

**The Political Elite in Kazakhstan Since Independence (1991-1998):  
Origins, Structure and Policies**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **The Political Elite in Kazakhstan Since Independence (1991-1998): Origins, Structure and Policies**

This is an analysis of the post-independence Kazakhstani elite between 1991 and 1998. Exploratory in nature, the thesis seeks to demonstrate four main points. First, historical antecedents and concurrent socioeconomic and political forces partly explain the composition, recruitment and nature of Kazakhstan's post-independent political elite. Second, while the political elite displays a certain consensus in its cognitive orientations, its social origins have become less homogeneous and its interests increasingly fragmented as a result of socioeconomic change. Third, the structure of the elite has narrowed between 1991 and 1998; this closed elite, through careful recruitment policies, is ensuring its self-replication. Fourth, if some links can be made between elite origins, attitudes and behaviour, these are only of a tentative nature.

These lines of enquiry are demonstrated in three sections: the historical antecedents and institutional sources of Kazakhstan's political elite (Section I); the degree of elite integration, in terms primarily of social homogeneity and recruitment (Section II); and the link, if any, between social structure and policies of the political elite (Section III). The study is based on Russian and Kazakh primary and secondary sources and on interviews with the political elite and a "panel of experts".

After establishing the work's aims and limits, the first section defines the terms "political elite" and establishes the methodology employed to locate and analyse the political elite. Chapters I.1 and I.2 provide the historical and institutional context in which the post-independence political elite has operated. Chapter II.1 addresses elite composition and structure according to dimensions of social background, in particular those of education, career, ethnicity and sub-ethnicity. Chapter II.2 assesses the recruitment process since 1991. Section III assesses two major elite policy spheres of these last eight years: nation-building and economic reform. The conclusion aims to establish the degree of linkage between these three sections and briefly discusses the implications of elite structure and integration for the future stability of the regime.

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## INTRODUCTION

People are the basic element of all social structure. Human beings create a society and its traditions. The assumption of this thesis is that the political elite plays a crucial role in the shaping of society.<sup>1</sup> In a society undergoing rapid social change<sup>2</sup> with a strong social hierarchy and where political passivity is considerable, the role of the elite as an instigator of reform is crucial.<sup>3</sup> This is a study of the post-independence Kazakhstani elite between 1991 and 1998.<sup>4</sup> The analysis follows three lines of enquiry: the historical antecedents and institutional sources of Kazakhstan's political elite (Section I); the degree of elite integration, in terms of social homogeneity, personal interaction and, to a degree, value consensus (Section II); and the link, if any, between social structure and policies of the political elite (Section III).<sup>5</sup> This chapter explains the rationale behind the enquiry, its theoretical considerations, and its methodology.<sup>6</sup>

A number of reasons make Kazakhstan an interesting case-study. Kazakhstan is an "accidental country", a nation that emerged from a Soviet republic which was never intended to be an independent state.<sup>7</sup> By contrast, the Eastern European upheavals involved largely sudden mass mobilisations that rendered regimes defunct, thereby creating power vacuums into which emerging opposition elites quickly stepped. The speed and ease with which this happened (outside Romania) testified to the always quite artificial, externally-imposed nature of the communist regimes; they fell like houses of cards. No humanistic intelligentsia existed in Kazakhstan to lead a comparable revolution or transition.

The post-independence Kazakhstani elite was not only initially reluctant to assume power but also highly insecure. At the root of the Republic's problems in 1991

was the fact that Kazakhstan was the only Soviet republic in which the titular nationality was a minority population; according to the last Soviet census, taken in 1989, Kazakhs constituted 39.5 percent of the population, while Russians were 37.7 percent. Combined with the Ukrainians (5.4 percent) and the Belorussians (1.1 percent), the Slavs constituted 44.2 percent of the population. When combined with the largely Russified Germans (5.8 percent), non-Kazakhs formed a bare but absolute majority of the Republic. Moreover, many of these were, and are, settled in nearly homogenous communities in the Republic's north, hard against Russia's southern and Siberian cities. By most predictions the 1999 census will indicate that, largely as a result of substantial Slav emigration, ethnic Kazakhs for the first time in their history of statehood have reached a majority. Faced with these cleavages, the Republic's only post-independence president, Nursultan Abisevich Nazarbaev, has celebrated his country's maintenance of interethnic peace. However by virtue of this multiethnicity, the elite has been deprived of an immediate source of legitimacy: monoethnic nationalism.

Despite their new-found status, then, Kazakhs were still faced with a substantial Russian minority from the era of nineteenth-century Russian colonisation and twentieth-century Sovietisation, a constant reminder to the political elite of its continued vulnerability to external political and cultural influence. Indeed, the Kazakh steppe cannot be considered a part of Central Asia proper; in Donald Carlisle's words, "it should be viewed as a Eurasian territory with a longtime – and enduring – subjugation to or dependence on Russia".<sup>8</sup> Historically, as we shall see, Russia had always been preferred to China as a partner since Chinese-Central Asian relations were hampered by the "legacy of mutual suspicion and fear".<sup>9</sup> China built the Great Wall as protection against invasion by Mongol and Turkic tribes and China's Han dynasty ruled large tracts of Central Asia until the second century A.D. The Arab conquest of Persia opened

up China more to influences from farther west. Furthermore, China's westward expansion left a large Turkic-Muslim minority in China's Xinjiang province and a strong, albeit unspoken, belief among many Chinese that large parts of Kazakhstan and Tajikistan "rightfully belong to them".<sup>10</sup>

In contrast to these multinational and geopolitical constraints, Kazakhstan's prospects as a viable economic unit were better in 1991 than those of many other successor states. Only some sixty years prior to independence, as Stalinism's collectivisation policy had still to be fully launched, the vast majority of ethnic Kazakhs were still pastoral nomads.<sup>11</sup> Sovietisation thus entailed sedentarisation as well as collectivisation. Like all successor states, Kazakhstan emerged from the Soviet era industrialised and urbanised. Kazakhstan inherited a sometimes obsolete but nevertheless significant manufacturing and processing industrial sector (including phosphate fertilizers, rolled metal, train bearings, tractors and bulldozers). According to Martha Brill Olcott, Kazakhstan also supplied about 11 percent of the total military production of the USSR and housed 1,360 nuclear warheads and one of the world's largest satellite-launching centre, at Baikonur. Nearly a third of its inherited workforce of 6.5 million people had enjoyed at least a secondary education in a total population of virtually universal literacy. The Soviet period also bequeathed a highly developed technical and physical infrastructure. Concludes Olcott: "Indeed, at independence, Kazakhstan could claim to be one of the world's most technologically advanced states".<sup>12</sup>

Unlike many other successor states, it also emerged with substantial wealth beneath its soil. According to Nazarbaev, Kazakhstan holds 30 percent of the world's proven reserves of chromium, 25 percent of manganese, 19 percent of lead, 13 percent of zinc, 10 percent of copper and 10 percent of iron. The President also claimed,

although without citing percentages, that Kazakhstan ranked first worldwide with respect to estimated reserves of uranium, and seventh worldwide for gold.<sup>13</sup> Crucially, Kazakhstan possesses the longest border of the Caspian Sea and thus stands to benefit exponentially once its oil reserves are tapped.<sup>14</sup> In 1992 the Kazakhstani government signed two flagship deals: with Chevron over the Western Tengiz oil-field and with British Gas and Agip over the Western Karachaganak gas-field.<sup>15</sup> By 1997, Kazakhstan enjoyed the largest foreign direct investment of all successor states.<sup>16</sup> These economic ventures are linked in another way to geopolitics: as a land-locked country, Kazakhstan relies on the good-will of its neighbours for the export of its products. As of 1998 all existing oil and gas pipeline routes continued to run through Russia.

In an echo of communism's top-down structure, the political elite's legitimacy has depended to a large degree on its ability to redistribute those resources. The political elite's ability to ensure economic redistribution will be its surest guarantee of keeping society together. Emile Durkheim argued that what provides a society's solidarity and its sense of identity is a form of a collective conscience or set of values and ideas created in the process of living together and carried around in the minds of the members of the group.<sup>17</sup> He called these ideas – embodying both values and instrumental knowledge – “collective representations”. People behave in accordance with these collective representations or, what he sometimes called, “currents of opinion”. Changes in population densities, Durkheim contended, led to social change. Social change, economic reform and geopolitical constraints create considerable challenges for the cohesion, autonomy and effectiveness of Kazakhstan's contemporary elite.

Studies of political elites have drawn on social-background information both to illustrate theoretical concepts and to establish relationships among social, economic and political variables. This thesis aims to identify such empirical connections in the

Kazakhstani context. Terms such as an “homogeneous-ruling elite”, “the elite-mass gap” and “the integration of a political system” will be illustrated and clarified by a quantitative study of the characteristics of the political elite. Similarly, in the search for theoretically interesting statistical relationships, information concerning political elites may be seen as a dependent variable affected by social and economic changes, or as an independent variable producing results of political and social significance. Such a study of the Kazakhstani political elite both as a dependent (i.e. where its formation is related to other factors) and as an independent variable (i.e. where the political elite itself affects other variables) is arranged in the following three sections.

The first section provides the historical and institutional context of the contemporary political elite. One of the first tasks is to discover how the political elite emerged in Kazakhstani society. Here it is well to follow Durkheim who distinguished three separate elements: the antecedent cause, the concomitant cause, and the current function. Section I.1 looks at the antecedent cause, at the political tradition of the steppe, Russian colonisation and Sovietisation. But the Kazakhstani elite cannot be reduced to these historically antecedent groups, and I.2 considers the concomitant causes, or the concurrent social forces that underlie the emergence of the contemporary elite. I.2 considers whether, institutionally, the elite in Kazakhstan is a pluralist or power elite.<sup>18</sup>

John Higley *et al.* pay particular attention to the possible emergence of national elites that share a consensus on rules of the game and that are unified in defence of democratic institutions.<sup>19</sup> With such elite consensus and unity, stable democracies are feasible, though perhaps not inevitable.<sup>20</sup> The thesis will also ask whether the failure of such unity has been one of the key reasons why Kazakhstan has failed to democratise. Higley *et al* argue that if elites become deeply disunited, unstable regions that oscillate

between pseudo-democratic and authoritarian forms, probably accompanied by much violence, are a virtual certainty.<sup>21</sup> In this section we also analyse the linkage of social status and political power. As we shall see, classical elite theory states that in modern societies wealth and social status and political power reinforce each other. The elite may be a “balance of the dominant social forces” in society. Pluralists argue that there is diversity in social class origins.

This institutional context established, Section II will assess the degree of elite integration by assessing several prominent “dimensions of integration”, along the three parameters of social homogeneity, recruitment patterns (which also helps us to look at the permeability or ease of entrance into the elite), and – where possible - value consensus.<sup>22</sup> The concept of an integrated political system implies that political leaders and activists throughout a country and at each level of authority hold relatively similar ideas as to how government should be managed. In terms of social homogeneity, different stages of economic and political development seem to be associated with the dominance of distinctive types of political elite. With the large amount of evidence that exists suggesting that socioeconomic status and political power are closely linked, it should be possible to establish whether this is an unstable political system in elite terms, such as those in which the secondary elite is more highly educated and enjoys more prestige than the top elite.<sup>23</sup> After the degree of their social homogeneity has been established in II.1, recruitment patterns are analysed. Where possible, some indication of the values of the political elite will be made; it is important to state at the outset that elite cognitive orientations, although crucial, are extremely nebulous and subjective at the best of times.<sup>24</sup>

The third section analyses the output of the elite in two crucial policy areas: nation-building (III.1) and the post-Soviet reform of the economy (III.2). Here we



assess the outward expression of elite values, the degree of intra-elite conflict that has arisen in the formulation of these policies, and the degree to which such policies have been reshaping the nature of the elite. We can go some way toward assessing how predictable this output is in the light of the structure and composition of the elite. Theories linking social background characteristics to political behaviour grow out of the work of Lasswell and Lerner.<sup>25</sup> Discussions of these linkages are found in Eulau and Sprague who focused on the legal profession;<sup>26</sup> Janowitz who studied the American military establishment and the origins of the officer class;<sup>27</sup> and, Frey who investigated the relationships between education, occupation, age and place of birth and the behaviour of Turkish parliamentarians.<sup>28</sup>

The conclusion will attempt a broader theoretical discussion in the light of this empirical evidence. For example, are there any linkages between our sections? Searing posited the weak links between social background and attitudes.<sup>29</sup> Is the structure of society unalterable? What links are there between the composition and output of the elite? From the point of view of stable, effective democracy, is elite integration desirable? By extension, can we divide society in Kazakhstan quite clearly into those who have “significant” political power and those who have none? Do the powerful try to claim legitimacy for their power, so it is acknowledged and accepted in the eyes of their subordinates and institutionalised in social arrangements? We will also look here at the relationship between elites and non-elites.

In seeking statistical relationships between socioeconomic variables and the social backgrounds of political leaders, the researcher is entering a field where data, while assembled with much effort and perseverance, will remain somewhat incomplete and where crude empiricism and abstract theorising are both occupational hazards. There are literally hundreds of quantitative studies on the background of political elites.

The attention paid to political elites and to their social backgrounds has frequently been justified by injunctions such as those of Reinhard Bendix who has written that:

a study of politics should be concerned with the social composition of the members and leaders of different political organisations; this kind of knowledge will provide a clue to the political goals which their leaders are likely to pursue.<sup>30</sup>

Expanding on the rationale for these studies, Lewis Edinger and Donald Searing have written that:

The stated or implied underlying assumption [in social-background research] is that leadership, social background and recruitment patterns will facilitate understanding of the political system because we can infer from them a good deal about the system's homogeneity and dominant values, about elite-elite relationships and about elite-mass relationships.<sup>31</sup>

This thesis hopes to draw some wider implications from the social data. There will be limits to the types of conclusions that can be drawn. This is because the use of one case study – which does not compare systematically across time or space – can really only be considered in isolation. The thesis thus falls into the most common type of study of political elites to date conducted by social scientists – the analysis of a single political unit at a single point in time. The use of one case-study can be justified for a number of positive reasons, however.

First, at a minimum, this represents the first detailed analysis of the political elite in Kazakhstan, and in Central Asia in general. Second, meaningful comparisons are strengthened by an intimate knowledge of one country. Often one country is a microcosm of trends witnessed elsewhere, and by understanding intimately the interrelationships of one country, more confident comparisons can then be made. Third, data gathering on one country is time-consuming. The data on this elite was collected in two periods, one nine-month period from October 1995 to June 1996 and October to December 1997. As explained in the Appendix, obtaining access to the elite was

difficult and time-consuming. Fourth, in the absence of strong institutions and legal norms, individuals often count more than institutions. Finally, comparisons of the same political unit at different moments is of particular interest in the study of periods of rapid change, which 1991-1998 has been for Kazakhstan.<sup>32</sup>

For data to be useful it must be as complete as possible, compiled through sound methodology and analysed by adequate theory. The methodology for elite studies has been somewhat neglected.<sup>33</sup> The Appendix describes the methodology and variables used. That study of methodology principally argues that the definition of a political elite must be empirically grounded.

While a major concern has been the search for political elites, disagreements over whether one has been located frequently derive from the use of incommensurate definitions. Harold Lasswell defined the political elite as “the power holders of a body politic ... the political elite is the top power class”.<sup>34</sup> C. Wright Mills defined it as “men...in positions to make decisions having major consequences ... [T]hey are in command of the major hierarchies and organisations of modern society”.<sup>35</sup> Robert Dahl referred to it as “a minority of individuals whose preference regularly prevails in cases of differences in preferences on key political issues”.<sup>36</sup> James Meisel, however, framed it as “the collective manipulation of the masses by a small leadership group or by several such groups... To put it into a facile formula, all elites shall be credited here with what we should like to call the three C’s: group consciousness, coherence and conspiracy”.<sup>37</sup> Finally, it has simply been termed “an elite which exercises preponderant political influence”.<sup>38</sup> Taken together, the definitions contain two crucial problems: different labels are used to refer to the same concept and different concepts are covered by the same label. These problems are discussed by Alan Zuckerman and the following represents a summary of the points he raises.<sup>39</sup>

Not only is there no general consensus as to how and where to use the concept “political elite”,<sup>40</sup> but also each of the suggested definitions also contains difficulties: (1) To define the political elite as those who control “real, effective power” raises the question of how to determine who in practice comprises the political elite. To cite Fleron’s critique of Bottomore, “First, we are still left to grapple with the elusive concept of ‘power’. Secondly, before using the concept ‘elite’, thus defined, in the study of any particular political systems [sic] we still have to solve the empirical problems of identifying those individuals who in fact exercise political power in that political system”.<sup>41</sup>

(2) To define the political elite by the control of political institutional positions omits those individuals who exert influence outside institutions. Although it is not possible to identify all individuals with informal power, attempts can be made to identify some of these individuals. This need is all the more the case in Kazakhstan, where, as we shall see, individuals without institutional power can be just as effective as those with institutional status. As Fleron maintained, there is still no certainty that those indicated are the actual controllers of power.<sup>42</sup> Lasswell argued for the utility of initially denoting the political elite by the following positions and then seeking to determine whether the occupants are the power-holders: (a) high government officials; (b) those who have recently occupied office and are in harmony with those in power; (c) those perceived as highly influential; (d) those of a counter-ideology who are perceived as highly influential; and (e) close family members.<sup>43</sup>

(3) Finally for our purposes as Zuckerman highlights, “in some cases, the definitions chosen make it impossible not to find a political elite. In others, the criteria used make it impossible to find one”.<sup>44</sup> As will be shown, Pareto’s conceptualisation is an example of the first point.<sup>45</sup> Dahl’s definition exemplifies the second problem.<sup>46</sup> Both Dahl and

his critics agree that political elites are incompatible with democracy. They differ on whether a political elite is to be found in the United State and, therefore, over the normative appraisal of the American polity. Dahl includes cohesion and finds a divided leadership group in New Haven and, therefore, by his definition, no political elite.

This thesis follows Bottomore by identifying both a political class and a political elite:

I shall use here Mosca's term, the "political class", to refer to all those groups which exercise political power or influence, and are directly engaged in struggles for political leadership; and I shall distinguish within the political class a smaller group, the political elite, which comprises those individuals who actually exercise political power in a given society at a given time.<sup>47</sup>

I shall refer to the broader political class as the political elite and to Bottomore's political elite as the core elite. This enables me to identify a broader political elite in 1995 and to follow the paths of a core elite – the political elite who actually exercise political power - over three time periods, 1992, 1995 and 1998. The political class enables me to conduct a wider statistical analysis of the political elite; the core elite identifies individuals with key influence.

Nevertheless, although sight must not be lost of members of the political elite as individuals, the elite is considered as a social group. It is in their roles rather than as individual personalities that we usually encounter them. It is a record not primarily of the people, but the parts they played. The destiny of a class is not identical with that of the individuals within it. The relative breadth of Bottomore's definition is particularly relevant to Kazakhstan where power remains informal. Power is understood here as "a process involving the exercise of control, constraint and coercion in society".<sup>48</sup> There is no commonly accepted definition of social power, but the essential idea is that *power is the ability to affect the actions or ideas of others, despite resistance*. It is thus a dynamic process. When studying political elites, it is most useful to consider power as the ability

to influence outcomes, or, more precisely, the policies and activities of the state, or (in the language of systems theory) the probability of influencing the authoritative allocation of values.

The full significance of this definition, I hope, will become apparent by the close of the thesis but it is a definition, working backwards, that is grounded in empirical evidence and theoretical considerations. This is because, as noted by Zuckerman, the problem with the definition of political elites is that the concept has led to a morass of conflicting definitions, the full ambiguities of which have not been solved.<sup>49</sup>

Concepts must be both empirically precise and theoretically useful. In the conclusion we shall return to whether the definition was empirically precise. For the moment we shall introduce the key elite theorists, whose relevance for Kazakhstan will be discussed in the conclusion once the empirical evidence has been gathered.

Elite theorists fall into two main groups: those selecting a single elite – usually the “political” – a single, socially decisive unit, and here Aristotle, Pareto, and Mosca bear relevance; those who insist that a number of elites coexist, sharing power, responsibilities, and rewards and here belong such writers as Saint-Simon, Karl Mannheim, Raymond Aron, H.D Lasswell, Floyd Hunter, C. Wright Mills and Robert Dahl.<sup>50</sup>

Aristotle focused on the social function of elites. He argued that elites are linked to the moral and material needs of the community. Like Plato, he saw the state as an instrument designed to fulfil collective ends and to serve communal needs. Irrespective of the form of government that develops, an elite must emerge to carry on the affairs of the state. French nobleman Claude Henri de Rouvroy, Count of Saint-Simon, also saw elites linked to the social needs of the community but argued that those needs, writing

as he did during the industrial revolution, were above all dictated by the emerging industrial society. Hence the importance of industrial producers. These producers – later to be replaced by high priests preaching the gospel of industrialism, he argued, would manage equilibrium. By rejecting the model of a single dominant political elite and by substituting for it the industrial elite, Saint-Simon anticipated a number of modern tendencies.

Mosca and Pareto were concerned with the conflict between two minorities. Pareto saw this conflict as a struggle between representatives of two types of social character, the lions and the foxes; Mosca assigned key significance to the skilful utilisation of political formulas by those in power. But both writers, in Machiavellian fashion, emphasised the importance of correct strategy for the maintenance of power, and both underscored the importance of traditional and nonrational forces in communal life. Perhaps their chief distinction is the insistence that a ruling class or elite is an inevitable feature of complex societies. But they put it all at the doorstep of personality and failed to account for the historical variety of elite types. Michels studied power in specific organisations rather than in society as a whole. He formulated the famous “iron law of oligarchy”. This states, “Who says organisation, says oligarchy”.<sup>51</sup>

Mannheim wrote on the problem of defining political generations, a topic which has still not been adequately treated. *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* developed Saint-Simon’s ideas on elites as a response of the functional needs of society. Rather than explaining the rise of elites in terms of power-hungry individuals, Mannheim saw elites as part of a system of collective relationships and necessities. Elites, in Mannheim’s view, exercise functional and institutional power. Contrary to the Marxists and the “Machiavellians” referred to earlier, Mannheim held that the

replacement of personal and arbitrary power by functional and institutional power to be a major social trend in modern times. Hence power is more legitimate and limited.

Mannheim was a member of a transitional generation of scholars whose works form a bridge between an older (and largely European) generation of philosophical students of social structure and social change and a younger generation (largely American) whose theoretical efforts are grounded in empirical studies. In this respect, and with particular reference to the analysis of patterns of power, Mannheim may be grouped with such scholars as Harold D. Lasswell.

Lasswell and some of his younger colleagues made the first systematic attempt to date to conduct comprehensive empirical studies of political elites on a world scale.<sup>52</sup> Lasswell followed in the footsteps of Pareto by analysing socio-psychological traits of elites – various skills, personality attributes, attitudes and symbols in the struggle for attaining and maintaining elite status. But Lasswell is clearly more interested in ascertaining what channels are open for those aspiring to elite positions and what rewards await those who succeed than in the social and cultural circumstances underlying the existence of these positions.

A third group, finally, may also be mentioned. This group concentrates on the distribution of power in sub-national communities – for example, cities in the American state of Georgia, by Floyd Hunter. These investigations generally concluded that a small number of people, mainly from the upper or upper middle class backgrounds, and/or representing business interests, were predominant in the community. Wright Mills applied these findings to the national level in the United States. In his influential study of *The Power Elite*, Mills argued that three interlocking groups dominated the “command posts” of American society: political leaders, corporate leaders; and military leaders. Dahl challenged these interpretations, arguing that the image of a closed power



elite should be replaced by that of a relatively competitive environment in which there are dispersed inequalities of power.<sup>53</sup> Suzanne Keller argued instead that society is governed by strategic elites which “consist of the minority of individuals responsible for keeping the organized system, society, in working order, functioning so as to meet and surpass the perennial collective crises that occur”.<sup>54</sup> These various theories of elites will be borne in mind as the empirical analysis of the Kazakhstani elite now begins.

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### Endnotes to Introduction

<sup>1</sup> Key works on the Soviet political elite include: T.H. Rigby, *Political Elites in the USSR: Central Leaders and Local Cadres from Lenin to Gorbachev* (Aldershot and Vermont, Edward Elgar, 1990); David Lane (ed.), *Elites and Political Power in the USSR* (Aldershot : Elgar, 1988); Jeffrey Klugman, *The New Soviet Elite: How They Think and What They Want* (New York: Praeger, 1989); Michael Voslensky, *Nomenklatura: Anatomy of the Soviet ruling class* (London: Bodley Head, 1984); Evan Mawdsley, “Portrait of a Changing Elite: CPSU Central Committee Full Members, 1939–1990”, in Stephen White (ed.), *New Directions in Soviet History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 191–206.

<sup>2</sup> For an introduction to transition literature, see G. O’Donnell & P.C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions* (Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986). In the Soviet context, see Stephen White, Graeme Gill and Darrell Slider, *The Politics of Transition: Shaping a Post-Soviet Future* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> The focus on national elites in transition is often associated with the work of Dankwart Rustow, “Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model”, *Comparative Politics* (Vol. 2, No. 3, 1970), pp. 337–63. See also his “The Study of Elites: Who’s Who, When and How”, *World Politics* (Vol. 18, No. 3, July 1966), pp. 690–717. On the role of elites in transition see, John Higley and Michael G. Burton, “The Elite Variable in Democratic Transitions and Breakdowns”, *American Sociological Review*, (Vol. 54, No. 1, 1989) pp. 17-32; Thomas A. Baylis, “Plus ça Change? Transformation and Continuity Amongst East European Elite”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* (Vol. 27, No. 3, September 1994), pp. 315–328; “Circulation vs Reproduction of Elites during the Postcommunist Transformation of Eastern Europe”, special issue of *Theory and Society* (Vol. 24, No. 5, October 1995); “Regime Transitions, Elites, and Bureaucracies in Eastern Europe”, special issue of *Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration* (Vol. 6, No. 3, July 1993); John Higley, Judith Kullbert & Jan Pakulski, “The Persistence of Postcommunist Elites”, *Journal of Democracy* (Vol. 7, No. 2, April 1996), pp. 133–147; John Higley and Jan Pakulski,

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“Revolution and Elite Transformation in Eastern Europe”, *Australian Journal of Political Science* (Vol. 27, 1992), pp. 104–119; and Heinrich Best and Ulrike Becker (eds.), *Elites in Transition: Elite Research in Central and Eastern Europe* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Interesting studies of other post-communist elites include: Anton Steen, *Between Past and Future: Elites, Democracy and the State in Post-Communist Countries: A Comparison of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997); Timothy J. Colton and Robert C. Tucker (eds.), *Patterns in Post-Soviet Leadership* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995); Olga Kryshantovskaya & Stephen White, “From Soviet Nomenclatura to Russian Elite”, *Europe-Asia Studies* (Vol. 48, No. 5, July 1996), pp. 711–734; David Lane and Cameron Ross, “The Changing Composition of the Political Elites”, in David Lane (ed.), *Russia in Transition* (London: Longman, 1995), pp. 52–75. Rarer studies are of the regional elites: James Hughes, “Sub-national Elites and Post-communist Transformation in Russia: A Reply to Kryshantovskaya & White”, *Europe-Asia Studies* (Vol. 49, No. 6, 1997), pp. 1017–1036; and Hellmut Wollman, “Change and Continuity of Political and Administrative Elites in Post-Communist Russia”, *Governance* (Vol. 6, No. 3, July 1993), pp. 325–340.

David Lane has written extensively on the post-communist Russian elite, including “Political Elites Under Gorbachev and Yeltsin in the Early Period of Transition: A Reputational and Analytical Study” in Timothy J. Colton and Robert C. Tucker (eds.), *Patterns in Post-Soviet Leadership* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), pp. 29–48; “The Gorbachev Revolution The Role of the Political Elite in Regime Disintegration”, *Political Studies*, (Vol. 44, No. 1, March 1996), pp. 4–23; “The Transformation of Russia: The Role of the Political Elite”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 4, June 1996, pp. 535–550; and “The Role of Elite and Class in the Transition in Russia”, paper presented to the Political Studies Association Communist and Post-Communist Studies Conference, South Bank University, London, 6 February 1999.

<sup>5</sup> For notions of elite cohesion see John Higley and Jan Pakulski, “Revolution and Elite Transformation in Eastern Europe”, *Australian Journal of Political Science*, (Vol. 27, No.1, March 1992), pp. 104–119.

<sup>6</sup> See the Annex for a full explanation of the methodology employed.

<sup>7</sup> Martha Brill Olcott, “Democratization and the Growth of Political Participation in Kazakstan”, in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds.), *Conflict, Cleavage and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 201.

<sup>8</sup> Donald Carlisle, “Islam Karimov and Uzbekistan: Back to the Future?”, in Timothy J. Colton and Robert C. Tucker (eds.), *Patterns in Post-Soviet Leadership* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), p. 211.

<sup>9</sup> Shireen Hunter, *Central Asia Since Independence*, (Washington, DC: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, published by Praeger Press, 1996), pp. 124–5.

<sup>10</sup> See Keith Martin, “China and Central Asia: Between Seduction and Suspicion”, *RFE/RL Research Report* (Vol. 3, No.25, 24 June 1994).

<sup>11</sup> Some sedentarisation had already occurred under the Russian period

<sup>12</sup> Martha Brill Olcott provides a neat summary of the industrial legacy. See her *The Kazakhs, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1995), p. 272.

<sup>13</sup> Almaty Investment Summit, *Panorama*, 4 June 1998; and *Interfax-Kazakhstan*, 4 June 1998.

<sup>14</sup> Oil reserve estimated for the Caucasus and Central Asia as a whole vary greatly and range from 30bn to 200bn barrels. These estimates include proven and possible

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reserves. Industry analysts often use a middle range of figure of 90bn barrels. See the excellent analysis of Rosemarie Forsythe in her, *The Politics of Oil and The Caucasus and Central Asia* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, Adelphi Paper 300, 1996). She cites Robert O.'Connor, Richard Castle and David Nelson, "Future Oil and Gas Potential in the Southern Caspian Basin", *Oil and Gas Journal*, 3 May 1993, pp. 117-26; Michael J. Strauss, "Caspian Sea May Offer Wealth of Oil and Gas, Geologists Say", *Journal of Commerce*, 16 September 1991, p. 6B; Khartukov and Vinogradova, "Former Soviet Union: Another Poor Year", *World Oil* (Vol. 215, No.8, August 1994), p. 69. See also John Roberts, *Caspian Pipelines*, (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1996). Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan have the largest oil deposits of the region. Forsythe cites geophysical estimates of 10bn barrels; she also points out that industry analysts cite Kazakhstan as the richest of the former Soviet republics in oil and gas, with more than 60 billion barrels.

<sup>15</sup> Tengizchevroil, a joint venture between the US company Chevron and the Kazakhstani Tengiz oil-field, went into operation in April 1993. At \$20bn, it is one of the largest single investments by a US firm in the former Soviet Union. Chevron began negotiating the deal in 1990 before the fall of the Soviet Union, and continued with Kazakhstan after its independence. As Forsythe notes, the oil-field "is the largest oil discovery in the world since the 1970s, with proven high-quality oil reserves of 6-9bn barrels – to be developed, according to the contract, over a 40-year period". Kazakhstan's Western Karachaganak field is estimated to be about two-thirds the size of Tengiz. In June 1992, Kazakhstan concluded an agreement with British Gas and Agip to restore the field; since then Russia's Gazprom and US Texaco have joined the production-sharing agreement.

<sup>16</sup> *Statisticheskoe Obozrenie Kazakhstana* (Almaty: National Statistics Agency, 1997), p. 21 cites 1997 foreign direct investment as US\$1633,2 million. Japan at 28.7 percent tops the list of foreign direct investors, followed by South Korea at 27.6, UK at 15.7, USA at 11.1 and Germany, Italy and Turkey roughly at 4 percent each. The largest sector of foreign direct investment is the metallurgical sector, followed by the oil and then energy sectors. See also Interfax-Kazakhstan, 12 January 1998; Panorama, 31 July 1998;

<sup>17</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society*, trans. G. Simpson (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1951).

<sup>18</sup> For an excellent analysis of elite integration in the United States, see Gwen Moore, "The Structure of a National Elite Network" in Marvin E. Olsen and Martin N. Marger (eds), *Power in Modern Societies*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), pp. 183–95.

<sup>19</sup> John Higley, Jan Pakulski and Wlodzimierz Wesolowski (eds.), *Postcommunist Elites and Democracy in Eastern Europe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998). Prospects for such consensual elites are judged to be best in Poland and Hungary, less good in Czechoslovakia, poor in Romania, Bulgaria and Albania, and virtually non-existent in the Yugoslav republics. The most popular account of the role of insurgents is by Timothy Garton Ash, *We the People: The Revolution of 89* (London: Granta, 1990). This work is concerned with Eastern Europe rather than the USSR.

<sup>20</sup> Other conditions, such as economic growth, the absence of deep regionally-based cultural conflicts, and a relatively benign international environment, may also be necessary for stable democracy. But without elite consensus and unity these other conditions do not appear to be reliably related to it.

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<sup>21</sup> See Higley *et al.*, *Postcommunist Elites*, Chapter 1. As the authors point out, for “transitologists” and “consolidologists”, “the achievement of democratic consensus and power sharing among divided elites through pacts is regarded as decisive”.

<sup>22</sup> An excellent introduction to the study of comparative elites is Robert Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976). See also Gerraint Parry, *Political Elites* (New York: Praeger, 1969).

<sup>23</sup> William B. Quandt, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites*, (Berkeley, CA: Sage, 1969).

<sup>24</sup> Among the most useful introductions to the interplay of personality and politics are Fred I. Greenstein, *Personality and Politics* (Chicago: Markham, 1969); Fred I. Greenstein and Michael Lerner (eds), *A Source Book for the Study of Personality and Politics* (Chicago: Markham, 1971); Lewis J. Edinger, “Political Science and Political Biography II”, *Journal of Politics* (Vol. 26, August 1964), pp. 648–676.

<sup>25</sup> Harold D. Lasswell and Daniel Lerner, *World Revolutionary Elites: Studies in Coercive Ideological Movements* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1965). See also Harold D. Lasswell, Daniel Lerner and C. Easton Rothwell, *The Comparative Study of Elites: An Introduction and Bibliography* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1952).

<sup>26</sup> Heinz Eulau and John D. Sprague, *Lawyers in Politics* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964).

<sup>27</sup> M. Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier* (New York: Free Press, 1960).

<sup>28</sup> F.W. Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite* (Cambridge: MA: MIT Press, 1965).

<sup>29</sup> See in particular D.D. Searing, “The Comparative Study of Elite Socialization”, *Comparative Political Studies* (Vol. 1, January 1969), pp. 471–500. Other studies that develop important theoretical perspectives include John C. Wahlke *et al.*, *The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior* (New York: John Wiley, 1967); J.A. Schlesinger, *Ambition and Politics: Political Careers in the United States* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966); J.D. Barber, *The Lawmakers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965); Tom Bottomore, *Elites and Society* (London: C.A. Watts, 1964); Prewitt *et al.*, “Political Socialization and Political roles”, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, (Vol. 30, Winter 1966–1967); and W.H. Wriggins, *The Ruler’s Imperative: Strategies for Political Survival in Asia and Africa*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969).

<sup>30</sup> Reinhard Bendix, “Social Stratification and Political Power” *American Political Science Review* (Vol. 46, June 1953), p. 596.

<sup>31</sup> Lewis Edinger and Donald Searing, “Social Background in Elite Analysis: A Methodological Inquiry”, *American Political Science Review* (Vol. 61, June 1967), p. 430.

<sup>32</sup> Donald Matthews, along with many others, has suggested that revolutions are led by intellectuals, but that usually the bureaucrats win the post-revolutionary struggle for power. Donald R. Matthews, *The Social Background of Political Decision-Makers* (New York: Random House, 1962), pp. 58–9.

<sup>33</sup> Among the best contributors are Edinger and Searing, “Social background”; Searing, “Models and images of man and society in leadership theory”, *Journal of Politics*, (Vol. 31, February 1969), pp. 3–30; Wahlke *et al.*, *The Legislative System*; C. Beck and J.M. Malloy, *Political Elites: A Mode of Analysis* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, Archive on Political Elites in Eastern Europe, 1966); C. Beck, *A Survey of Elite Studies* (Washington, DC: American University, 1965); J. Dennis, “Major Problems of Political Socialisation Research,” *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 12, February 1968, pp. 85–144; and R.S. Robins, “Elite Career Patterns as a

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Differential: A Use of Correlation Techniques and the Construction of Uniform Strata” *Behavioral Science* (Vol. 14, May 1969), pp. 232–238. Briefer methodological discussions are included in a number of other publications, including S.E. Finer *et al.*, *Backbench Opinion in the House of Commons* (London: Penguin, 1961); Frey, *Turkish Political Elite*; and William B. Quandt, *The Comparative Study*. See also, Samuel J. Eldersveld, *Political Elites in Modern Societies: Empirical Research and Democratic Theory* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1989).

<sup>34</sup> Harold Lasswell, “Agenda for the Study of Political Elites” in Dwaine Marvick (ed.), *Political Decision-Makers* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1961), p. 66.

<sup>35</sup> C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 3–4.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Dahl, “A Critique of the Ruling Elite Model,” reprinted in Edward Laumann, Paul Siegel and Robert Hodge (eds), *The Logic of Social Hierarchies* (Chicago: Markham, 1970), p. 269.

<sup>37</sup> Meisel explains the three C’s: all the members of the elite are alert to their group interests; that this alertness is in turn caused or affected by a sense, implicit or explicit, of group or class solidarity; and last, that this solidarity is expressed in a common will to action”. James Meisel, *The Myth of the Ruling Class: Gaetano Mosca and the Elite* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962), p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> Geoffrey Roberts, *A Dictionary of Political Analysis* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1971), p. 79.

<sup>39</sup> Alan Zuckerman, “The Concept ‘Political Elite’: Lessons from Mosca and Pareto”, *The Journal of Politics* (Vol. 39, No. 2, May 1977), pp. 324–44.

<sup>40</sup> Anthony Giddens, “Elites in the British Class Structure,” in Philip Standath and Anthony Giddens (eds), *Elites and Power in British Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> Frederick Fleron, “Notes on the Explication of the Concept ‘Elite’ in Soviet Studies,” *Canadian Review of Slavic Studies* (Vol. II, No. 1, Spring, 1968), p. 112.

<sup>42</sup> Fleron, “Notes,” p. 112.

<sup>43</sup> See, Harold Lasswell, “Introduction: The Study of Political Elites,” in Harold Lasswell and Daniel Lerner, *World Revolutionary Elites*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968), 3–28.

<sup>44</sup> Zuckerman, “Concept Political Elite”, p. 328.

<sup>45</sup> Vilfredo Pareto, *Treatise on General Sociology* (New York, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovitch, 1935); Samuel Finer, *Vilfredo Pareto: Sociological Writings* (New York: Praeger, 1966).

<sup>46</sup> Robert A. Dahl, “A Critique”, pp. 269–70.

<sup>47</sup> Tom Bottomore, *Elites and Society* (Middlesex, England: Pelican, 1964), p. 10.

<sup>48</sup> *Introductory Sociology*, p. 197. Also “Every social act is an exercise of power, every social relationship is a power equation, and every social group or system is an organization of power”. (Cited in Olsen and Marger, *Power*, p. 1). When Amos Hawley wrote that statement in 1963, very few sociologists were giving serious attention to social power. During the succeeding thirty years, however, increasing numbers of writers have argued that power exertion is the central dynamic within the process of social organization. These include: Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984); Stephen Lukes, *Essay in Social Theory* (London: Macmillan, 1977); Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power: History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760. Volume 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and Denis H. Wrong, *Power: Its Form, Bases and*

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*Uses* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979). Mann, for instance, began his work on the history of social power by asserting that “societies are constituted of multiple overlapping and intersecting sociological networks of power”. *Sources of Social Power*, p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> The argument that for a concept to be theoretically useful it should be used as a “natural” classifier is set out in its classic form by Carl Hempel, “Fundamentals in Taxonomy,” in his *Aspects of Scientific Explanation and Other Essays in the Philosophy of Science* (New York: Free Press, 1965), pp. 137–154. Sartori has emphasised the importance of unambiguous definitional criteria in concept-formation, and, hence, concept as data container”. See Giovanni Sartori, “Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics”, *American Political Science Review* (Vol. LXIV, No. 4, December, 1970), pp. 1033–53. The view that concepts must be both empirically precise and theoretically useful is also clearly developed in Abraham Kaplan, *The Conduct of Inquiry* (Scranton, Chandler, 1964), esp. p. 53.

<sup>50</sup> See Aristotle, *Politics* (trans. by T.A. Sinclair, London: Penguin, 1962); Vilfredo Pareto, *Treatise*; Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class*, (ed by Arthur Livingston, London: McGraw-Hill, 1939); Count Henri de Saint-Simon, *Oeuvres Choisies*, Tome Premier, 1839; Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1946), Part V; Raymond Aron, “Social Structure and the Ruling Class”, *The British Journal of Sociology*, (Vol. 1, 1950), pp. 1–16; Harold D. Lasswell, *Politics, Who Gets What, When, and How* (1936); Floyd Hunter, *Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1953); C. Wright Mills and Robert Dahl, *Who Governs?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

<sup>51</sup> Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy* (New York: Dover, 1959).

<sup>52</sup> Lasswell, *Politics, Who Gets What*, *passim*.

<sup>53</sup> Robert Dahl, *Who Governs?*, *passim*.

<sup>54</sup> Suzanne Keller, *Beyond The Ruling Class: Strategic Elites in Modern Society* (New York: Random House, 1963), p. 23.

## CHAPTER I.1:

### KHANS, CONQUERORS AND COMMUNISTS: KAZAKH TRADITIONAL SOCIETY AND THE IMPACT OF RUSSIAN AND SOVIET RULE

This chapter aims to trace elite-society relations since the ethnonym “Kazakh” first emerged in the fifteenth century.<sup>1</sup> This is not intended as a general history of the rise of the Arabs, Turks or the Mongols, or the causes of imperial Russia’s expansion southward and subsequent Sovietisation. The focus instead is on the dynamics of power distribution in the Kazakh steppe, and on its transformation under Russian colonisation and Sovietisation.<sup>2</sup>

A word of caution: the impartial student who aims at “getting at the significant facts” of early, medieval and early modern Kazakh history is confronted with an almost insurmountable task. History was transmitted orally from one generation to the next. Russian culture played an important role in conveying the nomadic legacy but fell hostage, therefore, to misinterpretation.

The chapter is based on a functional view of culture; cultures do not die but are reworked and transformed. As Stuart Hall writes, “we should think instead of identity as “production”, which is never complete, always in process”.<sup>3</sup> If we are to appreciate contemporary elite political culture, we need to understand its origins. To echo Benedict Anderson’s reasoning behind his celebrated definition of the nation as an “imagined community”:

nationality, ... nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind. To understand them properly we need to consider carefully how they have come into historical being, in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy.<sup>4</sup>

In the case of Kazakhstan, as we shall see, the case is interesting for the reverse reason – the sense of national identity is weak. Second, the contemporary elite are today’s nation-builders and tomorrow’s ancestors. Just as the steppe bard would be relied on to recount and transmit orally from one generation to the next the rich epic history of his forefathers, so today the contemporary elite will fashion its own view of history. This also begs the question whether the intellectual and political elites are the same and whether they define the nation in similar terms, a topic for Section III. As we shall see in Section II, what the political elite chooses to forget about its history will be as important as what it remembers. In David McCrone’s words: “Getting history wrong” is the precondition of nationalist history because it requires not only collective remembering but collective forgetting”.<sup>5</sup> Whether the ruling elite will ever be sharply reminded of hidden elements of its history by a dissident counter-elite depends on the nature of the polity, explored in the next chapter. That chapter will also highlight how the present regime bases itself on “primordial links” with the Kazakh steppe. The full significance of this chapter, I hope, will become apparent by the close of the thesis. The chapter considers four periods: (1) early steppe history, namely, before the fifteenth century; (2) Kazakh nomadic political structure up to the close of the eighteenth century; (3) The impact of Russian colonisation on traditional nomadic politics and society; and, (4) the impact of Sovietisation. As with all historic periods, they are somewhat arbitrary and inevitably overlap. It is the second period which provides the focus of this chapter. This is the period in which “traditional Kazakh culture” is formed. It is this culture that Russian colonisation indirectly transforms and that Sovietisation directly attempts to destroy. And it is to this period that today’s nation-builders turn for guidance, inspiration, solace – and legitimisation.



## EARLY STEPPE HISTORY

The investigator of Turkish and Mongol history in this part of the world is like a man standing on an upper floor, watching the unpredictable and disordered movement of a crowd gathered on some great occasion. Groups meet and coalesce, groups melt and dissolve; a sudden interest draws a mass in one direction, only to split up again; a bidder or leader may for some moments gather a knot of adherents; political or personal causes lead to rioting;... there is slaughter and destruction, or even for a time a sense of purpose and direction of effort".<sup>6</sup>

Early history of the Kazakh steppe may be divided into four main periods: the emergence of nomadism and the arrival of the Turks, probably in the sixth century AD; the Arabo-Persian Islamic conquest in the ninth and tenth centuries; the Mongol and Timurid dynasty (1200–1500 AD); and, the Uzbek (Shaibanid) empire followed by the emergence of the Kazakhs as a distinct group on the steppe.<sup>7</sup>

Historical records relating to the period before the Islamic conquest at the beginning of the eighth century are extremely scanty. As Shirin Akiner writes, archaeologists have identified the remains of some 200 Neolithic settlements, distributed all over the territory of present-day Kazakhstan, which suggests habitation by sedentary farmers and livestock breeders.<sup>8</sup> Nomadic tribes began to emerge in the first millennium BC. The Saks were the most prominent of these tribes, but the subsequent tribes of the Usuns, Kangyu and Alans are also thought to be direct ancestors of the Kazakh people. Some Soviet scholars contended that there was a Turkic-speaking presence in Central Asia before the end of the first millennium BC. Most Western Turkologists, however, date the first signs of a Turkic people in this region to the sixth century AD.<sup>9</sup>

The scarcity of historical records – and those that do exist are almost exclusively in Chinese - which obscures the earlier history of Central Asia ends with the beginning of the Arab invasion. Nomads, like the peoples of Central Asia proper as a whole, came into contact with Islam for the first time in the tenth century. But the influence of Islam on the steppe was far less. Nomads lacked the institutions to absorb the philosophy and dicta of Islam; the semi-sedentary Kazakhs of the south were the first to be exposed. The Arabs introduced tax incentives to nomads who adopted the Islamic faith. Overall, as the distinguished Kazakh ethnographer Chokan Valikhanov reports, Kazakhs combined a shallow internalisation of Islam with the cosmology of shamanism.<sup>10</sup>

It was to be the Mongols who, as we shall see, were to exert the strongest influence on the political life of the steppe. In the early thirteenth century, Chingiz Khan and his Mongol hordes captured the oasis cities of Transoxiana, among them Otrar and Taraz in the territory of present-day southern Kazakhstan. The Mongols destroyed the social and political organisation of the Turkic-speaking nomads; they reshuffled nomadic tribes and caused considerable ethnic regrouping in the Eurasian steppes. Chingiz Khan divided his huge empire between his four sons.<sup>11</sup> His descendants, the Chingizids, were to become the Kazakh aristocrats. Moreover, the three political formations which emerged on the Kazakh steppe in the seventeenth century are deemed by many to be the three sons' legacy. Today, as we shall see in Section II, the process of claiming ancestry to Chingizid descent amongst the elite is ambiguous.

It is important to stress that there is no consensus over the chronology or precise circumstances of the ethnogenesis of the Kazakhs; some historians do not trace the origins in the immigration of tribes who had divorced from the Uzbeks but rather in the fusion of a number of tribes long resident in the region. The Uzbeks and Kazakhs (who were even called Uzbek-Kazakhs) considered themselves to be one unified people.<sup>12</sup> In

the second half of the fifteenth century the cultural centre of Central Asia shifted; at the beginning of the sixteenth century the Uzbeks invading from the North-East under Shaibani Khan conquered the Timurid possessions in Turkestan and Khorezm. Pressured by encroachments on his land from other leaders and their followers, a Kazakh tribal leader, Abulhair, broke away from his Uzbek master with a camp of followers, and decided to roam northward to the steppe.<sup>13</sup> There he united a number of tribes and the resulting group became known as the “Kazakhs”. The choice of “Kazakh” is explained in most writings by its meaning - free wanderer – since Abulhair had freely wandered off and formed his own tribe. Thus, the earliest historical records of the Kazakhs appear in the fifteenth century, prior to which date they are believed to have formed part of the Uzbek people.<sup>14</sup> The Kazakhs thus appear as a distinct people a century after the Uzbeks, an important fact in the current competition for supremacy in Central Asia.

Chingiz Khan’s sons did not rule over ethnically defined units. When Abulhair was forced to migrate, there was no evidence at this stage of any real sense of ethnic difference among the Uzbeks and Kazakhs. At this stage, crucial in identity formation would appear to have been the definition of the self against the outsider. As part of this self-definition there appears to have been a process of discovery by the Kazakhs of their descent from a common ancestor.<sup>15</sup> Already at this stage, the multiplicity of Kazakhness becomes apparent. The mythical history divides itself into a grand, universal myth and a second, specific myth, one common to the Kazakhs and the Kyrgyz.

The grand myth refers to all Turkic peoples. It professes that all Turkic peoples are descended from a primal ancestor in the direct male line; this ancestor bears the eponym of the Turkic peoples generally. The specifically Kazakh myth, which interestingly is also applied by the Kazakhs to the contemporary Kyrgyz in the claim that the two peoples have common ancestry, has manipulated this universal myth.

Nineteenth-century observers generally agree that the primogenitor had three sons who branched off to form separate units which many deem were the precursors to the three “hordes” (on which more will follow).<sup>16</sup> Thus the Kazakh nation and all its subdivisions were regarded as ramifications of an extended family group. To this day, however, ethnographers have failed to pinpoint a common ancestor. Even the name of the primogenitor is disputed, although it is generally also believed to be Alash. Valikhanov confirms the name of the ancestor as Alash whom he sees as a real rather than mythical figure. Even the etymology of the word “Kazakh” remains disputed.<sup>17</sup> Fortes has demonstrated the role of a genealogy as a kind of origin myth in a unilineal descent group, of which the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz are examples.<sup>18</sup> It would appear, then, that the common ancestor was male - despite the fact that certain tribes of nomads in the Near East and Eurasian steppes traced their descent from a female ancestor, or else have female eponyms.<sup>19</sup>

What has this brief overview of early history demonstrated? First, the confusion surrounding ancestry and the ethnonym of the Kazakhs allows for convenient contemporary manipulation and wide interpretation. Potentially, this is not a problem: Gellner, amongst others, has noted that the Estonians at the beginning of the nineteenth century did not have a name for themselves, but subsequently did create a vibrant culture and past.<sup>20</sup> Second, the early ethnic mix threw up the controversy over whether Kazakhs are predominantly of Turkic or Mongol (or indeed Arab) origin. The dispute as to which tribes appeared first on the steppe is not merely a theoretical debate; the official rewriting of history, as discussed in III.1, places much emphasis on analysing the Kazakhs’ ethnic roots and Section II highlights how the confusion over origins is part of a much larger geopolitical question and of the importance of external influences in past and contemporary elite formation.

## KAZAKH TRADITIONAL NOMADIC POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The traditional Kazakh steppe tribes were predominantly pastoral nomads. Pockets of semi-sedentary peoples practising transhumance and crop-growing were found at the steppe periphery. We are still in the era, of course, where the steppe was bereft of borders – despite the tendency by some indigenous historians to dub this area already “Kazakhstan”.

Livestock was the nomad’s principal source of property, ritual and livelihood. As Bacon writes, sheep were of greatest economic importance, whilst horses incurred prestige and status. The small, shaggy horses of the steppe, she continues, “did not have the grace and fire of Arab steeds, but they were fast and had great endurance; they gave mobility in the wars and blood feuds (*barynta*) which frequently disrupted the peace of the steppe; they were the object of cult attention”.<sup>21</sup> Possession of large herds gave prestige unrelated to their economic value.<sup>22</sup> Two-humped Bactrian camels were also kept. Until Russian colonisation, cattle were rare. Every camp was guarded by large, fierce watchdogs, and dogs were used in herding.<sup>23</sup>

As with other peoples, an understanding of traditional Kazakh society and politics is best gained by first examining their economic way of life. Kazakh nomads conformed to Khazanov’s useful five-part definition of pastoral nomadism.<sup>24</sup>

First, pastoralism was the predominant form of economic activity. Second, its extensive character stemmed from the maintenance of herds all year round on a system of free-range grazing without stables. Nomads, third, were thus periodically mobile within specific grazing territories. Finding pasturage for the livestock entailed regular seasonal migrations by their owners. In winter the portable dwellings were set up in

sheltered spots in the foothills. In spring the people moved out of their winter quarters, following the fresh growth of grass northward or, for eastern groups, upward into the mountains; they followed then to the rich summer pastures and by October the autumn migration was over. Nomadic groups were thus only really clustered and sedentary in the winter months. The migration routes were never haphazard. Each tribal group had a traditional territory within which its member family groups migrated. The nomad migrated in encampments.

Khazanov's fourth criterion described how the population participated in nomadism which, fifthly, aimed at subsistence (as opposed to the market ranch or dairy farming of today). The nomadic economy, in short, aimed at "integration and accumulation."<sup>25</sup> Nomadic groups cooperated and depended on each other. Rich groups, who possessed spare and numerous horses, would often help out the poorer groups. Georgi recorded that a fairly well-off Kazakh family kept 30-50 horses, 100 sheep, 15-25 head of large stock, 20-50 goats and several camels.<sup>26</sup> Below this minimum even simple reproduction could not take place. For example, since the nomads stored no fodder, many animals died of cold and starvation, and if late "frost" (*dzhut*) became too hard to be broken by the horses' hooves, entire herds and flocks sometimes perished. During the nineteenth century, *dzhut* reportedly occurred twenty times in the area of what is now Kazakhstan – even if not simultaneously across the whole area.<sup>27</sup> If a nomad for any of these reasons was forced to migrate and eventually settle into agriculture, this was considered as the greatest defeat for the nomad and echoes Owen Lattimore's aphorism, "the only pure nomad is a poor nomad."<sup>28</sup> To become an agriculturalist was to lose status.

As Markov and Masanov highlight, livestock breeding and pastoralism shaped social and political relations, and were in turn shaped by them.<sup>29</sup> This symbiosis is seen

below in detail; in general, a useful means of conceptualising production is provided by Wolf's three possible modes of production.<sup>30</sup> Whilst nomadic society is not based around a tributary mode (where the elite coerces) or a capitalist mode (where labour is bought and sold), it is based on the kin-ordered mode. Production centred around kinship is based on an opposition between those who belong to the group, say, a lineage or a clan, and those who do not.

Traditional Kazakh society oscillated between dependence and independence. The rigidity of the structural hierarchies – born of a long tradition of warfare – was offset by the inherent mobility of nomadic life. As Shirin Akiner explains:

Thus, despite the very strong bonds of communal obligations and loyalties, ultimately the nomads remained free agents and if dissatisfied could, and not infrequently did, move with their households and flocks to a new location. This flexibility gave the tribal structure a dynamism that enabled it to accommodate the constantly changing shape and balance of regional power politics.<sup>31</sup>

Traditional Kazakh society, to coin Bacon, was thus conical in shape; or “pyramidal”, to use the typology developed by Fortes and Evans-Pritchard.<sup>32</sup> The narrow segment at the top was comprised of the Kazakh hereditary estate, the *aq su*, or white bone, whilst the wide lower part consisted of the non-hereditary masses, the *qara su*, or black bone. As we shall see, “bone” refers to lineage, and the colours white and black were inherited from Mongol practice. By way of further illustration, Kazakh traditional society was a textbook example of Khazanov's “differentiated segmentary society”, in which “the ruling segment ceases to be a replica of the other segments, fully or partially falls away from the genealogical cliché of the given society, acquires distinct laws of kinship and descent and, most importantly, turns into a distinct estate”.<sup>33</sup> Russian ethnographers considered that this hierarchy spoke of a far more developed political society than that found amongst their neighbouring Kyrgyz.

The primary socio-economic unit in Kazakh nomadic society was the encampment, or *aul*. This constituted a “clan”, “consisting of an extended patriarchal family network”,<sup>34</sup> maternal relatives from other clans (the Kazakhs were exogamous up the preceding seven generations);<sup>35</sup> freed slaves and other who had become part of the community. Each encampment consisted of a number of separate households, each with its own tent (Kazakh *ui*, Russian *kibitka* and Western *yurt*).<sup>36</sup> Several encampments would come together for the long summer migration; they would also unite in time of war or other periods of danger. During the winter, however, they would separate into their original units, to have a better chance of finding good pasture. The encampments were loosely grouped into tribal units, whose number varied.

Each encampment had its own leaders, of which there were two main principal categories: the *batyr* (“hero”) and the *bii* (“interpreter of customary law” or “judge”). Their role and influence depended on situation and their character. They usually presided over one or two clans, but sometimes over a greater number. Each clan also had its *aqsaqal*, or elder. The remainder of the clan consisted of “commoners”, who were also subdivided. As Akiner explains, the largest subdivision was formed was that of the *sharua*, clan-tribe members of middling standing, owning around 10 head of cattle per family. The *bai* formed the wealthier stratum, some of them owning several hundred head of cattle and having poorer families as their dependants; it was they who acted as heads of encampments. The poorest clansmen, those without animals of their own, would work as shepherds or domestic servants for others. Slaves, *telenguts*, were generally acquired as from raids on neighbouring lands, but only very few were kept.<sup>37</sup>

It is important to note that the *aul* is not composed of one lineage because of the rule of lineage exogamy.<sup>38</sup> In practice, two constraints prevented the *aul* being strictly of common descent, of men related in the male line – brothers, cousins, uncles, nephews.



First, family poverty: poor family heads would force their eldest sons to join a different encampment, take up agriculture or migrate. When a son moved off he renounced all inheritance rights. A poor family might be conquered or be forced to join a richer tribe, again of a different primogenitor. Second, the size of the *aul* was limited by the number of animals that could be pastured within range of one camp site. When the number of conjugal family units and animals became too large, one son might ask for his share of the family livestock and move off to form a new *aul*. The son automatically adopted the kinship of the *aul* that he joined or formed his own, separate kinship. Thus, the Kazakh *aul* was more frequently *not* a strictly patrilineal family, and implied looser ties than are normally associated with sedentary tribes.

However fictional the tribal genealogies were, they nonetheless provided the framework for much of Kazakh life. What mattered was that Kazakhs residing in one *aul* *believed* themselves all descended in the male line from one primogenitor. Furthermore, the genealogies themselves often recognised the engrafting of unrelated groups by attributing one subdivision to an adopted son or by the name of the subdivision, such as Zhetiru, “seven tribes.” Followers of a strong leader often took his name for their group, and this name was in time incorporated into the tribal genealogy as that of an eponymous ancestor.

Kazakh law – based not on Muslim law but on Kazakh common law, *the adat* – embodied these principles of kinship and lineage. Khan Tauke’s legal code, Zhetu Zhargy, is the only one of three to have survived to this day. Kazakh customary law had three sources: custom, practice in the courts of the *biis* or magistrates, and resolutions taken at periodical meetings of the *biis*. In different regions and clans customary laws would vary superficially, although fundamentally they remained the same everywhere.

The principles of kinship and hierarchy were expressed in nomadic law. The principles of Kazakh law corresponded most closely to Grodekov's principles of restitutive law, rather than repressive law. Most graphically, seizure of property (usually livestock) without permission was not regarded as theft among the extended family.<sup>39</sup> No provision was made for repressive punishment (by loss of life or liberty) – only restitution – penalty was payment of a *kun* (similar to the Anglo-Saxon *wergild*). The basic *kun*, mentioned above, was 200 *baital* (an abstract unit corresponding to the value of a horse in good condition, or the equivalent). Kinship always had validity – the kin of a murderer, even if the murderer was rich, would pay the *kun*. A lineage thus indemnifies another lineage for the loss of one of its members. Knowing one's lineage meant knowing one's enemies; a popular saying recounts how an encounter between two nomads on the steppe would begin with the question: "Which is your clan?"<sup>40</sup> Because the average Kazakh could not remember his genealogy for so many generations, there was an understanding that certain tribal subdivisions were too close and that others were far enough removed to allow intermarriage. The implications of such "genealogical amnesia" will be elaborated upon shortly.

The existence and maintenance of extended families depended on inheritance rules. These rules ensured that sons remained in the one encampment. The family estate, in line with the practice of nomadic society in general, was not communal family property but held in trust. Succession was unknown to the ordinary Kazakh: no Kazakh died without society making provision for the appointment of his heirs. Inheritance was based on the principle of ultimogeniture.<sup>41</sup> When an older son married, he received a yurt to be set up in his father's *aul*; he lived in close proximity and herded with his father. Together with the payment of the *kalym* on behalf of the son for the purchase of his bride, this practice of allotment to the eldest sons amounted to the total property

distribution from one generation to the next. Only the youngest son remained in the paternal yurt after marriage to care for his parents in their old age and inherit the yurt on their death. It was the youngest son who, as in both the Turkic and Mongol worlds, received the special title of “prince of the hearth”. If the family head died without direct male issue, the estate then reverted to his brothers, the closest collateral line. This occurred even if the brothers had quarrelled or were living apart.

An important exception to the pre-eminence of the patriarchal or male line existed, the contemporary significance of which becomes apparent again in Section II. This was the very close relationship existed between the maternal uncle (*nagasy*) and his nephew (*dzien*). Another close relationship existed between the husbands of sisters (who are *badza* to each other) and the sons of sisters (who are *bule* to each other). The case of the relationship between *bule* is quite clearly a systematic attack on the agnatic principle (paternal line) because in addition to the mother’s brother relationship, a man must now be aware of, and respond to the economic and legal implications of, a relationship through the mother’s sister. It is thus also non-unilineal, or cognatic. In the context of daily life this mattered: a man can call on all his cousins for help, paternal and maternal alike; he shares a common grandfather with them.

To sum up, then, the lineages operated according to the agnatic principle and were defined in terms of fixed generations counting from their founding ancestors. Lineage exercised various functions. Fortes usefully describes lineage as a type of corporation: it had a personality as a socio-legal unit. The lineage functioned as the unit of exogamy.<sup>42</sup> As a socio-legal unit, the lineage, used interchangeably with clan, addressed the issue of property. The property of an individual who died without any unilineal or collateral relatives simply passed to the clan; the corporation, to use Henry Maine’s expression, never dies. Genealogies were handed down by oral tradition. It is

thus unsurprising that two genealogies taken fifty years apart differ radically.

Ultimately, as we saw – accuracy was only of secondary importance. What mattered is how individuals conceptualised their kinship. Finally, the clan also assumed a military function, but this was usually as part of a larger unit, the tribe.

When part of a tribe, the clan took on a predominantly military role. Each tribe possessed its own *uran* (“war cry” or word shouted in the heat of battle) and *tamga* (“seal” of a given group embroidered on tents, incorporated into rugs, filigreed into jewelry, and used as a cattle brand).<sup>43</sup> The strongest clan gave its name to the tribe. Because of its size, and because it was itself divided into several clans, the tribe was relatively far less important. It was a military unit, and a tribe earned a senior status through military achievements.

In the seventeenth century, records and writings suddenly reported the appearance of three large units, the *zhuz*. Zhuz means hundred in Kazakh. Independent from each other, the zhuz were known as the Senior (*Uly*) Zhuz, Middle (*Orta*) Zhuz and Junior (*Kishi*) Zhuz. There is also a fourth, the Inner or *Bukei* Zhuz. Their labels indicate their chronology of formation, the Senior having been formed first. Nevertheless, as with Kazakh ethnogenesis, the origins of the zhuz are hazy.

The principal tribes of the Senior horde were, in roughly descending order of importance, the Zhalaïr, Oshakty, Dulat, Kangly, Shynyshkly, Alban, Suan, Shaprashty, Saryuisun, Srgeli, Ysty. In the Senior Horde, the Zhalaïr was the most important. The Argyn became legendary in the Middle Zhuz, followed in precedence by the Naiman, Kipchak, Kerei, Uak, Tarakty and Konrad.<sup>44</sup> The Junior Horde were led by the Alimuly tribe, but also included the six large clans of Shekty, Shomekei, Tortkora, Kete, Karakesek and Karasakal.<sup>45</sup> Kazakhs were familiar with the hierarchy of these tribes. But between the seventeenth and mid-nineteenth

century it appears that the zhuz was primarily a military formation, but did not perform any useful economic, social or cultural function.

The approximate boundaries of the zhuz have remained more or less unchanged. According to the first All-Russian Census in 1897, the populations of the Senior, Middle and Junior Zhuz were roughly 700,000, 1.2 million and 1.1 million people respectively.<sup>46</sup> Although numerically less, the Senior Horde covered the most extensive territory in the southeast of the country. In the Russian era, its territory spanned the Semirech'ye and Syr-Darya oblasts.<sup>47</sup> Today, the Senior Zhuz covers Taldy-Kurgan, Almaty, Jambyl and South-Kazakhstan oblasts. The Middle Zhuz, geographically closer to Russia, covers northeastern, central and a part of southeastern Kazakhstan. In the Russian colonial period, it covered the Semipalatinsk and Akmola oblasts and the Kustanai and Turgai uzeds.<sup>48</sup> The Junior Horde is situated in the west. Today, the areas coincide with Western Kazakhstan, Aktyubinsk, Atyrau, Mangistau, and part of the Kzyl-Orda oblasts.

Reasons for the emergence of the three zhuz remain shrouded in mystery. The appellation "zhuz" suggests the importance of units of one hundred in the Altaic steppe society when they related to a decimal politico-military organisation.<sup>49</sup> But that still begs the question as to why these structures loosely remained when nomads were not at war.

The most convincing explanation behind the formation of the zhuz is probably provided by the famous Kazakh historian S.D. Asfendiarov (and seconded thereafter by historians of the nomadic era Kh. A. Argyntbaev and Nurbulat Masanov).<sup>50</sup> All contended that the groupings were largely territorial, covering three geographically distinct geographic areas of the steppe: Semirech'ye, Western and Eastern Kazakhstan. Thus, even though these units arose primarily from geographic differences, the evidence provided by scholars such as Bacon and Krader suggests that the three units also differed in some aspects of political and cultural life.<sup>51</sup> Legends hold that each is associated with a different symbol: the Senior with

sheep (symbolising wealth); the Middle with a pen (signifying knowledge); and, the Junior with a weapon (symbolising a warrior culture).<sup>52</sup>

The formation of the Inner or Bukei Zhuz between the Ural and Volga rivers, was governed by altogether different forces; at the beginning of the nineteenth century a part of the Junior Zhuz flowed westward into an area vacated by the Kalmuks.

It was as military leaders that the top of the pyramid – the hereditary state or white bone – played a role.<sup>53</sup> The sultans, or *tore*, were “white bone” nobles, directly descended in the male line from Mongol princes, almost invariably of, or laying claim to be of, the house of Chingiz Khan. Periods of succession involved bitter power struggles between the khans. Crucially, they were not part of the clan-tribal system, but considered themselves a separate estate with their own Chingizid genealogy. Only they could elect the khan from among their own number, and they ruled by skill and their ability to balance conflicting tribal interests. This made their position fragile, for although they were a hereditary estate, they still had to earn their title.<sup>54</sup> They were not necessarily wealthy either, the *bii* or bai often surpassing them in wealth. *Bii* were as, if not sometimes more, influential than the khan, even conducting their own relations with rulers of contiguous peoples. The inability of the khans to command specific tribes or slaves also made them extremely weak and ineffective rulers. They often had to entertain lavishly to keep their followers who paid them no tribute. What they did enjoy were privileges in steppe etiquette. Commoners in conversation with *tore* were not allowed to call *tore* by name, and instead had to use the word “*taksyr*” (“Your Majesty”). When greeting or thanking they had to use “*Aldiyar*” “God come to help!”, while placing both hands on the chest or the right hand on the right knee.<sup>55</sup> Upon being sworn into office, the khan was lifted and spun around on a white felt; white was the sacred colour of the Mongols.

To summarise, several factors point to a situation of weak central authority. First, what might appear obvious but again is often denied in writing by both Soviet and post-Soviet historians, is the absence of a state. The official rewriting of history, as we shall see in III. 1, refers throughout to a nomadic state. None of the five attributes of a modern state as outlined by Dunleavy and O’Leary, for example, apply to the Kazakh steppe.<sup>56</sup> They can, however, be applied in varying degrees to the three khanates of their sedentary southern neighbours, the Uzbeks – Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand.

First, the khan did not rule over a clearly defined territory and could not, in Dunleavy and O’Leary’s terms, therefore claim an exclusive right to that territory. The boundaries of the Uzbek khanates may not have had internationally recognised, cartographic borders, but the Kazakh khan did not even possess a clearly defined territory to rule over. There was no “khanate” as such. The nearest equivalent unit that springs to mind is the zhuz, but, as Erofeeva points out, at no time in Kazakh steppe history did a zhuz concord with the territory over which the khan ruled.<sup>57</sup>

Rule over territory was not spatially but tribally defined: the khan ruled over tribes and the strength of his rule was as strong as those tribes. Thus, the strength and influence of khans such as Abulhair, Kaip and Argynazy was based on nomadic groupings of the Alimuly, Baraka, and Kanakoji; of Ablai over the Naiman; and, of Nuraly over the Argyn. Nomadic tribes are thus never a territorial unit. Unlike a canton or a district with historically and administratively established boundaries, ties to a nomadic territory were instead shaped by vague references of kinship and descent.

Moreover, khans such as Tauke, Kaip and Abulhair in the 1830s and 1840s resided in Turkestan in the south whilst ruling over several clans in the North and West. Issues of external sovereignty, namely the recognition in international law that a state has jurisdiction (authority) over a territory, only arose in the era of Russian

colonisation.<sup>58</sup> There is no passage in the *adat* which says that all groups “are legally subject”.<sup>59</sup> Or to follow Dahl’s definition, no institution existed on the Kazakh steppe which can be considered as the ultimate regulator of the legitimate use of force within its territory.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, the *adat* enshrines a reverse legitimacy – namely that a poor nomad is able to rob the khan of his property in times of desperation.

Finally, the state was not a “recognisably separate institution or set of institutions” – public and private spheres in nomadic societies were not clearly differentiated. There was no separate institution of bureaucracy, tax-collection or standing armies, which also eliminates the fourth point of Dunleavy and O’Leary’s definition, namely that certain personnel are primarily employed in bureaucracies. The administrative system of Bukhara – as well as that of Kokand – was to some extent a legacy of the Perso-Arab administration of Transoxania under the Abbasid caliphate and the Timurids: most of the terms relating to finance, land-tenure, justice and taxation were Arabic in origin; those relating to the army were mainly Persian. Unlike the Kazakh steppe, as many as 40,000 Uzbeks formed the ruling classes and provided the administration. After all, unlike the Kazakhs, the Uzbeks already possessed a written language. And unlike the Kazakh steppe, the Khiva khanate had a large slave element, mainly Persian, which seems to have exerted an important effect on its culture.

The nomadic relationship with territory was the single greatest obstacle to the establishment of any kind of state. The boundaries of what then effectively amounted to social units were not stable.<sup>61</sup> Even if the khan enjoyed the support of powerful tribes, nomads were at any time legally free to wander across to another zhuz – even if they were often financially and socially constrained from doing so. Nomadic respect for social authority was high (in the form of the *bii* or *aqsaqal*) but for political authority slight. Pressure from the Chinese or from local neighbours, local wars, droughts, frosts,



floods, epidemics of man and/or beasts, in any combination, could compel a pastoral group to move to a new locality. Land is not owned in a nomadic society, and, perhaps as a contemporary legacy, the government has still failed to introduce land privatisation - as we shall in III.2. The word “feudal”, another term often applied in contemporary historiography, is an utterly inappropriate description of steppe society. In the place of fiefs and vassals the stratum of ordinary free tribesmen dominated. Markov neatly summarises the difference: “History knows no rising of nomadic tribes, comparable to peasant risings.”<sup>62</sup> As shown above, grazing and production was based not on dependency but on cooperation or consent.

All things considered, khans were “chief-fainéants” :

Nowhere in the world had the heads of the nation and the aristocracy by birth so little meaning, so little real strength, as the Kirghiz [Kazakh] Khans and Sultans. If any one of them aspired to any influence, so as to be able to draw a crowd after him, he reached this not because of his “white bone,” but on account of his personal worth, and personal qualities which have gained exactly the same influence for simple Kirghiz of the “black bone.”<sup>63</sup>

The absence of real power among nomads was underscored by the much greater influence khans exercised in the southern, partially sedentary areas. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the institution of the khanate was the first to disappear under Russian rule. It also suggests a society that is far more fissured, splintered and cloven than, say, the tightly integrated society of the Uzbek khanates. It should also come as no surprise that in their work on “segmentary lineage systems” which described how descent systems behave politically, Radcliffe-Brown, Fortes, Evans-Pritchard and Goody all write that these systems usually occur in “stateless” societies.<sup>64</sup>

Khazanov's *Nomads and the Outside World* takes these eminent social anthropologists to task by arguing that it is the nomads' need to interact with and react to the outside world – either in the form of conflicts with other nomads or the sedentary world - that is the single most important influence on social and political structure. Indeed, only the geopolitics of the Kazakh steppe demanded leadership, and one could speak of unity, rule and some kind of political cohesion under the authority of khans only when the external world encroached on their territory. We turn to the period now which takes us out of this era of nomadic traditional culture: the onset of Russian colonisation.

## RUSSIAN COLONISATION

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Kazakhs were threatened by a catastrophe which had been steadily gaining momentum since the opening years of the seventeenth century. The Western Mongol tribes, the Oirots or Zhungars, squeezed out of their homelands by the eastern Mongol tribes who had reunited and grown powerful under Altan Khan (1543-83), were beginning to head westwards. Repulsed by the Manchus in the 1690s, Oirot armies raided the whole region with impunity and almost without interruption. Particularly catastrophic was the period of 1723-25, when a counter-attack, reaching southern Kazakhstan and the cities of the Syr-Darya – Tashkent, Yasi, Sairam – was beaten by the Oirot armies. At the same time the Kalmyks of the Volga began raiding into the Kazakh steppes to link up with their kinsmen from Zhungaria. This was the age of the *aqtaban shubrun dy* (the Great Disaster) which imprinted itself in an ineffaceable manner upon the epic literature of the Kazakhs.

In the face of the mortal danger which threatened them the Kazakh tribes, so long divided, resolved to unite and form a common front. In 1728, near Shymkent, a general assembly of the tribes chose the khan of the Middle Horde, Abulhair, as their supreme chieftain. In 1732 Abulhair approached St Petersburg for protection. In 1731 the Junior Zhuz, in 1740, the Middle Zhuz and in 1742 part of the Senior Zhuz had in fact accepted Russian protection – but so far as the Oirat threat was concerned this protection remained purely nominal.

The reasons for Abulhair's approach to Russia have been much debated. The Anrakai victory had by no means removed the threat of new Zhungar attacks and the grazing land question was a "matter of life and death". However, Bogder, in a lucidly argued chapter, demonstrates that dynastic struggles were the single most important reason behind Abulhair's plea to Russia to incorporate the Junior Zhuz into its Empire.<sup>65</sup> Put in the framework of this thesis, then, elite struggles within the Kazakh steppe had a decisive impact on the nature, speed and consequences of Russian colonisation (see below). Key to these dynastic struggles were competing genealogies within the Junior Horde.<sup>66</sup>

The Junior Horde was subdivided into two Chingizid lineages – Zhadig and Osek. The Jadig lineage had to date monopolised power. However, during the Zhungar invasions the Kazakh hordes were scattered and mixed, and Chingizids of the Zhadig line were criticised by various tribes for providing weak leadership. Between 1716 and 1719 sultan Abulhair of the Osek line came to increasing prominence as a commander and, in 1726, was elected khan. Bogder, emphasising that no khan had ever been elected from the Osek line, correctly affirms that Abulhair's election "constituted a kind of dynastic revolution."<sup>67</sup> And it was to defend his fragile position that Abulhair turned to Russia. There seems little doubt that the Russian government believed that this

submission of the Khan would be followed by the submission of the people. Khan Abulkhair, for his part, regarded the fort built by the Russians at the mouth of the River Or' as somewhere where he could take refuge in the event of trouble among his people, and he expected that the Russians would support him indefinitely. Eventually the Russians realised that the Khan's voluntary submission meant nothing. No security was guaranteed to the Russian caravans crossing to Turkestan and the Khan's descendants, as well as the khans of other hordes, repeatedly swore equally meaningless oaths of submission or allegiance not only to the Russians but to China and other Central Asian states.

Nevertheless, Abulkhair's approach to Russia certainly consolidated and facilitated the imperial power's southward advance into the Steppe region. The advance was further eased by the lack of Kazakh cohesion described above; the Tsarist government was not confronted by the need to compromise with nationalist movements, to grant real or synthetic self-determination to the non-Russian nationalities, or to justify the retention of imperial domination in the face of world opinion. Even in the heyday of the khanates no one thought of himself as Bukharan, Khivan or Kokandi. There were no tight-knit communities like the Sikhs and Mahrattas in India. As emphasised, the loyalty that did exist was to tribe and extended family. Nevertheless, as Bodger also pinpoints, Abulkhair did not seek the permission of a *kurultai*, a steppe council, when he approached Russia, and there is little, if any, indication that nomadic tribes desired what followed.<sup>68</sup>

The Russian advance was quite different from the raids of the Oirots. It was slow but inexorable. Two principal methods were used: the construction of military forts, and the permission, and eventual sponsorship, of Russian settlers by Tsarist Russia in the region. Peter the Great, seeking to increase commerce with the cities of

Central Asia and India, came to believe that the Kazakhs were “the key and the gate to all the Asian countries and lands”. He reached this conclusion when two Russian probes into Central Asia failed. Nevertheless, in his reign several forts were established on the Upper Irtysh river: Omsk (1716), Semipalatinsk (1718), Ust-Kamenogorsk and Pavlodar (1720). It was, however, the second prong - the movement of Russian settlers into the steppe - that exerted the most lasting effect on the nomadic way of life.

The settlement of Russian peasants in the Kazakh Steppe did not seem to have been contemplated by the Russian government before the subjugation of the Steppe had been completed. Earlier the Cossacks had been used to consolidate the territorial gains, first along the Ural River, then to the south of Orenburg and finally in Semirech’ye, and it was in this last comparatively fertile region that peasant colonisation was first started in 1868, largely on the Chinese border. The oblast of Semirech’ye consisted of what are now the Alma-Ata oblast (including the former oblast of Taldy-Kurgan, abolished in 1961) and the whole of the eastern half of present Kyrgyzstan, and it was classed as nomadic, although many of the Kyrgyz in the southern part had begun to adopt a settled existence and to take up agriculture.

George Demko has provided the most detailed study of the effects of land use and allotment in the wake of peasant settlement. The greatest single cause for complaint, and the underlying cause of the 1916 revolt, resulted from the wholesale settlement of Russians on the so-called unoccupied lands and on lands used by the nomads for grazing purposes. It is no exaggeration when Andreas Kappeler writes that the uprising in response to the call for military labour in 1916 was “part of a secular clash between expansionist agriculture and nomadic cattle-breeders.”<sup>69</sup> For the first time, land became an issue for the nomads. The Russian settlers occupied not just any land, but the best land. Many Kazakhs were reluctant to start a sedentary way of life –

even if there is some evidence that a few former nomads were willing to learn a new way of life; some had already been practising agriculture at the periphery with their sedentary neighbours, the Uzbeks and the Uighurs. But overwhelmingly there was opposition to the incursion on sacred nomadic migratory routes. And as pastureland became scarce, so too did the possibilities for nomads to express their disapproval of tribal chiefs by moving off into new pasturelands.

Land became private property: it could now be taxed. Before the Russian conquest the nomads had only paid taxes when they came under the influence of one or other of the khanates. One of the most difficult and pressing problems which confronted the Tsarist administration was the collection of revenue and its channelling into a central treasury. Pierce writes that it is “unfortunate that Soviet historical literature has not yet provided any detailed description of this land reform, one of the most progressive steps taken by the colonial regime”.<sup>70</sup> The Russians now instituted the so-called *kibitka* or tent tax, which was in reality a tax on each household irrespective of the number of residents, and exacerbated inequality amongst the nomads.

The reduction in pastureland exerted knock-on effects for income distribution and, by extension, the relative power of social groups, and the relative power of white and black bone. Kazakhs increasingly needed strong leadership to protect their ever scarcer territories; Russian administrative power soon exploited this by sponsoring richer chiefs who were more concerned with augmenting their own personal power than with preserving paternalistic practices.

The role of the *bii* was further transformed with territorial-administrative reforms, which were consolidated in earnest in 1867-8. In general, the introduction of administration, borders and bureaucracy forced nomads to reassess their relationship and attitude to territory.

Up to the 1867-8 reforms, Russian imperial policy had relied on the support of the white bone, which was in common with the general tsarist policy of coopting non-Russian elites. Russian authorities even gave some *tore*, or sultans, tax-raising powers, supplementing these with bribes and gifts. Khans were often bought at modest sums: Batyr was an enemy of Abulkhair and an enemy of Russia, yet he swore an oath of allegiance in exchange for R100 and a bolt of Damask, plus a further R50 and a bolt of Damask for his son.<sup>71</sup> Between 1820 and 1840, Russian policy became more discerning and began to reward only those sultans who had demonstrated their loyalty to the Russian interests. But eventually Russian authorities recognised that khans appointed by Russia such as Nuraly and Esim of the Junior Horde in the eighteenth century often had no real power amongst the population. On the other hand, Khan Kenesary, who was opposed to Tsarist power under Nicholas I and who was never confirmed by Tsarist authorities, managed to get himself elected as the representative of all three zhuzes. Russian abolition of the authority of the khans began with the Middle Horde whose last ruler, Shir-Ghazi, was summoned to Orenburg in 1822; in 1824 the khanate of the Junior Zhuz was suppressed, followed in turn by that of the Senior Zhuz in 1848. Its abolition spelt the end of the divide between the white and black bone, and of endogamy within the white bone.

By the time the 1867-8 reforms were introduced, Kazakh lands had ceased to be a border region and the limit of the Russian conquests had reached Tashkent, some 1,400 miles from Orenburg. Hitherto the new territories had been administered by the Governor-General of Turkestan, which included a large part of what is now southern Kazakhstan, the northern part remaining under Orenburg and Western Siberia. With the 1867-68 reforms three governor-generalships were formed: Orenburg, West Siberia and

Turkestan. These incorporated six *oblasts*: Uralsk, Turgai, Akmolinsk, Semipalatinsk, Semirech'ye, and the Syr-Darya.

The administration of the Steppe Region (and Turkestan, for that matter) was, from the beginning of the advance up to the Revolution of 1917, an essentially military one.<sup>72</sup> However, the military character of the administration was less marked in the Steppe region than in the Turkestan Governor-General. Whilst the Turkestan Governor-General was always a serving army general officer, responsible to the Ministry of War, all the so-called Steppe *oblasts*<sup>73</sup> came under the Ministry of the Interior. By 1867, there were already fourteen settlements of Cossacks which in many cases had appropriated the winter pastures of the nomads and the best lands of the settled Kazakhs and Kyrgyz.

While Tsarist authorities appointed the *oblast* and *uezd* heads, Kazakh nomads themselves were responsible for electing the *volost* head, who was usually a *bii*. Along with the abolition of the white bone as a legal category, this represented another revolution in steppe politics, one which often backfired. The election of the *bii* did not conform to the consensus of the steppe, where nomads obeyed the *bii* simply because he commanded their respect. Elections introduced open power struggles between *bii*, and upset the equilibrium. The only institution to retain its former role was that of the *aqsaqal*, recognised by the Russian authorities as a type of popular judge.

It is quite untrue, as has been stated by some Soviet historians and repeated by some Western writers, that the provincial division of the Governates-General was carried out with the express purpose of breaking down national formations since these last did not in point of fact exist. Instead, *oblast* and even *uyezd* boundaries “were to some extent contrived with the object of breaking up tribal and clan combinations, but this was not at all the same thing”.<sup>74</sup>



However, as with the *bii*, this policy also often had the reverse effect. To recall 1.2, *auls* were generally formed on the basis of lineage. Now that groups of different lineage were shifted around, the Kazakhs had to look for a different tribal identity. This was based now on the clan itself. In effect this amounted to the same thing as before – even when based on lineage, the *aul* and clan were the expression of this common descent. Now the clan, instead of the lineage, became the unit of exogamy, further strengthening intra-Kazakh cleavages. Sedentary and now administratively defined, the tribe actually strengthened. Defined by borders, identities lost some of their fluidity. These units were also often bigger and thus stronger: Russian administrative units, if concordant with clan size, stretched over a far larger surface area. In short, as lineage (vertical stratification) decreased and clan allegiance (horizontal stratification) increased, tribal formations transformed from being three-dimensional (or vertical) to flat structures.

In any case, the clan system had begun to change by the seventeenth century with the increase in wealth resulting from the conquest by the Kazakhs of some of the southern cultivated areas and the partial introduction of agriculture among them; in the Inner Horde, no *tamga* or *uran* could any longer be seen or heard. Hugh Seton-Watson writes that in the mid-nineteenth century “some of the tribal chiefs were trying to convert tribal lands into personal property and to make peasants into their tenants”.<sup>75</sup>

Krader illustrates the process of acculturation with an illuminating story. A son had two elder brothers who had been allotted their shares of the father’s estate during the lifetime of the father, while he remained by his father’s side until the death of the latter.<sup>76</sup> Through the principle of ultimogeniture, the residual property should have been transferred to the youngest son upon the father’s death, but the two older brothers threatened to take the herds away from him. The younger brother appealed to the *bii* of

his community. The older brothers argued that the Kazakh customs were no longer in force, and that Russian law required an equitable distribution of the paternal estate. The *bii* ruled that the youngest son should give up one of his winter camps. The youngest son appealed to the Russian courts, who advised all three simply to comply with the decision of the *bii*, but also to take one of the older brothers' winter camps instead. The youngest son agreed with neither suggestion. His appeal to the Russian courts was strongly resented by the community and he was threatened with arrest, whereupon he moved to a nearby town. The entire affair was placed in the hands of the local *bii*, but it was left unsettled. Finally the courts voted in favour of the youngest son after the appointment of a new Governor-General in the region. Important to note is that the appeal to the Russian courts provoked resentment amongst the local Kazakhs.

The tale highlights two final additional important aspects to Russian rule. First, even though imperial policy did not aim to Russify the steppe, acculturation had become inevitable. The oldest sons appealed to Russian practice, challenging traditional culture and the *bii* supported this challenge. As an extension of this phenomenon of acculturation, Russian rule made the conditions possible for the education of a Westernised elite. From 1789, institutions of higher education were established with the specific aim of providing a Russian education for the children of the Kazakh hereditary estate. The intention was “to facilitate the rapprochement of Asiatics to Russians to inspire in the former love and confidence towards the Russian government and to provide the region with educated personnel.”<sup>77</sup> In addition to these “advanced” establishments, which played a crucial role in the Russification of the Kazakh elite, the regional authorities were required to open mixed Russo-Kazakh primary schools in the all the district (*uezd*) centres. It was thus the children of the *tore* and *khodzha* who become the intellectual elite of tomorrow. Russian cultural influence was also seen in

the adoption by the hereditary estate of European form of dress, furniture and entertainment.

The degree of acculturation depended on the area of the Kazakh steppe. The Kazakhs of the Middle Zhuz had been longer under Russian rule than those of the Senior Zhuz, and their adoption of Russian practice was consequently greater. Writes Krader: "A Middle Horde Kazakh could adopt a "Russian" point of view and have the public opinion of his community support him in it a full generation anterior to even a remote envisagement of such a situation in the Great Horde".<sup>78</sup> The Junior and Inner Hordes, closest to European Russia and the longest of all in close contact with the Russians witnessed an even more marked degree of acculturation.

The Russian-educated Kazakh elite, numerically very small and still very shallowly grounded, had close the urban-based immigrant communities. As Akiner highlights, local newspapers began to appear in Orenburg, Omsk and Ural'sk in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Kazakh social elites used the First World War to encourage the assimilation of nationhood among other Kazakh conscripts. They now organised an *Alash Orda* provisional republican government which, after the Bolshevik revolution, did manage to unite a good proportion of the Kazakh population against this threat of Russian domination.<sup>79</sup> It was they who formed the Alash Orda government; similarities may be gleaned with the "enlightened" political elite in 1991-94 whose members also failed to implement their democratic vision of society. This cultural elite doubled as the political elite in 1917.<sup>80</sup>

The second and final point, again illustrated by the three brothers' story, is that the Russian administration ultimately opted for Kazakh and not Russian custom. Invariably anyone who applied to the *uezd* commandant or to higher Russian courts for the settlement of disputes seldom got any more satisfaction than they got in their own

courts. Although powerful examples of how Russian influence was disturbing and disrupting Kazakh rules and practices do exist, these were not all that common. In both Turkestan and the Steppe Region local government was allowed to continue on more or less traditional lines, although it was to some extent regularised by the Russians and locally elected elders were liable to summary removal by the uezd commandants. Much the same applied to the lower judicial courts.

Ultimately, the evidence on the steppe would bear out Kappeler's assertion that Russian rule was overwhelmingly indirect, governed by a policy of "pragmatic flexibility". The imperial regime was not interested in the swift assimilation of non-Russians. Indeed, the segregated Muslims were officially declared to be second-class citizens, or *inorodtsy* ("allogenuous", i.e., of a separate race),<sup>81</sup> who enjoyed a peculiar status with diminished rights, but also with privileges such as exemption from military service, as well as special rights regarding self-government and religion. Tsarist administration, itself weak, probably rightly recognised that it stood a better chance of maintaining control of the steppe region by allowing it to operate more or less as it had done previously. Nevertheless, Kappeler's statement needs to be qualified. True indirect rule leaves a native society intact and governs through its elites. In this case, colonisation by Slavs limited indirect rule to non-colonised native areas.

## SOVIET RULE<sup>82</sup>

The influx of Slavs was to continue in the Soviet period. Born in war and revolution, the Kazakhstani Soviet elite was consolidated through purges. Of course, this was a Union-wide phenomenon but the struggle between old and new elites at the birth of the Soviet era took on added significance in an area still beholden to much of its traditional way of

life. Unlike the contemporary elite who, as we shall see, grew up predominantly in an urban environment, the new Soviet bureaucrats who rose to power still had cultural links with the traditional *aul*.<sup>83</sup>

Modernisation sought to eradicate these vestiges. Two key Soviet policies need to be highlighted here: the creation of a Soviet nation; and, sedentarisation and collectivisation combined with accompanying industrialisation. All would profoundly influence the nature of the elite and of elite-society relations.

Soviet rule for the first time created a Kazakh nation-state. Marxist-Leninist theories of nationhood were partly based on common territory. This, as we have seen, the Kazakhs did not possess at the time of the 1917 revolution. Russian administrative-territorial reform, as described above, did start to transform the nomads' conceptualisation of territory, but not in any way on a nation-wide scale. To give at least a semblance of regional autonomy, Soviet republics were granted, albeit only formally, regional statehood and the right to secede. Simultaneously, Soviet powers set out to establish a trans-republican Soviet state identity. This resulted in a dual policy and dual identity – identification with the Soviet state and encouragement of a national self-definition. The Kazakhs, only recently sedentarised and still of a predominantly traditional existence, “were especially vulnerable to Soviet ethnic engineering”.<sup>84</sup> In 1924-5 the formal National Delimitation of Central Asia was accomplished, whereby the borders of the five main administrative-territorial units (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) were marked out; it is these borders, as we shall see, that have now become the international frontiers of the post-Soviet independent states of Central Asia.

As we shall see in Section III, language and culture were crucial in instilling in Kazakhs a sense of nationhood. The campaign for mass literacy and education

established a new basis on which elites and society could be linked. As long as statements were shrouded in Soviet patriotism, a tempered ideology of nationhood – that had been lacking for the Chingizids - took on a concrete shape. Cultural borders were being established, in which the negative definition of the nation was as important as its positive attributes.

Many prominent members of the Kazakh intelligentsia – the cultural elite that had in 1917 attempted to double up as the political elite - were shot in the second wave of repression in 1938.<sup>85</sup> Close on the heels of the campaign of terror came the eradication of pastoral nomadism through collectivisation and sedentarisation. This was in many respects a continuation of the process enacted under Tsarist rule, but it had now become a deliberate and central plank of regime policy. As Shirin Akiner highlights, Zhuldyz Abulkhozhin in *Traditsionnaya struktura Kazakhstana* draws on archival material and rare publications of the 1920s, was one of the first post-independence Kazakhstani writers to give a comprehensive account of the sedentarisation period.<sup>86</sup> Soviet leaders showed none of the hesitation of their Tsarist predecessors. Once they were in control, they pressed for rapid change. In 1926-7 there began an intensive programme of taking arable and meadow lands from the tribal leaders and redistributing them among poor families.<sup>87</sup> In 1928, the Soviets confiscated 145,000 animals, also for redistribution. This animal redistribution marked the beginning of a collectivisation program which was rushed through at breakneck speed, far ahead of plan and much more rapidly than in Russia itself. In the first year, 50,000 households were “settled” in collectives, and by the beginning of the Second Five-Year Plan, the settlement of the Kazakh nomads was regarded as basically complete.

Thousands of nomadic families were forced into collective encampments where their animals often starved to death for lack of adequate grazing. Many fled to the

Chinese side of the border, some sought refuge in Afghanistan. Those who could not escape often killed their animals. The collectivisation programme, which emphasized settlement of the nomads and development of agriculture, was accompanied by the impoverishment, exile, or liquidation of tribal leaders. The cost of the collectivisation campaign in terms of human and animal losses was calamitous:

out of a Kazakh population of approximately 4,120,000 in 1930, some 1,750,000 had died from starvation, epidemics and executions by 1939 – over forty percent of the entire population (this is in addition to deaths from natural causes); 200,000 fled into neighbouring countries and remained there (another 400,000 fled, but later returned), and 453,000 took refuge in neighbouring Soviet republics, also to remain there permanently.<sup>88</sup>

At the same time, mining and industry were developed in regions that had been the pasture lands or winter quarters of the nomads. Before and during World War II, many thousands of Koreans, Ukrainians, Volga Germans, Crimean Tatars, and other nationality groups were transplanted to Kazakhstan, and throughout the Soviet period there was an influx of Slavs in the guise of administrators, agitators, technicians, and “fraternal helpers”. By 1939 Kazakhs had become a minority in name only: whilst in 1926 they had comprised 58.2 percent of the population, by 1939 that percentage had fallen to 36.4 percent.<sup>89</sup> Only in 1989 did the Kazakhs become a plurality again in the Republic (39.7 percent as opposed to 37.8 percent Russian), but even then actual majority remained elusive. Finally came the “Virgin Lands” program, inaugurated in 1953 to convert the remaining grasslands of northern Kazakhstan into a Russian breadbasket. Even in 1959, the Kazakh population in the KASSR still numbered some one million less than it had in 1926 (2.8 million and 3.7 million respectively).

This is the first era, then, in which we can speak of a *national* elite, albeit a Soviet republican national elite. Soviet recruitment practice is analysed to some extent in Section II, including the analysis of the ethnicity of those who

held the commanding heights of the polity and economy, and the constellation of power networks of the ruling elite. To continue instead our analysis of the effects on traditional structures, it is important to understand at this stage that the Kazakh First Party Secretary in the Brezhnev era enjoyed a fair degree of autonomy in the appointment of his bureaucrats. The promotion and formation of an ethnic Kazakh elite can be largely attributed to Dinmukhamed Kunaev (1912-1993), who became Kazakh First Party Secretary in 1960. A protégé and close personal associate of Leonid Brezhnev, he became a candidate member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1966, and a full member in 1971, an achievement unique amongst Central Asian Party leaders, which gave him considerable power and influence. This, as we shall see in Sections II and III, benefited Kazakhstan, since he was able to promote both the Kazakhstani state and Kazakh nationhood.

Freed of the threat of repression, the *nomenklatura* began to develop on the lines of a ruling class not dissimilar to the white bone estate described by Khazanov in his differentiated segmentary society. But this time an elite post meant entitlement to real material gains, high consumer goods standards and an elitist standard of life, prestigious education, and undeclared income. Elite building for the first time was given its own institutional network. This, of course, was a Union-wide exercise. As in other fields, the dual-level hierarchy of Soviet and national identity was carefully articulated.<sup>90</sup> Thus, for example, the Communist Party of Kazakhstan (founded in 1937, on the basis of earlier, regional organisations) was part of and subordinated to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Similarly, as in other republics, the Kazakh national flag was a variant on the Soviet flag.



What had happened to the *aul*, *tribe* and *zhuz*, already under assault in the Russian era? We note an interesting, although not altogether surprising, development. In terms of recruitment and self-identification, the elite's zhuz membership was the decisive factor. Zhuz affiliation counted more for recruitment than that of the *aul* or the tribe. It is possible that the zhuz assumed this importance because the zhuz is the only unit which, as we saw, has readily available symbols and myths associated with the professions to be practised by members of a zhuz; to recall, a chief in the Senior Zhuz, a writer in the Middle Zhuz and a warrior in the Junior Zhuz. As we shall in Section II, after the dismissal of Janin Shayakhmetov from the post of First Secretary, power began increasingly to be concentrated in the hands of the Senior Zhuz, to which Kunaev belonged. The Senior Zhuz suffered the least from the sedentarisation campaign (having traditionally been part-agriculturalists), and was thereby in a better position to preserve its traditional social relations. This also brought prestige to the Senior Zhuz.<sup>91</sup>

At the societal level, even the Soviet era seemed unable to encroach into the established tribal affiliation. Tribal identities existed alongside the new nation-building project. The reasons are convincing in their simplicity. As Bacon notes, “kolkhoz exogamy has replaced genealogical exogamy”.<sup>92</sup> *Kolkhoz* nomad brigades regularly consisted of a close family unit. A brigade either tended a flock of sheep or a herd of horses, of camels, or of cattle, or cared for cultivated fields or cut hay from the meadows. Even if traditional auls always herded different types of animals separately, there was always close cooperation between different breeders, such as when horses were sent “to teben” for sheep, and this practise continued between *kolkhozy*.

The *kolkhoz* itself was made up of closely related families of a tribal kin segment. When these early *kolkhozy* were consolidated to form larger *kolkhozy*, such a consolidation usually brought together related kin groups by virtue of their traditional sharing of a common territory. In some cases, where one small *kolkhoz* kin group happened to be farther afield, it was nevertheless included in the *kolkhoz* of its closest tribal kin segments rather than in that nearest to it geographically. Thus, the old tribal kin structure had not been destroyed. As Bacon writes: “Indeed, the formation of kolkhozes within the traditional territory has perhaps strengthened kinship ties.”<sup>93</sup> This reinforcement of territorial boundaries and its effective strengthening of tribal identity mirrors our findings in the Russian era. And the *bii*, chief of the tribal kin groups, often reappeared as a district administrator. There were frequent newspaper complaints that administrators gave preference to members of their own tribal kin segment in making appointments and decisions. And the *aqsaqal* remained a person of importance – children within the extended family unit continued to be trained from earliest childhood to respect their elders.

## CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, except during periods of domination by a single great centre, such as Chingiz Khan’s Mongolia or Imperial and Soviet Russia, the peoples of the steppe were constantly in flux. Horde, clan, and tribal boundaries changed; intermarriage between Kazakhs and non-Kazakhs increased considerably. Genealogy, kinship and descent represented the one means for Kazakhs to maintain some semblance of continuity- by preserving the same clan names. Genealogies were the shell of the nomad: as successive powers encroached on their territory, groups of nomads were able smoothly to

incorporate and adopt outside groups into their own ranks, without making any essential structural changes. “Genealogical amnesia” was not uncommon: “The lineage was, moreover, a more fluid entity than the family, which also had a biological as well as a moral basis for stability.”<sup>94</sup>

The relationship established by a common ancestor, or of a previous group of common descent, was a weak one, but was related to certain rights of admission or combination with the distant kinsman. For example, the Kereit of the Senior Zhuz could join an Uzbek group also bearing the name Kereit. A small portion later returned to the Kazakhs, but this time established itself in the Junior Zhuz. Those who made the move to join the Junior Zhuz were thereupon given a fictive genealogy tracing descent from the eponymous founder of the Karakat clan in the Junior Zhuz. Noteworthy is the assertion of the right to clan membership by genealogical reckoning, real or fictive.

Ultimately, kinship served different functions for the white and black bone. At the lower level, kinship determined and organised questions of property, inheritance, guardianship of young children, the levirate, and material help on birth, weddings and funerals. For the white bone, genealogical links were very important in power relations, ideology and politics, and in the maintenance of their rule. Chiefs who could afford a Tatar secretary kept written genealogies.

Finally, what have the periods of Kazakh traditional nomadic culture and subsequent Russian and Soviet rule demonstrated individually?

Despite their dislike of excessive authority, the nomads did not live in a state of anarchy. They required leaders to settle disputes among themselves and to represent them in relations with the outside world. Part of the overall stability stemmed arguably from a complete separation of the elite and society – each operated according to its own rules. Ultimately, Kazakhs failed (or did not try) to reconcile the two apparently

contradictory principles of social structure: the common line of descent of all Kazakhs from one ancestor, and the division into estates.

Part of the stability stemmed from an innate systemic equilibrium. Where inequality was too pronounced, the system of cooperation and mutual aid which existed in the community was put in jeopardy; in such cases impoverished households fell away from the community and became dependent on new households. Two main mechanisms prevented inequality: reciprocity and redistribution. Kazakh nomadic society offered a prime example of reciprocity: *saun*. *Saun* in Soviet anthropology designated the various forms and terms by which rich stock-owners entrusted the pasturing of their animals to the poorer members of their society.<sup>95</sup> *Saun* discouraged poor households from falling away from nomadic societies, thus helping to prevent the disintegration of societies in question. Inequalities were nevertheless perpetuated: the rich tended to marry the rich, and the poor married the poor, for the bride-wealth (*kalym*) necessary for a rich wife was beyond the means of a poor Kazakh.

Property redistribution was equally common. *Bais*, *biis* and *sultans* (i.e., members of the ruling and well-to-do strata) often organised lavish feasts, following the saying: "The dog that is hit with a fatty bone never whines".<sup>96</sup> Livestock raids were an institutionalised form of property redistribution. It is curious that amongst the Kazakhs in the nineteenth century livestock redistribution, or *barymta*, was sometimes used by poor nomads as a way of seizing stock from the Kazakh nobility. Ultimately, poor nomads could not remain poor for long - either they entered the service of rich stockowners or they supplemented nomadism by partial sedentarisation. Property differences were only ever temporary, and rarely tended to turn into stable and hereditary social stratification.

Imperial policy introduced to the steppe a fundamentally different conceptualisation of power, one defined by territory, regulated by elections and

supported by a bureaucracy. Key to Tsarist rule was the seizure of Kazakh land. The policy in the Kazakh steppe was sometimes dominated by the colonialist feeling of superiority, industrialisation, imperialism, and nationalism. But overwhelmingly, colonial rule was not ideological but pragmatic, upholding the arrangements in prevailing in local administration, this option being the best means toward maintaining Russian rule.

Sovietisation brought the following peculiarities of elites and society to Kazakhstan: a Europeanisation of the population and accompanying acculturation; the loss of majority status by ethnic Kazakhs in the original KSSR; a wholehearted transformation in the production basis of their society; a clear divide between urbanised, industry-employed Russians and rural Kazakhs; the onslaught of literacy; a change in the character but an overall strengthening of kinship at the lower levels of society; and, the elevation of the *zhuz* to a primary unit of allegiance. The tragedies of the Soviet era were to spark a period of collective amnesia, of which our next subject, the Alma-Ata events of 1986, are just one example. The analysis of 1986 is the indispensable background to what is the essence of Chapter Two: the institutional architecture behind contemporary elite formation and competition.

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### **Endnotes to chapter I.1**

<sup>1</sup> Many controversies, myths, and legends surround Kazakh history. The etymology of the word “kazak” itself is not clear; the folk derivation *kaz* (goose), *ak* (white), links it to the legend of a white goose, which was an ancient totemic symbol. The term “kazak” was apparently used in the thirteenth century by the Chinese, and peoples of the Caucasus and Volga-Don region. Etymological connections with the Cossacks are firmly rejected. On the origins of the Kazakhs, see, for example, Zeki Velidi Togan,

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“The Origins of the Kazaks and the Oezbeks” in H.B. Paksoy (ed.), *Central Asian Reader* (New York, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> This chapter draws heavily on the excellent account of the traditional socio-cultural and economic structure of the steppe Kazakh nomads in Shirin Akiner, *The Formation of Kazakh Identity: From Tribe to Nation-State* (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995). Additional principal sources include: Martha Brill Olcott, *The Kazakhs. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1995); Thomas G. Winner, *The Oral Art and Literature of the Kazakhs of Russian Central Asia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1958); Alfred E. Hudson, *Kazakh Social Structure* (New Haven: Yale University Publications in Anthropology, Number 20, Yale University Press, 1938); Lawrence Krader, *Social Organization of The Mongol-Turkic Pastoral Nomads*, Indiana University Publications, Uralic and Altaic series, Vol. 20 (The Hague: Mouton & Co, 1963) ; Elizabeth E. Bacon, *Obok: A Study of Social Structure in Eurasia* (New York: Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Inc, 1958). For an introduction to trends across eras see Shirin Akiner (ed.), *Cultural Change and Continuity in Central Asia* (London, and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1991).

<sup>3</sup> Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora”, in J. Rutherford (ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture and Difference* (London: Lawrence and Wishart 1990), p. 222.

<sup>4</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> David McCrone, *The Sociology of Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 44.

<sup>6</sup> Sir Olaf Caroe is referring to early Turkish and Mongol history as cited by Geoffrey Wheeler, *The Modern History of Soviet Central Asia* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964), p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> For a classic early account of the history of Central Asia, see V. V. Barthold, *A Short History of Turkestan (Four Studies on the history of Central Asia)*, translated from the Russian by V. and T. Minorsky, Vol I (Leiden: E.J. Brill: 1956) See also Denis Sinor (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); and A.A.M. Adshead, *Central Asia in World History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> Akiner, *The Formation*, Chapter 1.

<sup>9</sup> Personal communication with Peter B. Golden, August 1995.

<sup>10</sup> Chokan Valikhanov, *Sobranie sochinenii* (Alma-Ata, 1961). See also his *Izbrannyye Proizvedeniya* (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1986).

<sup>11</sup> Joechi, the eldest, predeceased his father. The other three sons were Batu, Chaghatai and Tolui. For a full account see, Gavin Hambly *et al.*, *Central Asia* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), especially chapter 7.

<sup>12</sup> See Bakhytnur Otarbaeva, “A Brief History of the Kazak People” *Nationalities Papers* (Vol. 26, No. 3, September 1998), pp. 421-32. See in the same special issue Agyn Khairulloevich Kazymzhanov and Keith Owen Tribble, “The Political Tradition of the Steppe”, pp. 453-72.

<sup>13</sup> As Akiner highlights, the terminologies of Uzbek-Kazakhs overlap. See Akiner, *The Formation*, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> Mukhtar Auezov, *Abai*, 2 Vols (Alma-Ata, 1980) has attributed the formation of the Kazakh nation to the fifteenth century.

<sup>15</sup> See Alexis Levshin, *Description des hordes et des steppes des Kirghiz-Kazaks ou Kirghiz-Kaisaks*, trans. Ferry de Pigny (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1840) and S.S.

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Krivtsov (ed.), *Kazakhstan i Kirgiziia* (Moscow: Moskovskoi Oblastnoe Otdelenie Gosizdat RSFSR, 1930).

<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth E. Bacon, *Central Asians Under Russian Rule: A Study of Culture Change* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 36.

<sup>17</sup> There have been several full-scale anthropological studies of Central Asian ethnic groups conducted not in Soviet Central Asia but across the border in Iran and Afghanistan. M. Nazif Mohib Shahrani, *The Kirghiz and Wakhi of Afghanistan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980); Thomas J. Barfield, *The Central Asian Arabs: Pastoral Nomadism in Transition* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980); Audrey Shalinsky, "Central Asian Emigres in Afghanistan: Social Dynamics of Identity Creation" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1979); William Irons, "The Yomut Turkmen: A Study of Social Organization among a Central Asian Turkic Speaking Population", *University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology Papers*, no. 58 (Ann Arbor, 1975) Mark Slobin, *Music in the Culture of Northern Afghanistan* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1976).

<sup>18</sup> Meyer Fortes, "The Structure of Unilineal Descent Groups", *American Anthropologist* (No. 55, 1953), p. 25.

<sup>19</sup> Several hypotheses have been put forward to explain this. See, for example, Bacon, *Obok*, 1958, p. and Emmanuell Marx, "The Tribe as a Unit of Subsistence: Nomadic Pastoralism in the Near East", *American Anthropology* (Vol. 79, No. 2, 1977), pp. 343-63.

<sup>20</sup> In late 1995, not long before his sudden death, Ernest Gellner met with Anthony Smith at Warwick University to debate the modernist and ethnicist positions. The debate is reprinted in *Nations and Nationalism* 2(3), 1996.

<sup>21</sup> Bacon, *Central Asians*, p.30.

<sup>22</sup> Bacon says that most families had fifteen to thirty mares to produce *kumiss* (fermented milk), but the rich might have up to three thousand horses.

<sup>23</sup> Alexis Levshin, *Description des hordes*, pp. 341-42, 348-49, 408-09; S.S. Krivtsov (ed.), *Kazakhstan*, p.66; and Wilhelm Radloff, "Die Haustiere der Kirgisen," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* (III, 1871).

<sup>24</sup> See Anatoly M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), p. 16.

<sup>25</sup> Khazanov, *Nomads*, p. 18.

<sup>26</sup> However, according to S.E. Tolybekov, *Obshchestvenno-ekonomicheskii stroi Kazakhov v XVII-XIX vv* (Alma-Ata: AN Kaz SSR, 1959), p. 131, a Kazakh family of four to six people needed 15 to 20 camels with their young, 4-5 horses and 100-150 sheep and goats.

<sup>27</sup> Bacon, *Central Asians*, p. 31.

<sup>28</sup> Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1940), p. 522.

<sup>29</sup> G.E. Markov, *Kochevnichestvo: Istoricheskaya Entsiklopediya* (Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, 1965) and Nurbulat Masanov, *Kochevaya Tsvilizatsiya Kazakhov* (Moscow: Gorizont, 1995).

<sup>30</sup> Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

<sup>31</sup> Akiner, *The Formation*, p. 14

<sup>32</sup> Fortes, "The Structure", pp. 17-41; and Sir Edward Evans-Prichard, *The Comparative Method in Social Anthropology*, (London: Athlone Press, 1963).

<sup>33</sup> Khazanov, *Nomads*, p.146.

<sup>34</sup> Akiner, *The Formation*, p. 15.

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<sup>35</sup> As Grodekov maintains, in Kazakh tradition marriage was forbidden between patrilineally related kinsmen up to the seventh generation. See N.I. Grodekov, *Kirgizy i Karakirgiz Syr-Dar'inskoi oblasti* (Tashkent, 1889)

<sup>36</sup> For colourful illustrations of Kazakhs' eating, clothing and sleeping patterns see Bacon, *Central Asians*, 31-35.

<sup>37</sup> Skinner, *The Formation*, p. 16.

<sup>38</sup> See *Rodoslovnye Tablitsy k geneologii kirgiz-kazakskikh rodov* (Almaty: Gylym, 1993); shezhir, edebiet marlumattary, anyzdar men ertegiler, boljamdar boiynsha kyrastyraylgan kazaqtyn ru-maipalyk kurylysy; and, *Xanqar Kestesi* (Almaty: Jalyn, 1992) for a detailed tabular explanation of genealogies. I.E. Ergaliev and G. Telibaev, "Kazak dunietyanymynyn negizgi Uigymdary", *Xabarlary*, No. 3, 1993, pp. 32-38 provide interesting perspectives on the concept of genealogy. See also V.V. Vostrov and M.S. Mukanov, *Rodoplemennoi Sostav i Rasselenie Kazakhov* (konets XIX – nachalo XX v.) (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1968); M.S. Mukanov, *Etnicheskii Sostav i Rasselenie Kazakhov Srednego Juza* (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1974); M.S. Mukanov, *Etnicheskaya Territoriya Kazakhov v XVIII Nachale XX Vekov* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhstan, 1991); M. Tynyshpaev, *Materialy k Istorii Kirgiz-Kazakhskogo Naroda* (Tashkent, 1925). Vostrov and Mukanov, in particular, publish the findings of the ethnographic expedition of 1956 to 1973.

<sup>39</sup> The taking of livestock without permission (*baranta/barymta*) was permitted in the following circumstances: 1) Son/ Son's son cattle rustling of father could not be officially punished, but the father had the right of seizure of the entire property of the son; 2) Stealing between sons of brothers could not be punished outside the family; 3) Sister's son (*dzien*) up to three seizures on maternal uncles' property; and, 4) Among kin related beyond the third generation. See N.I. Grodekov, *Kirgizy*, 1889.

<sup>40</sup> Krader, *Social Organization*, 1963.

<sup>41</sup> A principle of inheritance whereby the youngest son succeeds to the estate of his ancestor.

<sup>42</sup> According to some sources, marriage in the Junior Zhuz was permitted only in the eighth ascending generation, compared to the seventh in the Senior. The Kazakhs on the Mangyshlak peninsula, on the eastern shore of the Caspian, differed again: they were subject to the most extreme rule of exogamy at the turn of the century, as they were forbidden to marry up to the tenth generation.

<sup>43</sup> See H.B. Paksoy, *Central Asia*, p. 39.

<sup>44</sup> Four of these names occur both in ancient Turkic records and in the Secret History of the Mongols: Kipchak, Kongrad, Naiman, and Kirei or Kereit. Another link may be found in the Argyn – there is an Argun river in northwestern Manchuria – Turks occupied parts of Outer Mongolia during the sixth to eighth centuries.

<sup>45</sup> For an excellent account of the Inner Horde at the end of the last century, see A.N. Kharuzin, *Kirgizy Bukeevskoi Ordyy: Antropologo-etnologicheskii Ocherk*. ("Izvestiia Obshchestva Liubitelei Estestvosnaniia, Antropologii i Etnografii pri Moskovskoe Universitets", Vol. LXIII., Moscow, 1989). The clan was divided into lineages called *taifa* (of Arabic origin), and the lineage in turn was divided into sublineages called *ata-bala*. *Ata-bala* means father and child in Kazakh.

<sup>46</sup> See M.K. Kozybaev, Kh.A. Argynbaev and M. S. Mukanov, *Kazakhi: Istoriko-Etnograficheskoe Issledovanie* (Almaty: Kazakhstan, 1995), especially Chapter One.

<sup>47</sup> This does not include the Amu-Darya section, part of the Tashkent uyezd, and the Khodjuentskovo and Djizaksovo uyezds.



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<sup>48</sup> As well as the Turgai regions, some of the Semirech'ye and Syr-Darya oblasts were included.

<sup>49</sup> This meant the armies' subdivisions increased by ten. Note also that the Kalmuks throughout the nineteenth century had a series of subdivisions imposed by the central khanate. These were divided into 10s, 40s and 100s.

<sup>50</sup> S.D. Asfendiarov, *Istoriya Kazakhstana (s drevneishikh vremen)* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhstanskoe Kraevoe Izd-vo, 1935); Kh. A. Argyntbaev, *Etnograficheskie Ocherki po Skotovodstvu Kazakhov* (Alma-Ata, Nauka, 1973); and, Nurbulat Masanov, *Kochevaya*, 1995.

<sup>51</sup> Bacon, *Central Asians*, 1980 and Krader, *Social Organization*, 1963.

<sup>52</sup> According to an ancient Kazakh proverb: 'Please give whips to the hands of the Great Horde so that they can herd our sheep, lances to the Junior Horde so they can defend us from our enemies, but let the Middle Horde carry pens so they can act as judges for our affairs'.

<sup>53</sup> See Irina Erofeeva, "Titul i Vlast: K Probleme Tipologii Instituta Khanskoi Vlasti V Kazakhstane V XVII-Nachale XIX VV", *Sayasat* (Alamty, 1997), pp. 37-46. See also her "Kharakter, Sostav i Struktura Pravyashchei Elity Kochevogo Kazakhskogo Obshchestva" (forthcoming 1999) for one of the first detailed analyses of the political and cultural structure of Kazakh khans.

<sup>54</sup> See Irina V. Erofeeva, "Kazakhskie Khany XVIII – Serediny XIXv", *Vostok* (No.3, 1997), pp. 5-32, for an excellent analysis of khans, according to their origins, dates of rule, territorial responsibility and political biographies.

<sup>55</sup> See Erofeeva, "Titul", 1997, p. 38.

<sup>56</sup> Patrick Dunleavy and Brendan O'Leary, *Theories of the State: the Politics of Liberal Democracy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987), p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> Irina Erofeeva, "Titul", p. 44.

<sup>58</sup> R. Scruton, *A Dictionary of Political Thought* (London: Pan, 1983).

<sup>59</sup> Rod Hague, Martin Harrop and Shaun Breslin, *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p.6.

<sup>60</sup> Robert Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1984).

<sup>61</sup> Marx has also, incidentally, written about this - 1978: 49-50) (Khazanov, 150)

<sup>62</sup> Foreword by Ernest Gellner in Khazanov, *Nomads*, p. xx.

<sup>63</sup> See Bacon, *Central Asians*, p.224.

<sup>64</sup> The distinction between state and stateless societies goes back to H.J. Maine, *Village communities in the East and West* (London: Murray, 1871) and L. H. Morgan, *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1870). There were traditional, pre-colonial states in Africa, which were seen as having administrative bodies that were not based on descent. In stateless societies in Africa on the other hand, politics was often a matter of the interrelationship of the segments of a descent system. The classic example was Evans-Pritchards' work among the Nuer of the Sudan (1940) where, although the segments of each descent group were potentially hostile to another, order is nonetheless maintained.

<sup>65</sup> Alan Bodger, "Change and Tradition in Eighteenth-century Kazakhstan: The Dynastic Factor" in Shirin Akiner (ed.), *Cultural Change and Continuity in Central Asia*, pp. 344-360. For further insight to this "dynastic revolution", see N.G. Apollonova, *Prisoedinenie Kazakhstana k Rossii v 30kh XVIII veka* (Alma-Ata, 1948); *Kazakhskogo-russkie otnosheniya v XV-XVIII vekakh*, Alma-Ata, 1961; and, M.P. Vyatkin,

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“Politicheskii krizis i khozyaistvennyi upadok v Maloi Orde v kontse XVIII – nachale XIX vv”, *Materialy po istorii Kaz. SSR*, vol. IV, Leningrad, pp. 3-39.

<sup>66</sup> See S. Z. Zimanov, *Politicheskii stroi Kazakhstana kontsa XVIII I pervoi poloviny XIX vekov* (Alma-Ata, 1960).

<sup>67</sup> Bogder in Akiner, *Cultural Change*, 1991, p. 347.

<sup>68</sup> Bogder in Akiner, *Cultural Change*, 1991, *passim*. Wheeler elaborates on the discrepancies in the treatment accorded by the official 1943 and 1957 histories of the Kazakh SSR to the development of Russian expansion in the Steppe Region during the eighteenth century. Eventually no mention was made of resistance to incorporation with Russia, elaborated greatly in the 1943 version. Tolybekov in the 1957 history argues that “in the first place, the Kazakh Steppes were not conquered by the Russian state, since the incorporation of the Lesser and later of the Middle and Greater Kazakh hordes was carried out of their own free will. In the second place, the union of the Lesser Horde with the Russian empire did not involve the restriction of its territory or of its nomadic practices. The isolated punitive expeditions carried out by Russian frontier troops in reply to the marauding expeditions of the Kazakh baturs in the course of which many innocent Kazakhs villages also suffered, cannot be regarded as a general campaign of conquest against the Kazakhs carried out by the Russian state.

<sup>69</sup> George J. Demko, *The Russian Colonization of Kazakhstan: 1896-1916*

(Bloomington/The Hague, 1969). Cf Andreas Kappeler in Andreas Kappeler, Gerhard Simon, Georg Brunner (eds), *Muslim Communities Reemerge: Historical Perspectives in Nationality, Politics, and Opposition in the Former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), p. 149.; Martha Brill Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, pp. 57-126.

<sup>70</sup> Richard Pierce, *Russian Central Asia, 1867-1917*, p. 148.

<sup>71</sup> *Kazakhskogo-russkie otnosheniya v XV-XVIII vekakh* (Alma-Ata, 1961), p. 61.

<sup>72</sup> Writing as late as 1912, A. Krivosheyn, head of the Agricultural Administration, felt that Turkestan was “still a Russian military camp, a temporary halting place during the victorious march of Russia into Central Asia. The Russian military might speaks to the subject mass of the natives a more comprehensible and impressive language than the civil administration.” See Wheeler, *The Modern History*, p. 67.

<sup>73</sup> All of them except Semirech’ye, which was called a Steppe *oblast* although it was included in the Turkestan Governorate-General.

<sup>74</sup> Wheeler, *The Modern History*, p. 67.

<sup>75</sup> Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Russian Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 294.

<sup>76</sup> Krader, *Social Organization*, pp. 235-7.

<sup>77</sup> *Istoriya Kazakhskoy SSR (Qazaq SSR Tarikhy)*, I (Alma-Ata, AN KazSSR, 1957), p. 306, cited by Akiner, *The Formation*, p. 26.

<sup>78</sup> Krader, *Social Organization*, p. 237.

<sup>79</sup> Akiner, *The Formation*, p. 27.

<sup>80</sup> From around mid-1850s, the higher and middle echelons – i.e., general-governors, *uyezd* and *volost* heads – began to bring in the modernisers of the sultan estate –, that is, the sons and grandsons of the former senior sultans, and also from various strata of the Kazakh black bone who had received higher education in many top-class Russian institutes. Here Chokhan Ch. Valikhanov and his male and female relatives come to mind; also several of Abulkhair’s grandchildren: sultans Nurlanikhanovy, Zhangirovy, Shigaevy, Seidaliny, as well as Abai Kunanbaev, Shakarim Kudaiberdiev, Ibrai Altynsarin, Zhakyp

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Akpaev, Ishmukhamed Bukin, Akhmed Beremjanov, and Mukhamedjan Tynyshpaev.

<sup>81</sup> The appellation, created for the peoples of Siberia, was applied to the Muslims of Kazakhstan and Central Asia but not, however, to the Muslims of Transcaucasia, the Volga-Ural region and the Crimea.

<sup>82</sup> For general introductions on Central Asia in the Soviet period, see: "Soviet Regime and Native Culture in Central Asia and Kazakhstan", *Current Anthropology* (Vol. VIII, No. 3, June 1967), pp. 147–208; Geoffrey Wheeler, *The Modern History of Soviet Central Asia* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964). Beatrice Manz, *Central Asia in Historical Perspective* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1994) W.P. and Zelda K. Coates, *Soviets in Central Asia*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1951), Yaacov Ro'i, *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies* (London: Frank Cass, 1995); Edward Allworth (ed.), *Soviet Nationality Problems* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971); and William Fierman, *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991).

<sup>83</sup> For an excellent study of the Kazakh elite at the close of Russian and during Soviet rule, see Talgat Ismagambetov, "Razvitie Kazakhskogo Isteblishmenta V Kontse XIX – Seredine XX Vekov", *Tsentrāl'naya Aziya*, (No. 5 (11), 1997), pp. 7–22.

<sup>84</sup> Akiner, *The Formation*, p. 34.

<sup>85</sup> L.D. Kuderina, *Genotsid v Kazakhstane* (Moscow, Scorpion, 1994)

<sup>86</sup> Zh. B. Abulkhozhin, *Traditsionnaya struktura Kazakhstana* (Alma-Ata, Gylm, 1991). For a comparison with an account written in the Soviet period, see A. P. Kuchkin, *Sovetizatsiya Kazakhskogo Aula, 1926-1929*, Akademiya Nauk SSSR, Moscow, 1962. For eye-witness accounts, see for example, Valerii Mikhailov, *Khronika Velikogo Dzhuta* (Almaty: Interbuk, 1990) or T.G. Kuderina-Nasonova and L.D. Kuderina, *Nedalyokoe Proshloe* (Moscow, 1994). For Western accounts of the sedentarisation period, see in particular Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), esp. pp. 189-199.

<sup>87</sup> Altogether, 1,360,000 ha of meadow and 1,250,000 ha of arable land were redistributed between 1927 and 28. See Bacon, *op.cit.*, p.118.

<sup>88</sup> Akiner, *The Formation*, p. 45. She cites M.B. Tatimov, *Sotsial'naya obuslovlennost' demograficheskikh protessov* (Alma-Ata, Nauka, 1989), pp. 120-6.

<sup>89</sup> The subsequent All-Union censuses of 1959, 1970, 1979 and 1989 reveal percentages of 30.0, 32.5, 36.0, and 39.7 respectively.

<sup>90</sup> For an introductory overview of Soviet institutions and politics, see, for example, Ronald J. Hill, *The Soviet Union: Politics, Economics and Society. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn* (London: Pinter, 1989); and Richard Sakwa, *Soviet Politics: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), chapters 6–9.

<sup>91</sup> See Talgat Ismagambetov, "Razvitie Kazakhskogo Isteblishmenta", pp. 7–22.

<sup>92</sup> Bacon, *Central Asians*, p. 136.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* 234.

<sup>94</sup> Krader, *Social Organization*, p. 207.

<sup>95</sup> For a description of those amongst the Kazakhs see Iohann Gotlib Georgi, *Opisanie vsekh v Rossiiskom gosudarsve obitaiushchikh narodov* (St Petersburg: Shnor, 1776), Vol. I, p. 131.

<sup>96</sup> S.E. Tolybekov, *Obshchestvenno-ekonomicheskii stroi kazakhov v XVII-XIX vekakh* (Alma-Ata, Kazakhkoe gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo, 1959), p. 95.

## CHAPTER I.2

### THE STRUCTURE OF POWER: ELITES, INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIETY

This chapter analyses how President Nursultan Nazarbaev has employed elites and institutions to consolidate his power. The empirical evidence on institution-building will enable us to draw some conclusions on:

- (1) the institutional architecture of the Nazarbaev regime; this will enable us to make some preliminary conclusions on whether, institutionally, this is a pluralist or power elite;
- (2) the relationship between national and regional power centres;
- (3) the interaction of elites and institutions; and,
- (4) the nature of power and the state in post-independent Kazakhstan.

The analysis begins with a chronological account of how the new constitutions and institutions in Kazakhstan were devised. Chronology is important: timing and interaction of institutions are crucial to an understanding of how the President had by 1998 managed to amass exclusive institutional control of his administration. The account will also introduce some of the major actors who have been shaping Kazakhstan's politics. These individuals cannot be ignored. Individuals continue to shape institutions, rather than *vice versa*, and informal networks, not formal structures, dominate Kazakhstani politics. By identifying the political elite and networks, we are also better placed to analyse the individuals who appear in Section II.

A word of caution, however: the principle aim of this chapter is not to consider democratisation in Kazakhstan, and therefore does *not* draw greatly on the growing democratisation literature. Post-independent Kazakhstan has displayed few signs of democratisation and President Nazarbaev has explicitly denied that democracy represents Kazakhstan's goal – even if the President has often used the term in deference to the international community and the nascent opposition.<sup>1</sup>

Stability has been the watchword of the regime, and the ruling elite has viewed democracy as anathema to stability. This is because the elite has considered democracy as conducive to the emergence of parties and movements along ethnic lines and thus the likelihood of interethnic conflict. Privately, of course, democracy has been feared for leading to the development of a counter-elite. More helpful comparisons can perhaps instead be drawn with patrimonialism in pre-modern, pre-capitalist Russia. Donald N. Jensen has argued that the current Russian political system is best understood as latter-day patrimonialism,<sup>2</sup> and the same observation could be made of Kazakhstan. Although his analysis is rather oversimplified, he compares how under the Russian autocracy, the Tsar was both ruler of the country and its proprietor; political authority was an extension of the rights of property ownership. The Tsar “owned” the country, its resources, and the citizens. Accordingly, the land and its people were at the sovereign's disposal. Citizens were assigned duties but had no rights. Favoured parts of the nobility received economic privileges in exchange for political support. The civil service kept a portion of the revenue they collected, which fostered corruption of government agencies. According to this argument, the patrimonial state impeded development of a bourgeoisie and, with it, democracy.

According to Jensen, patrimonialism did not die with the autocracy. The Soviet state was an “especially virulent” patrimonialism. The party-state owned “everything”,

controlled state revenues and citizens' rights were "for the state to give or to take away". Nor did it die with the Soviet Union. Under post-communist Russia, there are no distinct boundaries between the private and public domains. As we examine Kazakhstan, similar conclusions will be drawn but important differences will also be highlighted. In the words of the prominent human rights activist whom we shall meet in Section II, Evgenii Zhovtis: "When the mother is a market economy and the father communist authoritarianism, the result is a corrupt child".<sup>3</sup>

## POST-INDEPENDENCE INSTITUTIONS

Between 1991 and 1998 the President survived three governments, three parliaments and two judiciaries. He survived through Soviet command-administrative methods of power consolidation. Power consolidation has involved the manipulation of formal institutional mechanisms to strengthen the ruler's grip on his office. Soviet elite politics focused on patron-client relations and on policies designed to appeal to the Soviet establishment: the party apparatus, the state bureaucracy, the military, the police, and the military-industrial complex. Through a combination of patronage and reward, power consolidation allowed the General Secretary to surpass rivals and rise within the leadership. President Nazarbaev has used these same two methods to consolidate his power. To illustrate this, we need to begin with a chronological analysis of how Nazarbaev attained and consolidated power.

Nursultan Nazarbaev was born in 1940 in the village of Chemolgan, near the city of Alma-Ata (now Almaty). He was educated locally at a Russian language-school and in the Ukraine city of Dneprodzerzhinsk, where he completed a technical school degree in 1960. His education was thus in the Russian language. Upon graduation, he

returned to Kazakhstan to work as a metallurgist in the Karaganda Metallurgical Combine in Termitau. It was here that he first became active in politics. Having served his time in the Komsomol and the local Communist Party (CKP), by 1979 he had already been appointed to second secretary of the Karaganda regional committee. A year later he was appointed Secretary for Industry on the Republic's Central Committee. In 1984, Nazarbaev was appointed chairman of Kazakhstan's Council of Ministers, effectively the number two position in the republic after Kunaev. This meant that at the age of forty-four Nazarbaev was the youngest among all Soviet republic chairmen.

As Martha Brill Olcott highlights, Nazarbaev's election as First Secretary of the CPK's Central Committee in May 1989, and his co-chairmanship of the Supreme Council between February and April, allowed him to consolidate power. As chairman of Kazakhstan's Council of Ministers and the second most prominent Kazakh in the party, Nazarbaev must have had expectations that he would be picked to replace Kunaev.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, his criticism of Kunaev during the period between March 1985 and December 1986 indicated the reform-mindedness that should have made him a member of the Gorbachev–Ligachev–Ryzhkov reform team. He decided to take a chance. In January 1986, at the sixteenth session of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan (KPK), Nazarbaev criticised Kunaev's brother Askar, then head of the Academy of Sciences, for his inertia and anti-reformist credentials.

In his memoirs, Kunaev describes his role in the original appointment of Nazarbaev and his feeling of betrayal: "Igor Ligachev and I, we decided a number of cadre questions in the republic, in particular the promotion of Nursultan Nazarbaev to the post of Chairman of the Kazakh SSR Council of Ministers".<sup>5</sup> Shortly after this appointment, Kunaev flew to Moscow and demanded the removal of Nazarbaev. Meanwhile, supporters of Nazarbaev lobbied for Kunaev's removal and his replacement

by the young Chairman. Gorbachev, often preferring compromise, opted for neither, and instead parachuted in from Moscow an ethnic Russian, Gennadii Kolbin. The decision set off three days of rioting in Alma-Ata, between 16 and 18 December, 1986. These riots at the imposition of an outsider are often interpreted as the first major nationalist crack in the supranational Soviet edifice.

Gorbachev's decision to bypass Nazarbaev for a Russian from outside

Kazakhstan broke the traditional rules of Soviet society. As Martha Brill Olcott writes:

What may have seemed rational cadre politics in Moscow – a means of reducing local political influence, of increasing integration into the greater union, and also of avoiding falling into the clutches of any local faction – looked from Central Asia much more like Great Russian chauvinism.<sup>6</sup>

Kolbin returned to Moscow in June 1989 after riots in the western Kazakhstan oil town Novyi Uzen, and Nazarbaev was appointed as his replacement, first as head of the Kazakhstan Communist Party and then, in September 1989, as chairman of the republic's Supreme Soviet. Once elected first secretary, Nazarbaev moved steadily to bring the republic's administration under his control. Kolbin had not had great success in putting his own cadre infrastructure in place, which was one reason the Russian had had little effect on republic policy. Nazarbaev, by contrast, moved to heal rifts with other Kazakhstani officials that had been opened by his fight with Kunaev, including making peace with Kunaev himself in April 1991. Perhaps even more important. In March 1990, following the example set by Gorbachev in Moscow, Nazarbaev converted his chairmanship of the Supreme Soviet to a presidency confirmed by parliamentary election. Writing later in his memoirs, Nazarbaev was quick to establish his role in the 1986 events:

In everyone's life there are moments when suddenly a crucial choice has to be made, a choice between what is familiar, comfortable, and what is unpredictably complex or painful. A person faced with such a dilemma who does not conform to the circumstances, who remains true to himself, ultimately gains. When the people



began their march into town I realised that I faced such a dilemma – either take a stand or return to the Central Committee offices. The latter seemed an inexcusable betrayal of the people who were right. I went with them, at the head of the crowd.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps Nazarbaev's role in the 1986 events will never fully be known, but critics say that rather than lead the crowds, he dispersed them.<sup>8</sup> In any case, he was keen to assert his version of events. The above memoirs were strategically published four months before the December 1991 elections. Interestingly, Nazarbaev's key contender for the post of President was an undisputed leader of the 1986 riots and a proud ethnic nationalist, Khasen Kozhakmetov. Collecting his signatures from inside a yurt set up outside the State Supermarket of Alma-Ata's busiest pedestrian mall, Kozhakmetov practically obtained the required number to compete for presidential office. As the election date approached, his yurt was ransacked leaving no record of the signatures. Nazarbaev now stood alone and on 1 December 1991, under the slogan of "Want a Flag for Kazakhstan? Cast Your Vote for Nursultan" won outright with a reported 98.7% of the vote. As we shall see in II.3 and III.1, Nazarbaev was never a nationalist, but he was and remains a strong regionalist who understood that economic and political relations in the USSR worked to the advantage of Moscow and to the disadvantage of the various regions.

Crucial elite alliances were forged in this period. Soon after the August 1991 coup Nazarbaev had resigned his party membership but did not follow Yeltsin's example of trying to uproot the party in entirety. Indeed, Nazarbaev allowed the Kazakhstan Communist Party to hold a scheduled congress. Part of the reason for Nazarbaev's relative restraint was the need to secure administrative continuity, because he was making personnel shifts in his government in anticipation of the increased financial responsibility that sovereignty or independence would bring. In October 1991 Nazarbaev appointed a number of economists to his cabinet, including Erik Asanbaev as

vice-president, Uzakbai Karamanov (head of the Council of Ministers) as chairman of a new Council of Ministers, and Daulet Sembaev (former head of Nazarbaev's economic advisory council) as vice premier. His choice of Prime Minister was tactical; whilst the above three were ethnic Kazakhs, he appointed a Russian-Ukrainian, Sergei Tereshchenko. Born in the Russian Far East and an agronomist by training, he had earned his degree in Chimkent where, among other things, he had mastered Kazakh. Nazarbaev also appointed the first of several foreign economic advisers, including Grigory Yavlinsky, one of the authors of the 500 Days plan of economic transformation Gorbachev had commissioned, then rejected. During the latter part of 1991, Yeltsin and Nazarbaev forged political alliances.

Nazarbaev was blessed with one individual in particular, Erik Asanbaev. The two had been long-time friends and colleagues. Asanbaev was a trained economist and highly respected amongst many members of the Soviet elite. It is doubtful that Nazarbaev could have risen so far so quickly without Asanbaev's support. Nazarbaev probably also knew that Asanbaev did not aspire to the top office. With this knowledge, but also probably out of genuine acknowledgement for his support, he asked Asanbaev to stand with him in December 1991 as Vice-President. By granting both posts a popular mandate, Nazarbaev set up an automatic institutional competitor to the presidency.

Asanbaev was part of a significant number of reformers within this early Presidential Administration and Government who promoted gradual democratisation. Nazarbaev initially sought their advice; in these early days he perceived their support as crucial to his presidency. As a key concession to the reformers, the President allowed Asanbaev to head the drafting of Kazakhstan's first post-independence Constitution, or as Duchacek calls this formal distribution of power within the state, the 'power map'.<sup>9</sup>

Contrary to some opinion,<sup>10</sup> the commission was initially headed by the Vice-President, not President. In May 1991 a round table discussion involving commission members, deputies and parliamentarians from other Soviet republics debated the proposed draft, and in October the revised draft was submitted to a group of academics for comment.<sup>11</sup>

The twelfth Parliament and President differed on whether the Republic should be called parliamentary or presidential.<sup>12</sup> Nazarbaev was not yet strong enough to impose his own vision on society; he made no secret of the fact, however, that he wished to see a presidential republic with substantial presidential powers. Already in October 1991 in an interview with the Japanese newspaper *Hokkaido Shimbun*, President Nazarbaev stated: "I see Kazakhstan as a democratic, presidential republic, with a professional parliament, elected on a multiparty basis, and with strong executive power in the centre and in the regions".<sup>13</sup> By the end of December 1991 Nazarbaev had taken over the Constitutional Commission and persuaded former opponents to presidential rule to join him. Examples were S. Zimanov, M. Raev, K. Suleimenov and N. Shaikhenov.

Nazarbaev faced some of the same resistance from his Communist-era Supreme Soviet as Yeltsin did in Russia. Vitalii Voronov and Aleksandr Peregrin were the two deputies who actively opposed the draft Constitution in the twelfth Convention.<sup>14</sup> Both ethnic Russian, the one a trained lawyer who had worked in the procuracy, the other a researcher, they were to become founders of a key oppositional movement, "The Legal Development of Kazakhstan". Nazarbaev ensured that the Constitution incorporated democratic rules and procedures and parliament was actively involved in its adoption.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, unlike Uzbekistan's Islam Karimov and Turkmenistan's Saparmurat Niyazov, Nazarbaev was not creating a cult of his own personality. The Constitution very clearly provided for mandatory succession by forbidding a President to serve more than two

terms; it included a separation of powers between executive, legislative and judiciary and a legislature with real budgetary and law-making powers. Nevertheless, Nazarbaev was more successful than Yeltsin in negotiating approval for what he called a “strong presidential republic”.<sup>16</sup> He successfully argued the need for strong presidential power which would enable the President to overcome the problems of a transition period demanding substantial and painful economic reform in a multiethnic state.<sup>17</sup> The document<sup>18</sup> was passed by an overwhelming majority at the ninth session of the Supreme Soviet of the twelfth Convention on 28 January 1993.<sup>19</sup>

Despite his conviction that “the stabilisation of the economy and the transition to the market demand a categorical ban on any party, political, or ideological interference in this process”, Nazarbaev began in early 1993 to create institutions which would link the elites to the masses: political parties.<sup>20</sup> These top-down parties were conceived as transmission belts on the lines of the former Communist party. The key examples of these parties were, in the order of their formation, the Union of Unity and Progress for Kazakhstan, the People’s Congress Party (PNEK, later renamed SNEK), and the Union of People’s Unity of Kazakhstan or UPU (renamed People’s Unity Party or PUP).

These political parties did not function in the low-key, restrained fashion intended because the personalities whom Nazarbaev selected as their leaders demonstrated political aspirations of their own. Of particular note was PNEK whose chairman Olzhas Suleimenov became an increasingly outspoken critic of the President. Suleimenov was also buoyed through metals trading, initial funds for which were made available from the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement. Both Suleimenov and the head of UPU, Serik Abdrakhmanov, openly declared in 1994 their intention to stand for the presidency in the then scheduled 1995 presidential elections. Nazarbaev was thus to abandon the use of presidential parties until 1998, when, in the run-up to the

prematurely called elections for January 1999, he again felt the need to strengthen the relationship between rulers and ruled.

Differences between the twelfth Parliament and the President were to re-emerge after the passing of the 1993 Constitution. They were dominated by a personality clash between the President and Speaker of Parliament, Sergei Abdildin. Parliamentary newspapers such as *Sovety Kazakhstana* and *Halik Keverssi*, for example, published Abdildin's articles whenever the President was out of the country. One such interview was entitled "one mountain, two peaks". Parliament also represented distinct economic interests which fiercely opposed an IMF-backed stabilisation programme, something which Nazarbaev and the government of Tereshchenko had tried to push through since the beginning of 1993. Nazarbaev was getting impatient; Kazakhstan had launched privatisation back in 1991, but now the country was lagging behind Russia in its economic reform program. Crucially, he realised that Parliament's control chamber, headed by Sergei Abdrakhmanov, possessed compromising data on the executive elite.

Nazarbaev seized the initiative and "invited" parliament to dissolve itself in December 1993. He justified the self-dissolution by stating that independent Kazakhstan had not yet held democratic elections, which would be scheduled for March 1994. At all key points in Parliament's history, the President has been personally present and this was no exception. After hearing Nazarbaev's passionate appeal for self-dissolution, one deputy intervened to declare that Nazarbaev's actions were illegal. Nazarbaev stormed out of the chamber and returned only after a formal apology. Merely a handful voted against dissolution. Upon dissolution, the president decreed the status and income of the parliamentarians. Many spoke of a Faustian pact.<sup>21</sup>

Simultaneously, another decree granted the President plenipotentiary powers until the new parliamentary elections scheduled for 17 March 1994.<sup>22</sup> These powers

included the unilateral right to make personnel appointments, to adopt a referendum and to declare a state of emergency without recourse to Parliament until the first session of the newly elected parliament.<sup>23</sup> This law was in open violation of the existing Constitution, since it gave the President powers which, according to the Constitution, belonged exclusively to the Supreme Soviet.<sup>24</sup>

As the March 1994 elections approached, a special Central Electoral Committee (CEC) was established and foreign observers were invited to monitor the proceedings of the first supposedly democratic elections. Most concurred that the elections proved far from democratic. For example, many persons were arbitrarily denied registration as candidates for Parliament by electoral commissions that belied their ostensible independence by responding to orders from executive authorities; sharp restrictions were placed on campaign advertising; some candidates enjoyed material support from regional and local administrations in registration and campaigning; and ballot urns were often removed from polling places to homes in search of more voters. Moreover, 42 of the 177 candidates elected had been picked from a list compiled by the President. Known as the “*gospisok*” (abridged form of “*gosudarstvennyi spisok*” or state list), the list was the President’s means of placing “his men” in a potentially confrontational institution. Of the remaining 135, more than half were supporters of the President: only 15 percent viewed themselves as directly opposed to him.

This strategy to create a submissive parliament failed. Instead the parliament developed into three loosely formed blocs.<sup>25</sup> In ascending numerical importance, these were: the undecided; the pro-executive bloc; and the opposition. About 40 deputies, or nearly a quarter of parliament, did not know to which camp they belonged. It included individuals with “centrist” positions, who could be drawn to either of the two larger

blocs, as well as many without clearly defined voting patterns. As many as 10 of these included deputies from the state list and were predominantly ethnic Kazakh.<sup>26</sup>

The pro-executive bloc represented and supported the interests of the executive branch of government. By one estimate it initially held 37% of the votes. Most but significantly not all state list deputies supported this group. It also contained many members of the presidential SNEK party. Nearly half of this group worked in administration positions of various levels before entering parliament. The pro-executive group was highly educated; primarily Kazakh in ethnic origin, its strongest support lay in Almaty oblast and city, and the southern and southwestern oblasts of the Republic. Crucially, the pro-executive group did not function as an organised and powerful bloc. Core members, outside of speaking at plenary sessions, did not adequately or consistently lobby for presidential programmes.<sup>27</sup>

The opposition formed the largest group. The term “opposition” is misleading in the sense that these deputies, while questioning the means and speed of reform policies, did support the principle executive goals of marketisation and Nazarbaev’s conception of democratisation. Also the term conveys unity, which, as with the executive bloc, did not exist. Instead, the opposition was composed of a number of groups.<sup>28</sup> The largest of the opposition’s group, *Progress*, had formed around Gaziz Aldamzharov, who was its choice for speaker of parliament.<sup>29</sup> In the end, that post went to a presidential supporter, Abish Kekilbaev. *Progress* united individuals supporting *Azat*, a Kazakh national movement, and supporters of *Lad*, the Slavic national movement, which clearly pointed to a lack of unified positions on linguistic and ethnic issues such as the dual language and dual citizenship questions. Such issues were a secondary priority in the first months of parliament; instead, the opposition was united by common concerns about and approaches to strengthening the social net for the general population.<sup>30</sup> Aldamzharov

and his supporters had already rallied around a reform plan drafted by Pyotr Svoik, then Chair of the State Antimonopoly Committee. Progress played a major role in initiating the declaration of disapproval of the Cabinet of Ministers' economic policy.<sup>31</sup>

Another, much smaller, oppositional group was *Yevraziia*. Composed of approximately fifteen parliamentarians, it supported the establishment of a Eurasian union and greater contact with CIS members in all spheres.<sup>32</sup> Most of their members were ethnic Russian and supporters of *Lad*. *Yevraziia* actively supported a dual state language, but some members expressed a milder opinion on dual citizenship, saying there was no reason for it if a mechanism could be developed to allow Russians to emigrate easily should they choose to, and to receive Russian citizenship without obstacles. *Region*, the third major oppositional group, comprised about 16 deputies advocating regional autonomy.<sup>33</sup> Overall, the preeminence of semi-opposition groups was a surprise to most local observers and a nuisance to Nazarbaev who had again to contend with diluted executive power.

Meanwhile, the President himself took steps to distance himself from the government, separating in April the presidential apparatus from the Cabinet of Ministers, and restructuring various state management structures. In his 9 June 1994 speech to Parliament, he described his intention to distance the role of the head of state from government and to concentrate on his role as constitutional arbiter. This he did just two months before parliament, freshly in office, passed a vote of no confidence in the Tereshchenko government.

The President had clearly become increasingly dissatisfied with the course of economic reform and Tereshchenko provided a useful scapegoat. He dismissed Tereshchenko in September 1994. To the surprise of many, Akezhan Kazhegeldin, a little known 42-year old from the eastern town of Semei, was appointed as his



successor. Initially chief of a local company named Toman and then head of Semei enterprise, by late 1994 the Republic's flagship private enterprise, he had served in Semei's regional administration in the last days of Gorbachev. During the Tereshchenko years, Kazhegeldin had acted as informal head of a growing number of private entrepreneurs and had by 1994 been Head of the Union of Entrepreneurs, a rare industrial lobby group which at the time was pressing for land privatisation. This young Komsomol worker was later to reveal his KGB past. Here was the epitome of the young, westernised Kazakh elite, appearing in Italian designer suits and full of praise for rapid marketisation.

The policies of Kazhegeldin (1994–1997) were to mark a radical departure from the conservatism of Tereshchenko. Kazhegeldin was a far more open and flexible negotiator; whilst Tereshchenko rarely met with foreign investors and reportedly seldom read the foreign contracts he signed, Kazhegeldin was often criticised for neglecting the indigenous business elite. He was applauded by Western investors and institutions.<sup>34</sup> He was a passionate proselytiser for the market; after all, he had done well from the liberalisation under the Gorbachev period. Tereshchenko relied on the style of old-school party apparatchiks, accustomed to getting his way by thumping the table. One can only imagine how daunting it must have been for Kazhegeldin on his first day at work arriving to take charge of the country's vast economy; he must have been acutely aware how weak his power base was at the start. Not only did he belong to one of the lowest ranking tribes of the Middle Zhuz – the *Uak* tribe – he was also now in the seat of traditional, Southern power.

Unlike his predecessor, however, Kazhegeldin took full charge of economic policy. By so doing he was able to create a new power base. He surrounded himself with able economists. He retained the doyen of independent Kazakhstan's

macroeconomic policy, Daulet Sembaev. Universally respected and considered by most as a highly upright individual, Sembaev, in his former capacity as Chairman of the National Bank, steered the country out of the familiarity of the rouble zone to the uncertainty of an independent currency. Kazhegeldin undoubtedly encouraged Nazarbaev's appointment of Oraz Dzhandosov as Sembaev's successor.<sup>35</sup> At the age of thirty-two, Dzhandosov was the youngest Chairman of a National Bank in the former Soviet Union. Dzhandosov was less of a politician than Sembaev but a brilliant economist, and was ably served by his deputy, Grigory Marchenko. Zhanna Ertlesova, Deputy Minister of Economics, also collaborated closely with the IMF and was a further example of a technocrat. Finally, Kazhegeldin developed close ties with Kazakhstan's leading commercial bank, *Kazkommerstbank*, headed by another Moscow-educated economist, Nurlan Sukhanberdin. Although small, this circle of trusted and able cadre strengthened the institution of the government vis-à-vis the presidential administration. And unlike those of his predecessor, Kazhegeldin's policies reached out to the young business elite, key reformer elites in Moscow and, crucially, foreign investors.

Nazarbaev could turn his attention again to Parliament. By the end of 1994, very little legislation had been passed by the thirteenth Parliament and Nazarbaev appeared to lose patience.<sup>36</sup> But self-dissolution was not an option this time. Instead, a perfect pretext arose in the form of the complaint lodged with Kazakhstan's Constitutional Court by journalist-turned-MP, Tatyana Kyatkovskaya. This prompted Olzhas Suleimenov, poet, writer, politician and former leader of the anti-nuclear movement "Nevada-Semipalatinsk" to state in March 1995: "In Yeltsin's Russia, to dissolve parliament you need tanks; in Nazarbaev's Kazakhstan to dissolve parliament you only need one tank: Tatyana Kvyatkovskaya".<sup>37</sup>

Kvyatkovskaya was a former journalist who had stood for election as MP in the Ablaikhanskii district (*raion*) of Almaty in March 1994. Immediately after the elections, Kvyatkovskaya had lodged a complaint that the unequal size of constituencies resulted in unequal voting power (constituencies varied between as large as 93,000 in her own district and a mere 16,000 in the Leninsk *raion*), and also that the voting procedure was complex, resulting in many spoiled ballots. That it took one year for the complaint to lead to dissolution suggests astute timing on the part of Nazarbaev. On 6 March 1995 the Constitutional Court ruled that some of the CEC's decisions had been illegal back in 1994. Two days later Nazarbaev and Kekilbaev exercised their constitutional rights and opposed the Constitutional Court's ruling. On 10 March eight of the eleven judges reconfirmed their resolution, the two-thirds majority required by the Constitution for the original Constitutional Court's decision to be upheld. One day later again, Nazarbaev backtracked, stating that he had to "bow" to democracy and accept the Constitutional Court's decision to dissolve parliament. The government thus also resigned, as did the CEC. This represented the first time that a post-Soviet President had employed constitutional means to dissolve parliament.

Soon after the dissolution of the Supreme Soviet, the Constitutional Court, at the request of the President, ruled that, since the elections of the Supreme Soviet were considered to be null and void, the 10 December 1993 law, which had granted the President the power to issue decrees which have the force of laws, including constitutional laws, would remain in force. Nazarbaev stated that he was forced to rule as if in a state of emergency until the holding of new elections. In the next nine months he issued 180 decrees, juxtaposing his output to the eight laws passed by the thirteenth parliament. Two specific acts in this period, however, were to institutionalise presidentialism and the personality of the President.

The first was the April 1995 referendum which asked the population to extend the President's term of office to December 2000, thus avoiding the 1996 elections. This was justified in terms of the power vacuum created by the absence of parliament. At the time it appeared that Nazarbaev feared opposition from two key figures: in the Northern and Eastern regions of the Republic from the previously mentioned Olzhas Suleimenov and in the West from Gaziz Aldamzharov, former leader of the Socialist Party.<sup>38</sup> Both had openly declared their willingness to stand for presidential office. He issued a decree on 23 March 1995 "On the Holding of a Nationwide Referendum on April 29, 1995". The referendum asked a single question: "Do you agree to extend N. A. Nazarbaev's term as President of the Republic of Kazakhstan...until December 1, 2000?" According to official statistics, 91.21 percent of the country's registered voters took part in the 29 April referendum. Of those who voted, 95.46 percent voted to extend the President's term.<sup>39</sup>

This virtually unanimous support guaranteed that Nazarbaev would remain in power until December 2000. He used this position to push through a new draft Constitution, his second act of power consolidation. As mentioned at the outset, this was the product solely of the President and a group of his close associates. Nazarbaev opted for a veneer of legitimacy by establishing, according to a presidential edict of 22 May 1995, the EKS, or expert consultative committee whose task it was to "evaluate independently" the work of the committee. As it happened, it was the EKS that, chaired by the President, actually wrote the new Constitution. The EKS, rather than providing an independent evaluation, spent the months of May to August lobbying the regions, and promoting the Constitution through a series of seminars in all of Kazakhstan's then nineteen regions.

Once again the Constitutional Court stepped in, but this time to oppose the President. In response to the 28 June 1995 edict “On the national discussion of the draft Constitution of the Kazakh Republic”, six of the eleven judges – the “majority opinion” of the Constitutional Council, among them the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, M. Baimakhanov and Igor Rogov, published an open letter to the President.<sup>40</sup> Baimakhanov had played a key role in the 1986 events and had been rewarded for his loyalty to Nazarbaev by his appointment to Chairman of the Constitutional Court. Rogov, a mildly-spoken Russian enamoured of the effectiveness of the German judicial system, was a specialist, both liked and needed by Nazarbaev. Once the Constitutional Court had been abolished, Rogov joined the presidential administration as a key presidential assistant. Increasingly, Nazarbaev co-opted those who showed ability into his own administration. As in many transition or post-independence states, the shortage of appropriate skills and cadres has meant that the top elite has actively sought able individuals.

The 1995 Constitution was dubbed the “Nazarbaev Constitution”.<sup>41</sup> When interviewed, the Head of the Legislative Department of the Presidential Administration who was to become Justice Minister, Baurzhan Mukhadmedzhanov stated:

It must be said that the main author of this constitution was the President. He and his team, of which I was a part, worked late into the night to come up with a revised draft....The 1993 constitution was full of compromises between parliament, government, the courts and the Constitutional Court and it simply became contradictory. Collision between parliament and government often occurred... I am not saying that today’s constitution is an ideal constitution, but it lays out far more clearly the competences of each institution.<sup>42</sup>

Now that the President had physically separated his administration from that of the cabinet of ministers, he did so constitutionally: while in 1993 the President was the “single executive system”, in 1995 he ceased to be part of the executive system. Articles 40–48 stipulate a new status for the President as a head of state, as its highest official,

symbol and guarantor of the people's unity and of state power. Said Mukhamedzhanov again:

Although we do not simply copy the French constitution, we do consider that our conditions are similar to those prevalent under the Fourth Republic, such as the distancing of the President from law-making and political struggles. He has now become the supreme arbiter between various powers.<sup>43</sup>

Presidential responsibilities include organisational tasks, personnel appointment, legislation, and general political, social and foreign policy formation. Whereas the 1993 Constitution provided checks and balances on the powers of the President, its successor did not make him accountable to any institution. According to the rules operating in 1990, the President was to be elected for six years; in the 1995 Constitution, as in the Constitution of 1993, the President's term of office was placed at five years.

The 1995 Constitution sealed a presidential republic.<sup>44</sup> The Constitutional Court and its accompanying courts were swiftly replaced with the Constitutional Council, whose six members are nominated by the President, Senate and regional maslikhats (two for each region).<sup>45</sup> Its activities were to be directly controlled by the President. The status of judges is not clearly defined. The Arbitration Court has been abolished and the Prosecutor's Office restructured with part of its functions transferred to the newly-established State Investigation Committee which is subordinate to the President.

We now reach the second phase in the institutional history of Kazakhstan (1995-6). The bicameral parliament emerged a pale comparison to its predecessor. The 177 members of the thirteenth Parliament were now slimmed down to a lower house (*Mazhilis*) of 67. The Upper House, or *Senat*, consisted of 47 individuals, twenty of whom were elected by the regional maslikhats, and seven of whom were appointed by the President. This bicameral parliament was elected in December 1995; Marat Ospanov, whom we met earlier, became its chairman and Raev the chairman of the Senate. Vitalii Voronov, who had now become Chairman of the Non-Governmental Organisation "Legal

Development of Kazakhstan” and whose movement was well-represented in the previous parliament, stated in an interview that the elections were far from honest, free or secret. The election law, in his view, was itself unconstitutional – the President was not at any time empowered to change the Constitution by referendum when parliament was in recess. Whereas in the March 1994 elections the electoral commissions of the individual constituencies had been formed by both the then elected regional councils and the centrally appointed regional administrations, this time only the regional administration, appointed by the President, could influence who would sit on the committees. It was well known, Voronov added, that colleagues or friends of the administration’s chief often headed the regional election councils.<sup>46</sup> Carlos Robles Piquer, a Euro-MP and election observer was quoted in *Karavan* as stating: “For us, today is very strange. We are not used to seeing elections where only two candidates are running against each other. It is a shame that candidates were pre-eliminated”.<sup>47</sup>

Deprived of an Audit Chamber, which was dissolved together with the last Supreme Soviet, and deprived of the right to appoint the Prosecutor General, parliament has lost all levers of influence on the presidential office. It lost a say in the formation of government as approval by parliament was now stipulated only for the designation of prime minister and the chair of the National Bank. Instead, according to Article 64, Point 3, the government “in all its activity is accountable to the President of the Republic”. This rendered a vote-of-no-confidence in the government irrelevant. The Parliament reserved the right to impeach the President, but only with a three-quarters majority and strictly in the case of “high treason”. And even in that event an impartial outcome would be unlikely because the Senate would conduct any impeachment proceedings and its members were appointed by the President.

The fledgling opposition movement had to seek alternative channels to influence the elite. Formed in Spring 1996 by a group of intellectuals united in their anti-government stance, *Azamat* was headed by Petr Svoik (former Head of the Anti-Monopoly Committee who was asked to resign due to his oppositional stance), Murat Auezov (with a famous Kazakhstani writer) and Galym Abil'sitov. The movement distinguished itself from any oppositional predecessors in its multiethnic leadership. Nurbulat Masanov, the leading oppositional academic in the country, was also closely involved in its activities.

By selling off several strategic enterprises, Kazhegeldin ingratiated himself to the foreign investor community. Many of these foreign investors were closely linked with Russia's emerging capitalist class. In what was to become his last year in office in 1997, he also tried to capture the domestic Russian vote. Unlike Tereshchenko, Kazhegeldin was happy to appear on talk-shows, chair press conferences and represent his country abroad. It was only a matter of time before Nazarbaev was to perceive him as a rival. *Focus Central Asia*, one of the more outspoken of local journals, wrote in 1998 that the crisis between Kazhegeldin and Nazarbaev was concealed in the alignments that were increasingly pitting government against presidential administration.<sup>48</sup>

As we shall see in II.2, by 1997 Nazarbaev had surrounded himself with a core elite considerably smaller than that of 1991. That core predominantly comprised family, relatives and close friends. Key family members were his eldest daughter Dariga Nazarbaeva, who in 1997 continued to head the largest state television company, *Khabar*; Dariga's husband Rakhat Aliev, a surgeon who in October 1997 was made head of the Tax Inspectorate while continuing to own a sixty percent stake in the national sugar company, *Sakharniy Tsent*; Nazarbaev's other son-in-law, Timur Kulibaev, Deputy Head of *Kazakhoil* (the state national oil company which replaced the



Ministry of Oil and Gas in 1997)); and, his more distant relative Akhmetzhan Esimov, who as of 1997 had been appointed head of the presidential administration.

A row was sparked by Kazhegeldin's former business partner in Semipalatinsk, Galimzhan Zhakiyanov. He and Kazhegeldin had been inseparable in the Gorbachev years when they formed and managed Toman and then went on to set up what was to become the Republic's most successful private business, Semei. With his partner Prime Minister, Zhakiyanov in early 1995 was appointed regional head of Semei region. In 1996 the government, in its attempts to make *akims* accountable to regional economic performance, criticised Semei region's poor economic record. Zhakiyanov interpreted this as a personal snub and Nazarbaev, ever quick to profit from elite conflict, invited Zhakiyanov to head a new Agency for Strategic Resources in Almaty.

This quarrel set the stage for deeper rifts within the elite, and highlighted the narrowing of Kazhegeldin's power base. Kazhegeldin indirectly accused his Oil Minister of misappropriating oil revenues.<sup>49</sup> To retaliate, Aliev investigated Kazhegeldin's involvement in the Shymkent oil refinery where a significant proportion of shares was reported to have been purchased by Kazhegeldin. To abet Oil Minister Nurlan Balgimbaev in this struggle, Nazarbaev in March 1997 radically re-organised the government's administration. The Ministry of Oil and Gas was abolished and the state oil company Kazakhoil (modelled on Norway's Statoil) was formed in its place. Two primary opponents – Kazhegeldin and Balgimbaev – were institutionally separated. This move also weakened Kazhegeldin's position vis-à-vis foreign investors, as privatisation of key oil ventures was now temporarily on hold.

President Nazarbaev continued to deflect attention from his personal quarrel with the Prime Minister. Various options were considered. At one point it was rumoured that the President even considered scrapping the post of Prime Minister;<sup>50</sup> however,

both Tereshchenko and Kazhegeldin had acted as useful buffers. Galymzhan Zhakiyanov supported another constitutional variant – the construction of a parallel administrative structure in the presidential administration, called the Presidential Council, to which a share of government would be assigned. Instead, the President appeared to have opted for an old-style Soviet discreditation campaign. Former Almaty mayor Zamanbek Nurkadilov was the front-man who exposed alleged widescale corruption on the part of Kazhegeldin. Nurkadilov had been evicted from office four months prior to Tereshchenko's removal and would be reinstated as Almaty regional head after Kazhegeldin's departure. Tereshchenko had been in league with the mayor's key rival at the time, Viktor Tche, head of the Kramds financial-industrial group.

On 22 September 1997 Kazhegeldin suddenly left Kazakhstan, reportedly to seek treatment of a blood clot in Switzerland. Commenting on the resignation of the Prime Minister, the Almaty newspaper *Novoe Pokolenie* wrote:

Amassing money for his private future, the prime minister probably neglected the unwritten rules of the ruling elite....He strongly believed himself a reformer. He tried to enter the ruling elite by using his business qualities, despite the unwritten rules of the steppe. He did not want to enter the clan game. However, he forgot that it is difficult to be a pro-Western moderniser model leader in the Orient.<sup>51</sup>

Soon after publication of this editorial, the newspaper was closed. Kazhegeldin was replaced by his erstwhile Oil Minister Balgimbaev in October 1997.<sup>52</sup>

For our purposes, Kazhegeldin's departure prefaced our third final phase in the development of national government (1997-). This stage was marked by the official move of the capital 1,500km northward to Astana in June 1998 and the calling in October 1998 of early presidential elections for January 1999. Both initiatives can be regarded as a strengthening of centralised, executive power.

The presidential decision to relocate the capital Almaty 1,500 km north to the north-central town of what is now called Astana<sup>53</sup> was made in 1994, begun in 1997 and completed in 1998.<sup>54</sup> The official reason for the move was that Almaty was located in an earthquake zone and where surrounding mountainous terrain allowed limited expansion. Unofficially, the move grew principally from the fear of northern secessionism. In theory, relocation should enable government to exert a tighter grip on the northern regions, dominated by ethnic Russians and, according to the government, open to possible secessionism and eventual union with Russia. The move was also privately said to have been prompted to distance the capital from China. This represented the fourth move of the territory's capital in seventy-five years and within six months a Potemkin capital had been constructed, as most of the buildings bore elaborate but artificial facades. The capital's relocation may thus be regarded as a graphic example of the importance of geopolitics in the leadership environment. The move demonstrated an acute awareness of the country's geostrategic location as a landlocked country between China and Russia, and with almost all the bordering regions having a Russian minority.

With the new seat of government officially opened in June 1998, it took the president only three months to call premature parliamentary elections. Two key writers who had predicted the early elections: Sabit Zhusupov and Nurlan Ablyazov. Zhusupov was formerly a presidential aide but who established his own independent Institute of Political and Sociological Analysis in late 1997, and Ablyazov was the brother of the Ministry of Trade and Industry responsible for the new industrial policy. In addition to predicting that Nazarbaev would hold early elections they also stressed that, unlike the 1995 referendum, the early elections would not be replaced by a referendum as the president required a democratic "vote of confidence".<sup>55</sup>

As part of his election campaign, Nazarbaev tightened his grip on the media. Crucially, *Karavan*, Kazakhstan's most popular tabloid newspaper passed into new hands. The paper as of 1997 enjoyed weekly sales of 300,000 – ten times the circulation of any of Kazakhstan's other major newspapers.<sup>56</sup> In 1999 it remained the only newspaper in Central Asia to possess its own printing press. At the end of June 1998, the paper's owner Boris Giller, sold it, along with his TV Channel KTK, his radio broadcasting channel (also called) *Karavan* and his two printing houses in Almaty and Astana. The purchaser remained anonymous.<sup>57</sup> Since 1995, *Karavan* had become openly critical of government policies, but tacitly agreed not to criticise the President directly. The Giller media concern was beginning to exert an important influence on the formation of popular opinion.

Giller's decision to sell was reportedly provoked by government pressure.<sup>58</sup> In 1995, as *Karavan's* articles became more critical, a tax audit led to the imposition of fines totaling several million dollars. *Karavan* then accused authorities of an arson attack on its US\$1 million printing house in Almaty. Recently, relations between Giller and the government became particularly sour when Giller reportedly attempted to support former Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin as a potential alternative candidate to Nazarbaev by publishing excerpts from Kazhegeldin's book and airing an interview with Kazhegeldin on KTK.<sup>59</sup> Local analysts differ in their opinion on who bought *Karavan*. Some contend that Giller did not actually sell it, but that the purchaser, reportedly an offshore company, is owned by him. Others say that government officials loyal to the President have become its proprietor.<sup>60</sup>

With the 1998 state purchase of the major independent TV and radio station, KTK, almost all audiovisual media is state owned. The largest state TV station, Xabar, is run by Nazarbaev's daughter, Dariga Nursultanovna. *Twenty-First Century* was

forced to print in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan, as several small publications had already been doing, including *All Over the Globe* and Kazakhstan's version of Russia's *Argumenty i fakty*. In 1999, *All Over the Globe* launched its first Russian and English language editions. Nevertheless, these publications still exist, as does the somewhat oppositional *Delovaya nedelya* - though this last publication has largely refrained from direct criticism of the President. The launch of another critical newspaper, *451 Degrees Fahrenheit*, would indicate that authorities were intent to give at least the semblance of media diversity.

This absence of any separation between the three branches of government was further dramatically demonstrated in Autumn 1998 when parliament supposedly asked President Nazarbaev, first, to shorten his term of office by two years and, second, to call early presidential elections on 10 January 1999. Parliament cited the Russian crisis as one reason behind the need for early elections, arguing that avoiding a protracted election campaign would maintain unity and stability. Events, however, suggested a political pact. One local independent newspaper called the decision a "spectacle" which resulted in a "barter of privileges" between President and Parliament.<sup>61</sup> Nazarbaev's televised national address on 30 September 1998 promised far-sweeping democratisation and ruled out early elections.<sup>62</sup> In return for their support, both Houses of Parliament would see their next term of office extended by one more year each (parliamentary elections being due in December 1999). Also, parties and movements participating in parliamentary elections at the close of 1999 would need to pass only a 7 instead of a 10 percent hurdle of the popular vote to sit in parliament. But the most important of parliament's amendments was extension of the President's term of office from five to seven years (the next President will be in power until 2006). The

President's minimum age has been increased from 35 to 40, and the age limit of 65 lifted.<sup>63</sup>

In the event, however, the elections of 10 January 1999 did not prove democratic. The calling of early elections left only three months for campaigning, and only the incumbent President possessed the financial and organisational means to conduct the electioneering. More seriously, the election commission barred certain individuals from standing for office, on the spurious grounds of minor offences. The commission claimed that it was within its constitutional right, since the 8 May constitutional amendment to the electoral law of that year. In particular, Clause 4.1 stipulated that no one with a criminal record, including a minor offence such as possession of a parking ticket, was allowed to stand for electoral office.<sup>64</sup>

Not only does the date of this amendment suggest some political foresight on the part of the President, but it served to bar Nazarbaev's only serious contender, former Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin. Kazhegeldin was charged on two counts; one for money laundering and one for participating in an unsanctioned meeting of the yet unregistered "Movement for Honest Elections".

## ELITES AND INSTITUTIONS

What can we extract from the above with regard to the relationship between elites and institutions? Do institutions, as Geddes contends, simply "reflect the interests of those who devise them"?<sup>65</sup> Or do, as Whitefield contends, political institutions in Kazakhstan preserve a balance between social groups?<sup>66</sup> Where institutions mould interests they may be said to be relatively autonomous of those interests; where interests mould institutions, the latter may be said to be relatively captured. Still at its embryonic stage,

institutional reform – according to the 1997 United Nations Development Program report – led to a delegitimisation of state institutions in the eyes of the Kazakhstani population. Citizens were lacking confidence in institutional longevity.<sup>67</sup>

The President used elites to weaken institutions, particularly by appointing a weak Minister, a mere figurehead or the proverbial dummy in a shop window, to a traditionally strong Ministry. For example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until the appointment of Kasymzhomart Tokaev was headed by a two innocuous individuals, Suleimenov and Saudarbaev. The Ministry of Defence, elsewhere traditionally a strong institution, has also housed weak ministers. By contrast, the pairing of a strong individual with a strong ministry – such as Kairbek Suleimenov as Minister of Internal Affairs – probably signalled Nazarbaev’s confidence in that individual, both that Suleimenov was competent at his job and that he would not amount to a political rival. In addition, if the combination of institution and individual were to become too powerful, Nazarbaev could always move him. In any case, many of the key strategic security questions have been decided instead within the Presidential Administration in the KGB successor institution, the National Security Committee.

In reverse, the President also utilised institutions to centralise his own power. He abolished the post of Vice-President in 1995. The Presidential Administration, as we saw, was formally separated from the Cabinet of Ministers in March 1994 and its name changed from Apparat to Administration in 1995. Also, with the October 1995 Constitution, the President became the apex of government. He made the Presidential Administration the locus of executive power by coopting the brightest and best to work for him rather than government or parliament or even business. He assembled a full presidential bodyguard team.

Nazarbaev has also increasingly brought economic policy under his control. Kazakhstan's Anti-Monopoly Committee, resurrected in June 1998 continued the long line of agencies that would thereafter report directly to the president instead of to the government. Other agencies that have shifted from governmental to presidential responsibility include the National Statistics Agency, the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms, and, to some degree, the Strategic Investment Committee. Consequently, the presidential administration sits at the top, followed by the Cabinet of Ministers and the various Ministries, then Senate, then *Mazhilis* and then various other committees and public organisations, such as the Assembly of People's Deputies. As will be seen in III.2, he has also centralised economic decision-making under his office.

These trends allow us to make some preliminary observations on the relationship between elites and institutions. It already appears that elites shape new institutions, whilst institutions furnish the setting within which elites rise and act. Even when relatively inchoate, institutions have an impact on elite composition, favouring the rise of some groups and individuals to power over others, and influencing the strategies and tactics employed by those seeking to win or keep power. The thirteenth parliament (1994-1995) is the best example of this. Elites have changed significantly when institutions have not.

Second, institutions can change their names without changing their activities (such as the security police), while institutions retaining their old names (parliaments, for example) may acquire very different functions in substance. Third, unlike in East-Central Europe where important institutional decisions were made very early in the transition process – especially in the roundtable negotiations between representatives of the opposition and the old regime – in Kazakhstan the institutional architecture came after the change in regime, namely post-1991.<sup>68</sup> Fourth, initial decisions on formal



constitutional and statutory provisions are only the starting point in a continuing competition among leading political actors to shape the authority of specific institutions. In reality, then, Kazakhstan's Constitution between 1991 and 1998 has functioned decreasingly as a state code and increasingly as a loose frame of government. Constitutional development has conformed to a top-down model,<sup>69</sup> that is, the creation of new Constitutions since 1992 has stemmed largely from the initiatives of leaders rather than as a response to popular demands. Deliberate contradictions in the Kazakhstani Constitutions allowed President Nazarbaev to escape accusations of non-constitutionalism. By 1995 it had become clear that the Kazakhstani Constitution was designed to camouflage the distribution of authority, not define it.

The institutional architecture, then, has passed through three phases: 1991–4; 1995–6; post-1996. These three phases mark a step-by-step dominance of executive power at the national level – to the exclusion of all other branches of power. “Dual executives” in parliament and the judiciary ensure the absence of a separation of power. Power has been concentrated in one institution, the presidential administration.

Erzhan Utembaev was appointed by the World Bank as Kazakhstan's enlightened bureaucrat. Under World Bank recommendations he halved the size of the presidential administration in Spring 1997. The number of ministries has fallen from 19 in 1992 to 12 in 1998. The Cabinet of Ministers Administration was cut by 25%, and was followed by ministerial downsizing. The most drastic changes occurred with the 4 March 1997 decree that reduced the number of ministries from twenty to fourteen and state committees from twelve to two.<sup>70</sup> Like other former Soviet states, Kazakhstan inherited a sprawling bureaucratic machine from the Soviet period. In its July 1996 report, the World Bank ranked Kazakhstan among countries with the highest level of government employment, with about 6.4 public employees per hundred--a total of some

one million employees in total.<sup>71</sup> Functions of the abolished ministries, state committees, committees and agencies were transferred to newly established ministries. In a decree of 22 April 1997 Nazarbaev transferred the powers to investigate corruption from the KGB-successor, the National Security Committee to the State Investigations Committee of the Interior Ministry.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, on 4 May 1997, as we shall see, regions were cut by five, from nineteen to fourteen, ousting 5,000 state employees and saving US\$20 million.<sup>73</sup> Further downsizing has occurred in advance of the relocation of the capital from Almaty to Astana. In July 1997, Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Pavlov announced that 10,000 more state jobs would be axed.<sup>74</sup> Speaking on Kazakh Television Channel on 22 April 1997, President Nursultan Nazarbaev stated: "I have issued a decree to cut the staff of ministries and departments. By cutting numbers by half, approximately 0.5 billion tenge have been economised. Moreover, 93 fewer official cars will be needed. In Almaty alone, 1,000 [public sector workers] have been made redundant".<sup>75</sup>

Horizontal division has proven even more effective in weakening rival institutions. Institutions have camouflaged intra-elite conflict. The Tax Police was separated from the Ministry of Finance, enabling it to operate from outside the Government and thus also 'incriminate' the Prime Minister. The Agency for Control of Strategic Resources was also set up as an autonomous structure to oppose Kazhegeldin. When an agency proves successful it is then coopted by the presidential administration. Utembaev's organisation was repeatedly invited back into the presidential fold. Ultimately, when issues became too sensitive, the President appeared to have simply opted for abolition of the agencies responsible, as he did with the Ministry of Oil and Gas in 1997 and the Ministry of Economy in 1998.

Despite all these attempts at power centralisation, much confusion remained over the various prerogatives of the executive branches of power. A number of *ad hoc* duplicate and parallel administrations have sprung up largely to deal with economic policy. It seems to indicate more of a hand-to-mouth response to post-Soviet problems, and indicates some difference from the Soviet era when, in principle, the Soviet administrative structure was rather clear and well-established.

#### CENTRE-PERIPHERY DYNAMICS

The analysis has so far concentrated on central executive-legislative relations. But in a country 11 times the size of the United Kingdom, the regions cannot be ignored. After the failure of the 1991 August putsch, Jeffrey Hahn observed of local politics in Russia, that the implementation of reforms “is contingent upon who governs locally, for whoever controls political power at the local level will determine how reforms are carried out and [who] the beneficiaries are”.<sup>76</sup> Kazakhstan’s 20 regions (14 as of 1997) have always been extremely diverse geographically, socially, and economically: this makes for difficult governance. Nazarbaev consistently ruled out federalisation of the state. During Kazhegeldin’s term of office, the power of the government and the regions grew vis-à-vis the Presidential Administration. This was partly because between 1994 and 1996 Nazarbaev appeared to adopt a more *laissez-faire* approach to regional policy and the 1997 centralisation can thus be seen as reassertion of presidential power.

A brief discussion of the variation among regions is helpful to illustrate the difficulties of governing such a diverse country. First, however, Table I.2.1 lists these overleaf, giving their Soviet and post-independent Kazakhstani names.

**Table I.2.1**

**Kazakhstan's 20 regions including Alma-Ata city (1991- March 1997)**

<i>Soviet name</i>	<i>Post-independence Kazakh name</i>
Aktyubinsk (West)	Aqtobe
Atyrau	Atyrau
Alma-Ata city (South)	Almaty city
Alma-Ata (region) (South)	Almaty (region)
Dzhambul	Zhambyl
Dzhezkazgan	Jezkazgan
Karaganda (North-central)	Qaraganda
Kokchetau (North)	Qoqchetau
Kustanai	Kostanai
Kzyl-Orda	Qzylorda
Mangystau (West)	Mangistau
(port) Shevchenko	(port Aktau)
Northern Kazakhstan	Northern Kazakhstan
(Petropavlosk (North)	Petropavlosk)
Pavlodar	Pavlodar
Semipalatinsk	Semei
Southern Kazakhstan (Chimkent)	Southern Kazakhstan (Shymkent)
Taldykurgan	Taldykorgan
Turgay (North)	Torgai
Tselinograd	Akmola (renamed Astana in 1998)
East Kazakhstan	East Kazakhstan
(Ust-Kamenogorsk)(East)	Oskemen
Western Kazakhstan (Uralsk)	Western Kazakhstan (Oralsk)

Note: Names in parentheses are regional capitals. Spelling of placenames records the usage in standard atlases.

The North, Central and Eastern oblasts are more industrial, urban and Russian-dominated, whilst the Southern and Western regions are Kazakh-dominated and largely rural. Southern Kazakhstan has the highest population density at 16.8 people per sq. km., but at a national average of 6.2 people per sq. km. population density is amongst the lowest in the world. The richest agricultural land is in the North: Akmola, Kostanai, Torgai, Northern Kazakhstan, Qoqchetau and Pavlodar more or less monopolise the arable and permanent cropland. In terms of size the largest region is Jezkazgan at 300,000 square kilometres.

The years since independence have witnessed increased differentiation, but along new axes. The north-south divide has been supplanted by a west – north/south divide. Whilst the northern and southern regions have grown closer economically, the oil-producing Western regions – notably Atyrau, Aqtobe and Mangistau – have not only become richer but also have thereby become the principal donors for the other ten regions.

Nazarbaev employed five main techniques to maintain centralised power. These are: the appointment of regional heads and the institution of the regional Presidential representative, or “inspector”; economic centralisation through central redistribution of locally raised taxes; the reduction in the number of regions from twenty to fourteen; the capital move to Astana; and, his role as arbiter between centre, region and foreign investor interests.

First, both the 1993 and 1995 Constitutions declared Kazakhstan a unitary state. Nazarbaev’s relationship with the regions resembles that of Yeltsin’s in his early years of office. Like Yeltsin, Nazarbaev implemented a system of vertical integration through two main institutions: the appointment of the regional head and the use of the Presidential inspector. As in Russia the regional heads were initially called *glavi*

*administratori*, but unlike Russian practice, election of regional heads has always been ruled out. Regional heads were called *akim* from 1995.

The institution of local Heads of Administration can be traced back to Gorbachev. Nazarbaev tended to retain the old heads of administration or executive and agricultural elites of those regions. Indeed, it is fair to say that up to 1995, there was very little tendency, and certainly less than the system operating during the Soviet period, to “parachute” individual administration heads into the regions from outside areas. In comparison with Soviet *obkom* first secretaries, one is struck by the fact that the vast majority of those named as regional and local heads had emerged locally, and were far less likely to be moved administratively from one oblast to another. In many cases, former obkom secretaries re-created their old obkom organisations.

Heads of town and districts were initially appointed by the regional head with the President’s approval. Right from the beginning, Nazarbaev wished to assert this command-administrative system. At what was to be the first of several meetings of regional heads in Almaty in April 1992, he announced that the “penalties for non-fulfilment of my orders would be most severe”.<sup>77</sup> At its January 1992 session, the Supreme Soviet had already passed a law on local self-government which abolished regional, city and district executive committees of the Congress of Peoples’ Deputies.

Presidential representatives, renamed “inspectors” also in 1995, provided a second means of central representation in the regions. Unlike Yeltsin’s regional representative, the role of inspectors in Kazakhstan was not codified. Like Yeltsin, Nazarbaev appeared to have created a chief inspectorate. Unlike Yeltsin who targetted Presidential representatives to untrustworthy regions, Nazarbaev placed them in all nineteen. Like their Russian counterparts they enjoy less authority than the regional heads. On balance they appear rather ineffective, rarely being in the regions for any

length of time to exert real impact. Issues of institutional infighting at the national level (horizontal power distribution) and within the confines of the question of federalism itself (vertical power distribution) have helped shape the nature of this regional policy. Centralised power did not break down with the collapse of the USSR. Organs of representative government have been largely symbolic. Clearly, as with Yeltsin in his early years, Nazarbaev adopted a policy that sought to maximise the power of the centre generally and the power of the executive President specifically.

Centralisation was also implemented economically: taxes were raised regionally, transferred to the centre from where they have been redistributed regionally. Since the amount distributed does not necessarily reflect that originally raised by the region, local authorities, particularly in the donor regions of the west, have become resentful.

Third, as part of the bailing out of the poorer regions, in 1997 Nazarbaev decreed the fusion of five poorer regions with their richer neighbours. Table I.2.2 illustrates the new 14 regions.



Table L.2.2

<b><u>Kazakhstan's 14 regions including Almaty and Astana cities (June 1997-)</u></b>	
Akmola	(incorporating part of Torgai)
Aqtobe	
Atyrau	
Alma-Ata	(incorporating Taldykorgan)
East Kazakhstan	(incorporating Semei)
Zhambyl	
Qaraganda	(incorporating Jezkazgan)
Kostanai	(incorporating part of Torgai)
Qzylorda	
Mangistau	
Northern Kazakhstan	(incorporating Qoqchetau)
Pavlodar	
Southern Kazakhstan	
Western Kazakhstan	

The reduced number of regions served to diminish the potential power of the regional administrators of more prosperous regions. Nazarbaev justified the changes in cost-cutting terms. When the first regions – Taldykorgan and Torgai – disappeared in April 1997 he stated: “The economy of each of them separately accounts for not more than 1% of the total industrial output of Kazakhstan. As regions they have been running at a constant loss. 0.5 billion tenge is needed to prop up these two administrations alone... I think that we would do better to spend the money on salaries for teachers and doctors”.<sup>78</sup> The districts, however, remained intact. In May 1997 a further three regions were dissolved. Jezkazgan was merged with Karaganda; Qoqchetav with Northern Kazakhstan; and, Semei with Eastern Kazakhstan. On 4 May 1997 Nazarbaev ruled out

any further administrative changes. The dissolution of these three regions, he said, would eliminate 5,000 jobs. “This money will be used to repay pensions and wages,” the President explained. “The merger of regions will also accelerate regional development and help reduce the scope for corruption”.<sup>79</sup> Significantly, no mergers occurred in the republic’s western regions. Given the considerable resources shared by these regions, to do so would be tantamount to political suicide and suggested that greater influence even if only latent, was held by regional administrators.

The most extensive regional shake-up has occurred, as we already saw, with the capital’s move to Astana. My interview with Erzhan Utembaev in Almaty in 1996 happened to coincide with a mild earthquake. Leaning forward Utembaev exclaimed: “Now you understand why we are moving to Akmola”. The move to Akmola, renamed Astana in 1998, has indeed enabled the discharge of several thousand officials. Relocated to the north, the President will presumably be better placed to proffer carrot and stick to the northern regions: the carrot of better infrastructure and the stick against potential signs of secessionism. He has been physically able to distance himself from powerful southern power networks and thus achieve greater autonomy in his decision-making. He has moved close to the region where he spent the good part of his working life, Karaganda, and to the region where his wife, Sara, was born.

Finally, an unwritten rule existed that when a regional head arrived in Almaty, he should first go to the head of the Presidential Administration before checking into his hotel as a sign of respect, rather as nomads of the *aul* used to do to the wise elder, the *aqsaqal*. Foreign investors are increasingly advised to deal with the regions first, but to not forget the courtesy visit to the Presidential Administration on their way home.<sup>80</sup> The centre continues to make the final decision on foreign investment contracts. Often, the President has been able to blame regional heads for unfulfilled contracts. This is

especially the case where regions have successfully attracted foreign investment, such as the resource-rich regions of the West. The remit of regional power has also grown in the face of the administration's new responsibilities, such as social infrastructure which was formerly supplied by state enterprises (such as schools, local crèches and hospitals). In this way, just as the government at the centre has acted as a buffer between the President and Parliament, so in the regions, local administrations have acted as buffers between the people and central government. So far, then, Nazarbaev has appeared immune from what the politics of blame.

## CONCLUSIONS

At the close of Section I, how can we best characterise Nazarbaev's regime? The referendum of 1995, which was designed to prolong his rule to December 2000, was a further power-building tactic. By 1998, however, he appeared to sense that authority-building could not be entirely neglected and his decision to hold early elections in January 1999 can be viewed instead as a legitimising tactic. The undemocratic nature of the 1999 elections, however, did carry some implications for Nazarbaev's standing in the international community. Deemed a dishonest election campaign by OSCE monitors, the elections also set a precedent in international monitoring when the OSCE refused to recognise the outcome.<sup>81</sup> The US and Germany (in its capacity as Head of the EU) both condemned the elections.<sup>82</sup>

Particularly since 1995, the Nazarbaev regime has been characterised by an extraordinary concentration of administrative and coercive power and authority in the hands of the president and his administration, sanctioned by a constitution virtually foisted on the population. Nazarbaev appears to be isolating himself increasingly from

outside visitors, surrounding himself instead with an inner circle of sycophants. The first eight years of independence have demonstrated the overriding significance of Nazarbaev himself and his family. II.1 will demonstrate how recruitment practice is also dominated by the President. There is no conception of the state or nation separate from the person of the President; officials are the President's servants, not the nation's.

This centralisation of power has grown to the detriment of representative and judicial institutions and bodies normally associated with "civil society", such as political parties. The chapter has demonstrated how an 'apertura' occurred between 1994 and 1995 but that it was promptly closed in Autumn 1995 by the introduction of a second Constitution which firmly established executive power. The exclusion of effective representative government renders the link between rulers and ruled highly fragile, and questions the utility of the Durkheimian concept of society mentioned in the Introduction. Whilst the latter concept depends on the sharing of a set of norms by all citizens of a geographically bounded space headed by a single source of authority, the state, Kazakhstan's post-Soviet society is amorphous, fragmented and multiethnic. Gellner's agro-literate polity illustrated how peasants typically belonged to their own "societies", sometimes in "historical places" not knowing they were part of this or that empire;<sup>84</sup> Kazakhstan's population has yet to identify in a meaningful way with the new independent Kazakhstani state.

The absence of democratic norms, a reliable legal framework and a firm institutional architecture has rendered the study of personality, and the individual power-holder's relationship with the state, particularly necessary. Although not within the scope of this thesis, corruption has become an inevitable feature of such a regime, where the political elite acts as a 'comprador' elite and where responsibility to oneself overrides that to state or society. Since the political elite has managed to retain its

monopoly over the economy, it has been able to extract economic gain from foreign investors. For the purposes of this thesis it can also be surmised (but this cannot be proven in detail for reasons of potential hazards in obtaining such information) that corruption has infiltrated the internal workings of the Kazakhstani political system, for example through the purchase of office.

The purchase of office is an interesting aspect to the last point in this conclusion, namely the relationship between central and regional power. In the eight years under review, Nazarbaev has maintained his constitutional power to appoint the heads of regional administrations. It cannot be ruled out, however, that in some cases regional notables have been able to purchase their office from the President. It is more difficult for the President to remove these self-appointed individuals. Their power, in alliance with foreign investors, becomes entrenched. Power is thereby increasingly rooted in finance, which is diffuse and by definition hard to locate and thereby hard to capture.

This diffusion of power has further important implications for the development of centre-periphery relations. As we have noted, some of Kazakhstan's regions have grown at the expense of others. These richer regions have become the donor regions of the Republic. Without its power to appoint the centre would find it difficult to impose its diktat on these areas. The majority of donor regions are located in northern and western Kazakhstan. Thus, although in his state-of-the-nation address, *Kazakhstan 2030*, President Nazarbaev pointed out the need for both a further decentralisation of powers to the regional level and even a strengthening of the competitiveness between the regions, he is unlikely to countenance decentralisation because it is psychologically equated by the elite with separatism.

Although *de jure* regions remain part of the unitary state, *de facto* they thus vary in economic profile and geopolitical links. We shall see in II.2 that it has become

difficult for Nazarbaev to parachute his own men into the western oil-producing regions. Foreign capital may thus allow the western and northern regions to become more autonomous than others. Nazarbaev has found himself occasionally unable to act as arbiter between the interests of the centre, regions and foreign investors. Nevertheless, it would be premature to contend that the Kazakhstani state is disintegrating. Centripetal forces and policies are ensuring its survival. At the regional level, the *akims* of richer regions limit their demands to economic changes, not to demands for political secession. The move to Astana will likely enable the centre to have a greater impact on northern regions. Furthermore, government of the regions has been simplified by the reduction in the number of regions from 20 to 14; deliberately, the western regions were not fused to prevent the formation of one large economic unit.

In sum, in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, private interests are not deep-rooted or well-protected by law. None of them are strong enough to stand out against the state or protect themselves from it. But the state administration is fragmented and hard to control. Government in this context is terribly important. If indeed Kazakhstan becomes a mineral and raw material rich country then redistribution will be vital. It will not be administratively or politically easy given the country's great size, ethnic diversity, the absence of a strong common sense of national identity and the ineffectiveness and corruption of the administration and the elite. The patronage the political elite offers matters crucially. The next chapter analyses the donors and recipients of this patronage.

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### **Endnotes to Chapter I.2**

<sup>1</sup> The President explains: "We tried to make our executive powers stronger because our parties and people have no experience. Someone must help our people to acquire this experience... Democracy cannot be achieved by decrees and laws. I want to assure you that democracy is knocking on the door". *Sovety Kazakhstana*, 2 December 1994.

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<sup>2</sup> Donald N. Jensen, 'Patrimonialism in Post-Soviet Russia', *RFE/RL Newslines*, 17 July 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Evgenii Zhovtis, 8 July 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Martha Brill Olcott, "Nursultan Nazarbaev and the Balancing Act of State-Building in Kazakhstan" in Colton and Tucker (eds), *Patterns in Post-Soviet*, pp. 169–190.

<sup>5</sup> Dinmukhamed Kunaev, *O Moem Vremeni* (Alma-Ata: Deyir, 1992), p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Olcott, *The Kazakhs*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn.

<sup>7</sup> Nursultan Nazarbaev, *Without Right & Left* (London: Class Publishing, 1993), p. 101. Other principal works on Nazarbaev as president include: Karishap Asan Ata, *Prizrak Nezavisimosti* (Moscow: Academia, 1995); Zh. Kh. Dzhunusova, *Respublika Kazakhstan: Prezident. Instituty Demokratii* (Almaty: Jetu Jargy, 1996); K.B. Zhigalov and B.K. Sultanov, *Pervyi Prezident Respubliki Kazakhstan: Nursultan Nazarbaev: Khronika Deyatel'nosti* (1.12.1991-31.5.1993) (Almaty: Kazakhstan XXI Vek, 1993)

<sup>8</sup> Informal conversation with a local political analyst who requested anonymity, 2 July 1996.

<sup>9</sup> Ivo D. Duchacek, *Power Maps: Comparative Politics of Constitutions* (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 1973); for general works on constitutions see also W.G. Andrews, *Constitutions and Constitutionalism* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1961); Ivo D. Duchacek, *Constitutions and Politics* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970); C.J. Friedrich, *Constitutional Government and Democracy* (New York: Ginn and Company, 1950); H.J. Spiro, *Government by Constitution* (New York: Random House, 1959); M.J.C. Vile, *Constitutionalism and the Separation of Powers*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967); and A.J. Zurcher (ed.), *Constitutions and Constitutional Trends since World War II*, (New York: New York University Press, 1955).

<sup>10</sup> John Anderson, "Constitutional Development", *Central Asian Survey* (Vol. 16, No. 3, September 1997), pp. 301–320.

<sup>11</sup> See the interview with Zinaida Fetodova, *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 10 April 1992

<sup>12</sup> The twelfth Parliament had been elected as part of Gorbachev's reforms in 1990. The elections for the XII Supreme Soviet (April 1990 to December 1993) were held partially as they had been in the Soviet era: of the 360 deputy seats, 270 were deputies elected from districts and the other 90 were deputies from public associations, including 17 from the Communist Party of Kazakhstan.

<sup>13</sup> Cited by Vitalii Voronov and Alexander Peregrin in *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 13 July 1995.

<sup>14</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 13 July 1995.

<sup>15</sup> The text of the draft constitution was published in the press on 11 June and then subjected to four months of extensive debate during which one survey reported the improbable statistic that 47.6% of those polled claimed to have read the draft. *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 29 August 1998. Elsewhere it was claimed that over 3 million people took part in the discussion with more than 18,000 proposals being received by the constitutional commission. In late October the draft went for revision to the constitutional commission before being forwarded to the Supreme Soviet for discussion by deputies in early December. Here, extensive discussion led to yet further amendment before the document was passed by an overwhelming majority at the ninth session of the Supreme Soviet of the twelfth Convocation on 28 January 1993. See Sally N. Cummings, "Politics in Kazakhstan: The Constitutional Crisis of March 1995", *FSS Briefing No. 3* (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, August 1995), pp. 1–6.

<sup>16</sup> *Ogni Alatau*, 19 May 1992.

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<sup>17</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 2 June 1992.

<sup>18</sup> *Qazaqstan Respublikasynyn konstitutsiyasy* (Almaty: Edilet, 1993).

<sup>19</sup> Cummings, "Politics in Kazakhstan", p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> *Trud*, 14 May 1992.

<sup>21</sup> Informal conversations with local journalists. The author was present at the voting of parliamentary dissolution.

<sup>22</sup> "Law On the Temporary Delegation of Additional Powers to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Local Chiefs of Administration", *Sovety Kazakhstana*, 10 December 1993.

<sup>23</sup> The President was given the right to exercise certain other powers of the Supreme Soviet (appointing and removing judges, the Prosecutor General, and the Chairman of the National Bank, ratifying and denouncing international treaties, etc.) and to exercise independent powers which, according to the Constitution, the president could only exercise with the consent of the Supreme Soviet (appointing the Chairman of the Council of Ministers and certain other ministers).

<sup>24</sup> For further legislative detail, see Rinat Shamsutdinov, "The Legislative History of Presidential Government in Kazakhstan", The Jamestown Foundation, *Prism*, No. 16, Part 4, 7 August 1998.

<sup>25</sup> Once in parliament, deputies had the right to form formal groupings of no less than 10 individuals for the purpose of expressing a unified position on issues being considered by the Supreme Soviet. Groupings based on political parties and movements are called "factions", others "groups". Deputies can be members of only one faction, but may belong to more than one group. The speaker and deputy speakers of parliament are not permitted to lead a faction. Four factions based on political parties or social organisations initially formed in parliament: the "People's Unity of Kazakhstan" (SNEK); the People's Congress of Kazakhstan Party (NKK); the Socialist Party; and; the Federation of Trade Unions (FTU). Their leaders, Talgat Mamashev, Olzhas Suleimenov, Gaziz Aldamzharov, and David Gabriel' respectively, became members the Coordinating Council. The Organisation for the Legal Development of Kazakhstan (OPRK) also formed a faction, but gained such recognition much later. It was represented in parliament by Aleksandr Peregrin, actively supported inside parliament by Vitaly Rose and externally by Vitaly Voronov.

<sup>26</sup> See the excellent reports on the composition of the 1994–1995 parliament compiled by Reef Altoma under the auspices of Chemonics International, Contract No. CCN-0007-C-00-4004, 1 for the American Legal Consortium under USAID's Rule of Law Programme: *Deputies Elected to the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Kazakhstan and The 13<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Kazakhstan: Spring Session Results*, August 1994.

<sup>27</sup> The main leadership in this group was provided by Chairs of at least six committees: Dzholdasbekov (Science, Education, and New Technologies), Nurgaziev (Construction, Architecture, and Housing), Baimuratov (Finances and Budget), Sabdenov (Economic Reform), Kim (State Building and Regional Policy), Kalmatev (Legal Reform, Legality, and Law and Order); 4 Deputy Chairs: Mamashev (Social Defence), Baev (Industry, Energy, Transport, and Communications), Garkavets (Culture, Press, Mass Media, and Social Organisations), Balieva (Economic Reform).

<sup>28</sup> Most observers agreed that in the thirteenth Parliament factions and party identifications did not play a major role in the work of parliament. The larger story lay in the formation of groups, which often included whole or partial faction memberships, and other nonformalised coalescing of various forces in parliament.



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- <sup>29</sup> Progress coalition had a clear leader in the figure of Aldamzharov.
- <sup>30</sup> Progress members were able to significantly influence the budget process, which resulted in overturning President Nazarbaev's veto on support for certain social welfare programs.
- <sup>31</sup> The Progress Coalition contains close to a majority of parliamentarians. The coalition includes nearly all the members of four groups – Progress, OPRK, Region, Yevraziia (see below) – as well as a majority of Socialist Party Deputies, several members of People's Congress, a couple of members of SNEK, and at least a couple of state list deputies.
- <sup>32</sup> Their leadership was represented by Mikhailov (Akmola oblast), Galenko (Pavlodar oblast), and Golovkov (Oskemen); Kozlov was also an active member.
- <sup>33</sup> Their main concerns are the sharp drop in living standards for the bulk of the population and the drop in production. Region stresses that it is inappropriate to apply a single market reform program to a country whose regions differ as widely as "Poland and Mongolia". Region's kernel of activists are seven representatives from Pavlodar – Yeliseev, an economist with a candidate of sciences degree, as leader, Galenko, Sadykov, Sol'vov, Yerki Sultanov, Vil'danov, and Dymov. Yeliseev also identified Banovska, Zhulanova, and Silkina as supporters of their goals.
- <sup>34</sup> The new image Kazhegeldin gave to the Kazakhstani government is seen in a number of interviews. See, for example, "Kapital stiraet granitsy", *Vek*, 25 November – 1 December 1994; "My ne bol'she chem oskolki prezhnego moguchego gosudarstva...", *Obshaya Gazeta*, 16-22 December 1994; "Zapad Vzyal 'Kapital'", Nam Ostavil 'Manifest'", *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, 28 January 1995; "'Gost' Zhelanen Delom...", *Delovoi Mir*, 23 February 1995.
- <sup>35</sup> Sembaev became a senator in the new bicameral Parliament of December 1995. He was reputedly close to retirement.
- <sup>36</sup> By the end of 1994, very little legislation had been passed by the thirteenth Parliament and Nazarbaev appeared to lose patience.
- <sup>37</sup> Cummings, "Politics in Kazakhstan", p.2.
- <sup>38</sup> For a discussion of the pre-electoral campaign that began in 1994, see "Kto Sleduyoushchii Prezident Kazakhstana?", *Kazakhskaya Pravda*, No. 5, 4 January 1995.
- <sup>39</sup> Of those who voted, 95.46 percent voted to extend the president's term.
- <sup>40</sup> The text of this letter can be found in *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 13 July 1995; the text of the draft constitution was published in *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 4 July 1995
- <sup>41</sup> Conversation with Nurbulat Masanov, 2 February 1996.
- <sup>42</sup> Interview with Baurzhan Mukhamedzhanov, 1 December 1995.
- <sup>43</sup> Interview with Mukhamedzhanov, 1 December 1995.
- <sup>44</sup> See *Konstitutsiya Respubliki Kazakhstan* (Almaty: Kazakhstan, 1995)
- <sup>45</sup> See Cummings, "Parliamentary Elections", p. 3.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- <sup>47</sup> *Karavan*, 6 December 1995.
- <sup>48</sup> See "Family Policy in Kazakhstan – Seeking Mount Olympus Power", *Focus Central Asia*, No. 6, 31 March 1998., pp. 2–10
- <sup>49</sup> "Family Policy in Kazakhstan", p. 5.
- <sup>50</sup> *Delovaya Nedelya*, 3 April 1998.
- <sup>51</sup> "Family Policy in Kazakhstan", p. 10.
- <sup>52</sup> "Ob otstavke Kabinete Ministrov Respubliki Kazakhstan", *Sovety Kazakhstana*, 12 October 1994.

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- <sup>53</sup> In May 1998, just prior to the official inauguration ceremony of 10 June, Nazarbaev signed a decree changing the name of the country's new capital, Akmola, to Astana, effective immediately. The decree specifies that the general public, the maslikhat and the akimat (municipal council and city administration, respectively) had requested the change in order to improve the new capital's image. According to the president, the measure was necessitated by the fact that many people "misinterpret" the city's Kazakh name Aqmola as meaning "white tomb"—a noun with "pessimistic" connotations, the decree commented. The document posits "white blossoming" as the correct translation of Aqmola. The Aqmola region will nevertheless keep that name. The capital city's new name, Astana, is officially translated as "capital".
- <sup>54</sup> The decision to relocate 1,300 km northward was first mooted in 1994; was decreed by Nazarbaev in 1995; the official move occurred on 10 December 1997; and, the official opening ceremony occurred on 10 June 1998, when it was formally presented on June 10 to an audience of 1,500 foreign dignitaries and guests.
- <sup>55</sup> *Vremya po grinvichy*, 10 July 1998.
- <sup>56</sup> Experts also believe that Karavan accounts for nearly 40 percent of Kazakhstan's total newspaper advertising space.
- <sup>57</sup> *Focus Central Asia*, 29 and 30 June 1998.
- <sup>58</sup> Informal conversation with independent journalists, July 1998.
- <sup>59</sup> Interview with Petr Svoik, Azamat co-chairman, 9 July 1998.
- <sup>60</sup> Interview with prominent businessman who requested anonymity, 8 July, 1998.
- <sup>61</sup> *Delovaya Nedelya*, 9 March 1998.
- <sup>62</sup> See *The Jamestown Monitor*, 1 October 1998.
- <sup>63</sup> *Interfax*, 7, 8 and 9 October 1998.
- <sup>64</sup> Konstitutsionnyi zakon Respubliki Kazakhstan, 8 May 1998, Astana "O vnesenii izmenenii i dopolnenii v ukaz prezidenta respubliki Kazakhstan, imeyoushchii silu konstitutsionnogo zakona, "O vyborakh v Respublike Kazakhstan", published in *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 9 May 1998.
- <sup>65</sup> B. Geddes, "A Comparative Perspective on the Leninist Legacy in Eastern Europe", *Comparative Political Studies* (No. 28, July 1995), p. 239.
- <sup>66</sup> Stephen Whitefield (ed.), *The New Institutional Architecture of Eastern Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), especially Chapter 8.
- <sup>67</sup> *UNDP Human Development Report, Kazakhstan 1997*, p. 14.
- <sup>68</sup> See Thomas A. Baylis, "Elites, Institutions, and Political Change in East Central Europe: Germany, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia", in Higley *et al*, *Elites*, pp. 107-130.
- <sup>69</sup> K. Banting and R. Simeon, "Introduction: the politics of constitutional change", in K. Banting and R. Simeon, eds., *The Politics of Constitutional Change in Industrial Nations: Redesigning the State* (London: Macmillan, 1985), pp. 10-13.
- <sup>70</sup> Presidential Decree, "On Measures for Public Administration Restructuring in the Republic of Kazakhstan", 4 March 1997, *Sovety Kazakhstana*, 5 March 1997.
- <sup>71</sup> *Republic of Kazakhstan: Transition of the State*: Volume 1, p. i, World Bank, Country Operations Division I, 15 July 1996.
- <sup>72</sup> *Khabar television channel*, 22 April 1997.
- <sup>73</sup> EIU, *Kazakhstan Country Profile*, 1998/9, p. 19.
- <sup>74</sup> *Vremya po grinvichy*, 3 July 1998.
- <sup>75</sup> *Khabar television channel*, 22 April, 1997.
- <sup>76</sup> Jeffrey W. Hahn, "Local Politics and Local Power in Russia: The Case of Yaroslavl", *Soviet Economy* (Vol. 7, No. 4, October–December 1991), pp. 322–323.

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<sup>77</sup> *Egemen Qazaqstan*, 15 January 1992.

<sup>78</sup> *Khabar* First TV Channel, 15 April 1997.

<sup>79</sup> *Interfax*, 4 May 1997. Over the last few years, he added, about 50,000 migrated from Turgay to Kostanai and Akmola, leaving a population of only 300,000.

<sup>80</sup> Interviews with major Western oil and metals companies conducted between 1995 and 1996.

<sup>81</sup> RFE/RL Newslines, Part I, 20 January 1999. Nevertheless, this refusal was shrouded in ambiguity; moreover, only a few weeks later the European Union granted Kazakhstan another substantial aid package.

<sup>82</sup> *The Financial Times*, 2 February 1999.

## SECTION II

Section II fits the political elite into identifiable social structures (II.1) and analyses how it was recruited (II.2). In this first chapter we look at the 361 members of the March 1995 elite (henceforth referred to as the 1995 elite)<sup>1</sup> – according to our definition set out in the Introduction, the political class. We also identify our core elite, “those individuals who actually exercise political power in a given society at a any given time.”<sup>2</sup> 1995 represents a snapshot of the political elite; while it may fail to capture all the rapid changes in the composition of the core elite, the choice of 1995 nevertheless gives a fair representation of the political class. 1995, as seen in I.2, represents an important turning point in the history of these first eight years. Also, approximately 85 percent of the identified political elite was the same in 1992 and 1998 as in 1995. In II.2 we analyse recruitment *patterns* by examining three time periods: 1992, 1995 and 1998. We assess the degree to which these patterns have transformed with regard to the core elite. We also look at the fate of those who hold top offices (these individuals are identified in II.2).

This section thus has two, mutually reinforcing aims: to investigate (1) the degree of elite integration and cohesion amongst the Kazakhstani elite; and (2) the links between social structures, career patterns and – where possible – personalities and values. Aspects of elite integration include the recognised political science categories of social homogeneity, recruitment patterns, personal interaction, value consensus, group solidarity, and institutional context. I.2 already referred to the last, suggesting fragmentation both between and within institutions. This empirical investigation will provide the basis for a more general discussion of the consequences of elite integration

in the conclusion. Although, as we shall see, generalisations are possible, it must be remembered that any elite is comprised of individuals.

What can and can we not hope to achieve by an analysis of the social structure of the elite? What this chapter cannot do is predict either elite attitudes (covered insofar as information is available) or policies (Section III). There is no necessary correlation between origins, attitudes and behaviour. Even if members of the elite come from the same stratum, their attitudes may vary. Indeed, many have questioned the importance of social background for elite behaviour<sup>3</sup> and the relevance of changes in an elite's social origins to policy developments.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the resulting conclusions that such correlations were extremely tentative were made in the context of stable and institutionalised democracies, and are therefore less likely to apply to transitional states such as Kazakhstan.

We can, however, hope to say something about the links between the political elite and social structure. Elite background may be seen as a set of social resources which are converted into positions and influence. This will enable assessment of the permeability of the elites in question, or, put differently, whether the independence or agglutination model, as defined by Harold D. Lasswell, applies.<sup>5</sup> As with all models, these arguments represent extremes. In the independence model, the correlation between political status and socioeconomic status is negligible. Any citizen's chance of entry into the elite is independent of such characteristics as occupation, education, family background, age, sex, religion, and ethnicity. Every social category is proportionately represented in the elite. The opposite model posits a perfect correlation between an individual's place in the political stratification system and his place in the social hierarchy, so that a socioeconomically privileged class monopolises political leadership. Lasswell's term agglutination conveys this second model by suggesting that several

value rankings in society are fused. The powerful are also the healthy, wealthy, prestigious, and (presumably) wise.

Put differently, and to reiterate our introduction, according to the first model recruitment is closed, to the second recruitment is open. Various scholars, from Mosca via Lasswell to Mills, maintain that recruitment is closed: only specific social strata become members of the political elite.<sup>6</sup> By contrast, Dahl emphasises the plurality of and competition among elites and that recruitment is open.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, elite homogeneity according to social structure can be assessed within and across institutions. Are these individuals united by anything more than unusual involvement and influence in politics? Again the results of this case-study and the necessity of focussing on individuals indicates that this should be a matter for empirical investigation rather than definitional fiat.

## CHAPTER II.1

### THE POLITICAL ELITE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

This chapter looks at social structure in terms of the following variables: institutional affiliation, former occupation, parental background, age, sex, place of birth, nationality, sub-national allegiance, and education. Tables of each variable illustrate the analysis.

#### INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION OF THE POLITICAL ELITE

As outlined in the Appendix, the majority of the political elite in Kazakhstan is an executive elite. In 1995, the unusual importance of the thirteenth parliament (March

1994–March 1995) means that only a few of the 177 members of this Parliament, in addition to a few party leaders, lay outside the executive structure. Otherwise all of the political elite answered to, influenced or was co-opted by the executive. Crucially, members of the military and the religious higher echelons did not have any autonomous power but were co-opted by the elite. The analysis begins with the elite's institutional affiliations, which are listed in Figure 1, roughly in terms of hierarchy of decision-making power and influence, and gives a political class totalling 361. It gives the number of individuals who belonged to each of these institutions. Figure 2 then gives the names of the individuals who comprised the core elite. To recall, this is *not* a circular definition of the elite: Figure One, by listing only selected members of these political institutions, indicates that not all individuals who were found in these institutions automatically comprise the political elite.

## Figure One

*Background: Institutional Structure of the elite (Chapter 1.2)*

**Figure I The institutional affiliation of the elite (March 1995)**

I) Presidential Administration (PA)	55
PA (Top Officials in the Presidential Administration (President; Vice-president; presidential security council; president and vice-president; advisors and assistants; presidential inspectorate)	40
PA2 (Second-Tier Officials in the Presidential Administration (department and committee heads)	15
II) Cabinet of Ministers (CM)	153
CM (Prime Minister, First Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers)	37
CMD (First Deputy and Deputy Ministers)	57
CM2 (Heads of Ministerial Departments and Cabinet Committees; diplomats)	59
III) Regional Elite (O)	57
AO Akim of Oblasts	20
AOD Deputy Akim of Oblasts	21
AO2 (Akim of Towns, Districts, and Heads of Regional Administration Departments (Economic, Financial, GKI)	16
IV) Cabinet of Ministers Administration (CMA)	23
(Head and Deputy Heads; Advisors and Press Secretary to the Prime Minister, Heads of Departments)	
V) Cultural Political Elite (CU)	5
VI) State Enterprise Heads and their deputies (EST)	10
VII) Judiciary (Constitutional Court, Procuracy, Arbitrage Court) (J)	16
VIII) Parliament (13 <sup>th</sup> , 1994-5) (PT)	20
IX) Private Business Elite (EPR)	5
X) Party Leaders and Intelligentsia (PL)	17
<b>TOTAL NUMBER COMPRISING POLITICAL ELITE</b>	<b>361</b>



The numbers listed in Figure 1 are not the total numbers in each institution but the number of individuals who comprise the political elite in each of these institutions. (Again, the Appendix on Methodology indicates how I determined those individuals). What follows is a brief explanation of each institution.

At the top of the hierarchy is the presidential administration (group I) and at its apex stands the President. We saw in I.2 how the President modelled the administration on that of his Russian counterpart, changing the name from *apparat* to *administratsiya* in 1995. Of the 55 members of the presidential administration, 40 constituted what I term top officials (PA). Included in this top 40 are the head of presidential administration; the vice-president (an office, as we saw, abolished in 1995); the presidential security council head; inspectors; and, advisors and assistants. Second-tier officials in the presidential administration (PA2), of which there were 15, is comprised of department and committee heads.

The Presidential Security Council decided security questions of strategic importance (e.g. border issues, Cossacks, disintegration), while the Ministry of Interior (part of group II, see below) was concerned with public order.<sup>8</sup> Presidential advisors and assistants acquired a formal role in the administrative structure in 1995. Both essentially operated in an advisory capacity to the President; assistants were legally higher in rank to advisors, but advisors were often as influential. Igor Rogov, the Russian former Constitutional Court member whom we met in I.2 and who opposed the president's plans for power centralisation, was in March 1995 still in the Constitutional Court. The next time I met Rogov he was barely recognisable. Still ever welcoming and helpful, he showed signs of fatigue in his new role as presidential assistant. But if he was uncomfortable about his co-option into power, he did not show it.<sup>9</sup>

The group of Presidential Inspectors, by contrast, proved unavailable for interview, suggesting that they were an important - and hence often overlooked - group in the presidential administration. The writers of *Kto est' Kto v Respublike Kazakhstan*,<sup>10</sup> the first official comprehensive book of elite biographies, were very proud to have been given an actual list of the key presidential inspectors, and these are included in the table of my 361 members of the political elite.

Next in line is the government (group II), headed by the Prime Minister. As seen in I.2 there have been three very different Prime Ministers between 1991 and 1998, who diverged in personality, policies and in their relationship with their Cabinet. In 1995, Akezhan Kazhegeldin (1994–7) was Prime Minister. By now government ministries had been reduced in number but still the Cabinet was far larger than that under Tereshchenko. There were two First Deputy Prime Ministers, four Deputy Prime Ministers and nineteen ministers in 1995 under Kazhegeldin. The Deputy Prime Ministers often held the post of Minister simultaneously. As we shall see when we turn to the core elite, five ministries can generally be considered to contain top elite members: the Ministry of Oil and Gas, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Interior. The absence of the Ministry of Agriculture in this top hierarchy is important – it signifies the minimal importance placed on agriculture in the reform process. The small-scale post-Soviet Kazakhstani army, the transfer of nuclear weapons to Russia, the cash-strapped economy and the absence of any immediate external security threat made for a low status for the Ministry of Defence.

The Ministry of Economics typified how institutions continue to be shaped by individuals. It witnessed the highest turnover of Ministers. The influence of any one Minister depended on his personality. Altai Tleuberdin, the competent forty-five year

old Moscow-educated economist, proved the most influential of Economics Ministers (1994–5); he was soon co-opted by the President into his own administration. Mars Urkumbaev, another Moscow graduate (in engineering) and famous for his characteristically flamboyant ankle-length sheepskin coat, survived barely seven months. He was fired in the midst of one of Nazarbaev's many anti-corruption campaigns for illegal exports of Shymkent cotton. Like his boss Tereshchenko, he disappeared into the South (he had been head of the Southern administration between 1992 and 1993) and back to business, but unlike Tereshchenko, to date has not reappeared in politics. The high turnover of Economics Ministers suggests that Nazarbaev was never inclined to relinquish too much power to the government on economic policy; indeed, by 1998 the Ministry had been abolished. Altogether, as discussed in I.2, Nazarbaev often used the Prime Minister and Economics Minister as scapegoats for failures in economic policy.

Apart from the 19 Ministers, the identified political elite in the Cabinet of Ministers includes influential Deputy Ministers and Heads of Ministerial Departments and Cabinet Committees. It also includes key diplomatic appointments, notably those assigned to Russia, China, the UK, the US, and the UN. The total number of members of the political elite located in the Cabinet of Ministers is 153.

The heads of regional administrations (group III) and some of their deputies and heads of department constituted the third layer of influence on national policy. The principal departments at the regional level were those of the Interior, Economics and Finance. Anyone below these positions in the regional administrations appears to influence only regional politics. In March 1995 there were 20 regional heads, including the capital, then Almaty city.

The fourth and final, strictly executive, institutional affiliation of the elite was the Cabinet of Ministers Administration (CMA) (IV). To a degree this is a duplication of the bureaucracy of the presidential administration but with far less influence. In a strategic move discussed in I.2, the President physically separated the two bureaucracies in 1994. Approximately 23 of the bureaucrats in the CMA played an influential political role. In total, therefore, 55% of the total elite thus constitutes this main executive elite.

Outside the main executive institutions we find three other institutions that, although technically separate, are subordinate to the executive elite. They are the cultural political elite (group V), state enterprise heads (group VI); the private business elite (group IX); and, the judiciary (group VII). By “cultural political elite” I mean those figures who either directly or indirectly influence presidential policy on issues of education, cultural revival (e.g., the formation of minority cultural centres or language policy) but who are subordinate to executive power. The state enterprises – particularly those of strategic resources such as oil, gas, metals and minerals – included are effectively “owned” by the political elite, whilst the most important “private” businesses are either sponsored or indirectly owned by the political elite. The judiciary, although enjoying greater powers than it did after the introduction of the new Constitution in August 1995, was still appointed by the President and restricted in its autonomy.

The final two categories – the thirteenth Parliament (VIII) and party leaders (X) constituted a small counterelite, whose influence in early 1995 cannot be ignored (see I.2). Of the 177 parliamentarians, 20 are deemed of importance – these are either heads of significant committees, heads of factions or outspoken individuals. As we saw in I.2, around two-thirds of parliament in 1995 stood in “opposition” to presidential policies. 10 of the 17 “party” leaders headed what could be more accurately called opposition groups.

Finally, there are the less visible men or women behind the scenes. By definition, they lie outside the formal structure of power and lie almost beyond detection. As explained in the Annex, I do not purport to have found all these individuals nor to know their precise number. Key examples of these influential but inconspicuous individuals were members of the foreign business elite. Notable examples of these individuals are: Oleg Soskovets (former Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan who left to take up office in the Russian government); Aleksandr Mashkevich of TransWorld Corporation (see III.2), and a number of foreign business advisors (Dr Bang (II.2), and US businessman Jim Giffon of Mercator Corporation) all of whom appear to have the ear of the President. Others are listed in the publication *Kto est' Kto (Who's Who)*, perhaps indicating the desire of the elite to present a public face, but were rarely, if at all, mentioned by the panel of experts. Two notable individuals who are visible but are omitted in all elite biographies are Nazarbaev's wife, Sara Nazarbaeva and the eldest of their three daughters, Dariga Nazarbaeva.

Figure Two establishes the identities of those who comprise the *core* of this political elite. These individuals exerted real influence in March 1995. An even smaller group within this core political elite constituted President Nazarbaev's closest advisors, and those individuals are underlined. This smaller circle constitutes the selectorate – in other words, it is this small elite that actively took part in recruitment decisions, the significance of which will become clear in II.2. Where appropriate in this chapter, the core elite's social origins will be highlighted and compared to the wider political class.

**Figure 2: The core political elite (March 1995)**

(i) Presidential Administration (PA)	Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbaev; Erik Asanbaev; Nurtai Abykaev (Head of Presidential Administration); Tulegen Zhukeev (Security Council; later head of Democratic Party); Syzdyk Abishev; <i>Marat Tazhin</i> ; Sat Tokpakbaev Bizhanov; Tursunov; Mukhamedzhanov; Zhigalov
II) Cabinet of Ministers (CM)	Akezhan Kazhegeldin (Prime Minister); Isingarin; Shaikhenov; Aleksandr Pavlov; <i>Sobolev</i> Tasmagambetov Mette Kulibaev Kairbek Suleimenov Balgimbaev Tokaev Altai Tleuberdin (Economics Minister and Presidential Advisor); Kalmurzaev; <i>Utepov</i> ; <i>Petr Svoik</i> ; <i>Daukeev</i> ; Karibjanov; <i>Khrapunov</i> ; Shkolnik; Esimov
III) Regional Elite (O)	Zhakiyanov(Semei); Kulmakhanov (Alma-Ata town); Yuri Lavrinenko (East Kazakhstan); <i>Turisbekov</i> ; <i>Levitin</i> ; <i>Akhmetov</i> ; Cherdybaev
IV) Cabinet of Ministers Administration (CMA)	<i>Utembaev</i> ; <i>Zhannat Ertlesova</i>
VI) State Economic Elite and their deputies (EST)	<i>Jandosov</i> ; <i>Grigori Marchenko</i>
VII) Judiciary (Constitutional Court, Procuracy, Arbitrage Court) (J)	Makhalov; Baimakhanov; <i>Igor Rogov</i>
VIII) Parliament (13 <sup>th</sup> 1994-5) (PT)	Marat Ospanov; Kekilbaev Abdildin; <i>Nukadilov Peregrin</i> ; <i>Roze Aldamjarov</i> ; <i>Olzhas Suleimenov</i>
IX) Private Business Elite (EPR)	Sergei Tereshchenko ("Integration Fund"; former Prime Minister); Oleg Soskovets (Russian Government; industrial interests); Aleksandr Mashkevich (Trans-World Group) <u>Jim Giffin</u> (Mercator Corporation); Kalyk Abdullaev (President of Atakent Exhibition Centre)
XI) Other	Sara Nazarbaeva (President's wife); Dariga Nazarbaeva (President's daughter)
<b>TOTAL NUMBER COMPRISING CORE POLITICAL ELITE</b>	<b>60</b>

*Those in italics indicate individuals interviewed by the author.*

## **Former Occupation**

How was the elite occupied prior to the collapse of Soviet rule? Whilst in II.2 we will look more specifically at the roads to power since 1991, here we are interested in finding whether power under the Soviet system translated into elite status in an independent Kazakhstan.

**Figure 3: Pre- 1991 Occupation of the Kazakhstani elite (March 95)**

	AE	AW	CM	CU	EO	D	G	IE	IW	J	KE	OB	OG	OR	M	P	PF	PR	PW	R	S	ST
1.PA			2		1	3	5	1		1		11	2	2	1	1	1	6	2			1
PA2				1			5				1	1		1				1	1	4		55
2.CM		1			4		12	6				5	2		2					3		
CMD	1		1		2	6	16	8		1	1	4	4	2		3		1		9		
CM2			1		3	3	15	7		3	1	5		1		3			2	8	1	153
3.AO	3						1	4			2	6	3	1								
AOD 02	1	2			2	3	3	8	4	2	1	2	6	6	1							57
4.CMA			2		1		7			2	1	1		3	2			1	3			23
5.CU				2			1												1	1		5
6.EST					3			3			1											10
7.J							2			9						2				3		16
8.PT					1		1	3	1	1	3	1	1	3	2	2			1	4	1	20
9.EPR					2			2	1													5
10.PL				1	1	1	1		1			2	1		5					4		17
TOTAL	5	3	7	6	20	13	69	42	7	19	10	39	19	19	3	19	1	9	10	36	2	3
%	1.4	0.8	1.9	1.7	5.5	3.6	19.1	11.6	1.9	5.2	2.7	10.8	5.3	5.3	0.83	5.3	0.3	2.5	2.8	10	0.6	0.8

AE: Agricultural Executive; AW: Agricultural Worker; CM: Council of Ministers; CU: Culture; EO Economic Organisation; D: Diplomat; G: Government; E: Industrial Executive (incl head engineers); IW: Industrial Worker; J: Judiciary; KE: Komsomol Executive; OB: Obkorm; OG: Gorkom; OR: Rankom; M: Military; P: Professionals (incl doctors, vets, teachers and professors); PR: Full Members of the Republic Central Committee; PW: Party Writer; R: Research; S: Legislative Post; St: Student



The pre-1991 principal occupations of the Kazakhstani elite are as follows:

6 individuals were full members of the Republican Central Committee whilst the only full member of the CPSU Central Committee was President Nazarbaev. There were very few, if any, ethnic Kazakhs in elite positions of any sort outside the Kazakh SSR in the Soviet era. The largest percentage of today's elite were former *apparatchiki* – 40 percent. 20% of the elite were former Soviet republican ministers or deputy ministers, and just under 2% were part of the Council of Ministers of the Kazakh SSR. 13.5% of the contemporary elite were industrial executives (11.6) (a good many head engineers) or industrial workers (1.9%) in the Soviet period. Approximately 5 percent were part of the KGB. Only just over 2 percent of the present elite were employed (either as executives or workers) in agriculture. Under 1 percent were in the Soviet military and just 3.6% were in the Soviet diplomatic corps.

92% of the Kazakhstani elite were employed in either executive posts as state officials or as CPSU *apparatchiki* in the Soviet era just prior to 1991.<sup>11</sup> This suggests significant elite continuity rather than renewal. Such elite continuity appears typical of post-communist states generally.<sup>12</sup> 85% of the elite were members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). This continuity can be interpreted differently. On the one hand it might simply be the product of continuity by default. The absence of an alternative elite forced state-builders to keep the old elite. On the other hand, continuity might suggest that membership in the Soviet past is essential to membership in the post-Soviet present for a more subtle reason.

The second explanation is borne out by correlations within each institution. The same ethnic Kazakhs who held senior posts in the Soviet period also held top positions in 1995. Typically, those members of the 1995 elite in top positions of the presidential administration were top CPSU and government executive officials pre-1991, either at

the national or regional level. Interestingly, it appears that employment in top Soviet executive posts provided just as good a guarantee of a place in the post-independent Kazakh elite as employment as a CPSU *apparatchik*. Examples of those who climbed the executive rather than CPSU ladder in the Soviet period were Abykaev, Abdullaev, Isingarin, and Sobolev. 28% of the identified political elite worked at the *obkom* level. What is distinctive about both the presidential administration and the cabinet of ministers is that their officials were drawn from a wide band of the top jobs, ranging from the Council of Ministers to the position of party writer. Many in the presidential administration who worked in the oblast administration were actually first or second *obkom* secretaries.

Ethnicity has also played a role in continuity. Insert about Russians in Kazakh SSR Key examples of ethnic Kazakhs who have retained their power posts are President Nursultan Nazarbaev, Vice- President Erik Asanbaev, Former Minister of Foreign Economic Relations Syzdyk Abishev, Head of Administration Nurtai Abykaev, Transport Minister Nigmatzhan Isingarin, and CIS Executive Committee Head Kalyk Abdullaev. Abdullaev, who in 1995 chaired Kazakhstan's lucrative state-run exhibition centre, was chairman of Kazakh SSR Gosplan in the dying days of the Soviet Union. Recruited by Kunaev, he is a formidable figure in Southern politics. He was eventually to become the South's regional head in 1997. The other figure whose Soviet-era networks were crucial in the early independence period was Isingarin. By contrast, the majority of Russian *obkom* first secretaries appear to have emigrated, often to work in regional administrations in Russia's regions which border Kazakhstan.

Some homogeneity in prior occupation is discernible among members of the 1995 Cabinet of Ministers. The 1995 Ministers tended to have reached the rank of either Minister or Deputy Minister in the Soviet period. Of the 19 ministers, six worked as

CPSU *apparatchiki*, four at the ministerial level in the Kazakh SSR government, three as industrial executives, two as researchers, another two as USSR Ministry officials (Isingarín and 1995 Minister of Foreign Affairs Tokaev), one in a *gorkom* and one in the military. Most of the Deputy Ministers or Heads of Department in 1995 worked in Soviet government institutions. The overwhelming majority of Deputy Ministers served in various ministries of the Kazakh SSR. The Ministers in office in 1995 also appear generally to have stayed where they were, in the Cabinet of Ministers, rather than, say the presidential administration or business. It is thus premature to say that the Kazakhstani government has become professional in the sense of having its origins in economic management, diplomacy and the former security services. Although the core elite (see below) is drawn partly from these sectors, economic managers and former security service employees have more often been lost to the private sector.

The largest degree of occupational homogeneity among the core elite is found at the regional level. Of the 20 regional heads, half served in the Soviet period either as *raikom* or *obkom* heads, and half as managers or enterprises or collective farms. Apart from Saparbaev in Kzyl-Orda, all in 1995 had lived and worked in the regions which they headed. In contrast to Russia, where the chair of the regional parliament, *oblsovnet*, often became regional head, in Kazakhstan *obkom* first secretaries were more likely to assume that role. This suggests greater executive continuity. Of the eight regional heads not born in the region, all nevertheless served in these regions for most of their working life. Eight of the twenty heads had reached the level of *Obkom* First Secretary before 1991. “My experience as head of this oblast in the eighties has served me very well in my present job. I rely still almost exclusively on the contacts I had in that period”, explained Zhakupov, head of the Western region of the Uralsk.<sup>13</sup> In short, bureaucrats and managers dominate the regional level. Gartman and Braun, two ethnic

German heads of regional administration in the north in 1995, were part of a large group of Northern *sovkhos* and *kolkhoz* German economic leaders. Turisbekov, head of Southern Kazakhstan, made his career in the *raispolkom* and the *Komsomol*; Djakupov, by contrast, was one of the lowest-ranking regional heads in terms of Soviet occupation; he never reached higher than second *gorkom* secretary. Djakupov, as we shall see in II.2, became the longest-serving regional head; his longevity is probably best explained by loyalty rather than ability. Danial Akhmetov recounted: “Finally, regional deputies tend to have been formerly in obkom/raikom posts, in the regional procuracy or in the Congress of People’s Deputies in the final years of the Gorbachev era”.<sup>14</sup>

So far, then, the above suggests that a pre-1991 government career has led to a post-1991 government career. The remaining members of our elite have a somewhat different profile. The greatest degree of occupational homogeneity is found in the profession of the judiciary; more than half of judicial officials worked in the judiciary in the pre-1991 period. If members of the judiciary worked in government they tended to have worked in the security services.<sup>15</sup> The majority of the judiciary worked in the top Soviet legal institution, namely the procuracy. Vitalii Voronov is an example of a top lawyer who worked in the Omsk procuracy in 1995; as part of his promotion in Gorbachev’s shake-up in the judiciary in 1985, he was moved to then Tselinograd (now Astana) in 1987.

Homogeneity is also found amongst the industrial executives, both state and private. They were either “red directors” in the Soviet period or heads of new economic enterprises in the Gorbachev period. The business elite in the Gorbachev period in Kazakshstan, as in Russia, often emerged from the *Komsomol*.

A significant 29% of party leaders were professionals, compared to 10% of parliamentarians. 20% of parliamentarians were formerly academics, 5% were industrial

workers and 15% were *raikom* leaders. Little occupational homogeneity can be observed among parliamentarians, who range from the first cosmonaut of Kazakhstan, Kenes Aubaliev, to the chief national Greco-Roman wrestling trainer, Daulet Turlykhanov. This already suggests that the social background of parliamentarians differs from that of the core executive elite. This in turn is further evidence to the conclusions drawn in I.2, namely that parliament does not count in policy formation and that outsiders have been kept out.

What of the core elite? In terms of occupational background, the core elite is not homogenous. It is drawn from roughly three camps: old Soviet government executives (including the judiciary) and CPSU *apparatchiki*; economic and business executives; and, professional researchers/students.

**Figure 4: The Core Elite according to former occupation**

<p>Soviet government executives (including the judiciary) and CPSU apparatchiki</p>	<p>Nazarbaev (CPSU Republican First Secretary and President); Abykaev (Council of Ministers Chair and 1995 Presidential Administration Head); Zhukeev (former CPSU apparatchik and 1995 Security Council chair); Abishev (Minister and 1995 former Minister of Foreign Economic Relations); Tokpakbaev (KGB and 1995 Head of Presidential Bodyguard Service); Isingarın (1995 Transport Minister and former USSR Transport Minister); Tokaev (former USSR diplomat and 1995 Minister of Foreign Affairs); Sobolev (Gosplan and 1995 Deputy Prime Minister); Suleimenov (former KGB, 1995 Minister of Interior); Balgimbaev (USSR Ministry of Oil and Gas; 1995 Oil and Gas Minister); Tleuberdin (Gosplan, 1995 Economics Minister); Kalmurzaev (State Statistics Committee, 1995 State Property Committee Chair); Karibzhanov (Gosagroprom; 1995 Minister of Agriculture); Akhmetov (young CPSU apparatchik 1995 Head of Pavlodar region); Ertlesova (Gosplan)</p>
<p>Business/Economic/ Former Komsomol</p>	<p>Kazhegeldin (Komsomol executive and former head of Kazakhstan's flagship company Semei); Tasmagambetov (Komsomol executive); Mette (former</p>

	<p>“red director”); Daukeev (Kazgeofizika state geological exploration enterprise; 1995 Minister of Geology); Svoik (former “red director”, Uralsk Tsets); Zhakiyanov (took over Semei from Kazhegeldin; 1995 Head of Semei regional administration); Levitin (red director, 1995 Head of Mangistau region)</p>
<p>Professionals/ Researchers</p>	<p>Tazhin (former professor of sociology at Kazakhstan State University); Shaikhenov (1995 Justice Minister and former researcher in legal affairs in Sverdlosk and Uralsk); Utepov (Moscow student, but also served for five years in KGB); Cherdabaev (former petroleum researcher in Moscow, 1995 Atyrau regional head); Kosanov (former student Prime Minister’s Press Secretary)</p>

We also have a small number from the Soviet regional elite, notably Aleksandr Pavlov, a competent economist in the Pavlodar obkom who went on to head Pavlodar regional administration before he was appointed Finance Minister; Askar Kulibaev<sup>16</sup>; Shalbai Kulmakhanov (obkom, 1995 Almaty town mayor); Yurii Lavrinenko (obkom, East Kazakhstan regional head); and, Zautbek Turisbekov (obkom, Southern Kazakhstan 1995 regional head).

## **Family Background: A Chingizid Elite?**

Nomadic Kazakhs, we saw, enjoyed a somewhat permeable upper class.<sup>17</sup> Slaves, or *telenguts*, were integrated by marriage, and the white bone often married the black bone. Significantly, President Nazarbaev, elsewhere in his official biography, states: “It used to be that people boasted about their “proletarian” origins. Now the trend is to find some aristocratic blood among their ancestors. Well there was never one aristocrat in my background. I am the son, grandson and great grandson of shepherds.”<sup>18</sup> It is not possible to provide genealogical records of the Chingizid descent of the Kazakh members of the elite. Many members of the elite were unwilling to talk of their aristocratic descent. Informal evidence suggests that this absence of Chingizid descent has exposed Nazarbaev to some criticism. It appears that the search for Chingizid lineage is strongest at the regional level. Said one Uralsk entrepreneur who prefers to remain anonymous: “in both elite and business circles, people are quickly divided into white and black bone”. In any case, tracing aristocratic origins is not that significant at the more flexible national level. A partial explanation for the lack of importance accorded to pre-Soviet legitimacy may stem from the fact that, as seen in I.1, khans were traditionally weak rulers.

Only partial information could be determined on the parental backgrounds of the elite under investigation.<sup>19</sup> In 200 of the 361 members of the political elite, 62% of their parents were manual workers, either in industry or agriculture; 12% were managers; 15% were apparatchiki, 9% professionals; and, the remaining 2% had worked in the military. Of those I interviewed in the national elite, 52% of their parents were agricultural workers, 12% manual workers, 16% former apparatchiki, 10% teachers, and 10% professionals. Although not always made clear by the interviewee, the suggestion



is that these occupations were actually their fathers' main adult status (rather than simply being born, for example, the sons of agricultural workers). This suggests a high degree of first generation mobility.

This high degree of social mobility was characteristic of the Soviet period. It was estimated that more than four-fifths of the Soviet Central Committee were children of workers or peasants. Harasymiw also found that a large proportion of the top elite came from low status families. More rigorous evidence from Yugoslavia indicated that 38 percent of the party and legislative leaders came from proletarian families and another 31 percent from the peasantry.<sup>20</sup> International comparisons may be helpful here. By contrast, despite the American "log-cabin" myth, the evidence suggests that far from having more upward mobility into the political elite than other nations, the United States in fact has somewhat less. Indeed, since the birth of the Republic, American leaders have been drawn from upper social strata.<sup>21</sup> A study of 269 prominent political leaders in Asia, Africa, and Latin America found that their parents were generally in the middle or upper middle classes.

In other elite studies, generally the higher the level of political authority, the greater the representation for high-status social groups. There does appear to be some correlation in the Kazakhstani elite between social origins and political authority. The higher status families were able to send their children to Moscow schools and the disproportionate advantage of Moscow graduates increases at each rung of the political hierarchy – especially among the younger generation. But again this generalisation has its notable exceptions. Oralbai Abdykarimov, who in 1995 was Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration and became its head and thus among the top five of the national elite in 1996, does not hide the fact that his father, Abdykarim, was a shepherd

and that he too began his Soviet career as a shepherd of Nurinski state farm, Karaganda region.

In other ways, there were signs toward the end of the regime that first-generation mobility had already slowed: the Kazakh SSR political elite was increasingly promoting its own. Vice-President Asanbaev's father, for example, was one of the roughly 100 members of the Kazakh intelligentsia who were shot in the 1930s and who was since rehabilitated. The father of successful technocrat Uraz Dzhandosov was a senior Kazakh CPSU apparatchik. Marat Tazhin's father served as Obkom Second Secretary in Uralsk.<sup>22</sup> Other prominent members of the elite who enjoyed the protection of their fathers' status were one-time presidential opponent Murat Auezov, whose father Mukhtar Auezov wrote the pathbreaking novel *Put' Abaya*; and, successful state-funded entrepreneur Kozykorpesh Esenberlin, son of another noted Soviet writer, Ilyas Esenberlin who also, significantly, wrote in Kazakh. Soviet-era ethnic Kazakh historians also seem to have been rewarded – Kozybaev, for example, was the individual appointed by Nazarbaev to rewrite the history of Kazakhstan. The past appears also to have served as protection for the counterelite. The father of Russian Jew Evgenii Zhovtis, whom was identified in I.2 as having been an active opposition human rights campaigner since 1992, was rehabilitated in that year. Alternatively, the elite's own past individual literary accomplishments can serve as promotion or protection; pertinent examples are anti-nuclear activist Olzhas Suleimenov whose book *Az-i-ya*<sup>23</sup> was considered the main dissident work to emerge from Kazakhstan in the Soviet period; and Abish Kekilbaev, who has served as speaker of the 13<sup>th</sup> parliament and state secretary. In 1992 Kekilbaev was awarded the title of People's Writer (*Narodnyi Pisatel'*). Opposition lawyer Zimanov had as a father one of the highest-ranking ethnic Kazakh officers in the Soviet army.

Thus, the basic core profile in 1995 is of people from poor backgrounds (because their fathers remained farmers or workers). These people, therefore, enjoyed a considerable amount of first generation mobility, since their fathers *remained* agriculturalists or workers. There was also a well-connected minority – (particularly among the younger members). Among this minority there were a number of people whose backgrounds seemed to allow them an unusual degree of leeway for semi-oppositional activity.

Age

**Occupation and Age (March 1995)**

	<35	36-45	46-55	>55	TOTAL 36-55 (%)
<b>1.PA</b>	4	15	12	9	73
<b>PA2</b>	1	5	8	1	
<b>Total</b>	5	20	20	10	
<b>2.CM</b>	1	11	22	3	86
<b>CMD</b>	1	9	38	9	
<b>CM2</b>	1	13	39	6	
<b>Total</b>	3	33	99	18	
<b>3. AO</b>	1	4	14	1	84
<b>AOD</b>	1	4	12	4	
<b>O2</b>		8	6	2	
<b>Total</b>	2	16	32	7	
<b>4. CMA</b>	0	10	10	3	87
<b>5. CU</b>	1	0	2	2	40
<b>6. EST</b>	2	3	3	2	60
<b>7. J</b>	1	7	4	4	69
<b>8. PT</b>	1	5	9	5	70
<b>9. EPR</b>	2	1	1	1	40
<b>10.PL</b>	3	5	4	5	53
<b>TOTAL</b>	20 (5.4%)	100 (27.7%)	184 (51%)	57 (15.8%)	75%

This is a short time period with which to compare generations, but the following conclusions may tentatively be drawn. Compared to the Soviet period, the 1995 elite was significantly younger. In 1995, the trend was for the political elite to be drawn from the “middle-age” brackets 36-55 (76% in 1995). The highest percentage of the elite lay in the 46-55 age bracket. The oldest individual among the political elite was born in 1921 but he was among the 1% over seventy years of age. A common age pattern emerges for the four main arms of the executive elite: presidential administration, cabinet of ministers, regional administrations and cabinet of ministers apparat. The president, turned 55 in 1995, just fitted into this age bracket. As noted, until October 1998, the age of the president was not allowed to exceed 65; that age restriction was lifted in October 1998 and suggests that the president is likely to stand for another term of office in 2006. The age of the president is rarely seen as an obstacle for him to stand another term.

In 1995, as many as 40% of private managers were under 35; other institutions with a fair percentage of under 35s included parties, state economic organisation heads and heads of cultural organisations. The average age for men was lower than that for women.

There was evidence to suggest that the average age of the Kazakhstani elite may be rather higher than in some other Soviet republics.<sup>24</sup> This might partly be explained by Kazakhstani society’s own changing age structure; while the Kazakh SSR had one of the youngest populations of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, its rising rates of infant mortality and emigration since 1991 have increased the average of the population, with the percentage of 20-29 year olds in 1994 having dropped sharply. There also appear to be some regional differences – generally the youngest members of the regional

administrations tend to be found in the North. Overall, however, the average age of the elite is lower than heads of government worldwide.<sup>25</sup>

The core elite comprised both old and younger generations. Interviews with the elite suggested that age did not appear to have a significant impact on attitudes. Some of the top positions in the presidential administration were staffed by young members of the elite from private backgrounds and perhaps with Moscow educations. These younger generations were educated in market economics at financial institutes in Moscow. Not all were more liberally minded, however. Nor was there a significant gap between old and young in terms of attitudes towards market reform. Of those interviewed nearly 90% supported the privatisation initiatives underway, and the consensus on the overall direction of reform was overwhelming.

## Gender

The gender variable permits an evaluation of the role of women in the political elite and society of post-communist Kazakhstan, and a re-evaluation of their role in the Soviet and pre-Soviet past. Table 6 provides a categorisation of employment by gender.

<b>Table 6: Gender</b>		
<b>1995</b>		
<i>Gender</i>	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>1.PA</b>	37	3
<b>PA2</b>	13	2
<b>Total</b>	50	5
<b>2.CM</b>	36	1
<b>CMD</b>	54	3
<b>CM2</b>	57	2
<b>Total</b>	147	6
<b>3. AO</b>	20	0
<b>AOD</b>	20	1
<b>O2</b>	15	1
<b>Total</b>		2
<b>4. CMA</b>	22	1
<b>5. CU</b>	5	0
<b>6. EST</b>	10	0
<b>7. J</b>	14	2
<b>8. PT</b>	17	3
<b>9. EPR</b>	5	0
<b>10. PL</b>	16	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>20</b>
	<b>(94%)</b>	<b>(6%)</b>

93% of the elite in 1995 was male. The highest proportion of females were found in the judiciary (15%), parliament (12%) and presidential administration (10%). No females served as regional heads and none were found amongst the cultural-

political elite or as heads of state and private economic corporations. Only one female minister worked in the early Kazhegeldin government. Women constituted only 21% of heads of department and divisions within the government. In the regions, however, ten of the deputies were women, but no women worked among the top-level municipal administrations of Almaty. The situation did not differ in other towns and district administrative centres, although women were often assigned as deputies in towns of regional significance and in district administrations. In sum, although women formed an overwhelming majority in the bodies of state administration in Kazakhstan, they exerted practically no influence on state policy. The higher the status of the position, the lower the inclusion of women.

Although, therefore, women were better represented in the largely powerless parliament than in the more powerful executive branch, there were important exceptions. Women with direct influence on executive policy included Sara Nazarbaeva (wife of the President), Dinara Nazarbaeva (who, as seen in I.2, was Head of the State Television Company Khabar), Zinaida Fetodova (Presidential Administration, Head of Department), Gulzhana Karagusova (Head of Economic Council, Presidential Administration), and Rosa Kenzhetaeva (Head of the Economic Reform Unit in the Presidential Administration). Other than their gender, little bound these females together as a core elite; their social homogeneity was less than that of the male political elite and this confirms that they are largely excluded from the political elite. They were born in various parts of the country, had different discipline specialisations (economics, law, sociology) and either made their way through regional party organs or as professionals. It does seem however, that the party route has been the most assured for females. Aitimova, Fetodova, Kenzhetaeva all served in *rai-* or *obkoms*. Zhannat Ertlesova,



Deputy Minister of Economics who had worked all her professional life in Gosplan, played an influential role in the IMF stabilisation programme.

The one female minister in 1995 was the Minister of Youth, Tourism and Sport. Born in a village in the Western region of Uralsk, Byrganym Aitimova, who made her career through the Komsomol, is the daughter of two professionals. Again, although we must be careful with direct correlation, Aitimova, one of the few females to have risen to ministerial rank, is also one of the few females to have succeeded to *obkom* first secretary, serving in Uralsk between 1979 and 1983. However, this is a low-status Ministry; the only other female minister as of 1995 was Zaure Kadyrova who headed the equally low-status Ministry of Labour.

While the majority of females in the executive were ethnic Kazakhs, the largest proportion of prominent parliamentarians – and hence still lower status females – were ethnic Russians. Women appeared to be particularly active in forming political movements. One example was Aleksandra Dokychaeva, supporter of *Edinstvo* and *Lad*, who was educated in mathematics at Novosibirsk University and spent most of the Soviet period in scientific research. She stood as a candidate for the thirteenth parliament but her campaign was curtailed after she attacked the government for neglecting Russians in the northern regions. A similar example is Valentina Sivryukova. Born to Russian industrial workers in the region of Dzhambul – which probably made her one of the most militant females of Southern Kazakhstan - she studied engineering. She remains head of Birlesu, the first independent Trade Union in Kazakhstan. Highly respected, she sometimes overshadowed her husband, Leonid Solomon, head of the Independent Trade Union Centre of Kazakhstan.<sup>26</sup> Tatyana Kvyatkovskaya was exceptional among females in not having made her career either in the party or in industry. But then her place in the elite came more by accident. As described in I.2, she

was the disgruntled parliamentarian who complained to the Constitutional Court of irregularities in the thirteenth parliamentary elections and provided the excuse the President needed to dissolve parliament. Kvyatkovskaya has been a journalist for most of her life.

In the context of women in power worldwide, the above scenario of female under-representation and concentration in parliamentary rather than executive office is typical. The change in female status lies rather in comparison to the Soviet and pre-Soviet periods of rule in Central Asia. Women are less prominent than in Soviet days. Even if women in the Soviet period might not always have exerted real executive influence – indeed membership of the old Supreme Soviets was often symbolic - they were more visible. The Soviet system established specific quotas for particular jobs. The Soviet government made a strong drive to “rescue women from bondage.” In 1960 there were higher percentages of Kazakh and Kyrgyz women with specialised education or enrolled as students in higher education than of any other Central Asian nationality.<sup>27</sup> There is a strong call now in Kazakhstan for the restoration of the quota system. One parliamentarian stated: “I used to be in a top regional executive position. Now I got into the thirteenth parliament but see little chance of this channel surviving. I think that women should form political parties to boost their participation”.<sup>28</sup> Signs are that women have already made political capital on this: we shall see in II.2 that by 1998 a minister with the portfolio of women’s affairs had been assigned.

The pre-Soviet status of Kazakh women also seems to have been better. A woman was mistress of her yurt; indeed, she often owned it, for it was usually included in her dowry along, with household equipment, clothing, and jewellery. A woman could divorce her husband or, on his death, marry a man outside his family. Kazakh women were not veiled, and girls associated freely with young men, in horse races, singing

contests, and other diversions. As Winner has pointed out, in the traditional heroic epics of the Kazakhs the heroine was “usually endowed with qualities similar to those of the *batyr* (hero)”, and was “depicted as the equal of her husband or lover in moral worth and intelligence.”<sup>29</sup> They were not traditionally as powerless as women in settled Islamic lands. Some of these regional differences are born out today. Fewer females appeared to work in the Southern Kazakhstan oblast, a sign of the influence of their sedentary southern Islamic neighbour, Uzbekistan. Women were fairly highly represented in political office in the North and West. Female Kazakhs tended to occupy executive office.

Both Russian and Kazakh women have promoted the place of women in post-independent political office; Russian women tend to have espoused the fate of ethnic Russians in the north. The dual influence of Asia and Europe is felt in male attitudes to women in Kazakhstan. Although enjoying greater status than their Uzbekistan counterparts, Kazakh women are, in popular estimation, not legitimate power holders, as they appeared to be in Kyrgyzstan. In that republic women play a far more important political role and hold significant ministerial posts and ambassadorial appointments. One of the most prominent diplomats, Kyrgyzstan’s ambassador to London and former foreign minister, is female; one gets the feeling that Kazakhstan’s elite would not allow the easy ascent of women to senior posts.

Ultimately, perhaps their clearest avenue for influence is as wives. Wives were often very vocal at khan gatherings before Russian colonisation. Similarly today, wives can exert important influence on the male member of the elite. Sara Nazarbaeva has used her popular appeal to construct a bridge between the presidential house and the people. She is head of a children’s charity called Bobek. She has and is allowed to have a public profile. She is also said to exert informal power - she is said to have strongly

supported the move of the capital to Akmola, her birthplace. Mixed marriages are also common amongst the elite. Informally, marriage to a Russian or Jewish woman delegitimises a Kazakh male member of the elite in the eyes of the population (when in Soviet times intermarriage was often favourably regarded). A key example here is the wife of the second Prime Minister Kazhegeldin, who is a Russian Jew.

**Institutional Affiliation and Place of Birth (March 1995)**

**Table 6: Institutional Affiliation and Place of Birth (March 1995)**

	Rur	Urb	N	S	E	W	R	Oth
<b>1.PA</b>	24	16	17	12	4	3	4	1
<b>PA2</b>	9	6	3	10		1		
<b>Total</b>	33	22	20	22	4	4	4	
<b>2.CM</b>	21	16	4	13	5	3	11	2
<b>CMD</b>	33	24	8	20	7	8	12	
<b>CM2</b>	33	26	11	27	10	2	10	
<b>Total</b>	87	66	23	60	22	13	33	
<b>3. AO</b>	18	2	4	6	1	3	6	4
<b>AOD</b>	13	8	6	9	3	1	5	
<b>O2</b>	15	1	3	4	1	1		
<b>Total</b>	46	11	13	19	5	5	11	
<b>4. CMA</b>	14	9	3	10	6	2	2	
<b>5. CU</b>	2	3	1	2			2	
<b>6. EST</b>	3	7	2	5	2		1	
<b>7. J</b>	12	4	3	5	1	2	5	
<b>8. PT</b>	12	8	4	7	1	2	5	1
<b>9. EPR</b>	1	4	2	2			1	
<b>10.PL</b>	9	8	5	8		1	3	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>(61)</b>	<b>(39)</b>	<b>(21)</b>	<b>(39)</b>	<b>(11)</b>	<b>(8)</b>	<b>(19)</b>	<b>(2)</b>

*Key: Rur Rural; Urb Urban; N North; S South; E East; W West; R Russia;*

*Oth Other*

61% of the elite claimed rural origin. The urban/rural divide is important. In his study of comparative elites, Putnam highlights how many elites are drawn disproportionately from cities, in particular the larger metropolises. The under-representation of villages and small towns, he writes, “characterises both developed and undeveloped countries, both capitalist and communist systems.”<sup>30</sup> The reverse appeared to be the case for this political elite. This reinforces the point made earlier with regard to the high degree of social mobility in the Soviet era. This also begs the question as to how much the location of one’s early childhood and adolescent upbringing have influenced later character development. By most accounts they do, although socialisation within urban areas and institutions in later education and professional life also serves to redefine cultures and values.

The overwhelming majority of the elite came from the North and South, with 21% drawn from the former and 38% from the South. The East and West each shared 9% of the elite. Interestingly, fully one-fifth of the political elite was born in Russia. A significant number of the latter were Kazakhs; this suggests an elite that was highly integrated in the Soviet Union. There are logical explanations for this. As we shall see in II.2, recruitment policies under Kunaev favoured Kazakhs from his region, the South. Many of Kunaev’s clients of the South appear to have retained power. Many Kazakhs fled to the south of Russia in the eighteenth century with the Zhungar onslaught; many ethnic Russians settled in the Kazakh steppe and then Kazakh SSR in the Russian and Soviet periods.

The technical specialists, especially the Russians, came predominantly from the North. The East and the West have been less represented in the national elite. The regional elite has been recruited locally. 12 of the 20 regional heads in their posts in 1995 were born in their region; of the 8 that were not, 6 spent much of the Soviet period

in that region. The predominance of the Southerners suggests a somewhat unified mindset, but also suggests that there is a split between Northerners and Southerners. Some of these differentiating characteristics were shown in the interviews.

Being born in Russia has become a sensitive topic for some members of the elite. Kazakhstan's first Prime Minister, Sergei Tereshchenko, for example, deliberately omits his birthplace in all official biographies even though his birth in the Russian Far East is well-known. What he does include in his biography is his knowledge of Kazakh, which distinguishes him from other Slavs (and from 60% of the Kazakhs). Prominent members of the Kazakh elite were called back from service in Russia or the Ukraine, such as Kasymov and Isingarín, Ministers of Defence and Transport respectively in 1995.

## Nationality

**Figure 8: Occupation and Nationality (March 1995)**

	Ka	Ru	Uk	Ger	Kor	Tat	Bel	Jew	Ot
1.PA	29	8	2		1				
PA2	11	1	1			1	1		
Total	40	9	3		1	1			
2.CM	22	9	3	2	1				
CMD	42	10	2		1				
CM2	41	7			1	1		1	
Total	115	26	5		3	1			
3. AO	14	4		2					
AOD	16	4		1					
O2	9	4	1	1					1
Total	39	12		4					
4. CMA	18	4	1						
5. CU	3	2							
6. EST	9	1							
7. J	7	8							
8. PT	11	5	1	1			1		1
9. EPR	3	1			1				
10.PL	10	7							
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.5</b>

Of the March 1995 elite, 71% were Kazakh, 21% were Russian, 3% Ukrainian, 2% German, 1.6% Korean, 0.5% Belorussian, 0.5% Tatar, and 0.3% Jewish. Kazakhs



comprised 73% of the top positions in the presidential administration. The Prime Minister in 1995, Akezhan Kazhegeldin, was Kazakh. 12 of the 19 Ministers in 1995 were Kazakh; the two First Deputy Prime Ministers were Kazakh and of the four Deputy Prime Ministers, three were Kazakh and one Russian.

72% of the deputy ministers were Kazakh. In the case of the six Russian Ministers all of their first deputies were Kazakh. 78% of the Cabinet of Ministers Administration with political influence were Kazakh; only 4 out of 23 of those holding influential administrative posts in the Cabinet of Ministers were Russian; only 1 Russian, compared to 11 Kazakhs, occupied an important administrative role in the presidential administration.

14 of the then 20 regional heads were Kazakh; of the remaining six, four were Russian and two German. The latter six all have exclusively Kazakh deputies. Russians were best represented in parliament at 27% of parliamentarians, compared to 59% Kazakhs. 6% of parliamentarians are Ukrainian. Also of note is that Kazakh and Russian representation was fairly even in the judiciary and social movements, and thus again not proportional to the overall population. 9 out of 10 leaders of economic organisations, by contrast, were Kazakh.

Nevertheless, the fact that 32% of Ministers were Russians (6 out of 19) is significant and, as we shall see this, marks a notable change from 1992 and 1998 when the percentage of Russians was much lower. The Russians with greatest staying power appeared to have been the first Prime Minister Tereshchenko, Minister of Finance Aleksandr Pavlov, Minister of Health Vasili Devyatko, and Minister of Coal and Energy Viktor Khrapunov. The latter two might be explained by the relatively low status of their ministries. Pavlov, who survived into 1999 as First Deputy Prime Minister lost his financial portfolio. Tereshchenko's Soviet status, knowledge of Kazakh

and entrepreneurial connections with the state, set him apart. Ethnic German Vitalii Mette, although dismissed from his post as Deputy Prime Minister on charges of corruption in 1996, was reappointed as Head of East Kazakhstan in 1997. This relative ethnic mix is duplicated in the core elite.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, only very few of these non-Kazakhs of the core elite, as we shall see in II.2, were also trusted by Nazarbaev.

Thus, Kazakhs have risen to dominate national and regional power structures - and to a disproportionate degree relative to their percentage of the population. Ethnic Kazakhs have come to dominate the regional administrations of the ethnically dominated North. Security factors predominantly shaped the ethnic configuration of this regional political elite and charges of Kazakhisation appear justified by the above evidence. III.2 analyses the implications of this configuration and the conclusion assesses the repercussions for the republic's stability.

How does the elite interpret its ethnic origins? Overall, those interviewed stressed their identification with Kazakhstan, not their Kazakh origins. Prime Minister Kazhegeldin nevertheless expressed his pride at being Kazakh:

Kazakhs were never embarrassed about being Kazakh. We are a strong people, descended from our ancestors, the great Kipchaks. Ethnically, I know that I am descended from Turkic tribes, although as regards my religion, there I have more difficulty. Even if my wife is Russian, my sons know that they are Kazakh. But make sure when you write this you use the Kazakh transcription, Qazaq.<sup>32</sup>

When interviewed, ethnic Russians Pavlov, Sobolev and Khrapunov were particularly defensive about their nationality. Sobolev experienced some difficulty in defining his own place in the new Kazakhstani state:

Of course, cultural markers – like songs, national cuisine, folklores – remain with you and those for me are Russian. But in my day-to-day life these markers are diluted as I sit around a table with Uighurs, Koreans, Kazakhs, Germans. I think it is for the state to promote national-cultural revival. My ultimate loyalty lies to Kazakhstan and I am proud to be part of this new entity.<sup>33</sup>

Said Head of the Presidential Legal Department Baurzhan Mukhamedzhanov: “To be Kazakh today is to be a citizen of Kazakhstan”.<sup>34</sup> As a member of the counterelite, Pyotr Svoik could afford to be much more relaxed but admits after he left power that his ethnicity would never allow him to stand for the Kazakhstani presidency. Ethnicity did seem to affect the types of jobs. Pavlov was probably one of the highest placed Russians, but he was a trained economist. Yurii Kim appointed to head electoral observation by virtue of being Korean and thus an arbitor. Tatars appeared to head recruitment sections in regional administrations.

The majority of the political elite interviewed used the Russian language in their daily work and appeared to converse in Russian with their colleagues.<sup>35</sup> Many stressed that they tried to speak Kazakh at home with their children; in the same breath, however, they would also emphasise that the language for the future was English. Although Prime Minister Kazhegeldin appeared to feel more comfortable with Russian, he stated : “The people of Kazakhstan would like to see the Kazakh language develop. At work I always use Kazakh and at home increasingly too. My children must understand that this language exists”.<sup>36</sup>

None placed importance on Islam; thirty-four year-old Mukhamedzhanov stated: “The Islamic religion does not play an important part in my life. We grew up in a period where Islam did not matter. Today there are some moves to revive this religion, but, if I were to speak frankly, this is not important to me”.<sup>37</sup> This view would appear to concord with society at large; a USIA poll concluded that “Muslim Kazakhstanis know little about the basic tenets of Islam. They practice those elements of their faith that are cultural, humanitarian, or least time-consuming”.<sup>38</sup>

The older members of the elite nearly all displayed a detachment with the Soviet past. When asked about the collectivisation, sedentarisation and repression of the 1930s, they replied that this was a necessary component of the Soviet era and that it was compensated by the advantages that the Soviet system had offered Kazakhstan. Daulet Sembaev added a further point:

Yes, hundreds of thousands may have perished and all that is of course bad. However, those who lived under the system experienced it together, and there was a certain camaraderie. The attitude to the Soviet past is likely to change with the next generation, however. In twenty years from now those who look back to the Soviet era will not have this same understanding.<sup>39</sup>

### **By zhuz**

As described above, the Kazakhs believe themselves all to be descended in the male line from one ancestor. Tribal genealogies collected by nineteenth-century observers vary greatly in detail, even to the name of the primogenitor.

To recall I.1, the Kazakh nation and all its subdivisions were traditionally regarded as ramifications of an extended family group. The nation as family is an old metaphor. The tribal genealogies were highly idealised. The genealogies themselves often recognised the engrafting of unrelated groups by attributing one subdivision to an adopted son or by the name of the subdivision, such as Zhetiru, “seven tribes”. As seen earlier, these traditional structures were transformed but not eradicated in the Soviet period, and rural life still operated very much around kinship.

Zhuz affiliation of the contemporary political elite is almost impossible to obtain and what follows can only be a very rough approximation. As we saw in I.1, juz affiliation is not simply coterminous with place of birth; it is determined by the place of one’s ancestor seven generations back. But very few Kazakhs today know their seven

generations of ancestors. Moreover, the nomadic ancestors of today's elite appear to have stayed in their regions; it is thus likely that the ancestor's region of birth is the same as for his descendent. Put simply, the Kazakhs have not shifted much.

Rediscovery of *zhuz* identity is occurring and that rediscovery is often occurring at the level of the region in which the elite lives; it is thus possible, after all, to gain a rough estimate according to the region in which the elite was born. Exceptions to this were Kazakhs who fled to China and Russia through persecution, this was a small number of the elite. The Eastern region is particularly complex, as half of it falls in the Senior Horde and the other in the Middle Horde: we are fortunate as the borders of these juz are fairly well defined. Moreover, juz membership is not something easily asked of the elite in interview. This suggested to me, and the point is supported with anecdotal evidence, that juz identity is an important part of the growing regional identities of the elite. Indeed the two are often used synonymously.

While it cannot be overemphasised that the following figures must be treated with caution, approximately 40% of members of the 1995 political elite appeared to be from the Senior Horde, 28% from the Middle and 9% from the Small. About 10% of ethnic Kazakhs were born in Russia, of which roughly 5% could be said to belong to the Inner Horde.<sup>40</sup> In II.2 we shall determine whether juz status played a part in appointments, but for the moment can we gain some notion of the degree to which sub-ethnic identity matters to the elite? That the elite opted not to speak about its juz origins suggests one of three possibilities: that juz origins do not matter; that the phenomenon is extremely important personally to him/her; and/or that he/she has expressly been told that juz affiliation is a non-issue for public consumption. The first two reasons seem less likely. This is partly because socialisation in Soviet elite institutions ensured a distancing from traditional networks and partly because in the late

Soviet period issues of ethnicity rather than subethnicity predominated– with the sponsorship by Kunaev of an ethnic Kazakh as opposed to Russian elite. Moreover, Kunaev diluted the juz issue by sponsoring individuals predominantly from the Senior Juz.

There are indications that recruitment (II.2) and nation-building (III.1) policies are re-emphasising the importance of juz, and even, tribal divisions. Contrary to most nation-building projects which seek to overcome regional or ethnic cleavages, post-Soviet Kazakhstan’s efforts at “national-cultural revival” have served to accentuate sub-ethnic differences rather than ethnic unity. This is because the most readily available symbols for this national-cultural revival are lineage-based. Many of the Kazakh elite interviewed referred to folk-heroes and fairy tales of their early childhood, and nearly all were associated with juz history; this is not surprising – instances of unity amongst the juz were the exception rather than the rule. The extended family seems to hold even more importance, as it did in traditional steppe society; Zamanbek Nurkadkilov from the Senior Juz writes:

Concern of close relatives for the family of a brother who had passed away was, even in the postwar troubles, a distinguishing feature of the behaviour of Kazakhs. Not the change of regime, not the relatively new code of ethnic establishment of powers, not the little-allowed observance of traditions of the ancestors of the steppe generations [*kolen*] were capable of shaking the eternal, sacred duty of relatives to care for their close ones who had come upon misfortune.<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, for the juz factor to be of critical importance in elite attitudes it appears to need reinforcement from other factors – i.e. if juz, clan, economic and regional interests coincide, only then can divisions become entrenched and decisive for state unity. This sort of mix appears to be the case for the Western oil regions of Atyrau

and Mangistau which are becoming increasingly compact on all four counts and thus increasingly autonomous.

In his own work on the Middle East, Gellner understands tribes as separate from the state apparatus; evidence for their existence is considered tantamount to state ineffectiveness.<sup>42</sup> President Nazarbaev has repeatedly stated his desire to eradicate tribal ideology from positions of power. In the traditional steppe, in entertaining, honoured positions in seating and the assignment of servings of food were conducted according to the seniority of the line of the guests. In entertaining protocol, for example, a member of the Great Orda would take precedence over members of other ordas. In today's elite, there remains a tribal pecking order; Prime Minister Kazhegeldin was often informally criticised for being a member of an insignificant tribe of the Middle Juz. Nevertheless, this factor appears to be only one – and by no means the most important – factor for his alienation and dismissal, providing further evidence to the point that economic and regional differences are just as important.

## Education

**Figure 9: Occupation and Education**

	University				Institute				Sec Only
	A-A	R	M	Ot	A-A	R	M	Ot	
1.PA	12	3	1	1	5	1	1	13	3
PA2	3		2		1	3	2	4	
<i>Total</i>									
2.CM	4		1		12	5	6	5	4
CMD	8	2	2		11	11	9	14	4
CM2	20	1		1	12	8	2	11	
3. AO					6	7	1	6	5
AOD				1	5	7	2	9	
O2	1				5	5		10	
4. CMA	9	1			10	1		2	
5. CU	3						2		
6.			1	1	5	1	2		
ESTABLI SH									
7. J	10		1		2	3			
8. PT	3	1		1	6	2		7	
9. EPR			1		4	1			
10.PL	5		4		4	2		1	
TOTAL	78	8	13	5	78	55	27	81	16
%	22	2	4	1	22	15	7	22	5
		29%				66%			5%

A-A=Alma-Ata; R= Russia; M=Moscow; Ot = Other; Sec Only = Secondary Only



97% of the political elite possessed some form of higher education, although the quality of that higher education varied. 31% had a university education, compared to 66% who went to technical schools or institutes of higher education. Of the 208 in the presidential administration and upper ministerial level, approximately 45 reached *Kandidat* level (very roughly equivalent to a Western master's degree) and 25 doctorate level. Just over half of the 31% obtained their university degree at Kazakhstan's most prestigious institution, the State University at Alma-Ata. Just over 8% studied in Russia, and just over half of those in Moscow itself. Most of the Moscow-educated have been coopted into the executive elite, although five were parliamentarians. Parliament, to recall, is filled with the highest number of professionals.

This is testimony to the remarkable development of the school system and of literacy in the Soviet period. By the 1950s the percentage of literacy in Central Asia was much higher than elsewhere in the Muslim Middle and Near East. In 1940, Kazakh students made up only 30% of the total at the Alma-Ata State University named Kirova. By the mid-1990s, renamed Al-Farabi, the overwhelming majority of the student body had become ethnic Kazakh. Part of this change occurred in the 1970s under Kunaev. Indeed, by the 1969/70 school year, the proportion of Muslim students throughout Central Asia attending such institutions had become proportionate to the number of Muslims in the total population of the republics (better than that in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan, slightly worse in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan).<sup>43</sup>

Soviet educational statistics were especially impressive with regard to Muslim women, who before the Bolshevik Revolution took no part in public life. Until World War II, attendance by Muslim girls in secondary schools and universities had been poor (between 5 and 8 % of the USSR average in 1939).<sup>44</sup> The younger women in the March

1995 political elite appeared better educated than their older counterparts. Deputy Economics Minister Ertlesova is a prime example of woman who reached similar educational standards to those of men.

A higher percentage of ethnic Russians than ethnic Kazakhs appear to have attended Russian institutes and universities, although of those attending Russian universities in Moscow (18) as many as 12 were Kazakh. These were the privileged Kazakhs, and, in interviews conducted with some of these they tended to be the children of established communist apparatchiki. Jandosov, for example, stated: "If it had not been for the high status of my father in Soviet Kazakhstan, I would never have had the opportunity to study in Moscow."<sup>45</sup> These children of the privileged were younger than the average, and tended to serve in crucial departments of economics and finance.

Figure 10: Institutional Affiliation and Type of education: March 1995 elite

	engineer	technical	agric	law	economic	Journalism	humanities	Medicine	science	diplomacy	M
1.PA	8	3	4	5	6	1	6				1
PA2	6		1	2	3	1	2	1	1		
Total	14	3	5	7	9	2	8	1			1
2.CM	8	5	4	5	3		2	1	7	2	1
CMD	12	5	5	6	6		8	4	8	2	
CM2	17	6	8	10	4	6	4		4		
Total	37	17	17	21	13	6	14	5	19	4	1
3.AO	12		7		1			1			
AOD	8	5	3	1	2			2			
O2	8	4	1	1				1	1	1	
Total	28	9	11	2	3			4			
4.CMA	6	2	1	3	2	2	2	2	1	2	
5.CU				1		1	3				
6.EST	3	2		5							
7.J			15				1				
8.PT	10	1	3	3	2			1			
9.EPR	4		1								
10.PL	4	1	1	2		2	7				
TOTAL	106	34	56	44	29	13	35	13	22	7	2

The creation of a native Muslim technical and scientific elite can be counted as another achievement of the Soviet regime, strongly sponsored by Kunaev. Strong incentives for native students, including outright privileges (easier admissions, more available scholarships, and more lenient grading) began to bear fruit. By 1975 Muslim technical and scientific cadres in Uzbekistan had reached 57.6% of the total, quadrupling in number from 1960s. Rasma Karklins points to a survey conducted in West Germany among Volga German émigrés from Kazakhstan and Central Asia. An overwhelming majority of the respondents mentioned nationality as a key factor in admissions to institutions of higher education in those republics.<sup>46</sup>

One serious weakness was the qualitative gap prevailing between Russian-speaking schools and their graduates, on the one hand, and the native ones on the other. More Kazakhs had completed a higher or specialised secondary school education by 1960, than the Turkmen and Kyrgyz. When specialists with a higher education were separated from those with specialised secondary education, however, the picture is rather different. Only 45.7% of Kazakhs in 1959 had a higher education – this changed with the appointment of Kunaev. Statistics show that in 1960 only 21.4% of the research personnel in Kazakhstan was Kazakh. It is possible that Kazakhs making a transition from pastoralism to an industrial economy preferred the freedom of driving a truck or tractor to the restrictions of a desk or research laboratory. On the other hand, it may be that the Soviet government, in view of the large Slavic population and the important mining and industrial enterprises in Kazakhstan, preferred to employ scientific personnel trained in Moscow.

Higher education enrolment statistics suggest from the late 1960s a new trend among Kazakhs in favour of advanced education. They constituted a core of partly

Russified individuals whom Soviet leaders expected to act as transmitters of Russian culture to their people. As intelligentsia, in favoured positions, they acquired European clothes and placed European furniture in at least one room of the home.

Few members of the political elite had a knowledge of foreign languages. This is largely because the graduates of Kazakhstan's best linguistic school, the Foreign Languages Institute, sought employment with foreign companies rather than in the government. And it is the children of today's elite who are obtaining an education in the West.

## CONCLUSIONS

In sum, certain social groups do appear to be dominating the political elite in 1995. These form a typical profile of the elite which may be described as: membership of the Soviet elite; blue-collar background; age between 36 and 55; male, and ethnic Kazakh. But there are also important features which appeared to divide the elite: their birthplace, juz membership and education being among the most important. Members of the core elite appeared to have a similar typical profile. One important way in which the 1995 core elite departed from the typical elite in 1995 was its inclusion of non-Kazakhs; as II.2 will indicate, however, this is a departure from the 1992 and 1998 Kazakhisation trends and appears to have occurred as a concession to the Russian community.

Indications are that the divisions manifested themselves in different economic interests and state fragmentation rather than divergent attitudes. In other words, a considerable consensus existed among the executive political elite over the broad direction of economic and political reform. I.2 indicated that even the parliamentary counterelite agreed on the broad parameters of reform. However, this consensus was

increasingly held hostage to powerful interest groups which were forming on the basis of economic divisions. These interest groups were in turn fragmented by self-interest. These divisions were also heightening regional and, by default, clan differences. The elite was not an integrated elite in terms of social homogeneity or personal interaction, even if there was a broad degree of value consensus.

While the thesis is concerned with the national elite, some reference has been made to regional administrative leaders, and the findings can be summarised here. The regional elite does appear to have a common profile. Professionally, of the twenty regional heads analysed in 1995, half served in the Soviet period either as *raikom* or *obkom* heads, and half as managers of enterprises or of collective farms. Apart from Saparbaev in Kzyl-Orda, all in 1995 had lived and worked in their respective regions. The regional heads of administration tend to fall in the 46 to 55 age bracket, which conforms to the average age of the national political elite. All twenty heads of regional administration were male in 1995. At lower echelons of power, it was noted that fewer females appeared to work in the Southern Kazakhstan oblast, while women were fairly highly represented in political office in the North and West. 90 percent of regional heads came from rural areas. 14 of the 20 akims in 1995 were ethnic Kazakh, 4 Russian and 2 German. The majority of the regional administration heads have studied at technical institutes and none at universities. Despite this common profile, the regions themselves, as we saw in I.2, are increasingly diversifying due to varying economic performance. We have seen briefly that the behaviour of each regional leader can thus vary, as can his relationship to the centre, the full parameters of which lie outside the scope of this thesis.

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## Endnotes to Chapter II.1

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix One on Methodology for an explanation of how this elite was identified.

<sup>2</sup> Tom Bottomore, *Elites and Society* (Middlesex, England: Pelican, 1964), p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> S.J. Eldersveld, *Political Elites in Modern Societies. Empirical Research and Democratic Theory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989).

<sup>4</sup> See Klaus von Beyme, *Die Politische Elite in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Munich: R.Piper, 1971).

<sup>5</sup> “Ruling minorities are usually so constituted that the individuals who make them up are distinguished from the mass of the governed by qualities that give them a certain material, intellectual, or even moral superiority; or else they are the heirs of individuals who possessed such qualities. In other words, members of a ruling minority regularly have some attribute, real or apparent, which is highly esteemed and very influential in the society in which they live”. See Harold D. Lasswell, *World Revolutionary Elites: Studies in Coercive Ideological Movements* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1965), p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class*, 1939; C.Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959).

<sup>7</sup> Robert Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

<sup>8</sup> Kairbek Suleimenov was the brainchild behind the Security Council and he came into conflict with its activities as Minister of Interior. Many of the powers he had originally suggested were abrogated from him. Interview with the author, 10 February 1996.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with the author, 23 August 1996.

<sup>10</sup> *Kto Est' Kto V Respublike Kazakhstan* (Almaty: Evraziya-Polis, 1995).

<sup>11</sup> Executive and CPSU posts could, and often did, overlap.

<sup>12</sup> See the discussion by Anton Steen

<sup>13</sup> Interview with the author, 13 May 1996.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with the author, 26 May 1996.

<sup>15</sup> This career pattern is starkly reminiscent of the old Tsarist pattern.

<sup>16</sup> Askar Kulibaev was to become one of President Nazarbaev's son-in-laws. He worked in the Western and Almaty regions.

<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth Bacon, *Central Asians*, p. 39, writes: “The Kazaks were not very class conscious”.

<sup>18</sup> Nursultan Nazarbaev, *Without Right and Left* (London: Class Publishing, 1992), p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Only some of the entries in *Kto est' Kto* included references to parental origin.

<sup>20</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski and Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Power: USA USSR* (New York: Viking Press, 1964), p. 135; Allen H. Barton *et al.*, *Opinion-Making Elites in Yugoslavia* (New York: Praeger, 1973), p. 125.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas R. Dye and L. Harmon Zeigler, *The Irony of Democracy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1972), p. 34.

<sup>22</sup> The father of Zhanibek Marabaev, deputy head of the state oil company involved in the Caspian Sea offshore exploarations head of Atyrau.

<sup>23</sup> Az-i-ya's title denotes both “Asia” and the last letters of the Russian alphabet; Suleimenov challenges the claim that there are purely Russian sources in Russian national poetry by illustrating the large number of Turkish references.

<sup>24</sup> Compare Anton Steen, *Between Past and Future*, *passim*.

<sup>25</sup> On average, a leader of the contemporary world is about 50 on coming to office. Of the 900 or so leaders whose age was known, 498, or 55 percent, were over fifty when

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they were first appointed as heads of the government; only 129 – or less than 15 percent – were under forty, while 195 (21 percent) were over sixty – also on reaching the top position in their country for the first time.

<sup>26</sup> Informal conversation with a South Kazakhstan trade union activist, Shymkent, 12 April 1996.

<sup>27</sup> See Michael Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge: Soviet Central Asia* (Armonk, NY and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1990), esp. ch. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with the author, 2 July 1996.

<sup>29</sup> Bacon, *Central Asians*, p. 41.

<sup>30</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976), p. 32.

<sup>31</sup> This included ethnic Russians Zhigalov, Pavlov, Sobolev, Utepov, Svoik, Khrapunov, Shkolnik, Lavrinenko, Levitin, Cherdybaev, Peregrin, Marchenko, Tereshchenko and Soskovets; and, Germans Mette and Roze.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with the author, 22 February 1996.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with the author, 18 November 1995.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with the author, 1 December 1995.

<sup>35</sup> For example, during the interview with Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin he received a phonecall from the President and asked me to leave the room. In past similar scenarios, the members of the elite had tended to revert to Kazakh on the telephone – albeit broken Kazakh. Ethnic Russian Igor Rogov, for example, spoke some Kazakh on the telephone during our interview. See also, M.S. Mashanov and R.S. Arynova, “Kulturno-Lingvisticheskaya Situatsiya V Respublike Kazakhstan: Tendentsii Razvitiya”, *Sayasat* (September 1997), pp. 32–41.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with the author, 22 February 1996.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with the author, 1 December 1995.

<sup>38</sup> “Islam Yes, Islamic State No for Muslim Kazakhstanis”, *Opinion Analysis*, USIA Office of Research and Media Reaction, 24 December 1997. Approximately half of Kazakhstanis are Muslim, and a third are either Russian Orthodox or some other type of Christian. See also, S. B. Aidosov, “Mirovozzrencheskie Orientatsii Studentov: Otnoshenie K Religii”, *Sayasat* (September 1997), pp. 46–50.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with the author, 6 September 1996.

<sup>40</sup> To recall, the Inner or Bukeev (Bukey) Juz between the Ural and Volga rivers was formed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when part of the Small Juz migrated westward into an area vacated by the Kalmuks.

<sup>41</sup> Zamanbek Nurkadilov, *Ne Tol'ko O Sebe* (Almaty: Shartarap, 1996), p. 11.

<sup>42</sup> Ernest Gellner, “Tribalism and the State in the Middle East” in Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner (eds), *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

<sup>43</sup> Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge*, *passim*.

<sup>44</sup> Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge*, p. 104.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with the author, 22 February 1996.

<sup>46</sup> Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge*, p. 104.



## Chapter II.2

### *Cursus honorum:*

#### THE RECRUITMENT PATTERNS (1991–1998)

This chapter is a study of co-optation into, and promotions within, the top leadership of the Kazakhstani elite. As such it is concerned with political recruitment, defined here as “the processes that select from among the several million socially favoured and politically motivated citizens comprising the political stratum those several thousand who reach positions of significant national influence”.<sup>1</sup>

Such a study will give us an indication of the institutional permeability and thus homogeneity of the elite, and provide indications of cultural and social networks

Robert Putnam looks at “five critical issues” in his assessment of recruitment and I shall use four here, in a redefined order.<sup>2</sup> They are:

1. Gates and gatekeepers. How and by whom are the chosen few actually chosen?
2. Credentials. What criteria must successful aspirants meet?
3. Channels. Through what routes do aspirants for political leadership most commonly reach the top?
4. So what? Turnover and succession. How (and how often) do incumbents leave office? How do recruitment patterns ultimately affect the character of the elite and its politics?

Given the available statistics and the above definition of the political elite as the core decision-makers, our concern here is with the fate of the top individuals rather than with the thousands. At times we will look at the general fate of individual positions, such as the regional heads or ministers. But mainly, to reiterate the Introduction, the concern is with the political elite previously defined for this study (which includes prominent regional heads) and within this a core, identified in 1992, 1995 and 1998. Whilst the political elite generally exerts decisive influence on policy-making, the core elite, including Nazarbaev, is comprised of individuals who also have the trust of Nazarbaev. Recruitment criteria in the regions operated according to somewhat different criteria and these will be highlighted where appropriate.

### The core elite: 1992, 1995 and 1998

Before we begin, we need to establish whose political career paths are principally under scrutiny. We are analysing the core at three different time periods: 1992, 1995 and 1998.

**Table 1: The core political elite**

1992 - 1994	1994 - 1995	1996 - 1998
Nursultan Nazarbaev	Nursultan Nazarbaev	Nursultan Nazarbaev
Sara Nazarbaeva	Sara Nazarbaeva	Sara Nazarbaeva
Nurtai Abykaev	Nurtai Abykaev	Dariga Nazarbaeva <sup>3</sup>
Sergei Tereshchenko	Akezhan Kazhegeldin	Akhmetzhan Esimov
Erik Asanbaev	Erik Asanbaev	Askar Kulibaev
Olzhas Suleimenov	Olzhas Suleimenov	Nurlan Balgimbaev
Serikbolsyn Abdildin'	Abish Kekilbaev	Marat Ospanov
Zamanbek Nurkadilov	Daulet Sembaev	Rakhat Aliev
Daulet Sembaev	Tulegen Zhukeev	Nurtai Abykaev
Kairbek Suleimenov	Marat Tazhin	Zhanybek Karibzhanov
Syzdyk Abishev	Sat Tokpakbaev	Mukhtar Ablyazov
Nagashbai Shaikhenov	Nigmatzhan Isingarin	Oraz Zhandosov
Nigmatzhan Isingarin	Vitalii Mette	Altai Kakimzhanov
Serikbek Daukeev	Aleksandr Pavlov	Aleksandr Pavlov
Oraz Zhandosov	Sarybai Kalmurzaev	Igor Rogov
Grigorii Marchenko	Zhanybek Karibzhanov	
Oleg Soskovets	Serikbek Daukeev	
	Viktor Sobolev	
	Kairbek Suleimenov	
	Saginbek Tursunov	
	Igor Rogov	
	Erzhan Utembaev	
	Oraz Zhandosov	
	Grigorii Marchenko	

Two introductory remarks may be made about the core political elite. First, the core elite of 1998 is narrower than that of 1991, which suggests a centralisation of power. Second, it had become both more and less homogenous – more, because its members by 1998 were almost exclusively Kazakh and urban-born, but less because they were from different zhuz and occupational backgrounds. Socially by 1998 the core elite had bifurcated primarily into members who were relatives of the President and into business executives co-opted by the President.

### **Gates and gatekeepers**

Control over recruitment is an extension of elite power. Not only can certain formal qualifications be imposed, but so can other selective devices to establish the appropriateness of any particular candidate for entrance. Elites, psychologically and politically, like to recruit like-minded individuals; often this is more a question of values and behaviour than of social origins. This means, of course, that the elite is by definition and by practice, an exclusive group. The nomenklatura system allowed the CPSU to maintain its self-appointed prerogative of the selection, training and allocation of cadres<sup>4</sup>, and this task now fell after independence to the selectorate of the Kazakhstani elite, that small number around and including Nazarbaev that could appoint and dismiss senior political advisors to officials.

Monocratic regimes are usually characterised by a selectorate of one. In the difficult years after the Turkish revolution of 1919, Ataturk, undisputed leader of the new regime, took personal charge of nominations to the Grand National Assembly.<sup>5</sup> There is some indication that Nazarbaev's recruitment has become increasingly monocratic since 1991. Nevertheless, many informal accounts describe a President who continues to be influenced by advice from an inner circle of advisors.<sup>6</sup> That inner circle, in line with the developments among the political elite, has undergone some changes.

**Table 2: Nazarbaev's inner circle of trusted advisors**

1992 - 1994	1994 - 1995	1996 - 1998
Sara Nazarbaeva	Sara Nazarbaeva	Sara Nazarbaeva
Nurtai Abykaev	Nurtai Abykaev	Dariga Nazarbaeva
Sergei Tereshchenko	Akezhan Kazhegeldin	Akhmetzhan Esimov
Erik Asanbaev	Erik Asanbaev	Askar Kulibaev
Olzhas Suleimenov	Olzhas Suleimenov	Nurlan Balgimbaev
Seribolsyn Abdildin'	Abish Kekilbaev	Marat Ospanov
Zamanbek Nurkadilov	Daulet Sembaev	Rakhat Aliev
Daulet Sembaev	Sat Tokpakbaev	Nurtai Abykaev
Kairbek Suleimenov	Aleksandr Pavlov	Imangali Tasmagambetov
Syzdyk Abishev	Syzdyk Abishev	Syzdyk Abishev

Up to about 1995, Nazarbaev appeared to involve other individuals in recruitment decisions, and the post of Head of Presidential Administration was conceived primarily for cadre appointments.<sup>7</sup> The first to occupy this post was Nurtai Abykaev, testimony to his long-standing friendship with the President. But when Abykaev was appointed Ambassador to the United Kingdom, his replacement by Saginbek Tursunov, although a personal friend of Sara Nazarbaeva, signified a downgrading of the status of this position which has continued ever since. Another figure possibly intimately involved in cadre recruitment in the early years was Vice-President Asanbaev. This would explain the very different composition of government in the immediate post-independence period, which included a number of more liberal-minded individuals.

Between 1995 and 1998 the selectorate became smaller, more homogenous and centralised. This would confirm the general tendency we noted in the two preceding chapters and in the core political elite. The selectorate by 1998 was immediate to Nazarbaev: it was composed of family, relatives, close friends and loyal colleagues. The move to Astana appeared to have abetted the narrowing of the selectorate and political elite, as former members of the elite not selected by the President remained in Almaty. This narrowing of the selectorate is significant. It implies that the elite as a whole was

likely to become smaller, more homogeneous and centralised, which is again borne out by I.2 and II.1.

### **Criteria for selection**

According to which criteria does this selectorate choose its recruits? In this section we shall discuss the applicability of the patron-client model to post-Soviet Kazakhstani recruitment practices. If patronage occurs but is not universal, what is its scope and extent, what criteria alternative to patronage were used in personnel decisions, and in what circumstances were appointments the result of patronage? Here we are keen to refer, even at times only implicitly, to the structured and organised character and context of recruitment (which will be elaborated in the chapter's conclusion).

### **Achievement and Ascriptive Criteria**

First, let us approach the question by way of elimination, by identifying examples of patron-client relations which do not appear to have concurred with Kazakhstani recruitment practice, and where different typologies are necessary. Three criteria outside patron-client relations appear particularly important: co-option by virtue of the individual's independent political resources; individual achievement criteria; and the ascriptive criteria of ethnicity and sub-ethnicity.

Nazarbaev attempted to buy off independent-minded politicians. Olzhas Suleimenov, along with Gaziz Aldamzharov<sup>8</sup> back in 1994, expressed their intention in 1994 to stand for the then scheduled 1995 presidential elections; the elections were changed to a referendum in 1995 and Suleimenov accepted the post of Ambassador to Italy. In the event, his decision did not appear to have been difficult; when interviewed he stated: "It will be an excellent opportunity to complete my new book; there is no time here in Almaty".<sup>9</sup> In November 1997, Murat Auezov, then co-chairman of the opposition movement Azamat, declared his intention to stand for the presidential elections originally scheduled for December 2000. By February 1998 he had accepted a position as Head of Department of Social Accord of Almaty Regional Administration under former Nazarbaev-critic and now regional akim, Zamanbek Nurkadilov.<sup>10</sup> Baltash Tursumbaev, whose appointment as Ambassador to Turkey was seen as a means of removing him from Almaty, returned in 1998 and like Auezov declared his intention to

stand for the Presidency; he was appointed Deputy Prime Minister in the 1998 reshuffle. This co-optation appears to have worked - since the political elite is small enough, its best policy may well be to enlist individuals from a different, non-elite background – this has good propaganda value, includes individuals who are probably harder-working and implies that these individuals are easily bought off. There have also been individuals who, occupying alternative and significant power bases to Nazarbaev, were then co-opted by the President. Examples were Abdullaev and Nurkadilov; both originate from more powerful southern clans than Nazarbaev himself.

Second, individual achievements also seem to have become important criteria in recruitment policy, particularly since the appointment of Kazhegeldin as prime minister in 1995. Sabit Zhusupov, who, to recall, predicted the premature calling of presidential elections for 1999, stressed that contemporary recruitment has “a strong grain of pragmatism”.<sup>11</sup> Kazhegeldin surrounded himself with a fair number of technocrats.<sup>12</sup> Examples were Head of National Bank Uraz Djandosov, his deputy Grigori Marchenko and Head of Kazakhstan’s largest commercial bank, *Kazkommertsbank*, Nurlan Subhanberdin. At the ministerial level, the 1998 elite included young appointees such as Altai Kakimzhanov. In 1994, at the age of thirty, Kakimzhanov had already been appointed head of the National Savings bank (former *Sperbank*). Similarly, 31-year-old Mukhtar Ablyazov was appointed to head the Trade and Industry Ministry. Of these, all with the exception of Dzhandosov came from business into politics. This group is overwhelmingly Moscow-educated. This technocracy was still, however, a minority in 1998; moreover, unlike the first quasi-counterelite group, the technocrats did not appear to enjoy an independent power base (even if the President might have feared that they would develop such).

Those conforming to the above typologies appeared in turn to be outnumbered by those characterised by the third and final type of criterion for recruitment (other than a strictly patron-client model): the ascriptive properties of the recruit. Two criteria have figured particularly prominently in the selection of the post-independent Kazakhstan political elite: ethnicity and sub-ethnicity.

I.1 and II.1 outlined the ways in which ethnic Kazakhs were already gaining power in their republic during the Soviet period under the influential native First Secretary Dinmukhamed Kunaev. Without the enormous leverage enjoyed by Kunaev in recruitment, Kazakhs would not have occupied the number of posts they did by 1991. Furthermore, upon independence, Kazakhisation of elite structures became the most

visible means of displaying autonomy from Russia; in the opinion of one member of the political elite, recruitment of ethnic Kazakhs to top posts was tantamount to preservation of the state.<sup>13</sup> In these early years, the President was also hostage to an influential Kazakh nationalist camp. For example, at the ministerial level, of the 25 ministers in 1992, 88 percent were Kazakh. By 1995, this number had fallen to 71 percent (with the government including four Russians, one German and one Ukrainian).<sup>14</sup> This adjustment was possibly related to the democratic interlude of the republic and the stark reality that by 1994/5 more than one million ethnic Russians had emigrated, increasing the ethnic confidence of the Kazakhs and allowing Nazarbaev to make concessions again to the non-Kazakh constituency. Moreover, that several of these Russians in 1994/5 were not merely appointed to symbolic posts – such as Deputy Prime Ministers Sobolev, Pavlov, Mette and Minister Shtoik – may have been because of their personal links to then Prime Minister Kazhegeldin. As we saw in I.2, Kazhegeldin made the first, albeit tentative steps toward some sort of technocratic government, and often the best economists and financiers – certainly at the regional level – were Russians. By 1998 Kazakhisation of ministerial posts had again risen, to an overwhelming majority of 86%.<sup>15</sup> This Kazakhisation can in some ways be interpreted as a loss of power on the part of Nazarbaev – because of bitter power struggles between Kazakhs and his own strongly “internationalist” background, Nazarbaev has often felt more secure in a balance of Russians and Germans.

A similar Kazakhisation in the regions occurred since 1991. Again, already significant concessions to ethnic Kazakhs were made at the close of the Soviet period. In some obkoms, both first and second secretaries were Kazakh, breaking the usual tendency noted by John Willerton of dyarchy, where the first secretary tended to be Kazakh and the second Russian. Kazakhisation of the regions was, however, less in the early years of independence than occurred at the national level, and many deputy akims remained ethnic Russian or German. These deputies, as their second secretary predecessors, were often the *eminences grises* behind the top office.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, whilst in 1991 only half of then first secretaries were ethnic Kazakh, by 1992 the number of ethnic Kazakh akims had risen to 70 percent and thence to 72 percent in 1995; by 1998/9 only 1 of the 14 akim was not Kazakh. But that one individual, Viktor Khrapunov, was in any case mayor of the town that had ceased to be the capital. A Russian, he would be a loyal official for Nazarbaev as the President moved to the

northern capital of Astana. Greater detail of the ethnicities of the regional administration is provided in the table overleaf.



**Table 3: Regional Administrations: National Composition**

	1991			1992			1995		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Akt'yubinsk	R	K	1R 1K	K	R	4K 1R	R	K	2R 1K 1G
Alma-Ata	K	R	3K	K	R	4K 1R	K	R	4K 1R
East-Kazakhstan	R	K	1R 1K 1G	K	R	4K 4R	R	1R 1K	3K 2R
Atyrau	K	R	R	K	R	5K	K	A	1R 4K
Dz'yambul	K	K	1K 2R	K	K	2R 3K	k	2K	3k 2R
Dz'ezkazagan	R	K	2K 1R	R	1K 1R	3K 1R	k	K	3K 2R
Karaganda	R	K	2R 1K	R	K	4K 1R	R	K	3k2 R
Kzyl-Orda	K	K	2K	K	2K	4K	ka	2K	3K
Kokchetav	K	R	1R 1K	K	1R 1K	3K 1R	K	2K 1R	K
Kustanai	R	K	2R	K	R	4K 3R	K	R	4k 3R
Mang'stau	R	K	2K	R	2K	3K 1R	K	1K 1R	3K
Pavlodar	R	K	K	K	1K 1R	3K R	K	1K 1R	2K 2R
North-Kazakhstan	Ru	ka	1K 2R	G	ka	3K 3R	G	kaza khsta n	2k 2R
Semipalat'nsk	K	R	2K 1R	R	K	3K 3R	K	1K 1R	1K 1R
Taldy-Kurgan	K	R	3K	K	R	3K 1R	K	R	3K 1R
Turgai	K	R	2K	K	K	3K 1R	K	R	3K 1K
Uralsk	K	R	1K 1R	K	K	3R 2K	k	3R 1U 1K	K
Tsel'mograd	G	K	1K 1R	G	K	3k 1R	K	R	4k
Chimkent	Ru	ka	2Ka	Ka	Ka	3Ka 1Ru	Ka	Ru	4Ka
A-A town	K			K			K	R	3K 1R 1U

**1 = Obkom First Secretary (1991); Glavy Administratsii (GA) (1992); Akimy (1995)**

**2 = Obkom Second Secretary (1992); First Deputy GA (1992); First Deputy Akim (1995)**

**3 = Obkom Secretary (1991); Deputy GA (1992); Deputy Akim (1995)**

The initials in **bold** indicate where the same individual occupies office.

It is noticeable that the process of Kazakhisation had already become evident in 1991, with one half of first secretaries ethnic Kazakhs. With the important exception of Chimkent, all Southern first secretaries were Kazakh. As mentioned above, however, Chimkent's final first secretary was Sergei Tereshchenko, who could speak fluent Kazakh. Two of the four Western regions, Atyrau and Uralsk, already had Kazakh heads by 1991. The only Northern region with a Kazakh head by 1991 was Turgai, but Turgai is the smallest of the Northern regions and was indeed abolished in 1997. It is surprising that the Kazakh second secretaries, often considered the real power behind the Russian puppet, have *not* become important in the post-communist elite. By 1998 any notion of dyarchy had gone.<sup>17</sup>

### **Kinship and Tribalism**

On balance, however, it is probably fair to say that concerns of intra-Kazakh balance have been greater than those of achieving some ethnic proportionality.<sup>18</sup> After all, with the high rate of non-Kazakh emigration, by 1995 the Kazakh elite could already be confident that ethnic Kazakhs would soon have achieved a majority. In his recruitment decisions the President was undoubtedly aware of the internal divisions between ethnic Kazakhs, and the sharing of the spoils at the apex of the regime required delicate manipulation. This recognition alone would lend some credence to the theory that recruitment post-1991 has been more about balancing the three zhuz interests, a theory most closely associated with Nurbulat Masanov, professor of history at Kazakhstan State University.<sup>19</sup>

Masanov states that the decisive criterion which explains appointments amongst the core elite – and here he distinguishes it from second-tier officialdom – is zhuz affiliation. This he terms the “clan factor” (*klanonoi faktori*), and explains it to be a direct continuation of the policy conducted by Dinmukhamed Kunaev. Kunaev was

known to promote the Senior Horde, and our findings in II.1 did indeed show that the political elite is predominantly from the South. Nazarbaev, himself a southerner, carried on this tradition. But, says Masanov, Nazarbaev's game became more subtle. Aware of the potential struggle between the different zhuzes, Nazarbaev was concerned with attaining a critical balance between all three.

The Senior Zhuz, he contends, was accorded positions of low status but high influence. He cites two of its members, Nurtai Abykaev and Esimov, as key examples. The Junior Zhuz, which has often acted as broker between the Senior and Middle Zhuzes, has been appointed to positions of low profile, high status and relatively high influence. Here he cites Marat Tazhin whom he names "the regime's ideologist"; Tulegen Zhukeev, state advisor on national security; Abish Kekilbaev, speaker of the thirteenth parliament and then the undefined post of State Secretary; and, Nurbutai Shaikhenov, former state advisor and Minister of Justice by 1995. Finally, members of the Middle Zhuz – most notably members of its leading Argyn tribe – were placed in important but not overtly political posts. Examples included Murat Auezov, Sabit Mukhanov, Esenberlin, and Olzhas Suleimenov. Masanov himself is from the Middle Zhuz. Finally, Masanov, contends, the Middle Zhuz is likely to grow with importance after the move of the capital to Middle Zhuz territory, to Astana.

A number of points can be advanced in favour of this thesis. The first point to stress again is that the political elite will not speak openly about either their own zhuz membership or its importance in the political system. Masanov's described configuration of zhuz suggests that there is some deliberate balancing act on the part of the selectorate. Moreover, and crucially, the political elite was placing importance on the zhuzes. We shall see in III.1 how nation-building has created sub-ethnic lineages by default and how regional elites are celebrating their zhuz's folk-hero. This suggests that post-independent Kazakhstan is – for the first time in written form – conceptualising the zhuz and creating new associations which are zhuz-based. They are convenient markers and have meant that zhuz affiliation has become more important amongst elites than the general society, whilst clan affiliation is more important at society level.

Unlike the genealogies (*shezhire*) of the pre-Soviet period, which were largely committed to memory and transmitted orally, the genealogies of the post-Soviet period were published for consumption by an almost universally literate Kazakh population. Kazakh-language newspapers depicted the revival of genealogies as an imperative for all Kazakhs. "To know one's origins is a sign of a good upbringing" (Tegin bilu –

tektilikting belgisi).<sup>20</sup> The attributes understood to underlie Kazakhness – language, genealogical knowledge, and connection to events or personages of historical significance – were sorely lacking, especially among the members of a largely Russified political elite. Distinguishing oneself from the ethnic other was a crucial political tool.

All this considered, however, there are serious difficulties with Masanov's thesis, the details of which he had also come to revise by 1997 (see below). The zhuz labels are only really effective when allied with economic interests. Also, are these zhuz affiliations really more than geographic origin? The Small Zhuz sits on the enormous wealth of the Caspian Sea; its regional elite are thus mainly employed in oil and gas positions at the national elite level. This would make sense in any country.

Instead, what really matters is that the elite propagates the *idea* that these networks have a cultural, and not just, geographic content. It has been so successful at this propagation that over a third of the population asked in one poll believes that the zhuz factor is decisive in recruitment.<sup>21</sup> On the one hand, this helps legitimisation of the elite. Descent, or “the use of genealogical principles to form exclusive categories and groups for the allocation and transmission of social position”<sup>22</sup>, can be used as a legitimising tool. Moreover, the zhuz word is a convenient cover for the unashamed use of existing networks which, in the event can include members from any ethnic background. Ultimately, then, it appears that kinship might be more relevant, and that it, to follow Beattie's and Needham's views of kinship, has no kin-specific content, but only becomes real when expressed through economic or social interests.<sup>23</sup> However, these two attributes are frequently absent, and recruitment can be driven by the simple reality that economic interests are tying people together.

## PATRONAGE AND CLIENTELISM

It is important to note that Gellner is probably right when he contends that kinship cannot constitute patronage – even if patronage often borrows the language of kinship.<sup>24</sup> Write Lemarchand and Legg,

Political clientelism may be viewed as a more or less personalised, affective and reciprocal relationship between actors, or sets of actors, commanding unequal resources and involving mutually beneficial transactions that have political ramifications beyond the immediate sphere of dyadic relationships.<sup>25</sup>

This definition of “patron-client relations” (the inverted commas hereafter omitted) is a useful starting point.<sup>26</sup> It embodies, as highlighted by John H. Miller,<sup>27</sup> three points usually made by definitions of patronage: first, the development and use of personal relationships of mutual obligation; second, their purpose for the furthering of political ends; and third, the unequal command of resources by “patron” and “client”.<sup>28</sup> A “clientele” can therefore be distinguished from an interest group or an ideological movement, and its leaders can hence be labelled “patrons” and their followers “clients”. Patrons are powerful since they can have access to and distribute tangibles – government contracts, jobs, loans – and it is through the shrewd development of these resources that they may build and maintain their personal clientele. In principle, the greater the resources controlled the more powerful the patron.<sup>29</sup> In purely kinship societies, men look for their security to concentric groups of cousins, “sons of paternal uncles”; they expect their support in feud or at the collective oath, and recognise the corresponding duty to provide such support. In such circumstances, the unsymmetrical relationship of patronage may be of secondary importance.

Let us first consider, and then put aside, the peculiar difficulty of applying the definition of patron-client relations to secretive societies. As with the USSR, the bulk of our evidence for Kazakhstan is circumstantial; very rarely do we encounter a direct attestation of political *relationship*.<sup>30</sup> Also, we cannot tell definitively which factor above all others was vital in the recruitment choice. But there is nothing that can be done about speculative constructs; the best that can be done is to weigh up the maximum number of accounts against each other. Let us go now to a typology of appointment criteria in the post-independent Kazakhstani elite based on patron-client relations.

First, personal associations may have tipped the balance in one person’s favour out of a short-list where, to use our parlance, all appear competent and are considered reliable. Close associates of Nazarbaev who have remained part of his inner circle of advisors between 1991 and 1998 are Erik Asanbaev, Akhmetzhan Esimov, Syzdyk Abishev and Nurtai Abykaev. They were associates from the Soviet era. The longest serving Minister Daukeev appeared to be a good friend of Nazarbaev and Interior Minister Kairbek Suleimenov seemed highly respected by Nazarbaev.<sup>31</sup>

Next there were appointments in which political loyalty, and hence in all likelihood past associations, are themselves a qualification. This appears to be the case of the advancement of the ethnic Russians Aleksandr Pavlov, Viktor Khrapunov Igor

Rogov, Sergei Tereshchenko and the ethnic German Vitalii Mette. All were prominent members of the political elite throughout the period. Other examples of politically loyal individuals were Zhukeev, Zhigalov, Sat Tokpakbaev, Kalmurzaev, Tokaev, Karibzhanov and Shkolnik.<sup>32</sup> Ethnic Russians, devoid of any social roots of power and deriving their place amongst the political elite almost exclusively from the benevolence of their patron, have often proven more loyal clients.<sup>33</sup>

A third type of appointment in which patronage clearly played a role was where a secondary patron presented the qualifications of an individual to a top patron, in this case Nazarbaev. Sembaev, for example, was a key player in the promotion of Zhandosov to the post of National Bank Chairman; Erik Asanbaev was the sub-patron of a number of appointments, including of his assistants Erzhan Dosmukhametov and Grigorii Marchenko; and Kazhegeldin brought to Nazarbaev's attention talent from the regions, such as Zhakiyanov. Zhabagin from Pavlodar probably brought both Akhmetov and Pavlov to Nazarbaev's attention.<sup>34</sup>

Prior association played a role in patronage of these last three types. They are to be sharply distinguished from cases where no prior association appears to have existed; the notion of patronage arises not as a reason for the choice of one person rather than another but because clientelist bonds were created by the appointment. Marat Tazhin is a case in point. Nazarbaev probably hoped that the recruitment of technocrats, though primarily driven for reasons other than patronage, would ensure their loyalty to him. Patronage in this sense is the singling out of people for rapid promotion, thereby placing them under political obligation where past association was not a reason for their choice.

Also to be subsumed under the heading of patronage were such classical moves as befriending one's enemies' enemies and judicious recruitment from the followings of defeated rivals. A notable example was Nazarbaev's cooption of Galimzhan Zhakiyanov who had fallen out with his former best friend and co-director Kazhegeldin. Nazarbaev created an institution for Zhakiyanov – the Agency for Strategic Resources – to give him resources to outmanoeuvre Kazhegeldin. Such rewards for the clients of one's competitors appear prudent ways of consolidating power, and also of signalling that factional politics have their bounds, that the struggle could not be carried to extremes.

Two broad senses of the word “patronage” have thus been distinguished: the *creation* of patron-client bonds through personnel policy, and *drawing on* pre-existing bonds. There remains patronage in a strict, irreducible sense – the kind of preferment or

favouritism in which we suspect that obligations or reliance deriving from past associations count for *more* than qualifications of any sort. The chief hallmark of such appointments is their unexpectedness. Many commentators were surprised at the appointment of twenty-eight Nurlan Kapparov, former head of the trading conglomerate Accept, to head the country's only state oil company Kazakhoil in 1997.<sup>35</sup> But it soon became clear that, however competent he might become, he was the front-man for his deputy, Askar Kulibaev, one of Nazarbaev's son-in-laws. The President's other son-in-law, Rakhat Aliev, was more visible, having been appointed Tax Police Chief in 1996. As already noted, the tendency has been for Nazarbaev to allow his family – in the extended sense, with Esimov, for example, a distant cousin – to play an active role in political life. The reversion to patronage in this strict, irreducible sense implies that Nazarbaev is narrowing his power base and distancing himself from wider, but potentially less reliable networks.

What of the role and scope of patronage? First, virtually no-one in the Kazakhstani political elite enters the leadership as an unknown quantity.<sup>36</sup> We can say that in the case of at least 90 percent of leadership co-optations, that particular person would not have been chosen but for the factors of personal knowledge or personal bonds. In this sense, the hackneyed label applied to Soviet cadre of a “self-perpetuating oligarchy” remains apt in the post-Soviet period.

Why have patron-client relations dominated over clan or ethnic background? If an aspirant for a top job is ethnic Kazakh but not as evidently loyal as an ethnic Russian, then Nazarbaev would opt for the ethnic Russian. These networks matter because they became deeply entrenched in the Soviet era. Martha Brill Olcott notes in *The Kazakhs* that a dual power system emerged whereby the Slavic community dominated those areas of the economy and administration which were directly responsible to Moscow - for example, oblast level government and industrial production - while Kazakhs held sway over the livestock breeding economy and *raion* level party and state agencies.<sup>37</sup> In turn, Kazakhs generally made their career within the Socialist Republic of Kazakhstan, whereas Slavs were able to profit from positions Union-wide institutions. This system had the effect of reinforcing local political links in Kazakhstan while at the same time creating widespread, broadly Kazakh patronage networks and thus provided the means for a smooth transfer of power.

Moreover, as will be shown in III.2, private and public interests have remained blurred in the context of what is a very weak, post-Soviet state. A different kind of

patronage arises when a modern or semi-modern state operates in an idiom as yet unintelligible to a large part of the population who then need brokers to obtain benefits or to avoid persecution. The weakness of the state, allowing for the emergence of patrons, may have different forms. It has been said, for instance, that whereas the Lebanese state is an association of patrons, the Tunisian state is a machine for the making and unmaking of patrons.<sup>38</sup> Kazakhstan appears to display a kind of spectrum, ranging from a state which is an association for the protection of a pre-existing patron class (the ex-communists), via a state which plays off patrons against each other, to a state which creates and destroys them through temporary allocation of political positions. Political benefits are almost incalculable, incommensurate and long-term, which makes them peculiarly susceptible to patronage.

### **Regional Recruitment of Akims (Heads of Administration): criteria**

Which of these recruitment criteria most apply to regional heads of administration? Since Nazarbaev has appointed regional heads, he has effectively continued to act as their patron. The one important exception has been in the re-appointment of Levitin (see table below) in the oil-producing region of Mangistau. This seemed to be a case where Nazarbaev was unable to keep his choice – and had to bow to the individual whose networks had become so entrenched and without whom activity could simply not be enforced in the region.

**Table 3: Regional Recruitment of Akims**

	1992 - 1994 5	1995 - 1997	1997 - 1998
Akmola	Braun (Feb 92 - 97)		Kulagin, Sergei (Oct 97 )
Akmola city	<i>Not regional status until June 1998</i>		Dzhaksybekov, Adilbek
Aqtobe	Kulmakhanov, Shalbai (Feb 92 - Nov 93); Pachin, Savelii (Nov 93 - Sep 95);	Musin, Aslan (Sep 95 - 98)	
Atyrau	Tugel'baev, Sagat (Feb 92 - Oct 94)	Cherdabaev, Ravil' (Oct 94 - 98) Imangali Tasmagambetov (Feb 99)	
Almaty city	Nurkadilov, Zamanbek, (Feb 92 July 94)	Kulmakhanov, Shalbai (July 1994 - June 1998)	Khrapunov, Viktor (June 1998-)
Almaty (region)	Esimov, Akhmetzhan (Feb 92 - Oct 94)	Uzbekov, Umarzak (Oct 94 - Mar 96 ) Umbetov, Serik (Mar 96 - Dec 97)	Nurkadilov, Zamanbek (Oct 97 -)



	1992 - 1994 5	1995 - 1997	1997 - 1998
Jezkazgan	Yurchenko, Grigori (Feb 92 Aug 94)	Nagmanov, Kazhmurat (Aug 94 April 96) Smailov, Erlan (April 96 May 97)	<b>Abolished</b>
Qaraganda	Nefedov, Petr (Feb 92 )		Esenbaev, Majit (Oct 97)
Qoqchetau	Karibjanov, Zhanibek (Feb92 Jan 93); Iskaliyev, Nazhameden (Jan 93 Dec 93)  Zhumabaev, Kyzyr (Dec 93 Jun 96) Zhangalov (Jun 96 May 97)		<b>Abolished</b>
Kostanai	Ukin, Kenzhebek (Feb 92 Nov 93) Baltash Turumbaev (Nov 93 - Sep 95)	Kadambaev, Tokhtarbay (Sep 95 June 1998)	Shukeev, Umirza k (June 1998)
Qzylorda	Shaukhamanov, Seilbek (Feb 92 Sep 95)	Saparbaev, Berdibek (Sep 95 1998)	
Mangistau	Novikov, Fedov (Feb 92 Nov 93); Liazzat Kiinov (Nov 93 Sep 95)	Levitin, Vyacheslav (29 9 95 97) Baev, Nikolai (15 12/97 Jun 98); Levitin, Vyacheslav (June 1998) Liazzat Kiinov (Feb 99)	
Northern Kazakhstan	Gartman, Vladimir (Feb 92 May 97)		Akhmetov, Danial (May 97-)
Pavlodar	Zhabagin, Asygat (Feb 92 Jan 93)	Akhmetov, Danial (Jan 93 May 97)	
Semei	Chernov, Vyacheslav (Feb 92 - June 94)	Dzhakhanov, Galymzhan (Jun 94 Oct 95)	<b>Abolished</b>
Southern Kazakhstan (Shymkent)	Urkumbaev, Mars (Feb 92 - Dec 93)	Tursibekov, Zautbek (Dec 93 Dec 97)	
Turgai	Kulagin, Sergei (Feb 92 - Jun 93) Kosabaev, Zhakan (Jun 93 Oct 95)	Brynkin, Vitalii (Oct 95 - Sep 97)	<b>Abolished</b>
East Kazakhstan	Bektemisov, Amangeldy ( Feb92 Jun 94)	Yurii Lavrinenko (Jun 94 Oct 95) Nagmanov, Kazhmurat (Apr 96 May 97)	Mette, Vitalii (May 97-)
Western Kazakhstan	Iskaliyev (Feb - Oct 92)	Dzhakupov, Kabibulla (Oct 92 - 1998)*	

Although it is too early to speak of phases in recruitment, it does appear that Nazarbaev applied three criteria between 1991 and 1998, but all of which were subsumed to the key one of loyalty. In the early phase, the selectorate appeared to prefer continuity, selecting leaders from the regions. In 7 out of 20 cases, therefore, the Obkom First Secretaries became akims.<sup>39</sup> The preference was for “home-grown” elites. During

Kazhegeldin's government there was a half-hearted attempt to introduce performance-related criteria to the longevity of the akim. Technocrats or former businessmen were sometimes selected. Prime examples were Semei's Galymzhan Zhakiyanov, East Kazakhstan's Leonid Desyatnik, Aqtobe's Saveliy Pachin and Jezkazgan's Nagmanov. Pachin and Desyatnik, both Russian Jews, were sacked and departed for Moscow.<sup>40</sup> It is noticeable that all these younger technocrats and businessmen have been appointed to the East or West. None survived for more than a year.

In the third phase since 1997, Nazarbaev appeared to have parachuted members of the national elite into some regions, such as Tasmagambetov, Shukeev, Mette, Esenbaev, Kalmurzaev.<sup>41</sup> Mette, who disappeared from his post as Vice-Premier under Kazhegeldin in disgrace for corruption, but as the only non-Kazakh left at the end of 1998 (and at that a German and not a Russian), he is again part of this centralisation drive.<sup>42</sup> As part of this tightening up of regions to consolidate the elite as part of the move to Akmola Nazarbaev appears to have felt most comfortable with the older loyals, Viktor Khrapunov (Almaty), Serik Umbetov (Jambyl), Liazzat Kiinov (Mangistau) and Abdullaev (Shymkent).<sup>43</sup> The centre still did not seem to trust the North enough to make appointments of such new recruits, believing that those with a Soviet career were more guaranteed to prevent secession from the Northern regions. It is too early to tell how the regional administrations are reacting to these national recruits or Presidential clients. With the political elite's fear of disintegration and of its desire to maintain a unitary state, it is not surprising that loyalty – and hence patronage – have been the uppermost criteria in appointment. Loyalty may explain why in 1995 the only two original akims (then named heads of administration) of 1992 who were still in place were ethnic Germans Andrei Braun and Vladimir Gartman. The following comment of opposition leader Azamat Petr Svoik, himself an ethnic Russian, is not surprising:

There is no defined border between Russians and Kazakhs in the oblast administrations. Of course many Russians have left positions but some have got good positions. In North Kazakhstan oblast for example, the akim is German. Most akims are loyal to the government which illustrates that the ideology of nationalism is secondary to the ideology of power.<sup>44</sup>

## **Channels of recruitment**

Given these examples, what are the most effective channels for a young Kazakhstani eager to aspire to top office? Key channels remain these informal networks or social institutions; political institutions do not yet have “personalities”, no collective ethos or standard operating procedures with which to socialise recruits. Nevertheless, institutions do play their role: to be effectively obstructionist or even just visible, individuals must be allied to certain institutions. The following table indicates career patterns of recruits after 1991.

**Figure 1: Channels of recruitment: post-1991 occupations of the March 1995 elite**

	1. PA	2. CM	3. AO	4. AO A-1	5. CMA	6. CU R/J	7. est	8. J	9. PT	10. EPR Sp AO	11. PL NGO TU	12. M	13. I/A	14. PR
I.PA	14	6	9	3	4				3	1				
PA2	3		2											
Total	5	16	4	4	1	1	1	1	1	5		1		
II.CM		8				1				1				
CMD														
Total		2	9			3				1				
III. AO														
Total		9	1	3	1	1				3				
IV. CMA														
V. CU														
VI. EST		1					1			1				
VII. J								2						
VIII. PT	1	9	44	1		30	14	3	20	13	16	3	11	11
IX. EPR		2								3				
X. PL				2		5			5		5			
TOTAL														

1. Presidential Administration; 2. Cabinet of Ministers; 3. Regional Administration; 4. Regional Administration of Almaty; 5. Cabinet of Ministers Apparatus; 6. Cultural sphere/research/journalism; 7. State Enterprise/ Banking; 8. Judiciary; 9. Parliament; 10. Private Business; 11. Party Leaders/Non-governmental associations/trade unions; 12. Military; 13. Agricultural Industrial Executive/Worker; 14. Professional.

As in other countries, there have been various channels into the elite: educational institutes, political parties, local governments, lateral entry from business, and the bureaucracy. Each are discussed in turn, but the overwhelming impression from the table is that a position amongst the existing executive branch is the safest guarantee of cooption and promotion.

What about educational institutions as a channel of recruitment? Two principal national educational institutions have been established since 1992 with the intention of training the “new” elite. These were the Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics and Strategic Research (KIMEP) and Kazakhstan’s Supreme School of Public Administration (NSSPA), modelled on France’s Ecole Nationale d’Administration (ENA).

KIMEP was established in 1992 at the initiative of President Nazarbaev and with the invaluable assistance of California-born South Korean advisor, Dr K. Bang. Three main departments offer MBA, MA (economics) and MPA programmes, which draw on European and US models. KIMEP’s faculty originate from a number of different countries, including Denmark, France, South Korea, the United Kingdom and the US. Many of the original teaching faculty were US Baptists, who were prepared to work for moderate salaries. The Institute continues to be sponsored by the Technical Assistance for CIS countries (TACIS) of the European Union, the British Know How Fund, USAID, multilateral donors and the Soros Foundation. In co-operation with KIMEP, George Soros founded the International Institute for Market Economics to provide training for public servants and entrepreneurs dealing with privatisation in the country.

The history of NSSPA is less remarkable. Established in 1994 by an agreement with France, the school was specifically designed to train Kazakhstan’s top officials.

Says Danenov, a passionate Francophile, then Deputy Foreign Minister and tireless promoter of the school:

We would like to see NSSPA develop into the ancient Oxbridge colleges of England, the elite grandes écoles of France, the Law School of Tokyo University, Makerere University College in East Africa, Tunisia's Sadiki College, the National University of Mexico City, or the Political Science Faculty of Ankara University in Turkey. All these have traditionally furnished a very disproportionate share of the recruits to their respective national elites.<sup>45</sup>

But there are few signs that a similar merging of educational and political recruitment systems will occur here. The School has lacked the funding and external support enjoyed by KIMEP. Already the awarding of its scholarships were marred by corruption. More fundamentally, there is also a sense that these are not the institutions of the future.<sup>46</sup> The majority of today's political elite have sent their children abroad, mainly to Turkey and a growing number to Western Europe and some to the US. This elite will become increasingly Western-orientated and Europeanised, which we explore in II.3. And for the moment, a Moscow-based education provides the nearest equivalent to these elite schools.

What has been the specific role of parties in recruitment? In the Communist era, the CPSU was the best springboard to national leadership. More than 80 percent of the members of the Soviet Politburo had served previously as party functionaries.<sup>47</sup> In some parliamentary democracies, such as Austria, Italy and India, the party organisation itself is an important source of elite recruits, while in others, most notably Britain, the party's parliamentary delegation supplies virtually all national political leaders.<sup>48</sup> Parties in the Third World are frequently evanescent, but many political leaders in Asia, Africa, and Latin America have achieved power by virtue of their role in party activities or

nationalist movements. None of these functions apply to Kazakhstan; parties have instead played a more subtle role in sifting out elites.<sup>49</sup>

Parties did not play a defining role in the election of candidates to the thirteenth Parliament. First, 42 candidates, amounting to 24 percent of their total number, were elected from a presidential list (or *gospicok*). Surveys prior to the election indicated that the population voted for individuals rather than parties. And third, the candidates themselves seemed confused about their party affiliation. Although far from complete, biographical data published by *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* indicated how candidates appeared to have affiliation with more than one major political movement. Whilst the first column of the data indicated candidates who listed a party affiliation and the second listed deputies whom the parties/organisations themselves identify as members - the two often differed.

On the other hand, in cases where individuals have been able to use the institution of a party to further their oppositional stance they have often been considered a threat and thus co-opted. Aldamjarov and Abdrakhmanov were classic examples. Murat Aueзов who, as we saw in II.1, has been somewhat protected by his father's illustrious background, declared his candidacy for Presidency in November 1997. By February 1998 he had accepted a job in regional government. One of his co-chairman of Azamat, Petr Svoik, admitted privately that his co-optation did not signify the end of his struggle with the government. Indeed, Svoik proceeded to argue, his appointment in Almaty's regional administration under Zamanbek Nurkadirov, the fiery and dominant player in Southern politics whom Nazarbaev reluctantly re-admitted into the elite, assures that the two will provide a fifth column, a halt on power centralisation.<sup>50</sup> It is much rarer for the elite to transfer into the counter-elite, although there are notable

examples: Svoik, Abiilsitov, Kazhegeldin and Tursumbaev, all of whom were discharged from office.

The most important way, however, in which parties have controlled the recruitment process has been through the President's own parties – SNEK, the Democratic and the most recent in the run-up to the 1999 presidential elections, the Liberal Party. The latter was chaired by Nazarbaev's press secretary, Asylbek Bisenbiev. Nominations and affiliations of members of parliament were predominantly tied to these parties. They have sifted elites and have served to marginalise other "parties" and movements on the political spectrum. Moreover, alternative parties have been very poor at garnering numerous supporters. Kazakh nationalist organisations such as Alash, Azat, and Jeltoqsan all complained that their power base of popular support has greatly diminished in the course of the decade and that most of them have struggled to get anyone to attend their meetings or support their policies.<sup>51</sup>

A third channel of recruitment to the national elite has been regional service in the Communist period. In the post-communist period, individuals who served in *obkoms* were: Esimov, Mamashev, Uzbekov, Shtoik, kAldamzharov, Pavlov, Asygat Zhabagin<sup>52</sup> and Medvedev.<sup>53</sup> The two key examples were the two first Prime Ministers, Tereshchenko and Kazhegeldin.<sup>54</sup> Nurkadilov, as mayor of Almaty city, also became a prominent member of the elite. Khrapunov, who served as first deputy to Nurkadilov and his successor Kulmakhanov, temporarily became Minister of Coal and Energy before returning to become their successor as Almaty town akim in 1997. Regional "Red" directors have also enjoyed a meteoric rise in the post-communist elite. They were Soskovets (1991–99 head of Karmetkombinat); Salamatin (1989–92 head of Karagandaugol)..



Subsequently, regional leaders who have become prominent in the post-independence period have also become prominent in the national elite. Urkumbaev was first regional head of Chimkent and became Minister of Economics. Shukeev, another Minister of Economics, served under Urkumbaev's successor in Chimkent, Turisbekov.

Frequent lateral transfers from jobs in the party apparatus to managerial posts in the state-run economy and back again, have also become channels of recruitment. Examples are provided by Ablyazov, Kakimzhanov, Dzhakijanov, Zhabagin, Tereshchenko and Esenberlin. This tendency has increased notably since Kazhegeldin's departure in 1997 and has been heavily criticised by the opposition movement *Azamat*.

But we must keep this in perspective: the most striking case of permeability and lateral entry is found in the United States. Cabinet and sub-cabinet positions are typically filled by men and women from industry, commerce, education and the professions. As one administration succeeds another, many officials return to their private jobs, only to reappear in Washington when their party regains power.<sup>55</sup> Based on his study of elective careers in the United States, Joseph A. Schlesinger concludes: "There is no clearly marked *cursus honorum* or set of stages of office advancement. Nor are there any offices, including the very highest, which have not gone to men from outside the ranks of officeholders or active party workers."<sup>56</sup>

Still, in Kazakhstan, the safest recruitment channel remains the executive – the Soviet bureaucracy itself. Those in the Presidential Administration or Government have tended to stay in those institutions. Other executive institutions can ensure a meteoric rise. Especially with regard to agencies with interlocked industrial, regional and crucially foreign interests. The rise of Kalmurzaev as head of the State Property Committee here is exemplary – at the close of 1998 he had been appointed Head of Administration.

## Sequential overlap?

One fundamental feature of any elite structure is the extent to which individuals hold key posts simultaneously in more than one organisation or sector and can thus coordinate diverse activities. This practice was found in the traditional Kazakh steppe society in which the religious shaman also served on the council of elders, or the *bii*, the local judge, was simultaneously the key arbitrator and tribal leader. Roles were very fluid. The Central Committee of most ruling Communist parties included senior officials of the state administrative and economic bureaucracies, the military, the diplomatic corps, and the secret police, as well as the top members of the party apparatus itself. Two points on simultaneity can be made about the post-independent period. Between executive institutions there is a lack of the sort of overlap noted in the Communist period between, for example, military and civilian posts (there was no national liberation and no cash for it). Second, the President had his appointees in almost every political institution: principally in parliament, government and the judiciary. This was taken to its extreme in the case of the thirteenth parliament, where the state list consisted of 42 nominations by the President himself. The *gospicok* can be viewed as a means of interlocking institutions, of creating institutional homogeneity. Simultaneous incumbency in local and national elites is embodied in the role of the Presidential Inspector. This system of dual executives met with mixed success. The *gospicok* dramatically failed to provide the sort of institutional cross-cutting and consolidation that had been hoped. The regional inspectors seem to have very little, if any, effect on the implementation of daily policy in the regions, and are increasingly viewed with suspicion by local authorities. Where there is a high degree of

simultaneous membership in a variety of elite positions there is always danger of the concentration of power.<sup>57</sup> In Kazakhstan, this intrusive power is still the domain of the political rather than the corporate elite.

Even more important than simultaneous overlap among elite positions is sequential overlap, that is, the successive holding of top posts in diverse sectors. C. Wright Mills was particularly impressed by such links among US business, government, and military elites:

The inner core of the power elite consists, first, of those who interchange commanding roles at the top of one dominant institutional order with those in another. By their very careers and activities, they lace the three types of milieux together.<sup>58</sup>

The archetypes in Kazakhstan are harder to find. This tells us that sequential overlap is rarer and, by virtue of the reduced interaction between institutions, likely to lead to a less integrated elite. For example, members of the core elite do not appear to have moved between more than two institutions, and those are often parliament and cabinet of ministers, or cabinet of ministers and presidential administration. Indeed, the President in 1994 deliberately prevented this sequential overlap by splitting a hitherto unified government and Presidential bureaucracy. The lack of sequential overlap is not surprising: a regime dominated by professional long-serving bureaucrats is likely to have less overlap, hopping from office to office, or from department to department.

## CONCLUSIONS: IMPLICATIONS OF RECRUITMENT FOR ELITE CIRCULATION AND STABILITY

The only constitutional rules that exist for elite change cover elected offices. These rules themselves have easily been subject to renegotiation in Kazakhstan, as evinced in the results of the pact between parliament and president in October 1998 which allowed Nazarbaev to call early Presidential elections. The president's term of office was extended from five to seven years and that of parliament, which is due to be re-elected in December 1999, was lengthened from four to five years. Unlike its predecessor, the 1995 constitution set out clear succession procedures: the first office-holder to succeed the President is the head of the Senate, followed by the Prime Minister.

There are no codified rules for elite turnover. Even if they did exist, the persistence of informal networks outlined above suggests that they would in any case be inoperable. At the national level, a change in elite does not necessarily follow a change in government. Instead, the key determinant appears to be loyalty to the president. If at any point an individual appears to be too influential he is removed to a post of insignificant status. The most frequently used has been the post of ambassador. Key examples were Baltash Tursumbaev, Olzhas Suleimenov and Kuanysh Sultanov. Difficult or incompetent individuals have been often conveniently removed through corruption scandals. Examples were Mars Urkumbaev, Asygybat Zhabagin and Nazarbaev's first two prime ministers. But, as highlighted earlier, these individuals often reappeared, and frequently in better posts. What does seem to be the case, however, is that the frequent reshuffling of the top posts has reduced the functional identity of the various institutions. The increasing interchange between the corporate

elite, the higher civil service and the top political offices has concentrated power in a small number of individuals and, in particular, loyal technocrats. This small elite at the top appears highly integrated. At lower tiers, however, the degree of institutional interaction and integration, by virtue of the relatively little transferral from one institution to another, has made for an institutionally fragmented political elite.

Circulation also appears to apply at the regional level of elite formation. It does appear that elite reshuffling has been less frequent at the regional than national level, which suggests that the regional political elite has become more entrenched and is more reliant on existing networks than is the national elite for policy implementation.

At the expense of some oversimplification I have suggested that this circulation of the political elite is characterised above all by political patronage and that patron-client models are the most useful. There are some counter-tendencies such as the co-optation of people with alternative power bases, but this only took on real significance in 1997. The alternative model of recruitment – based on zhuz affiliation – is an oversimplification, indeed distortion, of reality. That is not to say that kinship is not an important element in the decision of patronage but rather that it is part of a wider set of relations rather than an element in its own right. This would support the camp in the kinship debate which states that kinship has to be expressed in other relationships to be given content.

Various criteria have thus been applied to the recruitment of the regional elite between 1991 and 1998. We have mentioned purchase of office as one possible factor, but one which is difficult to document. The chapter has attempted to demonstrate that in the initial period of transition regional heads were appointed because they were deemed effective managers, either because they had worked in that region in the Soviet period for several years, or because they demonstrated a knowledge of economic reform and

proved themselves with the economic regeneration of the region. However, Particularly since 1997, Nazarbaev appears to have parachuted in members of the national elite; the move to Astana has ensured a further centralisation of political appointments. However, as already noted, Nazarbaev has found it increasingly difficult to parachute in his own men in economically rich regions where elites have become entrenched. Levitin in Mangistau, as we saw, is an example of a regional notable who has returned despite two attempts by Nazarbaev to remove him. Overall, as with the recruitment of the national elite, the principle criterion has been loyalty to the President.

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## Endnotes to chapter II.2

<sup>1</sup> Robert Putnam, *The Comparative*, p. 46

<sup>2</sup> In his chapter, Putnam separates point four into: (1) issues of turnover and succession and (2) implications.

<sup>3</sup> Dariga Nazarbaeva figures first in 1996 because it is from then that Xabar acquired real prominence among the media.

<sup>4</sup> Ronald J. Hill, *Soviet Union: Politics, Economics and Society*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London: Pinter Publishers Ltd, 1990), p. 92.

<sup>5</sup> See Frederick Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite* (Cambridge, MA.: M.I.T. Press, 1965).

<sup>6</sup> Informal evidence given by my chosen "panel of experts", July 1996.

<sup>7</sup> Conversation with Nurbulat Masanov, 2 November 1995.

<sup>8</sup> Aldamzharov became occupied full-time with a trading company.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with the author, 5 September 1996. Olzhas Suleimenov was returning for an eight-day party in his honour. The interview took place in the offices of the now defunct PNEK party; enamoured by Italy, Olzhas Suleimenov showed little interest in returning and even less in joining the opposition. Suleimenov, to recall, had amassed a considerable amount of money from his erstwhile Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement. See Martha Brill Olcott, "Democratization".

<sup>10</sup> *Panorama*, 17 November 1997 and *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 15 February 1998. The author was present at his electoral speech in 1997. The decision by Murat Auezov to join the renegade Nurkadilov is not as clear-cut a victory for the ruling elite as that of Olzhas Suleimenov. Many argue that Azamat has created a fifth column within the ruling elite, and the Nurkadilov-Auezov alliance is not a reliable one for Nazarbaev. In any case, the position is a demotion from his former position as Ambassador to China.

<sup>11</sup> Sabit Zhusupov, 'Politicheskaya Elita Kazakhstana: mekhanizmy konsolidatsii i rekrutirovaniya', paper presented at the Carnegie Foundation, Spring 1998.

<sup>12</sup> Gleason and Dadabaeva, 1998 argue that globalisation has encouraged the creation of a technocratic elite. See Gregory Gleason and Gulnara Dadabaeva, 'The Ethnic Factor in Government Reform in Kazakhstan', paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association (Boston: MA), 2 – 4 September 1998.

- <sup>13</sup> Author's conversation with Asylbek Bisenbiev, deputy to Marat Tazhin and appointed presidential press secretary in 1998,
- <sup>14</sup> *Spisok Telefonov Rukovodyashchikh Rabotnikov Organov Gosudarstvennogo Upravleniya, Partiinykh, Obshchestvennykh i Drugikh Organizatsii Kazakhskoi SSR*, January 1995.
- <sup>15</sup> *Spisok Telefonov Rukovodyashchikh Rabotnikov Organov Gosudarstvennogo Upravleniya, Partiinykh, Obshchestvennykh i Drugikh Organizatsii Kazakhskoi SSR*, July 1998.
- <sup>16</sup> The first secretary enjoyed general powers of leadership, supervision and coordination in his obkom or Central Committee. The functions of the second secretary were more nebulously defined, but John Willerton argues that he functioned as 'an institutionalised check on the first secretary', most crucially in the appointments area. The akim in post-independent Kazakhstan would appear to have more powers than the first secretary – his cadre decisions are not vetoed by his deputy – but it appears that his deputies are often more professional and better educated. John P. Willerton, "Cadre Policy in Nationality Areas: Recruitment of CPSU First and Second Secretaries in Non-Russian Republics of the USSR", *Soviet Studies* (Vol. 29, No. 1, January 1977), pp. 3–36.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, *passim*.
- <sup>18</sup> The first semi-official discussion of the role of the zhuz factor in political appointments was published by the Institute of Development of Kazakhstan (IDK): *Kazakh Tribalism today, its characteristics and possible solutions* (Almaty: IDK, 1996).
- <sup>19</sup> See *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 3 April 1997 and *The Economist*, 4 June 1994 for variations on Masanov's theory. Writes *The Economist*: "So, as ethnic Russians are disappearing from the corridors of Kazakh power, the Great Horde is asserting itself. Horde politics works much like party politics. When a new speaker of parliament was chosen recently, members of the Middle and Little Hordes combined to vote against Mr Nazarbaev's Great Horde candidate".
- <sup>20</sup> *Qazaq adebieti*, 15 October 1997.
- <sup>21</sup> *Kazakh Tribalism today*, p.22.
- <sup>22</sup> C.C. Harris, *Kinship* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1990).
- <sup>23</sup> J. H. M. Beattie, "Kinship and Social Anthropology", *Man*, No. 64, pp. 101–3 and R. Needham, *Rethinking Kinship and Marriage* (London: Tavistock, 1971).
- <sup>24</sup> Ernest Gellner and John Waterbury, *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies* (London: Duckworth, 1977).
- <sup>25</sup> R. Lemarchand and K. Legg "Political Clientelism and Development: A Preliminary Analysis", *Comparative Politics* (Vol. IV, January 1972), pp. 51–2.
- <sup>26</sup> Typologies have been developed of all "dependency relations in traditional Africa" in which the "type of clientelism" is seen as characterising the overall system of domination. See R. Lemarchand "Political Clientelism and Ethnicity in Tropical Africa: Competing Solidarities in Nation-Building", *American Political Science Review* (Vol. LXVI, March 1972), pp. 68–90.
- <sup>27</sup> John H. Miller, "Putting Clients in Place: the Role of Patronage in Cooption into the Soviet Leadership", in Archie Brown (ed.), *Political Leadership in the Soviet Union* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), pp. 54-95
- <sup>28</sup> See also T.H. Rigby and Bohdan Harasymiw (eds), *Leadership Selection and Patron-Client Relations in the USSR and Yugoslavia* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1983)
- <sup>29</sup> See Gellner and Waterbury, *Patrons and Clients*, especially Alex Weingrod, "Patronage and Power", pp. 41–51. Also, G. Roth (1971) "Personal Rulership,

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Patrimonialism and empire-building: The new states', in R. Bendix and G. Roth (eds), *Scholarship and Partisanship: Essays on Max Weber*, Berkeley.

<sup>30</sup> Consequently we may know a set of people who all come from the same part of the country (or tertiary institution, or army front), who cross paths repeatedly during their careers, who get conspicuously accelerated promotion once one of their numbers reaches an influential post – and still we have no knowledge, merely more or less cogent hypothesis, about their relationships.

<sup>31</sup> Interviews with the author, 6 February 1996 and 8 April 1996 respectively.

<sup>32</sup> Konstantin Zhigalov is co-author of a biography of the President, *Pervyi Prezident Respubliki Kazakhstan: Khronika Deyatel'nosti* (1.12.1991-31.5.1993) (Almaty: Kazakhstan – XXI Vek, 1993) Tokpakbaev has little public prominence but was instrumental in setting up the Presidential bodyguard.

Karibzhanov has returned at various points to the position of Minister of Agriculture. Shkolnik is the longest-serving Minister of the same Ministry.

<sup>33</sup> For comparisons with the Soviet era, compare Rachel Denber (ed.), *The Soviet Nationality Reader* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993).

<sup>34</sup> Conversation with Pavlodar Entrepreneur, 2 October 1997.

<sup>35</sup> Most Western businessmen attending the Euroforum Kazakhstan Investment Conference, London, April 1998 expressed surprise at the ousting of Kuandikov and the replacement by a business and not an oilman, Kapparov.

<sup>36</sup> The closest we came to this was the appointment of Kazhegeldin, who was appointed Prime Minister from the regions and from business; however prior to his political appointment he had gained an increased political profile by virtue of his political lobbying for the privatisation of land.

<sup>37</sup> Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, pp. 242–3.

<sup>38</sup> Lebanese state is an association of patrons, the Tunisian state is a machine for the making and unmaking of patrons.

<sup>39</sup> These were Umirbek Baigel'diev (Dzhambul); Seilbek Shaukhmanov (A-A); Novikov (Mangistau); SaginbekTursunov (Taldy-Kurgan), Nazhameden Iskaliev (Uralsk –who only survived four months); Braun (Tselinograd); and, Zamanbek Nurkadilov (A-A town).

<sup>40</sup> Pachin is reportedly working in a private company whilst Desyatnik has joined the CIS Ministry.

<sup>41</sup> Tasmagambetov is suitor of Dinara Nazarbaeva, daughter of the President whose rumoured divorce to Rakhat Aliev continued into 1999.

<sup>42</sup> Although born in and having been an industrial executive for most of his working life in East-Kazakhstan born, he has spent all of his independence years in the capital.

<sup>43</sup> Abdullaev is a prominent member of the Southern Kazakh Soviet elite who went on to chair Gosplan and deputy chair the Kazakh SSR Council of Ministers between 1986–1990. He spent the first five years of independence in the capital of Almaty, as head of the formidable Atakent exhibition hall (home to the very lucrative annual foreign investment conferences) and CIS affairs. His predecessor, Turisbekov, whom I interviewed, was rumoured to have been unpopular.

<sup>44</sup> Cited by Timothy Edmonds, 'Power and Powerlessness in Kazakhstani Society', *Central Asian Survey* (Volume 17, Number 3, September 1998), p. 467.

<sup>45</sup> Author's interview with First Deputy Foreign Minister Nurlan Danenov, 5 June 1996.

<sup>46</sup> Many of the members of the core elite are known to have sent their children to predominantly Western institutions for their further education.



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<sup>47</sup> More than 80 percent of the members of the Soviet Politburo had served previously as party functionaries.

<sup>48</sup> See Kurt Steiner, *Politics in Austria* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972).

<sup>49</sup> See Putnam, *Political Elites*, Chapter 3.

<sup>50</sup> Conversation with Pyotr Svoik, 3 July 1998.

<sup>51</sup> Edmonds, "Power and Powerlessness", p. 467.

<sup>52</sup> Zhabagin is also from Pavlodar and, like Pavlov, also someone who served in Pavlodar obkom in the 1990s. Pavlov had been a secretary of Northern-Kazakhstan (1988–92) and became First Deputy Prime Minister in Tereshchenko's government.

<sup>53</sup> Obkom First Secretary of Northern Kazakhstan (1989–91) became Minister of Ecology between 1992-1995.

<sup>54</sup> Sergei Tereshchenko was Obkom First Secretary of Chimkent and became Kazakhstan's first Prime Minister. His second secretary, Rashid Ibraev, became an outspoken member of the thirteenth parliament and was sent in disgrace to the post of Ambassador to India. Akezhan Kazhegeldin was one of the Secretaries of Semipalatinsk obkom.

<sup>55</sup> One study found that two-fifths of the American business elite have served in high government jobs at one time or another, and five out of every six government based their careers primarily in the private sector. Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power*, (New York: Wiley, 1960).

<sup>56</sup> Joseph A. Schlesinger, "Political Party Organisation", in James G. Marsh (ed.), *Handbook of Organizations* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965), p. 781.

<sup>57</sup> John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971). Porter notes how the corporate elite in Canada, as no doubt in other western societies, can extend its power more than other elite groups can. Bishops or university presidents in the board rooms of large corporations are exceedingly rare, but corporation directors on the boards of universities or publishing chains, or as members of synods or councils of churches are quite frequent.

<sup>58</sup> Mills, *The Power*, pp. 288-289

### SECTION III

In a post-independence environment, it is often assumed that the meaning of leadership has changed. Rule can no longer be reduced simply to occupying political office. Elites who lack authority in society, who cannot enforce their decisions, or who find themselves the targets of mass protests can hardly be considered “ruling elites” in the traditional sense in which the words were used in the Soviet period (See Introduction and I.1). Nevertheless, the distinction between pre- and post-1991 has been blurred by the authoritarian regime that has governed Kazakhstan since 1991, wherein elite transformation and elite succession remain the domain of the elite, not the masses. Accountability of the rulers to the ruled is still limited. However, Section I also outlined the ways in which Kazakhstan’s authoritarianism is circumscribed by a number of social and national cleavages, a relatively free media (up to 1997) and the periodic presence of open contenders for the post of Presidency. These three factors, as already illustrated, have encouraged Nazarbaev to be extremely sensitive to elite and mass support. In this light, there are three reasons for analysing the policies of the elite:

- (1) Output cannot be guessed. Even if there is a relationship between identity and output, it is not always definitive and it is almost impossible to separate the influence of identity on output from other factors;
- (2) Output must be explained. Given the existence of an array of distinctions among peoples in a multinational society and the potential for conflicts among them, this analysis will assess which factors are critical in determining those distinctions which may be used to build political identities;
- (3) Output must be assessed. Did policies originate from or are they leading to intra-elite conflict? Were they obstructed or supported by society at large? Overall, are the policies likely to enhance elite legitimacy and elite-society linkages?

This section applies these questions to two policy areas prioritised by the elite in 1991-1998: nation- and state-building and economic reform.

## CHAPTER III.1

### CONSTRUCTING A POLITICAL IDENTITY: NATION- AND STATE-BUILDING

In an elite's desire to create at least a veneer of legitimacy, ethnicity and elite identity become increasingly important. Elite legitimacy depends on a number of factors, including successful modernisation, economic management and ideologies of, for example, freedom or socialism. However, it is to a great extent on the basis of ethnicity that new elites have undertaken to build their followings, consolidate state power and establish a legitimacy for their rule. This chapter seeks to analyse, in Paul Brass' terms, "the process by which elites and counter-elites within ethnic groups select aspects of the group's culture, attach new values and meaning to them, and use them as symbols, to mobilise the group, to defend its interest, and to compete with other groups."<sup>1</sup> In short, has Kazakhstan's elite used ethnic mobilisation to improve its economic and political place in society?

#### ASSUMPTIONS AND WORKING DEFINITIONS

Over recent years academic discussion on identity politics has flourished. People live with multiple identities and these do not necessarily have a clear or permanent hierarchy in relation to each other, and are often mutually contradictory. Ethnicity, however, remains a very enigmatic concept. Although it appears to be an expression of individual identity, it is available to be used and misused by political elites for their own purposes. In certain circumstances, it can serve to consolidate state power. Such a form of politics is usually thought of as arising from historical change. People once had a defined and recognisable location in all-encompassing and rigid social structures and the family. The "problem" of their location in these structures therefore did not arise in any fundamental way. But these "traditional" social structures have now begun to "detraditionalise" or collapse, as the consequence of a number of changes including new

social movements.<sup>2</sup> To cite Pile and Thrift, “it has become a normal part of life to question identities, to construct them reflexively rather than simply recognise them. Consequently, social conflicts are no longer seen as just the epic clash of antagonistic social blocs but as a distributed deconstruction and reconstruction of social identities”.<sup>3</sup>

As a framework for discussion, the chapter draws upon the expansive literature on nations and nationalism. Anthony Smith’s definition is one of the most all-encompassing and will be used: “a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members”.<sup>4</sup> Smith’s notion that the *ethnie* is a precursor to the modern nation will also become relevant, as will Clifford Geertz’s distinction between the civic, cross-national state identity and that of an organic, ethnic identity.<sup>5</sup> The notion of instrumentalism, clearly illustrated by Ernest Gellner, will also be applied.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind, as Ronald Grigor Suny writes in *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, that if “there is any conclusion to be derived from such a study of the *longue duree* of a small nation, it might be that a nation is never fully ‘made’.”<sup>7</sup> Indeed, some national identities can weaken over time.

## THE RHETORIC OF NATION-BUILDING

Unlike many elites in other successor states, Kazakhstan’s political elite enjoyed the luxury of a choice upon independence. This choice was shaped by two realities. First, the absence of a “liberation movement” and of any strong nationalist movement (see Section One) meant that the elite was not forced to adopt exclusive, nationalist policies (or indeed any other policies, such as socialism). Second, as a multiethnic and multiconfessional state, albeit where the governing elite is largely Kazakh, Kazakhstan could opt for either a civic and cross-national political identity or an ethnic Kazakh, organic one – even if, as we shall see, their choice is constrained by geopolitical fears and realities.

The leadership from 1992 onward chose in its rhetoric to promote a civic, rather than ethnic identity. From the start of 1992, the President stressed that the multicultural

and multiconfessional nature of Kazakhstan had determined the inescapable path of civic responsibility and a cross-national state identity.<sup>8</sup> Already in 1992 placards and billboards promoting interethnic harmony were posted by the government in even the remotest rural area. One example of a placard encouraging a civic identity can be found on the high-deserted dusty road from Shymkent to Saratai: “Kazakhs and Russians unite in your new state of Kazakhstan!”<sup>9</sup>

President Nazarbaev and his closest advisors assigned various individuals and departments to roles in the creation of this political identity. At the apex of policy implementation, as with all spheres of policy, is the President. A governmental committee, independent of any Ministry, is charged with the administration of nationalities’ policy. In reality, its powers are weak. Instead, national policy and the formulation of a political identity is conceived in the Presidential think-tank, the Centre for Information and Analysis. As we saw in Section II, its most influential figure is Marat Tazhin, a professor of sociology in his early thirties. As the manager of the team of Presidential ghost-writers, Tazhin recruited some of the brightest individuals in the country in the fields of political science, history, economics and sociology, most of whose ages were between twenty-five and forty. In many ways, the Centre is a microcosm of how the elite sets out to build its nation’s civic consciousness – from above, controlled, and accompanied by many placards and much propaganda. Over the past five years, this think-tank has concentrated on policy implications as diverse as those concerning the Cossacks, territorial integrity in the face of perceived secessionism, ethnocratisation of the regions, religion and the impact of ethnicity and “clans” on political recruitment.<sup>10</sup> In turn, in every regional administration, the Department of Internal Politics – the regional branch of the Ministry of Interior – employs officials in “Nationality Affairs”. In all three regions surveyed, the Department of Internal Politics ranked amongst the top three departments in terms of status and importance. Unlike Tazhin’s think-tank, these latter institutions are mere executives.

## THE POLICIES

This emphasis on political rather than cultural identity – as problematic as most dichotomies – or, put differently, the typical republican, civic, French tradition over the ethnic, organic German one, was partly translated into policy initiatives in the first years of independence. What we shall be observing is the constant pull between these two conceptions of identity, as the fortunes of various societal and governmental interests and groups wax and wane, with the French conception eventually giving ground to the German. The three major policy areas of nation-building considered here are: religion, language and citizenship.

### **Religion**

Multiconfessional Kazakhstan, reminiscent of the religious tolerance practised under the Mongol Empire, was declared secular upon independence.<sup>11</sup> President Nazarbaev also told a Russian newspaper in 1995 that “Islam and Christianity are the two flanks of Kazakhstan’s spiritual legacy.”<sup>12</sup> The model often invoked was modern Turkey (despite, of course, the absence of a large number of Christians in Turkey).<sup>13</sup> Of the political elite interviewed, 70 percent confirmed that Kazakhstan initially sought emulation of Turkey, and over 80 percent claimed that by 1994 Kazakhstan no longer sought models of development, but had sought its own path. 95 percent confirmed that this path remained secular.

The elite has not permitted the registration of what they consider extreme religious groups, such as *Alash* (See Section I). Nevertheless, they have indicated relative freedom in registering foreign religious organisations, such as the American Baptist Group. The religious elite, represented since 1991 by mufti Ratbek Nysanbayuli and Orthodox Russian Archbishop Aleksei were, as seen in Section I, answerable to the Presidential administration, as the elite of both principal religious groups are appointed by the President. Mufti Ratbek has on several occasions been attacked by Muslim believers for being too “soft”.<sup>14</sup> Neither has been known to openly contradict the President.<sup>15</sup>

### **Language**

By contrast, the underlying dynamics of language, ethnicity and power were marked by considerable bargaining and negotiation.<sup>16</sup> Already in 1989, under strong pressure from a small but then relatively vocal nationalist movement, Nazarbaev in his previous capacity of Regional First Secretary of the CPSU insisted on passing a language law which, for the first time in the territory's history, established Kazakh as the state language to replace the Russian language. This was a prime example of the elite using the symbols of Kazakh nationhood to secure itself in power. It was also an underlying sign of nationalist pressure at that time even on the Central Asian leaders, of their need for alternative legitimacy and perhaps too of their nervousness. Upon independence, no new language law was introduced, and the Kazakh language retained its status as state language in both the 1993 and 1995 Constitutions. Soon, the President was again able to manipulate the language issue. In what was seen by the elite as a major concession primarily to the Russian-speaking minorities, Russian was elevated from its 1993 designation as a "language of interethnic communication" to that of "official language" in the 1995 Constitution. This possibly reflected varying levels of confidence and different perceptions of threat. Only in 1996 did the draft of a revised language law appear, of which elaboration follows below.

### **Citizenship**

The elite's third, and most important, element of constructing a civic identity was its introduction of an inclusive citizenship law in 1993.<sup>17</sup> In contrast to the citizenship laws promulgated in two former Soviet Republics which also house a large Russian community – Estonia and Latvia – Kazakhstan's 1993 citizenship law (including the minor changes introduced in 1995), did not include naturalisation laws, stiff language requirements, or stringent descent stipulations. Kazakhstani citizenship derives from residency, not descent. Like Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan adopted the policy of zero-option, where residents of the Kazakh SSR were automatically entitled to Kazakhstani citizenship but had to rescind any other. A deadline on citizenship adoption was also imposed. Even if the process ultimately proved more protracted than had been hoped, with the deadline postponed thrice, approximately only 20,000 Russians opted for Russian citizenship.<sup>18</sup> As a symbolic gesture to its Russian minority abroad, the Russian

government, represented by the Chairman of the Commission on Citizenship. Abdulat Mikitayev, embarked on a mission to “persuade Kazakhstan to conclude an agreement on dual citizenship.”<sup>19</sup> Kazakhstan’s elite, however, was united in its decision to permit only single citizenship<sup>20</sup>, believing, understandably, that dual citizenship would breed split loyalties, something a young nation could not afford<sup>21</sup> Dual citizenship would also provide endless possibilities for Russian intervention in Kazakhstan’s internal affairs And to any criticisms made by minority communities of ethnocentric policies, the elite points to the Peoples’ Assembly of Kazakhstan, a body established in 1994 to hear out the demands and defend the rights of minorities<sup>22</sup> Moreover, both the 1993 and the 1995 Constitutions banned parties based on ethnic lines.<sup>23</sup> This enabled the Kazakhstani government to refuse registration of, for example, the Cossacks’ movement.

The relatively liberal citizenship law probably reflects a part of the Kazakh mentality that considers itself genuinely tolerant. Nations often feel the duty to fulfil at least partially their self-ascribed myths. Many of the elite interviewed referred to the Kazakh tradition of hospitality in their self-definition, nurtured on a territory that has for centuries served as a crossing point and a melting-pot of a myriad of *ethnies*. The Minister of Culture, when interviewed, illustrated his nation’s generosity by pointing to the historically proven fact that it was only when travelling over that part of the Silk Road coterminous to contemporary Kazakhstan that merchants did not deem it necessary to carry extra foodstuffs, in the knowledge of the kindness of the Kazakhs.<sup>24</sup> (He did not mention that merchants travelled very well-armed.)

## THE UNWRITTEN AGENDA

Upon closer examination, however, the policies conceal a long-term agenda of Kazakh ethnic regeneration. Multi-confessionalism, far from being a concession to the hundred or so minorities of Kazakhstan, expresses the religious world of the Kazakh tribes, outlined in I.1, which was informed by two sets of beliefs. a sub-stratum of animism onto which was gradually grafted a veneer of Islam. The former had its roots in ancient Turkic and Mongolian tradition. The rhythm of nomad life, with its constant movement over long distances and lack of a permanent base, was not conducive to a spread of the



orthodox, mosque-centred faith of the sedentary people. Few members of the elite, outside the older generation of Kazakhs, can recite passages from the Koran or say the Islamic prayers (*bata*) correctly. The first Kazakh translation of the Koran did not appear until 1993, around the same time as the Uzbek and Turkmen translations. Put another way, if Kazakhstan had been a mono-national state, it is almost certain that it would have been secular.<sup>25</sup>

However, it is noteworthy that Kazakhstan's government increasingly has identified itself publicly and officially with Sunni Islam. It was with unqualified support from senior Kazakhstani officials, confirmed also by my findings, that a separate muftiat was established in 1990 in then Alma-Ata, still within the framework of the Soviet Islamic hierarchy, but no longer under the jurisdiction of the Tashkent-based Muslim Spiritual Directorate of Central Asia.<sup>26</sup> Even if this move might be interpreted as a show of independence more than anything else, up to then no Kazakh had ever served as head of the Central Asian muftiat, in which Uzbeks far outnumbered Kazakhs. As such, the muftiat's establishment can be considered the first step towards an official acknowledgement of the Islamic element in the national heritage. The political elite has accepted generous foreign donations, notably from Saudi Arabia, for the financing of mosques.<sup>27</sup> Only sixty-three mosques existed on Kazakhstan's vast territory before 1990 – now there are more than four thousand. Almaty's only Soviet-era mosque, deserted for decades, completed its face-lift with Saudi Arabian money, in 1996.<sup>28</sup> In the last five years, eight more mosques have opened in Almaty, even though the city's population is still mostly Slavic. Foreign donors have also ensured the wide distribution of Kazakh-language Korans.<sup>29</sup>

The elite interviewed confirmed religion's increasing place amongst the pomp and circumstance of public ceremonies. Public displays of prayers and chanting have become chic among Kazakhstan's political elite. Public gatherings are invariably now begun with a small prayer, as recently occurred on 16 December, 1997 when President Nazarbaev opened a ceremony in commemoration of those who were killed in the Almaty riots of 1986.<sup>30</sup> Religious holidays were made public holidays; the Muslim festival of *kurbanbairam* as well as the springtime celebration of *nawruz* – commemorated by few Kazakhs during the Soviet era – are leading examples. In short, the government of Kazakhstan is carefully using Islam to foster among its citizens an

identification with state-sponsored religious institutions.

On the second question of language, even if the Russian language was elevated to so-called “official” status in 1995, not one member of the elite interviewed could provide a definition for “official”. The government openly sponsored *Qazaq tili*, a movement, as its name suggests, pursuing the specific aim of promoting the Kazakh language. This was not a pragmatic choice. Only a reported 40 percent of Kazakhs know Kazakh<sup>31</sup> – and that often badly – and there is an acute shortage of Kazakh-language textbooks and teachers. Consequently, opinion polls indicate that Russians fear being stranded on linguistic islands as the state begins to open Kazakh-language schools.<sup>32</sup> The President outlined his plans. “All schools in Kazakhstan should teach Kazakh properly and there should be a state Kazakh language examination to obtain the secondary education certificate. At higher educational establishments, Kazakh must be a compulsory graduation examination.”<sup>33</sup> In other words, a non-Kazakh science student, for example, would have to know advanced Kazakh to graduate from university.

Moreover, all parliamentary proceedings are now bilingual. Already in 1993, a law required documents to be drawn up in both languages in all government bodies. Nevertheless, the common language of communication remains Russian. As witnessed at larger meetings, in confidential matters in the company of other nationalities, the elite tends to revert into (albeit broken) Kazakh, which automatically excludes non-Kazakhs.<sup>34</sup> As we found in Section II, the elite’s mastery of Kazakh is poor, but the state has nonetheless insisted upon financing Kazakh language lessons after work at government institutions, businesses and universities. These same provisions were not granted by the elite to other languages. Linguistic disagreements also arose over the introduction on 15 November 1993 of the republic’s sovereign currency, the *tenge*. The government’s tardiness in rectifying a policy error was revealed in an interview on 15 April 1996 with the doyen of Kazakhstan’s independent macroeconomic reform, Daulet Sembaev. He stated that it was only after considerable deliberation that the second batch of notes of the new *tenge* were issued in both languages, those prior to 1995 were written only in Kazakh; and both versions featured Kazakh folk-heroes.

The notion of a language law based on civic identity was most seriously questioned, however, by the revised language law draft which was introduced in 1996.<sup>35</sup> Significantly, unlike the 1989 language law which originated in parliament, the

brainchild of the 1996 draft was the government. Passed in 1997, the revised Language Law requires Kazakh to be spoken fluently by Kazakhs by the end of 2000 and by non-Kazakhs by the close of 2005. The 1995 Constitution had already stipulated that major political offices in Kazakhstan require a knowledge of fluent Kazakh. Sergei Tereshchenko, who, as we saw, was the only ethnic Russian in political office to have commanded fluent Kazakh had a Kazakh mother. Even if the President would appear genuinely against the introduction of an exclusionary language policy, he often employs a quite different content and manner when addressing an audience in Kazakh. On one notorious occasion, he was quoted as saying “Wait, my Kazakhs, your time will come!”<sup>36</sup> Given these stringent new language requirements, it is unlikely to be long before other demands will be introduced for citizenship, thereby making it exclusive rather than inclusive.

In short, these three policy areas are creating, in George Schoepflin’s words, an “exclusive moral community”.<sup>37</sup> Two further initiatives, which are unique to Kazakhstan amongst the successor states, buttress such indigenisation, and require brief elaboration: the move of the capital to Akmola (renamed Astana in May 1998), and the official sponsorship of the return of the Kazakh diaspora.

The first is the presidential decision of 1994, officially confirmed in 1995, to relocate the capital Almaty 1,500 km north to now Astana (former Soviet Tselinograd and Kazakh Akmola). Officially, the move is explained by the need to move away from Almaty’s geography of seismic faultlines and limited expansion possibilities. Privately, most agree that Nazarbaev made a geopolitical decision. Movement to the centre distanced ethnic Kazakhs from their traditional enemy, China. In theory, a central location would enable the government to exert a tighter grip on the northern regions, dominated by ethnic Russians and, according to the government, open to possible secessionism and eventual union with Russia. Of the elite interviewed unofficially, 60 percent were against the move (primarily for reasons of finance and personal comfort rather than geopolitics). The only elite member who disagreed publicly with the President over the move was Zamanbek Nurkadilov, former mayor of Almaty and, as of 1997, akim of Almaty region.<sup>38</sup>

Second, as recently as 1997, Kazakhstan's government reaffirmed its commitment to repatriating ethnic Kazakhs even though many returnees have found it

hard to adjust to their new circumstances.<sup>39</sup> Since Kazakhstan became independent in 1991, its government actively sponsored the return of ethnic Kazakhs from other parts of the former Soviet Union, China, Mongolia, Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. In September 1992, the government convened a worldwide *Qazaq kurultay* – the name given to the medieval meetings on the steppe - inviting representatives of the Kazakh diaspora from all over the world to Almaty. Many Kazakhs fled their native land in the 1920s and 1930s to these countries to escape agricultural collectivisation and other policies imposed by the Soviet government. This exodus, coupled with high Slav immigration throughout the Soviet period, meant that Kazakhstan found itself at the 1989 census the only one of the fifteen union republics in which the titular nationality was outnumbered collectively by other ethnic groups. The government has therefore been keen to encourage as many ethnic Kazakhs to return as would. According to official estimates, since 1991 over 160,000 Kazakhs have returned, mainly from Mongolia.

The policy, however, has not been without serious problems. Many of the newly-arrived, having retained the Kazakh language, are sometimes regarded with suspicion by those who now predominantly speak Russian. Meanwhile, non-Kazakhs have complained about a policy that they perceive as favouring the indigenous nationality. Even if the 1995 constitution did strip the Kazakh diaspora of its privileged entitlement to dual citizenship when living abroad, its members can still become automatic citizens of the Republic upon return without any residency requirement<sup>40</sup> Uighurs, for example, many of whom also fled in the Soviet period, are not automatically entitled to return to Kazakhstan. In practice, too, the government's policy has put considerable strain on the state budget. Returnees complain about not receiving allowances from cash-strapped regional authorities. They say that, while they have been offered land, frequently there is no housing to go with it. Jobs are scarce because the inability to speak Russian and limited practical experience restrict those returning to agricultural labour. Many have still not managed to gain Kazakhstani citizenship. Those coming from Mongolia with livestock in tow have faced considerable difficulties in transit.<sup>41</sup>

The government is proud of the fact that, by 1996, ethnic Kazakhs comprised 51 percent of the population. The policy of encouraging repatriation is only partly

responsible for this new ethnic balance, however. The main reason is the substantial and continuing emigration by Russians, Ukrainians and Germans. As a result, Kazakhstan has seen a net drop in its population -- from about 17 million in the early 1990s to just under 16 million today.<sup>42</sup>

So far, then, policy output has conformed with the elite structures, recruitment practices, and values outlined in the first two sections. Covertly, Kazakhs have been ensuring that policies culminate in the ultimate triumph of the Kazakh ethnos. Of course, only the more nationalist-minded or higher-ranking Kazakh officials admitted this privately. By contrast, as noted in II.1, amongst the elite interviewed the most fervent espousers of a civic identity were non-Kazakhs. The unstructured interviews revealed how the latter would unsurprisingly overcompensate for their lack of “Kazakh” identity by repeating almost to the letter the vision of a Kazakhstani state publicised by their President. It was often thought in the past that those Russian officials in the non-Russian republics in the USSR who spent their entire lives in that territory or were born there were likely to defend local interests with greater vigour than those who came to the republic at a later age. There is some indication of such local patriotism amongst Russian members of the Kazakhstani elite today. Their state identity is more marked than that of their Kazakh colleagues: it has conveniently replaced the former all-embracing Soviet identity. As non-Kazakhs governing in independent Kazakhstan, the social roots of their power are weak.

#### ELITE GROUPS, SYMBOL MANIPULATION AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

Our discussion so far has, in many ways, focussed on the primordial view of the nation, which argues that every person carries with him through life “attachments”, derived from place of birth, kinship relationships, religion, language, and social practices that are “natural” for him, “spiritual” in character, and that provide a basis for an easy “affinity” with other peoples from the same background.<sup>43</sup> If policies have direct, tangible effects on the lives of the ordinary citizen, they do not, however, construct a nation; regions are, after all, artificial constructs, and people can be *made* to believe that they are from a common origin. To secure national loyalty, peoples’ hearts and minds must be won, and constructing and deconstructing myths play a fundamental part in that

process. Such “engineering of human souls”, to appropriate Stalin’s sobriquet for writers, belongs to the instrumentalist camp of nation-building, to a perspective that emphasises the uses to which cultural symbols are put by elites seeking instrumental advantage for themselves or the groups they claim to represent.<sup>44</sup>

A useful comparison for assessing the manner in which Kazakhstan’s elite is engaged in this conscious selection of symbols from the past is provided by the French Third Republic. The comparison draws in large part on the account made of France by Eric Hobsbawm in *The Invention of Tradition*. There is no proof as to whether the elite referred to the experience of the Third Republic, but we did see in I.2 that the Kazakh elite often looks to the French for advice on constitutional and legal reform, and admires both the cultural confidence and style of leadership of the French. Three methods of reinventing the past are highlighted by Hobsbawm: historiography, public ceremonies, and, most effectively, the manipulation of symbols<sup>45</sup>

President Nazarbaev has satisfied nationalist expectations by sponsoring a collective rewriting of history, of which a six-volume series began to be published in October 1996. Three main points in the new series stand out. Most important was the open admission of the suffering that had been inflicted on the Kazakh population during the period of collectivisation and sedentarisation; this had previously been either entirely ignored or trivialised with vague statements about mistakes and misunderstandings. Manash Kozybaev, Director of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan, published a series of articles revealing publicly for the first time that millions of Kazakhs died at the regime’s hands during the early 1930s. Zhuldyz Abulkhozhin, who was a key participant in the 1990 State Committee established to investigate Stalin’s crimes, also highlighted the environmental devastation wrought by Khrushchev’s Virgin Lands project of the 1960s.<sup>46</sup> The Central Committee was more hesitant about a second reappraisal, namely the proposed rehabilitation of anti-Bolshevik Kazakh national communists. Nevertheless, the “bourgeois nationalists” are now regarded with respect and the period of government by the Alash Orda praised for its example of independent government. Third, Kazakh-Russian relations were re-appraised; although it was confirmed that the Small Horde asked to be admitted into the Russian Empire in 1731 in response to

Chinese encroachments, it is now stressed that Kazakhs never desired colonisation or the Russian territorial-administrative system

The second “invented tradition” is that of public ceremonies. We have referred to the introduction of Muslim ceremonies. The most important secular holiday is Independence Day, which combines official parades with unofficial popular festivities, such as fireworks and dancing in the streets. It is, however, interesting to note that the official date of 17 December has been moved forward to August due to the unspoken fear of the elite that popular turnout in winter would be low.

The third, and most visible expression of an “imagined community” are symbols. As elsewhere in the FSU, a plethora of new symbols proclaimed the emergence of independent Kazakhstan: a national flag, a new anthem to replace the Soviet one, a constitution, a national bank, (embryonic) defence forces, a national currency, the *tenge*, passports and other formal attributes of statehood. The cultural references were drawn from Kazakh traditions. The new and elaborate flag, for example, includes a band of Kazakh ornamental motifs and a representation of the steppe eagle, favoured hunting companion of the Kazakhs of old, the main elements of the national coat-of-arms are the winged horses of Kazakh myth and the sacred smoke-hole wheel of the yurt.<sup>47</sup> The national colours of blue and gold, representing the sky and the sun (as a symbol of harmony), have a universal significance, but also a symbolic link to the ancient Kazakh cult of the Sky. The flag has been democratised and universalised in its mandatory presence at every civil wedding or ceremony.

Like the creators of the Third Republic, Kazakhstan’s nation-builders sought more tangible, every-day ways in which to show that the political framework had changed. One method involved statues.<sup>48</sup> However, as was the case even for the founding fathers of the French Republic, money is scarce, and statues and buildings were ultimately often financed by private money. A former member of the elite, turned entrepreneur, provided capital for the construction of the House of Abai in London, to venerate and publicise the much-respected poet of Kazakhstan. A substantial museum and statue were also built to commemorate him in his hometown of Semipalatinsk in 1996.<sup>49</sup> Zhambyl, one of the Kazakh steppe’s most famous bards, as seen in I.1, had a yurt and statue erected outside the National Museum in Almaty in 1996. Another notable statue was completed at the end of 1996; situated prominently opposite the

Presidential Palace it commemorates those who died in the Almaty riots of 1986 – even if the official death toll still only stands at two. Meanwhile, only in 1996 was the statue of Lenin finally pulled down in Almaty. A handful of protesters stood by. Its disappearance seemed as ignominious as its appearance, since it was the only statue of Lenin in the entire Soviet Union which had been erected facing the wrong way, away from Parliament and hence away from the people.<sup>50</sup>

A less costly and more effective means of altering perceptions was the elite's decision to rename streets, towns and regions to emphasise their Kazakh essence. The Caspian port of Shevchenko, for example, has now become Aktau; similarly, the Slavic-named cities of Gur'yev and Panfilov are now Atyrau and Zharkent respectively. In the capital alone, by 1995 over twenty streets had been renamed. *Kommunistichesky* was transformed into *Ablai Khan*; Karl Marx into Kunaev; and Kirov into *Bogenbai batyr*, medieval and modern heroes of the Kazakh ethnos. The spelling of the names of several towns and provinces was also altered to reflect Kazakh pronunciation; the official designation of Chimkent, for example, has become Shymkent; Alma-Ata is now Almaty and Kustanai, Kostanai.<sup>51</sup> Ethnic Kazakh Nurbulat Masanov wrote a letter in 1996 to the Head of the Press Section under the President demanding an explanation for the absence of streets named after Russian heroes.<sup>52</sup>

From this short tour of invented traditions, what have we ascertained about the truth or otherwise of the primordialist versus the instrumentalist view? So far, the symbols are not proving too effective. Karl W. Deutsch writes that “*a nationality is a people pressing to acquire a measure of effective control over the behaviour of its members.*”<sup>53</sup> Over a landmass eleven times the United Kingdom (size is discussed at greater length in III 2), there is little assurance that the elite is getting the message across to all people and to all regions equally. Former Soviet citizens, Kazakhs and Russians, continue to call place-names by their former, Soviet names. Kazakhs and Russians alike continue to favour the old Soviet holidays, particularly Women's Day and Victory Day. Kazakhs are becoming proud of *nawruz*, but ordinary Russians do not feel it is “their” holiday.

Research conducted by Masanov suggests that only Kazakhs identify in a majority with Kazakhstan. In a close second come the Koreans, who have a functional



approach to the state.<sup>54</sup> Even this is simplistic, however. There are important differences amongst Russians, and also amongst Kazakhs, in how they perceive independence

### **Constraints**

What have been at once the obstacles to and sources of support in the implementation of nation-building projects?

On the civic side, there are no symbols which unify both Kazakhs and Russians. One recent event was the Olympics, where Kazakhstan won three gold medals, two won by Ukrainian Kazakhstanis, and the third by an ethnic Russian. No Kazakh won a medal. Numerous were the allusions in the media to the pride that the young state should feel for its sportsmen. But, in reality, the only shared cultural experience was the Soviet period, and now the government is busy legitimising a post-Soviet future. The Russian community in particular has little emotional commitment to this state in which its status has lowered, and in which, even before policies were adopted, it sees a second-class future.

Even if such common symbols might have been tapped, the elite soon saw the attraction of ethnic over civic nationalism. Cultural referents drawn from the Kazakh nation have dominated the nation-building project. The changed pronunciation and transliteration of “Qazaqstan” from its initial “Kazakhstan” is a case in point. Between 1995 and 1997, the ethnic Kazakh elite has insisted on foreigners pronouncing and transliterating their country the Kazakh way, with a definite emphasis on the Kazakh hard “q”. Kazakhstan was prevented by its multiethnicity from introducing such a policy immediately, and, since December 1997, with no official reason, has reverted to the old way of “Kazakhstan”. What is notable is that Kazakhisation became more overt once the peak of Russian emigration had been reached in 1994; it may well be that the government had given up in its attempts to keep the Russians at home. The President, unlike his Kyrgyz counterpart Akaev, now hardly pleads for the Russian community to stay. More frequent are his statements of regret at the departure of the Germans; they are likely to be better citizens than the Russians and are also likely to stay in their much-needed positions on now-privatised farms. During the visit by German Chancellor Helmut Kohl on 10 May 1997, Nazarbaev stated: “I appeal through this microphone to

all ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan, calling on them not to leave. They are our compatriots, this is their homeland. We will improve the economy together and will get rich together also.”<sup>55</sup> Nazarbaev has often expressed his hope that economic success will help to bind all communities in a common home, and the reality of this hope is assessed in the next chapter. After all, the nation is also a conspiracy.

Even if the government has had remarkably free rein in nativisation, what is striking is the constrained manner in which the government has been using its cultural symbols. Negative, rather than positive identity has characterised the first stages of independence. A.L. Epstein has distinguished between what he called positive identities, resting on “self-esteem, a sense of the worthiness of one’s own group’s ways and values,” and negative identities, based on “the internalised evaluation of others,” with “much of one’s behaviour...prompted by the desire to avoid their anticipated slights or censure”<sup>56</sup> One startling manifestation of this tepid identity has been the limited manner in which history has been rewritten.

Quite apart from the fact that the elite is a Soviet creation, three major explanations can be given for its display of a “negative identity”: a certain embarrassment about its nomadic past; the Kazakhs’ susceptibility to ideology and propaganda; and, a divisive rather than unifying history. Coupled with these is also the elite’s Soviet past, its absolute lack of revolutionary nationalist origins, and its awareness of where whole-hearted identity politics might lead.

Officials display a certain embarrassment about their past. This again is part of the Soviet heritage. The Soviet identity was self-defined as ultra-modern, against which a backward past was measured and found wanting. Nomadism also lacks physical reminders of a great past. One general and one specific example will serve as illustration. Nomadism is regarded ambivalently. On the one hand, the elite says publicly that it is proud of its nomadic past, its oral traditions and elaborate customs. Nomadism is also the Kazakhs’ most significant cultural marker against their sedentary northern neighbours, the Russians. On the other hand, the elite recognises nomadism’s inferiority in a Western-centric view of civilisation and its inadequacy in a modern world. The specific example of the 1986 riots shows how an event, dubbed by many observers as the first crack in the Soviet edifice and thus a convenient springboard for Kazakhstan’s independence, has instead been surrounded by investigations,

recriminations, calls for apologies, retrials and rehabilitations. The reason is clear: the head of the Committee established to look into 1986, Mukhtar Shakhnov, implicated President Nazarbaev as one of the officials who helped to instigate the events (as we saw in I.2), and full details of the criminal proceedings were never made public. In Shirin Akiner's words, "there was no freedom struggle: the Kazakhs were bereft both of the organisational experience of such a period of preparation, and of the ideological bonding of the fight for a common national goal; hence, there was no legacy of audacious deeds to celebrate, no emotive slogans and symbols, no heroes, no national myths."<sup>57</sup> This has had a positive side in the resulting absence of the extreme authoritarianism, intolerance and militarisation that armed struggle can bequeath to subsequent independent governments.

Second, the ethnic Kazakh elite appeared almost numbed by its past. It, and the embryonic Kazakh intelligentsia, have not yet capitalised on the plethora of unifying disasters that is the tragic legacy of their nation's history.<sup>58</sup> To take this century alone: the Kazakhs have endured the 1930s famine, collectivisation and sedentarisation in the 1940s, together with the Virgin Lands project and substantial Slavic immigration of the 1950s and 1960s. The two million lives lost as a result of the artificially induced famine and sedentarisation policies of the 1930s have not, for the Kazakhs, assumed the centrality that the Genocide has acquired in the Armenian consciousness, or the Holocaust in the Jewish. As noted in II.1, even if the elite did insist on one of its first reappraisals being the establishment of a definitive death toll for the 1930s, it is remarkably detached from these events. Various explanations are plausible. Perhaps also the 1930s famine, as potentially powerful a piece of folklore as the 1840s Irish famine<sup>59</sup>, was lost in what was to be a series of calamities. But that begs the question as to why Dzhungar atrocities are often remembered and not Russian/Soviet ones. Perhaps the elite feared an upsurge in anti-Russian feeling if the Committee were to implicate Moscow and Kazakhstan's local Russians. Whilst mobilisation of memories the Irish famine memories by Irish intellectual opponents of British colonial rule was in the nationalists' interests, Kazakhstan's political elite will not capitalise politically on apportioning blame, since nearly half of its own population would be implicated – as would the elite's own Soviet past<sup>60</sup> However, this gradual response accredits too much rationality to an irrational, emotive subject. A more convincing explanation might lie in

the fact that the question is not so crudely manipulative. Memory is possibly different in the Soviet context. The pronouncements noted in Section II of the elite regarding its perceptions of the Soviet past are testimony to the balance sheets that it rationally draws up on the legacy of the Soviet era.<sup>61</sup>

Third, and finally on this point, Kazakh history on the whole is a divisive, rather than unifying force. In the new version of history, government-sponsored historians have done their best to emphasise those brief periods of history where Kazakhs found unity. The Kazakh khanate of the fifteenth century is conveniently now portrayed as the territory's first consolidated state; the 540<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this event (which cannot, in fact, be attributed to a precise date) was celebrated in 1995. Historians also highlight the unity achieved in the eighteenth century against the Dzungars. Like the founders of the Third Republic, the Kazakhstani government has preferred such general symbols of unity. However, the Third Republic had great difficulty with 1789: for much of the population, this moment defined identity, and in an anti-republican way. Similarly, in reality, historical figures such as Ablai Khan cut ambiguous heroes and, moreover, would even be regarded as divisive for the Kazakh nation let alone the Kazakhstani state, since they could be seen to represent the interests of one horde rather than of the Kazakh people as a whole. For some of the other Central Asian peoples, the literary heritage, oral or written, provides a focus for their national identity; for the Kyrgyz, for example, the Manas epic has traditionally constituted the defining feature of their group identity, cutting across regional and tribal differences. The Kazakhs have nothing comparable: almost all their oral epics are Central Asian, while their written literature, though distinctive and original, is stylistically too indebted to Russian/Soviet models to serve this purpose. The nineteenth-century "enlighteners", who were instrumental in shaping the notion of the Kazakhs as a discrete national entity, are also no longer accorded universal approbation: Chokan Valikhanov in particular is felt by some to have been too enthusiastic an advocate of Russian culture.<sup>62</sup> And both Abai and Valikhanov wrote in Russian, not Kazakh.

The young Republic's celebrations of its folk-heroes graphically illustrate inter-horde rivalry. In 1995, in large part due to the enthusiasm for Kazakh poetry of the then French Ambassador to Kazakhstan, UNESCO sponsored a spectacular festival in memory of Abai in his hometown of Semipalatinsk. However, the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of

the Great Horde's chief *akyn*, or bard, Jambyl, had to surpass it. In 1996, extravagant amounts of state money were lavished on the construction of a yurt in the poet's birthplace, reminiscent of the extravagant fur yurts that the white bone aristocracy owned during the previous century with the modern addition of over a million dollars worth of imported Italian furniture. Every major official was present; any absence would have been considered a personal snub to the President.

In short, as Epstein has noted, "elements of negative identity are nearly always present where ethnic groups occupy a position of inferiority or marginality within a dominance hierarchy."<sup>63</sup> Put differently, identities are usually defined "against" and never in a vacuum. Negative ethnic identities are characteristic not only of subordinate groups, but of dominant groups as well. If extreme conformity is a typical reaction to domination among coopted elites of subordinate groups, then empathy with the demands of subordinate groups is one form of response to power among dissenting elites of dominant groups.

## THE EFFECTS OF NATION-BUILDING POLICIES

Although this is still very early days for any definitive conclusions to be drawn, and bearing in mind that cause-and-effect linkages must necessarily be treated with caution, some present and likely effects of the above policies and processes will be assessed. The effects will be considered in terms of the revival of Kazakh traditions, inter-horde rivalry and interethnic relations.

Even in an increasingly authoritarian structure such as Kazakhstan, where government actions do not require initial legitimacy, policies are not made in a vacuum. The language policy enacted was in part a reaction to a demand by the Kazakh population for their vernacular language, a demand channelled to the elite by the *Qazaq tili* (Kazakh language) movement. Many Kazakhs desired Kazakh-medium kindergartens and schools; they also wanted grammars, phrasebooks, dictionaries and other teaching materials. It became a point of honour to use the language as much as possible. Nevertheless, there are practical constraints on the use of the Kazakh language. Although Kazakhstan was officially a bilingual republic, in practice, Russian

prevailed in most public settings. Kazakh nationalists blame the Russians for “closing down” Kazakh schools in the last decades of the Soviet era, but Russians say it was done with the full compliance of Kazakh officials, adding that in most cities, there used to be no Kazakh schools at all.<sup>64</sup> Most of the young members of the Kazakhstani political elite neither listened to traditional fairy tales nor know their “seven generations”.<sup>65</sup>

In Section II we also determined that the official’s primary loyalty lies to himself, to his close family, and to his extended family rather than to the state. For over sixty years, the official attitude towards the clan-tribal system was that it was primitive, repressive and an impediment to progress. The first two sections showed how clientelism in the Soviet period primarily reinforced horde rather than ethnic identities, even if the two were linked symbiotically. Rather than leading to national solidarity, indigenisation in the 1960s and 1970s led to corruption and a gradual undermining of organisational discipline from within.

The process of privatisation is already forming a new business class, but, to date, networks based on the privatisation of capital (the subject of III.2) remain on clan, rather than ethnic lines. Within the army, anecdotal evidence suggests that whilst in Soviet times Kazakhs feared Russians, today the army is fragmented along horde lines. The comparison with the Uzbek elite is instructive; the more rigid and cohesive structure of the Uzbeks means that one clan tends to dominate the present state; in the Kazakh case (as we saw in I.1) clans are rigorously exogamous, and the curious situation may arise where a Russian is part of Kazakh network.

Thus, for the immediate future, clientelism has, to use Beissinger’s words, a denationalising effect on politics.<sup>66</sup> Over time, ethnicity itself can, however, form the basis of clan loyalty, if financial and business structures are made up of various clans. As we saw in II.2, the Middle Horde distrusts Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin, an *Uak*, largely because he is popular in Russia, the West and among the emerging Russified business class. The move to Akmola (Astana) may also reduce inter-horde rivalry – this is given as yet another unofficial reason for the move – by enabling horde relations to be placed on a new footing, geographically removed from the seat of the Senior Horde in whose tight grip Nazarbaev is said to make policies.

Interethnic stability, on the other hand, results to date from a largely self-regulating situation. Soviet communism had ensured a weak civil society and the inability of ethnic groups to organise themselves into popular movements. Substantial acculturation by the Kazakh and Slav ethnic groups occurred during the Soviet period, and both ordinary Kazakhs and Russians in private relate how they have not accorded primacy to nationality. Furthermore, emigration by Germans and Slavs has vacated jobs and flats for the rural Kazakhs who are migrating to the cities. Other decisive factors contributing to stability have been the attitude of the Yeltsin leadership and the overwhelming priority given in Kazakhstan to socio-economic recovery rather than politics, nationalist politics included. The existence of over one hundred nationalities has also deflected attention from the two major groups.

Over and above this happy coincidence of subjective and objective factors, the elite was also politically astute in its adoption of a policy of Kazakhisation that was covert and gradual. Both the ethnic Kazakhs' own numerical weakness upon independence and their competition with an almost numerically equal other ethnic group, the Russians, posed initial limitations on the elite's ability to manipulate ethnicity and claim legitimacy on the basis of the Kazakh ethnos. By acting inclusively and not exclusively, the government felt it can avoid alienating large parts of the population and creating islands and boundaries of ethnicity which could unleash ethnic conflict. The President, therefore, seemed to understand the dangers of pushing nationalism too far and must also feel that demography ensures that the future is on the Kazakhs' side.

In the medium- to long-term, however, the state may prove its own gravedigger. By maintaining a near-total monopoly over cultural and religious symbols, the ruling authorities have so far kept a tight lid on the potential mobilisation of public opinion by independent, non-governmental forces on ethnic or religious grounds. However, it has empowered new divisive groups on the basis of ethnicity and religion. The Kazakhstani government has done so by creating cultural markers for purposes of internal communication.<sup>67</sup> These cultural markers are becoming cultural boundaries, a position that is in sympathy with Fredrik Barth's boundary approach to ethnic groups<sup>68</sup> Barth treats ethnic groups as groups of self-ascription, which develop identities through dichotomisation with others. Their cultural symbols operate to mark the boundaries of interaction between "us" and "them". As John Hutchinson explains, "Cultural symbols

are proposed, according to this argument, not to express a commitment to fundamental values, but rather to effect a differentiation of the group from others. In this context they have a functional rather than an essential significance.”<sup>69</sup> Politicised ethnicities grow off each other. The weakness of a strong sense of Russian identity, still less of organised nationalist movements among the minorities, has to date arguably reduced the incentive for Kazakhstani nationalism. And in just the same way the relatively gentle growth of Kazakh nationalism (such as the absence of violence, crude slogans, minimal overt mobilisation) has not given the Russians too many reasons to mobilise.

The result has been that the Kazakhstani government has influenced the self-definition of the group and its boundaries, to such an extent that the ethnic community being created is a very different social formation from its progenitor. If ethnic conflict does break out in the short-term in Kazakhstan, we may go so far as to say that it will be almost entirely devoid of cultural content, and will constitute merely “one form in which interest conflicts between and within states are pursued.”<sup>70</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

Ultimately, this chapter, then, has been concerned with how the elite itself has chosen to define its nation. Its image of the nation contains few elements of Ernest Renan’s view of the nation as a form of morality<sup>71</sup> or of Max Weber’s sense of a nation’s cultural mission.<sup>72</sup> Karl Deutsch, on the other hand, would be pleased to see his functional definition of nation being implemented, as throughout the country, national and local governments have been engaged in strengthening and extending the channels of communication which can ensure a popular identification with national symbols and norms.<sup>73</sup>

Kazakhstan is busy reinventing its past. However, the actual evolution of Soviet Kazakhstan, unlike that of, say Georgia, did *not* result in the emergence of a conscious nation with its own national intelligentsia and political elite. A national myth promoted by nationalists of oppression, struggle and eventual freedom is conspicuously absent. Consequently, the nation is not seen as the most natural of human associations, which breaks the oppressive bonds of empire and reaches its fullest flowering with sovereignty



and independence. Primary loyalties of the Kazakh remain with the individual, family and then only with a larger *Gemeinschaft*. Consequently, it is the Kazakhs' self-definition that is the primary obstacle to the building of an ethnocratic state, rather than the republic's many minorities, which is the impediment most emphasized by current literature. In Walter Connor's typology, the *ethnie*, defined, has not yet become a nation, which is self-defined. Brass may ultimately be correct in his assertion "that the pre-existing cultures or religious practices of ethnic groups are infinitely malleable by elites."<sup>74</sup>

The President has been aware of his country's ethnic time-bomb: "God grant that nobody will stir up Kazakhstan on ethnic grounds. That would be far worse even than Yugoslavia."<sup>75</sup> Whether there was instead an overall long-term policy of ridding the Republic slowly of its non-Kazakh minorities is open to question. Masanov contends that the elite always privately hoped that Russians would leave to free housing and jobs; and that, finally, the Kazakhs' time had come.<sup>76</sup> However, to judge by the Kazakhs' ancestors, whose lifestyle was at the mercy of the climate and reliant upon the yurt's inherent strength – the trellis, the roof struts and the wheel of the smoke-hole determined whether there was to be harmony or chaos<sup>77</sup>, the Kazakh is a short-term thinker with short-term policies. Short-term politics instead of long-term strategy has allowed a predominantly ethnic Kazakh elite to become rich now at the expense of potential chaos in the future. For the moment, the elite, witnessing a substantial foreign interest in its Republic, has become less risk-adverse and more confident, secure in the knowledge that the international community has rarely placed democracy before the interests of oil or geopolitics.

### Endnotes to chapter III.1

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<sup>1</sup> Paul R. Brass, "Elite Groups, Symbol Manipulation, and Ethnic identity among the Muslims of South Asia", in D. Taylor and M. Yapp (eds), *Political Identity in South Asia*, (London: Curzon Press, 1979), p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> See Paul Wilkinson, *Social Movement* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1971) and Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

<sup>3</sup> See Stephen Pile and Nigel Thrift, *Mapping the Subject: Geographies of Cultural Transformation* (Routledge: London and New York, 1995), p. 9.

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<sup>4</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1991), p. 23.

<sup>5</sup> See Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States", in *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, ed. Clifford Geertz (New York: Free Press, 1963), pp. 107-13.

<sup>6</sup> See Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964), pp. 158-69.

<sup>7</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation, 2nd edn* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994) p. 333.

<sup>8</sup> See Nursultan Nazarbaev, *Idei 'naya Konsolidatsiya Obshchestva kak uslovie progressa Kazakhstana*, Kazakhstan – XXI Vek, Almaty 1993; *K Obnovlennomy Kazakhstany cherez iglublenie reform, obshchenatsional'noe soglasie*, Kazakhstan, Almaty, 1994; *Kontseptsiya Gumanitarnogo Obrazovaniya v Respublike Kazakhstan*, Almaty 1994; and *Za mir i soglacie v nashem obshchem dome*, Almaty, 1995. See also, Paul Kolstoe, "Anticipating Demographic Superiority: Kazakh Thinking on Integration and Nation Building", *Europe-Asia Studies* (Vol. 50, No. 1, 1998), pp. 51–69.

<sup>9</sup> Author's observation, 7 September, 1993.

<sup>10</sup> Author's interview with Marat Tazhin, 12 December 1994.

<sup>11</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 12 January, 1992. For other major statements by Nazarbaev concerning Kazakhstan's secularism, see *Egemen Qazaqstan*, 10 November 1992; *Panorama*, 13 July 1993; *Ana tili*, 14 August, 1994; *Express-K*, 12 December 1994; *Zaman Qazaqstan*, 1 December 1995; *Turkestan*, 2 June, 1996; and *Panorama*, 15 June, 1997.

<sup>12</sup> Bhavna Dave, "Kazaks Struggle to Revive Their 'Language of Folklore'", *Transition*, 29 November 1996, pp.23–25. See also her, "National Revival in Kazakhstan: Language Shift and Identity Change", *Post-Soviet Affairs* (Vol.12, No. 1, 1996), pp. 51–72.

<sup>13</sup> For discussion of the "Turkish model", see *Jas Alash*, 14 March, 1992; *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 22 February 1992 and *Zaman Qazaqstan*, 24 July and 1 August, 1992

<sup>14</sup> The most notable examples of criticism were found in *Zaman Qazaqstan*, 13 April, 1993; *Ana Tili*, 22 December 1994; and *Turkestan*, 4 September, 1996. Also, Kazakh-language Xabar TV First Channel, 15 December 1995; Kazakh-language TV First Channel, 16 April, 1996.

<sup>15</sup> For a discussion of these issues see, *Sayasat*, June 1996, Vol 13, pp.24-30.

<sup>16</sup> For issues concerning the Kazakh language, see M.S. Mashanov and R.S. Arynova, "Kul'turno-lingvisticheskaya situatsiya v Respublike Kazakhstan", *Sayasat* (Vol.8, September 1997), pp. 32-4; N. Sh. Tankieva, "Ob izmeneniyakh v obshchestvenno-politicheskoi terminologii kazakhskogo yazyka i nekotorykh printsipakh terminoobrazovaniya", *Sayasat*, (Vol. 8, September 1997), pp. 43-51; and, N.A. Aitkhozhin, "Problemy vnedreniya Latinitsy v kazakhskii alfabit", *Sayasat*, (Vol. 9, October 1997), pp. 24–29; and William Fierman, "Language and Identity in Kazakhstan: Formulations in Policy Documents: 1987–1997", *Communist and post-Communist Studies* (Vol. 31, No. 2, 1998), pp. 171–186.

<sup>17</sup> For an analysis of the law see *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 25 March, 1993 and *Panorama*, 24 August, 1993

<sup>18</sup> The Russian Embassy would, understandably, only supply an approximation.

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<sup>19</sup> BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts*, 2 June 1994.

<sup>20</sup> Eventually, the two sides reached a compromise elaborated by the Kazaks called the “Simple Exchange of Citizenship Agreement” (Uproshchennyi’ poryadok priobretenie grazhdanstva). See *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 21 January, 1995.

<sup>21</sup> The elite’s state policy was outlined at a roundtable conference in Moscow in mid-November 1995. Sabit Zhusupov and Zhapsarbayou Kuanyshev stated that whilst no citizenship concept is perfect, single citizenship is optimal. See Karlygash Ezhenova, “Put’ k resheniyu problem grazhdanstva – v konstruktivnom poiske integratsionnykh resheni’I real’noi’ podderzhke so storony Rossii svoikh sootchestvennikov”, *Panorama*, 28 October 1995.

<sup>22</sup> The People’s Assembly temporarily replaced the parliament which had been dissolved by the President.

<sup>23</sup> See *Jas Alash*, 10 October 1995; and *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 9 November 1995.

<sup>24</sup> *Author’s interview*, 17 April, 1996.

<sup>25</sup> See also, “Mirovozzrencheskie orientatsii studentov: otnoshenie k religii”, *Sayasat*, September 1997, Vol.8, pp.46–50.

<sup>26</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 2 June 1990.

<sup>27</sup> *Karavan*, 5 February 1994; *Delovaya nedelya*, 8 December, 1994.

<sup>28</sup> Almaty’s only Soviet-era mosque, deserted for decades, completed its face-lift with Saudi Arabian money, in 1996.

<sup>29</sup> Foreign donors have also ensured the wide distribution of Kazakh-language Korans.

<sup>30</sup> *Delovaya Nedelya*, 18 December 1997; and *Panorama*, 19 December 1997.

<sup>31</sup> Only a reported 40 percent of Kazakhs know Kazakh.

<sup>32</sup> See *Karavan*, 25 October 1994; and *Karavan*, 15 July 1996.

<sup>33</sup> *Kazakh Television First Channel*, Almaty, 17 April 1997.

<sup>34</sup> Personal observation

<sup>35</sup> For a detailed analysis of the 1996 Language Law, see “Zakon Respubliki Kazakhstan. O yazykakh v Respublike Kazakhstan,” *Mysl’* (Vol.9, 1997), pp. 2–7.

<sup>36</sup> *Xabar TV First Channel* in Kazakh Language, 25 July, 1995.

<sup>37</sup> George Schoepflin, “Aspects of Language and Ethnicity in Central and Eastern Europe”,

*Transition*, 29 November 1996,6–9.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Zamanbek Nurkadilov, 12 March 1996.

<sup>39</sup> For a more detailed discussion of these issues, see Sally N. Cummings, “The Kazakhs: Diasporas, Demographics and the Kazakhstani State”, in Charles King and Neil Melvin (eds.), *Nations Abroad: Diaspora Politics and International Relations in the Former Soviet Union* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), pp. 133–52..

<sup>40</sup> *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, Moscow, 28 April 1997.

<sup>41</sup> *Panorama Shimkenta*, 22 September 1996.

<sup>42</sup> See *The Jamestown Monitor*, 30 January, 1998.

<sup>43</sup> See Clifford Geertz, “The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States”, in Clifford Geertz (ed.), *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa* (New York, 1967), pp. 108–10 and 128.

<sup>44</sup> See Brass, “Elite Groups”, pp. 35–43. To return to our Introduction, it also tends to be true that societies tend to function more efficiently and harmoniously if the population shares a sense of solidarity.

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<sup>45</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions", and "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914", in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 13-14, 264-5, 271-8. It is nevertheless important to note that right down to the Vichy era a considerable proportion of the French population did not wholly identify with the Republic.

<sup>46</sup> Less has been said to date about the loss of ancestral land to Slav immigrants. This is an explosive issue that might be further manipulated once the demographic balance has swung further in the Kazakhs' favour.

<sup>47</sup> In the past the yurt had been the focal point of the communal life of the family. By the 1970s, the use of yurts had expanded from the private domain into the public, where they were widely used as clubs, libraries, restaurants and exhibition centres.

<sup>48</sup> See M. Agulhon, "La Statumanie et l'Histoire", *Ethnologie Francaise*, (1978), pp. 3-4.

<sup>49</sup> *Panorama*, 25 August 1996.

<sup>50</sup> Author's observation, 20 August 1996.

<sup>51</sup> The Supreme Kenges (Parliament) passed a decree on 14 May 1993.

<sup>52</sup> *Express-Kazakhstan*, 12 June 1996.

<sup>53</sup> See Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1966), pp. 96-8, 101, and 104-5.

<sup>54</sup> Tsentr monitoringa mezhetnicheskikh otnoshenii v Kazakhstane, *Etnopoliticheskii monitoring v Kazakhstane*, Three Volumes, (Almaty: Arkor, 1996).

<sup>55</sup> *Kazakh Television Xabar Channel*, Alma-Ata, 10 May 1997 in *SWB*, 13 May 1997.

<sup>56</sup> A.L. Epstein, *Ethos and Identity: Three Studies in Ethnicity* (London: Tavistock, 1978), 102-103.

<sup>57</sup> Akiner, *Formation*, p. 60.

<sup>58</sup> This is very fortunate, given what such revival might do for inter-ethnic tensions and for relations with Moscow. There is not yet a widespread felling of rural mass identity rooted in enmity to Russia, partly because the rural population's enmity is directed toward the ex-Soviet elite in Kazakhstan.

<sup>59</sup> Comparisons might also be drawn with native American and aboriginal movements in Australia.

<sup>60</sup> In Ireland nationalists used these myths as a means of seizing power for themselves from London and the Anglo-Irish elites.

<sup>61</sup> It will be interesting to see the impact of exposure to worldwide currents of anti-imperialism.

<sup>62</sup> See Chokan Valikhanov, *Izbrannye proizvedeniya* (Almaty: Nauka, 1986).

<sup>63</sup> Mark Beissinger, "Elites and Ethnic Identities in Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics", in Alexander J. Motyl (ed.), *The Post-Soviet Nations: Perspectives on the Demise of the USSR* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p. 149.

<sup>64</sup> Dave, "Kazaks Struggle", p. 23.

<sup>64</sup> Beissinger refers to a "denationalising effect". "Elites and Ethnic Identities".

<sup>65</sup> Many instead pointed me to F. Januzakova, *Kazakhskie Narodnye Skazki* (Alma-Ata: Zazushy, 1982).

<sup>67</sup> Abner Cohen, *Two-Dimensional Man: An Essay on the Anthropology of Power and Symbolism in Complex Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 98-

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102 and 106–110.

<sup>68</sup> See the Introduction in Fredrik Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1969).

<sup>69</sup> John Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* (London: Fontana Press, 1994), p. 27.

<sup>70</sup> Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, "Introduction", in Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (eds), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 8.

<sup>71</sup> See Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation*, trans. Ida Mae Snyder (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1882), pp. 26–9.

<sup>72</sup> "The Nation", in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. and ed. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1948), pp. 171–7 and 179.

<sup>73</sup> Deutsch, *Nationalism*, p. 22.

<sup>74</sup> Brass, "Elite Groups", p. 89.

<sup>75</sup> *Kazakstanskaya pravda*, 23 November 1991

<sup>76</sup> Personal conversation with the author, 12 August 1996.

<sup>77</sup> Zh.K.Karakuzova and M.Sh. Khasanov, *Kosmos* (Almaty, 1994), p. 18.

### III.2 BUILDING AN ECONOMY: THE POLITICAL ELITE AND ECONOMIC POWER

The preceding chapter demonstrated the dual conundrum of nation-building in Kazakhstan. At the multiethnic level, a civic, Kazakhstani identity remains elusive for a majority of the population. At the ethnic Kazakh level, Kazakh identity is devoid of cultural content and fragmented along sub-ethnic lines. National solidarity as a basis of political community remains elusive, and the well-tested Soviet methods of nation-building in the early years carried little effect. By 1995, it appeared, the ruling elite had opted for a more objective, universal approach to achieve solidarity: economic growth. The only way in which the average Kazakhstani was going to believe in his state was through tangible, material gain. The vision of society changed. This was embodied in *Strategy 2030*, Nazarbaev's equivalent of a state-of-the-nation address.<sup>1</sup> Delivered in 1997, it emphasised technocratic and managerial reform while diminishing reference to the consociationalism that had marked his earlier statements.

In this light, the chapter will assess the relationship between the political elite and economic reform. It analyses the ways in which the political elite affects, and is affected by, economic reform. A word of caution – effects and influence can only be hypothesised, not proven, although correlations are possible. Nor does the argument assume that other factors – such as national resources, political culture, financial resources, geopolitics or social structure – do not play just as an important factor, or often an even greater role, than political elites in the economic development process. This is not a chapter detailing economic reform. While the chapter offers a brief consideration of newly-independent Kazakhstan's economic condition, it resumes a focus on the composition and structure of the elite. The importance of political actors in

economic reform is heightened by an observation made by Tom Bottomore, namely that the “whole process of economic development has become more deliberate and self-conscious than it was in the first industrial revolution”.<sup>2</sup>

The relationship between the political elite and economic reform will be assessed along five criteria: elite composition, integration, structure, capacity and legitimacy. Marx argued that the composition of the political elite is a direct consequence of patterns of socio-economic power. To what extent has economic reform shaped the composition of the elite and vice versa? Second, how institutionally integrated is the political elite involved in economic policy-making? This will give an indication of the degree to which political centralisation remains a possibility in the wake of increased economic decentralisation. The composition and integration of the elite involved in economic policy provides the backdrop to our third point of enquiry: elite structure. To what extent has socio-economic modernisation fragmented the elite? Do we see a type of bifurcation witnessed at the national level in Russia, where the political elite became separated into a political and an economic elite? Finally, all three of these factors have serious implications both for elite capacity (determined both by state autonomy and state resources) and elite legitimacy, shaped by the nature of mass-elite linkages. In the absence of democratisation, economic performance offers some substitute for public opinion otherwise expressed through elections.

Kazakhstan’s independent economic policy has been driven by the triad of economic necessity, political priorities and geopolitical constraints. Its economic challenges were faced by many transition states.<sup>3</sup> But geopolitics (see introduction) and Soviet legacies (see I.1) added to Kazakhstan’s own economic challenges.<sup>4</sup> As the USSR began to unravel in late 1991, the product cycle linkages among raw material suppliers, intermediate product and equipment suppliers, and tertiary producers were

disrupted. Enterprises sought to continue functioning despite the breakdown in deliveries from suppliers and loss of orders from consumers. Heavy industry was particularly hard hit. The metallurgical industry of Kazakhstan had come into existence relying to a large extent on the vast demands of the Soviet military industrial complex.<sup>5</sup> This entity was centred in Moscow and Kazakhstan's post-independence ability to continue exports was dependent on the economic and political situation in the Russian Federation. As the Soviet Union reorganised into fifteen independent states, the consumers of heavy industrial goods in Russia ceased issuing requisitions and orders for inputs from factories located outside the Russian Federation dwindled. 1992 was a year of wrenching economic adjustment for Kazakhstan's heavy industry.

Without cash to pay for production inputs—raw materials, and processed materials delivered from other plants—enterprises could continue operating only by passing the debt on to other firms through accepting promissory notes for accounts receivable and, in turn, passing promissory notes to their suppliers for inputs. This form of inter-enterprise debt continued to accumulate throughout 1993 and 1994, capturing enterprises in a scissors crisis.

Kazakhstan's reluctance to declare independence was principally determined by the Republic's extensive integration into the Russian economy.<sup>6</sup> Not only had it been one of the highest recipients of Soviet subsidies and trade with Russia,<sup>7</sup> but its energy and pipeline system also remained integrated with that of its northern neighbour.<sup>8</sup> These geopolitical constraints shaped the ruling elite's 'multi-vector' economic foreign policy.<sup>9</sup> While it would remain in close alliance with Russia – a relationship further dictated by its demographic balance– it would nurture new trading partners and seek aid and alternative oil pipelines from elsewhere. Kazakhstan adopted the most ambitious economic liberalisation programme in



Central Asia, “assuming a ‘Kazakhstan means business’ attitude”.<sup>10</sup> The Nazarbaev government was among the first in the former USSR to commit itself to a course of thoroughgoing economic reform and the transition to a market based economy. Shortly after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan thus set out to liberalise its economy and integrate into the world market. Kazakhstan developed a programme for the divestiture of state-owned enterprises and began to develop the legal and institutional infrastructure to facilitate the transition to a system of trade and commerce in accordance with internationally accepted standards. Within a year Alma-Ata, a sleepy vacation town for Soviet officials, was transformed into a commercial capital, becoming a nexus for some international flights, foreign investors, and diplomats.

These aims fed into three key economic policies between 1991 and 1998: macroeconomic stabilisation with the help of an IMF-backed stabilisation programme; diversification of trade and pipeline routes; and, privatisation. By 1998 Kazakhstan was generally considered a macroeconomic success story.<sup>11</sup>

Macroeconomically, Kazakhstan has undoubtedly made great strides in transforming its economy since the introduction of its own currency, the *tenge*, in November 1993. “The stability of the *tenge* came at a price: we worked to eleven every evening for years to develop the National Bank into a respectable institution able to control its own currency”, said Daulet Sembaev.<sup>12</sup> In June 1994, Tereshchenko negotiated a \$1.4 billion IMF stabilisation package which was implemented by his successor Kazhegeldin. Even if real output and wages were higher in 1991, the two indices meant little, since output was not demand-driven. By 1996, prices for almost all goods had been freed, and a reformed National Bank of Kazakhstan had successfully asserted control of monetary policy, interest rates, and inflation. Annual inflation at the

close of 1997 had settled at the lower than expected rate of 12 percent, while the average monthly wage had risen 27 percent to \$120.<sup>13</sup> In his 1998 New Year's address at Kazakhstan State University, Nazarbaev announced that GDP had grown by 2.5 percent in 1997 over the year before. This, he said, gave Kazakhstanis the highest per capita GDP rating (\$1,500) of any country in the CIS.<sup>14</sup> The IMF's involvement in Kazakhstan's economy also began the Republic's dependence on Western, specifically, US capital and policy recommendations.

Foreign investment, trade and pipeline routes had mixed records of diversification by 1998. Russia remained Kazakhstan's principal trading partner in 1998 and the principal pipeline route for the export of oil. But China and several Western countries had been added to the country's list of trading partners. Kazakhstan's principal exports to these countries were raw materials, and its principal imports consumer goods. Coupled with this, the government drew up six alternative pipeline routes; although by the end of 1998 no capital for any alternative pipeline route was forthcoming, there were plenty of competitors interested in these alternatives.<sup>15</sup> The oil and gas agreements on the Caspian Sea and Karachaganak gas condensate fields signed in November 1997 in Washington, which Nazarbaev called "the deal of the century", had now intimately bound the West's leading oil and gas companies to the fate of the Kazakhstani economy. The biggest achievement in the period has been Kazakhstan's record at attracting foreign investment. The State Investment Committee reported in 1998 that foreign direct investment in 1997 totalled a healthy \$1.7 billion – the highest of all CIS countries for the second consecutive year. And this figure did not represent the full potential of investment, since the oil and gas sector was outranked by the metallurgical.<sup>16</sup>

Foreign investment and privatisation were mutually reinforcing. Already in 1990 Kazakhstan had already begun formulating an ambitious privatisation programme, the first Soviet republic to do so, but was subsequently slow to implement it. The independent state began piecemeal with small privatisation in 1992 but the full process was launched in earnest only in 1994.<sup>17</sup> As then Agricultural Minister Karibjanov stated, small privatisation of the trade and service sector was the easiest to achieve but added little to state coffers.<sup>18</sup> For a while, the scheme was opened to the public through so-called ‘mass privatisation’ based on the Czech voucher model but with the important difference that all privatisation had to undergo several stages: first, through investment funds, then enterprises, through a voucher scheme and investment funds, followed by mass and finally, “case-by-case”. “Case-by-case” comprised two stages. First, as we shall see, key enterprises were either sold to or placed under management contracts with strategic investors. These included giants such as Karaganda Metall Kombinat, the Sokolov–Sabaisko mining concern, the Pavlodar aluminium company, the Ermakovsk Iron Plant, and the oil companies of Tengizneft and Embanefit. The second phase moved to portfolio investment and involved the planned stock-market flotation of thirty-two of Kazakhstan's largest enterprises. This also constituted the second stage in Kazakhstan's case-by-case privatisation program. The flotation, scheduled for October 1997, was put on temporary hold with the appointment of Kazakhstan’s third Prime Minister Balgimbaev.

What is striking is the overwhelming consensus on the overall direction of economic policy. Crucially, even the bellicose 13<sup>th</sup> Parliament which Nazarbaev conveniently dissolved in 1995, expressed serious misgivings on timing and sequencing, but did not disagree with the end-goal of marketisation. The policies briefly reviewed, what was their relationship to the five criteria?

## ELITE COMPOSITION

First, the composition of the Kazakhstani elite (character, social origins and values) does appear to reflect the nature of economic change. On the one hand, the nature of the elite appears to have had some bearing on policy content. On the other hand, economic change, in line with Marx and the classical elite theorists, has affected the composition of the political elite. The three governments of independent Kazakhstan serve as illustration of this symbiosis.

Economic reality in the early years of independence dictated policy continuity. This continuity was served by Nazarbaev's appointment of Sergei Tereshchenko, an old Soviet apparatchik. Many members of the elite favoured continued relations with Russia. As seen in II.2, many of the elites in this period were hand-picked for their Soviet-era connections.

Nevertheless, Nazarbaev was a reformer and his key task at an early stage was to attract foreign investment. To do this he added two categories to his elite. First, he attracted a foreign cadre of experienced economic advisers and consultants, many from South-East Asia. Their state-led approach to economic reform may have had a marked effect on the largely top-down policies enacted in this period. Second, the president added to his policy circle a group of the leading young Kazakh intellectuals who were also forward-looking. Many members of Kazakhstan's intellectual elite, formerly associated with the universities and research institutes, were drawn into advisory and consultant relationships, and they supported Nazarbaev's course of this period which promulgated liberalisation and democracy. Their advice, modelled on Western principles of reform, thus differed to that of many of the foreign advisers. The upshot

was an often contradictory policy mix, with proposals ranging from rapid liberalisation to cautious conservatism. It was in this period that accusations also began against Nazarbaev that, because he was not an economist like Karimov, he did not know the direction in which the reforms were leading the country. Kazakh officials at this stage were unwilling to commit to what was widely regarded as “shock therapy”. For example, the Tereshchenko government objected to a rapid liberalisation of energy prices on the grounds that this would hobble light industry. From the government’s point of view during this time, the situation of growing inter-enterprise indebtedness was preferable to a complete collapse in production. The government was thus willing to tolerate the situation temporarily while it sought new financial mechanisms for clearing the indebtedness. Enterprises themselves, however, found that some creditors were less flexible than the government. The enterprise debt involved payments to other enterprises, but also included payments for energy, payroll and, sometimes, foreign suppliers. Energy producers began demanding payment. Foreign suppliers called for payment or at least equity shares in debtor enterprises. Workers started refusing to work without payment of overdue wages. By mid 1994, many enterprises were demanding government credits to pay for energy supplies and resorting to chits, payment in kind, or other creative techniques to meet their payrolls.

Meanwhile, the Kazakhstani government was preparing the groundwork for the privatisation of state-owned and state-managed enterprises. But until privatisation could be carried out in the far-flung regions of Kazakhstan, with their poor transportation and communications infrastructure, enterprises were at least temporarily being operated by their Soviet-era managers. To the north, in Russia, rapid privatisation was already handing managerial control over to newly appointed managers representing the recently formed joint stock companies. In many cases the new management in Russia had little

need for the Soviet-trained managerial cadres. Kazakhstan was perhaps two years behind the Russian experience. But as Kazakhstani enterprise managers observed developments in Russia and saw impending privatisation in their own future, many naturally began to think in terms of short-term self-interest. The danger of asset stripping, looting and embezzlement in idle enterprises became a serious problem for the government.<sup>19</sup> Oblast administration officials began to worry that by the time privatisation of the enterprises was complete everything of value would have been sold.

Nazarbaev decided to dismiss Tereshchenko in 1994. His replacement, Kazhegeldin, ushered in a qualitatively new phase in economic policy and government composition. Kazhegeldin represented the triumph of technocracy, the search for managerial answers in the place of political solutions. Kazhegeldin immediately took bold and decisive steps to transform the economy, even to the extent of taking some politically unpopular and experimental measures. For instance, Kazhegeldin liberalised the grain market, eliminating one of Soviet communism's first and most symbolic subsidies, the price of bread. The price of bread was freed on 13 October 1994, and a short time later the Kazakhstan government eliminated the state grain monopoly. Kazhegeldin began to implement legislation to liberalise other industry, including the oil and gas industries. Kazakhstan began to look for new instruments to encourage economic development in primary commodities, introducing new leasing and concession agreements. In this early phase of the Kazhegeldin administration, the concept of management contracts was introduced.

Kazhegeldin surrounded himself with a like-minded team, including individuals introduced in I.2 but worth a new mention in the context of economic reform. Chief among it was the thirty-two year old, Moscow-educated economist Oraz Dhandosov who succeeded Sembaev as head of Natsbank, making him the youngest National Bank

Chairman. He was aided by Western-trained Grigory Marchenko. Others included the Deputy Minister of Economics Zhanna Ertlesova, who also collaborated closely with the IMF. Kazhegeldin also developed close ties with Kazakhstan's leading commercial bank, Kazkommertsbank, headed by another Moscow-educated economist, Nurlan Sukhanberdin. The upshot was a dedicated team of technocrats committed to Western marketisation and keen to implement the IMF stabilisation programme. The style of government was also very different and appealed to the West; whilst Tereshchenko rarely met with foreign elites, Kazhegeldin enjoyed substantial freedom in his travels abroad. So keen was the team to please its donors that the IMF actually advised Kazakhstan to not worry excessively about implementing its advice to the letter.<sup>20</sup> And unlike conventional bureaucrats, whose managerial skills are capable of being duplicated, the relative scarcity of technocrats means that they cannot be purged or replaced easily.

The dismissal of Kazhegeldin and his replacement by Balgimbaev in October 1997 ushered in a third and final phase of economic policy-making in the period under consideration. Balgimbaev was Nazarbaev's third choice. Although Western-educated and trained, Balgimbaev was not an economist; even more importantly, he was widely known to have opposed Kazhegeldin's rapid privatisation programme. His government and the heads of key economic agencies reflected again a mix of old and new, combining politics again with technocracy.

Under all three governments, economic interests, factions and performance appear to have influenced recruitment. Poor economic performance provided Nazarbaev with a useful excuse to dismiss officials. Of all the ministers, the Economics Minister was most frequently replaced. After six Ministers the Ministry was ultimately abolished. Kazhegeldin introduced a league table of regional heads related to their performance;

performance was judged according to the economic performance of the regional economies. In the end, this was never implemented, as the central administration reportedly feared that highlighting regional differences of economic performance through this system would only exacerbate regional differences and possibly accelerate disintegration.<sup>21</sup>

Significantly, economic agencies appear to have assured an individual's permanent place among the elite. Said Eduard Utepov, Deputy Head of the State Property Committee in 1996: "Before I came to this job, my chances within the system had been poor. I have been very privileged to work alongside Sarybai Kalmurzaev".<sup>22</sup> Key individuals associated with the economy – such as members of NAFI, the State Investment Committee or the State Property Committee, appear to have gained permanent access to the elite. Even if these posts were ripe conduits for corruption, and thus possible removal, these individuals invariably returned. The circulation of elites - Zhabagin, Urkumbaev, Tereshchenko and Kazhegeldin – suggest that in this time of flux, economic interests quickly become entrenched and political officials are not easily sidelined. Their alienation becomes a threat to the centralisation of policy-making.

## ELITE INTEGRATION AND EFFECTIVENESS

Centralisation of power has been another attempt by the elite to shape the direction of economic reform and to ensure the integration – both horizontal and vertical – of its elite membership. The degree of elite integration – the extent to which institutions are coordinated and members of the elite share the same policy goals – can be shown to have a direct effect on the nature and effectiveness of economic policy. Briefly, the three phases have been an initial attempt at centralisation; a period of *laissez faire* under Kazhegeldin; and ineffective centralisation since 1997.



Under the first government of Tereshchenko until 1994, the administrations of president and government remained fused. In reality, however, the presidential administration took charge of economic policy whilst the Prime Minister and his government awkwardly waited to receive orders and then anxiously checked that they had fulfilled those orders. Nazarbaev became increasingly frustrated in these early years with what seemed like non-fulfilment of his commands. He would frequently bypass the government, calling meetings of regional heads, banging his fist on the table in the style of the former apparatchik, and threatening dismissal for non-fulfilment. Horizontal integration seemed to have little effect. The lack of horizontal integration at the level of government can further explain the lack of policy coherence at this stage of reform.

Vertical integration, by contrast, seems to have been more effective in these initial years of the Republic. The appointment of akims was little contested because economic interests had not yet increased their economic powers to the point where they could start asking for greater regional autonomy. The relatively little privatisation of this period made for easier governance. Recruitment decisions of akims were driven by loyalty to this vertical hierarchy rather than by skills or technocracy.

Horizontal integration increased with the appointment of Kazhegeldin in October 1994. But this integration was within institutions, not across them. As a sign of the president's desire to distance himself from economic policy-making – its failures could expose Nazarbaev to the 'politics of blame' - Nazarbaev separated his administration from that of the government in March 1994. In these years Kazhegeldin encouraged regional heads to take increased charge of their own economic policies, and, as seen, even produced a table of performance for regional heads dependent on the success of their regional economies. Furthermore, between 1994–1997, the State

Investment Committee (between, and independent of the government and the President; akin to the Treuhandanstalt of East Germany) became the powerful agency in charge of privatisation. This period in economic policy-making, although marked by a degree of internal institutional divisions, appears to have been more effective at devising a coherent policy than when the elite was totally integrated. It suggests that institutional context was less important for good economic policy than a good degree of solidarity amongst the key economic policy-makers of the time. The fellowship among the members was relatively good, akin to “the psychological affinities... that make it possible for them to say of one another: He is, of course, one of us....”<sup>23</sup>

By elevating Balgimbaev to the Premiership, Nazarbaev was to recentralise the direction of economic policy, an area that Nazarbaev indicated could not be trusted to Balgimbaev. With the move to Astana, Nazarbaev also brought all economic think-tanks, agencies and committees under his direct scrutiny. These were: the State Investment Committee, the National Statistics Agency, the Committee for the Regulation of Monopolies and Competition Policy, and Utembaev’s outfit, the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reform.<sup>24</sup> Some of the earlier integration had been lost due to the departure of its key planner, Akezhan Kazhegeldin. What Ralf Dahrendorf wrote of West Germany’s elite of the 1960s might well apply to the Kazakhstani elite in this final phase under consideration: “The elites lack the confidence needed for leadership or for conflict. If we ask why this is so, the answer must be... [t]hey do not in fact form a group, but remain a mere category”.<sup>25</sup>

## STRUCTURE

Elite composition, degree of consensus and style of integration feed into elite structure and further linked to economic reform. The nature of policy, and the degree of

integration surrounding its actual formation, have had important implications for the relationship between the political elite, domestic entrepreneurs and foreign investors. Crucially, the structure of the political elite has passed through three phases, roughly concurrent with the three periods of policy formation. In the first phase, the political elite was synonymous with the economic elite (1992-1994); second, the political elite became interlocked with the foreign elite, which in the regions was often in alliance with the indigenous business elite (1994-1997); and, third the political elite co-opted the business elite (1997 onwards). By this third stage, the political elite had become less of a structural power elite than it had been in 1991. Nevertheless, by 1998 the political elite still held both the top political and the top economic posts. At this time, the business elite was still to a large degree dependent on the political elite which, in contrast to Russia, still makes it impossible to speak of a business elite in its own right. One significant new factor, however, had been the influence of foreign investment by 1998: in the regions this was increasingly depriving the regional political elite of its power of recruitment.

The first phase of economic and political structural congruity can be explained by the privileged position held by the former nomenklatura in 1991. Even if ethnic Kazakhs were rarely former “red” directors, the new Kazakh political elite was able to appoint the new, now ethnic Kazakh directors. By being ethnically, rather than ideologically correct, this new group became the effective owners of the large industries that were the remains of Soviet industrialisation. In any case, many of the ethnic Russian “red” directors emigrated of their own accord in these early years, leaving managerial vacancies behind.

In the transition from the communist era to independence, the Kazakhstani elite, like its Russian counterpart, managed to maintain its monopoly in the economic

domain. It did this through much the same ways aptly described by Olga Khrystanovskaya and Stephen White for the Russian elite: the establishment of joint enterprises; the conversion of assets into cash; advantageous credits; property dealings; privileges in import-export operations; and 'privatisation of the state by the state' or so-called 'nomenklatura privatisation'.<sup>26</sup> The first two methods were less available to the Kazakhstani elite; Moscow was still in charge of printing roubles, and only a handful of top Soviet-era Kazakhstani officials, such as Nazarbaev, Asanbaev, Abyshev, Abdullaev, Isingarín and Suleimenov had enjoyed travel to the West in the pre-independence era. But in the four other domains, the Kazakhstani elite proved as adept as its Northern counterpart in ensuring that the economy in this first stage of transition remained in its hands.

To receive credit at low rates of interest (or sometimes without interest payment at all) it was necessary to belong to the nomenklatura or to have close links with highly placed officials. It is not surprising, then, that the majority of young entrepreneurs who emerged between 1992 and 1994 were ethnic Kazakhs. Most of their large trading conglomerates, which traded in anything from Snickers bars to Italian designer clothes and Mercedes cars, were started up on these credits. Key examples of Kazakh entrepreneurs and their trading companies were: Kazhegeldin's Semei company before he assumed the premiership; Bulat Abilov's Butya company (Abilov is a nephew of the president's wife, Sara Nazarbaeva); Raimbek; Esenberlin of "Aziya-Leasing"; Nurlan Smagulov of Astana-Motors; Nurlan Kapparov of Accept, which traded mainly in petroleum products; Nurlan Subkhanberdin of what was to become Kazakhstan's biggest 'commercial' bank, Kazkommertsbank; and, Mukhtar Ablyazov of Astana Holdings. Rakhat industries became a particularly powerful group; owned by Nazarbaev's son-in-law, Rakhat Aliev: by 1996 it controlled 60% of

Kazakhstan's sugar company, Sakharnyi Tsentri and owned the most popular foreign-frequented Almaty hotel Rakhmat Palace Hyatt Regency<sup>27</sup>, a sweets factory and associated industries.

As in Russia, the political elite was well placed to capitalise on property dealings. The best properties were in the former Soviet resort of then Alma-Ata and included the key party hotel Dostyk (Friendship) and the former CPSU sanatorium, Hotel Alatau. Alatau's elaborate grounds were bought in 1995 by a Japanese consortium and converted into Kazakhstan's first golf course. The most recent opportunity for property deals has emerged from the capital's move to Astana, where company affiliates have vied for plots of land close to the Potemkin village that has become the capital's emerging political centre.

Just as members of the former nomenklatura were able to benefit from favourable credit lines, so too were they able to retain their monopoly hold on trading. The former Vneshekonombank, the Soviet-era trading intermediary, became Alembank in 1991. Its manager, Berlin Irishev, became a key contact for foreign companies. Alembank, responsible for negotiating foreign credit lines, appeared to compete with the Ministry for Foreign Economic Relations (1992-1994). Its only Minister, Syzdyk Abishev and former Soviet Trade Minister, was a close friend of Nazarbaev and has survived as an important, if subsequently low-profile, member of the elite. These institutions were able to impose strict quotas and licences on the various trading organisations, and enabled the elite to keep control until trade liberalisation occurred in 1994. The elite enjoyed unrivalled access to the republic's vast wealth of raw materials. Gaziz Aldamzharov, head of the thirteenth parliament's control chamber, became an outspoken critic of this period:

In those years, oil, copper, iron and others were sold from Kazakhstan at prices half or a third of the world market price. I know people who made themselves

millionaires on the strength of one or two deals and then left Kazakhstan. These deals were made on the basis of two contracts – the first on the basis of low prices, then a second, hidden contract at much higher prices. Kazakhstani authorities were only privy to the first. The rest went to offshore bank accounts.<sup>28</sup>

Aldamzharov claims that, at a minimum, \$5 billion had been lost in this way already by mid-1993. Imports were also carefully controlled, and the new commercial importers were in a position to set handsome margins between state and retail prices.

Finally, and as the epitome of the blurring of public and private property; the state privatised itself. Notably factories were now owned by the state, and Ministers often became owners of majority shareholdings in privatised companies. Many Kazakhstani officials have their own enterprises; in the words of a presidential advisor on political affairs, Ermuhamet Ertysbaev:

Almost every Kazakhstani official has received an additional source of profit to supplement their salaries. These are not any longer bribes which can be easily detected. Today's state officials are more inventive. They all have their own enterprises and they ensure that it is these enterprises that, for example, carry out repair jobs or are protected by these officials from state audits.<sup>29</sup>

This protection is known locally as *krisha* or supplying a roof to the company. This involves ministers, *oblast akims*, the Ministry of Interior or Procuracy. Successful entrepreneurs are almost always part of state officialdom. Concluded Azamat leader Petr Svoik: "The present model of Kazakhstani capitalism harps back to feudalism because its power, management and property are fused."<sup>30</sup>

Kazkommertsbank became the closest Kazakhstani equivalent to the Russian financial-industrial group by having as its top patron Prime Minister Kazhegeldin. The two served each other. Kazkommertsbank began to handle state finances by buying shares of Shymkent oil refinery on Kazhegeldin's behalf. In turn, Kazkommertsbank acquired a considerable degree of independence. For example, it became the only

example of a private company which repurchased shares originally sold to a foreign company. The shares in question amounted to forty percent of the state telecommunications company Kazakhtelecom and were resold directly to Kazkommertsbank by the South Korean conglomerate Daewoo. Daewoo had changed its mind when the Kazakh government began to insist on the former's purchase being accompanied by \$1 billion of investment into the country's communications infrastructure. Kazkommertsbank purchased the state shares without any intervention by the government and with no assurances that it would deliver on the investment front.

Thus, in contrast to Russia, the Kazakhstani political elite had managed to retain its monopoly over the economy to the end of 1994. The young managers of the investment funds were not trusted in government as their advocacy for the right of Private Investment Funds to hold shares in Kazakhstan's strategic enterprises represented a step tantamount to economic decentralisation.<sup>31</sup> The government refused to bail out the trading conglomerates when many had become insolvent by 1993. One of their managers, Butya's Abilov (Sara Nazarbaeva's nephew), received a further snub when he made a bid for the former USSR's leading metals plant, the Karaganda steel mills, or Karmetkombinat (where Nazarbaev had made his early career and Oleg Soskovets was to follow). Abilov, in alliance with Austrian company Voest-Alpine, won the tender and took over the plant in Spring 1995. This happy alliance lasted for nine days; meanwhile the Kazakh government, notably then Deputy Prime Minister Vitalii Mente, had found more profitable and promising buyers in the Indian-owned, London-based steel company Ispat International. Butya. Voest-Alpine protested, but in vein.

Frustrated, these domestic entrepreneurs turned to politics. They formed a movement called *Novoe Pokolenie* (New Generation), hoping that they would be able to

arouse similar indignation amongst the population. In their newspaper of the same name, they portrayed themselves as the kernel of the new Kazakhstani economy and one which had been abandoned by the government. The group made little impact either on the government or the population, who derided them as “children of asphalt”.<sup>32</sup> Unlike Yeltsin, Nazarbaev did not need business support for election campaigns; by 1995 Nazarbaev had opted instead for the far cheaper and safer referendum on his continued presidency. When, in October 1998, Nazarbaev called for premature elections to be held in January 1999, he argued that the short campaign time would enable money saved on electoral posters to go toward back-payment of wages.

But there is also a more subtle reason why President Nazarbaev may have been unwilling to allow the uncontrolled, state-free development of a national bourgeoisie. This was the fear alluded to at the outset of this chapter, namely that the struggle over resources, if uncontrolled, would be particularly bitter in the Kazakhstani context. The struggle, he may well have feared, would become entrenched along sub-ethnic, ethnic and regional lines, all sources of potential state disintegration. This reason may also partly explain the government’s hesitation over the privatisation of land which has still to occur. The government (probably justifiably) feared that in the early years of reform the best land – in the north of the republic – would have been bought by ethnic Russians and not ethnic Kazakhs.

The structure of the domestic business and political elite was transformed under Kazhegeldin. The transformation came with accelerated privatisation, foreign investment and particularly, the ‘management contract’. Speaking at the “International Conference on Investment Opportunities in Kazakhstan” in London in July 1996, Kazhegeldin noted that Kazakhstan was the “first country in the CIS to begin using a new form of economic management, management contracts with foreign firms for the



management of government property.” Kazhegeldin added that these contracts were designed to lead the enterprises directly to privatisation.<sup>33</sup>

The Kazakhstan Committee on the Management of State Property issued approximately 60 management contracts between December 1994 and August 1996 to private firms to manage publicly owned enterprises in Kazakhstan. As the use of management contracts was expanded in 1995, the government sought to provide a reasoned rationale for the practice. The most authoritative statement of the rationale appeared in an article published by the Chairman of the State Property Committee in 1996.<sup>34</sup> Contracts were issued in the service sector, in food processing, and in the mineral extraction and metals processing sector. Some of Kazakhstan’s most valuable enterprises were placed under management contracts. The large Karaganda Steel Factory (Karmet), the Pavlodar Aluminium Plant, the Sokolovo-Sarbai Mining Combine, the Ust-Kamenogorsk Titanium Factory, the Zhezkazgan Non-ferrous Metals Plant, and a number of other Kazakhstani flagship enterprises were transferred from direct state management to management under contract to private firms. A management contract is typically an agreement whereby the owner of a facility contracts with a firm possessing technical, financial, or managerial expertise to operate the facility under specified conditions for a given period of time for an agreed upon remuneration. Common in the developing world, management contracts usually require the owner to pay the contracting firm; at the conclusion of the period, the responsibility for managing the property returns to the owner.

The Kazakhstan property committee designed a novel contracting instrument by concluding management contracts in such a way that the managing firms paid the government to take over the responsibility of running factories.<sup>35</sup> It is unusual that a firm would pay the owner for the privilege of providing the service of managing an

enterprise. Because the remuneration in these cases appears to be going in a direction opposite to that normally expected, donor agencies and international organisations providing technical assistance to the Kazakhstan government privatisation program raised questions asking whether the terms of these confidential management contracts may have offered managing firms extraordinary concessions.<sup>36</sup> These contracts typically offered the managing firms “exclusive and unconditional” rights to purchase outstanding shares in the enterprise. In other words, the management firms contracted to manage the enterprises *and* to obtain the right to purchase the enterprise. Without violating any Kazakhstan privatisation legislation, ownership of some of Kazakhstan’s most valuable enterprises appeared at times to have passed from the state to private hands in a less than fully transparent and competitive manner.<sup>37</sup> The Kazakhstani management contract thus served a dual purpose: it satisfied those who believed that direct foreign investment may imply an unwanted degree of external political and economic influence but in reality financially satisfied the majority of the political elite. In some cases, it should be noted, real benefits in back-payment of wages and clearance of debts were achieved.

Of the total of 42 management contracts, twelve were reportedly abrogated, leaving a total of 30 contracts in force. Of the 16 contracts held by firms registered in Kazakhstan, three were joint-ventures. The Kazakhstan firms were among the most visible in Kazakhstan. They include the principally trading conglomerates of Aleksei Postopalov and Co., Aksept, Kazkomertsbank, Tagam, Altynalmas, Raimbek, and AvtoVAZ.<sup>38</sup> It is worth noting that many of these local firms are those we met first as being under Tereshchenko in the Novoe Pokolenie group.

Enterprises under contract, while relatively few in number, had a commanding position in the economy. These enterprises were responsible for over

90% of production in metallurgy. The contracts concluded for the Sokolo-Sarbai Mining Operations, the Donsk Mining Combine, and the Ermakovskii and Aqtobe Metal Works are in force.<sup>39</sup> According to the State Property Committee, all of the contracts on the state list included a provision of confidentiality to protect the commercial interests of both parties, the owner (the state, which in most cases also becomes the seller) and the managing firm. Neither of the principal parties was permitted to disclose the conditions of transfer or sale to third parties without the consent of the other principal party.

In some cases, the contract provisions reportedly were not met, yet the contracts continued in force. Samsung and Yutek-Lukoil (acting as an affiliate held by IBE Trading) did not satisfy their contract requirements for investment and operating expenses. Ivedon, White Swan, and Nova Resources did not provide GPM with their business plans and their investment programs in the time frame required by their contracts. As parties differed on the contractual obligations, the happy alliance between national capital, the political elite and the foreign interests broke. This underlined a final important point in this history of management contracts, namely that foreign owners were rarely foreign. Japan Chrome, White Swan and Ivedon were all offshore companies established exclusively for their operations in Kazakhstan and all managed by a former member of the Soviet shadow economy, Aleksandr Mashkevich. This age- and nationality-inclusive ex-Soviet business group clouded ownership and led to the absurd and sometimes embarrassing situation where Kazakhstani officials did not know who owned their flagship companies.

By 1997, 90 percent of the metallurgical industry had been privatised in this way and Kazhegeldin made known his intention of starting a similar process in the oil and gas sector.<sup>40</sup> This intention provoked many members of the ruling elite –

amongst them Balgimbaev – to call for Kazhegeldin’s resignation.<sup>41</sup> When Balgimbaev was appointed, the political elite entered a new phase of consolidation.

First, the source of the foreign economic power structure of the political elite had shifted. It had divided the economic pie among itself, a national rent-seeking class and foreign capital. It had made Western investors express some discomfort at investing in a country which either adds new conditions to signed contracts or abrogates them altogether. Some better known, established Western companies had also been in dispute, such as Belgium’s Tractebel and Canada’s World Wide Minerals.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, the elite emerged more confident in 1997 vis-à-vis its relations with Russia. Although the pipeline question had still not been resolved, the sale of many of its assets to non-Russians – and certainly to non-members of the Russian elite in Moscow – meant a slow decoupling of structural interests from Russia. 1992 – 1994 had been dominated by a close alliance between Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, who had brokered the deal with Chevron, and Oleg Soskovets who left Kazakhstan in 1992 to join the Russian government. By contrast, China appeared to have gained the upper hand since 1994. The most dramatic economic concession to the Chinese came in 1997, when Kazakhstani authorities granted the Chinese National Petroleum Corporation the sale rights to Aqtubinsk power plant – after a number of considerably better offers from US firms were ignored.<sup>43</sup>

Second, the newly empowered ethnic Kazakh entrepreneurs were co-opted after 1997. The appointment of 28 year old Nurlan Kapparov – a former member of Novoe Pokolenie - to head Kazakhstan’s state oil company Kazakhoil represented a qualitatively new stage in government and marked the beginning of a process the government had hitherto resisted. This was an invitation to members of the business elite to join the ranks of government. Other members of Novoe Pokolenie were invited

to join. The president appointed Ablyazov Trade and Industry Minister and Kakimjanov Head of the State Revenues Ministry.<sup>44</sup>

By 1997 the result was a fragmented political elite. Kryshtanovskaya and White concluded that the Russian political elite is distinct from the economic elite in terms of its occupational background.<sup>45</sup> James Hughes, on the contrary, contended that the sub-national political elite was not rigidly demarcated from the economic elite as regards occupational origins but is intrinsically interlocked with it.<sup>46</sup> It appears that in the case of Kazakhstan the situation is the opposite: in 1997 the national political elite had become, albeit to a lesser degree than in Russia, bifurcated between a political and an economic elite – between senior administrative officials and senior managers of business enterprises. The regional political elite, by contrast, retained a considerable degree of occupational homogeneity. Privatisation had ceased the ability of the local political elite to control appointments in areas strategic to the regional economy and ownership had placed control of local enterprises outside the region or even the country. Further, the growing role of private capital meant that the political elite had increasingly become dependent on private financial institutions for investment in the regions.

Privatisation deprived the local political elite of an important resource. Prior to privatisation of these enterprises, the local political elite used the profits generated by sales of oil and metals to prop up failing enterprises within the oblast. The loss of control over the strategic enterprises, therefore, had a critical impact on the relationship between the economic and the political elite. To restore some of its control over the regional business elite, the regional political elite developed a series of consultative forums with the economic and financial elite. A range of informal and ad hoc meetings have also often been used for other groups in the oblast.<sup>47</sup> Membership of the meetings confirmed membership of the core elite. Similar consultations were observed at the

national level; in 1997, Nazarbaev began to call several meetings with heads of companies, both national and foreign.

#### CONCLUSIONS: ELITE CAPACITY, AUTONOMY AND LEGITIMACY

In conclusion, what can we say about (a) the relationship between political and economic power at the national and regional level; (b) the relationship of the centre to the periphery with regard to the economy; and, (c) elite-society relations as a result of economic reform?

At the national level it remains impossible to speak about a significant business elite that operates separately from the political elite. The main financial-industrial groups and trading conglomerates were either part-owned or part-sponsored by the political elite. By coopting leading representatives of these groups into government from 1997, Nazarbaev attempted to tighten further these links.

At the regional level, it is not possible to generalise about political and economic elite alignments. Each region displayed a different configuration dependent on the degree of foreign investment and the nature of the resources. In Mangistau and Atyrau, the two major oil producing areas of the West, the regional akim remained in charge of its key economic resources, and the configuration was rather similar to the national level. A similar configuration was noticeable in Southern Kazakhstan, where the sale of cotton had required effective contacts with the regional administration. In regions with a high metallurgical base – the single greatest source of foreign direct investment – the nature of foreign direct investment had made the most substantial difference. Here, as seen, investment has often been difficult to control. This reduced the capacity of the regional political elite to control the business elite. In yet a third group, where there has

been little foreign investment, the political and economic elite existed in mutual dependence.

Despite these different internal economic alignments at the regional level, the approach of the centre to the periphery has remained uniform across the whole country. I.2 stressed the unwillingness of the president to introduce any form of decentralisation to the regions, and has ruled out the election of akims.<sup>48</sup> It also described the process of re-centralisation the President has enacted especially since the move to Astana. This began with the move of the capital and thus the transfer of political power to the north, and has continued, as we saw, with the reduction of regions from 20 to 14. The creation of a national elite that stretches into the regions, rather on the lines of Uzbekistan, may be the next major step in the development of a strong unitary state model. II.2 indicated that recent appointments at the regional level have, for the first time, included a significant number of individuals who have been parachuted in from the central political structures. However, it is unlikely that the President will find central control as easy as his southern counterpart, especially in regions where economic interests have become entrenched with regional political interests such as in the West. This was partly why the president ruled out the fusion of the western regions. The case of the reinstatement of Mangistau's akim Levitin, unpopular with central authorities but supported by powerful local networks, suggests that Nazarbaev was not always able to appoint as he wished. Nevertheless, this is still the exception, even if an important one.

What then, finally, does the population think about economic reform and the elite's relationship thereto? What effects is socio-economic change exerting on the population? First, whilst the core elite has narrowed and grown richer, the masses have grown poorer. Nazarbaev's glowing 1998 New Year account differed markedly in tone from a report published at around the same time by the Almaty-based Institute of

Development of Kazakhstan. The Institute calculated that GDP and wages in 1997, while indeed over the 1996 figures, were still some 35 percent lower than in 1991.<sup>49</sup> Officially, unemployment was relatively low at 5.6 percent, but the authors of the report claimed that the real unemployment rate was closer to 20 percent, and that 40 percent of those unemployed are rural youths aged between 16 and 29. Due to poor health and environmental factors, male and female life expectancy had fallen by nearly five years since 1991. With the added emigration of non-Kazakhs, the Republic's population dropped from a high of 16.9 million in 1994 to 15.8 million in 1997, making it the only Central Asian state reporting an absolute decline in the size of its population since independence. Journalists have warned that, unless the government takes urgent measures to improve living standards and create employment, the country could face even more serious problems in the next century.<sup>50</sup> According to the International Federation of the Red Cross, 73 percent of Kazakhstanis were living below the government-defined monthly individual poverty line of \$50 per month in 1997 and electricity cuts and wage arrears continue to plague the average citizen.<sup>51</sup>

These socio-economic pressures sparked a growing delegitimation of the elite in the view of the population. Whilst the elite seemed convinced of the benefits of a market economy, a poll by the U.S. Information Agency in December 1997 indicated that three quarters of the population supported state control of agriculture and health care; only one quarter of those aged between 18 and 29 supported elements of the free market system; and, three quarters believed that the economy was in poor condition and would deteriorate.<sup>52</sup> Few individuals demonstrated any belief in the rule of law or institutional longevity. Nor did they believe that corruption amongst the political elite would in any way diminish with the introduction of an anti-corruption law. Igor Rogov, the president's legal advisor, devised the decree "On Fighting Corruption". The law was



designed to increase the legitimacy of the current regime.<sup>53</sup> In one sense corruption can be easily understood. Until March 1997, the average monthly wage of a state employee was around \$80 to \$100. In March 1997, Head of the State Anti-Monopoly Committee Nikolai Radotovetz, one of the few ethnic Russians who remained in government, stated: "My wife earns more than I even though she is only a clerk in a private company".<sup>54</sup> The population has little acceptance when it sees the elite building luxury houses and learns of its children being educated abroad. In the words of Gaziz Aldamzharov, former chairman of the Control Chamber of the thirteenth parliament:

Many ministers assist in the acquisition of this or that product, or receive substantial bonuses from public companies. No official will do something for a company for free. There is always somebody behind the project who controls the specific terms the company wishes to receive. The cost of the service depends on the individual's access to the president. If the official is just an assistant but works with the president, then his services cost much more than those of a minister. The president can do everything; the minister only a little.<sup>55</sup>

1996 and 1997 did see the first signs of social protest, almost exclusively in the south of the country. The Janatas strikers set a precedent by declaring hunger strikes involving whole families, some of whom attracted added attention by camping out in sub-zero temperatures. The strike, which began in mid-December 1997, originally involved 200 workers at a phosphorus plant in Janatas in southern Kazakhstan's Zhambyl Region. By mid-January 1998, 30,000 workers had set off on a march to the capital to call on President Nursultan Nazarbaev to order an independent audit of the state-owned "Phosphorite" enterprise. The strikers said they were owed a total of \$6 million in unpaid wages, and blamed both the central and the regional governments for their plight. The protesters were turned back by the militia, while 20 hunger-strikers were said to have been hospitalised.<sup>56</sup> Eventually, the government conceded and bailed out Phosphorite. Phosphorite was only one of four subsidiaries of the "Kazaphosphor" company whose workers were suffering wage arrears. However, weak trade unions

ensured that most strikes remained marginal. The growing socio-economic based discontent within Kazakhstan may, however, force the central elite to rely upon the support of regional authorities to control opposition movements and lead to a new compact for coercion between centre and region.

The first eight years of independence give a sense that the elite will continue to matter more than society as a motor for socioeconomic change. Social forces are too weakly organised and lack a powerful counter-elite to organise revolution; the military has long been abandoned by the Kazakhstani elite. The construction of a political community through economic modernisation is unlikely to occur. Social forces will not 'confront each other nakedly' as they would in Huntington's praetorian politics scenario. Nevertheless, Huntington might well be right on another account, namely that politically centralised institutions are unlikely to be able bring out rapid economic reform in a country this size developing at different economic speeds.<sup>57</sup> Economic modernisation has already weakened established institutions and increased the complexity of political demands.

Ultimately, mistrust and conflict among the Kazakh political elite have been aggravated by economic decline and the dismantling of the enormous state-run economy. The elite has scrambled to benefit from the opportunities that privatisation has created. The result is an aggregate of competing groups whose members see politics as a zero-sum contest. Group leaders continue to accumulate power through patronage and by expanding the administrative hierarchies over which they preside. Junior or aspiring members of the elite continue to be rewarded for their support. It is unlikely that fragmentation at the top of the regime will cease once revenues from the Caspian's "black gold" begin to flow. The stakes of the political game will be raised.

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## Endnotes to III.2

<sup>1</sup> *Kazakhstan-2030: Prosperity, Security and Ever Growing Welfare of all the Kazakhstanis: Message of the President of the Country to the people of Kazakhstan* (Almaty, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> T. B. Bottomore, *The Managerial Revolution* (London: Penguin, 1964).

<sup>3</sup> For general works on economic transition, see, for example, Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, *Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), Ch. 5; Ian Jeffries *Socialist economies and the transition to the market : a guide* (Routledge, 1993); And, Michael Kaser, 'Economic Transition in six Central Asian economies', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (September 1996), pp. 5-26.

<sup>4</sup> For good overviews of the Kazakhstani economy see *Kazakhstan Human Development Report: 1995* (Almaty: United Nations Development Program, 1995); *EIU Country Profile: Kazakhstan 1998-99* (London: The Economist Intelligence Unit, 1998); *Economic Trends Quarterly Issue: Kazakhstan*, Quarterly Issues of January – March; April – June; July – September and October – December since January 1996, EU TACIS, Berlin. See also *Annual IMF Economic Reviews: Kazakhstan* since 1993 and *Kazakhstan: A World Bank Country Study* (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 1993, 1995 and 1997). Two good comparative works on the economies of Central Asia are Shirin Akiner, Sander Tideman and Jon Hay (eds), *Sustainable Development in Central Asia* (London: Curzon Press, 1998); Boris Rumer and Stanislav Zhukov, *Central Asia: The Challenges of Independence* (Armonk, NY and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> For general statistical information on Kazakhstan see the quarterly and annual Statistical Bulletins issued by the State Committee of Statistics and Analysis, Almaty.

<sup>6</sup> See Martha Brill Olcott, "Democratization and the growth of political participation in Kazakhstan" in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds.), *Conflict, Cleavage, and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 201–242.

<sup>7</sup> Grants from the central Soviet Union budget amounted to 13.6% of the Kazakh SSR's GDP in 1990, and their withdrawal forced sharp cuts in the output of goods and services which were largely uncompetitive. See EIU, *Country Profile: Kazakhstan 1998*, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> All oil from Kazakhstan in the Soviet era was processed in Russia. See *Oil Refining and Gas Processing* (Almaty: European Consortium EU TACIS Programme, 1994).

<sup>9</sup> This Machievellian term is used openly – Kazakhstan's multilateral foreign policy has been extremely successful.

<sup>10</sup> Gregory Gleason, *The Central Asian States: Discovering Independence* (Boulder, Westview Press, 1997), p. 90.

<sup>11</sup> See *The Jamestown Foundation Monitor*, 16 January 1998.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with the author, 6 September 1998.

<sup>13</sup> *Interfax*, 12 January 1998; and *Kazkommerts Securities*, 12 January 1998.

<sup>14</sup> *Panorama*, 15 January 1998.

<sup>15</sup> Six alternative pipeline routes were under consideration. These were clearly explained by the Kazakhstani government at the Euroforum Conference, London, April 29-30. Murtazaev identified the six pipeline routes now being discussed by Kazakhstani authorities as: (1) the Atyrau-Samara pipeline ("limited by the Russian-set quota"); (2) the Tengiz-Novorossiisk Caspian Pipeline Consortium pipeline to the Black Sea ("scheduled for completion by 2000"); (3) the Transcaspian pipeline ("technological, political, environmental and economic risks"); (4) the pipeline to China ("promising and financially advantageous to Kazakhstan"); (5) the pipeline to Iran ("technically feasible

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but not economically very sound"); and (6) the Trans-Central-Asian pipeline ("high political risk because of transfer across Afghanistan"). No route was yet preferred by Kazakhstan.

<sup>16</sup> *Statisticheskoe Obozrenie Kazakhstana* (Almaty: National Statistics Agency, 1997), p. 21.

<sup>17</sup> This first phase of privatisation began as a stroke of the pen variety. Coupon privatisation of 1,700 enterprises between 200 – 5,000 workers. Then became small privatisation – this was the most successful, commenced in 1992 and finished in 1993 mainly in the trade and service sector.

<sup>18</sup> For a useful and detailed indigenous view of the privatisation process, see "Chto dala nam privatizatsiya?", *Delovaya Nedelya*, 9 January 1998 (No. 1, 279) to 27 March 1998 (No. 12, 290).

<sup>19</sup> See Gregory Gleason, *Management Contracts in Kazakhstan's Market Transition* An Analytical Report Prepared for the U.S. Agency for International Development Cooperative Agreement No. OP/ENI/EPE 95-01TCCA Report No. 97-1 February 1997.

<sup>20</sup> Author's informal conversation with an International Monetary Fund employee who prefers to remain anonymous, 4 August 1996.

<sup>21</sup> "Biznesmeny V Politike: Nado Nam, Rebatya, Zhizn' Krasivuyou Prozhit", *Delovaya Nedelya*, 13 February 1998.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with the author, 14 July 1996.

<sup>23</sup> C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 283.

<sup>24</sup> *Delovaya Nedelya*, 30 March 1998. This was paralleled by a similar centralisation in the security realm in the form of the Committee of National Security, Procuracy General, Foreign Intelligence Agency or Barlau, the presidential bodyguard team, and the Committee of Security, all part of the political centralisation we saw in II.2.

<sup>25</sup> Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969), p. 256.

<sup>26</sup> Olga Kryshantovskaya & Stephen White, "From Soviet Nomenklatura to Russian Elite", *Europe-Asia Studies* (Vol. 48, No. 5, July 1996), pp. 711–734.

<sup>27</sup> Rooms can rarely be found at less than around \$250 a night.

<sup>28</sup> *Delovaya Nedelya*, 12 May 1998.

<sup>29</sup> "The Struggle With Corruption: Can a Snake Bite Its Own Tail?", *Focus Central Asia*, 30 January 1998, pp. 1–4.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> *Delovaya Nedelya*, 2 February 1998.

<sup>32</sup> *Delovaya Nedelya*, 10 March 1998.

<sup>33</sup> According to Gleason, *Management Contracts*, Kazhegeldin added that these contracts were designed to lead the enterprises directly to privatisation.

<sup>34</sup> S. S. Kalmurzaev, *Assignment to Management Contracts as a Instrument of Economic Growth* (Almaty: GosKomImushchestvo, 1996). The article, as also highlighted by Gleason, *Management Contracts*, lists a number of reasons why management contracts were adopted; for example, that they facilitate privatisation, attract foreign capital and foreign expertise but leave ownership in Kazakhstan.

<sup>35</sup> The contracts specify the rights and obligations of both parties, as well as any payment and schedule of payments by either side.

<sup>36</sup> *Panorama*, 15 November 1997.

<sup>37</sup> Gleason, *Management Contracts*, *passim*.

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- <sup>38</sup> A list of management contracts in force in August 1996 was published in *Panorama*, 6 and 13 September 1996..
- <sup>39</sup> The back wages, the pensions, the government indebtedness as well as the debt for transport and inputs was either met or renegotiated.
- <sup>40</sup> Kazhegeldin planned the stockmarket flotation of the major oil and gas companies for Autumn 1997.
- <sup>41</sup> Informal conversation with Nurbulat Masanov, 10 October 1997.
- <sup>42</sup> *Delovaya Nedelya*, 10 January 1998; *Interfax-Kazakhstan*, 8 January 1998; *Panorama*, 12 January 1998.
- <sup>43</sup> Only a few weeks later statements were made to the effect that China represented the most feasible alternative pipeline route to Russia. Kazakhstan's economic dependence on external powers has been somewhat tempered by its ability to play off these foreign powers; only a few days after Nazarbaev's Autumn 1997 visit to the US where he signed what he termed 'the deal of the century' on the exploitation of the Caspian Sea, he stated that the Iranian route for oil transportation – then strongly opposed by the US - would be preferred if the US did not offer a suitable alternative date by early 1998.
- <sup>44</sup> "Biznesmeny V Politike", *passim*.
- <sup>45</sup> Olga Kryshantovskaya & Stephen White, "From Soviet Nomenklatura".
- <sup>46</sup> James Hughes, "Sub-national Elites and Post-communist Transformation in Russia: A Reply to Kryshantovskaya & White", *Europe-Asia Studies* (Vol. 4, No.6, 1997), pp. 1017–1036.
- <sup>47</sup> This is supported by findings of Neil Melvin, "The Consolidation of the Regional Elite in Pavlodar (Kazakhstan): The End of Transition?", Paper presented at the British Association of Slavic and East European Studies, 4 – 6 April 1998.
- <sup>48</sup> Nazarbaev has mooted at the possibility of regional elections only in the run-up to electoral campaigns. For elaboration on the challenges of regionalism, see *O Mestnom Samoupravlenii* (Almaty: Centre for Democracy, 1997).
- <sup>49</sup> *Interfax-Kazakhstan*, 12 January 1998; and *Kazkommerts Securities*, Almaty, 12 January 1998.
- <sup>50</sup> *Delovaya Nedelya*, December 26 1997
- <sup>51</sup> *Reuters*, 12 November 1997.
- <sup>52</sup> "Declining Support for a Free Market and Privatization in Kazakhstan", *Opinion Analysis*, USIA Office of Research and Media Reaction, 12 December 1997, pp. 1-3. For further popular and 'expert' views of economic reform, see S. Zhusupov, B. Zhusupov and K. Ezhnova, *Dinamika Obshchestvennykh Protssessov v Kazakhstane* (Almaty, 1997).
- <sup>53</sup> Nazarbaev introduced a pay increase for public officials in June 1996. In response, over half of the respondents of a Giller opinion poll suggested that Kazakhstani officials will retain their private companies even with a payrise. See *Delovaya Nedelya*, 3 March 1997.
- <sup>54</sup> "The Struggle With Corruption", *passim*.
- <sup>55</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>56</sup> *Interfax*, 20 January 1998; and *Summary of World Broadcasts*, 21 January 1998.
- <sup>57</sup> Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

## CONCLUSION

Other empirical analyses of political elites have used social-background information both to illustrate theoretical concepts and to establish relationships among social, economic and political variables. What preliminary conclusions can we draw from the empirical evidence of Kazakhstan? To reiterate, since this thesis covers the first seven years of independence conclusions can only be of a tentative nature, and where conclusions are not possible this will be stated.

The thesis has encouraged us to question the unqualified application of social science methodologies to area studies. This caution applies particularly to the methodology of locating the elite. The four methods of locational, reputational, decisional and press analysis, as described in the Appendix, proved inadequate in fully determining the political elite in a society where power remains informal and where institutions remain poorly developed. Instead, a more flexible approach was required which combined all four methods. This approach identified individuals who exerted informal power and excluded individuals who did not exert power even if they were employed in institutions of formal power. The appendix explains how different results from the four methods used to locate the elite were reconciled. For example, as demonstrated in the thesis, only a tenth of the members of Kazakhstan's Parliament, even at its strongest in 1994–5, exerted influence on decisions of major strategic importance. These findings would confirm the conclusions made by others that methods of data collection must differ markedly between developed and developing countries.<sup>1</sup> I would go further and argue that even such compartmentalisation is misleading, and research methods need to be adapted to the particular culture and society in question.

The upshot is an empirically grounded definition of the political elite. This definition of the elite has established a hierarchy of factors which explain the contemporary constellation of the political elite. In increasing order of importance these are: history, nationality, wealth, education (in particular in Moscow), and loyalty to the principal gatekeeper, President Nazarbaev. These factors will be mentioned at various points in the conclusion, and the importance, or otherwise, of horde membership will also be discussed.

The thesis has assessed the importance of historical factors in the make-up of the contemporary elite. Some elements of the political culture of the traditional steppe appear to have survived – even if such apparent cultural legacies cannot be proven or isolated from more immediate causes. Power was shared in the traditional nomadic steppe, shared between various individuals both within the black and the white bone. For example, in cases of dispute nomads would seek redress in the social figure of the local elder rather than in the political office of the khan. The contemporary political link between rulers and ruled in contemporary Kazakhstan is also weak, but for different reasons. The main reason for the absence of a political and social contract between the political elite and society stems from the economic chaos that has resulted from economic transition. The vast majority of the population has not yet benefitted materially from independence and thus is not reassured that an independent Kazakhstan can deliver better than, or even as well as, the former Soviet republic.

As regards antecedents, it is above all those from the Soviet period which explain the formation and make-up of the contemporary political elite. Kunaev fostered an educated and indigenous elite already in the 1970s and 1980s. He was able to do this because of the freedom granted him in recruitment by his patron, Leonid Brezhnev. This indigenoussness of authority ensured a smooth transfer of power for ethnic Kazakhs into

the post-independence period. Moreover, Kunaev primarily favoured individuals from his own Southern Horde. This further explains why upon independence it is the Southern Horde which initially occupied major government posts. In comparison to other post-colonial states the native majority (and in the case of the Kazakhs upon independence a titular minority) engaged in far less of a struggle to replace alien elites in the economy (whether these aliens were from the former colonial people or from ethnic minorities who had flourished under colonial rule). Put differently, Kazakhisation of the elite, which has been reinforced in the post-independence period, can be seen as a reaffirmation of political power, rather than as a co-ordinated plan to nationalise the regime. This continuity and the lack of an independence struggle helps to explain the relative weakness of Kazakh nationalism, which is further explained by the weak national identity of ethnic Kazakhs.

The absence of a strong national identity enabled us to appreciate the wider dynamics behind the composition and constellations of the contemporary political elite. Part of this weak national identity stems from the republic's multiethnicity, with the Kazakhs emerging a titular minority upon independence. The numerical inferiority of the Kazakhs explains the initial anxiety of the political elite to staff its top offices with ethnic Kazakhs. Thus, particularly in the heavily-Slav populated northern regions, the staffing of regional administrations by ethnic Kazakhs was deemed an indispensable step towards state survival. Simultaneously, the ethnic make-up of the political elite became self-regulating as substantial numbers of the three largest non-Kazakh ethnic minorities of Russians, Ukrainians and Germans emigrated. Furthermore, the weak national identity explains the sense of a weak cohesion among members of the political elite. This weak sense of solidarity is further explained by the frequency of reshuffles and the possibility of sudden unemployment, which has encouraged the accumulation of



public money for private gain, or corruption. Corruption is further exacerbated by a weak sense of national identity and a lack of responsibility to any electorate or legal order. The resultant insecurity of tenure means that this is a high-risk political system for the individual members of the political elite. Michels traced the roots of oligarchy in working-class movements in part to the very sharp drop in status and income that awaited ex-leaders, and a similar theory may fit some developing countries today.<sup>2</sup>

When interviewed, few members of the political elite defined themselves in terms of what it meant to be an ethnic Kazakh; instead they usually invoked the term Kazakhstani but expended great efforts to provide a cultural content to this term. Important generational differences should nevertheless be recognised in the political elite's self-definition. Western values of anarchic individualism and materialism expressed by many members of the younger, second generation political elite, have already strengthened during the short period since 1991. This second generation political elite is ensuring that its children, who will possibly be the third generation political elite, will absorb these Western values through study and training in predominantly Western institutions. Daulet Sembaev aptly underscored this generational change:

To put it in simple terms, my family is a professional family. My parents, on the other hand, came from a very simple background; my grandfather was a nomad all his life in the great expanses of Central Kazakhstan. For the third generation this will be different again; their education will begin with Cambridge.<sup>3</sup>

The weakness of a national identity carried a further implication. Once in power, the ethnic Kazakh elite needed to foster a sense of consciousness and cohesion among its members. The most readily available tool to foster a sense of solidarity in a post-independence setting is nationalism. In the absence of a readily-available sense of nationhood, the Kazakhstani political elite fostered a national-cultural revival. This

revival appears to have backfired. It has instead provoked a rediscovery of sub-ethnic identity among the political elite. The thesis has argued that this rediscovery is the result of actual policies rather than of deeply held affiliations to sub-national groupings. III.1 demonstrated how the political elite, devoid of unifying cultural markers, was forced to revert to symbols which it already possessed, albeit quietly. These were most clearly associated with the traditional horde structure. Thus, for example, celebrations of national heroes usually turned out to be devoted to locally revered figures, often associated with particular horde structures. Paradoxically, then, this state-sponsored national revival has led to a sub-national revival of traditional allegiances, reinforced by the size of Kazakhstan and the increasing diversity of the regions, a condition enhanced by foreign investment and natural resources.

In addition to these first three general points on the overall nature of the political elite and its relation to society, this thesis has empirically demonstrated the make-up of the contemporary political elite. Certain social groups dominated the political elite in the snapshot (but representative) year of 1995. The typical profile of the political elite constituted: former membership of the Soviet elite; a blue-collar background; aged between 36 and 55; male, and ethnic Kazakh. But there were also important features which appeared to fragment the political elite: their birthplace, juz membership and education being among the most important.

Some of the post-independence members of the political elite are self-made and have gained their political standing by accruing wealth. But larger numbers of the post-independence political elite consist of offspring from the post-Stalin generation. Some of these members were sons and daughters who were educated in Moscow in the Gorbachev period and formed a close-knit group once Nazarbaev came to power. Reproduction of this political elite is expected because of the concentration of wealth in

its hands, the educational patterns of offspring, and a narrowing of the elite. The narrowing of the elite renders reproduction easier. This make-up of the political elite suggests – again, conclusions can only be tentative - that the agglutination model applies, in which the political elite reproduces itself and becomes closed. The thesis has also demonstrated how this closed model contrasts starkly with the considerable upward social mobility of the Soviet political elite of the Kazakh SSR. Much of this continuity depends, of course, on the survival of President Nazarbaev, who has dominated the recruitment process.

In addition to these ‘push’ factors, the thesis has highlighted the ‘pull’ factors in recruitment. Given the authoritarian nature of the regime, these top-down recruitment decisions are often more important than factors of ambition or social forces which might propel individuals into office. II.2 demonstrated how throughout the period it is the President who has dominated this recruitment procedure and it is the President who has made the principal recruitment decisions as regards membership of the political elite. The thesis has discussed various factors which influence the President in his recruitment decisions.

The principal criterion of recruitment has been loyalty to the President. The factor of loyalty explains why members of his own family, close relatives and friends have come to comprise the core elite. It also partly explains the decision since 1994/5 to employ a number of technocrats, who, by definition, are apolitical and do not harbour political ambitions. All other factors that are considered by the President are subordinate to this.

The thesis has assessed other factors in recruitment, notably horde membership, the importance of Moscow networks and the role of bribery and corruption. In reverse order, although detail could not be provided on the last (both because of a lack of firm

evidence and because a too persistent enquiry would have rendered research on the elite dangerous and essentially nonviable), the purchase of office did probably occur in the case of some individuals. It appears that these individuals ultimately enjoyed less security of tenure. Again, documentation of this evidence is impossible to obtain, but some members of my panel of experts intimated that the regional head of Southern Kazakhstan, Turisbekov, was an example of an individual who had purchased his office. Such a practice negates any principle of merit in appointments. Bribery and corruption have also had an impact on dismissals. Individuals observed to be incompetent or politically suspect to Nazarbaev have often been conveniently removed through corruption scandals. Examples were Mars Urkumbaev, Asygybat Zhabagin and Nazarbaev's first two prime ministers. But the thesis also highlighted how these individuals often reappeared, and frequently in better posts (especially if these individuals in exile managed to accrue wealth). Such circulation also appears to apply at the regional level of elite formation. Nevertheless, it does appear that elite reshuffling has been less frequent at the regional than national level, which suggests that the regional political elite has become more entrenched and is more reliant on existing networks for policy implementation than is the national elite. This in turn implies that Nazarbaev's control over regional elites is less complete than his domination of the central cadres.

With regard to another network, that of Soviet-era Moscow connections, the thesis highlighted how individuals who belonged to this network have formed a close-knit sub-group of the political elite. This was already highlighted above. Predominantly in their early thirties, they trained primarily as economists in Moscow in the 1980s and were recruited by Prime Minister Kazhegeldin in 1994/5 to manage the IMF macroeconomic reform programme. It will be some time before the republic can

generate its own indigenously trained economists; indeed, it may be that Kazakhstan, like many countries of the developing world, will send its elite for training abroad indefinitely.

Does the 'horde factor', then, explain recruitment? The thesis has argued that explaining decisions in terms of the juz affiliation is an oversimplification and thus distortion of reality. In the first years of independence there did exist signs that the President opted to follow in Kunaev's path and recruit primarily from the Southern Horde, from which Nazarbaev also hails. However, these individuals were often either close relatives or friends of the President and it has been argued that these factors of loyalty predominated. Masanov's thesis, as explained in II.2, that the President engaged in a careful balancing act between different juz has been highlighted, but on closer inspection it was concluded that this was a symbolic gesture on the part of the president to honour a revived sub-national identity. Moreover, that sub-national identity, in any case, was fluid. The juz identity had little cultural content and thus little significance in and of itself. Horde membership has principally become crucial when allied with significant economic interests. In the case of the political elite of the Western region, for example, economic and horde interests were most starkly intertwined, and it is here that the central authorities have encountered the most difficulty in parachuting in their own clients. Thus, we saw that the majority of the key posts of the Oil and Gas Industry was occupied by members of the Small Horde. Put differently, kinship was not in itself a crucial element in the allocation of patronage but rather it was part of a wider set of relations. This, as noted, would support the contention that kinship has to be expressed in other relationships to be given content.

In the final analysis, I found the patron-client approach the most useful one in an attempt to understand the recruitment process. Recruitment, in a weak state where

officials are beholden to the selectorate and not the population, has become a considerable source of power. Just as in the Soviet period, patronage is structured and organised because the power to appoint is a vital resource in politics. Patronage is a sought-after-resource, despite its limitations, and more available to some than others. By the same token, its misuse bespeaks considerable instability. The selectorate in post-independent Kazakhstan has become a broker of competing identities, networks and interests (with Nazarbaev as the constant factor). Much of what Waterbury writes on Morocco could be applied to Kazakhstan. According to Waterbury, the Moroccan political fabric is composed of a multitude of clienteles each seeking to “create or corner a patrimony and then defend it”. The King stands at the summit of this pyramid: “the monarchy is the major distributor of spoils and patronage in Morocco, and it considers the entire elite as its clientele group. To maintain its following... the palace manipulates its systems of rewards...to great advantage”. In this sense, Nazarbaev has been extraordinarily adept at using the tool of patronage as a factor of elite stability. That said, there is an important sense in which Nazarbaev differs: he does not have the traditional legitimacy or the security of succession of a monarch.

In sum, where power is effectively centralised in an authoritarian bureaucracy, or on the other hand well-diffused, patronage is correspondingly less common. When power is neither effectively centralised, nor well-diffused – somewhere in the middle as in the case of a fragmented centralised political elite as is Kazakhstan’s - patronage assumes added importance.

Elite fragmentation can partly explain the authoritarian nature of the regime. Authoritarianism can act as a partial antidote to a fragmented elite. The study of Kazakhstan’s political elite can perhaps improve our understanding of the republic’s political system. Its approach provides an alternative explanation for centralised

presidential power, and supplements other reasons in the literature on presidentialism explaining Central Asia's failure to democratise.<sup>4</sup> Higley *et al.* provide a schema of how elite types correspond to particular political systems, and they show how a fragmented elite is generally associated with authoritarian systems.<sup>5</sup> Kazakhstan would appear to fit with this correlation.

What has been the effect of this fragmentation on the degree of elite integration? The picture is not clear-cut. Let us take the parameters we specified in the Introduction: social homogeneity, recruitment patterns, and value consensus. That the post-independence contemporary political elite has its origins primarily in the Soviet elite provides some social homogeneity in terms of education and origins. The core elite itself has become increasingly unified in terms of one of two social origins – it is composed of either the extended family of the President or loyal technocrats. They are united by their loyalty to the president. The political class is occupationally homogeneous and still mainly southern in origin.

In terms of recruitment, the agglutination model does appear to apply. The political elite has become increasingly closed. There is a strong degree of elite circulation, where the same members of the political elite have survived during these seven years.

In terms of the degree of value consensus, no definitive conclusions can be made. Values are subjective at the best of times, but this is a closed elite which is unwilling to talk about its values and opinions and above all about its views on political decisions.<sup>6</sup> What can be tentatively gleaned, however, is a tacit agreement among the political elite about the rules of the game, which would fit with Meisel's argument that for a political elite to exist and operate it has to be a conspiracy. The political elite appeared united by a consensus about the process of government, which principally

dictated that conflict is camouflaged and opposition or rapid change is undesirable. This harmony is contradicted, however, by a culture of conspiracy, mutual suspicion and cynicism in a period of political and economic transition strongly marked by the absence of law and the lure of economic gain.

It appears, indeed, that socio-economic change has begun to transform the alignments, composition and outlook of the political elite. Brzezinski and Huntington, in their study of United States and Soviet Union elite turnover, state that such change “does not guarantee new policies, but it makes them possible.”<sup>7</sup> Marketisation has assisted the emergence of some new business entrepreneurs. The majority of the political elite studied here consists, however, of members of the former Soviet political elite. This continuity suggests that structure is less important than agency in this early transitional stage, that the same leaders can (and sometimes must for the lack of any alternatives) remain in power despite the collapse of the structure of the command economy. Is the importance of agency then reflected in differing outputs? We were to some degree able to measure this correlation with regard to economic reform since the economic sector has seen the greatest number of new recruits at the policy-level. Chapter III.2 on economic policy suggests that composition has made a difference to output. Nevertheless, we also inferred a surprising degree of congruence, for example on attitudes to marketisation from both former *apparatchiki* and present entrepreneurs. Kazakhstan has thus provided a further example that the link between opinion and behaviour is never simple,<sup>8</sup> and would confirm C. Wright Mills’ statement that: “We cannot infer the direction of policy merely from the social origins and careers of the policy makers”.<sup>9</sup>

Overall, and crucially, the structure of the elite has narrowed in Kazakhstan. The background of the top power holders was increasingly differentiated from the political



elite at lower echelons of power. This narrowed political elite has been remarkably adept at monopolising the cultural, political and economic policies of independent Kazakhstan. It has so far prevented an effective nationalist counterelite from developing, it has centralised power and it has co-opted the political counterelite through various institutional mechanisms and recruitment policies. Economically, the political elite has managed to keep its hold over the business elite either by continuing to control the principal resources or by co-opting the business elite into the ranks of the political elite.

Thus, neither the power nor pluralist paradigm appears an apt illustration of the elite. The “power elite” suggests a number of interlocking, but separate elites – in C. Wright Mills’ case of the United States, the interlocking of the military, business and political. This does not (yet) apply in Kazakhstan. In the absence of genuinely competitive elections nor is it a pluralist political elite. “Fused political elite” might be the best term: there is no distinct political elite because, for the above reasons, it is inseparable from the business or cultural elite.

Finally, we look at the implications of elite composition, structure and policies for the political stability of the Republic. We do not here assess other, potentially more important, factors contributing to political stability, such as economic growth, democratisation or interethnic relations. Some brief, tentative points on the likely effects of oil revenue on political stability will however be made at the close.

The thesis has attempted to demonstrate that the relationship between the contemporary political elite and political stability is still unclear. This inability to draw any definitive conclusion can be illustrated by looking at three aspects of the political elite: its relations with society; its configuration at the national level; and, the relations between the national and regional elite.

The Republic is likely to remain most stable at the level of elite-society relations. Regimes with a narrow elite, a fragmented, disenfranchised population and a weak civil society, such as in the Middle East, have proven remarkably durable. This is partly because the population does not expect power to be “legitimate”: despite clear anti-democratic measures of the Nazarbaev regime, there have been few popular protests. That also partly stems from economic chaos when politics becomes a luxury.

Intra-elite stability, in turn, can work both ways. On the one hand, the frequent reshuffles at the top are likely to continue. These personnel changes are due to the dominance of the recruitment process by a single individual, President Nazarbaev. When a member of the political elite displays either disloyalty or ambition he is sidelined. These reshuffles are a source of instability, as they create considerable discontinuity in policy-making and relations with foreign actors. By isolating himself in Astana, Nazarbaev may be increasingly unable to broker these southern networks and act as patron. Therefore, although the move to Astana was conceived by some as a means for Nazarbaev to distance himself from the nepotism of the South, it may also contribute to more frequent reshuffles by the President in his eagerness to keep a hold on regions through divide-and-rule tactics.

Conversely, there are mitigating factors of stability at the intra-elite level. The political elite consists largely of the same individuals as it did eight years ago. Individuals have ‘circulated’ rather than disappeared. This deliberate policy of ‘circulation’ on the part of Nazarbaev has maintained the loyalty of a good part of the political elite. In the absence of a united national army with real political influence, a military coup is highly unlikely. The issue of succession is not yet on the agenda and its precise form is difficult to predict. It is likely to be marked by fierce internal battles of the incumbent elite, given its fragmented nature. But under present circumstances – the

absence of a weak national army and the marginalisation of the opposition - succession is likely to be relatively smooth. The successor to Nazarbaev is thus likely to come from within the ranks of the incumbent elite. In the meanwhile Nazarbaev has already declared his intention to stand for re-election in 2006.

It is probably fair to posit that the principal strains on the political system will emerge from relations between the centre and the periphery. The thesis has been concerned with the national political elite between 1991 and 1998 and thus only generalisations can be made here about the regional elite. The thesis has hinted at a growing regional divergence. The key post-Soviet variable to cause this diversification has been foreign investment. While the Western oil-producing and Northern metals-trading areas have become key beneficiaries of foreign capital, the Southern, mainly agricultural, areas have been largely neglected. In the resource-endowed areas foreign investors have struck strategic alliances with the regional administrations. These alliances, largely dependent on the goodwill of the *akim*, have become entrenched. Entrenchment has in some cases divested Nazarbaev of effective appointment powers. In Mangistau, for example, we saw how the President has twice removed but twice reinstated the regional *akim*. This may result in a figurehead national elite with little meaningful power in some key regions. Some tribute or family-linked remittances may come back to Astana but this may not necessarily be the case and it is again too early to predict. The optimal means of countering a growing resentment of central interference by these richer regions may be to allow the election of the local *akim* and to grant meaningful powers to local legislative bodies.

Despite these centrifugal forces, secession by the regions or disintegration of the unitary state is unlikely. The move to Astana will tend to strengthen the centre's grip over the northern regions, as will the reduction of the number of regions from 20 to 14.

To date *akims* have limited their demands to a fairer redistribution of taxes to avoid unfair penalisation of the richer regions; none have harboured serious secessionist claims. Instead, the national elite may close itself off, making its composition less important because in some regions it will become largely ineffective.

Ultimately, in these early years Nazarbaev has proven extraordinarily adept at managing his political elite. He has maintained the loyalty of the senior members of various groupings through careful patronage. He has successfully neutralised tensions by incorporating foreign experts among his cadre of advisors and by stressing policies that appeal to various constituencies. By introducing external parties with less stake in the regime the president has thus reduced tensions. This neutralisation appears above all embodied in his *Strategy 2030*, with its emphasis on big decisions, broad outlooks and long-term perspectives. This strategy is also designed to bring the political elite together, to provide them with a goal and an élan, above all with patriotism. It is a sensible approach; the challenges of an independent state demand strategic and not just tactical decisions. As former Presidential aid Sabit Zhusupov concluded: “the emphasis on the strategic can in many ways explain the specifics of the way the Kazakhstani political system is functioning, indeed the sovereign state as a whole.”<sup>10</sup> The emphasis on technocracy is designed to deliver economic growth and exclude potential political rivals from government. This is very traditional monarchical politics – and all the more important for a politician without the institutional charisma or legitimacy of a monarch.

The political elite regards oil revenue as the best guarantee of stability. Revenue, its members say, will finance the budget deficit. They will allow a redistribution of income to society. They will increase the economic pie and allow more members of the political elite to benefit. This might increase the cohesion of the political elite. Less burden will be placed on the richer regions to subsidise the poor. However, while these

are attractive gains in principle, the reality may well be different. Much will depend on the actual quantity of oil, the willingness of foreigners to invest, and the ability to construct alternative pipeline routes. Undeniably, oil will raise the stakes of the political game. Given the already fragmented nature of the elite, oil will probably serve to strengthen these divisions, which in turn might evolve into increasingly tense regional disparities and relations.

All of the above issues are crucial in an attempt to evaluate Kazakhstan's future stability. They are, however, beyond the scope of this thesis; instead the thesis has above all attempted to illustrate and explain the contemporary make-up of the national elite, the importance in this transitional period of agency over structure, of individuals over institutions and of the relationship, if any, between socioeconomic variables and elite composition. The other equally important issues of geopolitics, mineral wealth, economic reform and centre-periphery relations are the subject of another enquiry.

## Endnotes to Conclusion

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<sup>1</sup> Quandt makes those analogies in *The Comparative Study of Political Elites*, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Lester G. Seligman, *Recruiting Political Elites* (New York: General Learning Press, 1971), pp. 9-12; Michels, *Political Parties*, *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> Author's interview, 20 February 1996.

<sup>4</sup> Jon Elster "Afterword: The Making of Postcommunist Presidencies", in Ray Taras (ed.), *Postcommunist Presidents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 225-237. See also James McGregor, "The Presidency In East Central Europe" *RFE/RL Research Report* 3, 2 (1994), pp. 23-31; Joel Hellman, "Constitutions and Economic Reform in the Postcommunist Transitions", *East European Constitutional Review* 5 (1996), pp. 46-56; John Ishiyama and Matthew Velten, "Presidential Power and

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Democratic Development in Post-Communist Politics,” *Communist and Post-communist Studies* 31(1998):217-234; Timothy Frye, “A Politics of Institutional Choice: Post-Communist Presidencies”, *Comparative Political Studies* 30 (1997), pp. 523-552; Gerald M. Easter, “Preference for Presidentialism: Postcommunist Regime Change and the NIS”, *World Politics* 49 (1997), pp. 184-211; Arend Lijphart (ed.), *Parliamentary Versus Presidential Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

<sup>5</sup> Higley *et al.* (eds), *Postcommunist Elites*, Chapter One.

<sup>6</sup> For example, even though informally many, if not the overwhelming majority, of members of the political elite were opposed to the move to Astana, only one stated so when interviewed. This was former Almaty city mayor Zamanbek Nurkadilov. Nurkadilov was the only official to have put this disagreement in writing in 1994, ten days before his dismissal.

<sup>7</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski and Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Power: USA/USSR* (New York: Viking Press, 1964), p. 181.

<sup>8</sup> Fred I. Greenstein, *Personality and Politics* (Chicago: Markham, 1969), *passim*.

<sup>9</sup> Mills, *The Power*, pp. 279-280.

<sup>10</sup> Sabit Zhusupov, “Politicheskaya Elita”, p. 5.

## APPENDIX: APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This Appendix provides an overview of the methodology that has been employed in this thesis. It will become apparent as the narrative evolves how crucial was the choice of methodology and how revealing it is or is not about the structure of society.

### 1. APPROACH

Primarily concerned with exploratory research, the foremost aim of the methodology was to establish a means of determining the political elite in post-independent Kazakhstan, and then applying that mechanism to the realities on ground.

### 2. AIMS

The aims of the methodology are three-fold:

- (a) to identify the political elite (whose parameters are defined in the Introduction);
- (b) to locate sources on the political elite; and
- (c) to interview the core elite where possible.

#### **(a) Identifying the political elite**

Various authors have waxed lyrical about the problems of finding the powerful.<sup>1</sup> Broadly speaking, social scientists have used three strategies for identifying elites: positional analysis, reputational analysis, and decisional analysis. The most important point about “finding the powerful” was to be systematic in my selection, criteria and interviewing of the core political elite (see Introduction).

Positional, or locational, analysis, assumes that powerful people are located in the institutions of government. In other words, people derive power itself from institutional roles. The key treatise written in this assumption is C. Wright Mills’ *The Power Elite*: “To be celebrated, to be wealthy, to have power requires access to major institutions, for the institutional positions men occupy determine in large part their chances to have and to hold these valued experiences”.<sup>2</sup> Because formal institutions usually keep good records, positional analysis is the easiest and most common technique for finding the powerful. There are immediate flaws, however. This type of analysis assumes that we know which institutions are politically significant, but neglects the possible existence of individuals who merely rubber-stamp decisions. More seriously, this method ignores the indirect influence of those figures not located in

governmental institutions. Where institutional architecture is in its very infancy and where informal networks are at least as important as formal networks (particularly true of Kazakhstan), this is a serious shortcoming.

Reputational analysis relies, not on formal organisation charts, but on informal reputations of power. Usually a “panel of experts”, or “informants”, deemed to have observed political machinations from close up is involved. It also relies on opinion polls taken at various times by the media. This technique is founded on the assumption that participants in a system will know who is powerful and who is not. It incorporates powerful figures whose influence is also indirect or implicit. However, reputational analysis also has grave weaknesses, for a researcher using this method must decide whom to ask and what to ask. Errors in choosing informants may irreparably bias the results. The reputational approach is most closely associated with Floyd Hunter’s study of communal power structure.<sup>3</sup>

The reputational approach is closely related to the third main technique for identifying the powerful – decisional analysis. This method – sometimes called event analysis – is based on the assumption that if political power is defined in terms of influence over government activities, we can detect it by studying how specific decisions are reached, and, in particular, by noting who successfully initiates or vetoes proposals. In the best-known application of decisional analysis, Robert A. Dahl studied decisions in New Haven, Connecticut, on three issues: urban redevelopment, public education, and nominations for public office.<sup>4</sup> Again, there are several significant limitations. Only a few decisions can be studied in detail, yet patterns of power may differ from issue to issue.<sup>5</sup> It is also best suited for studying matters that have already become recognised public issues.<sup>6</sup>

Because none of these methods for finding the powerful is without limitations, some sophisticated analysts have merged several different approaches. For example, in a pair of pioneering studies of Yugoslav and American elites, Allen Barton and his collaborators combined positional and reputational analysis in the so-called “snowball” technique.<sup>7</sup> In each country, incumbents of key formal positions constituted the initial elite, as defined operationally. Respondents from these positions were then asked for the names of others to whom they looked for advice or who they thought to be generally influential. People receiving at least five such nominations were themselves added to the elite sample, and they in turn were asked for further nominations.<sup>8</sup>



The vigorous debate among social scientists over methods for identifying the political elite has often proceeded at too abstract a level. At times too little attention has been paid to whether, when, and how our conclusions might be affected by our methods. It was with this last point in mind, in particular, that I began my pilot tests of the first two months of fieldwork. The conclusion I came to was that only a combination of these three techniques would provide as realistic picture of those who wield substantial influence.

I adopted the following combinations of methodology. I first adopted the snowball technique by locating individuals by the locational and reputational methods. I selected institutions on the basis of the Constitution and media coverage. Reputations were gleaned from an independent panel of experts that I established consisting of inside informers, journalists, political scientists, the generally interested and informed, and the foreign community (mainly chosen for their impartiality and often closer dealings with the community). This panel of experts is elaborated below. In addition I scanned the newspapers over two separate periods of one hundred days (in 1992 and in 1995). I also compiled a list of issues that the experts, media and other sources had put as the top ten facing Kazakhstan in its first five years of independence. This would also allow me to gauge, up to a degree, which individuals had been involved in the decision-making process. Nevertheless, decisions are closed and access to signatures and policy proposals was rare. Most information here was revealed by informers from the inside who were simply keen to assist and who did not fear too much for their positions.

Such a combination of methodologies had to be treated with caution. Combining them required a systematic process of elimination of some members of the political elite. This is because, unsurprisingly, not every methodology resulted in the same list of names. To avoid confusion, I adopted the following approach. Those members of the political elite who were common to all four methods comprised my core elite (p. 133). Then I used Barton *et al's* tested "snowball technique" of combining institutional and reputational analysis. This meant that I placed reputational analysis at the heart of my location of the elite. If members of my institutionally-located elite were not confirmed by my 'panel of experts' then they were only included in my list (p.127) if they were associated with posts which were known to be institutionally powerful but about whose individuals even a panel of experts would know relatively little. This was the case, for example, with the presidential inspectors, the President's most loyal coterie of advisors who provided a reliable link between him and the regions, but about whom little was

known. The decision-making method was generally only helpful in illuminating those who comprised the core elite since it was only core individuals who were associated with core decisions; little of the reality of other decision-making processes were possible to uncover. The analysis of the media also provided a means of rubber-stamping some of the names of the core elite; individuals who appeared in the media but who were not endorsed either by the intrinsic power of their institutions or by the panel of experts were eliminated. In this way, it can be summarised that the panel of experts was the linchpin of the four methods and served to sieve contradictions that might have arisen from the simultaneous use of four methods. Given the importance of informal power, however, the combination of methods was a means of reinforcing the list generated by the panel of experts and acted as a safeguard.

An additional point needs to be made here on the final composition of the political elite (p. 127). The ultimate inclusion of only one editor of a major newspaper – under the heading of ‘cultural political elite’- is a useful means of highlighting how Bottomore’s definition became useful. My use of an essentially political definition of the elite – rather than a cultural one in its own right – means that for any individual in the cultural sphere to be included in the political elite he/she must “exercise political power or influence, and [be] directly engaged in struggles for political leadership” (see my p. 17). As the owner of the only independent printing press in Kazakhstan (and in Central Asia for that matter) and as the only influential figure in his own right, only *Karavan*’s Boris Giller is included. He was in a position to exert real influence as an opinion-maker, not least as his newspaper at the time of analysis enjoyed at least five times greater circulation than that of its competitors. In other cases, the media is either state-owned, influenced by the state or essentially a cultural channel.

To sum up, the convergence of formal and informal power had to be taken into account in the context of Kazakhstan. The relationship between concepts and data is dialectical, and concepts and definitions needed to be reassessed and reshaped in the post-Soviet context of Kazakhstan.

#### **(b) Sources on the political elite**

The reliance on reputational analysis required a competent, ideologically diverse and well-informed ‘panel of experts’. The following consists of a summary of my “panel of experts”. It indicates its composition (according to the occupation, status, background) and why these particular 55 individuals were chosen.

**a. 14 Journalists and Academics**

This group included 5 journalists from independent radio and TV stations, 2 from state-owned newspapers, 3 from independent newspapers, and 4 academics. Here the main criterion of selection (where possible) was a broad range of ideologies and subject areas of specialisation. Of the journalists and academics, 8 were ethnic Russian and 6 were ethnic Kazakh; 10 of the 14 were aged between 25 and 40; the remaining 4 were over 40. I initially selected journalists and academics whom I had known from two previous years' experience in the Republic. They suggested further specialists in their field.

**b. 10 local political office-holders** (2 from the presidential administration, 2 from government ministries, 4 from parliament and 2 from local government). 6 of the local 'informers' were ethnic Kazakh, 3 Russian and 1 German. 8 of the 10 were aged between 25 and 40 and the remaining 2 were over 40 years of age. This list took longer to compile because it was based on individuals whose trust I gained between 1992 and 1996.

**c. 21 foreign businessmen and diplomats** (3 from international organisations (UN and IMF); 5 from foreign embassies (Britain, the Czech Republic, France, Israel, Japan and the United States); 5 from US company representative offices; 5 from European company representative offices; and, 3 from non-governmental organisations). 80% of these foreign representatives were chairmen of local companies and 65% of these foreign representatives had been resident in Kazakhstan for over three years. They were chosen on the basis of their reputation in Kazakhstan, their access to the President, and their representation of a broad spectrum of economic sectors and interests.

**d. 10 local businessmen** (2 from state mineral extraction companies, 2 from state production companies, 2 from private trading companies, and 4 from local consultancies). They were chosen on the basis of their access to the President, their degree of inside knowledge and my personal acquaintance with them. 80% of these local businessmen were between the age of 25 and 40, 20% were over 60. 65% of local businessmen were ethnic Kazakh, 25% Russian, 5% German and 5% Korean.

Furthermore, I used the following sources on the political elite: my panel of experts, informal data (a good deal highly speculative and subjective, but this form of evidence in this sort of setting invariably needs to be used); newspapers; biographical

data; government directories. The key Russian-language newspapers used were: *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, *Sovety Kazakhstana*, *Delovaya Nedelya*, *Panorama*, *Karavan*, and Kazakh-language newspapers *Egemen Qazaqstan*, *Ana Tili*, *Jaz Alash*, and *Zaman Qazaqstan*. The key sources of biographical data were: A. Z. Asylbekov, V. N. Voloshin and V.N. Klyoupin, *Kto Est' Kto V Respublike Kazakhstan* (Almaty: Evraziya-Polis, 1995); D. R. Ashimbaev, *Kto Est' Kto V Respublike Kazakhstan* (Almaty: Karzhy-Karazhat, 1995); individual biographies were also sourced from *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*. The key government directories used were: *Spisok Telefonov Rukovoditelei Oblastei*, 1995 and 1996; *Spisok Telefonov Rukovodyashchikh Rabotnikov Organov Gosudarstvennogo Upravleniya, Partiinykh, Obshchestvennykh i Drugikh Organizatsii Kazakhskoi SSR*, July 1991 and January 1995; *Spisok Telefonov Rabotnikov Administratsii Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan*, October 1992 and April 1996; and *Spisok Deputatov Verkhovnogo Soveta Respubliki Kazakhstan* (12<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 1993).

### **(c) To interview the core elite**

Part of my information on the elite was determined from interviews. This formed some of the fieldwork that was carried out principally over a period of one year. For this reason, I did not interview individuals throughout the seven-year period. Clearly, this poses problems in that the composition of the elite has changed and individuals have changed their opinions. Ideally, one would wish to interview the same individual throughout the five years to detect any transformations. Time and money did not allow for this.

I knew prior to my fieldwork that I would not be using questionnaires. The culture in Kazakhstan is not written, and the likelihood of receiving informatively completed questionnaires was very slim. I opted instead for unstructured interviewing (based on techniques acquired at the LSE Methodology Institute 1994-5), which necessitated the compilation of topic guides. Rather than providing a straightjacket for the interviews, these provided me with a guide to the topics that I needed to cover in the interview, ensuring uniformity and systemisation of approach. I compiled the topic guide in both Russian and English. When appropriate, interviews were recorded. Approximately 40% of my interview data was useful. I interviewed twenty members of the core elite, including the Prime Minister.<sup>9</sup>

Because the number I interviewed was small I used 'Framework' as the method of qualitative data analysis. 'Framework' is an analytical process which involves a number of distinct though highly interconnected stages. Although the process is presented as following a particular order and is actually systematic and disciplined, it relies on the creative and conceptual ability of the analyst to determine meaning, salience and connections. The strength of an approach like "Framework" is that by following a well-defined procedure, it is possible to reconsider and rework ideas precisely because the analytical process has been documented and is therefore accessible. The five stages to qualitative data analysis involved in "framework" are: (1) Familiarisation (i.e., becoming familiar with the range and diversity of the data); (2) Identifying a thematic framework (process of abstraction and conceptualisation) (3) Indexing (where a thematic framework is systematically applied to the data in its textual form); (4) Charting (where data is 'lifted' from the original context and rearranged according to the appropriate thematic reference); and, (5) Mapping and interpretation. (which involved defining concepts, mapping the range and nature of phenomena, creating typologies, finding associations, providing explanations and developing strategies).<sup>10</sup>

### 3. LIMITS TO MY ANALYSIS

There are a number of limits to my analysis. This thesis does not set out to analyse regional recruitment dynamics, but focuses on the national elite. But since decentralisation has not occurred and power remains vertically centralised, this exclusion can be justified. Second, the nature of this thesis means that some sources either cannot be revealed or are based on anecdotal evidence. Third, since only seven years of independence have passed, definitive conclusions are premature. Fourth, this thesis does not purport to claim that the elite factor is the only factor worthy of analysis in transition, nor can it have the space to analyse other factors essential to Kazakhstan's successful development. It does, assume, however that the elite factor is crucial.

As a final note, locating the elite was not without its physical and psychological hazards. In interviewing what I had conceived to be an informant of a popular newspaper, roles were quickly reversed. An article of that newspaper the following day described me as a Westerner keen to discover the size of bank accounts of the Kazakh

elite and that, in the true spirit of a good, racy detective story, all could not wait for the last page of my work where the name of the richest of them all could be revealed. Needless to say, I had great difficulty in gaining any access anywhere in the subsequent few weeks. The same public attention occurred in Pavlodar, where “a mysterious young Englishwoman” in “less than a week” had managed to interview “nearly all the members of the regional administration”.<sup>11</sup> Suspicion always shrouded my activities, and the Ministry of Interior kept track of my activities. The reaction of the regions to my arrival was very different. While the regional administration of Pavlodar sent one of their own employees to accompany me to all the interviews, those of Shymkent left me unaccompanied. As we shall see as the thesis unfolds, this has much to do with the increased regional differentiation, a product of both geopolitics and foreign investment.

#### 4. TRANSLITERATION

For Russian transliteration, the Library of Congress system has been used throughout. In terms of Kazakh transliteration, more familiar forms have been preferred than the use of a Turkic transcription system. Thus, for example, *zh* is often used in preference to *j* and *k* is used for *q* such as in Kazakh, rather than Qazaq (except where usage dictates, such as in *Qazaq Tili*, the Kazakh language organisation).<sup>12</sup>

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#### **Endnotes to Appendix**

<sup>1</sup> See Frederick Frey, ‘The Determination and Location of Elites: A Critical Analysis’, Paper read at the Sixty-sixth Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Los Angeles, September 1970 and Jerry Hough, ‘The Soviet Experience and the Measurement of Power’, *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 37 (August 1975), pp. 685-710.

<sup>2</sup> C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 10-11.

<sup>3</sup> Floyd Hunter, *Top Leadership, U.S.A.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959) pp. 16 and 195.

<sup>4</sup> Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), pp. 104-62.

<sup>5</sup> Theodore J. Lowi, *At the Pleasure of the Mayor: Patronage and Power in New York City, 1898-1958* (New York: Free Press, 1964).

<sup>6</sup> Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz, “Two Faces of Power”, *American Political Science Review*, (Vol. 56, December 1962), pp. 947-52.

<sup>7</sup> Allen H. Barton et al., *Opinion-Making Elites in Yugoslavia* (New York: Praeger, 1973).

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<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Charles Kadushin, "Social Structure of Yugoslavia's Opinion-Makers: Part I, Informal Leadership" in Allen H. Barton et al., *Opinion-Making Elites* *Opinion-Making Elites*, pp. 155-219.

<sup>9</sup> On interview techniques see, for example, Charles L. Briggs, *Learning How to Ask: A sociolinguistic appraisal of the role of the interview in social science research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) and Steinvar Kvale, *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing* (London: Sage Publications, 1996).

<sup>10</sup> See Alan Bryman and Robert G. Burgess, *Analyzing Qualitative Data* (London: Routledge, 1994), especially Chapter Eight. This book was used heavily in the course on interviewing techniques I attended at the LSE Methodology Institute in June 1995.

<sup>11</sup> *V Meste*, No. 31, 10 November 1995.

<sup>12</sup> For further detail on transliteration, see Edward Allworth, *Nationalities of the Soviet East : publications and writing systems; a bibliographical directory and transliteration tables for Iranian - and Turkic - language publications* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1971).

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