

***CHAPTER-1***  
***INTRODUCTION***

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## INTRODUCTION

In an ongoing state-society dynamic, Central Asian states exhibit “the modernity of tradition”. Informal clan networks still pervade society and play a central political and economic role, but its role and form have changed over time, and not always with positive effects on political development. The objective of the thesis work is to conceptualize clans, view them as socio-economic and political actors, and examine the role of clans in the political life of Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in particular. A lot of work has already been done which relates with the anthropological concepts like ethnicity, sub-ethnicity, tribe, clan, sub-clan, family and so on. Ethnicity and concept of nation state is well developed and matured in western world. In the present context the concept of kinship, tribe, clan etc. doesn't have much role in the each and every walk of life of the western countries. But in the case of most of the third world countries the imported or imposed western socio-political systems doesn't fully penetrate into the socio-economic and political horizon of the people's life.

### **Identity**

Identity entails a sameness that links individuals in a group. Identity is at root about group behaviour and group self understandings. In modern context, we can express our identity through various ways like nationality, ethnicity, and sub-ethnicity and so on. Identities are embedded in the stories we tell about ourselves individually and collectively, implied in the way individuals and groups talk and give meaning to their being, their selves, and their roles. Identities-whether gender, ethnic, religious, national, or state identity-are constrained by experiences and available possibilities and might be thought of as part of a search for a usable past and an acceptable modernity to stave of anxiety about the present and future.

National identity is a particular form of political identification. As universal as it tends to be in modern times (roughly from the eighteenth century), it neither encompasses all peoples and communities nor exists exclusively or in isolation from other competing identities. As scholars have demonstrated in the last few decades, nation is not natural or given but must be worked for, taught, and instilled, largely through the efforts of intellectuals, politicians, and activists who make the identification with the “imagined political community” of the nation a palpable and potent source of emotional and intellectual commitment.<sup>1</sup> Even still in much of the world, supranational religious or imperial affiliations coexist comfortably with sub national ethnic, local, regional, tribal, clan, and other affiliations and may work to undermine as much as to support national identities.

## **Ethnicity**

The concept of nationhood and ethnicity is developed in the modern context. The label of nationhood is getting mainly through the process of watertight territorial divisions. Ethnicity is on the other hand is generally understood to encompass differences in language, dress, religion, customs, cuisine, family patterns, and other cultural characteristics. An ethnic group is defined as a collectively within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more ‘symbolic elements’<sup>2</sup> defined as the epitome of their people hood (Schermerhorn 1970:17).

Though the term ethnicity is recent, the sense of kinship, group solidarity, and common culture to which it refers is as old as the historical record. Ethnic communities have been present in every period and continent and have played an important role in all societies. The term ‘ethnicity’ is, quite clearly, a derivative of the much older term and more commonly used adjective ‘ethnic’, which in the English language goes back to the Middle Ages. The English adjective ethnic in turn derives from the ancient Greek term ‘ethnos’, it was used as a synonym of gentile, which is non-Christian and non-Jewish pagan in New Testament Greek (Hutchinson and Smith 1996:3-4).

For convenience, we can divide the existing approaches (theories) to ethnicity into two broad camps: primordialists and instrumentalists. First come the so-called 'primordialists'. This is a term, which was first used by Edward Shils (1957) who was influenced by his readings in the sociology of religion. He sought to distinguish certain kinds of social bond- personal, primordial, sacred and civil ties-and to show how even in modern, civil societies the other kinds of social bonding persisted. It was an idea taken up by Clifford Geertz (1963), who spoke of the 'overpowering' and 'ineffable quality' attaching to certain kinds of tie, which the participants tended to see as exterior, coercive and given. It is important to note here that primordality is attributed by individuals to the ties of religion, blood, race, language and custom. Geertz suggest that the drive for an efficient, dynamic modern state interacts with the other great drives for personal identity, which is based on the 'primordial ties'.

In stark contrast to the primordialists, the 'instrumentalists' treat ethnicity as a social, political and cultural resource for different interest and status groups. One version focuses on elite competition for resources and suggests that the manipulation of symbols is vital for gaining the support of the masses and achieving political goals (Brass 1991; Cohen 1974). Another version examine elite strategies for maximizing preferences in terms of individual 'rational choices' in given situations; here it is assumed that actors generally desire goods measured in terms of wealth, power, and status, and that joining ethnic or national communities helps to secure these ends either by influencing the state or, in certain situations, through secession.<sup>3</sup> One of the central ideas of 'instrumentalists' is the socially constructed nature of ethnicity, and the ability of individuals to cut and mix from a variety of ethnic heritages and culture to forge their own individual or group identities.<sup>4</sup>

We shall call 'Ethnic Groups' of those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of custom or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration. This belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely it does not matter, whether or not an objective blood relationship exists. Ethnic membership differs from the kinship group precisely by being as presumed identity, not a group with concrete social action, like the

latter. Ethnic membership does not constitute a group; it only facilitates group formation of any kind, particularly in the political sphere. On the other hand, it is primarily the political community, no matter how artificially organized, which inspires the belief in the common ethnicity. This belief tends to persist even after the disintegration of the political community, unless drastic differences in the custom, physical type, or above all language exist among its members.

Ethnicity defines individuals who consider themselves, or are considered by others, to share common characteristics which differentiate them from the other collectivities in a society, within which they develop distinct cultural behaviour. The term was coined contra distinction to race, since although members of an ethnic group may be identifiable in terms of racial attributes, they may also share other cultural characteristics such as religion, occupation, language, or politics. Ethnic groups should also be distinguished from social classes, since membership generally cross-cuts the socio-economic stratification within society, encompassing individuals who share (or are perceived to share) common characteristics that supersede class. For example Jews in the United States thus constitute a typical ethnic group, since they include individuals of different racial origins (from east Europe to North Africa), social classes, mother tongues, political beliefs, and religious commitment (from orthodox to atheist), yet still consider themselves to share a common Jewish identity that distinguishes them from, while not necessarily placing them in opposite to, wider American society.

## **Tribe**

The term 'Tribe' usually denotes a social group bound together by kin and duty and associated with a particular territory. Members of the tribe share the social cohesion associated with the family, together with the sense of political autonomy of a nation. In *Ancient Law* (1861), Sir Henry Maine identified tribalism with a pre-civilized stage of human society, and the derogatory use of the term to denote emotional, pre-scientific, and irrational behaviour, unfortunately still lingers in the modern usage<sup>5</sup>. Tribes are rural groups that have a name and distinguish between members and non-members, which occupy a territory, and which within that territory assume either all responsibility or at

least a significant proportion of the responsibility for the maintenance of order. In as far as they assume such responsibility both internally and externally, they can be said to possess political and military functions. Under modern conditions, the state generally tries to monopolize these functions, and so it is sensible to extend the term 'tribe' even to groups which have but recently lost the capacity for political and military action, or rather have been deprived of it, but which could easily resume it if the central state slackened its hold partly because of the confrontation with larger states, some kind of tribal genealogical charter assumes almost mythical importance and is mentioned from generation to generation, making allowances, of course, for lost ancestors (Ahmed and Hart 2008).

According to Gellner (1990), where the modern nation state and Weberian rationality eventually triumph, lower-level affiliations are eclipsed as obsolescent. In his work on the Middle East, Gellner argues tribes are separate from the state apparatus; evidence of their existence is considered to be tantamount to modern state ineffectiveness. From Gellnerian perspective western education plays a central role in homogenizing previously differentiated cultures, leaving little room for alternatives. That's why Gellner doesn't see any future for supra-national and sub-ethnic identities like clan in modern political context. Grief and North (1998) in their work on the economics of collectivist cultures, concur that "pre-modern" collectivist organizations such as clans-despite their suboptimal efficiency and potential long term deleterious effects are nonetheless both rational and surprisingly durable, and that they are therefore important variables to be explained. According to Esenova (1998) the term 'tribe' originally came from *tribus* (Latin) a term denoting the three divisions of the population of Rome. This originally political term, referring, let us note, to an urban society, was revived in English in biology (especially in botany), and finally adopted as a scientific sounding term for anthropology to describe kin groups in primitive societies.

In general usage, the word "Tribe" is taken to denote a primary aggregate of peoples living in a primitive or barbarous condition under a headman or chief. Indeed it has become a technical term denoting a territorially defined political unit, a usage that recalls

the original Latin use of the word for the political divisions or political order of the Roman state. Morgan (1986) saw tribal state as having social, but not political organization, a judgment echoed by Sidgwick (1891) and some later authorities on politics. Both Morgan and Maine (1861) contrasted the territorial foundations of the modern state with what they considered to be the kinship basis of tribal societies. It is true that no one seriously questions the importance of kinship organization in most tribal societies, but the conclusion that this implies the exclusion of territorialities can no longer be maintained. Almost all sedentary tribal societies have well defined groupings based on common occupation of territory, and even where these are lacking, kinship is not coterminous with the political cohesion of tribe.

When tribesmen move out of their native society to join, however peripherally, a larger multitribal or plural society, the tribal identity that they carry with them is that of their tribal society as a whole, irrespective of whether or not it originally represented a single political unit. An interesting example is provided by the Luapula kingdom of Kazembe in Central Africa studied by Cunnison (1960). Here peoples of various tribal origins have settled and owe allegiance to the Lunda king of Kazembe and yet also retain their external ties with their tribal homelands. When tribal identity and cohesion persist outside towns, those tribesmen who move into the industrial areas in search of work do not necessarily become “detrribalized”, especially where urban conditions are insecure, the tribal townsman maintains foot in both town and country and is not unequivocally committed to urban society. Social, political and property interests ties the townsman to his rural kinsmen, whom he helps to support with his new earnings.

## **Clan**

Then what is a clan? A clan is an informal social organization in which actual or notional kinship based on blood or marriage forms the central bond among members.<sup>6</sup> Clans are identity networks consisting of an extensive web of horizontal and vertical kin based relations.<sup>7</sup> These relations are linking elites and non-elites, and they reflect both actual blood ties and fictive kinship, that is constructed or metaphorical kinship based on close friendship or marriage bonds that redefine the boundaries of genealogical unit.<sup>8</sup> A clan is a group of people, part of a larger nation or ethnic group, who claim common ancestry,

though without necessarily being able to trace of, a lineage is a localized and unified group of people who can trace links of common ancestry.

A clan may thus comprise several lineages, while clans and lineages at various levels may form a hierarchical, segmentary nesting structure. When tribe is used to denote a kinship based group, then clan is its synonym. An almost inevitable confusion arises from the two rather different meanings of an adjective 'tribal': first, with the properties of a tribe (clan) especially in the sense of kinship-based; secondly, 'composed of tribes', which are not necessarily related to each other by kinship. The statement that a group or system is 'tribal' is therefore ambiguous unless clarified by context. Historically, tribes were larger conglomerations of interrelated clans claiming to be of the same patrilineal descent line.<sup>9</sup> This belief in common descent, mythical or actual, was the source of norms, values, and symbols of kinship and tribal loyalty. Tribal groupings form confederation and in some cases ethnic groups (for example, Arabs, Kurds, or Turkmen).<sup>10</sup>

Clan members share an organizational identity and network. Norms of loyalty, inclusion of members, and exclusion of outsiders continually reinforce the kin-based identity. Norms demand reciprocity of exchange.<sup>11</sup> This also includes support for clan elites by non-elites as mentioned.<sup>12</sup> Or in other words the clan is the basis of a strong, but narrow and exclusivist social organization.<sup>13</sup> While clans are primarily affective relations offering psychological benefit for following the norms of the collectivity,<sup>14</sup> clans also include rational elements of exchange dependence-selective incentive and sanctions.<sup>15</sup> In the universe of intra-clan relationship clan elites need the support of their network to maintain their status, protect their group, and make gains within an overarching political or economic system. Non elites need clan elders and patrons to assist them in finding jobs, dealing at the bazaar, accessing education, getting loans, obtaining goods in an "economy of shortages,"<sup>16</sup> and procuring social or political advancement.<sup>17</sup>

Clan elites also resolve disputes, guarantee economic transactions, and provide security. Eventhough elites and non elites do not benefit equally from clan politics, both have incentives to maintain their bonds. Clans become increasingly important politically within weakening states when the regime is losing power. If in the west, clan politics is



the subject of an academic discussion, for many population across Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and South East Asia, clan politics propels real world challenge to governance, economic performance, and in some cases stability.

The modern world is supposed to be the arena of western style nation states which based on clearly marked territorial boundaries and either mono-ethnic or poly- ethnic in nature. But is this conception fully true? We can see that in the case of various third world countries, the concept of nation state is normally getting bypassed by numerous informal organizations based on clan and tribal values. The Central Asia and Caucasus region is the typical example for this case. Many assume that tribes existed at an evolutionary stage before the emergence of modern nation state. In the case of a tribal confederation, all members of that confederation is considered to be originated from a common ancestor. The common ancestor may be either real or imagined. Clans have their roots in a culture of kin based norms and trust that makes rational sense, particularly amid the semi-modern economies of Central Asia.

History of the Arabian Peninsula provides numerous examples of ephemeral Bedouin states which crumbled as rapidly as they appeared. When leadership arises in the tribe, its scope is very quickly likely to expand beyond the organization of pasture and water. Out of a desire to guarantee the tribe's livelihood, the leadership will attempt to gain control over either resources that are used by its members, such as supervision of transport routes and the caravan traffic, and of the market towns in which the nomads exchange their animals and produce for the products of the settlers and-trade goods. In due course the leadership of the tribes moves to the occupied towns, which then becomes the capital of a small kingdom (Rosenfield 1965: 79-85).

Under the pressure of hostile neighbours, the Bedouins are compelled to seek the patronage of a ruler or to create for themselves a political association that can match that of their enemies. The source of these pressures is not in the Bedouin tribes, but in the permanent settlement, since only it can maintain comparatively large regular military forces. When the rulers or neighbours exerted constant military or administrative pressure on any group of tribes, they compelled it to organize within a large framework and

brought the development of aggressive leadership. This was necessary both for negotiation with the powers that be and for defense against attack (Marx 1977: 349).

Bedouin tribes have come to symbolize Jordan's national identity, in contrast to Palestine's<sup>18</sup> traditionally more settled population, thus the tribal character of Jordan tends to be used to accentuate the autonomy of the two nations. Those in favour of tribalism assert that many urban Jordanians are right to feel proud of their Bedouin origins-the Bedouin ethos being an ideal to be emulated and a noble moral code to be followed.<sup>19</sup> The Bedouin virtues of group solidarity, mutual responsibility and an affinity for professional military life are also praised. While for all nations the possession of a heritage, of culture is considered crucial part of national existence, and outsider's denial of national existence (such as that of ex- Israeli Premier Ariel Sharon's) is a challenge that prompt nationalists to claim and specify the nation's possession in an effort to construct an account of the unique culture and history that attaches to and emanate from the peoples living there (Handler 1988:154). In such a context tribes have come to symbolize Jordan's national identity. The symbolization of tribes have been facilitated by the Jordanian government's policy over the last several decades to unify and integrate individual tribal identities into one broad tribal identity, that is, to promote 'Bedouinism' in a general way rather than encourage each tribe to maintain and develop its own individual identity (Layne 1989:35).

The encapsulation of tribes by more extensive political units, such as empires and nation-states, was in the past and is currently a usual phenomenon in the Middle East.<sup>20</sup> The efficiency of a single contact point makes a centralized indigenous tribal structure convenient for the encapsulating power. Furthermore, an indigenous tribal leader can, to the extent that he has traditional authority, be held responsible for the acts of his tribesmen. In the case of Shah Nawazi Baluch of Iran, before pre-pacification time (before 1935), the Chiefs, *Sardars*, was the symbolic representative of the tribe, the diplomatic representative of the tribe in relation with outsiders, and the war leader. He could make various demands upon his tribesmen for goods and services, but he had little sanctioning power and very limited control over resources. Traditionally, then, the role of Shah Nawazi Sardar was that of a central authority, but a weak one.

After pacification, the functions of *Sardar* as leader of an independent political entity declined and the role evolved into that of a middleman between the tribe and the agents representing the encapsulating Iranian state. After the tribe was encapsulated by the state of Iran, the agents of the Iranian government dealt with the *Sardar* as representative of the tribe. Government thus made use of the indigenous centralized authority structure of the tribe, in effect connecting the tribe to the administration of the state at the point of the *Sardarship*. Still, then the *Sardar* continued to represent the tribe as a corporate body, and he was treated by agencies of the government as the legitimate representative of the tribe. This arrangement facilitated accommodation between the Iranian state and the Shah Nawazi Baluch Tribe, and minimized disruption in tribal life and discontent among the tribesmen.

In contrast to the Shah Nawazi Baluch, the Yomut Turkmen of Northern Iran illustrate the converse correlation between a traditional decentralized structure and the inability of the encapsulating power, the Iranian state, to effectively rule through the use of traditional tribal roles (Irons 1971). During the initial states of encapsulation, before control was complete, the Iranian authorities attempted to use the Turkmen '*Saqlau*' as middlemen. Each *Saqlau* was provided with funds to hire armed retainers and was responsible for collecting taxes and conscripts for the government. The *Saqlau* was not an especially good middleman between the tribe and the state primarily because his was not a traditional leadership role among the Yomut; he had been a middleman between the tribes and client agriculturists. The traditional authority of the *saqlau* was limited to the sphere of raiding; *saqlau* did not collect taxes from the tribesmen or interfere ex-officio in the internal politics of his own group. When fully effective military control over the Turkmen was established by the Iranian Government, the *saqlau* lost his position as middlemen. Agents of the Iranian Government hierarchy became the representatives of the Government among the Yomut Turkmen.

In the Middle Atlas, Morocco, growing government bureaucracy has not undermined the informal village council and the legitimacy of local functionaries such as *Shaykh* or *Muqaddam*. Although official or elected bodies may formally have defacto power, in practice the village council still controls access to local resources. Hammoudi (1997)

agrees that contemporary elective institutions have increased the power of the state in the rural areas of Morocco, and clans that the central government collaborated with the rural notables, the sons of those who as *Caid* (District Officer) or *Shaykh* (Sub District Officer) during the era of the French Protectorate, acquired large parcels of land and became local strongmen. These notables now participate in the patronage network of the monarchy and state. They came to be *Cuwwad* or *Shuyukh* or members of the district council in return for collaborating with state authorities.

The overlapping determinations of history and culture can be seen in Baluchistan, where tribes coalesced around Chiefs (*Sardars*) whose authority was accepted by the descent groups that formed the primary sections. These descent groups were often unrelated to one another, but they collaborated in creating a tribal identity based on a constructed genealogy and narratives about their collective achievements. In Baluchistan politics the conditions of class formation grew out of the tributary relations between surplus-producing cultivators and locally dominant overlords who enforced their right to appropriate by providing the security necessary to irrigated agriculture. Overlord appropriation was based not on property rights in land but on the defense of vulnerable settlements in a region of chronic political instability.

Today as then, Kalat tribal organization is similar to tribal formations throughout the region in that a genealogical idiom is used to express political allegiance (Barth 1961:52; Beck 1986:174,190; Tapper 1983:64-65). Political allegiance and genealogy are ideologically linked in the concept of *shad-i-gham* (joy and sorrow), the obligation to participate in the good and the bad times, to share joy and sorrow at all levels, from the life crisis of the family to the defense of tribal land and honour. The Sardar's commitment to the tribal order had a significant ideological component as well. The Baluch tribal system was something more than a means of allocating power, status, and strategic resources. It was also an ideology of brotherhood, of the ideal relations between men. The tribes shared a common code of honour based on blood vengeance, protection of those seeking refuge, hospitality to guests, death to both parties in adultery, and women's right to petition for peace and the pardon of offence. The code assumed the

right of all men defined their honour; in this sense it was an assertion of tribal egalitarianism and autonomy (Swidler 1992:557, 562).

Pashtuns (also known as Pathans or Afghans) are the northern neighbours of the Baluch; their homeland straddles Northern Pakistan and Afghanistan. These varied people, who make up the largest tribal group in the world, span many ecological zones and include many lifestyles. Nonetheless, as a modern Pashtun writer says, “the Pashtuns are like rain sown wheat. They all came up the same day. They are all the same.”<sup>21</sup> The primary factor, which must be kept in the forefront of any analysis of Pashtun politics, is that the society was and is organized on the basis of kinship. Strictly patrilineal, the fundamental concept of the society is that all those related through a common male ancestor should stand united against outsiders. Thus, in theory, all Pashtuns of Pakistan and Afghanistan should be capable of coming together to fight invaders.

Organized in segmentary lineages, Pashtuns did not develop the institutionalized chieftaincy characteristics of Baluch tribes. Instead in Swat, Pakistan, the Pashtuns (Yusufzais) themselves were divided. Although the term Pashtun properly applies to all landholders related patrilineally, it is in fact used primarily to refer to the weaker lineages. Pashtun men whose families are powerful, who have illustrious ancestors, and who held large amounts of land relative to the rest of the villagers are called khans. The Pashtuns rely on the khan family in the neighbourhood for protection and, in return, offer deference and loyalty.

In Swat, the Pashtun is considered a part of the ‘*tul*,’ or faction, of his khan, and was formerly expected to fight on his behalf. The specialists, the fakir, and the Gujar, who do not have any rights to land since they are not lineal relatives to the Pashtuns, were granted a share in ‘*tul*’ land or produce as payment for their service. The khan family of the *tul* gave them houses, adjudicated their disputes, arranged their marriages, helped them in their feuds and, in general, acted out the obligations of a patron. The khan held great power over the landless and over the poorer Pashtun, so much so that it was common for him to take the more attractive wives and daughters of his dependents as his mistresses.

It is evident from this that, at least in the case of Swati (Yuzufzais) Pashtuns that, inspite of the egalitarian ideology of the segmentary society, social reality was hardly without distinctions of rank. The lower level Pashtun, who had little land, became retainers of the khan, while landless were his outright subjects. Aside from the machinations of the traditional leadership, a new element had begun to make itself felt in Swati politics, partly as a result of the policies of the then Pakistani Government. The new element was the poor and landless, which began taking an active and self-interested role in politics (Lindholm 1979: 486, 490, 498).

Before the changes that accompanied Russian colonization, five identity forms intersected in the Central Asian steppe: local clan divisions, limited class stratification, umbrella clans, ethnic difference and a nomad-sedentary divide. The primary level of identity before the onset of Russian colonial rule was local clans (ru). Russian colonization brought two central changes to tribal and clan politics of Central Asia. First, it brought the locus of authority increasingly to the level of the local clan. Second it intensified tribal and clan division by raising the political stake involved in claims to group membership (Schatz 2004:27, 33). Steppe region (both Kazakhstan and part of Kyrgyzstan) witnessed radical socio-economic and cultural change in the Soviet period.

In theory, one of the primary aims of Soviet rule was the creation of a “New Soviet Man” whose identity would be based on class solidarity rather than national sentiments. Socialist society was supposed to neither be rational and homogenous with neither ethnic nor class contradictions. The Soviet state undermined the nomadic economy of extensive pastoral, replacing it with large scale, motorized agriculture, extractive industries, and manufacturing. Soviets considered sub ethnicity concepts like clans are the vestiges of pre-modern feudal era and that’s why should be destroyed through inculcating modern European concepts like ethnicity, territory and nation-state into the minds of Central Asians. Therefore, Soviets criminalized the concepts of ‘clan’.

But early Soviet rule acutely politicized the sub ethnic identities. Competition among clans manifested itself most clearly during the cadre development efforts of the Soviet state and in land use debates. Attempts to turn the poor nomad against the relatively well to do members of his clan ran up against long institutionalized patterns of authority. But

clan based competition overshadowed any class based competition during the elections for cadre development (Schatz 2004:37, 38). Whereas before the Soviet period, clan identity and difference were freely established through relatively unencumbered flows of genealogical information. But in the Soviet period most Central Asians kept their clan background private at least from state agents. In the absence of obvious visible markers that provided sub ethnic differentiation, place of residence (kolkhoz) began to play a more important role. The net consequence of the Soviet project of cultural modernization was not to eliminate clans, but rather to critically diminish their public expression. Besides by offering political and economic benefits to its class allies while meting out punishments to its enemies, the Soviet state had created a strong incentive for Central Asians to express kin conflict in class terms.

In Central Asia, modern institutions were, and continue to be, a creation of the Soviet era, as statehood itself was introduced to the region in the twentieth Century. Unlike the Soviet period, however, when clan politics remained subordinated to other high stake struggles, in post-Soviet Central Asia, clan conflict flourished. When the Soviet system collapsed, clan networks based on kin or fictive kin bonds emerged as political actors. But clans were no longer the corporately defined kin groups that dealt with a wide array of cultural, social and political matters, but in the post- Soviet period, individuals used kin networks often without imagining clan as a coherent group. Modern Central Asian clans range from two thousand to twenty thousand individuals. In Modern Central Asia, clans also cross class lines. This includes support for clan elites by non-elites. Elites need the support of their network to maintain their status, protect their group, and make gains within an overarching political or economic system.

For example in the case of Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev, the President of Kazakhstan privileged his umbrella clan (elder) and extended family but at the same time he also sought to avoid a fundamental imbalance in the relative power of the three umbrella clans (elder, middle and younger). Besides the domination of the elder umbrella clan among the top elite helped to consolidate the power of Nazarbayev and his kin. Moreover an average Kazakhstani resorted to their sub ethnic connection for access to scarce economic goods rather than engaging highly competitive and risky market mechanism. In the case

of Uzbekistan, the President Islam Karimov launched a new authoritarian trajectory. But most Uzbek elites preferred a continuation of the Soviet system but without the communist ideology.

Primarily three major clan networks in Uzbekistan from Samarkand, Tashkent, and Fergana. Karimov himself is coming from the Samarkand which staunchly opposes historic Tashkent domination over other parts of the country. Karimov always tries to show he is out of any clan networks and superior to feeling and any form of clan loyalties and prejudices. At the same time Karimov is forced to accept the reality of clan networks in various walks of Uzbek life. The major battle between Karimov and different Uzbek clan factions has impeded the centralization of control over rich economic resources especially gold, oil, gas and cotton (Collins 2004: 251, 252).

In Kyrgyzstan, the ex-President Askar Akayev publicly called for discarding clan norms and adopting fair and democratic one, but later he found himself increasingly relying on clan support to keep him in power. In Kyrgyzstan, there are two broad clan groupings, referred to as wings: The Northern and the Southern. The Northern Wing contains seven clans of which most important two are the Beguu and the Sarybagysh. The ex-Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev belongs to the Sarybagysh clan. In general Southern Wing clans have been, by and large, circumvented when it comes to access to state power (Dukenbaev and Hansen 2003: 24, 25, 26). But in the case of Tajikistan, there was no understanding among clan elites during Soviet period. It resulted in disaster when it comes to post-Soviet era. During post-Soviet period each and every clan elites were trying to capture their share in each and every sphere. This restless, unhealthy competition naturally ended up in a disastrous and tiresome civil war.

Imomali Rakhmenov became the President of post-civil war Tajikistan. In reality the civil war was initiated by elites over resources not by ideology or primordial identities. At beginning Rakhmenov seems to be unprejudiced but later like any other Central Asian leader, he uses his clan first and foremost to control the key power ministries. There is no clear consensus between Rakhmenov and other clan elites. Naturally the Tajik's regime stability thus remains dependent upon Russia's continued backing. In the case of Turkmenistan, in his first decades in power, the then Turkmen President Sapramurat



Niyazov was very careful to maintain a balance of clan representation in the government. But in later years, Niyazov increasingly placed only Tekke clans (his own tribe) in key positions. Besides Niyazov is the only one Central Asian leader, who established a council of clan elders that worked in parallel to the parliament.

## **Review of Literature**

In Durkheim's (1893) work on *The Division of Labour in Society*, he considered clans are a kind of politico-familial organization in which "affinities produced by sharing a blood kinship are mainly what keeps (members) united". In this perspective clan divisions are those that exist within an ethnic group and in which demonstrable common kinship is understood to claim the membership. According to Roth and Wittich (1978), eminent social scientist Max Weber<sup>22</sup> observed over a century ago that clans were a historically common form of social organization in the nomadic and semi-nomadic regions of Eurasia, the Middle East, and parts of Africa. However Weber, like many social scientists of his time, assumed that clan network would disappear with the emergence of modern states and the rise of institutionalized politics.

According to Gellner (1990), where the modern nation state and Weberian rationality eventually triumph, lower-level affiliations are eclipsed as obsolescent. In his work on *The Middle East*, Gellner argues tribes are separate from the state apparatus; evidence of their existence is considered to be tantamount to modern state ineffectiveness. From Gellnerian perspective western education plays a central role in homogenizing previously differentiated cultures, leaving little cross for alternatives. That's why Gellner doesn't see any future for supra-national and sub-ethnic identities like clan in modern political context. Grief and North (1998) in their work on the economics of collectivist cultures, concur that "pre-modern" collectivist organizations such as clans-despite their suboptimal efficiency and potential long term deleterious effects are nonetheless both rational and surprisingly durable, and that they are therefore important variables to be explained.

According to Esenova (1998) the term 'tribe' originally came from *tribus* (Latin) a term denoting the three divisions of the population of Rome. This originally political term, referring, let us note, to an urban society, was revived in English in biology (especially in

botany), and finally adopted as a scientific sounding term for anthropology to describe kin groups in primitive societies. Stevens (1999) in her work, *“Reproducing the State”* is trying to argue that not only clans can produce state but state can shape clans also. According to author, across the southern tier of the ex-USSR, clans and states construct each other. The image that modern state need and clan operate by mutually exclusive logics, that they are situated at a fundamental separation, and that they are necessarily at odd with one another is misleading. To Stevens even kinship based divisions are reproduced by the state. Joel Migdal (2001) in his work *“State in Society: Studying how States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another”* is trying to emphasis that clans are one of the traditional social organizations that “vie for power the set rules” and affect social conflict or order in many developing societies.

Dixit (2004) uses game theory to show that “alternative” informal institutions and organizations (such as clans and mafias) support economic activity when a government is unable or unwilling to provide adequate protection. According to Edgar (2004), in a stateless, genealogically organized society, personalistic ties based on patrilineal kinship play a primary role in shaping behaviour and allegiances. Pre-Soviet Turkmen society is typical example for this. Collins (2006) through her work *“Clan Politics and Regime Transitions”* is trying to define clan that the clan is thus an informal organization built on an extensive network of kin and fictive or perceived and imagined, kinship relations. She argues, contrary to Western style of kinship, the kinship units of typical Central Asian societies in many ways embody a non-western, more expansive and fluid in nature. Here multiple individuals are connected by kin-based bonds (sometime distant and sometime immediate), with concomitant responsibilities for the members of that identity networks.

Historically the Central Asian society is divided into two categories; i. Pastoral and ii. Sedentary. Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Turkmen come under the first category and a good chunk of Uzbeks and almost all Tajiks comes under the second category. Socially Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Turkmen have tribal identity and Uzbeks and Tajiks have territorial identity. In the case of nature of the settlement area as concern the pastoral (nomadic) people spend on the steppe and desert region of Central Asia and sedentary agriculture based peasants settled on the oasis region of the Central Asia.

Soucek (2000) finds Uzbek political identity formed in fifteenth century from Uzbek Chief Muhammad Shaybani Uzbek or Shaybak Khan of Central Asia. Muhammad was a grandson Shoban, the grandson of Chengiz Khan. According to Soucek, Kipchak Turki speaking Uzbeks of that time led partly a nomadic way of life and had a tribal structure of social organization and Sunni denomination of Islam. According to Soucek this situation had been continued for the coming three hundred years even though the Uzbek elites accepted the life style of sedentary people of Central Asia in given time.

Edgar (2004) describes pre-Colonial Turkmen society was really tribal in nature. The nomadic Turkmen didn't have any powerful ruler but they were under the nominal control of Uzbek rulers of Khiva, Bukhara, Khokhand and rulers of Persia. According to Edgar, Turkmen society was more egalitarian in nature. Edgar is trying to highlight the geographical distribution of various Turkmen tribal confederacies like Tekke from Transcaspia region, Yomut from Khiva and Ersari from Bukhara through his work. Edgar argues that although various Turkmen groups claimed common ancestry, they possessed no clearly bounded territory, no common political institutions, no uniform language, and no mass culture of print and education. In short none of the trappings of the modern world.

Schatz (2004) in his work "*Modern Clan Politics*" is describing the feature of nomadic people who settled in the steppe region of Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan in particular. According to him, there were five identity forms intersected in the steppe region of Central Asia. For Schatz, the primary locus of identity before the advent of Russian colonial rule was local clans (*ru*). Similarly, he is trying to explain the origin of Kazakhs and social stratification among Kazakhs. Besides Schatz is pointing towards the geographical distribution of each umbrella clan among Kazakhs.

Abazov (2006) found it quite difficult to make out the origin of Tajik people. According to him scholars still have dispute over the origins of the Tajik people, their cultural heritage and even the origin of the word Tajik. Most Tajik scholars believe that the Tajik ancients lived in what is now Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan after about 2,000 BC. For Abazov, three different groups came together to form the Tajik nation. The first was the Persian speaking population of the Pamir Mountains and the

surrounding areas. The second was a Turkic speaking population grouped mostly in large and small cities and towns in the Syr Darya, Zeravshar, Vakhsh, and Panch river valleys. Arabs made up the third group that formed the Tajik nation. On the eve of Russian invasion Tajiks were mostly settled peasant group with more defined regional identities compared to their nomadic neighbours.

Soucek (2000) finds Kyrgyz, as a old people who originated in Western Mongolia. According to him in 540 AD the Kyrgyz destroy the Uighur kingdom on the Orkhon. Later Kyrgyz migrated west wards and occupied the mountain region which is known as Kyrgyzstan today. In the early Russian records the Kyrgyz were called *Qara Kyrgyz* (“Black Kyrgyz”). For Soucek on the eve of Russian invasion the Kyrgyz social structure was really tribal in character and pastoral in economy. Collins (2006) argues that both urban and rural/nomadic people of Central Asia, placed an enormous importance on kin and fictive kin ties, and their living patterns whether in the urban *mahalla*, the rural *qishloq* or the nomadic *aul*-were organized around effective networks into the twentieth century.

The eighteenth and nineteenth century witnessed the resurgent Russian expansion into the waste lands of Central Asia. At first Tsarist Russian forces occupied the steppe region and later oasis Muslim Khanates of Central Asia. This Tsarist Russian rule was replaced later in the second half of the second decade of twentieth century by the more powerful Soviet Communist Russian rule. This long Russian colonial rule has caused for the tremendous change in socio-economic and political life of Central Asians.

According to Olcott (1995), Russian colonization introduced two central changes to identify politics of Central Asia. First, it brought the locus of authority increasingly to the level of the local clan. Second, it intensified identity divisions by raising the political stakes involved in claim to group membership. Roy (2000) is arguing that the concept of ‘nationalism and nations’ is created in Central Asia by Stalin through the tough implementation of ‘nationality policy’. But Roy shows how the Soviet institution making had reproduced the pre-existing regional and tribal communal structure under the ‘Kolkhoz system’ and converted them into enduring networks of regionalist factionalism.

Roy is also trying to present an argument of the institutionalization of regional and clan based factionalism within the modern socialist state organization in Central Asia.

According to Edgar (2004), Soviet officials pursued two essentially contradictory policies in their attempt to eliminate “tribalism” in the Turkmen republic. The first was straightforward materialist, seeking to undermine the economic basis of descent group affiliation by dismantling existing system of collective land tenures and creating a class of poor peasants dependent on the Soviet regime. The second was the strategy of political appeasement suggested by Karklin, in which Soviet authorities would attempt to provide equitable treatment to all genealogical groups. For Schatz (2004) Soviet rule deeply transformed sub-ethnic affiliations in Central Asia. But at the same time the modernization project which introduced during Soviet rule in part to eradicate clan divisions helped to contribute to their ongoing importance.

For Starr (June 2006), a paradoxical result of the Soviet colonial system is that it transformed local power brokers and clan leaders into civic and even national leaders. According to him clan and local interests differ sharply within each country. Various leaders gained legitimacy because the local power brokers supported them. According to Collins (2006), Russian conquest of Central Asia brought this region into contact with modernity, emphasizes the Russian colonial administration’s focus on economic exploitation and its policy of ignoring Islam and other traditional identities. So long as nothing interfered with Russia’s economic and geopolitical control, Russia was not interested in social transformation until the Soviet era. Collins continues, under the Soviet regime, the communist party’s colonial like rule of Central Asia more often reinforced than undermined traditional kin and clan identities.

The Soviet Union got disintegrated in 1991 and all Central Asian republics of the erstwhile Soviet Union became independent countries. All these new Central Asian republics were formed on the basis of ethnicity in a typical western manner. This new ethnic nationalities were already created during Stalin’s period. But when these countries got independent all the concealed or suppressed identities or social symbols were coming into the forefront. Informal institutions like clan, kinship network etc. became most important among them.

According to Esenova (1998), all of modern day Kazakh consider the tribal division among Kazakhs as part of Kazakh history, a part which was less touched by the soviet falsification of the history of the national minorities and best known by the people, and which should be for future generations. Through his work Zhukov (2000), addresses the economic development of Central Asia in the 1990s. He considers, this was an era of 'incredible incomprehensible economic catastrophe'. Moreover Zhukov provides a thorough analysis of the problems of the Central Asian republics in adapting to the global world economy, and describes the peculiarities of economic development for each individual state in Central Asia. Besides in short he also seems to be convinced that 'factors of a global order prevail over specific local traditions, but at the same time, each of the Central Asian republics has offered its own response to the challenges of globalization. For Edgar (2004) the concept of "Turkmeness" and belief in the shared ancestry is basis of the modern Turkmen nation, so called Turkmenistan. He also highlights genealogy is the most important factor in one's identification as a Turkmen, but it was not the only factor. In order to be a "real Turkmen", one also had to lead a Turkmen way of life.

Schatz (2004) doesn't see any form of artificially created identities like Soviet internationalist, Kazakh ethno-nationalist and class based identities can supplant kinship divisions. Besides Schatz argues that Stalin replaced one mechanism for reproducing clans (nomadic pastoralism) with another (shortage economy). Similarly the actions of the Post-Soviet state have served to sustain clan relations. According to Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Fact book (2004), in analyzing the internal political and socio-economic situation in Kyrgyzstan, its foreign policy, and the evolution of civil society institutions, it is important to take into account Kyrgyz peculiarities. Some of them are intrinsic to the Kyrgyz community since the tribal stage of its evolution. One of these key features is the clannish nature of Kyrgyz society and Kyrgyz statehood. In Kyrgyzstan, just like in any Central Asian country, clannishness is an important factor but still not a core principle of social structure. TH-17603

From Collin's (2006) perspective although the Soviet State attempted to modernize Central Asia by eliminating clans, twelve years after independence all five Central Asian

States are increasingly pervaded by clan networks. According to him where bureaucracies cannot adequately provide basic social services, an “economy of shortages” prevails and efficient markets are lacking. Informal institutions like clan thus fill the gap as networks for social, economic and political exchange. From Ilkhamov’s (2007) point of view in the Post-Soviet context, various informal aspects of power relations is identified and articulated through the notion of clan network, often considered as a source of state corruption. According to him ‘clanovist’ is still being blamed from public tribunes in newly independent states and treated as a threat to the rule of law and the integrity of the state. He also take into account that the creation of “clan” and patronage networks often make sense only if they help to gain privileges and resources associated with state power. For Ilkhamov, Central Asian leaders are trying to show they are above the rule of clan relations and quite independent from its influence. But at the same time they are encouraging their close associates to form various clan equations and cleverly use it for the protection of their own self interests.

### **Definition, Rationale and Scope of the Study**

The concept of clan is a primordial identity which has been existed from pre-modern times. It is generally accepted that human society is developed into present level by stages through a process of evolution. At beginning human society showed the character of a chief centered tribal society with more egalitarian principles. Then agriculture based feudal society came into being. The present or modern territory and ethnicity based nation state oriented society came much later. This evolution process happened in the case of almost all parts of world but with varying degrees based on its civilization development. But, remember, not all present societies exactly follow the evolutionary stages of tribal society, feudal society and state society especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and Greater Middle East including Central Asia.

In the case of Sub-Saharan Africa and Greater Middle East with some exception almost all present day nation states of region jumped directly from chief centered tribal chiefdom to modern day western style nation state. The Thesis is mainly going to deal with the primordial tribal identity which is still prevalent in Central Asia is known as clan. This thesis is more concentrating on the political role of clans in Central Asia especially in

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Simply put, then, a clan is an informal organization comprising a network of individuals linked by kin and fictive kin identities. These effective ties comprise the identity and bonds of its organizations. Kinship ties are rooted in the extensive family organization that characterizes society in Central Asia and in tribal societies world over. "Fictive Kinship" ties go beyond blood ties and incorporate individuals into the network through marriage, family alliance, school ties, localism, neighbourhood and village. In Central Asian context, the strength of the modern clan membership is in between two thousand to twenty thousand in number. As compared to past, the modern Central Asian clans are quite smaller in size.

Rationality of the thesis is that even though nation states often tried to hide or tried to suppress the existence of primordial institutions in their socio-political and economic system, it clearly seems to appear that most of the third world countries especially Asian and African countries are still directly or indirectly supporting the existence of various primordial institutions in their newly adopted western socio-political and economic structure. At the same time, these countries also adopted various modern western institutions for their survival like universally accepted western notions of modernity and nation state. But still nation states of Afro-Asian region in general and Central Asian region in particular is behaving quite differently from its western counterparts. Through, thorough understanding of the working mechanism of social system like clan in Central Asian region, the understanding of various underlying mechanisms in the social, political and economic spheres of Central Asia and its influence on their policy making, is quite easy to understand. Very few researchers are trying to make out or identify this research problem. Relevance and scope of the thesis is mainly lying here.

Even though western scholars are conducting quite serious research on various issues of Central Asian region very few researchers are trying seriously to deal with the unnoticed issues like connection between primordial social organizations and politics in the present day Central Asia. Western anthropologists did some great works in nineteenth century and early decades of twentieth century, due to an excitement about the study of a strange society totally different from their own. The lack of proper understanding of the character of the societies of non-western world in general and Central Asian region in particular is



creating a great problem for various western dominated International Organizations like United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and International Peace Keeping Forces (IPKF) in the case of solving various political dilemmas, which are facing the region.

For example continuous call by western powers and UN for western style liberal democratization in Central Asian countries including Afghanistan. But most of the Central Asians, except a few western educated elites, are considering that western institutions are totally strange to their own culture and civilization and westerners are trying to impose these institutions over them for protecting vested interests of their own. This clear communication gap led to the further alienation of Central Asians from other parts of the world and their further move towards the various forms of radicalism like from ultra nationalism to militant Islam. Only through the proper understanding of socio-political working mechanism of this part of world, the International community can deal with the various burning Central Asian issues like one in Afghanistan. Moreover the various dynamics of clan will help to explain the social foundations of order/disorder in Central Asia, and will help us to think about the factors driving negative political trajectories in similar societies.

## **Objectives**

These are the objectives of study:

- Identify the various forms of informal organizations existing in Central Asian countries.
- Assess the influence of clan and tribal system over pre-Colonial Central Asian society.
- Analyze the various structural and operational difference happened to the 'clan organization' during Soviet period.
- Assess the various socio-economic and political roles of clans in everyday life of post-Soviet Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in particular.

- Try to understand the relationship between the Central Asian Government policies and role of clan networks over it with special focus on Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

## **Research Questions**

- What is the character of pre-Colonial Central Asian Society?
- Has Russo-Soviet invasion caused for a fundamental change in the various informal organizations of Central Asia including clan system? If it is and then how?
- Why did radical steps which had taken by the Soviet Empire become quite successful in other regions but a failure in Central Asian context?
- How did clan mechanism work during Russo-Soviet period in general and Soviet period in particular?
- What is the attitude of post-Soviet Central Asian Governments in general and Kazakh and Kyrgyz Governments in particular towards various informal organizations, especially clans?
- How come post-Soviet Central Asian clan system differs from pre-Colonial Central Asian clan system?
- Are clans and clan networks still having a role in socio-economic and political life of Central Asia especially in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan? If it is then how and why?

## **Hypotheses**

These research questions will be answered by testing the following hypotheses:

- Central Asian society is traditionally clan and tribal based with quite strong kinship and family relationship.

- Tsarist-Soviet empires and post-Soviet governments failed miserably in case of the dissolution of various informal social organizations of Central Asia, especially clans.
- The social organization of clan still has a major role in socio-economic and political life of Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in particular by either direct means or indirect means.

### **Research Methodology**

The proposed study will be based on historical, empirical and analytical review of data, collected from both primary and secondary sources. As far as secondary sources are concerned, the data and information will be collected from the existing literature-books, published articles and news from various magazines and Internet sites. Seminars and Project Reports by eminent researchers and scholars will also be consulted. For primary sources, data will be collected from government documents, texts of various acts and speeches. A theoretical framework will also be developed on the basis of existing theories of sociology, anthropology, political science, particularly theories of identity, clan, tribe, ethnicity, informal organizations, and authoritarian states and so on.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> See Gellner, Ernest (1983), *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell; Anderson, Benedict (1991), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso Publications; Smith, Anthony D (1986), *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell; and Hobsbawm, E.J (1990), *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Symbolic elements are: kinship patterns, physical contiguity, religious affiliation, language or dialect forms, tribal affiliation, nationality, phenotypical features, or any combination of these.

<sup>3</sup> See Banton, Michael (1983), *Racial and Ethnic Competition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>4</sup> Bhabha, Homi (eds) (1990), *Nation and Narration*, London and New York: Routledge; Cohen, Abner (1969), *Custom and Politics in Africa*; and Cohen, Robin (1994), *Frontiers of Identity: The British and the Others*, London: Longman.

<sup>5</sup> See Marshall, Bordon (1994), *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, New York: Oxford University Press, p.674.

<sup>6</sup> See Collins, Kathleen (2003), "The Political Role of Clans," *Comparative Politics*, 35(2):173-74.

<sup>7</sup> See Edgar, Adrienne (2001), "Genealogy, Class, and Tribal Policy in Soviet Turkmenistan, 1924-1934," *Slavic Review*, 60(2): 266-88; Roy, Olivier (2000), *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*, New York: New York University Press.

<sup>8</sup> Anthropologists and historians argue that "fictive kinship"- ties through marriage, family friends, religious circles, and close business or political relations is an essential element of kinship and clan. Marriage and political/business ties often overlapped, thus extending the family circle.

<sup>9</sup> See Hourani, Albert (1990), "Tribes and States in Islamic History," in Phillip Khoury and Joseph Kostiner (eds.) *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.303-304.

<sup>10</sup> Tapper, Richard (1990), "Anthropologists, Historians, and Tribes people on Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East," in Phillip Khoury and Joseph Kostiner (eds.) *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.52-53.

<sup>11</sup> See Humphrey, Caroline and David Sneath (1999), *The End of Nomadism?* Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, pp.26-27.

<sup>12</sup> See Shryock, Andrew (1997), *Nationalism and the Genealogical Imagination*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 40-41, 318.

<sup>13</sup> See Gibson, James (2001), "Social Networks, Civil Society, and the Prospects for Consolidating Russia's Democratic Transition," *American Journal of Political Science*, 45:53.

<sup>14</sup> See Elster, John (1990), "Rationality and the Emotions," *Economic Journal*, 106:1389-90.

<sup>15</sup> See Chong, Dennis (2000), *Rational Lives*, Chicago: University of Chicago press.

<sup>16</sup> See Kornoi, Janos (1991), *The Socialist System*, Cambridge, Harvard: Harvard University Press.

<sup>17</sup> See Padgett, John and Christopher Ansell (1993), "Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400-1434," *American journal of Sociology*, 98: 1267.

<sup>18</sup> Transjordan and Palestine (today Jordan, Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip) were part of the same British mandate and although they had separate governments, geography and British political and military strategy contributed to a close political and economic relationship between Transjordan and Palestine throughout the mandate period (1920-48).

<sup>19</sup> One of Jordan's senators defended tribalism on religious grounds saying, "I believe in the righteous tribal traditions, for God said in his Sacred Book, 'we created you peoples and tribes' not parties and classes."

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Quoted in Layne, Linda L (1989), "The Dialogics of Tribal Self-Representation in Jordan," *American Ethnologist*, 16(1):27.

<sup>20</sup> See Salzman, Philip Carl (1974), "Tribal Chiefs as Middlemen: The Politics of Encapsulation in the Middle East," *Anthropological Quarterly*, 47(2): 204-05.

<sup>21</sup> See Khan, Ghani (1958), *The Pathans, A Sketch*, Peshawar: University Book Agency, p.57.

<sup>22</sup>See Weber, Max (1978), "The Origins of Ethnic Groups" in Roth Gunther and Claus Wittich (eds.) *Economy and Society, vol.1*, pp. 389-95.

***CHAPTER-2***  
***CLAN AND POLITICS IN CENTRAL ASIA***

## CHAPTER-2

### CLAN AND POLITICS IN CENTRAL ASIA

The so-called “clans” that dominate the invisible politics of Greater Central Asia (including Afghanistan) can be divided into three groups<sup>1</sup> : First, the formerly nomadic peoples, Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, and Turkmens, are composed of large kinship system that are in turn subdivided into lower units culminating in individual families. The three Kazakh “hordes” or zhuzes extended deep into Xinjiang and embrace all people calling themselves Kazakh. Analogous groupings divide northern and southern Kyrgyz. The next lowest level in both peoples can fairly be called a “tribe” or “clan”. Second, are the regional networks that exist in every country. Based on close economic and political ties and accent (in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan also on language) these regional networks are extremely powerful, reflecting the diverse emirates and local power centers of earlier centuries. The largest of these, acting alone (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan) or in alliance with another regional power center (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan), have long dominated the politics of each country. The third source of political power in Central Asia derives from control of resources. In pre-Soviet times this meant the emir’s control of irrigation system. Today, it means control of whole sectors of the economy, whether cotton, power, mineral extraction, construction, or transport. The influence of some of the business magnates often overlaps or merges with regional power centers or even kinship groups.

#### **The Rise of a Tribal State: Afghanistan**

Tribal groups in Iran and Afghanistan are conventionally viewed as historically inveterate opponents of the state. They were notorious as makers and breakers of dynasties, while both countries were ruled by dynasties of tribal origin until the twentieth century. Historically in these countries, group defined by a wide range of different criteria have been called “tribes”. In general, tribal group commonly comprise several levels of organization, from camp to confederation. The writers of

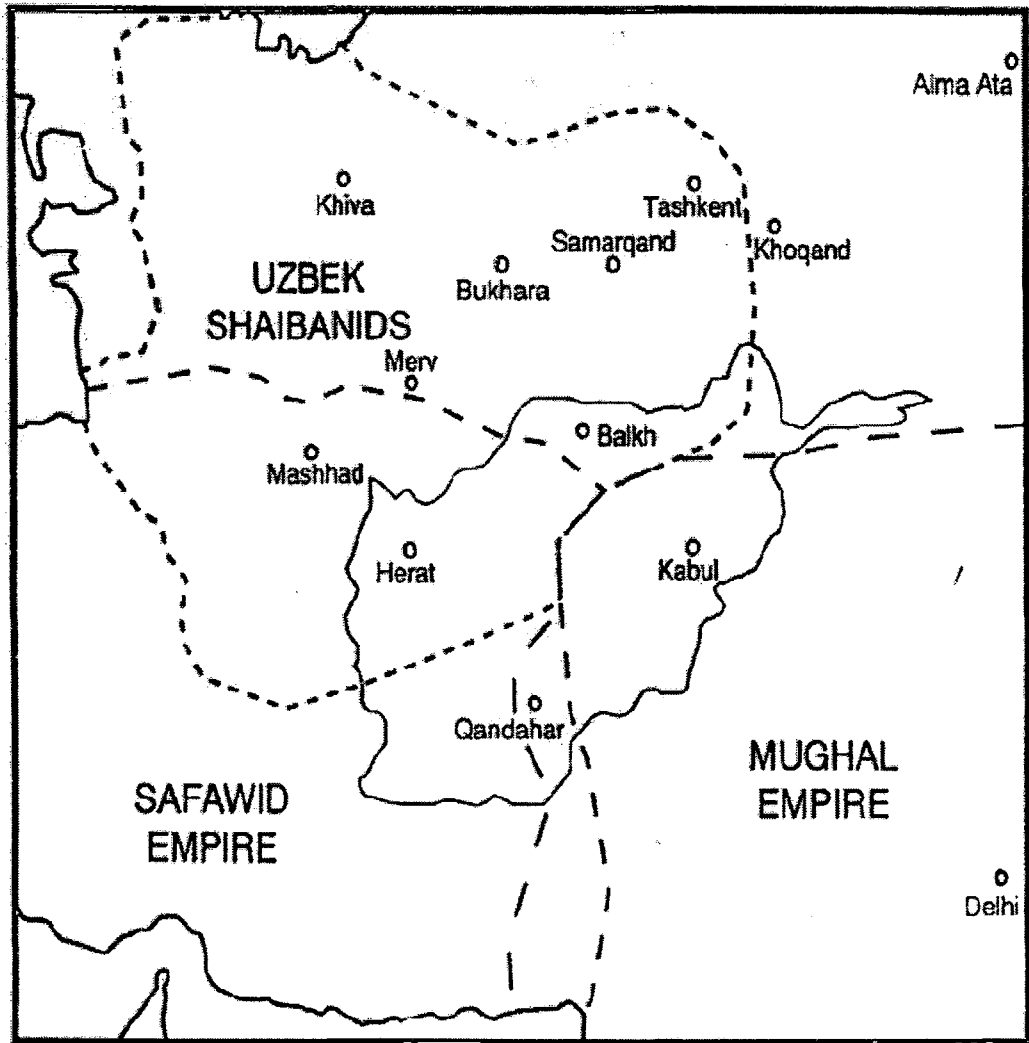
nineteenth and twentieth century projected tribal society are just opposite to settled urban society of the civilized Islamic world. While the city was considered as the source of government, order and productivity, the tribes had a natural tendency to rebellion and destruction, a tendency which might relate to the starkness of their habitat and its remoteness from the sources of civilization, and also to the underemployment inherent in their way of life (Tapper 1983:6). Helfgott (1977), whose main study has been of the rise of the Qajars, argues that the Iranian state was composed of two or more separate but linked 'socio-economic formations'. Apparently extrapolating from the Basiri tribe of the modern era, Helfgott characterizes Iranian tribes as pastoral nomadic kinship based chiefdoms that, form closed economic systems; such nomadic socio-economic formations are distinct from but in constant relation with the settled agricultural and urban formations.<sup>2</sup>

In both Iran and Afghanistan the urban centers were dominated by Persian language and civilization, which often proved stronger in the long run than invading tribal cultures. Afghan tribes are renowned as hardy, independent, warlike mountaineers, farming barren fields and rigorous if not fanatical in their devotion to Islam. The tribes of Iran by contrast are supposedly pastoral nomads, organized into strong centralized confederacies under powerful and aristocratic chiefs, and notorious for their ignorance of and indifference to Islam<sup>3</sup>. The eighteenth century witnessed the rise of Pashtuns as a major political power of Central Asia, Iran and South Asia. From, then the Pashtuns turned from the role of mercenaries to powerful rulers. This century also witnessed the decline of two powerful empires of the region: the Safawid of Persia and the Great Mughals of India (see Map 2.1). Similarly the confusion of the era caused for the formation of new political entity in the region: The Afghan Empire under powerful Pashtun confederation: The Durranis.

The Ghilzais, another powerful Pashtun tribal confederation, made last struck to the dying, once mighty, Safavid Empire. The Safavid capital, Isfahan fell in 1722 to advancing Mahmud Ghilzai and his Afghan tribesmen. Ghilzai ruled Persia up to 1729. Later Ghilzais fell prey to the all conquering Turkmen warlord Nadir Shah Afsar<sup>4</sup> of Northern Iran. Ghilzais were forced to return to their homeland but only for accepting the suzerainty of reemerged Persia under Nadir Shah. Having deposed his Safavid puppet, Nadir broke away from the precedents of Safavid dynasty, and



**MAP 2.1: THE SAFAWID, MUGHAL AND UZBEK EMPIRES IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY**



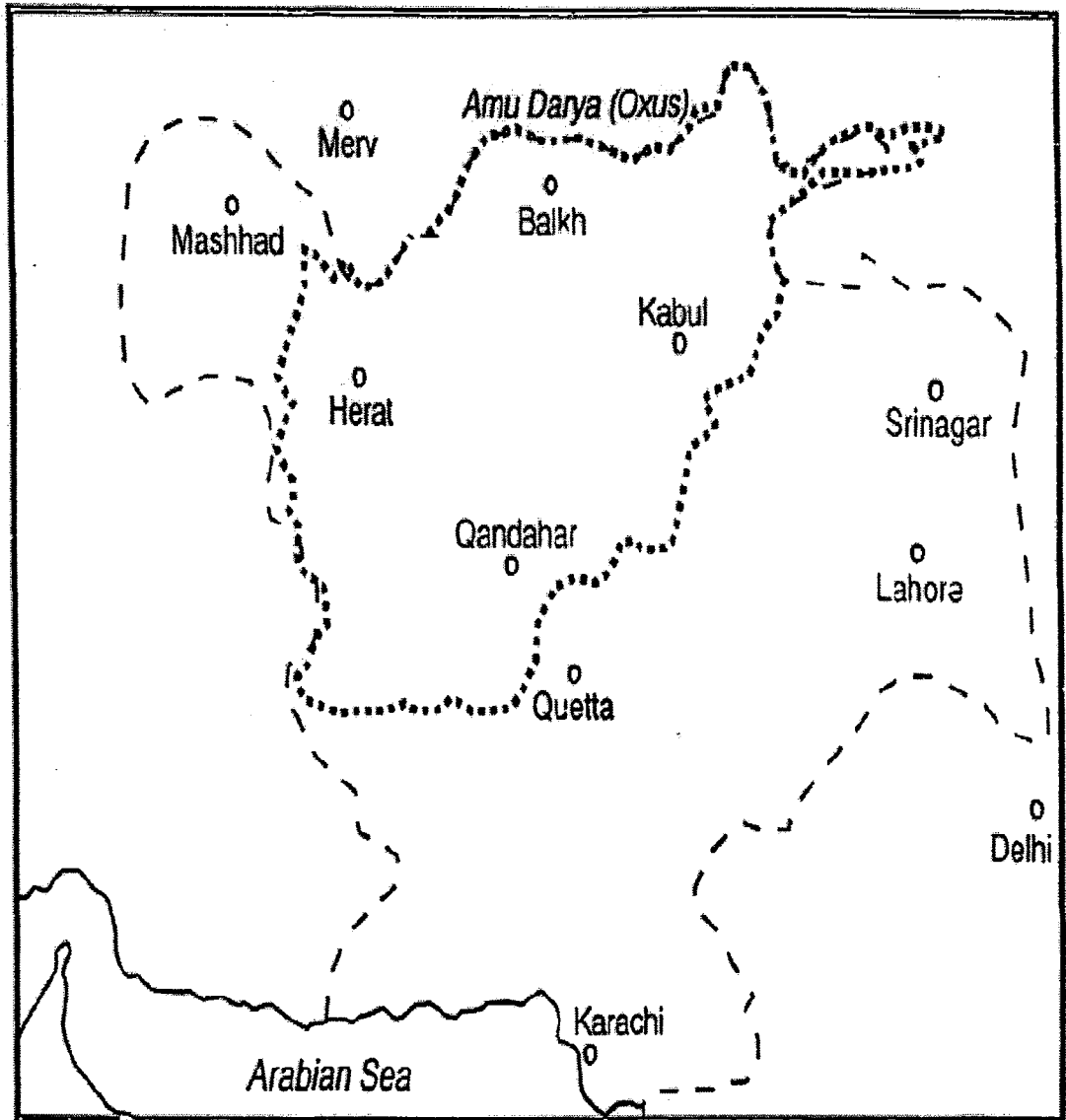
Source: Olesen 1995

establishing new empire's capital at Mashhad in Khurasan, and favouring Sunni tribal groups such as Afghans and Turkmens. The new Persian Empire saw its demise after the death of Nadir in 1747. Nadir's empire got disintegrated and the eastern half, and much of his treasures, fell to his trusted Afghan general, Ahmad Khan Abdali<sup>5</sup>, a minor Durrani Khan from Kandahar. The Pashtuns who were in support of the Nadir Shah followed the footsteps of their forefathers. They left Iran and again found refuge in their hilly, inaccessible, tribal homeland but this time for the carving of new political entity for themselves at the expense of others.

Ahmad Khan of the less powerful but more aristocratic Sadozai Popalzai tribe was elected leader by Jirga. The wonderful and continuous exploits of Ahmad Shah brought unity among warlike Pashtuns especially among his own men, the Durrani. Ahmad Shah's government was essentially tribal and feudalistic in that tribal leaders were confirmed in their possession of lands and the main offices of state were distributed among the different tribes. Ahmad Shah moreover consulted with a council of nine tribal chiefs. The Sadozai Afghan Empire stretched to the Indus in the east and nominally included Kashmir, Turkistan (south of the Oxus) and much of Baluchistan but not Badakshan and Kafiristan yet (see Map 2.2). But by 1800 both Sadozai Popalzai rule and Pashtun imperial pretensions were rapidly fading<sup>6</sup>. The first quarter of the century was marked by intense rivalry between the Sadozai Popalzai and Muhammadzai Barakzai branches of the Durrani. Ahmad Shah's son Timur Shah and his grand sons Zaman Shah (1793-1800), Shah Mahmud (1800-03, 1809-18) and Shah Shuja (1803-09) alternated on the throne at Kabul, until the last Sadozai ruler Shah Shuja was forced into exile in India by the Muhammadzai Faith Khan, grandson of charismatic Hajji Jamal. At the same time Shah Mahmud was driven off to Herat<sup>7</sup>. The Muhammadzai, who since Hajji Jamal's time had been the most powerful tribal faction in the empire, now formally took over control.

Dost Muhammad, the youngest brother of Fatih Khan Muhammadzai eventually consolidated the Afghan provinces. Dost Muhammad made up the loss of revenue from the east<sup>8</sup> by forcing non-Durrani tribes into payment of back taxes. At the same time Dost Muhammad cultivated the support of the frontier tribes such as Mohmand and Yusufzai, and paid subsidies to the Khyber tribes, continuing the practice of his predecessors since Nadir Shah. The Dost Muhammad Khan's court at Kabul

**MAP 2.2: THE EMPIRE OF AHMAD SHAH DURRANI**



Source: Olesen 1995

resembled a tribal council. The non-Barakzai Durrani maintained their privileges jealously, but Amir challenged the non- Durrani especially Ghilzai at Ghazni; and he claimed sovereignty over the frontier tribes, though new masters of India, the British is not ready to accept this claim. Amir Abdulrahman Khan, The Grandson of Dost Muhammad Khan was the first Afghan Amir seriously tried to break the power of the tribes, using a mixture of force, alliances, reprisals, bribes and intrigues. Amir reduced many independent tribes to order, broke some and scattered them around the country, destroying their strong holds. Ghilzais faced his wrath more than anyone. But Amir Abdurrahman failed to extend his authority over the frontier tribes, in the face of their own resistance as well as the continuing British policy of using them as buffer.

Abdulrahman's successor, Amir Habibullah established a council of state for tribal affairs, and other measures to allow the will of the tribal leaders to be felt. But Amir Amanullah was not ready to follow the footsteps of his forbearers. Due to the influence of the Ataturk of Turkey and other western rulers Amanullah tried to walk far ahead of his countrymen especially of his fellow Afghan tribesmen<sup>9</sup>. This led to the disastrous ouster of Amanullah from power by a Tajik usurper from Panjshir Valley known in Afghan history as Bacha I Saqau<sup>10</sup>. Another branch of Mohammadzais known as Musahiban family<sup>11</sup> under Nadir Khan recaptured Kabul from Panjshiri Tajiks with the help of ferocious border tribes of the then Indo-Afghanistan border. This family ruled up to 1978, year which witnessed the takeover of power by Afghan communists with the support of Soviet Union.

### **Ethnic Groups of Afghanistan: A Nineteenth Century Setting**

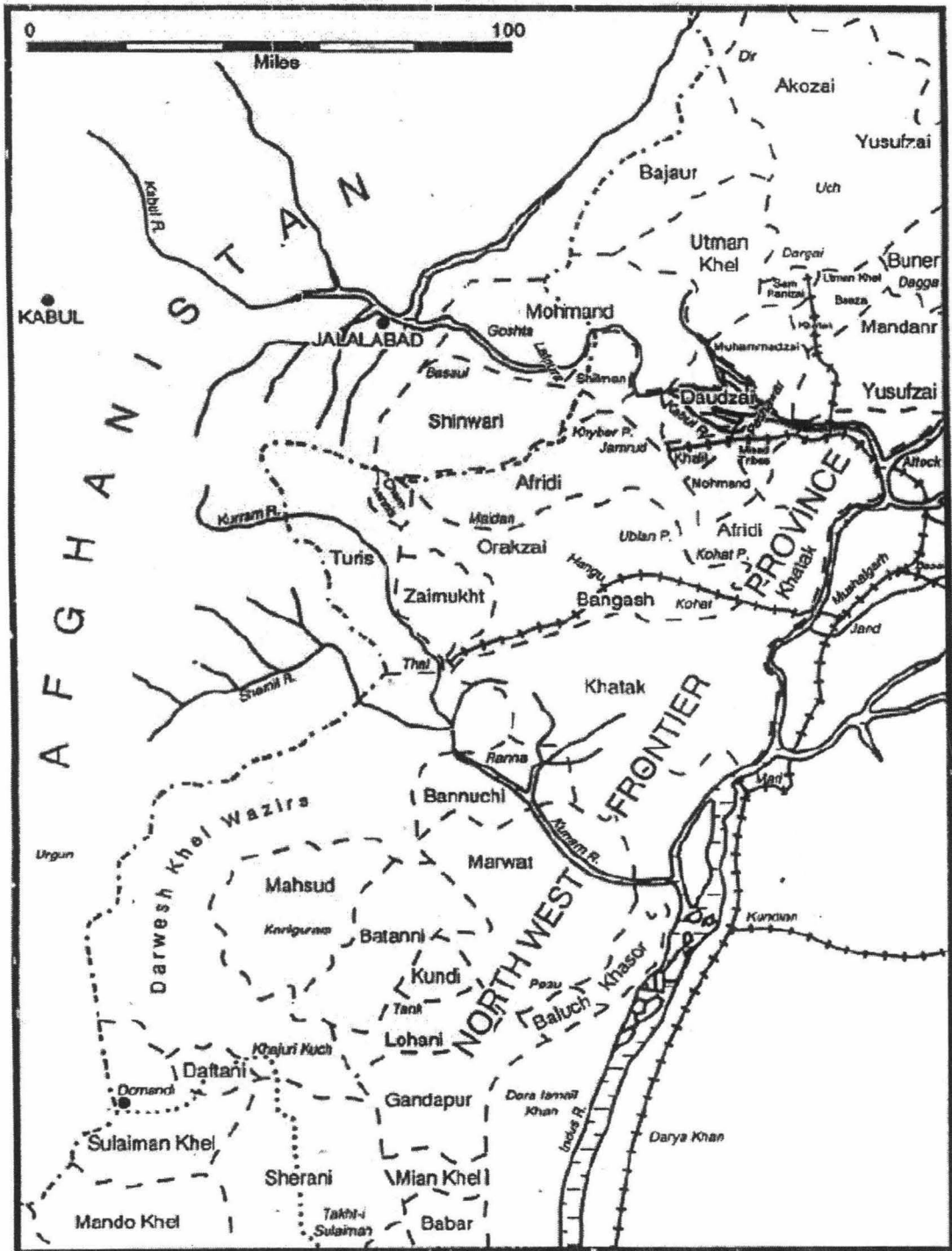
'Afghanistan entered the nineteenth century a politically disunited, ethnically and religiously heterogeneous tribal-feudal state' (Gregorian 1969:51). The dominant Durrani (with their component tribes Nurzai, Ishaqzai, Alizai, Atsakzai (Achakzai), Barakzai, Popalzai, Alikozai) (see Appendix 2.1) occupied the south western region from Herat to Farah, Kandahar and Kalat-I Ghilzai. Between these last two places they mingled with their rivals, the Ghilzai (with their major tribes Suleiman Khel, Hotaki, Kharoti, Andor, Taraki, Tokhi) (see Appendix 2.2), whose lands were mainly around Ghazni as far as Kabul. South of the Durrani and Ghilzai were the Kakar,

while near Kabul were other settled Pashtun groups: Wardak, Safi. The Eastern Pashtuns mainly conducting irrigated farming included the Mohmand, Yusufzai and related tribes of Peshawar and Swat and other valleys to the north. In the mountains to the south were the highlanders, later famous as the 'Frontier Tribes': Afridi, Orakzai and Shinwari of the Khyber; south of them the Khatak and Bangash, and the Jaji and Jardan of Khost; towards Baluchistan, the Wazir and Mahsud (see Map 2.3).

In the vicinity and hinterland of Herat, near the disputed frontier with Iran, were the Persian speaking Chahar Aymaq tribes: Timuri, Jamshidi, Firuzkuhi, Taymani, Qala-I Nou Hazaras and many smaller groups, mixed farmers and semi nomads for the most part. To the north and east, in Turkistan south of the Oxus, were the lands occupied by various Turkmen groups and the Uzbek tribes and khanates, only nominally in submission to Kabul; nomads included Turkmens, Uzbeks and Arabs, while most Uzbeks and the non-tribal Tajiks were settled in villages and towns. In the high mountains of the centre of the realm, east of the Aymaqs, were the Persian speaking Shiite Hazara, still to a large degree autonomous, as were the numerous unsubdued pagan tribes of Kafirstan in the even higher mountains further to the east. The rest of the population of the eastern areas near Kabul and to the north were mostly non-tribal Tajiks, though in Kabul itself there was also a substantial group of Shiite Qizilbash, remnants of Nadir Shahs tribal forces from Iran, mainly of Turkic origins. In arid Makran and Sistan, in a relation of partnership rather than allegiance to Kabul, were the numerous but scattered Baluch and Brahui tribes, mainly pastoral nomads.

Durrani and Ghilzai territory included extensive pastures and some irrigated farmlands, suited to mixed farming; many of the tribesmen were pastoral nomads, many were settled farmers, and substantial numbers combined two (Tapper 1983:17). Almost all frontier tribes conducted a marginal agriculture, irrigated where possible (especially to the north and around the Khyber area), but mostly rain-fed. In short within the Durrani Kingdom, where the pastures were dominated by the Pashtun nomads, who could claim ethnic and political identity with the rulers, pastoral nomadism could not be the refuge of subordinate political groups that it was in Iran (Tapper 1983:44). Afghan rulers were more dependent on the main tribal chiefs than were the Shahs of Iran, but neither rulers nor chiefs kept close links with nomadic elements among their followers. Politically important tribal groups, at least until

MAP 2.3: THE AFGHAN BORDER TRIBES



Source: Wylly 1912

twentieth century, were almost all nomadic or semi nomadic, their importance related to their potential, when united by a strong leader, for raising bodies of cavalry. In tribal situations there are opportunities for successful brigands to collect followers and challenge states or their appointed agents. By the twentieth century, egalitarianism and dependence of authority had been historically validated long enough to have become central elements in the 'pashtunwali' ideology dominant in the frontier.

### **The Pashtuns: King's Men**

Of all tribal groups in Afghanistan and Iran, the Pashtuns had perhaps the most pervasive and explicit segmentary lineage ideology on the classic pattern, perpetuated not only in written genealogies but also in the territorial framework of tribal distribution. Among Pashtuns during the nineteenth century there were three main socio-political forms<sup>12</sup>. One involved marginal agriculture or pastoralism, practiced in remote mountain valleys and producing little surplus; probably there was regular short fall, made up by trading or raiding or long distance labour migration, egalitarian, communal social forms flourished among independent tribal groups, fierce in their defense of territory but rarely persuaded to campaign far away. Typical were North West frontier groups such as Afridi, Mohmand, Wazir often regarded as living closest to the principles of 'Pashtunwali'.

Another type, equally remote from urban centers but inhabiting more favoured, well-watered valleys where agriculture was capable of producing a large surplus, exhibited social stratification, usually with a leisured class of martial Pashtuns owing the land and independent groups working it: the best known example is Yuzufzai of the Swat<sup>13</sup>. A third, intermediate form was found in areas where agriculture was reasonably productive; here the influence of the state produces a feudalistic, Asiatic form of stratification, involving a chiefly class with limited powers, a broad mass of tribes people, and a sizeable substratum of dependants. Many Durrani groups were of this type<sup>14</sup>.

The ruling elite of Afghanistan up to 1978 was ethnically, and to a certain extent even genealogically, closely related to those Pashtun tribes to which the bulk of Afghan nomads belong (Glatzer 1983: 212). Richard Tapper has stated, 'Afghan tribalism has not on the whole been based on pastoralism or nomadism.....politically active

(‘troublesome’) tribes were more often settled villagers or traders than pastoral nomads<sup>15</sup>.

Nomad groups as particular social and political entities sharply distinct from sedentary groups, without neglecting the fact that pastoral nomadism in Afghanistan (as elsewhere) is only part of the local rural economy. Political organization of nomads in Afghanistan tends to be egalitarian unless either the nomads are forced to react to political pressure from neighbours or the state itself imposes institutions of power and authority on the nomads or strengthen existing political positions such as the *Khan* or *Malik*, whose functions were previously more representative than authoritative. After economic and close kinship, there is a third principle of social organization: the tribal or clan system, based on a national genealogy. While this tribal or clan system permeates the thinking of the Pashtun nomads, it plays the least important role in their social group formation. Pashtuns believe they are patrilineal descendants of one common ancestor, Qays Abd al- Rashid or Khaled Baba or Daru Nika<sup>16</sup>.

The genealogical clan system is not the social system of the Pashtun nomads, nor is it merely an ideology. The majority of the Pashtuns are settled, and there is no vital evidence that they have ever been nomads to a larger extent than they have been recently. Therefore, this genealogical clan system is a pattern of settled people and was developed among peasants, not nomads (Salzman 1978: 618-37). In theory, Pashtun nomads can also use their clan model for recruiting raiding parties or groups united for aggression and natural defence, as Sahlins has suggested for segmentary lineage systems in general (Sahlins 1963: 322-43). The office of *Malik* carries no power or authority among Pashtuns, neither in its traditional nor in its state approved form. The task of *Malik* is to represent his group or clientele in its relation with the outside, especially with the state.

When *Maliks* are powerful, it is because they possess strength of character, wealth, numerous relations, influence with government and, last of all, birth (Robinson 1935: 8). The *Khan* is a politically more important office. Although one person can be *Malik* and *Khan* at the same time, the offices should be clearly separated. *Khan* alone means as powerful, politically influential person. The *Khan* is not an institutional political



office. To be a Khan is rather a quality that, in principle, any man can acquire. The Khan performs for the tribe the public services of representing and mediating between groups so as to build more inclusive unities within the tribe. The Khan's role of broker with the empire can be adorned with imperial titles and honours which add to his prestige and charisma within the tribe; at the same time he becomes adept in manipulating the metropolitan culture.<sup>17</sup>

Ahmad Shah however was following egalitarian Pashtun tradition, as he was only a *primus inter pares* ('Dur-I Durran' or 'pearl among pearls'), and could hold the loyalty of his followers only by his continuous success in war (Caroe 1958: 255). The nomads tend to reside in thinly-populated steppe and mountain regions, where the influence of the state authorities is weakest. The egalitarian organization of Pashtun nomads cannot be explained by nomadism alone, since nomad Pashtuns are only part of a mainly sedentary ethnic group, and sedentary Pashtuns show very similar egalitarian tendencies. In June 1886 Abdulrahman was quoted as saying, 'it is proper that as the king is an Afghan, his tribesmen the Afghans should guard the frontiers.'<sup>18</sup> Three related considerations prompted the Amir's policy of encouraging Pashtun migration to the north-west: Russian moves in Central Asia, the ethnic diversity and hostility of the population of the Afghan border lands, and the economic potential of vacant lands there.

Tribal or ethnic boundaries are not drawn on the ground, but rather separate groups of persons who identify with different 'basic value orientations, the standards of morality and excellence by which performance is judged.....belonging..... implies a claim to be judged and to judge oneself by those standards that are relevant to that identity'. Pashtun tribes were Barth's specific reference in making these observations<sup>19</sup>. According to Barth (1969), then, a tribally-organized ethnic group will generate a normative order to govern its relations with another such groups so as to permit them both to coexist with independence and, presumably, equality.

The structure for normative relations between the ideal-type tribe and state is thus determined by these incongruities between their legal orders. First, power in the state is monopolized by a central government, while in tribes such as the Pashtuns it may typically remain distributed among persons who adhere to the tribal law or may

occasionally be consolidated within various levels of latent tribal hierarchy. Among Pashtuns, hierarchical organization seldom surpasses the minimal lineage grouping of the extended family. Second, the state legal order articulates vertically and exclusively over a fixed territory while the tribal legal order provides the framework for horizontal relations and consolidation of power among persons for whom the legal order provides a shared identity<sup>20</sup>.

Caught between competing empires, Pashtuns commonly fought or intrigued with both sides, even the opposite was a Pashtun. Pashtun tribesmen fought with Timur against the Pashtun supported Delhi Sultanate, they fought with Babur when the Mughal overthrew the Lodi Afghan rulers of Delhi, they fought with Nadir Shah Afsar when he defeated the Ghilzai Afghan rulers of Isfahan and Kandahar in the early eighteenth century, and were caught up in the Safawid-Mughal competition for Kandahar in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Two patterns which stand out here are, first, imperial alliances with factions or particular tribes used to control other factions or tribes, and second, the recruitment of tribesmen in to imperial armies. The more common means, by which empires impose their ideology upon the normative orders of subordinate tribes, is by co-opting tribal leaders into representing imperial interests and promoting that ideology.

From the perspective of the polity, however, 'Hobbesian abhorrence'<sup>21</sup> of tribal society by civilized metropolitan society is reciprocated in the disdain the tribal expresses for the transactional relation of the metropolis, compared to the personal and kinship relations of the tribe. The state may correspond to a political economy where intensive utilization of land or natural resources is the key factor in the production of wealth or military power. In the tribal form of polity, people, rather than territorial resources, may be the crucial factor for production and war. Empires, tribes and the state have all been important actors in the politics of Afghanistan during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As much as any area in the world, Afghanistan has been characterized by conflicts and tensions among all three types of polity. Not only was the state's jurisdiction poised against regional and tribal autonomy, but the state was itself dependent on the tribes for its own legitimacy.

The Muhammadzai legitimacy, which stretched with remarkable continuity from the eighteenth century down to the socialist coup of 1978, reflected a tribal settlement of national leadership. This year also witnessed another important change in ever dynamic Afghan politics. The Saur Revolution<sup>22</sup> with the backing of USSR. The revolution formally ended the monopoly of Durranis in Afghan politics which started from Ahmad Shah Abdali onwards. The new era witnessed the rise of Ghilzais in the top of Afghan power hierarchy which continued during the time of mujahidin rule and even during the presence of ultra radical Taliban movement.

### **The Communists and the Demise of Royal Tribe**

In May 1978, the head of new communist government, Nur Muhammad Taraki, announced his government's intent to revise the existing pattern in favour of a scheme based on the Soviet nationality policy model.<sup>23</sup> Despite the token minorities on the cabinets or in lower ministerial posts, the dominant ethnic group in all cabinets and offices has been Pashtuns.<sup>24</sup> The major ethnic shift in government personnel has been in the Pashtu faction taking the leadership. Taraki belonged to the Ghilzai confederation of Pashtuns, which has been in traditional rivalry with the Pashtun faction that has provided most Afghan kings and rulers: The Durranis.

As long as the 'Mujahidin' were fighting Soviet troops, the Afghan war was considered a 'Jihad', a holy war against invaders and infidels. The Mujahidin still advocate an 'Islamic state' and oppose the Kabul regime on such vital issues as education, the status of women and foreign policy. The war politicized traditional society: there were political parties inside Afghanistan, even if they express, to a certain extent, traditional segmentation. It is true that, behind their ideological and political commitment, most Afghans remain loyal to their grass root identity groups. Any leader is suspected of promoting the interests of his own group, even if he is the most committed political worker. These horizontal connections have always been at work, even during the worst period of revolution and war. A traditional leader is someone who has been able to establish a personal patron- client relationship, at the expense of a real political party structure. He is not a feudal lord, but uses his influence to protect and promote the interests of his own segmentary group, thus enhancing his own status in terms of wealth and prestige (Roy 1989:70-71).

The war brought a new leadership. The major tribal leaders usually left the country. The new leadership of the 'Mujahidin' is made of either young, middle-class, educated Islamists or traditional ulema, usually also young<sup>25</sup>. They had to root themselves in traditional society by using, on one hand, new political patterns such as affiliation to a political party, implementation of 'Shariat' and military efficiency, and by adopting, on the other hand, some traditional patterns of power such as distributing weapons as a tool of influence, forging personal ties with other leaders and establishing a patron-client relationship with their followers. The breakthrough of the ulema in the tribal areas entailed a significant change in tribal structures, although tribal identities remain as pervasive as ever. Hence the Mujahidin have never been able to replace a traditional structure with a modern political one. Traditional society has expressed through the new political parties. Most of the Mujahidin commanders either use traditional patterns of power and thus became the new khan and malik, or try to adapt traditional society to more modern political structures.<sup>26</sup> At the local level, the key issue remains the 'qawm' affiliation.

In fact, one has to distinguish three levels of community identity in order to understand segmentation in the post-1978 Afghanistan: Qawm, Tribe and Ethnic group. Qawm affiliation is considered to be the lowest common denominator of group affiliations in Afghanistan. A Qawm is the term used to describe any segment of society bound by solidarity ties, whether it is an extended family, clan, occupational group or village (Azoy 1982:31-32). Ismat Muslim, a famous tribal leader who joined the regime in 1984, is first referred to his extended family, then to his clan ('Kalkozai'), then the tribe ('Atshokzai'), and then the tribal confederation ('Durrani') then the ethnic group (Pashtun). Tribalism also involves tribal ideology, customs and common law. A Pashtun is not only a Pashtun speaker but someone with a tribal identity. Thus the traditional power status in Afghanistan is an incentive to both political affiliation and political segmentation. Subordination of local notables and commanders to an *Amir* (both a political and military leader) is possible only if the leader is a charismatic and or religious figure, or if the level of politicization is so high that discipline exists. The war also created a new ethnic balance. Traditionally, between 1747 and 1978, the Pashtun Durrani confederation held central powers. By contrast, the bulk of the communist party was made up of Ghilzai and Eastern

Pashtuns, because of the dominant Khalq faction. Both the Kabul regime and their opponents', the Peshawar based Mujahidin alliances<sup>27</sup> were mainly Ghilzai.

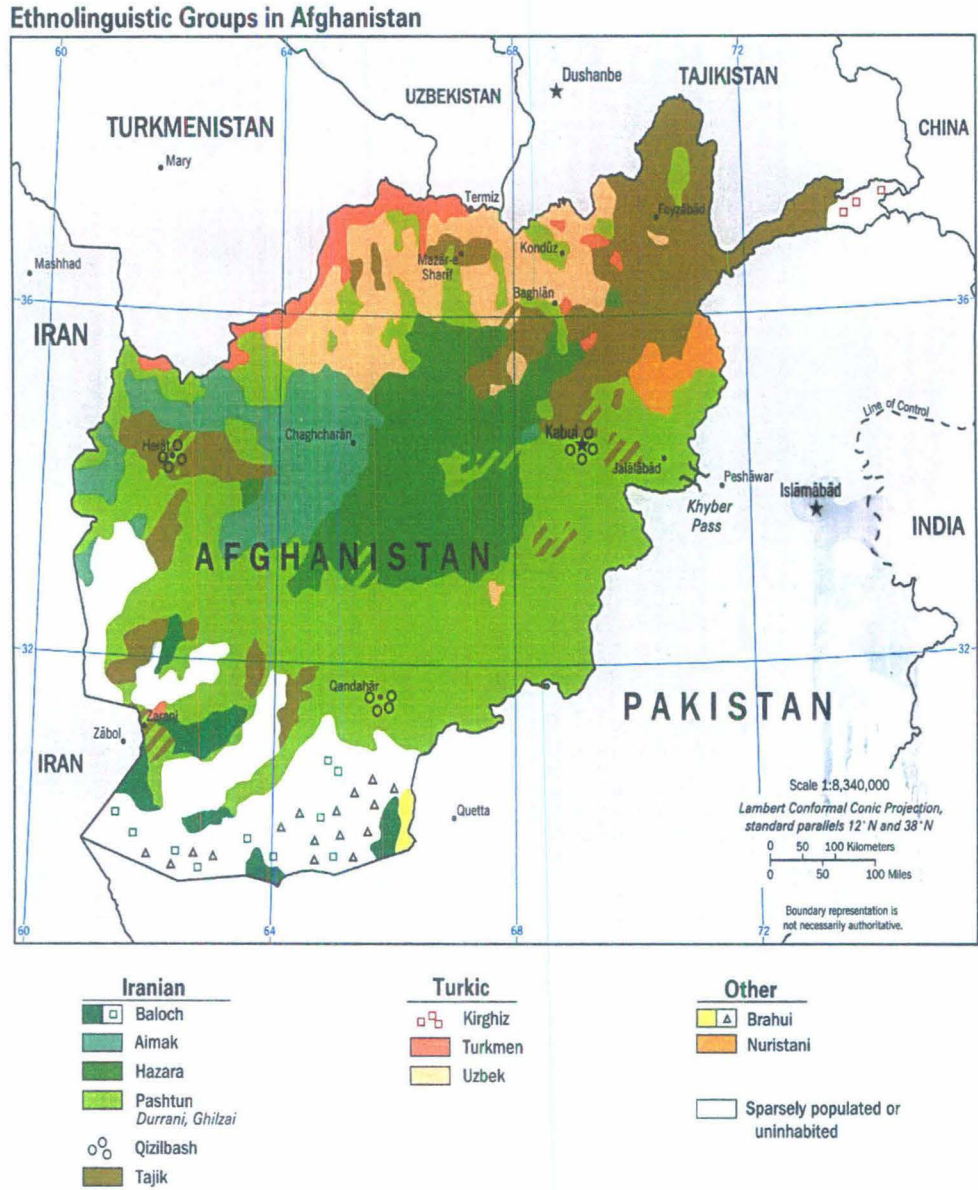
Analyzing colonial politics in Zambia, Daniel N. Posner<sup>28</sup> concludes that the structure of a country's ethnic cleavages is not just a social fact but also a historical product. Posner indicates that the ethnic landscape is important because the dynamics of ethnic competition and conflict rise not from the pattern of their relative sizes and geographic distribution. Countries containing a single large ethnic group or two evenly matched groups, he notes, have been found to be more violence prone than those including a large number of equally sized groups.

### **Pashtun versus 'Other' Afghans: Race for Power**

Afghanistan's population is made up of nearly fifty-five distinct ethnic groups (see Map 2.4). Four of these accounts for a large majority: the Pashtuns (38%), Tajiks (25%), Hazaras (19%), and Uzbeks (6%).<sup>29</sup> Pashtuns controlled political power for most of Afghanistan's history as a state, with the result that their traditions and cultural accepts tended to be equated with the national identity of Afghanistan. Pashtuns in Afghanistan are segmented into about thirty tribes, each further divided into clans and lineages. Close to half of these tribes belong to one of two major confederations; the Durrani and the Ghilzai. The Dari (Persian) speaking, Sunni Tajiks are the second largest ethnic group. They live primarily in Kabul, the north east, and the province of Herat, but also comprise a large portion of the urban population in other parts of the country. The primarily Shi'i, Dari- speaking Hazaras live in the central highlands and have historically been the most politically and economically disadvantaged group. The Turkic speaking Uzbeks abide in the northern plains and foot hills. Unlike the Pashtuns, the three other major ethnic groups in Afghanistan were either non-tribal or predominantly detribalized by the late twentieth century.

Afghanistan is a heterogeneous society of Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, Aimaqs and a large number of other much smaller ethnic groups. The Pashtuns established the Afghan state in 1747, and despite the country's ethnic heterogeneity, maintained their dominance until 1992. These two and half centuries can be divided in to four periods:

MAP 2.4: MAJOR ETHNO-LINGUISTIC GROUPS IN AFGHANISTAN



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Source: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/asia.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/asia.html)

1) The rise and fall of the Durrani empire, 1747-1818; 2) The emergence of an ethnically more homogeneous, but decentralized Afghanistan, 1818-1880; 3) The consolidation of the modern Afghan state, 1880-1950s; and 4) The emergence of the nation state, 1963- 1992. The Durrani Empire for the first time brought all the Pashtuns under the control of one political center. Pashtu tribal levies constituted the backbone of the empire's military force, and the state treated the Pashtuns preferentially compared to its other subjects. In short, during the Durrani Empire, the Pashtuns enjoyed institutionalized military, political and economic dominance in Afghanistan (Ahady 1995:621-622).

During the reign of Khalq faction (1978-79) of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), the communist authorities, in addition to Pashtu and Dari (Persian) recognized Uzbek, Turkmen, Baluchi and Nuristani as official language. However, while Pashtu dominance in state institutions declined during the 1980s, Pashtun supremacy within the resistance was undisputed non-Pashtuns, who control about three-fifth of the country, not only reject Pashtun dominance but are opposed to the Afghan or Pashtun character of the state as well. The late Tajik warlord Ahmad Shah Masud formed the Northern Alliance with the Hazara, Abdul Ali Mazari, the Uzbek general Rashid Dostum, and the leader of the Ismaili sect, Jaffer Naderi, to overthrow the Najibullah regime and prevent the implementation of the peace plan. The collapse of the Najibullah regime in April 1992 not only ended the communist era in Afghanistan but also heralded the end of the Pashtun dominance in Afghan politics.

### **Mujahidin, Taliban, Karzai and More**

From 1992 to present, Afghanistan has gone through three different set of ruling coalitions. First from 1992-96 under former Mujahidin commanders, from 1996-2001 under ultra Sunni Islamic religious movement Taliban and then from 2001 to present a democratically elected coalition government with the support of international community under the leadership of United States of America. During Mujahidin time, non-Pashtun groups especially Tajiks got major stake in Afghan politics. A Mujahidin faction under Gurbudin Hekmatyar superficially represented the Pashtun interests in Afghan politics. Hekmatyar is a Ghilzai Pashtun from the northern province of Kunduz. Uzbeks under their powerful warlord Rashid Dostum controlled the provinces

north of Hindukush Mountains. Another warlord Ismail Khan controlled provinces of west from the historic city of Herat. Central mountains were under the control of most disadvantageous group of Afghan history, the Hazaras. But this power equation had been successfully challenged and replaced by the formidable ultra Islamic student's movement known as 'Taliban'. Taliban was mainly Pashtun dominated. Even though the Taliban had a pan Islamic identity, and it got its major support from the tribal people of Pashtun origin. Its supreme leader is a Ghilzai Pashtun from Uruzgan of South Eastern Afghanistan.

The current phase of Afghan politics is giving representation to all major ethnic groups of Afghanistan. Even though the present government is being headed by a Durrani Pashtun of Kandahar, the Pashtuns especially the Pashtuns from the tribal areas felt alienated from the politics of Kabul. They consider Hamid Karzai, the President of Afghanistan is a puppet in the hands of both non- Pashtuns especially the Tajiks and the international lobby lead by all powerful USA. These factors are considered as reasons for the ever increasing support for the reemerging Taliban in both the tribal areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

United States directed military forces deposed the Taliban; and the United Nations-negotiated Bonn agreement set up an interim administration that was to govern for six months. Though headed by an ethnic Pashtun, Hamid Karzai, a Popalzai tribal leader and former Deputy Foreign Minister from Kandahar, leaders of the Shura-I- Nazar- I Shamali (Supervisory Council of the North) predominated in the cabinet, primarily Tajiks from the Panjshir valley.<sup>30</sup> Panjshiris controlled the power ministries like Interior, Defense and Foreign Affairs.<sup>31</sup> But Pashtun control of financial institutions<sup>32</sup> somewhat balances Shura-I-Nazar's control of the security forces. Regarding the new national army, the troops are not as ethnically monolithic as the general staff. However, Tajiks have more than an equitable portion of army personnel. Pashtun recruits are thought to have some grievances regarding their training especially about instruction. Training instruction is only in Dari, no Pashto. The Pashtun population is extremely sensitive to indications of domination of the new army by Tajiks. They are suspicious suggestions that the ethnic imbalance might just be temporary.



Afghanistan has been characterized as a failed state, a society where the institutions managing conflicts have collapsed. The impact of the collapse of government authority on the Pashtuns can be observed as an example. In the political and security vacuum left by the fall of the Taliban, the actions of Pashtun warlords to develop a tribal support base has worsened sub-ethnic divisions and, in fact, marginalized non-dominant groups. Commanders are supported largely for the critical funds they provide to their ethnic group or tribe. Commanders with local government positions often channel foreign aid to areas where their ethnic group or tribe predominates (Riphenburg 2005a:43-47). Ghilzai, who live in predominantly Durrani areas, complain of harassment, seizure of property, and discrimination from Durrani warlords. More powerful than the Durrani/Ghilzai divide, however the identities of individual tribes. Enmities between particular Durrani tribes for are greatly surpassing any bad feeling between Durrani and Ghilzai (Riphenburg 2005b:47). Of the six principal Durrani tribes,<sup>33</sup> three now experience exceptional political influence in the south: the Barakzai, the Popalzai, and the Alikozai.

Ethnic identities are generally defined by the beliefs in a common origin and are expressed by a common language, historical consciousness; religion etc. Ethnic identities remain only a subordinate reference of identity for the majority of Afghans. Group solidarities on the basis of clans, tribes, or villages, in addition to ethnic association, are the dominant reference of identification. The most pressing challenges facing Afghanistan today are: legitimizing the central government and managing center- periphery relations, especially in dealing with the warlords; providing reliable security and rule of law beyond Kabul; economic reconstruction; and upholding ethnic harmony and achieving national integration.<sup>34</sup>

### **Politics and Society of Central Asia up to Tsarist Period**

The steppe built, an immense swath of land locked grass land, made possible the appearance of a unique historical phenomenon; the horse breeding, highly mobile Eurasian nomad. To be sure, nomads have also existed in other parts of the world, but the scale of the habitat, the role of the horse, and the relative and paradoxical proximity of great agricultural or urban civilizations made it possible for the Inner Asian nomad to play a historical and often as grandiose as was his homeland. In

historical time, steppe nomads have been Turks and Mongols: these people had earlier seized the primacy from the Indo-Europeans, some of whom they absorbed and some of who migrated to India, the Middle East, or Europe. Both rivers and mountains affected the nomad's lives.

The two mountain ranges, the Hissar on the north and Hindukush on the south, bracket the core territory of historical Bactria, the later Tokharistan, today and this territory corresponds to northern Afghanistan, southern Tajikistan and South Eastern Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The people who inhabited the area along the Zarafshan River as well as adjacent regions at the time of Arab conquest were the Sogdians, hence the historical name for this central part of Transoxania, Sogdia or Sogdiana. Sogdians spoke an Iranian tongue, for Sogdia, like much of Central Asia, was then an Iranian speaking area. Unlike their kinsmen who settled in north eastern Xinjiang and asserted their ethno linguistic individuality there, the Tokharians of Bactria, memorable as the people who played a leading role in the creation of the famous Kushan Empire, became 'Iranized' without leaving any trace of their original identity. In historic times the nomads of this region have been mainly Turks and Mongols in contrast to the Iranian and Tokharian agriculturists and urban dwellers.<sup>35</sup>

It was between Onon and Korulen that a people called Mongols emerged in the twelfth century, having moved there from their earlier habitat, and believed to have been the adjacent forest zone to the north. The descendants of legendary Mongols of Genghis Khan's hordes later came to be known as Eastern Mongols or Kalkha Mongols. The Buriats or Northern Mongols do not appear to have played any significant historical role, but their territory assumed some importance in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a gateway for Russian influence reaching Mongolia usually by way of Kiakhta. The Tuvans of this region speak a Turkic idiom, and may be partly descended from the Kyrgyz. The Tuvans themselves, like their Buriat neighbours to the east, underwent strong influence from the south and converted to Buddhism, the only Turkic – speaking group to do so besides the historical Uyghur. Another Mongol group, the Oirats or Western Mongols, used to live between the upper Yenisei and Lake Baikal, to the east of the Kyrgyz and the north of the Tuvans.

We have already mentioned the influence and popularity of Iranian culture and civilization in the present almost Turkic Central Asia. The presence of various Indo-European speaking people is reported as far as the present Xinjiang to east from immemorial time itself. The legendary Aryans are the typical example for this. Historic Persia has produced a line of magnificent empires which are starting from Achaemenid itself. At the time of Arab or Islamic invasion of Persia the Zoroastrian dynasty of Sassanid were the rulers. Most of the Persians got converted into Islam and produced wonderful Islamic Persian culture which was the standard civilization of entire Islamic East up to modern times. The Samanids were the last indigenous Iranian speaking ruling dynasty of historic Persia. It was under the able and felicitous reign of the Samanids that Islamic Central Asia came of age, acquiring the major features of a mature Islamic civilization. Another feature which nurtured in this time was the substitution of Islamic Persian linguistic identity for the Sogdian and Khwarazmian identities with the Iranian framework of Central Asia.

Turks began their infiltration into Central Asia in the second half of the sixth century AD, but the first migration en masse occurred around eleventh century AD. When the Seljukids and Qarakhanids moved into the region of the Syr and Amu Darias. During and after the Mongol invasion in the first half of the thirteenth century AD, numerous Turkic tribes settled in Central Asia. The last Turkic migration into the region was that of the Uzbeks. Uzbeks, who for four centuries remained lords over the oases between the Syr and Amu Darias.

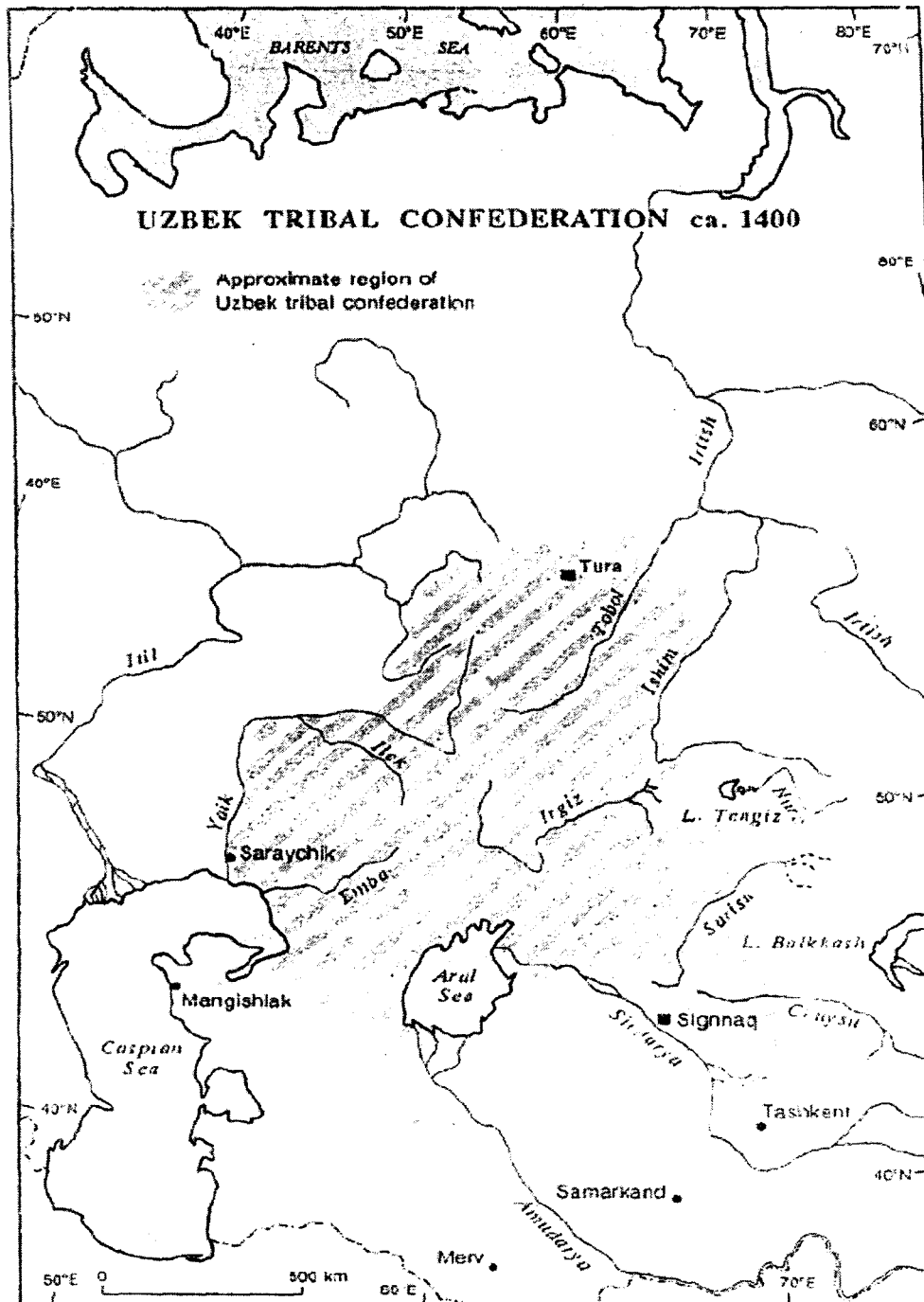
The coming of Qarakhanids from their distant eastern steppe homeland caused for the beginning of a new chapter in the history of Central Asia. It was the beginning of various Turkic nomadic dynasties in the Iranian heartland for an almost a millennium. The Qarakhanids were Turks, however, and their arrival signaled a definitive shift from Iranian to Turkic predominance in Central Asia. The Qarakhanids, who replaced the Samanids at the turn of the millennium, looked up to the Caliph in Baghdad and holy cities of Mecca and Medina as their ultimate spiritual authority. Initially they differed from their neighbours to the south-west, the Samanids, in three fundamental aspects: religion, language and way of life. Following the time honoured custom of Turkic and Mongol nomads, the Qarakhanids also practiced the rule of family or clan rather than that of a single monarch.<sup>36</sup>

Like the Qarakhanids, the Seljukids appeared in Central Asia during the tenth-eleventh century AD, but further west on lower course of the Syr Darya, near the Aral sea, and as member of a different group of Turkic tribe called Oghuz. Like most of the Turks of the time, the Oghuz were pagans, but qams or shamans and the idea of a principal deity, Tengri, do seem to have played a role in their spiritual orbit. The Oghuz, also known in Islamic sources as Ghuzz, then became the permanent Turkic element in the Middle East, starting with Turkmenistan and ending with Turkey. Both the Qarakhanids and Seljukids established their authority as free families or clan by means of a successful regimentation of tribes, the other Turkic dynasty of the region, the Ghaznavids came to power through a completely different channel: as slave soldiers of the Samanids (Soucek 2000:93-97). Then came the Chenghiz Khan's Mongols and later another important historic player of the region, Timur or Tamerlane of the western sources. If the Mongol interlude (1220-1370) was a traumatic experience in the history of Central Asia, the Timurid period (1370-1507) can be viewed as ultimately it's most glorious one. Timur was a Turk of the Barlas tribe.

Then came one of the last major Turkic migrants from the east, the Shaybanids, the forefathers of the powerful Uzbeks of the present Central Asia (see Map 2.5). Shaybanids (see Map 2.3) ended the glorious period of Timurids. The Shaybanids were Turks like Timurids (the descendants of Timur), although they spoke a different dialect of Kipchak, in contrast the local Turki; both led a partly nomadic way of life and had a tribal social structure, although again this must have been more pronounced among the new comers. The tribes under the leadership of Abulkhayar, the grandfather of Muhammad Shaybani, most of which spoke the Kipchak form of Turkic, had their own lineage and appellation but they were also known by the general name of Uzbek, a word whose origin is a matter of debate; it may indeed derive from Uzbek Khan of Golden Horde who ruled from 1312 to 1341.<sup>37</sup>

After the major migration to south at the end of fifteenth century, large bodies of Uzbeks lived with different people, often distant kinsmen in Western Siberia, Turkistan, the Khanates of Khwarazm and Qoqan plus the Emirate of Bukhara, Northern Afghanistan, and Khurasan. Tatar warriors made up that first conglomeration of people called Uzbeks but do not show their point of origin. They

MAP 2.5: THE FIRST UZBEK HOMELAND



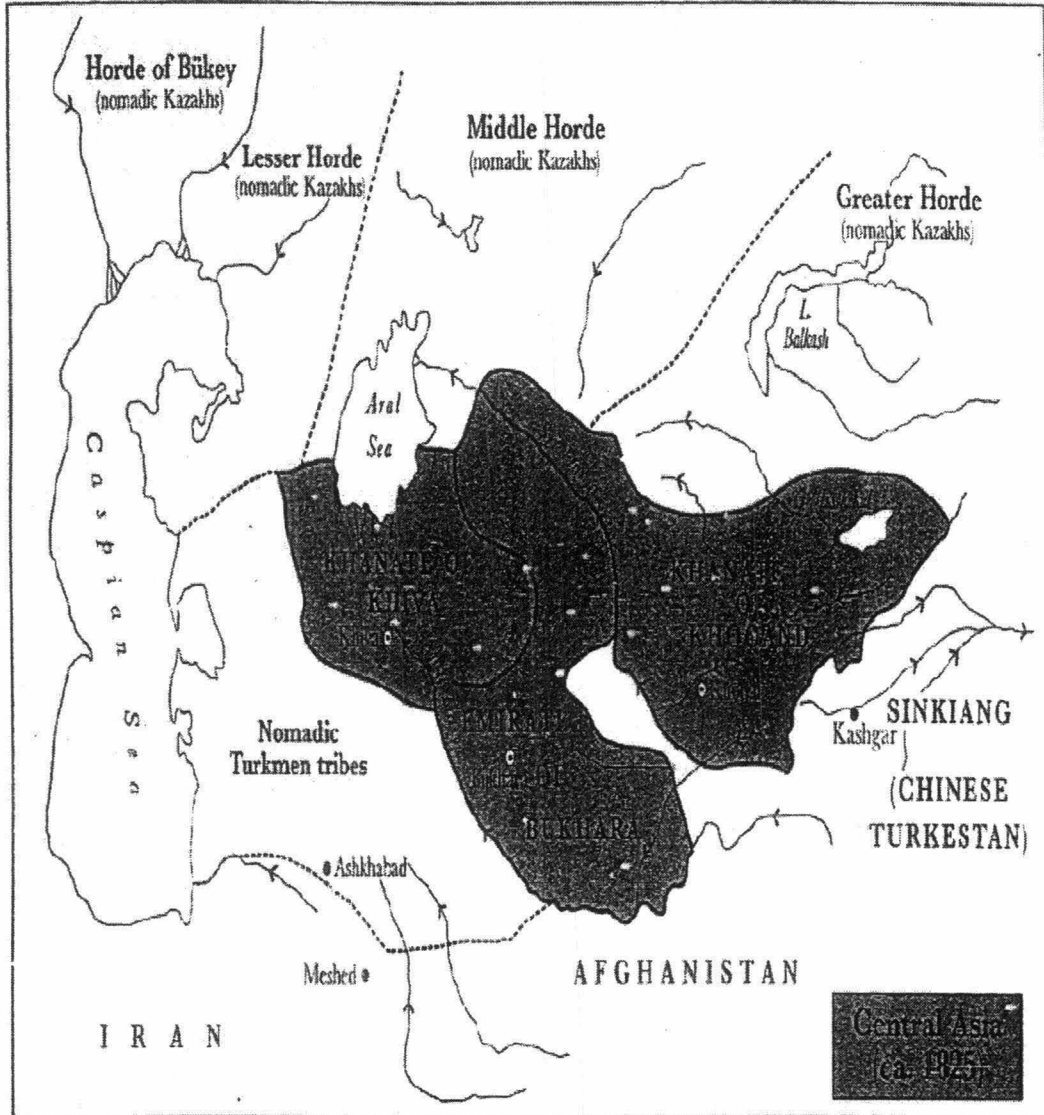
The first Uzbek homeland. Sources: B. A. Akhmedov, *Gosudarstvo kuchezykh Uzbekov* (1963); *Hudud al-'Alam* trans. Minorsky (1970); W. Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion* trans. Gibb (1958).

were in the first Tatar tribes' men following the renowned Ghiyath Al- Din Muhammad Uzbek (Ozbek) Khan (1312-41), who was descended from Juchi, Chinghiz Khan's son, through his grandson, Batu. Uzbek Khan's prestige and a still strong Mongol custom led the mobile Tatar troops that he commanded to take his name during his life time. Abulkhayr Sultan, when he became Khan, headed a confederation that started with no fewer than 24 tribes, many with numerous subdivisions. (In alphabetical order, the original combination included the tribes Barak, Bayly, Durman, Imchi, Jat, Kenagas, Khitay, Kiyat, Kurlaut, Kushchi, Manghit, Ming, Nayman, Qarluq, Qanghirat, Tangut, Taymas, Tubay, Tuman, Ugrish-Nayman, Utarachi, Uyghur, Uyshun and Yigjan/Alman).<sup>38</sup> The various developments of the fifteenth century split the Uzbek into three suborders (Siberian Uzbek, Uzbek Shaybanid and Uzbek- Kazakh).

In Central Asia, Tsarist Russia encountered not an ethnically homogenous state or system of states but a scattering of feudal principalities and tribal territories of the state or system of states but a scattering of feudal principalities and tribal territories of the most complex national composition. The then Central Asia was divided into the three main khanates of Bukhara, Kokand and Khiva, as well as into numerous smaller vassal and independent despots (see Map 2.6). In all of these khanates and principalities Uzbeks formed the aristocracy and dominant political group (see Appendix 2.4). In addition to the ruling Uzbeks the population consisted of the still Iranian- speaking Tajiks, their Turkicized brothers, the Sarts, and remnants of older Turkic groups which had preceeded the Uzbeks in conquest of the Central Asian oases. This semi-sedentary, semi-nomadic core located between the Syr and Amu was surrounded by the tribal territories of other Turkic- speaking nomads-Turkmenians in the west, Kazakhs in the north, and Kirghiz in the east, all of whom jealously guarded their grazing grounds and occasional cultivated fields from encroachment by the Uzbek Khans. There existed also substantial distinctions in religion and culture. The sedentary population strictly observed the 'Shariat', the law of Islam, while the nomads were only nominal Muslims and preserved the customary law of steppes, the Adat (Zenkovsky 1955: 15-41).<sup>39</sup>

It was mainly the lands of non-Uzbek nomads and the khanates of Kokand that were integrated into the Russian empire, while the bulk of Bukhara and Khiva remained

MAP 2.6: CENTRAL ASIA IN 1825 AD



Source: Soucek, Svat (2000), *A History of Inner Asia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

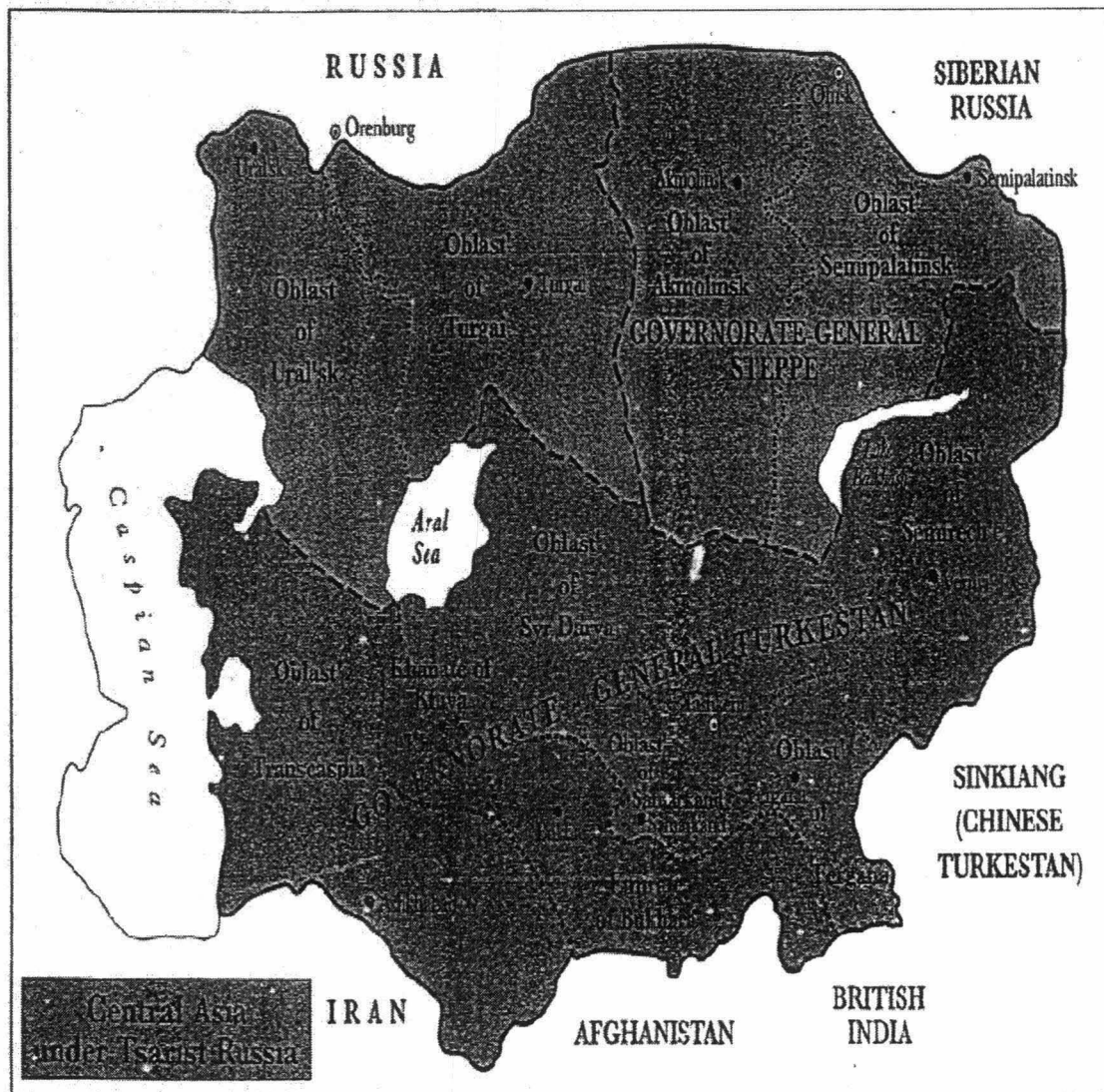
outside the Russian boundary. These areas continued to be ruled by their Khans who, though vassals of the Russian crown, remained independent in their internal affairs. The annexed region was organized into the Turkistan General Governorship, headed by a military governor general located in Tashkent. This general governorship consisted of three provinces : the oblast' of Ferghana, composed of the lands of the former Khanate of Kokand; the Samarkand oblast, which comprised the former northeastern Bukhariote districts; and the oblast of Syr Darya which included various territories previously under the administration of vassals of the khans of Bukhara, Kokand and Khiva<sup>40</sup>(see Map 2.7). In these new provinces of Central Asia, no major changes in the social organization of the natives followed after Russian conquest, and Russia preserved as well many traditional features in the system of administration. While the higher administrators- the governors of the oblasts, their staffs and heads of the districts (uezd)- were Russians or Europeans, Russian subjects (Ukrainians, Tatars or Baltic Germans), the lower administrators, officials of the Muslim villages and towns, were native Uzbeks, Kirghiz, Sarts or Tajiks, elected as before by the local population.

### **Ethnic Groups of Central Asia: Clans, Tribes and Nationalities**

The principal nationalities of the present day Central Asia are the Kazakhs, Karakalpaks, Kyrgyz, Tajiks, Turkmen, Uzbeks, Uighurs and Mongols (see Map 2.8). In the past as at present, a number of Inner Asian nationalities have been felt to possess a common bond in the Turkic language of which they speak their own diverse idioms. Linguists divided the Turkic language into several groups. The most commonly accepted theory speaks of the Kipchak group (Kazakh, Karakalpak), Turkic group (Uzbek, Uighur), and Oghuz group (Turkmen, Azeri, Turkish). Similarly linguist speaks of three groups of Mongolian languages: Eastern, Northern, and Western. Northern Mongolian is also known as Buriat and is together with Russian, the official language of the Buriat Autonomous Republic of the Russian federation. Western Mongolian is also known as Kalmyk. Eastern Mongolian or Kalkha Mongolian is the official language of the Republic of Mongolia. Besides the Two and half million inhabitants of the republic, over four million live to the south of the border, in the Mongolia Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China also speak the same tongue.



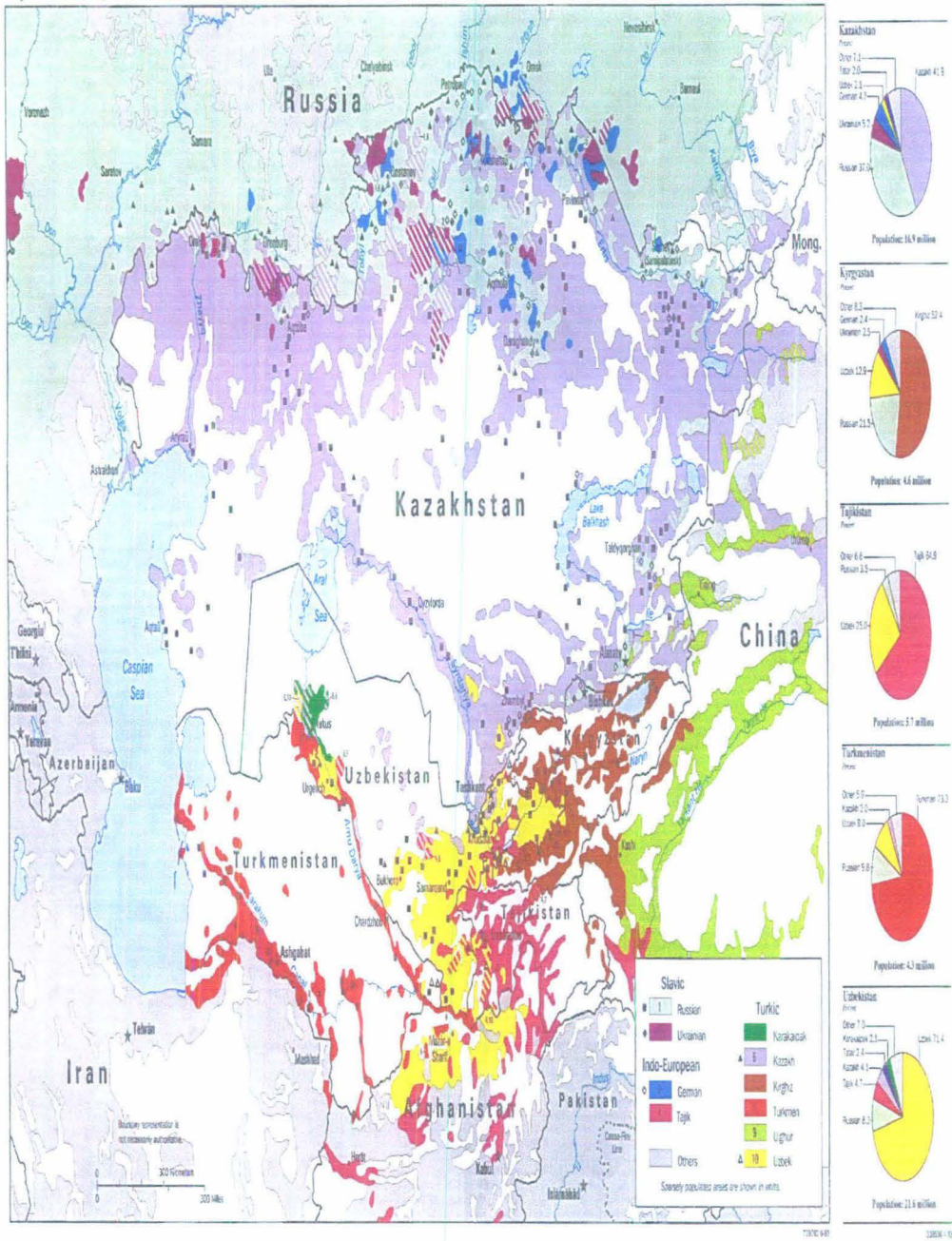
MAP 2.7: CENTRAL ASIA UNDER TSARIST RUSSIA



Source: Soucek, Svat (2000), *A History of Inner Asia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

# MAP 2.8: MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS IN CENTRAL ASIA

Major Ethnic Groups in Central Asia



Source: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/asia.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/asia.html)

The bulk of publications on Central Asian 'clan' politics have been based on material from three countries, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan,<sup>41</sup> but between Kazakhstan, on the one hand, and Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, on the other, there are differences in the role played by kinship and lineage networks in 'clan' formations. In the literature on Kazakhstan, clan are often closely associated with primordial tribal and lineage kinship associations that claim to have a common nomadic ancestor, real or imagined. Tribal identity among Uzbeks and Tajiks, who have had a long history of sedentary lifestyle, is much feebler<sup>42</sup> in comparison with recently sedentarized Kazakhs and Kyrgyzs. At the same time, the sense of affinity to territory resulting in mobilization of regional network is quite strong in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, as in other parts of Central Asia. Nonetheless, lineage identity does not play such an outstanding role as in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan in the creation of clan formations.

In Uzbekistan what are often meant by clans are very loose coalitions composed by various types of allegiances, including kinship, friendship, patron-client, client-client partnerships. Like Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Turkmen, Uzbeks are also coming from nomadic tribal background but in period they were mostly settled under three pre-Soviet Uzbek Khanates of Central Asia: Bukhara, Khiva and Khoqand. All rulers of these three chiefdoms were Uzbeks. Besides Uzbeks had nominal legitimacy over the various nomadic Turkmen groups which lies south and south western region of their territory. Uzbeks are considering themselves as the inheritors of the political identity which founded by the Muhammad Shaybani Uzbek a descendant of Genghis Khan. Due to their more sedentary nature of settlement in the oasis region of Central Asia, Uzbek clan networks are not exactly based on kinship but on the basis of region like Samarkand, Tashkent and Ferghana.

In a study of Uzbek identities, famous anthropologist John Schoeberlen-Engel demonstrates that "the name 'Uzbek' entered Central Asia with the Shaybanid conquest in the sixteenth century" and was thereafter "associated with the several dynasties descended from the Shaybanids which ruled the khanates until they lost their independence to Russia."<sup>43</sup> Uzbek came to mean those related to the ruling elites, soldiers of the conquering armies, and even the subjects of the Uzbek dynasties. With the establishment of the Soviet republic of Uzbekistan in 1924, the identities of

the population shifted dramatically. The Turkic- speaking Sarts<sup>44</sup> became Uzbeks; and Persian speaking Sarts became Tajiks. The linguistic identification cut across social lines, uniting some townspeople with nomads and villagers, while dividing the settled population into distinct “nationalities”.<sup>45</sup> A host of identities with smaller Turkic groups- the Lakays, Karluks, Kipchaks, Chaghatays were eliminated and those people integrated into the Uzbeks.

Historically, Tajiks are sedentary, Persian speaking settlers of Central Asia. That’s why for Tajiks their clan networks more based on their places of origin than the pure tribal concept of a common ancestor. However, Tajiks were divided into various clans like Gharmis, Kulyabis, Badakshanis and Hissaris on the basis of their place of origin. Tajiks are distinct from and distant from the Turkic speakers like the Uzbeks or Turkmens. Before the nineteenth century, “Tajik” referred to people who lived in oases and not to a particular linguistic group. Later it referred to city dwellers or to particular peoples in the mountains.<sup>46</sup> Familial bonds, mutual dependence of extended family members and respect for the elders of the family are important traits of the Tajik society. The Soviets collectivized agriculture and the majority of state and collective farms were based on extended family units. What made clientalism more pronounced in Tajikistan and other Central Asian states was the tendency to develop familial bonds, through marriage, to mirror the regional patron- client net works. These regionally based client networks are conventionally called clans. It must be stressed; however, that clans in the present day Central Asia especially in Tajikistan do not by necessity indicated blood ties, though they might have done in the past. And Central Asians are prone to assigning honorary ‘blood ties’ to their close friends and neighbours. However, in most cases, it is the geographical proximity which weighs most in the definition of clan membership, not blood ties particularly in Tajik society (Akbarzadeh 1996:1108).

Pre-Soviet Turkmen tribes were almost autonomous except their nominal recognition of the political supremacy of the Uzbek Khanate of Khiva over them. They showed their respect to the khan of Khiva through more symbolic tributes to him in his court in irregular basis. At the same time they protected their autonomy jealously in their strongholds. More regularly Turkmens attacked the sedentary subjects of khan of Khiva and other unfortunates passing through their desert stronghold and took them as

slaves and sold them in various slave markets of Central Asia. Turkmens continued their lucrative business up to nineteenth century when Russians completely overwhelmed Turkmen tribes through successive wars. Under Soviets Turkmens forced to give up most of their nomadic traditions at least openly for the sake of modernization process.

Traditionally, in the case of Turkmen, they identified primarily with those who shared their ancestry, in a real or imagined sense. “Turkmenness” was understood in terms of patrilineal descent, with all those who called themselves Turkmen claiming origin in a single mythical ancestor named Oguz Khan. Each of the major Turkmen tribes—Tekkes, Salirs, Sariks, Yomuts, Chodirs, and Ersaris was thought to descend from one of Oguz’s grandsons. A distinction was also made between “pure blooded” Turkmen (ig) who enjoyed considerable prestige and those of “mixed blood” (yarimcha) or “slaves” (gul), who were descendants of non-Turkmen captives. These “pure-blooded” Turkmen formed elite that preferred not to intermarry with Turkmen of the other two categories.<sup>47</sup> Before the Turkmen came under the effective control of neighbouring states, much of political life was regulated genealogically as well. Regardless of the biological reality, in short, genealogy was the most important way of conceptualizing and justifying social relationships among the Turkmen. Turkmen groups chose their leaders by consensus, mainly on the basis of such pastoral qualities as courage and intelligence.<sup>48</sup>

The primary large scale division within the Turkmen republic was between the Turkmen of Trans Caspia, Bukhara and Khiva. The Tekkes, as the largest and most powerful Turkmen tribe, had dominated neighboring Turkmen tribes prior to the Russian conquest and had been at the forefront of the military resistance to Persian and Russian incursions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During Soviet time, the Tekke’s proximity to the centers of colonial power had given them some of familiarity with Russians and the Russia language. The Turkmen regions of the former khivan republic, home mostly to Yomut Turkmen, and of Bukhara, inhabited by Ersaris and other groups, had not experienced direct Russian rule and were more distant from the centers of Soviet power. For all these reasons, Tekkes tended to be see themselves as “first among Turkmen” and to assume they should dominate the new republic.<sup>49</sup>

## **Evolution of Central Asian Nation- States: The Soviet Period**

The state, in both an imperial and a modern form, came late to Central Asia. Before the twentieth century, clans and larger tribes were the predominant mode of social organization and political organization in Central Asia.<sup>50</sup> Although the Russian empire had attempted to create ethnic categories for studying Central Asians, it ruled indirectly, through small imperial outposts, and it did not alter the social structure of the region.<sup>51</sup> Nor had the emirates and khanates that encompassed parts of contemporary Central Asia undermined clans; in fact the emirs like Russians, often struck feudal-like bargains with clans over tax collection or military support.<sup>52</sup> And only in the 1920s, when the Bolsheviks incorporated the new Central Asian republics into the USSR, did a modern state attempt to eradicate the clan system.<sup>53</sup>

At First, the new communist government waged an attack on clans, which it viewed as pre-modern, by imposing a nationalities policy that denied clan identities and replaced them with five new ethno-national identities: Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Turkmen and Uzbek.<sup>54</sup> Second, collectivization broke down tribes and ended traditional clan pastoral and agricultural patterns. Nationalities Policy provided a source of patronage for clan elites, who used the “affirmative action”<sup>55</sup> appointment system with little monitoring from Moscow.<sup>56</sup> Instead of destroying clans, the collective farms (kolkhoz) kept extended kin units intact. The Kolkhoz, an enormous source of economic power in Soviet Central Asia, at first froze clans in place but then fostered their growth and network’s advancement throughout the Soviet period.<sup>57</sup>

By the 1940s the communist party was in retreat, ignoring the “clan problem”.<sup>58</sup> Leonid Brezhnev’s near quarter century advocating a policy of “stability of cadre” meant that as long as Central Asia and other republics were politically submissive, Brezhnev would turn a blind eye to practices such as informal patronage of one’s network.<sup>59</sup> While Brezhnev had sought to ignore- and sometime to foster- clan-based patronage, his successor, Yuri Andropov, used the KGB to monitor the Central Asian Republics and document extensive corruption, deception of the party-state institutions, and departure from Leninist principles.<sup>60</sup> Andropov initiated a purge in 1983 and Gorbachev continued the purge from 1985 to 1988.<sup>61</sup>

Purge caused for the removal of thousands of individuals from the power. In the most stunning cases, the Kyrgyz and Uzbek party first secretaries, Turdakun Usubaliev and Sharof Rashidov, were openly dismissed in a dramatic reversal of Brezhnevite stability.<sup>62</sup> This led to the removal of their extensive personal clan networks—commonly known as the “Usubaliev clan” and “Rashidov clan”—and subsidiary clans were swept from positions of power.<sup>63</sup> The new appointees were more ‘Russified’ central Asians close to Moscow and the party—Absamat Masaliev in the Kyrgyz republic, and Inamzhan Usmonkhodjaev and later Rafiq Nishanov in the Uzbek republic. Most crucially, the new leaders had weak clan ties and stronger party ties.<sup>64</sup> Moscow’s purges of the hegemonic clans of the Brezhnev era had left a relative balance of power among clans in each case (except in Tajikistan).

In Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan the story is much the same. New presidents rose to power under similar conditions: in 1986 Gorbachev first removed Dinmukhammed Kunaev, the long time first secretary of the Kazakh Republic who had used state assets to foster his own patronage networks for more than twenty years.<sup>65</sup> The new secretary Nursultan Nazarbaev was not known for supporting a particular clan. Similarly in Turkmenistan, Sapramurat Niyazov rose to power in the 1980s with few clan ties. Both were therefore acceptable both to Gorbachev and to rival clans, which saw them as able “balancers”.<sup>66</sup> In Tajikistan, by contrast, Moscow never initiated a purge. From 1946 to 1991 representatives of a prominent Tajik clan, based primarily in the Khodjent region, had controlled most lever of power within the republic. Loosely known as the “Khodjentis”, this clan delegated some power to its “little brother clan” from Kulyab. The Khodjentis, assured of Moscow’s continued patronage, had no incentive to pact. They continued their hegemonic control and a precarious imbalance of clan power remained.<sup>67</sup>

The Soviet period totally changed the political traditions and values which were unquestionable in previous centuries. The Soviets shunned the nomadic and tribal values of Central Asia as part of the backwardness of the region and propagate their level best for a change which is more western or Russian in content. The western education brought a new generation of Central Asian leaders who are partially or fully ‘Russified’ and always unconscious towards their history and traditions. But cleverer among them used their blood connections more effectively during Soviet rule not

directly but indirect ways. The 'Big Brother' of Moscow completely unaware of the Central Asian traditions was forced to accept the advice of their Central Asian comrades. Or in other words, tribal and clan politics continued still but not open to strangers especially to Russians. At the same time Central Asian Marxists condemn the clan system in a more rigorous manner and considered it as one of the reactionary activity and punishable crime at any cost. The contradiction of theory and practice continued in Central Asia throughout the Soviet Period. But the influence of Soviet ideas still lingers in post-Soviet Central Asia. But difference that in post-Soviet Central Asia, the leaders are willing to accept the existence of clan reality in their society. But openly they criticize it as a backward looking concept which slows down their political development.

### **Re-emergence of Clans: The post-Soviet Central Asia**

Soviet Union got disintegrated in 1991 and all the Central Asian republics got independence. As the Soviet system collapsed, clans-informal identity networks based on kin or fictive kin bonds- emerged as political actors. Clan politics- the politics of informal competition and deal making between clans in pursuit of clan interests-has had profound effects on the political trajectories of these regimes. Inter-clan deals helped to stabilize the transitions in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Inter-clan competition fostered regime breakdown in Tajikistan, leading to one of the longest and bloodiest post-Soviet conflicts (Collins 2004: 224).

The Soviet collapse that triggered political transitions in Central Asia, the collapse, which no Central Asian leader had supported, thrust the republics into independence and uncertainty. Most clan elite had been relatively unconcerned with political ideology and were not prepared to propose a new agenda. Only the Kyrgyz president Askar Akayev alone initiated rapid democratization. In other cases, where there was no pact among elites, the regime rapidly dissolved into civil conflict. Democratization is rather particularly vulnerable in Kyrgyzstan. Key dimensions of Kyrgyzstan's fledging electoral democracy are undermined by clan politics, including 1) contestation through elections, 2) separation of powers, 3) participation through parties, civil society, and the free media, and 4) transparency and accountability in controlling



state resources.<sup>68</sup> Authoritarianism is also penetrated and weakened by clan rivalries in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Uzbekistan's authoritarian transition has allowed the president Islam Karimov to maintain a tighter grip on the regime and its resources. Karimov sought to consolidate an authoritarian state by centralizing economic and political power. Islam Karimov, from the beginning, tried to present himself as a leader of the whole nation and standing above any clan loyalties. In his public statements Karimov denounced clan politics and swore to fight and uproot it from Uzbekistani reality. Karimov refer to regionalism and clans as one among seven most important threats to the country's security. That's why Karimov himself recognized that the phenomenon of 'clans' had not disappeared but was still a part of reality in Uzbekistan. But in reality Karimov functions himself in different manner especially towards his powerful family. The enrichment of the presidential family is a matter of debate among political analysts who are concentrating on the region especially on Uzbekistan. The battle between Karimov and Uzbek clan factions has impeded the centralization of control over economic resources. Karimov was besieged by ever increasing demands-primarily by three major clan networks, from Samarkand, Tashkent, and Ferghana- to control a greater share of the state's natural resources (especially gold, oil and gas, and cotton).<sup>69</sup>

The interests of particular clans and even clan-based corruption networks frequently conflict with Karimov's state agenda. The convertibility crisis was a prominent example of the president's inability to define state policy in opposition to clan interests. The government consistently refused currency convertibility despite U.S., IMF, and World Bank demands. Making the currency convertible would have undercut major areas of profitability for the Olimov, Ganaev, Jurabekov, and other elite clans who maintained monopolies over alcohol, banking, cotton, gas, and other key industries, by preventing privatization and foreign competitors.<sup>70</sup> Building familial wealth became quite another extensive business resulting in the emergence of what may be qualified as 'mega-clan', a clan formation centered on the presidential family. A key role in the creation and expansion of this mega-clan belongs to the president's daughter, whose business and Patronage Empire has been growing rapidly, both in terms of the administrative machine controlled by her father.

In post-Soviet Tajikistan people divided along lines of “ethnicity” (Uzbeks vs Tajiks vs Pamiris), along regional lines (Khojand and Kulyab on one side, Karategin, Jurgon Teppe, and Pamir region on the other), as well as along sociological lines (old communist elite vs. emerging intelligentsia). The Tajikistan descent into civil war originated as a contest between communist conservatives and a “democratic” opposition based on rival regions. One side in the political struggle was made up of the traditional communist leaders with their complex networks of patrons and clients embedded in extended families, clans, and local relations, along with their Uzbek allies.<sup>71</sup> The opposition was a brand political coalition of cultural revivalist intellectuals (The Rastokhez movement), the Pamiris, the Democratic Party of Tajikistan, and the Islamic Renaissance Party.

The privileged Leninabad clan or later Khodjendis from northern Tajikistan owed its supremacy to Soviet rule. It was tightly knit to the communist party. Badakhshanis or Pamiris other major clan group of Tajikistan from the mountain region of Badakshan, the south eastern Tajikistan who belongs to the Shia sect of Ismaili and whose language, an offshoot of East Iranian, is unintelligible to the rest of the Persian-speaking population. The Kulyabi clan, who are coming from the capital region of Dushanbe, was incorporated in the state by giving them high office at the expense of neighbouring Badakhshanis and Gharmis. The Kulyabi leadership, on the other hand, was as suspicious of Leninobadis as it was hateful of Badakhshanis and Gharmis. The Tajik civil war ended in peace settlement by the two factions with the unconditional support of western powers. But in the present context the Khodjendis lost their position which they enjoined throughout Soviet period and the years just after the decline of Soviet Union and Kulabis became more powerful especially due to their proximity to capital, the city of Dushanbe. The inaccessible mountain homeland of Badakhshanis still lingers as one of the most backward region of the entire Tajikistan.

The Tajik civil war was initiated by elite clan struggles over resources- not by ideology or primordial identities.<sup>72</sup> Russia backed the official faction which led by the former communist elite and the president of Tajikistan Rakhmonov and has subsequently played the role of the Kulyabi external patron, Russian patronage is critical, since Rakhmonov has little legitimacy among other groups. From the mid-

1990s to the present President Rakhmonov has run an openly clan-based regime, stacked with his own Kulyabi network. The regime continues to exclude or short change not only the Khodjentis but also most Garmi, Pamiri, Hissari, Lakhai, and ethnic Uzbek clans.<sup>73</sup> As one political party activist put it: “Now we have elections, but the whole government is controlled by Rakhmonov’s clan, and it is not even a larger and important clan. It is a small Kulyabi clan that rose to power because of the war.”

In Kazakhstan, President Nursultan Nazarbayev faced historical divisions between three hordes and smaller clan lineages.<sup>74</sup> Despite his brief liberalization of the media and parties and his rhetoric about inclusion of all three hordes,<sup>75</sup> Nazarbayev’s regime has reverted to clan-based authoritarianism. The Post Soviet Turkmenistan witnessed the dictatorial rule of Sapramurat Niyazov, a Tekke by birth but brought up in Soviet administered orphanage. Or in other words he was detribalized in nature with almost zero tribal connections. President Niyazov acted more quickly than his neighbours to strengthen the security forces behind him in the early years of independence and to use them to control clan and larger tribal rivalries. Although the parliament declared him President for the life in 1999 and many western scholars and policy makers have portrayed Turkmenistan as a consolidated sultanistic or even totalitarian regime,<sup>76</sup> Niyazov is not autonomous. There is evidence that various clan and economic elites caught stealing a share of the state pie are periodically purged.<sup>77</sup> Even still, Niyazov’s fellow Tekkes found themselves in higher rung of the political and military circle which closes to President during the final years of Niyazov era.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> See Starr Frederick S (2006), "Clans, Authoritarian Rulers, and Parliaments in Central Asia", *Central Asia –Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program*, pp.7-8.

<sup>2</sup> See Helfgott, L (1977), "Tribalism as a socioeconomic formation in Iranian history", *IS* 10, PP.36-61.

<sup>3</sup> See Tapper, Richard (1983), "Introduction", in Richard tapper (eds.) *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan*, London, Canberra and New York : Croom Helm and St.Martin's Press,pp.6-7.

<sup>4</sup> Tahmasp Quli, or Nadir Shah as he became in 1736, was a military adventurer rather than a tribal chief.

<sup>5</sup> Abdali later changed the name Abdali to Durrani, supposedly after the title he adopted-Durr-I Durran (Pearl of Pearls).

<sup>6</sup> The account of Afghan history and the relation of the rulers to the tribes draws heavily on a manuscript by Rob Hager.

<sup>7</sup> Later Shah Mahmud acknowledged Qajar Suzerainty in 1829.

<sup>8</sup> Eastern territories of Kashmir, Multan and Peshawar were lost to the Sikhs under Ranjith Singh.

<sup>9</sup> Ataturk in Turkey and Reza Shah in Iran, contemporary rulers with similar programmes to Amanullah, came to power by overthrowing previous long-established tribal dynasties, Amanullah succeeded to power as a tribal chieftain himself.

<sup>10</sup> Bacha I Saqau assumed title Amir Habibullah Second.

<sup>11</sup> Musahiban descended from a brother of Dost Muhammad.

<sup>12</sup> See Elphinstone, M (1815), *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul*, Karachi, London and New York: Oxford University Press, reprinted 1972.

<sup>13</sup> Barth (1959), *Political Leadership among Swat Pathans*, London: Athlone.

<sup>14</sup> See Elphinstone, M (1815), *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> See Tapper, R (1983), *ibid.*, p.43.

<sup>16</sup> Khaled Baba: personal communication by Muhammad Shabir Khan of Kabul University; Daru Nika: information from an Atsakzai nomad from Shindand. Quoted in Glatzer, Bernt (1983), "Political organization of Pashtun nomads and the state", in Richard Tapper (eds.), *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan*, London, Canberra and New York : Croom Helm and St.Martin's Press, p.220.

<sup>17</sup> See Lockhart, L (1958), *The Fall of the Safavid Dynasty and the Afghan Occupation of Persia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.85-87, 95-96, for Abdali and Ghilzai leaders under the Safavids.

<sup>18</sup> See KNL, 29 June 1886.

<sup>19</sup> See Barth, F (1969), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, London: Allen and Unwin, pp.14-15.

<sup>20</sup> See Falk, R (1959), *International Jurisdiction: horizontal and vertical conception of legal order*, Temple Law Quarterly, 32:295-320.

<sup>21</sup> A Term borrowed from Richard Tapper, "Nomadism in modern Afghanistan: asset or anachronism?" in Dupree and Albert (eds.), *Afghanistan*, p.136.

<sup>22</sup> The Saur Revolution is the name given to the Communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) takeover of political power in Afghanistan on 27 April 1978. In 1978 a prominent member of PDPA Parcham wing, Mir Akbar Khyber, was killed by the government and his associates. Although the government statement deploring the assassination, PDPA leaders apparently feared that, the then Afghan President Mohammad Daoud Khan was planning to exterminate them all. Shortly after a massive protest against the government during the funeral ceremonies of Mir Akbar Khyber most of

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the leaders of PDPA were arrested by the government. Hafizullah Amin and a number of military wing officers of the PDPA Khalq wing stayed out of prison. This gave a chance to the group to organize an uprising. Nur Mohammad Taraki, Babrak Kamal, and Hafizullah Amin overthrew the regime of Mohammad Daoud Khan, and renaming the country the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA). The word 'Saur' means 'April' in Pushto. The regime of President Mohammad Daoud Khan came to a violent end in the early morning hours of 28 April 1978, when military units loyal to the Khalq faction of the PDPA stormed the Arg Palace and killed Daoud and most members of his family.

<sup>23</sup> Among statements broadcast and published about the new nationality policy was the following, appearing as a larger banner during the International Kushan Conference (Kabul, November 1978): "Creation of a progressive national cultural system and in the first step ensuring of conditions essential for evolution of art and literature, education and publication in the mother tongues of tribes and nationalities reside in Afghanistan." See Naby, Eden (1980), "The Ethnic Factor in Soviet-Afghan Relations", *Asian Survey*, 20(3):238.

<sup>24</sup> Under the communist régimes, the requirement that Pashtu be studied by all government employees has been dropped. However, this has not decreased the use of Pashtu because, more than ever, the government bureaucracy has been staffed with native Pashtu speakers, often the first generation in their families to be literate.

<sup>25</sup> For getting details about Mujahedin Leadership, see Roy, Oliver, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, chapters four and ten.

<sup>26</sup> See Roy, Olivier (1989), "Afghanistan: back to tribalism or on to Lebanon?", *Third World Quarterly*, 11(4): 74.

<sup>27</sup> The majority of the seven Peshawar leaders are also either Ghilzai (Hekmatyar, Sayyaf, Nabi), or eastern Pashtun (Khales). Of the three other leaders, two have family links with Ghilzai (Gailani and Mojadidi); only Rabbani is non-Pashtun.

<sup>28</sup> See Posner, Daniel N (2003), "The Colonial Origins of Ethnic Cleavages: The Case of Linguistic Divisions in Zambia," *Comparative Politics*, 35(2):127-28.

<sup>29</sup> "Inside Afghanistan," *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago, 30 September 2001, p.16.

<sup>30</sup> The late Ahmed Shah Masoud's native region and power base.

<sup>31</sup> Muhammed Fahim was the Defense Minister, Abdullah Abdullah was the Foreign Minister, and Ali Ahmad Jalali was the Interior Minister. All are Tajiks from Panjshir.

<sup>32</sup> A notable World Bank anthropologist, Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, was appointed as Finance Minister; Anwar Ul-Haq Ahadi was chosen as Governor of the Afghan Central Bank.

<sup>33</sup> Six principal Durrani tribes are the Barakzai, the Popalzai, the Alikozai, the Nurzai, the Alizai, and the Achakzai.

<sup>34</sup> See Rippenburg, Carol J (2005), "Ethnicity and Civil Society in Contemporary Afghanistan," *Middle East Journal*, 59(1):48.

<sup>35</sup> See Soucek, Svat (2000), *A History of Inner Asia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.1-29.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, pp.70-84.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, pp.143-49.

<sup>38</sup> See Allworth, Edward (1990), *Modern Uzbeks*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, p.34.

<sup>39</sup> Zenkovsky, Serge A (1955), "Kulturkampf in Pre-Revolutionary Central Asia," *American Slavic and East European Review*, 14(1):17.

<sup>40</sup> In 1897 the oblasts of Semireche and Transcaspia were also included in the General Governorship.

<sup>41</sup> In Tajikistan the clan and regional groupings division was considered as one of the causes for the civil war in 1993.

<sup>42</sup> See Ilkhamov, Alisher (2004), "Archaeology of Uzbek identity," *Central Asian Survey*, 23(3-4):289-326.

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- <sup>43</sup> Schoeberlen-Engel, John (1996), "The Prospects for Uzbek National Identity," *Central Asia Monitor*, 2:13.
- <sup>44</sup> Settled people were known as Sarts, while nomads were often called Kazakhs.
- <sup>45</sup> Schoeberlen-Engel, John (1996), "The Prospects for Uzbek National Identity," *Central Asia Monitor*, (2):14.
- <sup>46</sup> Schoeberlen-Engel, John (1994), *Identity in Central Asia: Construction and Contention in the Conceptions of 'Ozbek', 'Tajik', 'Samarqandi', and other Groups*, Ph.D dissertation, Harvard: Harvard University.
- <sup>47</sup> Bode,k (1847), "O turkmenskikh pokoleniakh iamudakh I goklanakh," *Zapiski russkogo geograficheskogo obschestva*, vol.2:224. Quoted in Adrienne L Edgar(2001), "Genealogy, Class, and "Tribal Policy" in Soviet Turkmenistan 1924-1934," *Slavic Review*, 60(2):271.
- <sup>48</sup> See Geiss, Paul Georg (1999), "Turkmen Tribalism," *Central Asian Survey*, 18(3):347-49.
- <sup>49</sup> According to 1927 figures, the Turkmen population included 270,254 Tekes, 157,483 Ersaris, 103,729 Yomuts, 32,729 Sariks, 35,541 Salirs, 20,899 Goklengs, and 24,077 Chodirs. Quoted in Adrienne L Edgar (2001), "Genealogy, Class, and "Tribal Policy" in Soviet Turkmenistan 1924-1934," *Slavic Review*, 60(2):280.
- <sup>50</sup> See Khalid, Adeeb (1998), *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- <sup>51</sup> See Browner, Daniel and Edward Lazzerini (1997), *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>53</sup> See Hirsch, Francine (1998), *Empire of Nations: Colonial Technologies and the Meaning of the Soviet Union*, Ph.D dissertation, Princeton: Princeton University.
- <sup>54</sup> See Slezkine, Yuri (1994), "The USSR as a Communal Apartment or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review*, 53(2): 14-52.
- <sup>55</sup> See Martin, Terry (2001), *The Affirmative Action Empire*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- <sup>56</sup> See Suny, Ronald G (1993), *The Revenge of the Past*, Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.
- <sup>57</sup> See Roy, Olivier (2000), *The New Central Asia*, New York: New York University Press.
- <sup>58</sup> See Massel, Gregory (1974), *The Surrogate Proletariat*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- <sup>59</sup> See Bunce, Valerie (1983), "The Political Economy of the Brezhnev Era: The Rise and Fall of Corporatism," *British Journal of Political Science*, 13:135.
- <sup>60</sup> See Ligachev, Yegor (1993), *Inside Gorbachev's Kremlin*, New York: Pantheon.
- <sup>61</sup> Grinevskii, Oleg (1999), personal interview, Kathleen Collins, May 1999.
- <sup>62</sup> See Carlisle, Donald (1991), "Power and Politics in Soviet Uzbekistan: From Stalin to Gorbachev", in William Fierman (eds.) *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation*, Boulder: Westview Press.
- <sup>63</sup> See Usabaliyev, T.U (1995), *Kleveshchite, Kleveshchite, Bishkek: Uchkun*. Quoted in Kathleen Collins (2004), "The Logic of Clan Politics," *World Politics*, 56(2):240.
- <sup>64</sup> Kathleen Collin's interviews with journalists in Tashkent, Bishkek, and Dushanbe, July 1998, August 2000, and January 2003. Quoted in Kathleen Collins (2004), "The Logic of Clan Politics," *World Politics*, 56(2):240.
- <sup>65</sup> See Olcott, Martha Brill (1997), "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.

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<sup>66</sup> See Ochs, Michael (1997), "Turkmenistan: The Quest for Stability and Control," in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds.) *Conflict, Cleavage and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>67</sup> Kathleen Collin's interviews with journalists in Tashkent, May 1998. Quoted in Kathleen Collins (2004), "The Logic of Clan Politics," *World Politics*, 56(2):243.

<sup>68</sup> See Dahl, Robert (1971), *Polyarchy*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

<sup>69</sup> See International crisis group (2003), *Uzbekistan's Reform Program: Illusion or Reality?* ICG, Osh/Brussels.

<sup>70</sup> See Said, Farangis (2000), "Machinations Mar Uzbekistan's Banking System," *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*.

<sup>71</sup> The communist elite had strong local base in Leninabad Province (the capital of which is Khojand) and Kulab Province, as well as an ethnic coloration, because Leninabad is an area that is either Uzbek or Uzbekized and somewhat Russian in culture.

<sup>72</sup> See Rubin, Barnett (1998), "Russian Hegemony and State Breakdown: Causes and Consequences of the Tajik Civil War," in Barnett Rubin and Jack Snyder (eds.) *Post-Soviet Political Order*, London: Routledge Press.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> See Schatz, Edward (2000), "The Politics of Multiple Identities : Lineage and Ethnicity in Kazakhstan," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 52 (3) : 489-506

<sup>75</sup> See Olcott, Martha Brill (1997), "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.

<sup>76</sup> Fairbanks, Charles (2001), "Disillusionment in the Caucasus and Central Asia," *Journal of Democracy* 12.

<sup>77</sup> Safronov, Rustem (2002), "Turkmenistan purge indicative of instability," [Online: web] Accessed 7 July 2009, URL:<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav0301202.shtml>.

***CHAPTER - 3***  
***CLAN AND POLITICS IN KAZAKHSTAN***



## CHAPTER - 3

### CLAN AND POLITICS IN KAZAKHSTAN

#### **Kazakhstan: An Introduction**

Kazakhstan sprawls across a territory of approximately 2.7 million square kilometers, encompasses three time zones with vastly varying topographies and climate and houses substantial metals and mineral wealth, was the second largest republic of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR). The republic is landlocked and borders the two great powers of Russia and China (see Map 3.1). The republic is home to over one hundred nationalities. In the past, the country was the exclusive domain of pastoral nomads. For over two millennia, from prehistoric times up to the twentieth century, or more precisely, up to the collectivization campaign of the Soviet period, the inhabitants of the 'Kazakh lands' followed a nomadic way of life (Sarsembayev 1990). Russia gradually subdued and annexed Kazakhstan during the long period which lasted from the second half of the eighteenth century to the mid-sixties of the nineteenth century. Soon afterwards, the Russian government began to take away the Kazakh's summer pastures and sometimes even winter quarters and replaced them first with Cossacks and then with peasant settlers from the European part of the empire (Demko 1969). Many Kazakh pastoral nomads were gradually ousted to the arid areas of central and southern Kazakhstan.

The Kazakhs accepted Russian rule because they acknowledged Russia's superior military force, which they were shown in the 1840s and again in 1869-70, but Kazakhs remained hostile. Almost all Kazakhs of any stature refused to serve in the new administration, and taxes were collected only by force or its threat. The Kazakh community had grown increasingly unhappy with Russian policies in the steppe until discontent climaxed in the 1916 uprising. In late June 1916 the Russian government makes a new and disruptive demand. The Tsar called for conscription into labour brigades of the indigenous population, from the Caucasus oblasts and Turkestan and

### MAP 3.1: KAZAKHSTAN ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS, 1996



Figure 4. Kazakhstan Administrative Divisions, 1996

Source: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/asia.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/asia.html)

Steppe regions; this was at the time when the Russian army was seriously understaffed and the front was collapsing. The uprising crushed with brutal force.

The most serious problem in the decades before the communist revolution had been the shortage of accessible pastureland; good grazing land had always been in short supply, but the imperial policy of land seizure for distribution to European settlers had exacerbated the situation. At the same period, contact with Russian and European settlers was leading both to acculturation and the formation of a small group of bourgeois nationalists who established the Alash movement, which became a moderate nationalist uprising in 1905.<sup>1</sup> Maintaining its loyalty to the Tsarist authorities during the First World War, the movement after the 1917 February revolution formed the Alash Orda government which lasted until 1920. At the same time, Kazakhs were deported after 1916 when an anti-Russian uprising in reaction to forced conscription failed and was followed closely by famine and disease further reduces the Kazakh number. The national delimitation of Central Asia by the Bolsheviks in 1924-1925 established the five main administrative-territorial units of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and in 1925 the 'Kirghiz' ASSR was officially renamed the 'Kazak' Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic ( Kazak ASSR); in 1936 this was amended to 'Kazakh', 'in order to reflect more closely Kazakh pronunciation'<sup>2</sup> (Akiner 1995). Also in 1936 the Kazakh ASSR was elevated to full Union republic status, which it retained until it declared independence in December 1991.

During the 1920s the Kazakh pastoralist economy partly recovered because some of the pastures were taken away from the Russian settlers and retained to nomads and semi-nomads. In the early 1930s came the traumatic events of forced collectivization and the bloody settlement of Kazakh nomads on fixed lands. In a few years, about five hundred and fifty thousand nomadic and semi-nomadic households were forced to settle, others were moved to towns and cities to turn them into industrial workers (Olcott 1987:179-87). The forced collectivization and denomadization of the Kazakhs met with widespread resistance. Many slaughtered their livestock or tried to drive them into China. Those Kazakhs who resisted were killed or deported if they did not manage to migrate abroad.

All these events and the subsequent famine cost the Kazakhs between one and half to two million souls; another half million people had to flee from the country.

Meanwhile, the Russian and Slavic migrations to Kazakhstan continued. In the 1930s and 1940s the industrialization of the republic stimulated these movements, in the 1950s- the so-called ‘Virgin Lands Campaign’ aimed at sowing wheat on large tracts of lands in the northern Kazakhstan steppe. In addition, in the 1930s and particularly in the 1940s, Kazakhstan became one of the ‘Gulag’ areas and one of the main territories for resettlement of various deported groups and peoples. According to the final Soviet census (See Table-3.1), taken in 1989, Kazakhs constituted 40.1 percentage of the population, while Russians were 37.4 percentage. Combined with the Ukrainians (5.4 percentage) and the Belorussians (1.1 percentage), the Slavs constituted 44.2 percentage of the population. When added to the largely Russified Germans (5.8 percentage), non-Kazakhs formed a bare but absolute majority of the republic (Cummings 2005: 2).

Ethnic Group	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan
Russians	37.8	21.5	6.7	9.4	8.4
Uzbeks	2.0	12.9	23.5	8.9	71.4
Kazakhs	39.7	-	-	2.5	4.1
Kyrgyzs	-	52.4	1.3	-	-
Tajiks	-	-	62.3	-	4.7
Turkmen	-	-	-	71.4	-
Others	20.5	13.2	6.2	7.8	11.4
Total Population	16,464,464	4,257,755	5,092,603	3,552,117	19,810,077

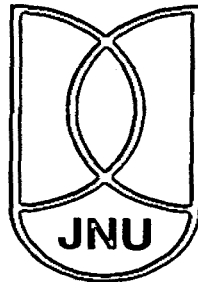
Source: 1989 All- Union Census, reported in *vestnik statistiki*, 1990-91. Quoted in Paul Kubicek (1997), “Regionalism, Nationalism and Realpolitik in Central Asia”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 49(4):645.

**ROLE OF CLANS IN POLITICS OF  
CENTRAL ASIA: A  
CASE STUDY OF KAZAKHSTAN AND  
KYRGYZSTAN**

**Dissertation Submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University for  
Award of the Degree of**

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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20 July 2009

**DECLARATION**

I declare that the dissertation entitled "ROLE OF CLANS IN POLITICS OF CENTRAL ASIA: A CASE STUDY OF KAZAKHSTAN AND KYRGYZSTAN", submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University, is my own work. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

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**CERTIFICATE**

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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## PREFACE

This research work is an endeavour to make an analytical study of the role of clans in politics of Central Asia with focus on Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The clan is a primordial identity which has been existed from pre-modern times. It is generally accepted that human political development from pre- historic period to contemporary period through stages. At beginning human society showed the character of a chief centered tribal society with more egalitarian principles. Then agriculture based feudal society came into being. The present territory and ethnicity based modern, state society came much later. But, not all contemporary societies exactly follow the aforementioned stages of tribal society, feudal society and state society especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, Greater Middle East and Central Asia.

This Dissertation work is going to deal with the primordial tribal identity which is prevalent in Central Asia, known as clan. The Dissertation work is concentrating on the political role of clans in Central Asia especially in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. A clan is an informal organization comprising a network of individuals linked by kin and fictive kin identities. These effective ties comprise the identity and bonds of its organizations. Kinship ties are rooted in the extensive family organization that characterizes society in Central Asia and in tribal societies world over. This “Fictive Kinship” ties go beyond blood ties and incorporate individuals into the network through marriage, family alliance, school ties, localism, neighbourhood and village.

Even though modern nation states often tried to hide or suppress the existence of primordial institutions in their socio-political and economic system, it clearly seems to appear that most of the third world countries are still directly or indirectly supporting the existence of various primordial institutions in their recently adopted western socio-political and economic systems. The Central Asian countries are not exception to this. Central Asian countries also adopted universally accepted western notions of modernity and development. But they are functioning quite differently from their western

counterparts. Through, proper understanding of the working mechanism of social organization like clan in Central Asia, it is quite easy to identify the underlying ebb and flows in the socio-political and economic domain of Central Asia.

Though scholars from different parts of world are conducting quite serious research on various issues of Central Asian region very few researchers are trying to deal with the unnoticed issues like connection between primordial social organizations and politics in the present day Central Asia. Western anthropologists did some great works in nineteenth century and early decades of twentieth century, due to an excitement about the study of a strange society totally different from their own. The lack of proper understanding of the character of the societies of non-western world in general and Central Asian region in particular is creating a major problem for various western dominated International Organizations like United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and International Peace Keeping Forces (PKF) to deal with various problems which bring instability in the region.

The communication gap between Central Asians and people from other parts of the world may led to the development of various forms of extremisms, from ultra nationalism to militant Islam. Only through clear and detailed understanding of socio-political dynamics of this part of world, the International community can deal with the various burning Central Asian issues like one in Afghanistan. Moreover various dynamics of clan equations will help to explain the social foundations of order/disorder in Central Asia, and will help us to think about the factors driving negative political trajectories in similar societies.

This research work has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter will be going to focus on the familiarization process of the dissertation work. The chapter will be roughly going to cover all themes relate with the research topic. The chapter will also be obliged to discuss various informal and formal institutions and concepts like identity, kinship, clan, tribe, ethnicity and so on. Moreover the first chapter will be more theoretical and conceptual. The second chapter will be going to discuss about the traditional Central Asian society (including Afghanistan) in its pristine form. The chapter will also be going

to deal with the almost all important ethnic groups of Central Asia, their origin, and their spread into the present habitation area. The second chapter will highlight the role of clans in various spheres of Central Asian life especially in its political life. In short, this chapter will give a quite clear and detailed picture about the relationship between clans and politics in Central Asia.

The third and fourth chapters will be more specific in nature. In the case of third chapter, the chapter will focus on nuptial relationship between clan and politics in Kazakhstan. This chapter will analyze in detail about Kazakh clan system and its influence over the present day Kazakh life especially the Kazakh political life. The chapter will also deal with the structural changes which happened to Kazakh clan system through ages. But this chapter will give more attention to the post-Soviet Kazakhstan society. The fourth chapter will highlight the relationship between clan and politics in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan. This chapter will discuss in detail about traditional Kyrgyz clan system and its influence over the various walks of life of present day Kyrgyzstan especially in its political life. The chapter will analyze the role of clans over the Tulip Revolution which brought power change in Kyrgyzstan after long fifteen years. This chapter will also highlight various clan equations which brought political stability in post-revolution Kyrgyzstan.

While summarizing the arguments which made in previous chapters, the last and final concluding chapter will test hypotheses. The chapter five will highlight the importance of primordial institutions like clan in socio-economic and political life of modern Central Asia and its ability to keep newly born Central Asian countries especially Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in a politically stable condition. Finally, this chapter will also make some theoretical arguments about the relevance of informal institutions in the globalized modern world.

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# MAP 1: THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

## THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA



Source: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/asia.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/asia.html)

## **The Origin of the Kazakh People**

There is no agreement on how the Kazakh people were formed, largely because of the paucity of contemporary sources.<sup>3</sup> Almost no Europeans travelled to the area, Eastern chroniclers were far more interested in events in the oasis cities than in the lives of the nomadic steppe populations, and the nomads themselves left no legacy apart from a fragmentary, often legendary, oral history. Physically, Kazakhs are classified as South Siberian Mongoloid, but the Kazakh language belongs to the Central Turkic Family. The vocabulary contains a significant proportion of early loans from Arabic, Persian and Mongol, and a more recent stratum of Russian loans (Akiner 1995). Folk tradition traces the origins of the Kazakhs back to a single legendary progenitor named Alash Khan.

The Kazakhs have been pastoral nomads for most of their existence, engaged in a constant struggle to preserve their traditional, self-sufficient, livestock-based economy. Finding self-sufficient pastures to serve the needs of the entire community posed a challenge in the steppe and semi desert lands that they controlled, and maintaining domination of their territory put the Kazakhs over at odds with more powerful neighbours, first the Uzbeks, then the Kalmyks, and finally the Russians. Although nomadism is now no longer a living tradition, it remains a fundamental element of the national self- image of today's Kazakh. The religious life of the Kazakh tribes was informed by two sets of beliefs: a substratum of animism onto which was gradually grafted a veneer of Islam. Despite all challenges to their survival, the Kazakhs exist today as a distinct ethnic group of nearly seven million people, clearly shaped by the experience of nearly seventy years of Soviet rule, yet retaining strong cultural ties with their past and taking pride in their heritage. Although the Kazakhs have borrowed much from other cultures, coloring contemporary life with Islamic, Russian, and Soviet influences, the Kazakh remain unique-similar but not identical to other Central Asian nationalities.

The consensus is that the Kazakh people or Kazakh nation was formed in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century when Janibek and Kirai, sons of Barak Khan of the White Horde of the Mongol Empire, broke away from Abu' l Khayr (Abulkair), khan of the Uzbeks. Janibek and Kirai sought to capitalize on the power vacuum created by Abu' l Khayr's defeat by the

Oirats (western Mongols), and they moved with their supporters to western Semireche'-the land between the Chu and Talas rivers, formerly controlled by the Uzbeks. Over the next century their descendants were joined by indigenous Turkic clans and Turko-Mongol pastoral nomads who moved to the area to find pasture on the ever-increasing lands under Kazakh control. By the mid-sixteenth century these people, who were calling themselves Kazakhs, had divided into three tribal groupings (Small, Middle and Great Hordes) ruled by a single khan. The territory of the Kazakh khanate continued to expand, so that by the middle of the sixteenth century it included most of the environs of Lake Balkhash and the lands immediately above and below the Syr Darya River, north to the Turgus River and west to the lands just northwest of the Aral Sea. The Kazakh khanate was a political confederation composed primarily of Turkic-speaking nomadic tribes of Uzbek-Turkic stock (mostly) Nogai that had migrated to the area from the Dasht-I-Qipchak (Kipchak steppe), and Naiman, Argyn, and Chagatai tribesmen from the Uzbek Khanate, as well as some indigenous population. By the time of Qasim Khan (reigned 1511-23), the Kazakh nation was estimated at over one million people.<sup>4</sup>

The term Kazakh came into use by the residents of the area possibly as early as the end of the fifteenth century and certainly by the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Many theories have been advanced to explain the origin of the term. Some speculates that it comes from the Turkish verb 'qaz' (to wander), because the Kazakhs were wandering steppe men; or that it is the combined form of two Kazakh tribal names, Kaspay and Saki; or that it traces from the Mongol word *Khasaq* (a wheeled cart used by the Kazakhs to transport their yurts (felt tents) and belongings).<sup>6</sup> Another explanation advanced in the nineteenth century is that the term comes from the Turkish word *ak* (white) and *kaz* (goose), from a popular Kazakh legend of a white steppe goose that turned into a princess, who in turn gave birth to the first Kazakh.<sup>7</sup>

The Mongol rulers influenced language and culture as well as the social organization of the Turkic tribes of Central Asia. The Kazakh language took on Mongol words, and clan structure was modified to resemble the Mongol *ulu* (clan) system. Perhaps the longest-lasting innovation of Mongol rule was the application of the 'Yasa', a codified law based



on a combination of customary practice and Muslim percepts, which served as precedent for a Kazakh system of customary law. When Chingis Khan's empire was distributed among his heirs, the territory of present-day Kazakhstan was divided between his sons, Jochi and Chagatai. Jochi predeceased his father, and so his inheritance (the lands west of the Irtysh River) passed to his son, Batu, who expanded his territory westward and founded the Golden Horde. Chagatai controlled the Semirech'e region as well as western Jungaria (also known as Dzhungaria and late as Kashgaria) and Mawarannahr.

During the first half of the thirteenth century Batu's territories continued to expand westward, but his headquarters remained at Sarai (Dasht-i-Qipchak). The vastness of Batu's holdings made it easy for loyal but independent khanates to emerge within the territory of the Golden Horde. Over the first quarter of the fourteenth century, a semiautonomous Mongol Khanate gradually emerged, known as the White Horde (Ak Orda) and encompassing the Syr Darya region. The first khan of the White Horde paid tribute to the khans of the Golden Horde. Eight successive khans tried unsuccessfully to gain complete autonomy for the White Horde, but it was not until 1364 that independence from the Golden Horde was achieved.

As part of their process of self-definition of Kazakhs appear to have discovered their descent from a common ancestor.<sup>8</sup> The most popular related legend is that of Alash, viewed as the original ancestor of the Kazakhs and his three sons- Uisun, the eldest, Aktol, the middle, and Alshin, the youngest- who formed the Ulu (Great), Orta (Middle) and Kishi (Little) Zhuz (Horde) respectively. The official Soviet history of Kazakhstan consider Janibek, the first Kazakh khan, holding that, upon Janibek's death in 1480, Kirai's son Buyunduk (reigned 1480-1511) was elected his successor.<sup>9</sup> Other sources maintain that Kirai was the first elected khan, ruling until his death in 1488, when he was succeeded by Buyunduk.

The largest and most important city, Yasi (later Turkistan), became the headquarters of the Kazakh khan. Buyunduk's successor, Qasim Khan, is generally credited with the creation of a centralized and unified Kazakh Khanate. During this period the Kazakh confederation expanded as Qasim welcomed other Turkic tribes, including Kipchaks

from the Nogai group and Naimans and Argyns from the eastern branch of the Chagatais. It was possible for the first time to consider the Kazakhs a people: they were approximately one million strong, spoke the same Turkic language, utilized the same type of livestock breeding, and shared a culture and a form of social organization. Under Qasim, political unity was established as well, for his authority was recognized by the sultans who lived in the Kazakh territory. From the reign of Qasim Khan on, Uzbeks and Kazakhs lived side by side, but they never again consider themselves one people.

### **The Social Structure of Kazakhs**

In the first half of the sixteenth century, following the death of Qasim and consequent breakup of his holdings, the Kazakhs formed their distinctive three hordes (Zhuzes). Because of difficulties with source materials, it is not possible to date precisely the formation of the three Kazakh hordes. The earliest reference to the three hordes was made in 1731 by Tevkelev, the Russian ambassador to the Small Horde, and their existence was confirmed in 1734 by Kirillov, the head of an expedition to Orenburg. Both these accounts, as well as those of Rychkov and Georgii- eighteenth century Russian travellers to the steppe- gave similar accounts of the size and location of the hordes. Vostrov and Mukanov place the formation of the Great, Middle and Small hordes in the middle of the sixteenth century, during the rule of Haq Nazr (1538-1580) (Olcott 1995: 10). This view, which dominates contemporary Soviet scholarship, conflicts with the accepted nineteenth century opinion of V.V. Vel'iaminov-Zernov (1864), who argued that the hordes were formed in the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>10</sup>

The nature and composition of the hordes has also been a source of contention. Although used by western and soviet scholars alike, the term horde is probably a misnomer; the Kazakh referred to these three groups as the Ulu Zhuz, Orta Zhuz and Kichi Zhuz, literally the Great Hundred, Middle Hundred, and Small Hundred. This distinction between horde and hundred is important, since the former implies consanguinity and common ancestry, whereas the latter does not. The Kazakh hordes were, in fact, federations or unions of tribes that typically did not share a common ancestry. They were instead simply an extension of the temporary military unions formed by both Turkish and

Mongol tribes. Such Unions were often called Zhuz; there reference to the existence of various Zhuz in Kazakh territory prior to the sixteenth century.

The 'larger tribal confederations' to which Jones Luong (2004) refers include the horde. The appearance of the horde, or zhuz (meaning 'hundred' in Kazakh) was first reported in the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Independent of each other, the Zhuz were known as the Senior (Uly) Zhuz, Middle (Orta) Zhuz and Junior (Kishi) Zhuz.<sup>11</sup> The Great Horde or Uly Zhuz covered the most extensive territory in the east and south-east of the Kazakh country. The Middle Horde or Orita Zhuz, geographically closer to Russia, covered the northern and central regions (and part of South-Eastern Kazakhstan), and Small Horde or Kishi Zhuz in the west around the Caspian Sea, Aral Sea and Ural river (Bacon 1966). Due to geography, before the Russian colonial presence, proximity to the Khivan Khanate and Turkmen group influenced the Younger Umbrella Clan. Russian traders, Bashkirs, Tatars, and Kalmyks shaped relations with the Middle Umbrella Clan. Pressures from Uyghurs, Uzbeks, and the oasis cultures affected the Elder Umbrella Clan. Legends hold that each horde is associated with a different symbol: the Greater with sheep (symbolizing wealth); the Middle with a pen (signifying knowledge); and the Smaller with a weapon (symbolizing a warrior culture).<sup>12</sup> Great Horde was dominated by Usun tribal confederation but was also composed of ten distinct tribes: Usun, the Kangly, the Dulat, Alban and Suan, the Jalair, the Usty, the Srgeli, the Chanyshkly, the Choprashti. Middle Horde included six tribes: the Kerei, the Naiman, the Argyn, the Kipchak, the Konrat, and the Uak.<sup>13</sup> But eighteen clans of the Small Horde claimed common descent from the Alchins, and the remaining clans were known as the Jedgira (in Kazakh, seven clans), who were said to have attached themselves to the Alchins later on. The three most numerous clans of the small horde were the Kerder, the Adai and the Kereit.

Despite the division into three hordes, the Kazakhs were still one people, with a common language, culture and economy. Initially, in the sixteenth century, the divisions were ephemeral, depending as much on land usage as any voluntary allegiance to the constituent tribes and clans that formed each horde. As Kazakh control of the steppe

expanded during the seventeenth century, the hordes gradually evolved into three stable unions with reasonably well defined and stable territories under their control. When the Kazakh khanate began to break up at the beginning of the eighteenth century (after Khan Tauke's death), the khan of each horde assumed the powers of sovereign ruler in his own territory, including the right to negotiate treaties with foreign powers.

The Kazakhs had a dual authority structure; an aristocracy of khans and sultans was superimposed upon a clan based authority system. A khan was elected at meeting of sultans, biis (lesser nobles), and clan or family elders, who met annually to affirm the khan's leadership, to advise him, and to receive his instructions. The power of the khan was vested in the person, not in the office, so the power a particular Kazakh khan enjoyed was a reflection of his perceived particular fitness to rule. The Kazakhs had several great families, and each of these (either a clan or, more typically, a branch of clan) was divided among several auls that migrated together and generally grazed their animals on adjoining pasture lands.

An *aul*, which in winter might have numbered as many as thirty to forty yurts (round felt tents), consisted of a few related, extended families. Each aul had an elder, usually referred to as an *aksakal* (white beard), who was charged with the protection of his pasturelands and people. The elders met to choose a *bii* to represent the family in negotiations with other families and to mediate internal disputes, regulate the migration, and allocate pastureland. Although the title of *bii* often went from father to son, the office was not hereditary and could be shifted if the elders so chose. The biis met to choose the *sultans*, who typically functioned as sub-khans ruling over particular territory and governing relation between clans, as well as to choose the *khan*, who governed the entire horde. The khan generally served for life and, in keeping with the local tradition, was succeeded first by his brother and then by his son; nevertheless, since to become khan an individual had to prove his own competence, ruling families were often eclipsed by new claimants. The khan or sultan lived in an aul, which, like all others, migrated in a seasonal pattern. Although that aul might have been slightly larger than the norm, the

only major distinction was that sultans and khans lived in ornate, white felt yurts rather than in simple, black felt ones (Olcott 1995:13-14).

The tribal-clan structure gave the Kazakh steppe tribes both day- to- day meaning and their very livelihood. Nomadic society was not based on a tributary mode (where the elite coerces) or a capitalist mode (where the labour is bought and sold), but on a kin-ordered mode.<sup>14</sup> Membership in the Kazakh aristocracy (white bone-*ak suiuk*) was restricted to individuals who at least in theory could trace their descent to Chingiz Khan. Bone denotes lineage, and the use of colours white and black come from traditional Mongol practice (Cummings 2005:19). By the end of the eighteenth century the white bone had expanded to include *Hojas* (the Turkish term for individuals who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca) and descendants of the Caliph (Olcott 1995:14). The general population of Kazakhs was known as black bone (*kara suiuk*). The black bone had its own leaders: the *bai* (the wealthier stratum who often acted as heads of auls); the *batyr* ('hero') and the *bii* ('interpreter of customary law' or 'judge'). Each clan also had its *aqsaqal*, or elder. Nomadic respect for social authority was higher (in the form of the *bii*, 'judge' or the *aqsaqal*) than their respect for political authority (in the form of the khan).

### **Kazakhs and the Tsarist Russia**

Kazakh's contact with Russia, begun minimally in the seventeenth century, intensified in the eighteenth. On the one hand, in 1716-1718 the Russians introduced a string of forts, the so- called Orenburg fortified lines on the edge of the steppe. On the other hand, Kazakhs approached Russia for imperial protection. In 1723 the Kalmyks of the Volga had raided settlements in the Kazakh steppes to link up with their kinsmen from Zhungaria (Jungaria). The Kazakhs fled, leaving most of their possessions and livestock. 'The Great Retreat' of 1723-25,<sup>15</sup> prompted Kazakh tribes to form a common front and, in 1728, to vote for a supreme chieftain, Abulkhair. To secure his political position and to gain Russian protection from further such encroachments and land pressures, in 1730 Abulkhair requested Russian suzerainty.<sup>16</sup> In September 1730 Abulkhair, Khan of the Kazakh Little Horde, 'wishing to be completely subject to your majesty', requested Empress Anna Ioannovna to take him and the 'numerous Kazakh people of the Small and

Middle Horde' under her protection. In October 1731 an oath of allegiance was administered and repeated in the following decades by Abulkhair, his descendants and the khans of the Middle Horde. The Kazakhs promised to protect Russian borders, to serve when needed, to pay tribute and to protect Russian trade caravans to Central Asian oases (Bodger 1980:40).

There is broad agreement among all historians, Tsarist, Soviet and non-Soviet, that the general causes of the Kazakh leader's desire for Russian protection lay in growing threats to their way of life as the Kazakh steppe became encircled by the expanding Russian frontiers and by the attacks of the western Mongols, the Oirats or Jungars. Another area of broad consensus is that, nominal and ineffectual as these oaths of allegiance were in future Russian influence over the steppe, Abulkhair's oath of 1731 nevertheless marks the beginning of a new phase in Kazakh history, a point from which, to use Geoffrey Wheeler's words (1967), 'the fate of the Kazakhs was sealed in the sense that henceforward their future was to be bound up with that of Russia'.

Russian conquest of the Kazakh steppe occurred in two distinct phases. First, under Peter First and Anna Ioannovna, was the relatively bloodless acquisition of the northern part of the steppe, which was the territory of the Small and Middle Hordes. This was followed by the military conquest of the Syr Darya region (the territory of the Great Horde) in the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Russians already gained some knowledge of the Kazakh through the steppe travels of Herberstein (1517 and 1526), Danil Gubin (1534), Anthony Jenkinson (1557-1571), and Semen Moltsev (1569). By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Russian administrators were confronted with the problems of the Kazakh steppe. The internal rule of the khans had all that but disintegrated. As Levshin describes it, Kazakh self government was nothing more than an "anarchic combination of despotism with freedom for every individual."<sup>17</sup> Much of the day-to-day control of the steppe had developed to the local clannic authorities who lacked effective judicial mechanism and so resorted to such traditional institutions as barymtas (punitive raids) and the extraction of kuns (blood prices) for the regulation of conflict.

On June 22, 1822, the *Rules on the Siberian Kyrgyz* came into effect. The legislation which applied only to the Kazakhs of the Middle Horde (who were ruled from Omsk and not from Orenburg), was the product of the eminent Russian statesman, Michael M. Speransky. Speransky, then Governor General of Siberia, devised a wholly new administrative structure for Siberia that extended the civil administration of the Middle Horde. Until that time these Kazakhs had governed themselves, save for periodic mediating effects by the Omsk frontier commission. The new reforms, however, divided eastern portion of the Kazakh territory into territorial units, each with its own administration (Olcott 1995:58).

According to the new rules, the smallest administrative unit was the clan or aul, which consisted of fifty-seventy carts (approximately fifteen families) and was headed by an elder chosen by the community. This unit was to be ethnically homogenous as was the region, the volost, which was to consist of ten-twelve *auls* and be administered by a sultan or member of the aristocracy chosen by the elders. At this time the territory of the Siberian Kirghiz was divided into eighty seven *volost* spread between four *okrugs*. Each *okrug* was administered by a *prikaz*, a committee chaired by an elder, generally a sultan, and including two Russian representatives sent by the authorities in Orenburg, two elected Kazakh representatives, all of whom served two year terms<sup>18</sup>. The 1822 reforms recognized the special position of the Kazakh aristocracy while greatly undercutting its power. The Kazakh sultans could continue to use their titles, but they were not recognized as part of the nobility of the empire unless through service they were appointed to it. They could not own serfs but could own land; one-fifth to one-seventh of the Kazakh pastureland was reserved for the sultanic families.

The first stage of the expansion of Russia's control of Central Asia was the conquest or annexation of the Great Horde. In the 1730s, when the khans of the Small and Middle Horde swore their fealty to the Russian Empress Anna Ioannovna, one part of the Great Horde joined the clans of Er Ali, Abulkhayr's son, and became Russian subjects. The majority of the Great Horde, however, remained under the control of the Jungar Empire. When the Jungar Empire was defeated in 1756 by Manchus, vast new pastures were

opened up for these Kazakhs who were now under Chinese rule. One group migrated to Jungaria; another remained in the Tashkent area and adopted a semi sedentary life-style, some of them joining the agricultural Karakalpak population. This second group became subjects of Kokand when the troops of Alim Khan captured Tashkent in 1808. A third group camped in the eastern Semirech'e region, and quickly established their independence from China. By the first part of the nineteenth century this third group, ruled by Suiuk (son of Ablai) swore his loyalty to Russia. Tsarist Russia formed a council on January 10, 1848, to administrate the Great Horde.<sup>19</sup> Later years witnessed the fall of cities of Tashkent in 1865 and Kokand in 1876 before all conquering Russian forces. Besides Khiva and Bukhara became Russian principalities in 1873. Through these actions the remaining Kazakhs also fell under Russian administration.

In 1867 the creation of three Governor-Generalships (Orenburg, West Siberia and Turkestan) for the steppe populations-administrative divisions that eluded traditional authority patterns-provoked profound anti-colonial sentiment. It resulted in the weakening of the position for the white bone sultans and a privileging of the black bone elites. Land was also declared the property of the Russian state. As Russia's colonial frontier gradually moved southward, diminishing pasturage intensified competition for land, and simple lack of land for extensive pastoralism forced some nomads and semi-nomads to adopt agricultural practices. Further impetus for sedentarization came in number of forms with the 1867 reforms that had, among other things legally appropriated all land as imperial property, any imperial subject's claim to land stewardship required settlement and the creation of permanent structures.

The pastoral livestock breeding economy of the Kazakhs never fully recovered from the 'Aqtaban Shubirinds' (Great Retreat) of the eighteenth century, since the new grazing land were never adequate for even a diminished Kazakh herd. In the eighteenth century and early nineteenth centuries there was a constant struggle for land, both within the Kazakh community and between Kazakhs and Russians. Following the introduction of restrictive land policies in the year 1867-70, the transformation of the Kazakh economy accelerated rapidly. By the time widespread seizure of land began in 1890s, the economic



situation was dire; the settlement of nearly three million Europeans in Kazakh territory during the decade prior to First World War made things even worse. In the first decade of the twentieth century, particularly after the agrarian revolts of 1906-07, the Russian authorities became very concerned with satisfying the land hunger of the Russian peasantry, even at the expense of the economic well-being of non-Russian peoples. The policy pursued by the Tsarist colonial authorities in the steppes and Turkistan regions irreversibly affected the Kazakh economy and the society as a whole. It transformed the steppe from an ethnically homogenous to an ethnically diverse society and introduced in nearly three million Europeans into a society of fewer than five million Kazakhs.

The economic changes were paralleled by a social transformation of Kazakh society. Most of the social and political structures that had governed the Kazakhs during the period of the khanate grew from the needs of pastoral nomadism. Even before Tsarist colonial rule, the authority of the khans and sultans had eroded and been replaced by an increased dependence upon the clannic, or black bone, authorities. The introduction of Russian civil administration as well as the disruption of migratory paths hastened this process, since they increased Kazakh dependence upon the aul and lessened ties between auls and clans. By the end of the nineteenth century some tribes reorganized; the Kipchak, Kerei, and Naiman tribes all subdivided, and clan ties became more localized. A new social organization appeared in Kazakh society the *aul-commune*, a semi-sedentary residential community based on common ownership of land and livestock and communal income derived from both farming and livestock breeding. These more localized clan ties were very important and were often the sole factor in choosing aul and volost officials.

The first half of the nineteenth century also witnessed the effective destruction of the Kazakh aristocracy without the creation of anything to replace it. The most serious pretenders were the clan authorities, who had been instrumental in the popular uprisings in the first decades of the century. The colonial administration introduced by the Russians did little to strengthen the power of such authorities. When compared to the alternative of starvation, the old ways took on new popularity among Kazakhs. The tribal system had

been destroyed and was not able to restore itself, but clan and sub-clan ties, which had remained strong, now took on a new vitality (Olcott 1995:162). They were able to retain control of the aul-level administration, and some clans managed to gain representation at the volost level as well. In short the power of the clan leaders declined during colonial rule, largely because they could not perform their primary duty- the allocation of pasture land. The Russians saw their decline in the authority of the biis and elders as positive; it was a necessary step for the creation of a loyal, peaceful Kazakh population.

### **Soviet Kazakhstan**

Early Soviet rule acutely politicized sub ethnic identities. Competition among clans manifested itself most clearly during the cadre-development efforts of the Soviet state and in land-use debates (Schatz 2004:37). Promoting non-Slavic indigenous groups through broad-based “affirmative action” policies in cadre development, the Soviet state set out to address two problems at once: the widespread illiteracy and sporadic resistance that had limited Central Asia’s involvement in administration, thus casting doubt on the popular legitimacy of nascent Soviet institutions, and the legitimacy of alternative patterns of authority in the form of local rule by black bone elites.<sup>20</sup> The language that Soviet authorities used for this sea change of cadres was one of class warfare. As in attempts to consolidate Soviet rule in Slavic regions, in Central Asia relatively well-to-do (kulaks) were assumed to be the agents of capitalist exploitation and were accordingly targeted for political or physical extermination. In Kazakhstan the ‘bais’ (rich ones) were declared to be the equivalent of the kulaks of the Slavic areas. But attempts to turn the poor nomad against the relatively well-to-do members of his clan ran up against long-institutionalized patterns of authority.<sup>21</sup>

In fact, black bone elites, declined in clan terms, still enjoyed paramount authority over most everyday political matters. Olcott (1995) argues that the members of these local elite “emerged from the civil war period with their authority enhanced. Ten years, previously, on the eve of First World War, Kazakh intellectuals and even relatively uneducated youth had distrusted their elders because traditional society appeared unequal to the challenges presented by the colonial power. Now....most Kazakhs....saw the old

clan system and the traditional leaders as offering at least the hope of stability through the continuation and strengthening of a subsistence based, livestock-breeding economy.....clan, village, and aul authorities simply reconstituted themselves as societies and governed their populations much as before.”

State-led change involved more than the attempts to eliminate traditional patterns of authority and economy. It also involved the criminalization of behaviors connected with sub ethnic identity. Among practices identified as crimes were bride-price (qalym), the punitive raid on neighbouring nomadic encampments, blood revenge (qun), polygamy, premature marriage, forced marriage, and levirate. Soviet efforts to criminalize traditional practices encountered long- standing patterns of behaviour. Olcott (1995) suggests: “Laws against customary practices was simply not enforced, since the Kazakh officials themselves observed them.” Indeed, these practices continued well past collectivization, if in altered form.

The policy of ‘Sovietization’ of the Kazakh aul, which was pursued in Kazakhstan from 1925 through 1929, was in part a product of the political events in Moscow but was also influenced by the same biases that the Russian colonial administration had held. It was a policy directed solely towards the Kazakhs and was not applied to other Central Asian nationalities. The policy of Sovietization of the Kazakh aul was adopted at the fifth all-Kazakh conference of the communist party, held in December 1925. The Soviet regime could not afford to treat the Kazakh as a special case, since the Soviet economy was evolving toward a centralized economy; such as economy demands the assumption that general economic policies may be supplied equally well across mega-regions, if not across the whole expanse of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, to the Soviet regime agriculture meant grain growing, and so the entire rural population was expected to behave like Russian peasants. The sixth Kazakh regional party conference, held in November 1927, passed a six-point programme that called for equalization of land holdings, Sovietization of the auls, reduction of the power of the bais, introduction of cooperative organization among Kazakh live-stock breeding households, improvement of

party work in the localities, and greater integration of the Kazakh population into the government.

Rudenko's expedition of 1927-28 to Semipalatinsk reported that the central role of the family in Kazakh society remained unchanged and the authority of the aksakal, or elder, remained undiminished (Rudenko 1930:72). Customary practices were as important as before the revolution, and justice was still largely administered by adat and sharia courts.<sup>22</sup> Aul Soviets were formed in every community, as legislation required, but they were dominated by traditional leadership, both clannic and clerical. The same was true of the aul party cells; many communities had neither party cell nor any aul communists. However, where cells did exist the membership was indistinguishable from the traditional leadership groups.

The collectivization drive (introduced by Stalin) in Kazakhstan occurred in four distinct phases: the campaign for rapid collectivization, November 1929-March 1930; retreat and experimentation with different types of collective farms, March 1930-August 1932; the use of the TOZ (a society for the communal working of land) for the reintroduction of collectivization, September 1932-November 1934; and the reconstitution of TOZ farms as agricultural artels, December 1934-December 1938 (Male 1971:219). On January 5, 1930, precise details on the tempo of collectivization were more available; the Soviet Union was divided into three regions, the first to be completely collectivized by the spring of 1931, the second by the spring of 1932, and the third by the end of 1933. The grain producing regions of Kazakhstan were included in the second group, and the rest of Kazakhstan was in the third category. At first the collectivization drive was carried out by urban communists' mobilized in January. Included in their ranks were young Kazakh students eager to effect social change through the destruction of the old order (Musrepov 1976:95-109). As a consequence of massive collectivization, the percentage of the population of Kazakhstan that lived on collective farms increased from 33.2 percentage in November 1930 to 62.7 percentage in November 1931 and to over 70 percentage by late 1932.<sup>23</sup>

F.I Goloshchekin, first secretary of the Kazakh communist party, argued that: “settlement is collectivization. Settlement is the destruction of tribal attitudes. Settlement is simultaneously the question of socialist construction and the approach of socialism, of the socialist reconstruction of the Kazakh mass without divisions by nationally under the leadership of the vanguard of the proletariat and the communist party.”<sup>24</sup> The Kazakh economy paid dearly for the collectivization drive, particularly in its first years. Comparing figures from the 1926 and 1939 census, Naum Sasny has estimated that more than one and half million Kazakhs died during the 1930s and nearly 80 percentage of the herd was destroyed between 1928 and 1932.<sup>25</sup> Besides, three hundred thousand Kazakhs moved to Uzbekistan and a group of forty four thousand Kazakhs fled to Turkmenistan, where they provided much of the leadership for a revived Basmachi revolt.<sup>26</sup> The collectivization drive ended Kazakh pastoral nomadism by settling nearly four hundred thousand Kazakhs between 1930 and 1937.

Khrushchev’s decision in late 1953 to create a new breadbasket out of the allegedly underutilized lands of southern Siberia and Kazakhstan affected the Kazakhs more than any other soviet policy decision, with the possible exception of collectivization under Stalin. These so-called ‘Virgin Lands’ were underutilized only from the perspective of Moscow, since the Kazakhs had for generations made good use of them as pasturelands. Khrushchev sent thousands of Russian and Slavic “volunteers” to create a second USSR breadbasket, pushing most of the remaining Kazakh collective farmers out of northern Kazakhstan.

In short the consolidation of Soviet rule involved repression, sedentarization and collectivization. Soviet power liquidated the intellectual and political elite through three major waves of terror in 1928, 1937-38 and 1949-50. The traditional Kazakh pastoral based, kin based nomadic economy, already under attack in the Russian period, was destroyed through the twin policy of collectivization and sedentarization. The number of Kazakhs resultantly had fallen by 39.8 percentage from 3, 637, 612 in 1926 to 2,181,520 by the time of the 1939 census.<sup>27</sup> Stalin deported various nationalities (such as Germans, Koreans, Poles and Chechens) and, between 1954-56, a large influx of settlers from the

Slavic and Baltic republics arrived as part of the Virgin Lands campaign as mentioned above.

The appointment of Dinmukhamed Kunaev as Kazakh First Party Secretary in 1960 was to prove instrumental for the consolidation of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic (Kazakh SSR).<sup>28</sup> Dinmukhamed Kunaev, the long time party chief in Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic (Kazakh SSR) who initiated process of 'Kazakhification' that continued into the post-Soviet period. Under Kunaev, Kazakhs participated increasingly in the leadership of both party and state, whereas much of the old Russian dominance over native cadre broke down, particularly after 1971, when Kunaev became a full member of the Politburo. Kazakh participation in the government has also increased; whereas in 1964 only 33 percentage of the members of the council of ministers were Kazakh, by 1981 Kazakhs hold 60 percentage of the posts, and the Kazakh share of ministerial and state chair positions increased from 39 percentage to 61 percentage. Even more important is that Kazakhs of Kunaev's period occupying more of the key posts than their predecessors. During this time Kazakh has served as ministers of heavy industry, agriculture, and construction (Olcott 1995:244). The political coalitions of Kunaev's Kazakhstan do not appear to have been formed solely, or even predominantly, on ethnic ground. They appear to be based on loyalties for or against Kunaev or one of his potential successors, and there are both Russians and Kazakhs in each of the major cliques in the Kazakh party.

The three key legacies of Russian-Kazakh interaction are economic industrialization and urbanization; acculturation; and the establishment of administrative and cognitive borders. The steppe was revolutionized from a largely nomadic pastoral economy to a settled, urbanized and industrialized society. Acculturation process between Russians and Kazakhs significantly outpaced those in the southern areas, due to the northern areas geographic proximity and its longer incorporation under Russian rule. The Junior and Inner Zhuz, closest to European Russia, and most exposed to contact with Russians, witnessed an even more marked degree of acculturation. In the southern areas the Uzbek influence remained stronger. Writes Krader (1963) '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>29</sup>

Among the critical ironies of Soviet rule was that a modernization project designed in part to eradicate clan divisions helped to contribute to their ongoing importance. What had previously sustained clan-identity relations-nomadic pastoralism - was now gone, but in the Soviet period, state generated shortage performed a similar function. According to Roy (2000) 'the Soviet era created a new tribe: the kolkhoz and a two-level political culture: on the one hand an appearance of conformity with the social project imposed by the authorities: on the other, a subversion of that project by practices of factionalism and clientalism.'<sup>30</sup> In short the Soviet rule deeply transformed sub ethnic affiliations in Central Asia. The Soviet regime deliberately targeted kin-based divisions for eradication. The Soviet intention was to eliminate traditional authority patterns and undermine the basis for behaviour considered to be anti-Soviet, there by facilitating the construction of the new social order. The modernization project (it includes urbanization, universal literacy and education), combined with a more general climate of terror and oppression that atomized the population, did notably diminish the role that clan relationship played under Soviet rule in public.

"Soviet nationalities policy"<sup>31</sup> served to remove clan divisions from public life, relegating them to private spheres. This occurred principally through deliberate state-led campaigns to root out manifestations of clan relationships. On its face, Soviet nationalities policy was a creative policy designed first to accommodate preexisting cultural divisions, in order to transform them into something qualitatively new (Brubaker 1996). Early policy involved attempts at the republican level to consolidate "national" communities from preexisting cultural divisions. As a drive for modernization, Soviet policy was like other such nation-building efforts, except in one critical aspect: it attempted to consolidate national communities at a level that was not coterminous with the territorial frontiers of the state. Once thus consolidated, the thinking went; these communities would in turn

become part of a larger community represented not by ethno-cultural frontiers, but by the new 'Homo Sovieticus' (Schatz 2004:54).

Soviet internationalism came to involve a significant degree of linguistic, cultural, and demographic Russification. Homo Sovieticus only seemed to be unmarked ethnically; in fact, Sovietization brought a significant degree of assimilation to the dominant Russian patterns.<sup>32</sup> The Soviet internationalism had a distinctively ethnic Russian face. By the 1970s, wholly European dress, the almost total eradication of Islamic practices and the lack or very poor knowledge of the Kazakh language among the majority of young, urban-based Kazakhs had become the characteristics of the Soviet Kazakh people. 'Nevertheless, there was still a strong awareness of a specifically Kazakh identity, even if this was based more in self-perception rather than in identifiable cultural indicators.'

Soviet Union prompted ethnic categories, elevating them as the legitimate vehicle for group identity. But Soviet policies of cultural modernization were Janus-faced. On the one hand, Soviets involved the positive transformation of peoples into something new-something ethnic and, eventually, "international". On the other, Soviets involved attempts to move peoples away from tradition. While the creative side of this policy privileged ethnicity, its destructive side set out to eliminate sub ethnic divisions. Branded as primitive, the nomads and semi nomads in Soviet territory were viewed as little different from sedentary groups. Instead, beginning with a central normative and taxonomic principle-that class stratification propelled historico-evolutionary stages-the Soviet regime classified such societies as a variation on the theme of feudalism.<sup>33</sup> Through this perspective, clan identities that persisted into the period of socialist construction were considered the vestiges of feudalism.

If in the pre-Soviet era, sub ethnic difference had been established through the dense exchange of genealogical knowledge, but in Soviet period such information was not exchanged publicly. In the absence of obvious visible markers that provided sub ethnic differentiation, place of residence began to play a more important role. In fact, especially for rural Kazakhs, the name of the collective farm on which one resided became an indicator of sub ethnic background. Collective farm identity was often not separable from



sub ethnic belonging. Frequently, the kolkhoz itself contained the members of only one or very few clans. Kolkhoz was a marker that literally coincided with sub ethnic divisions.<sup>34</sup> With the traditional means of establishing sub ethnic difference thus disrupted, kolkhoz residence was the only possible public marker of identity and difference. In private, however, the lines of clan identity and difference continued to provide everyday life. In short, the net consequence of the Soviet project of cultural modernization was not to eliminate clans, but rather to critically diminish their public expression. Hence, the Soviet state undermined the nomadic economy of extensive pastoralism, replacing it with large-scale, mechanized agriculture, extractive industries, and manufacturing. By the end of the Soviet era, the Kazakh republic was predominantly urban, industrialized, and held up as a model of socialist development.

### **Sub-Ethnic Groups and Politics in post-Soviet Kazakhstan**

In Central Asia in particular, modern institutions were, and continue to be, a creation of the Soviet era, as statehood itself was introduced to the region in the twentieth century (Rakowska 1994). The Soviet collapse brought not radical rupture to the states of the Central Asian region, but rather an unusual identity with past practices. Elite choices in the construction of political institutions were heavily saddled institutional baggage from the Soviet period.<sup>35</sup> Continuity of Soviet period was notable in several important senses: 1) ethnic categories were assumed to be the legitimate form of social organization and nationalities policy entered on harmonizing relations among ethnic groups; 2) supra-ethnic categories with questionable popular resonance were deployed in the attempt to harmonize interethnic relations; and 3) sub ethnic categories and practices were routinely stigmatized in public discourse (Schatz 2004:74).

One face of post-Soviet state discourse emphasized a vision of multiethnic harmony that reiterated Soviet-era categories of internationalism and *Homo Sovieticus*. Its central organizing theme was 'Eurasianism'. President Nazarbayev's notion of Eurasianism was designed to show the geographic centrality of Kazakhstan and the multi-ethnic population that occupied its territory. Based loosely on the ideas of Soviet scholar Lev Gumiliev (1967), this Eurasianism was a celebration of the continent's multicultural heritage and a

vision that reserved a formative historic role for the Turkic peoples, of which ethnic Kazakhs are a part.<sup>36</sup> Accordingly, the state elite strayed beyond the rhetoric of just and temporary compensation to hold a privileged and permanent, if still ambiguous, position for the titular group. Nazarbayev routinely pointed to the “integrating role” of the Kazakh people amidst the country’s cultural diversity.

A vibrant politics based on sub ethnic clans that had predated Soviet rule emerged in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. The first president of the independent state, Nursultan Nazarbayev, hinted at the breadth of the problem, decrying the attempts of local clients to establish “tribal” ideology and clan-related “protectionism”. In the 1990s the structure of access to political and economic goods was striking similar to that of the Soviet period, and this legacy continued to fuel clan politics. Unlike the Soviet period, however, when clan politics remained subordinated to other high stake struggles, in post-Soviet Central Asia clan conflict flourished. Jockeying among kinship based group was apparent, although its specifics were often shrouded in secrecy. President Nursultan Nazarbayev’s clan-based network dominated political and economic life in the 1990s. It will show that Nazarbayev privileged his umbrella clan and extended family, but he also sought to avoid a fundamental imbalance in the relative power of the three umbrella clans. At the same time the government also draws a strong line between clan and family. While many critics would claim that clan politics plays an important role in the country, this officially denied as stated by Nazarbayev above.

Family, though, is quite another thing. President Nazarbayev’s 1993 statement urges support for “development of national language, art, culture.....and the family”. In his public presence, the President is very much a family man, being frequently photographed with his wife, children, and grand children. His wife, Sara Alpysovna heading an active national children’s charity called Bobek. Nazarbayev’s oldest daughter, Dariga, was the head of the only independent national television channel, Khabar. The prominent economic and political roles played by Nazarbayev’s two older sons-in-law, Timur Kulibayev and Rakhat Aliyev. The increased importance of family is strengthened by the leadership’s continuation of the Soviet practice of reinforcing the approved view of

history by elaborately staged public ceremonies. The occasions chosen are all new ones that emphasize Kazakh cultural continuity and the strengthening of dynastic rule. An example is Unity Day, declared on 28 May, 1993, on Ordobasy Hill (outside Shymkent), chosen to memorialize a 1726 meeting of three Kazakh elders, or *biis*, who joined forces to oppose the Jungar Mongols who were invading from the east. The celebration drew more than fifty thousand people, including: official representatives from each of Kazakhstan's then nineteen oblasts; the Presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan; a Kazakh *akyn*, or oral poet, who chanted the history of the first meeting; and flocks of people demonstrating traditional Kazakh dances, crafts and sports.

In post-Soviet Kazakhstan, clans were no longer the corporately defined kin groups that dealt with a wide array of cultural, social, and political matters. In the post-Soviet period, individuals used kin networks often without imagining clan as a coherent group. The Soviet period limited kinship to particular social niches associated with gaining access to scarce goods. Thus, clan emerged as distinctly political, by becoming ensnared with questions of distribution and exchange. Clan became associated with goal-seeking behaviour. It was increasingly invoked when one had a goal in mind. The language of networks is particularly appropriate at this juncture. Individuals involved in good acquisition create networks and networks involve greater fluidity. One network mostly overlaps with others; competing networks may even occasionally have members in common (Schatz 2004:97).

Kinship is a unique basis for identity politics to the extent that it is scaled at multiple levels simultaneously. This is clearest with the former nomads of Central Asia, among whom an individual could be the member of a small-kin based aggregate of one hundred people, which in turn was a subunit in a larger aggregate of one thousand people. This larger aggregate could be a subunit in a still-larger aggregate of ten thousand members, and so on.<sup>37</sup> Scaled at multiple levels, clan politics in the 1990s Kazakhstan played itself out differently at different levels of analysis. First, at the republic level, the regime tolerated and itself used patron-client ties along sub ethnic lines, as patterns of political appointments suggest. At the oblast level, the regime attempted to undermine the efforts

of clan patronage networks to create regional powerbases that might challenge the Elder Umbrella Clan's control of the state. At the district level, lower aggregate clan divisions became relatively more important, as many locals were the site of umbrella clan homogeneity that rendered lower-aggregate differences all the more politically salient (Schatz 2004).

At the end of Soviet rule, Younger Clan Kazakhs were relatively marginalized from distant Almaty, the Middle Clan dominated technical professions with their high degree of Russification and the Elder Clan remained politically predominant, given its proximity to Almaty. In the post-Soviet period Nazarbayev continued the general republic-wide patronage practices of Dinmukhamed Kunaev, long time Soviet- era communist party first secretary in Kazakhstan and mentor to Nazarbayev, by propelling members of the Elder Umbrella Clan (to which Nazarbayev belongs) into the ruling elite. Nurtai Abykaev ( the President's closest adviser), Akhmetzhan Esimov (Deputy Prime Minister from 1996-98, chair of the President's administration from mid-1998), Al'nur Musaev (Director of the Committee on National Security, successor to the Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti or KGB<sup>38</sup>), Kasymzhomat Tokaev (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Mukhtar Abkazov (Minister of Energy, Industry, and Trade), Omirbek Beigel'di (Chair of the Senate), and Altynbek Sarsenbaev (Director of the National Agency on Press Affairs and Mass Information) were some of the most important Elder Clan Kazakhs under Nazarbayev in the late 1990s (Schatz 2004:98-99).The dominance of the Elder Umbrella Clan among the top elite helped to consolidate the power of Nazarbayev and his kin.

From the mid-1990s, especially with the introduction of mass privatization and the opening of Kazakhstan to large scale foreign direct investment, the political reach of members of Nazarbayev's family was dramatically enhanced. The national television became increasingly monopolized by the State Television Company Khabar, run by the president's daughter Dariga Nazarbayeva. Other family members with prominent positions in the elites included two sons-in-law: Rakhat Aliev and Timurkulibaev, who were appointed respectively, head of the Tax Inspectorate in 1996 (assuming

chairmanship of Kazakhstan's National Security Committee in 2000) and Vice-Chair of Kazakhoil in 1997 (becoming chair of Kaztransoil in 1999). A reported relative of the president's wife Sara Nazarbayeva, Nurtai Abykaev, became through his appointment as head of the presidential administration between 1994 and 1995, one of the most influential members of the 'selectorate'. V.N Khliupin, to nickname the political elite Nazarbayev's bolshaiasemia (big family) (Cummings 2005:66).

Nurbulat Masanov (2002) views that an individual's zhuz affiliation determined the rank and type of political appointment. Masanov explains the importance of the zhuz not just in symbolic but also in functional and historical terms. The Senior (Great) Zhuz, he contended, was accorded positions of low status but high influence. The Junior (Small) Zhuz, which has often acted as broker between the Senior and Middle zhuzes, was appointed to positions of low profile, high status and relatively high influence. Finally members of the Middle Zhuz-most notably members of its leading Argyn tribe-were placed in posts of lesser influence but that their influence was likely to grow with the move to Astana.

If the Elder Umbrella Clan dominated at the top, patterns in the broader state apparatus were more complex. Among rural Kazakhs in the elite, there was a numerical predominance of the Middle Umbrella Clan, with the Elder Umbrella Clan not far behind and Younger Clan is the big loser (see Table-3.2 and Table-3.3). Because Middle Clan Kazakhs were disproportionately educated and linguistically Russified (compared to other Kazakhs), they enjoyed a prominent position in the political elite at the end of Soviet rule, not withstanding Kunaev's attempts to weaken the Middle Clan's position.<sup>39</sup> This translated quickly into bargaining leverage vis-à-vis the emerging regime of Nazarbayev. Specifically, the threat of separatism in the northern oblasts worked to the Middle Clan's benefits. The regime feared an alliance between these more Russified Kazakhs and ethnic Russians who faced a choice of exit (separatism) or loyalty (political quiescence). The regime sought to retain the loyalty of Middle Clan Kazakh as a hedge against separatism in the region. This is the best explanation for the selection as Prime Minister, a Middle Clan Kazakh (Akezhan Kazhegel'din, 1994-97) through such top elite

appointments, patronage along umbrella line was a strategic concession to forge loyalty to the new state structures in a period of high uncertainty.

**Table-3.2: Composition of Elite (1997, 2001)**

Background	Number	Percentage (%) of Total	Percentage (%) of Total Rural-Born Kazakhs
Rural- born, Younger	25	5.2	11.5
Rural- born, Middle	84	17.5	38.5
Rural- born, Elder	83	17.3	38.1
Rural- born Kazakh, Clan background unclear	26	5.4	11.9
Urban- born Kazakh	141	29.3	*
Non- Kazakh	122	25.4	*
TOTAL	481	100	*

Source: Werner, Cynthia (1997), *The Significance of Tribal Identities in the Daily Life of Rural Kazakhs in South Kazakhstan*, New York: Columbia University.

**Table-3.3: Umbrella Clan Background of Rural- Born Elite (1997, 2001)**

Background	Percentage (%) of Rural-Born Kazakh Elite	Estimated Percentage (%) of Population
Younger	13.0	33.96
Middle	43.8	41.24
Elder	43.2	24.63

Source: Werner, Cynthia (1997), *The Significance of Tribal Identities in the Daily Life of Rural Kazakhs in South Kazakhstan*, New York: Columbia University.

There was no alliance yet possible between the Elder and Middle Umbrella Clans. In 1997, member of the Younger Umbrella Clan was no less likely than a member of the other clans to be selected for a post ever which the President had high influence. The Younger Umbrella Clan was underrepresented in general in the elite. The situation had changed appreciably through patronage politics by 2001 (see Table-3.4). An emerging source of Middle Umbrella Clan patronage was the relocation of the capital city from Almaty to Astana in 1997, which accorded Middle Clan Kazakhs greater influence over personal appointments. Gas and oil extraction in western Kazakhstan began to attract the

attention of international actors, as well as that of the state elite. But the development of a resource base quite distant from Almaty, in the stronghold of the Younger Umbrella Clan, begged vigilance. The regime succeeded in steering all major investment deal through Almaty (and later Astana), to prevent any end-around attempts by local Younger Umbrella Clan authorities. Moreover, Prime Minister Kazhegel'din was replaced in 1997 by Nurlan Balgimbaev, from the Younger Umbrella Clan and until then the president of the state oil company, Kazakhoil.

**Table-3.4: Presence of Elder-Middle Umbrella Clan Alliance, 2001**

Estimated Degree of President's Influence on Post	Percentage (%) of Elder-Middle Elite Occupying	Percentage (%) of Younger Elite Occupying
Low	8.4	24.0
Medium	51.8	48.0
High	39.8	28.0

Source: Schatz, Edward (2004), *Modern Clan Politics*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.

The politics of umbrella clan at the republican level ran up against the politics of regionalisms at the oblast level. Preventing regionalism was a central political concern of the 1990s, as the regime sought to preclude sub ethnic networks from finding explicit territorial expression. Proposals for an administrative union of Younger Umbrella Clan dominated oblasts (such as Alyrau and Mangystau) were deemed too threatening; as such groupings would have created a bloc based on the Younger Clan. The Younger Clan enjoyed both a tradition of defying state authority and simultaneously a recent boost to its economic position. Administrative units were combined only in those cases where doing so would not strengthen the Younger Clan. If Nazarbayev had a particular fear of Younger Umbrella Clan regionalist movements, he appears to have feared regionalisms more generally. Nazarbayev rotated oblast akims frequently, rewarding those who were particularly loyal and relocating those who appeared to challenge his control. Thus, Nazarbayev created a core, circulating elite that benefitted from his patronage.

If clientelism in general was widespread, it often specifically followed clan or umbrella clan lines in the predominantly Kazakh regions. For example, when Amalbek Tshanov became the governor of Zhambyl oblast in 1995, he removed 140 employees, replacing 80% of them with members of the Zhanys subdivision of the Dulat division (Elder Umbrella Clan). Members of this clan, to which Tshanov himself belonged, occupied key posts in the region. Local sub ethnic patronage networks reached national-level politics, ensnaring particular members of the lucrative extractive industries, who had a stake in Shymkent's local oil refinery.<sup>40</sup> Saizaq district of the south Kazakhstan region was the first district in the country to create a local "council of elders" to adjudicate local disputes. These elders were the prominent members of the clans that dominated in the area. But in northern Kazakhsatn, a similar proposal appears to have fallen on deaf ears.

At the most local level (cities and districts), kin background was primary consideration in political patronage. As one long-time employee of the Shymkent city akimat noted, when the new akim was appointed, he usually replaced about 50 percentage of the office staff with his supporters. These people were usually from the same umbrella clan and frequently from the same subgroups.<sup>41</sup> Clan played a still-greater role in rural areas. Given declining economic conditions (particularly for animal husbandry), access to scarce goods was established through sub-ethnicity. Place of residence on a micro scale (like who lives on the east side of the river, who lives on the west side) was understood to correspond with clan divisions.

The rational, dominant clan would seek to please its opponents at a minimal level, for avoiding the disintegration of the state. Clan politics mattered in Central Asia, but in two ways that are theoretically in tension. These might be called "clan clientelism" and "clan balancing". In the Somalia case, clan clientelism contributed to the collapse of the state but little balancing occurred. In Morocco, something closer to clan balancing occurred.<sup>42</sup> In Kazakhstan, both occurred simultaneously. At the core of the regime were practices of clan clientelism, with Nazarbayev creating a pocket of privilege for his extended family and elite members of his umbrella clan. In the broader elite, such privilege was relatively



diminished as Nazarbayev sought to foster a degree of clan balancing. Individual regions, cities, and districts saw contextually specific mix of the two principles.

In a state with a significant ethnic Slavic minority and that was popularly viewed as bi-ethnic, clan and umbrella clan genealogies experienced a revival as traits that distinguished ethnic Kazakhs from the non-titular citizens of independent Kazakhstan. By the late Soviet and post-Soviet periods, there were too many competing allegiances-to Party, to internationalism to non-titulars with privileged access to scarce goods, and so on. The argument here is not that genealogical knowledge was an inalienable, inherent, or primordial trait among Kazakhs, but rather those quasi-state actors held it up as such. For example Dinmukhamed Kunaev, the long time communist party chief in Kazakh SSR, exemplified the centrality of genealogical knowledge in his memoirs. In his words: “each person should know his or her pedigree.

Without going into deep antiquity, we can only say that my ancestors come from Baidybek, a young man (dzhigit) of the Elder Zhuz. My immediate genealogical tree looks like the following; Zholyn, Nurmambet, Aznabai, Kanai, Dzhelibai, Zhumabai, Minliakhmed, Dinmukhamed” (Kunaev 1992:10-11). While no data are available on the number of written genealogies generated since the Soviet collapse, indications are clear that the practice was widespread, as informants described that even in urban areas these books were a popular gift in the early to mid-1990s.<sup>43</sup> Kazakhness-language, genealogical knowledge, and connection to events or personages of historical significance – were sorely lacking, especially among the young members of a largely Russified political elite. Distinguishing oneself from the ethnic other was a political tool, and widespread attention to local heroes and historical sites honed the instrument.

When a string of celebrations reaches its peak as descendants of different tribes from the same horde gather to exalt their most proud figures, the impact of the events on the contemporary politics of Kazakhstan escalates. First, when high-ranking Kazakhs rush to the scene from the capital to reaffirm their affiliations, a strengthened tribal identity silently hammers a rift into the unity of elite Kazakhs in whose hands are concentrated the nation’s political and economic power. Second, the representatives from each horde

honour the occasions with political significance in that each horde wants historical legitimacy in the competition for political powers. For example in the summer of 1991, the descendants of the Middle Horde widely advertised the event dedicated to the name of Ablay Qan (1711-1781) of the Middle Horde in Kakshetaw oblast. The media controlled by the members of the Middle Horde gave the event wide publicity. Feeling obscured by the ambitious advance of the Middle Horde, the sons of the Great Horde felt threatened and they waited for their turn.

The Great Horde finally grasped their opportunity to justify their political hierarchical position in the republic, when Toly Bii, a sage from the Great Horde, was honoured in the summer of 1993 at the auspicious leadership of Nazarbayev. Through this action Nazarbayev made it clear to his Kazakh rivals that the Great Horde's monopoly in the republic's power structure should not be questioned. The sons of the Great Horde will not tolerate it, since their current political and economic dominance finds legitimacy in the body of great wisdom of Toly Bii when he was recognized by all three hordes three hundred years ago.<sup>44</sup>

Nurbulat Masanov (1996), a Kazakh scholar, noted the pattern of appointments from the village of Chemolgan (Nazarbayev's birth place), which gave rise to depictions of the Chemolganization of the power structures. Part of his conclusion contended that,

“competition of the umbrella clans on the elite level played and plays an extremely important role in the life of Kazakh society-notwithstanding, we should not forget that no clan is monolithic, since among Kazakhs interclan competition is also widespread. Much depends on the concrete region and concrete people, but it is quite well-known, for example, that some Arghyns, Naimans and Qypshaqs (Middle Clan) cannot stand each other. In the Younger Clan, Alimulins and Vailulins condescend to the Zhetiru. In the Elder Clan, the Shaprashts and Dulats are more influential than others, often hampering the advancement of representatives of other clans.”<sup>45</sup>

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> See Akiner, Shirin (1995), *The Formation of Kazakh Identity: From Tribe to Nation-State*, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Virtually all contemporary sources from this period are grouped together in the volume *Materialy po istorii kazakhskikh khanstv, 15-18* (Alma-Ata, 1969). Quoted in Martha Brill Olcott (1995), *The Kazakhs*, Chapter.1

<sup>4</sup> Tolybekov, S.E (1971), *kochevoe obshchestvo kazakhov*, Alma-Ata, p.184. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Barthol'd, V.V (1962), *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia, vol.3*, Leiden: E.J Brill, p.129. Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Valikhanov, Chokan (1957), *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR, vol.1*, Alma-Ata, p.143. Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Grodekov, *Kirgizy I Karakirgizy*, p.1. Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Levshin, Alexis (1840), *Description des hordes et des steppes des Kirghiz-Kazaks ou Kirghiz-Kaisaks*, translated by Ferry de Pigny, Paris: Imprimerie Royale. Quoted in Sally N Cummings (2005), *Kazakhstan : Power and the Elite*, London and New York : I.B. Tauris, Chapter.1

<sup>9</sup> Hambly, Gavin (eds) (1969), *Central Asia*, New York: Delacorte Press, p.142. Quoted in Martha Brill Olcott (1995), *The Kazakhs*, Chapter.1.

<sup>10</sup> Vel'iaminov, V.V and Zernov (1864), *Issledovanie okasimovskikh tsariakh I tsarevichakh, 3 vol*, St.Petersburg. Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> There is also a fourth, the Inner or Bukei Zhuz.

<sup>12</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 Little 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.' Quoted in Sally N Cummings (2005), *Kazakhstan: Power and the Elite*, London and New York: I.B. Tauris, Chapter.1.

<sup>13</sup> See Vostrov and Mukhanov, *Rodoplennoi Sostav*, p.56. Quoted in Martha Brill Olcott (1995), *The Kazakhs*, Chapter.1.

<sup>14</sup> Wolf, Eric R (1982), *Europe and the People without History*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>15</sup> Martha Brill Olcott (1995), *The Kazakhs*, p.26.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p.31.

<sup>17</sup> See Levshin, *Opisanie Kirgiz-Kaisatskikh*, p.436. Quoted in Martha Brill Olcott (1995), *The Kazakhs*, Chapter.3.

<sup>18</sup> See Zimanov, S.Z (1960), *Politicheskii Stroi Kazakhstana*, Alma-Ata, p.18. Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Until 1867 the Kazakhs of the Great Horde were under the administration of the governor general of Western Siberia.

<sup>20</sup> See Martin, Terry D. (1996), *An Affirmative Action Empire: Ethnicity and the Soviet State, 1928-1938*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago. Quoted in Schatz, Edward (2004), *Modern Clan Politics*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, Chapter.2.

<sup>21</sup> See Payne, Mathew J. (1995), *Turksib: The Building of the Turkestan- Siberian Railroad and the Politics of Production During the Cultural Revolution, 1926- 1931*, Ph.d Dissertation, University of Chicago. Ibid.

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- <sup>22</sup> See, Rudenko, S.I. (1930), "Ocherk byta severo-vostochnikh kazakhov, Leningrad. Quoted in Martha Brill Olcott (1995), *The Kazakhs*, Chapter.7.
- <sup>23</sup> See Tursunbaev, Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo, 1:287. Quoted in Martha Brill Olcott (1995), *The Kazakhs*, Chapter.8.
- <sup>24</sup> See Zveriaikov, T.A (1934), *Ot kochev'ia k sotsializmu*, Alma-Ata, p.53. Quoted in Martha Brill Olcott (1995), *The Kazakhs*, Chapter.8.
- <sup>25</sup> See Sasny, Naum (1941), *The Socialized Agriculture of the U.S.S.R*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, p.323. Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> See Amantaev, Sotsializm: Korennoe, p.325. Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> See Poliakov, Iu.A (eds.) (1991), *Vsesoiuznaia perepis naseleniia 1937 g. - kratkie itgoi*, Moscow: Akademiia Nauk SSSR. Quoted in Sally N Cummings (2005), *Kazakhstan: Power and the Elite*, London and New York: I.B Tauris, Chapter.1
- <sup>28</sup> Of the Kazakh Communist Party First Secretaries between 1920 and 1991, ten were ethnic Russians, one Pole, one Georgian, one Jew, one Armenian, one Uighur and four Kazakhs. The last four were Murzagaliyev, Shaiakhmetov, Kunaev and Nazarbayev.
- <sup>29</sup> Krader, Lawrence (1963), *Social Organization of the Mongol-Turkic Pastoral Nomads*, The Hague: The Mouton and Company, p.237.
- <sup>30</sup> See Roy, Olivier (2000), *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*, London and New York: I.B. Tauris, P.85.
- <sup>31</sup> On the origins of Soviet Nationalities Policy, See Pipes, Richard (1954), *The Formation of the Soviet Union*, Cambridge : Harvard University Press; Slezkine, Yuri (1994), "The USSR as Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review*, 53(2) : 414-52; Brubaker, Roger ( 1996), *Reframing Nationalism*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press; Suny, Ronald Grigor (1993), *Revenge of the Past : Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, Stanford : Stanford University Press.
- <sup>32</sup> See Yack, Bernard (1996), "The Myth of the Civic Nation," *Critical Review*, 10(2):193-211.
- <sup>33</sup> Khazanov, Anatoly (1994), *Nomads and the Outside World*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. See Ernest Gellner's forward to this book.
- <sup>34</sup> See Winner, Irene (1963), "Some Problems of Nomadism and Social Organization among the Recently Settled Kazakhs, part two," *Central Asian Review*, 11(4): 355-73.
- <sup>35</sup> See Luong, Pauline Jones (2002), *Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Power, Perceptions, and Pacts*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- <sup>36</sup> See Gumiliev, Lev N (1967), *Drevnie Tiurki*, Moscow: Nauka. Quoted in Edward Schatz (2004), *Modern Clan Politics*, Chapter.4.
- <sup>37</sup> See Barth, Fredrik (eds) (1966), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture and Difference*, Boston: Little Brown and Company.
- <sup>38</sup> Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti (KGB) was the national security agency of the USSR.
- <sup>39</sup> Kunaev had managed to weaken but not fundamentally undermine the Middle Umbrella Clan's position.
- <sup>40</sup> See Tileulesov, Temirtas (1998), *Ordaly Zhylyan: korruptsiia turaly*, Shymkent. Quoted in Edward Schatz (2004), *Modern Clan Politics*, Chapter.5.
- <sup>41</sup> See Bakhyt (1998), personal interview, Edward Schatz, Shymkent Akimat, South Kazakhstan Oblast, 28 May 1998. Ibid.

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<sup>42</sup> Waterbury, John (1970), *The Commander of the Faithful: The Moroccan Political Elite- A Study in Segmented Politics*, London: Weidenfield and Nicolson.

<sup>43</sup> See Dadabaeva, Gulnara (1998), personal conversation, Edward Schatz, Almaty, Almaty Oblast, 3 March 1998. Quoted in Edward Schatz (2004), *Modern Clan Politics*, chapter.6.

<sup>44</sup> See Janabel, Jiger (1996), "When National Ambition Conflicts with Reality: Studies on Kazakhstan's Ethnic Relations," *Central Asian Survey*, 15(1): 5-21.

<sup>45</sup> See Masanov, Nurbulat (1996), "Kazakhskaiia politicheskaia i intellektual'naia elita: klanovaia prinadlezhnost'i vnutrietnicheskoe sopernichestvo," *Vestnik evrazii*, 1(2):59. Quoted in Edward Schatz(2004), *Modern Clan Politics*, Chapter.6.

***CHAPTER - 4***  
***CLAN AND POLITICS IN KYRGYZSTAN***

## CHAPTER - 4

### CLAN AND POLITICS IN KYRGYZSTAN

#### **Kyrgyzstan: An Introduction**

The landlocked country of Kyrgyzstan is bordered with Kazakhstan in the north, Uzbekistan in the west, Tajikistan in the south-west and China in the south-east (see Map 4.1). The picturesque country is famous for the Tian Shan Mountain, Issyk Kul Lake, lush green meadows, flowing streams, rich and variegated flora and fauna and high mountains which cover more than 93 percentage of its territory, thereby providing lush green grasslands to its large livestock (Warikoo 2006: 64). The territory where Kyrgyz people presently live within its statehood (present Kyrgyzstan) is only a part of the ethnic territory, since formation of Kyrgyz ethnic community covered for many centuries a wide territory of Central Asia. In contemporary times with the formation of political states with clear cut borders, the Kyrgyz became a predominant nation in the Kyrgyz republic and a national minority in other states. Apart from their own republic, Kyrgyz also live in different states such as Tajikistan (Gorny Badakshan and Jerghetal), Uzbekistan (Ferghana Valley), China (Xinjiang), Afghanistan (Major and Minor Pamirs, Wakhan corridor) and Turkey (Wan province).

It is almost impossible to find out any Kyrgyz historian who wrote a history of the Kyrgyz nation before the end of the nineteenth century. This paucity of indigenous historiography is the reason that Kyrgyz history has been written mainly from external sources in various languages including Chinese, Arabic, Iranian, Greek, Turkic, Mongolian and Russian (Tahoroev 2002: 351). The first written information about the Kyrgyz is found in ancient Chinese chronicles. The name of the ancient Kyrgyz was first recorded in 201 B.C. in connection with Inner Asian events. In 201 B.C. in the work of Syma Tzan titled Shi Tzi (historical notes) where he narrates about campaigns of Shanyun Madeun, a ruler of the Huns against Kyrgyz. In their two thousand year old history, the Kyrgyz assimilated a lot of components from their historical neighbours (the

**MAP 4.1: KYRGYZSTAN, POLITICAL**



Source: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/asia.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/asia.html)



Hsiung-nu, Wu-sun, Saka, Turgesh, Oghuz, Qarluq, Kipchak, Uighur, Chigil, Turkified Sogdians, Qara-Qitai, and other Mongolian speaking peoples). Several Kyrgyz groups were included among the other Euro-Asian peoples and mixed with Kyrgyz.

According to research conducted by the Federal Research Division of the library of congress, the Kyrgyz descend from ancient nomadic tribes who inhabited the eastern and northern regions of modern day Central Asia (O'Quinn 2007: 11). During the time period from 300 BC- 100 BC, Kyrgyz overcame domination by the Huns and moved to the region of modern day south-central Russia between the Yenisei River and Lake Baikal. The Kyrgyz khanate, the first Kyrgyz state, endured from the sixth century until the thirteenth century A.D. and reached from the eastern border of modern day Kyrgyzstan across modern day Kazakhstan to the Irtysh River. The formation of Kyrgyz ethno-political territory passed through several stages which can tentatively be identified as following: Central Asian, Yeniseian and Altaian (Kerimbekova 1998: 57).

1) Central Asian- The first information about the existence of Kyrgyz domain has been found in 201B.C. at that time, they were already having a supreme ruler and the army. This area was located in the outlying districts of Huns domain near the lake Kyrgyz Nor or between the lake Alakol and Boro Horo range.

2) Yeniseian- During the early middle ages Minusinsk hollow in the middle Yenisei remained an ethno-cultural territory of the Kyrgyz. However, at the end of thirteenth century the state of Kyrgyz in Yenisei was destroyed.

3) Altaian- one of Kyrgyz sub-culture was formed in Altai and Jungaria. Here the culture of the Yenisei Kyrgyz was Kypchakized. Between thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, the Altai Kyrgyz joined the system of states whose political centre was Tien Shan.

Juchi, the son of Genkhiz Khan, conquered the Yenisei region and the Mongols ruled over the Kyrgyz tribes for the next two hundred years. The Kyrgyz attained freedom in the early 1500s and lasted until being overrun by the Kalmyks in the seventeenth century, the Manchus in the eighteenth century, and Uzbeks in the nineteenth century. Russian

forces conquered the Uzbek khanate of Khoqand in 1876 and within five years all Kyrgyzstan had become a part of Russia.

### **Kyrgyz Society: Traditional Social Structure**

A classic theme of Central Asian societies- and of the Kyrgyz society in particular- is the theme of tribal and clan structures (see Appendix 4.1). In the pre-Russian times the Kyrgyz society was made up by some forty tribal units (*uruks*), each of which consisted of different sub-level units (*teyp*) that were united by imagined kinship links. The *uruks* were united into three big confederations, the so-called right wing (*Ong khanat*), the left wing (*Sol khanat*) and neither (*Ichkilik*) (Graubner 2005: 5-6). The left wing consists of seven clans from the north and west, while the right wing has only one clan, the Adygine, based in southern Kyrgyzstan.<sup>1</sup> The Ichkilik group, with a stronghold in the southern part of the country, includes many clans, “some of which are not of Kyrgyz origin, but all of which claim Kyrgyz identity in the present.”<sup>2</sup> At the moment of war, each confederation had its specific place on the battlefield according to its name. Today, each confederation has its specific geographic location. Batkenians are Ichkiliks and consider themselves as particular Kyrgyz.

Following are the examples of migration of some big tribes in order to get a better idea of the Kyrgyz settlements (Kerimbekova 1998:60):

- 1) Northern Kyrgyz tribes (Buggu, Sarybagysh, Sayak) migrated along the Issyk Kul Lake and rivers Ulahol and Aksu in the foothills of Treskei Ala-too, on southern slopes of Muzart, the Upper Naryn, Karkara valley, the Upper Illi and the Tekes.
- 2) Large tribe Solto traditionally settled in the Chui valley in the foothills of the Kyrgyz ala-too ranges, on rivers Chui and Talas.
- 3) Nomad camps of Cheriks reached the boundaries of eastern Turkistan around the towns of Aksu and Uch Turfan.

- 4) Tribes Kushchu, Saru's and Kytai occupied eastern parts of the Talas valley and surrounded by mountains and foothills.<sup>3</sup>
- 5) South Kyrgyz tribes, mainly from the large kinship-tribal grouping Ichkilik occupied eastern Ferghana including Uzgen, Jalalabad and Osh localities spreading to the west in mountainous places up to Kokand, while in the east up to Gulchian valley and mountain ravines of Altai from Margelan between Uch Kargen and Min Tuibe, in ravines Altyn Dara and Koksu etc.<sup>4</sup>

The political culture and mentality of the Central Asian people have formed and developed under the influence of the ideas stemmed from the great role played by the “leader” or “ruler” throughout the history. In Kyrgyzstan, the nomadic civilization which was historically dominating throughout the centuries organically enrolled many elements of democratic attitude surrounding the world. Nomad was “citizen” of the khan only conditionally. The cattle and its possession were individual but belonged to the family as well. The khan was usually elected on a nation-wide meeting (kurultay) and had only a nominal power. The power of the clan's head was more real (Dononbaev 1998: 112-113).

The characteristic notion of Kyrgyz tribal groupings were a set of shared values (the *achabyya*, said to be adapted from other Muslim societies during the period of Islamisation), which included loyalty and allegiance towards the family, respect towards elders and mutual support and assistance-relations between the members of the same clan. Janna Khegai (2004) describes how this intra-clan support mechanism works: “whatever the social position of a clan member is, he/she is required to foster the well-being of his/her clan. This goes especially for the elite members of the clan, who, by providing opportunities or assistance to the members of their respective networks, count in return in these members' personal loyalty and respect in order to maintain their status.”<sup>5</sup> The tribal system of the Kyrgyz was clearly linked to their social structure, which has stratified by different social positions and titles among the northern and southern Kyrgyz tribes. *Manaps* or tribal and family chiefs, *biis*, actual judges, *bukharas*,

common people, and *kuls*, slaves have stratified the patriarchal Kyrgyz society of the northern tribes.<sup>6</sup>

Kyrgyzstan is 94 percentage mountainous with elevations ranging from 840 meter in the capital Bishkek to over 7,000 meter in both the Tian Shan and Pamir-Alai ranges, a geography that has greatly influenced the Kyrgyz system of semi nomadic pastoralism (Schmidt 2001). In the late nineteenth century, Kyrgyz herders followed a three pasture animal nomadic cycle that was largely vertical in nature due to the mountainous terrain of the Kyrgyz homeland. Horses were the primary animal of nomadic Kyrgyz but cows and sheep were of lesser importance. Pasture rights and migration routes were passed down within a clan migration distances varied from twenty kilometers to two hundred kilometers. Families of clan moved together for protection and in the early 1800s groupings of up to one hundred families were observed (Emeljanenko 1994).

The Kyrgyz followed pagan, pre-Islamic religions before adopting Islam in the eighth century. One of the most ancient religious cults followed by the Kyrgyz is the cult of Mother Umai (Umai Enge) (Moldobayev 1999:42), whom researchers have identified as the most important Central Asian goddess. There are reference to Umai Enge as a goddess alongside the gods Zher – Suu (earth-water) and Tenir (sky) in runic scripts dating back to the seventh and eighth centuries. A feature of early Kyrgyz religion was the totemic concept that people (tribes and nationalities) were related to certain types of animals and birds. Over two thousand Kyrgyz given names reflect a totemic origin. Kyrgyz tribes used to revere the animal whose name they bore; the animals were divided into the so-called large species, such as boru (wolf), uku (owl), zhoru (vulture) (Ashymov 2003:134). In his *Zain al- Akbar*, the eleventh century Persian-speaking author Gardizi writes that ‘many Kyrgyz revere the cow, while others revere the wind, or the porcupine, or the magpie, or the falcon’ (Barthol’d 1973:48). The cult of the dead and of ancestors, referred to as *arbak* in Kyrgyz, also features in Kyrgyz pre-Islamic faiths. These cults originate in animism. ‘The spirits of the dead also take on a holy meaning, candles burn in their honour and rams are brought as sacrifices’ (Valikhanov 1985:73).

By the Middle Ages Central Asia had already been converted into Islam. However, with some of the various nationalities living in the region this process had taken larger than others. The settled peoples of Central Asia were the first to adopt Islam; the Kyrgyz were last to do so. Ernest Gellner (1992) distinguishes two parallel, often complementing forms of Islam; high and low. Low Islam thrives among nomadic people whose access to the Koran and religious education is seriously curtailed by the very nature of their mobile lifestyle and they are unlikely to have the necessary resource to support a permanent clerical class. In the absence of the clergy, local chiefs, elders and wandering saints meet the spiritual needs of nomadic Muslims like Kyrgyz, by leading religio/traditional festivals and rites. In Kyrgyzstan today, what is known as 'Traditional Islam' incorporates many elements of pre-Islamic religions and cults, including shamanism, animism, Zoroastrianism, ancestor worship and the cult of nature.

Three events of the modern era were to dramatically affect the Kyrgyz people eventually change their semi nomadic, pastoral way of life forever (Farrington 2005: 171-172). The first was the arrival of the Russian army in the present day Bishkek, in 1860, soon to be followed by thousands of Russian and Ukrainian settlers. These European colonists appropriated large tracts of the most fertile lowland pastures, converting them to plough land, greatly reducing the amount of winter pasture available to the Kyrgyz while also disrupting their seasonal migration patterns and water access for their livestock (Popova 1994, Schillhorn Van Veen 1995, Wilson 1997). The next major event to affect the indigenous system of nomadic pastoralism was the forced collectivization under Stalin of all Kyrgyz pastoralists between about 1928 and 1932, after this permanent settlement began to be built throughout the whole of Kyrgyzstan. The third event to dramatically affect Kyrgyzstan's semi nomadic herders (Kyrgyz: chaban) was the collapse of the USSR in 1991 and the resulting disbandment of the collectives. The subsequent economic crisis and ongoing process of 'de-development' have left large numbers of semi nomadic herders operating as individual family units, rather as part of a larger collective or clan unit, for the first time in Kyrgyz history.

## **Kyrgyz and the Tsarist Russia**

After the abolition of Kokand khanate in 1876, Tsarist Russia became successor to all its lands. Two great powers Russia and China who entered into territorial relationship had to define the borders of their domains. The legal basis for Russian - Chinese traditional demarcation on the Kyrgyz part of the border was defined in Beijing Agreement of 1860<sup>7</sup>, Chuguchak Protocols of 1864<sup>8</sup>, Petersburg Agreement of 1881<sup>9</sup>, Kashgar Protocol of 1882<sup>10</sup> and New Margelan Protocol of 1884.<sup>11</sup> After the territorial – national delimitation of the Central Asia in 1924 by communists, Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast was transformed into the Kyrgyz Autonomous Socialist Republic. In 1936 A.D. the Kyrgyz Autonomous Socialist Republic became one of the fifteen Union Republics within the USSR.

Since the arrival of the Russians in the Tian Shan range in the second half of the nineteenth century, Kyrgyz transhumant practices have been significantly modified, first with the displacement of Kyrgyz herders by Slavic farmers and secondly by forced collectivization under Stalin. Kyrgyz nomads faced particular deprivation from Russian policies with the confiscation of their land for Russian settlements. Indigenous groups were also the target of forced labour and taxation. A bloody uprising began in Uzbekistan in 1916 and extended into Kyrgyzstan and other regions. Thousands of local people were killed and approximately one third of the Kyrgyz population fled to the bordering Xinjiang province of China. As a result of war caused destruction, there was famine from 1921-22 and over five hundred thousand Kyrgyz perished.

The political culture and mentality of the Central Asian people have formed and developed under the influence of the ideas stemmed from the great role played by the “leader” or “ruler” throughout the history. In Kyrgyzstan, the nomadic civilization which was historically dominating throughout the centuries organically enrolled many elements of democratic attitude surrounding the world. Nomad was “citizen” of the khan only conditionally. The cattle and its possession were individual but belonged to the family as well. The Khan was usually elected on a nation-wide meeting (kurultay) and had only a nominal power. The power of the clan’s head was more real (Dononbaev 1998:112-113).

Before the communist revolution, a significant part of the Kyrgyz people was used to a nomadic way of life and, as nomads, they organized themselves according to tribal principles. A Kyrgyz, when presenting himself to another, had to clarify his relationship to a lineage. This meant he had to present the names of some forefathers, his tribe and clan affiliation, and perhaps his ancestor's area of residence. In some encounters he presented himself by naming two or three forefathers, while in others it was enough to present the name of the main clan. It is said that it was compulsory for everyone to learn by heart the genealogies was certainly also necessary because the Kyrgyz former times had no written language and this fact made the inhabitants unable to keep written records<sup>12</sup> (Hvoslef 2001: 87).

Russian and Soviet state systems exerted very strong influences on the transformation and further development of the political culture of the Kyrgyz people (Dononbaev 1998:119). During the Russian domination, a number of traditional institutes of common type feudal governance were kept alive. However, they were changed formally according to the requirement of a colonial administration. The Kyrgyz khan's power also changed under the power of a Russian "White Tsar". Democratic procedure of election had been gradually changed to an institution of governance where a representative of the government was appointed from outside. This long run practice was deeply into the political consciousness and behaviour of the people, so that democratic traditions were forced out slowly or steadily and were finally replaced by authoritarian rules.

### **Soviet Kyrgyzstan**

According to Soviet anthropological theory on ethnicity, the family, tribe and tribal federations arose in the primitive communal system stage; the "people" arose in the slave owning system and feudalism stages; and the nation arose in two regular stages (i.e.; the capitalist nation arose in the capitalism stage, and the socialist nation in the socialism stage). The people who had orderly kinship structures in the past and retained them until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were named "peoples with tribal and kinship patriarchal remnants." The Kyrgyz were considered a "socialist nation from the end of the 1930s (Tchoroev 2002: 354). Currently there are two opinions in post-Soviet historiography in

the ethnic development of the Kyrgyz. The authors who mainly represent the “old school” continue to believe that “before 1917 the Kyrgyz were not a natsiia (nation) and they were only a narodnost (sub nationality), given the feudal- kinship structures of the settlements” (Koichuev 1998:3).

The Soviet politics aimed to modernize the Kyrgyz society and thus to weaken dominance of clan and tribal structures. One of the first steps of the new- soviet rulers in the 1920s was the process of collectivization, intended to make the nomadic Kyrgyz settle down. Families that formerly roamed the high pastures in summers and settled villages (ail) in the valleys in winter were collectivized into collective farms (kolkhoz). Collectivization of Kyrgyz and Kazakh herders’ began in the late 1920s, as semi nomadic pastoralists were forced to reside it in permanent settlements and hand over their livestock to local authorities for redistribution. Many herders responded by slaughtering their animals. Famine in Soviet Central Asia followed at least one million people died while thousands fled to other countries (Popova 1994; Soucek 2000).

The process of collectivization had several characteristics important for clan structures (Graubner 2005:6):

- 1) Members of families were settled in the same villages, members of clans in the same regions.<sup>13</sup>
- 2) Traditional elites were given official position in the new system. What had been formerly a head of an extended family now became the head of a kolkhoz or member of a village council.
- 3) Villages and regions were included into the Soviet administrative hierarchy.

Through this process informal and formal institution overlapped as traditional elites were installed into the new, regionalized administrative hierarchy. Their status changed from being elites of informal institutions to being elites of formal, Soviet institutions. Because they were regionally anchored, regional identity became an important part of the clan identity (Graubner 2005:7). The practice of election of governing bodies and men was again introduced in a changing life style. For the first time in the history of the Kyrgyz



people, an administrative and territorial demarcation started to break the traditional mechanism of the clan's and tribal division. Instead of clan's and tribal's democracy, there came into being the democracy of the "collectivist organization" which was oriented towards an individual and building of the society (Dononbaev 1998:119 - 120).

One of the goals of the Soviet leaders was to destroy the tribal organization among the Kyrgyz and by this strengthen the control over them. The enforced changing of the naming system was one of many drives towards this end. The new rules and the obligatory registration of all individuals made it easier for the authorities to keep control of the population. During soviet rule, two systems of naming existed side by side. The 'russified' version was used in official settings and when Russian language was spoken, while a more Kyrgyz form was used in private settings (Hvoslef 2001:89). After the communist take-over some girls also started the practice of taking their husband's surname upon marriage. This was not the traditional way. Kyrgyz girls are throughout life members of their father's clan and this relation was until the communist revolution indicated by the names attached to them.

In the pre-Soviet period in Central Asia, religion was part of the hegemonic ideology of the region. The state defined and authorized the parameters of religious knowledge. Under the Soviet System as atheism became the official doctrine, the state denied access to religious knowledge and greatly restricted practices. This led to a loss of religiousness (retaining religious knowledge) among the great majority of Soviet Central Asian Muslims in general and Kyrgyz Muslims in particular. But, ironically, religiosity (using religion as an idiom) manifested in frequent reference to allah-'guda' in Kyrgyz- and retaining strong religious sentiments flourished (Heyat 2004:275).

The national-territorial delimitation of Central Asia, which saw the abolition of the republics of Turkestan, Bukhara, and Khiva and their replacements with a number of ethno territorial units in 1924-25, marks a significant step in the sovietization of the region (Khalid 2006:874). Arne Haughen (2003) shows quite convincingly that for the soviets, the main issue was not a local unity that had to be destroyed, but quite the opposite: Central Asia was hopelessly fragmented into clan and tribal divisions, which

made the process of Soviet construction difficult. National delimitation would consolidate the populations and make their incorporation into the Soviet State, and the Bolshevik project, easier.

Politics in Kyrgyzstan bears the imprint of the republic's ethnic diversity and its economic backwardness and dependency. Carved out of the larger Central Asian region of Turkestan, Soviet Kyrgyzstan embraced numerous Muslim, Turkic-speaking peoples at its founding in 1936. The titular nationality, the Kyrgyz, was concentrated in the vast mountain regions of the republic, where sheep raising served as the traditional livelihood. Uzbeks lived in the south west, in the fertile Ferghana valley, Kazakhs inhabited the northern and northwestern regions, and the smaller Dungan and Uighur peoples settled along the republic's eastern border with China.<sup>14</sup> Second World War brought forced resettlement into Kyrgyzstan of three suspect populations, the Germans, the Tatars and the Meskhetian Turks (Huskey 1995:813-14). The Famine of the 1930s and the industrialization of Kyrgyzstan in the aftermath of the Second World War prompted the movement of large numbers of Russians and other Slavs into the republic, where they joined a small but well established Slavic community dating from Tsarist rule.<sup>15</sup>

Although the Soviet nationality policy attempted to weaken the traditional structures in Central Asian societies, some of the important aspect such as clan-based informal patronage governance was overlooked as long as the Kyrgyz ruling elite remained loyal to Moscow (Berdikееva 2006:7). The Soviet-led modernization and development of the Kyrgyz society did not reduce the influence of clans, which defined the identity of many people and included "an extensive web of horizontal and vertical kin-based relations."<sup>16</sup> Clans from the left wing dominated Kyrgyzstan vied for power during the Soviet and post-Soviet years. The northern Buguu clan controlled the country during the early years of Soviet Union, but the Sarybagysh clan wielded more power as the Buguu's rein weakened after the 1930 Stalinist-purges.<sup>17</sup> Moscow's "indirect rule" of its satellite states through representatives of titular nationalities provided an opportunity to the ruling elite and powerful clans in Kyrgyzstan to promote their kin in the system.<sup>18</sup>

In Kyrgyzstan, political leadership required maintaining ethnic harmony at home and obeisance to Moscow while being perceived to champion the interest of the titular nationality. From 1961 to 1985, T. Ususbaliyev assumed this challenge as first secretary of the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan. Ususbaliyev belonged to a cohort of Central Asian leaders appointed by Khrushchev, preserved in power by Brezhnev, and removed by Gorbachev (Allworth 1995: 548-554). Dismissal from power in 1985 of the first secretary of Kyrgyzstan, Turdakun Ususbaliyev, who is from the northern political clan and served for a quarter of a century, reportedly led to the “personal humiliation” of Ususbaliyev as well as a purge of “his entire network of associates, cronies and relatives” with the succession of Absamat Masaliyev, who came from the southern clan.<sup>19</sup> The victor of the post-independence presidential elections in 1991, Askar Akayev repeated the pattern of the “winner take all” tactic by humiliating Masaliyev and granting political and economic power to his close circle of cronies and supporters, “at the expense of the southern clan.”<sup>20</sup> Akayev’s induction to power was reported to have been at least partially due to the heavy backing of northern clans under the leadership of Chingiz Aitmatov, a well-known and respected writer from the north.<sup>21</sup>

### **Sub-Ethnic Groups and Politics in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan: Akayev Era**

The modern (post-Soviet) Kyrgyzstan is divided into eight administrative provinces. There are seven regional provinces and then the capital city of Bishkek. The provinces referred to as “northern” are Naryn, Issyk Kul, Chui and Talas. The “southern” provinces are Osh, Jalalabad and Batken. Each province has its own legislative system, but real power is concentrated in sub-regional governors or akims. The Kyrgyz national identity is represented by its history, culture, regionalism, tribalism, ideology, language and ethnicity.<sup>22</sup> While the exact definition of Kyrgyzstan’s national identity remains debatable, some of the country’s unique characteristics help to understand the country’s current political and socio-economic problems.

The definition of the term national identity can often be ambiguous because it can be looked at from different perspectives. Identities may vary from individualistic to collective, ideological, religious, ethnic, cultural or language-centered. But the general

thrust of the term national identity such as history, language and cultural legacy, have also failed to address and, in fact, became a victim of some of the negative aspects of the Kyrgyz national identity such as regionalism and clannism. A subject of suppression during the Soviet years, the Kyrgyz national identity began to be openly discussed after its independence. To a large degree, the discussion and definition of the Kyrgyz national identity were necessary as the country faced ideological vacuum and lack of a clear understanding of itself to determine its vision of the future. In an attempt to consolidate power and control over the country, the Kyrgyz leaders began emphasizing the unity of the nation by tapping into some of the unique characteristics that symbolize the Kyrgyz national identity such as the historical figure Manas,<sup>23</sup> the Kyrgyz language and Kyrgyz history.

One of Kyrgyzstan's unique features is the continued strength of clans and their roles in various aspects of the political and socio-economic dynamics of the country. The notion of a clan in terms of Kyrgyzstan is rightly defined by Kathleen Collins who notes that it is "an informal social institution in which actual or notional kinship based on blood or marriage forms the central bond among members."<sup>24</sup> Although the Kyrgyz people remain largely a monolithic group with shared history, language, ethnicity and culture, divisions among the Kyrgyz across clan lines have survived and constitute an important part of the identity of many Kyrgyz people. Clan structures go back to the Kyrgyz history. According to Manas epic, the Kyrgyz society was built from forty kin-based but disparate tribes, each of which had different subdivisions (Berdikeeva 2006:5). Some scholars claim that these tribes "were united by imaginary, rather than real, kinship links."<sup>25</sup>

In analyzing the internal political and socio-economic situation in Kyrgyzstan, its foreign policy, and the evolution of civil society institutions it is important to take into account Kyrgyz peculiarities. Some of them are intrinsic to the Kyrgyz community since the tribal stage of its evolution. One of these key features is the clannish nature of Kyrgyz society and even Kyrgyz statehood. Clannishness has traditionally been a very strong factor, so Kyrgyzstan's well-known division into north and south, widely accepted. Local clans, however, are by far the most important factor-like Talas and Chui in the north, Ichilik and

Otuz in the south etc. Division by the tribes and families is crucial for the Kyrgyzstan's population. Given the institutional weakness of Kyrgyz statehood, this tribal affiliation plays an important role in providing informal social guarantees, when not the state and institutions but the clan (teyp) protects an individual belonging to this particular group. Furthermore, the clan is a kind of a "social elevator," ensuring an individual's career advancement and providing opportunities for his/her self-fulfillment.

Each of the Central Asian states is a multi-national entity with a range of ethnic communities that sometime, as in the case of Kazakhstan, challenge the demographic superiority of the titular ethnic group and consequently question the legitimacy of the 'nation-state' epithet. In Turkmenistan, regional groupings have the potential to pull the state apart and shattered the young Turkmen nation (Akbarzadeh 2001:454). Similar spatial sub-national groupings have marked politics in Kyrgyzstan. Eugene Huskey argues thus: the Kyrgyz have developed fierce regional loyalties. Each of the five major valleys- Ferghana, Talas, Chui, Issyk-Kul and Naryn has nurtured a distinct Kyrgyz culture, evident in patterns of speech, dress, food and even one may argue, in political and social values.<sup>26</sup> Regional loyalties appear to have exerted a discernable influence on the political process in Kyrgyzstan, often referred to as the north-south rivalry.

The technological, educational and administrative center of the Kyrgyzstan has been concentrated in the north, while the south remains agricultural and traditional in many ways. Attempts of the northern political elite to eliminate competition and maintain control over resource and the distribution of power in the country met resentment from southern clans, which to this day seek better representation in the government. Some of the pre-Soviet Kyrgyz traditional principles such as adat and tuuganchylyk (kinship) also provided basis for clan solidarity. Adat promoted a strict discipline and social control, requiring respect of the elders. Adat is a part of tuuganchylyk that required each Kyrgyz to be a loyal member of a group, ready to defend and fight for it as the Kyrgyz came under threats and attacks.<sup>27</sup> Another more obvious traditional structure, which Kyrgyz power continues to maintain, is the so-called aksakal court, or the court of the elderly.

The government has often used this structure as an instrument to settle dispute as well as to boost its legitimacy.

Divisions along regional, tribal and clan-based lines not only negatively impact the stability and cohesiveness of the Kyrgyz nation, but they are also sources of many social, political and economic problems. In particular, clans, which form informal influential entities, wield influence in politics and decision-making, undermining state-building efforts based on the rule of law, democracy and meritocracy (Berdikeyeva 2006:1-2). However, corruption and politicization of the country due to regional and clan divisions and competition facilitate the process of selecting public figures on their clan or regional affiliations more than their political agenda and reform proposals. Differences in political loyalties and allegiances are not limited just to regional clan divisions. They are often present among various local clans within the regions. A vivid example was Kyrgyzstan's, as well as Central Asia's, first elections for local self-administration in December 2002. Such elections demonstrated the prevalence of voting along blood ties instead of policies, proving "once more the enduring strength of clan solidarity in Kyrgyz society."<sup>28</sup>

Privatization of Kyrgyzstan's agricultural sector began in 1991 and one by one the republic's herding collectives were disbanded. Animals, equipment, machinery, buildings and other collective assets were distributed among collective members, who unexpectedly found themselves to be individual livestock owners with no experience of herding without state support (Farrington 2005:175). Another major change directly affecting herders in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan is that of land distribution. Whereas in the Soviet Era all land was the property of the state and pastures were allocated by local soviets, it is now possible to purchase limited accounts of arable farmland and residential land in Kyrgyzstan. Ownership of Kyrgyzstan's vast pasture lands, however, has been retained by the state. Rights to use pastures are precisely available to both individual herders and other economic entities in the form of five- to ten year pasture lease granted by national, provincial and district governments, depending on the type and location of pastures leased. However, these leases are not issued on the basis of historical use of

lands, rather through competitive bids that evaluate not only the price bid per hectare but also a business plan submitted by the bidder (Chemonics 2003).

Post-Soviet organization of transhumance has produced diverse forms that reflect not only the conservatism of earlier collective and clan practices, but also newer individualism where some herders, either by choice or lack of choice, are going it alone as a family unit. Although Kyrgyzstan's herders face large challenges today, nomadic pastoralism remains at the core of the Kyrgyz identity, as evidenced by the use of the circular yurt roof frame as the national symbol and by the thousands of urban Kyrgyz who return to ancestral village each year to spend summer holidays, drinking koumiss and visiting the yurts of relatives who remain on the land (Farrington 2005:194).

In short still "the Kyrgyz nation is a small nation, which has actually preserved its tribal structure as well as the sense of genealogical unity of the whole people. There is a local proverb saying that any Kyrgyz at a huge table will inevitably meet a relative among unknown people. Both will start checking their relations and discover that at least ten generations earlier they had a common ancestor."<sup>29</sup> In clarifying the genealogical affiliations, an individual supposed to mention the names of important ancestors, names of lineages, clans and tribes. However, it is certain that this kind of knowledge always has been more important in the countryside than in the cities. In most villages, people still organize themselves more in accordance to tribal rules. Each family- clan lives in its own part of the village and buries its dead in its own graveyard, and so on (Hvoslef 2001:92). As a part of the ongoing process of 'Kyrgyzification', some present-day Kyrgyz choose to change their personal names, first names and or surnames. By doing this they want to make the names sound more Kyrgyz or given them a new meaning. The urban population are usually much more 'Russified' than the Kyrgyz living in the countryside and at the present time many feel the need to create a new existence more in accordance with Kyrgyz traditions and customs.

Regional loyalties appear to have exerted a discernible influence on the political process in Kyrgyzstan, often referred to as the north-south rivalry. The Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan (CPK) was dominated for nearly twenty five years by leaders from the north

under the stewardship of Turdakun Usubaliev (1961-1985).<sup>30</sup> The northern domination came to a close with the promotion of Absamat Masaliev from the south, but, on the eve of Soviet collapse, the balance of power shifted again in favour of the north. Askar Akayev's presidential election by the republican parliament in October 1990 and the removal of Masaliev from the position of the CPK first secretary in April 1991 signalled this reversal. In October 1994, President Akayev's referendum on reforming the parliament received a ringing endorsement in the north, but popular support for his constitutional amendments was much lower in the southern districts of Jalalabad and Talas.<sup>31</sup> A similar pattern marked the 1995 and 2000 presidential elections, when Akayev received his lowest support in the south.

The first post-Soviet Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev often spoke of the existence of inherent democratic traditions in pre-modern Kyrgyz tribes, referring to freedom of thinking, freedom of movement and the tradition of selecting 'khans' in popular gatherings,<sup>32</sup> presumably in a manner that could be qualified as democratic. Looking at positive developments by the mid-1990s in Kyrgyzstan, some western commentators have portrayed the country as the "island of democracy,"<sup>33</sup> while the US deputy secretary of state Strobe Talbott has identified Kyrgyzstan president Askar Akayev as "the Thomas Jefferson of Kyrgyzstan."<sup>34</sup> President Akayev has several times tried to contain clan politics and, especially in the beginning of the 1990s, to construct a larger Kyrgyz civic identity that would include not only the sub-ethnic Kyrgyz groups but also the other ethnic groups such as the Russians, Uzbeks, Germans and Dungans.<sup>35</sup>

The balance of forces in the Kyrgyz republic is predicted not so much on the line up of political parties, which are traditionally weak in the post-Soviet era, as on the balance and line up of forces between the clans. Experts on Kyrgyzstan's national politics note that representative of a particular clan or teyp in a high state or government office strengthens the clan's positions and its hierarchical structure. This set-up is further strengthened by the complex familial system of relationships and connections between clans, organized on the principle: "if – your- relative -gets- married- all- of- his- in- laws- automatically- become – members- of- your family." In his, *The New Central Asia*, Oliver Roy (2000)



characterized Kyrgyz politics already in the Soviet period as “built on an opposition between north and south. The (then) current president Akayev, and his whole team are from the north, from the valleys of Talas, Jui and Kemin.....while the valleys of Issyk Kul and Narain remain outside their control.”

Discussing clan politics in Kyrgyzstan under president Akayev, Collins (2006) describes the northern bias in elite representation in state institutions as reflecting a political split between the northern and southern clans. In particular, this concerns the distribution of economic rents and the politically and economically important posts of provincial governors or akims: “During the early 1990s, the oblast akims were almost invariably members of a powerful local clan. However by 1995, Akayev began to appoint northerners, especially from his own clan, to control the southern regions- the base of his main rivals” <sup>36</sup>(see Table-4.1). Melvin ( n.d.), discussing the fault lines of Kyrgyz politics, emphasizes three of them : “while Akayev eventually established considerable control over much of the elite in the Kyrgyz republic, the regime remained featured along a number of fault lines, notably the north-south axis, urban-rural tensions, and inter-ethnic fissures.”

	<b>North</b>				<b>South</b>		
<b>Region</b>	Chui	Talas	Naryn	Issyk-Kul	Jalal Abad	Osh	Batken
<b>Number of Elites</b>	20	5	7	9	4	14	0

Source: Graubner, Cornelius (2005), *Kyrgyzstan: Mapping the Shadow State*, Field Research Report, Berlin, December 2005.

The informal patronage system and clanism helped to maintain the stability of the Akayev regime. Akayev had disorienting power to allocate public goods, the main beneficiaries of which were reportedly the northern Kemin, Aitmatov and Sarygulov clans as well as that of his wife.<sup>37</sup> The Akayev regime finally acquired the form of a “family rule”. As the “family influence expanded, the balance of clans and ethnic groups

was disturbed. The core of the ruling elite was constituted by the Talas and Chui-Kemin clan as mentioned above. The other clans, especially in the south, were certain they had gotten raw deal. Kumtor, the gold mine and Karakeche, the coal mine were under the control of allies of Askar Akayev. In Kumtor, allegedly the higher paid staff is entirely from Kemin, while the workers are mostly from the villages of Baraskoon.<sup>38</sup>

Many observers put a lot of emphasis on the special importance of the inner circle of the Akayev family in Kyrgyz politics. The first lady, Mairam Akayeva, was said to have an important saying in questions the regimes personal policy, and a good connection to her apparently was vital to advance ones career. The oldest daughter, Bermet Akayeva, was heavily involved in politics through her active involvement in the “Alga Kyrgyzstan!” party, which was widely believed as an attempt to create a party of power, and established herself as an important informal player in business. She also won a seat as a parliamentary deputy during the 2005 parliamentary elections. Her husband, Adil Toigenbaev, who is of Kazakh nationality, controls important business sectors and parts of the media, he is also active in the “Alga Kyrgyzstan!” party. The oldest son, Aidar Akayev, is also heavily involved in certain business sectors. He furthermore enjoys the support of a group of younger, well- educated representatives from the National Security Service and the Ministry of Finance also won a seat in the 2005 parliamentary elections. Recent investigations and disclosure of the Akayev family’s financial and property possessions revealed numerous illegal activities with astounding revenues. The Akayev family was suspected of involvement in money laundering.<sup>39</sup>

### **The Tulip Revolution and the Continuation of Clan Politics**

The “Rose Revolution”<sup>40</sup> in Georgia and the “Orange Revolution”<sup>41</sup> in Ukraine followed by yet another “colourful” revolution (The Tulip Revolution) in Kyrgyzstan in the march of 2005. A group of opposition who were dissatisfied with the result of the parliamentary election taken place on February 27<sup>th</sup> and March 13<sup>th</sup> of 2005 upraised against incumbent regime of Askar Akayev. Common characteristics of all these colourful revolutionists were that they all used rhetoric of “democracy and freedom” and that they were all pro-western especially pro-American (Bingol 2006:73). The unique expectation of Bush

administration from the Central Asia and the Middle East during this period (after 9/11) is to find devoted regimes and leaders who would be in line with American politics, rather than democracy and freedoms. In this regard, the US planning to control Russia as well as China in Eurasia, must have given great importance to Kyrgyzstan which, albeit lacking natural resources, has great geopolitical location for the purpose of controlling Russia and China (Bingol 2006:75). While Mikhail Saakashwili in Georgia and Victor Yushchenko in Ukraine were the sole leaders in their respective republics, the number of leaders, in the Kyrgyz revolution was at least four: former Prime Minister Kurmanbek Bakiev, former Minister of Foreign Affairs Roza Otunbayeva, Former National Security Advisor Feliks Kulov, and former MP Azimbek Beknazarov.

As mentioned above, the administrative arbitrariness in counting the ballots provoked the well-known events that came to be known as the “Tulip Revolution.”<sup>42</sup> Twenty large clans, which were left out in the cold under the Akayev regime, were extremely unhappy and antagonistic. They felt that their interests had been trampled upon, while their representatives saw no opportunities for career advancement within a system where the key positions in the political and economic spheres were controlled by other clans. Since the tribal/familial bonds in Kyrgyzstan are extremely strong, an injustice committed against one person (a candidate) is preserved as an injustice committed against an entire clan.

The revolution brought Kurmanbek Bakiyev to power, a former Prime Minister and Jalalabad Akim. Later Feliks Kulov joined as the Prime Minister of the republic. Kulov explicitly declared that his decision to join Bakiyev came from a desire not to let the country split into the north and south.<sup>43</sup> Among the reasons for choosing Bakiyev was an informal pact between opposition forces to nominate a representative from southern Kyrgyzstan who would balance power sharing among northern and southern political elites. Since 1961, Soviet Kyrgyzstan was led so by representatives of the north, and Absamat Masaliyev, first secretary of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic between 1985-1991, was the only southern leader in decades. In 2006 opposition groups increasingly accused Bakiev of taking all the executive power that Akayev had exercised

before his overthrow. Significant regional political power centers continued to exist in 2006, with a pronounced split between northern and southern provinces. In many cases, political loyalties still are defined by clan rather than party.

Bakiyev replicated Akayev's worst mistakes while discontinuing some of the more positive features of his predecessor. Bakiyev changed the constitution to suit him, and formed loyal political party; corruption is widespread and threatens to drive the hydro-energy sector into greater chaos. Bakiyev has been accused of promoting nepotism and clanism. Resembling the former president Akayev, Bakiyev is giving important posts to his relatives and supporters in a likely attempt to take control of the north and create his own power base.<sup>44</sup> Kyrgyz mass media often referred to the President's younger brother, Zhanysh Bakiyev, with a background in military structures as a grey eminence in the President's intimidation of political opponents. There were also reports that Bakiyev's older brother Akhmat Bakiyev, a chair of the Jalalabad city council, was allegedly controlling organized crime and drug trafficking in southern Kyrgyzstan. He is an informal governor of the entire oblast.<sup>45</sup> Bakiyev's son, Maksim, is notorious for controlling all major businesses in the country (Marat 2008:234). Besides Bakiyev appointed one of his brothers as ambassador to Germany and a younger brother as first Deputy Chairman of the National Security Service.<sup>46</sup>

The forces that drove the Tulip revolution – independent business interests, informal networks, and patronage ties- developed under Akayev's fifteen year rule, and remained strong after his exit. The Kyrgyz "opposition," moreover, consisted not of established parties or civil society groups, but of elites lacking broad-based support that had banded together for tactical reasons. There are two reasons why the development of opposition during the Kyrgyz spring took place in such a fragmented way. The first was the ubiquity of and importance of informal impersonal ties, which motivated the candidate's close acquaintances, neighbours, and extended family to lend their aid to a defeated relative or friend. The second was patronage. Candidates were typically people who had lent their villages consistent material support while in office, support whose loss villagers would naturally view with dismay.<sup>47</sup> These mechanisms tied elites to (mostly rural) communities

throughout Kyrgyzstan and gave their residents ample incentive to support their patrons when called upon to do so (Radnitz 2006:137-38).

Kyrgyzstan proved that under certain conditions empowered elites, even in the absence of a strong civil society, can challenge entrenched autocracy. Among those conditions that proved critical were local vertical networks through which various elites could “reach down” in order to mobilize certain segments of the population, and horizontal networks by means of which elites could “reach out” in order to agree with one another at least temporarily on a common political agenda (such as throwing out Akayev) (Radnitz 2006:144).

However, corruption and politicization of the country due to regional and clan divisions and competition facilitate the process of selecting public figures on their clan or regional affiliations more than their political agenda and reform proposals. Differences in political loyalties and allegiances are not limited just to regional clan divisions. They are often present among various local clans within the regions. Barriers to battling corruption persist thanks to the shady Akayev era histories of current government officials, including Bakiyev himself, in a society where blood ties and cronyism remain strong. Bakiyev is reputed to be one of Kyrgyzstan’s hundred richest people.<sup>48</sup>

The question remains as to whether the ‘colour revolutions’ produced enduring regime changes.... The chance of consolidated democracy in Kyrgyzstan is very low, because the ‘Tulip revolution’ only replaced one former communist appatchic with a less sophisticated one, and the northern elite with a more parochial southern elite (Fairbanks 2007:55). Theodor Tudoroiu (2007) suggests that what appeared as a democratic revolution proved to be ‘a limited rotation of ruling elites,’ while Scott Radnitz (2006) qualified the same events as nothing more than a ‘transfer of power’.

In contrast to analyses of other coloured revolutions, explanatory emphasis in the Kyrgyz case have been on the role of the informal, defined by Douglas North as conventions and codes of behaviour not intentionally created by an established authority (Harukiro 2000). Helmke and Levitsky (2004) consider four categories of informal politics, defined by two

dimensions. The first dimension concerns the convergence or divergence of institutional outcomes in the formal and informal sectors. The second measures the effectiveness of formal institutions in whose presence the informal ones operate. Pauline Jones Luong (2002) partly argues that the perceived transformation of 'tribal' into regional identities resulted from Soviet administrative – territorial policy, economic specialization and korenizatsiya, the creation and consolidation of national elites. By contrast, Kathleen Collins (2006:43; 2002:145) contends that these social actors 'have persisted despite the breakdown of their larger tribal organizations, and they have used clientelism and patronage as strategies for advancement and survival', with regional identities formed on the basis of these very kinship or large family networks. Other actors use broader terms to refer to these groupings partly also to reflect the very fluidity of these social organizations boundaries (Khamidov 2002, Temirkulov 2004, Gullett 2007).

Professor Djunushaliev (2008) suggests the fragmentation of Kyrgyz society is related to its traditional organization, which represents a pyramid type of network of families/tribes along patrilineal genealogy. According to Djunushaliev, the Kyrgyz sub-ethnic units have traditionally been in competitive relationships, particularly on the issue of political power. Such competitiveness, and the absence of a dominant/ prevailing unit, has led to the emergence and persistence of characteristics of the political system such as pluralism and power contestation. The concept of centralized political power and formal written law did not exist in the territory known as Kyrgyzstan today until Tsarist Russia occupied it.

Two competitive elements referred to most often of fragmented Kyrgyz society are the groups based on kinship-based bonds and geographical location (often referred to as regionalism) (Mokeyev 2006). Blood-based kinship groups are the principal units of an imagined map of Kyrgyz ethnic groups. Any ethnic Kyrgyz is believed to belong to several vertical groups, starting from his/her nuclear family is extended (real or perceived) kin-based group along patrilineal genealogy. Ultimately, the whole Kyrgyz ethnic group is claimed to consist of three major groups Ong kanat, Sol kanat and Ichkilik.<sup>49</sup> After sedentarization and incorporation into the Soviet state, the principle of

blood solidarity continued in the form of informal patronage of a person's network by those in power (Collins 2004:239), while the informal character of these networks prevented them from being erased by communist rule (Schatz 2004:17). Regionalism, often in the form of the north-south divide, has also been one of the major topics in Kyrgyz political discourse. Significantly, however, the term regionalism has been used to designate a competitive character of the relationship between northern oblasts (including Chui, Talas, Naryn and Issyk Kul) and southern ones (Osh, Jalalabad and Batken oblasts).

The concept of centralized political power and formal written law did not exist in the territory known as Kyrgyzstan today until Tsarist Russia occupied the area as mentioned above. At the same time, kinship-based groups had their own hierarchy of authority as well as a set of unwritten principles, referred to as customary, informal rules or law. Hansen and Dukenbaev (2003) point to the persistence of these informal rules, arguing that 'the people of the region have shown little respect for formal rules and institutions,' preferring rather to 'resolve their problems not through courts of law, and the like but through informal channels of communication.' The first elections of heads of local self-governance ('village governors'), very clearly revealed the 'enduring strength of clan solidarity in Kyrgyz society' (Orozobekova 2002). The institute for war and peace reporting notes that in the southern Suzak district, the confrontation between leading candidates caused village elders to express serious concerns about the possibility of violence between Kaman and Kudailat tribes (Orozobekova 2002). In another instance, in the 2000 parliamentary elections in the Kara-Kulja district, Soronbai Jeenbekov, running for the parliamentary seat, took the electoral slogan of 'bargy-tasma-bir tuugan' (bargy-tasma-one people), appealing to two major tribes living in that district, Bargy and Tasma, apparently discriminating against other, minor tribes.<sup>50</sup>

Even when marginalized by the governmental machine and state-owned media, individual opposition leaders such as Beknazarov, Tekebaev and Kulov would find people from dozens of villages standing behind them at critical moments, ready to block roads or to march to Bishkek. A role of unquestioned, kinship based loyalty to local

'heroes' seems to have played a crucial role in creating and maintaining certain levels of political contestation in Kyrgyzstan (Juraev 2008:260-61).

Despite seventy years of social engineering under the Soviet regime, Kyrgyz society had managed to keep its traditional institutions, albeit considerably changed (Roy 2000). These institutions can be observed in daily life, especially on the periphery where they play an important role in the life of local communities and exercise social control. At the time of elections, patronage networks, which were directly related to different political forces, mobilized their resources. In order to mobilize society, they made use of three informal institutions such as:

- 1) **Aksakal**- In the periphery of the Kyrgyzstan, almost all personal relations are established according to traditional respect for age. The Aksakal is an elder, whose authority derives from this social norm. Aksakal use their authority to maintain social control in the community. For this purpose they use informal tools such as *uiat*<sup>51</sup> and *bata*<sup>52</sup>.
- 2) **Palvan**- Palvan means wrestler, fighter, strongman, who has physical strength and skills in 'kuresh' (Central Asian traditional wrestling). Palvan are considered not only to have strength, but also nobility and a feeling for justice. Palvan have networks, which extended all over Ferghana valley. They supervise illegal commerce, smuggling and other kinds of illegal business, but also run some legal businesses, such as markets. Baiaman Erkinbaev<sup>53</sup> founded the 'Alysh' sports association for traditional kuresh wrestling, where the number of sportsmen involved had reached several hundred people.
- 3) **Kurultai**- In pre-revolutionary Central Asia, the kurultai played a role of national assembly. It is a national congress, which was called upon to discuss major national questions. Delegations from all parts of Kyrgyzstan, mostly nobility and influential aksakal took part in the kurultai. Common people also had the right to have their say. In 2001, the authorities formalized kurultai. Common people also had the right to have their say. In 2001, the authorities formalized kurultai in order



to strengthen state structure, democracy and also to have more effective control over local communities.<sup>54</sup>

In short, the Kyrgyz people were often mobilized not against the regime or the ruling elite, but because their patron failed to secure a place in the first or second round of the parliamentary elections, thus depriving him of access to resources. Therefore, the events of the Tulip Revolution can be explained not by grievances, but by resource mobilization: conjuncture, patronage networks based on traditional solidarity-tooganchilik, and pre-existing actors and institutions such as the aksakal, the palvan and the kurultai networks (Temirkulov 2008:331).

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Khamidov, Alisher (2002), “Kyrgyzstan’s Unrest Linked to Clan Rivalries”, [Online: web] Accessed 7 July 2009, URL: [http:// www.eurasianet.org/ departments/ insight/ articles/ eav060502 pr.shtml](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav060502.pr.shtml).

<sup>2</sup> Kyrgyzstan- A Country Study Based on the Country Studies Series by Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress, URL: <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-7659.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Here overall pictures of location of Kyrgyz tribes is given according to scholarly works of contemporary authors, S.M.Abramson, K.U.Usenbaev, V.M.Ploskikh, E.Maanaev and others.

<sup>4</sup> L.F Kostenko (1876) cited by N.N.Aristov on p.433.

<sup>5</sup> Khagai, Janna (2004), “Constitutional Regimes and Clan Politics in Central Asia”, in Wallace Johnson and Irina A.Popova (eds.) *Central Asian Law: an historical overview a festschrift for the ninetieth birthday of Herbert Franke*, Lawrence: Society for Asian Legal History, Hall Center for the Humanities, University of Kansas, p.10.

<sup>6</sup> Schuyler Eugene(1876), *Turkestan Notes of a Journey in Russian Turkistan, Khokand, Bukhara and Kuldja*, in two volumes, vol.2. New York: Scribner, Armstrong and Co. Quoted in Turdalieva Cholpan(2006), “The Kyrgyz As Viewed By American Travellers and Explorers”, *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies*, 10(2-3):134.

<sup>7</sup> Diplomatic Glossary, vol.2, Moscow, 1985, p.351.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, vol.3, Moscow, 1985, p.580.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Education and Science in a New Geopolitical Space: Proceedings of Scientific-Practical Conference, Bishkek, 1995, p.68.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Kyrgyz became a written language from 1924.

<sup>13</sup> Chingis Aitmatov’s famous story “Djamilla” provides a literary account of this: “(...) it had been so since the time our people had been nomads, when our grandfathers used to break camp and round their cattle up together... We kept this tradition alive. When our village was collectivized, our fathers built their houses side by side. Actually we were all fellow tribes-men-the whole Aralskaya Street, stretching the length of the village to the river, was inhabited by our kinsfolk.”

<sup>14</sup> There is also a sizeable Tajik population in the south, whose language is in the Iranian family.

<sup>15</sup> As M.Rywkin notes, ‘an accelerated outflow of immigrants began in Kyrgyzstan around 1970 and in the rest of Central Asia in the mid-1970s’. *Moscow’s Muslim Challenge: Soviet Central Asia* (Armonk, NY, 1990), P.81. Due to the rise in interethnic violence and the new law on language in the republic, a significant exodus of highly trained Slavs from Kyrgyzstan began in 1990, causing concern in the republic political leadership. In a front-page article in the leading Russian language newspaper of Kyrgyzstan, the republic first secretary, Absamat Masaliev, appealed to all peoples of Kyrgyzstan, to ‘do everything to ensure that [Russian speakers] live and work in peace and do not succumb to a migratory attitude’. SK, 22 September 1990, p.1. Official figures indicate that during the first six months of 1990 more than 34,000 Russians left Kyrgyzstan, more than two and a halftimes the number for all of 1989.

<sup>16</sup> Collins, Kathleen (2002), “Clans, pacts, and politics in Central Asia,” *Journal of Democracy*, 13(3):137-152.

<sup>17</sup> Khamidov Alisher (2002), “Kyrgyzstan’s unrest linked to clan rivalries”, [Online: web] Accessed 7 July 2009, URL: [http:// www.eurasianet.org/ departments/ insight/ articles/ eav060502 pr.shtml](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav060502.pr.shtml)

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- <sup>18</sup> Collins, Kathleen (2002), "Clans, pacts, and politics in Central Asia," *Journal of Democracy*, 13(3):137-152.
- <sup>19</sup> Abazov, Rafiz (2003), "Kyrgyzstan and Issues of Political Succession," *Russia and Eurasia Review*, 2(11)
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Collins, Kathleen ((2004), "The Logic of Clan Politics: Evidence from the Central Asian Trajectories," *World Politics*, 56(2):241.
- <sup>22</sup> Bashiri, Iraj (1999), "Kyrgyz National Identity", Minnesota: University of Minnesota.
- <sup>23</sup> Manas, a Kyrgyz hero who lived around AD 800 and fought for the independence of the Kyrgyz people, united them and led Kyrgyz troops in battles against foreign invaders, is celebrated in a well-known three part tale epic, which was preserved for many centuries by bards called "manaschi".
- <sup>24</sup> Collins, Kathleen (2002), "Clans, pacts, and politics in Central Asia," *Journal of Democracy*, 13(3):137-152.
- <sup>25</sup> Temirkoulov, Azmat, "Tribalism, social conflict and the state-building process in Kyrgyz Republic," *Forum*, Institute for East-European Studies: 94. URL: <http://www.oei.fu-berlin.de/Outnow/boi21/pdf/forum%20temirkoulov.pdf>.
- <sup>26</sup> Huskey, Eugene (1997), "Kyrgyzstan: the fate of political liberalization", in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrots (eds.) *Conflict, Cleavage, and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- <sup>27</sup> Temirkoulov, Azmat, "Tribalism, social conflict and the state-building processes in Kyrgyz Republic", *Forum*, Institute for East-European Studies: 96. URL: <http://www.oei.fu-berlin.de/Outnow/boi21/pdf/forum%20temirkoulov.pdf>.
- <sup>28</sup> Orozobekova, Cholpon (2002), "Kyrgyzstan: Clan Loyalties Mar Local Elections," *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 18 January 2002.
- <sup>29</sup> Kostyukova, Irina (1994), "The towns of Kyrgyzstan change their faces: Rural-urban migrants in Bishkek", *Central Asian Survey*, 13(3):428.
- <sup>30</sup> Abazov, Rafiz (1999), "Politicheskie prebrzovaniya v kyrgyzstane I evolyutsiya prezidentskoi sistemy", *Tsentral'naya Aziya i Kavkaz*, 1(2):25. Quoted in Shahram Akbarzadeh (2001), "Political Islam in Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan", *Central Asian Survey*, 20(4):455.
- <sup>31</sup> Slovo Kyrgyzstana, 28 October 1994:6. Quoted in Shahram Akbarzadeh (2001), "Political Islam in Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan", *Central Asian Survey*, 20(4):456.
- <sup>32</sup> See. For example, the transcript of Askar Akayev's interview for Radio Mayak (September 2003). Available from: URL: <http://old.radiomayak.ru/schedules/1/11465.html> [Accessed 15 April 2008 by Shairbek Juraev]. Quoted in Shairbek Juraev (2008), "Kyrgyz Democracy? The Tulip Revolution and beyond", *Central Asian Survey*, 27(3-4):258.
- <sup>33</sup> Anderson John (1999), "Island of Democracy? The Politics of Independence", in John Anderson (eds.) *Kyrgyzstan: Central Asia's Island of Democracy?* Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers.
- <sup>34</sup> Talbott, Strobe (1994), "Promoting Democracy and Prosperity in Central Asia", *US Department of State Dispatch*, 5(19): 280-282.
- <sup>35</sup> The adoption of these policies had probably to do with economic considerations, due to the fact that thousands of members of the minorities had started to leave Kyrgyzstan after the unrest in the Fergana valley in the summer of 1990, most of them highly educated specialists in their field. Something to had to be done in order to stop the brain drain. As a result of these policies many members of the ethnic minorities were integrated into the political process and education, both on elementary and higher level, in foreign languages, mostly Russian, was made possible. Akayev also created and relied heavily on the usage of

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symbols which stood for neutrality and Kyrgyzstan as a bridge and mediator between east and west. Those symbols were designed to appeal to all interest groups, not only the ethnic minorities, but also to the western states, Russia, China and the Central Asian neighbours.

<sup>36</sup> Dukenbaev and Hansen (2003,p.5) characterize the north-south cleavage as follows: 'One most important, if not the most important, fault lines marking politics in Kyrgyzstan is that of region; specifically the hostility and tension between what is referred to Kyrgyzstan as "north" and "south".'

<sup>37</sup> Collins, Kathleen (2004), "The logic of Clan Politics: Evidence from the Central Asian Trajectories", *World Politics*, 56(2):250.

<sup>38</sup> Graubner, Cornelius (2005), personal interview, Scott Hynek, Kochkor, 7 august 2005. Hynek, an American geologist, received this information from a security guard of the Kumtor gold mine from Kemin that he met during his research in the vicinity of the gold mine. If this information is true it would raise again the interesting question of the binding power of clan institutions. The Kumtor gold mine is operated by the Canadian company of Canterra, but run by a friend of Akayev from Kemin. Apparently his clan ties were important enough to him to supply his fellow clan members with well-paid jobs in Kumtor.

<sup>39</sup> Kimmage, Daniel (2005), "Kyrgyzstan: Follow the money – the Akayev investigation", *RFERL*, 4 May 2005.

<sup>40</sup> The "Revolution of Roses" was a bloodless revolution in the country of Georgia in 2003 that displaced President Eduard Shevardnadze. Georgia held parliamentary elections on 2 November 2003. But the elections were denounced by local and international observers as being grossly rigged in favour of Shevardnadze. The main opposition leader Mikheil saakashvili urged Georgians to demonstrate against Shevardnadze's government and engage in non-violent civil disobedience against the authorities. The main democratic opposition parties united to demand the ousting of Shevardnadze and the rerun of elections. In mid-November, massive anti-governmental demonstrations started in the central streets of Tbilisi, soon involving almost all major cities and towns of Georgia. The "kmara" ("enough") youth organization and several NGOs, like the Liberty Institute, were active in all protest activities. In the evening of 23 November, Shevardnadze met with the opposition leaders Saakashvili and Zurab Zhvania to discuss the situation, in a meeting arranged by Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov. After the meeting, the president announced his resignation. In the 4 January 2004 presidential election Mikheil Saakashvili won an overwhelming victory and was inaugurated as the new President of Georgia on January 25.

<sup>41</sup> The Orange Revolution was a series of protests and political events that took place in Ukraine from late November 2004 to January 2005, in the immediate aftermath of the run-off vote of the 2004 Ukrainian presidential election which was claimed to be marred by massive corruption, voter intimidation and direct electoral fraud. Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, was the focal point of the movement with thousands of protesters demonstrating daily. Nationwide, the democratic revolution was highlighted by a series of acts of civil disobedience, sit-ins, and general strikes organized by the opposition movement. The nationwide protests succeeded when the results of the original run-off were annulled, and a revote was ordered by Ukraine's Supreme Court for 26 December 2004. Under intense scrutiny by domestic and international observers, the second run-off was declared to be "fair and free". The final results showed a clear victory for Yushchenko, who received about 52 percent of the vote, compared to Yanukovich's 44 percent. Yushchenko was declared the official winner and with his inauguration on 23 January 2005 in Kiev, the Orange Revolution peacefully reached its successful conclusion.

<sup>42</sup> The Tulip Revolution refers to the overthrow of President Askar Akayev and his government in the Central Asian republic of Kyrgyzstan after the parliamentary elections of 27 February and of 13 March 2005. The revolution sought the end of rule by Akayev and by his family and associates, who in popular opinion had become increasingly corrupt and authoritarian. Following the revolution, Akayev fled to Kazakhstan and then Russia. On 4 April he signed his resignation statement in the presence of a Kyrgyz parliamentary delegation in his country's embassy in Moscow, and on 11 April the Kyrgyz parliament ratified his resignation. The Tulip Revolution, however, saw some violence in its initial days, most notably in the Southern city of Jalalabad, where the first major signs of violence were noted, and at least three

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people died during widespread looting in the capital, Bishkek in the first twenty four hours after the fall of the Kyrgyz government.

<sup>43</sup> Given to the newspaper *Vremya novostey* published on 30 May 2006. Available from: <http://kg.akipress.org/news/28696> [Accessed 18 April 2008 by Maxim Ryabkov]. Quoted in Maxim Ryabkov (2008), "The north-south cleavage and political support in Kyrgyzstan", *Central Asian Survey*, 27(3-4): 307.

<sup>44</sup> Kyrgyzstan: Instability in the Wake of "Revolution", *Stratfor*, 11 April 2005.

<sup>45</sup> "Kyrgyz President's Five Brothers and Two Sons Annoy Political Opposition", *Ferghana.ru*, 20 October 2006.

<sup>46</sup> Bakiyeva, K (2006), "Kyrgyz President's Brother Appointed To High Security Post", *RFERL*, 2 March 2006.

<sup>47</sup> This also explains why those candidates with the largest following were officials or successful businessmen from the countryside but working in Bishkek, whose seat in parliament would ensure continued material support for the community.

<sup>48</sup> Stamov Akyl (2004), "Fergana: The 100 richest people in Kyrgyzstan", [www.akipress.org](http://www.akipress.org).

<sup>49</sup> Some Kyrgyz historians argue that Ichkilik is in fact part of Ong kanat (Mokeyev 2006)

<sup>50</sup> Anonymous Interview, March 2008. Quoted in Shairbek Juraev (2008), "Kyrgyz Democracy? The Tulip Revolution and beyond", *Central Asian Survey*, 27(3-4):260.

<sup>51</sup> Uiat is a sanction, which is used to expose unworthy behaviour or an act which is publicly condemned.

<sup>52</sup> Bata is a traditional ceremony, where elders publicly bless members of the community at the beginning of a new business or collective action.

<sup>53</sup> The now deceased Baiaman Erkinbaev was a famous wrestler, big businessman, deputy of parliament and also former suspect in several criminal cases.

<sup>54</sup> The decree of the president of the Kyrgyz Republic: 'About measures on increasing the role of the people's kurultais to represent local communities in the Kyrgyz Republic and for the management of local affairs', 2 May 2001.

***CHAPTER-5***  
***CONCLUSION***

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### **CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to conclude and test the hypothesis on the basis of preceding chapters. It is quite evident from the previous chapters that the primordial organizations like clans still have significant role in the political life of Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in particular. It would be better to summarize findings first before proceeding to test the hypotheses.

On the basis of modern social science theories, human civilizations especially western civilization went through different stages of development. According to Marxist historians it can be divided into five stages: primitive communist, slave owning, feudal, capitalist and socialist-communist. In the first two stages, the material relationship is purely on the basis of primordial institutions like kinship, family, clan, tribe etc. Among these two stages, the first one is more egalitarian in comparison with the second. During the stage of feudalism society becomes more developed and this development naturally reflects in their social and material relationships. This is the period of mighty kingdoms, vast empires, highly organized religions and so on. Now the material relations becomes more exploitative but primordial concepts of earlier stages continues with the support of more sophisticated institutional setup and patronage network. Still state in the modern concept does not exist.

The stage of capitalism and modernity witnessed the development of nation state with clear cut territorial boundaries and rule of law. This is the age of reason and scientific development. But still socio-economic relationships are hierarchical and much more exploitative mainly due to the drastic technological advancements compared to the previous stages. From the Marxist point of view the human civilization reaches in its peak during the last and final stage; the socialist- communist. Here again in socialist stage the concept of state and some vestiges of earlier stages remain but in last and final stage

of communist development all these relationship would disappear and society would become egalitarian without any exploitation.

In the stage of communist all nation states would wither away without any trace. Even though the society is really egalitarian in this stage, it is quite clearly differed from the first stage of primitive communist. Now society is not tribal with any importance to primordial notions like purity of blood, sanctity of family, holiness of kinship etc. Hence the society becomes more developed and only material interests are significant now.

The reason for explaining this basic theory is mainly due to the area which dealt in this dissertation work, the Central Asia, was under one of the most powerful communist regime of the modern world, now historic Soviet Union. The Soviet communists treated their entire principality on the basis of theories which developed on Western Europe as a role model. That's why the communist misunderstandings about the development of non-European society in general and Central Asian society in particular created a lot of confusion and wrongs in this region and it still continues in various forms.

As discussed in preceding chapters, Central Asian society is built on the basis of tribal and clan notions rather than ethnic or territorial concepts. The basic building bloc of Central Asian society is still extended family especially in rural areas where still a significant number of populations resides. Traditional Central Asian economy was the combination of both pastoral nomadism and irrigation based agriculture. Settled agriculture was widely practiced in the oasis region and pastoral nomadism was quite prevalent in steppes and deserts. Central Asians are racially divided into two stocks; Iranian and Turkic. In the case of religious following as concern they were the followers of various animist cults which were prevalent in both Central Asia and Siberia. Later majority of them converted into the religion of Arab prophet, the Islam which advanced from west. But Central Asian Islam was quite unique and different from its Arab and Persian counterparts. It still carries the influence of various animist cults especially in steppe region.



Due to its geographic peculiarity, an unending meadow of grass lands, Central Asia was always a meeting ground for competing empires, evangelical religions, trade caravans, and innumerable number of ethnic and tribal groups. Various civilizations like Ancient Iranian, Greek, Indian, Chinese, Turko-Mongol and various religions like Zoroastrianism, Nestorian Christianity, Buddhism, Manichaeism and Islam had come, met and flourished here. A true European power in the form of Tsarist Russia ruled here for nearly three hundred years after a long gap which generated due to the decline of various Greek principalities sprouted from the remains of once mighty world empire of the great Macedonian, Alexander the Great. Tsarist Russians were later replaced with a new breed of power again in the form of Russians, now not rule from imperial capital of St Petersburg but from another important Russian city of Moscow, known in history as Bolsheviks or Russian communists.

The Russian communists successfully dethroned the last Russian imperial dynasty of Romanov (Tsar) through a bloody revolution. Communists successfully defended the imperial possessions and extended the power of center again through the banishment of last political remnants of medieval Central Asia; the Emirate of Bukhara and the Khanate of Khiva. Now all imperial Russian possessions and vassalages come under a single power center at Moscow under the leadership of charismatic communist leader Vladimir Lenin. Hence onwards erstwhile empire of Russian Tsar came to be known as Soviet Union.

Even though the Tsarist period started the modernization of Central Asian society, the modernization came into a matured level and quite clear during the Soviet period. During the Tsarist period Central Asia hosted for a large chunk of Russian and other European peasant settlers from west. Tsarist agricultural colonialists converted the pastoral lands of Central Asian nomads to the irrigation based grain producing land. This change negatively affected the existing social structure of heavily bonded Central Asian nomads. Now their traditional aristocrats lost in touch with ordinary nomad and at the same time their elite position was under question due to the rise of new elite class with the support of imperial power.

Now the clan relationship became more localized mainly due to the lack of extensive pastoral lands for the seasonal migration. But still the basic primordial concepts and notions like common blood, structured and detailed genealogies and respect for various tribal codes of conducts were continued without any hindrance. Russian administrators never tried to interfere in the traditional social structure of Central Asians as long as the empire doesn't face any serious opposition from the subjugated people. British also followed this dignified neutrality in the case of neighbouring Afghanistan. But Russians crushed the traditional Central Asian aristocrats without creating a new one with immense influence. At the same time British were complete failure in this case. In Afghanistan the traditional tribal elites continued to enjoy their privileges and rights with the support of imperial power at first from Calcutta and later from Delhi.

Soviet period caused for the revolutionary changes in traditional tribal structure of the Central Asian society. Communists considered the Asians in general and Central Asians in particular is still in their primitive stage of development with various outdated, backward looking primordial concepts like common ancestor origin, kinship, lineage, clan, and tribe and so on. New rulers considered the society still a breeding ground for various feudal political institutions like khanates and emirates. So that Central Asian society is not mature enough to accept well advanced modern concepts like socialism and communism. That's why Russian communists tried their level best to change the structure of Central Asian society through forceful inculcation of modern western ideas like ethnicity, nation state, individualism, equal gender relationship into the minds of still highly traditional Central Asians. Communists calculated that through this way they can slowly and steadily guide Central Asians into the path of communist way of development.

As part of this programme communists conquered and abolished the last political vestiges of medieval Central Asia; the emirates of Bukhara, the Khanate of Khiva and various minor Turkmen principalities. Later communists brought all these new dominions under their central head quarters in Tashkent. In 1924 as part of Soviet nationalities policy, the Soviet Central Asia was delimited into five Soviet Socialist Republics on the basis of

assumed dominance of titular nationalities in the respective republics. These are Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. But in content all these republics are multi-ethnic. But communists accepted the reality of various ethnic groups and encouraged titular nationalities in all these republics as part of modern nation-state formation.

At the same time communists under Stalin started ultra radical social engineering programme known as 'collectivization' as part of permanent settlement of still largely nomadic Central Asians. Collectivization Programme started in late 1920s and majority of Central Asian nomads got settled this time by rude display of force and power. But still considerable number of them fled to neighbouring countries especially to Afghanistan and China with their flocks. Massive literacy programmes and programmes for the enhancement of Central Asian women also started at the same time. Through these actions communists got succeeded in the conversion of once nomadic pastoralists to settled grain growing agriculturists and cattle breeders. The post Second World War period and Virgin Lands campaign under new Soviet supreme leader Nikita Khrushchev brought new wave of European settlers into Central Asia. It further reduced the number of already dwindled Central Asians in their own republics. This situation was quite clear in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan where most of the new settlers got settled.

Now the communist party spread almost all nook and corner of erstwhile USSR including Central Asia. The traditional pastoral nomadism of Central Asian steppes got disappeared. The nature of communist leadership of Central Asian republics also went through drastic changes. Earlier ethnic Russians were the supreme leaders, now the Russians got replaced with ethnic Central Asians. Kunaev, Rashidov, Usubaliev et al. was example for this. This process started under Khrushchev and really got established under Brezhnev. In contrast to Stalin, Brezhnev never tried to interfere in the social affairs of central Asians as long as his Central Asian satraps were really loyal to him. Those situations caused for the reemergence of clans with official patronage. Now leaders started to patronize their clients mainly on the basis of same age old primordial institutions which are openly criticized by communists as backward looking and

remnants of feudalism. This new turn led to massive corruption, nepotism, cronyism etc. in all Central Asian and Caucasian republics. But still the positions of clans were concealed to outsiders especially to Russians.

Developments in their Asian principalities naturally affected the performance of quite sophisticated and mammoth like political machine named Soviet Union. This pathetic situation invited the attention of central leadership. The well deserving attention and interference at last came under Brezhnev's successors; Yuri Andropov and Mikhail Gorbachev. The new leaders started inquiry and long serving Central Asian satraps lost their position. They were replaced with new faces without any clan allegiances. Mikhail Gorbachev tried his level best to purify already rotten Soviet system with new steps and acts but he was too late. The seeds of destruction were already sown and first experiment towards ideal communist state went wrong and Soviet Union got collapsed and disintegrated into fifteen independent republics. It happened in late 1991. Central Asian states also got their freedom but against their will. From the point of view of their elites they were simply thrown out of the union without even asking a single word by their own big brother Russia.

Newly formed Central Asian republics, now forced to develop their own resources without expecting any further economic support and subsidy from their ex-mentor Russia. Now under this time of uncertainty and practical necessity, longtime concealed and suppressed, informal institutions like clan came into daylight. During this initial stage, the economy of shortages and continuing political uncertainty forced both elites and non-elites to welcome the organization of clan. New elites of Central Asia got their legitimacy not through party as during Soviet time but through more pronounced kin and blood ties. Elites, most of them are erstwhile communist bosses raised up to the situation and openly started to encourage their own clan networks for increasing their legitimacy in the eyes of their own people and expanding their base among others. At the same time non-elites survived this difficult stage with the help of their own people in center. Central Asians voted for persons not for parties.

In post- Soviet Central Asia each and every clan started to compete with each other for getting access to already shrunken material resources. Without the support of their own clan elites it is quite difficult for an ordinary person to get access into any of the national resources. Due to this reckless clan competition elites in top are forced to reach in a mutual understanding about the sharing of economic pie. This understanding is a form of clan balancing especially among powerful clans. It occurred in almost all Central Asian countries except Tajikistan. Lack of clan balancing was one of the reasons for the Tajik civil war.

Afghanistan also went through the almost same trajectory when the last royals of Afghanistan were dethroned by communists in 1978 with the support of Soviet Union. But Afghanistan was never been a Soviet colony like their Central Asian neighbours. Soviets tried to implement Soviet policies in Afghanistan with the help of their Afghan allies of Kabul. Afghan communists (PDPA) openly questioned the traditional Afghan institutions and met with wide scale resistance from already estranged ferocious Afghan tribesmen. Afghan communists successfully survived the ten year long Afghan jihad led by Mujahedin with the support of USA and various Muslim countries especially Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Soviets were forced to retreat and Afghan communists somehow survived three more years. Then they also succumb to their fate and later dethroned from Kabul by victorious Mujahedin in 1992. Traditional Afghan society still intact but there were new claimants to political power, until then the monopoly of Pashtuns especially the Durranis, the ethnic minorities especially Tajiks. The tussle for power continued the entire period of Mujahedin rule and came into an end when Kabul was occupied by new masters in the form of radical Sunni madrassa students named Taliban. Taliban was basically a Pashtun movement with heavy representation of village tribesmen. In short Pashtuns came back to the higher echelons of political power under the guise of pure Islam. Post- Taliban period again turned the tide in favour of ethnic minorities especially Panjsheri Tajiks who were in the forefront of Northern Alliance which ousted Taliban from Kabul.

In the case of post-Soviet Central Asia first round of power transfer was occurred in the cases of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. But in the cases of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan post-Soviet presidents are still continuing. In Kyrgyzstan fifteen year rule of Askar Akayev came to an end in 2005. He belongs to northern Sarybagysh clan. He was then replaced with Kurmanbek Bakiyev, a southerner from Jalalabad province. In Tajikistan, Rahmon Nabiyev from Khodjent region of northern Tajikistan was replaced by Emomali Rakhomonov of Kulyab region of central Tajikistan. This change happened during the initial stages of Tajik civil war. But in Turkmenistan, the powerful supremo 'Turkmenbashi' (the father of all Turkmens) Sapramurat Niyazov passed away in 2006 and then a fellow Tekke like him named Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov came into power. In Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev of Greater Horde and in Uzbekistan Islam Karimov from Samarkand region is still continuing in power.

After the brief summary of this dissertation work, we try to test the hypotheses which are mentioned in the introductory chapter:

- 1) Central Asian society is traditionally clan and tribal based with quite strong kinship and family relationship: – From my readings, discussions and analysis, it seems to me that this hypothesis is true. From the discussion which conducted in the previous chapters, the traditional Central Asian society is clearly clan and tribal based with quite strong kinship and family bonding. The nature of this relationship may vary from pastoral to settled groups and from Turkic speaking to Persian speaking but the output is same.
- 2) Tsarist-Soviet empires and post-Soviet governments failed miserably in case of the dissolution of various informal social organizations of Central Asia, especially clans: – I am agreeing partially with this hypothesis because it is quite clear that Tsarist-Soviet empires succeeded to a great extent in the case of diminishing the influence of informal organizations like clans over the day to day activities of Central Asians. Therefore no one can compare Soviet Central Asian society with traditional Central Asian one. But other part of the story gives a different answer.

It is true that the influence of tribal and clan organizations reduced up to a significant level during the Tsarist-Soviet period in general and Soviet period in particular. But it is also true that these institutions were not fully disappeared in village areas but it was hidden from outsiders. In Soviet Central Asia, the agriculture settlement, kolkhoz became new tribe. Kolkhoz consists members from one or two clans and almost all members are relative to each other. In this situation it is quite easy for the protection of traditional institutions. Even communist party functioned in the similar manner but no one openly revealed or accepted this fact. In short under Soviet period, the clans were not dissolved but concealed from authorities especially from Russians.

- 3) The social organization of clan still has a major role in socio-economic and political life of Central Asia in general and Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in particular by either direct means or indirect means: - I am partially joining with this argument also. In all Central Asian countries clan still has a major say in socio-economic and political life of the people. Now the presence of clan is quite revealed. The Central Asian leaders are openly admitting it as a unwelcoming development. But in private they even support clan competition and clan balancing for their political survival and neutralizing their opponents. But in public they oppose it mainly for appeasing prominent western financial donors. For example in Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev from the elder clan patronizing his clan members and at the same time trying to keep a balance between middle and younger clans.

In Kyrgyzstan it is true that Akayev was quite neutral at beginning due to his very long Russian and European association but during his later years he also started to support his own northern clan members especially people belongs to his own native village Kemin. The Tulip Revolution doesn't bring any change and successor to Akayev, Kurmanbek Bakiyev is still following the footsteps of his ex-mentor and boss, Askar Akayev, in a more rigorous fashion. This is one part of the coin but other part looks different. It is true that all Central Asian presidents

support and patronize their clan members. At the same time they are quite shrewd politicians also. They look towards their clan members especially for stabilizing their power. When they did so, they tried to show that they are above any clan alignment and leader to everyone. This assumption is true in the case of Nazarbayev, Karimov and Niyazov. Rahomonov and Akayev behaved little bit different manner. Then they started to cultivate a close elite group consists of their close family members, cronies and business partners, all they are not from same clan not even from same ethnicity. They turned towards their common non-elite members again when they face any form of opposition for their political authority from their opponents. This situation is existing now.

From the above discussion we can conclude that the organization of clan is still strongly alive in the region of Central Asia. The western notions of civilization development is not applicable in Asian countries in general and Central Asian countries in particular. Here the civilization and trajectory of historical development is quite different from European part of world. That's why Euro-centric assessment about this part of world creates lot of misunderstandings about socio-political development of Central Asia. First off all Marxist perception of European political development from primitive communism to socialist communism is not applicable in the case of Asian countries. Here there is no clear cut difference between stages as we are witnessing in Europe. Or in other words, in Asian countries egalitarian tribal society co-exist with feudal empires and even with modern nation states.

In Greater Central Asia (including Afghanistan and Azerbaijan) and Caucasus society is in general tribal with strong kinship and family bonding. Real or fictive common ancestry and well structured inter connected genealogy also plays a major role in this part. Central Asians followed and jealously protected this system of ancestral knowledge for generations. Only in nineteenth and twentieth century they faced series opposition to their traditional way of life from their new European colonial masters. The then Europe already accepted the modern western



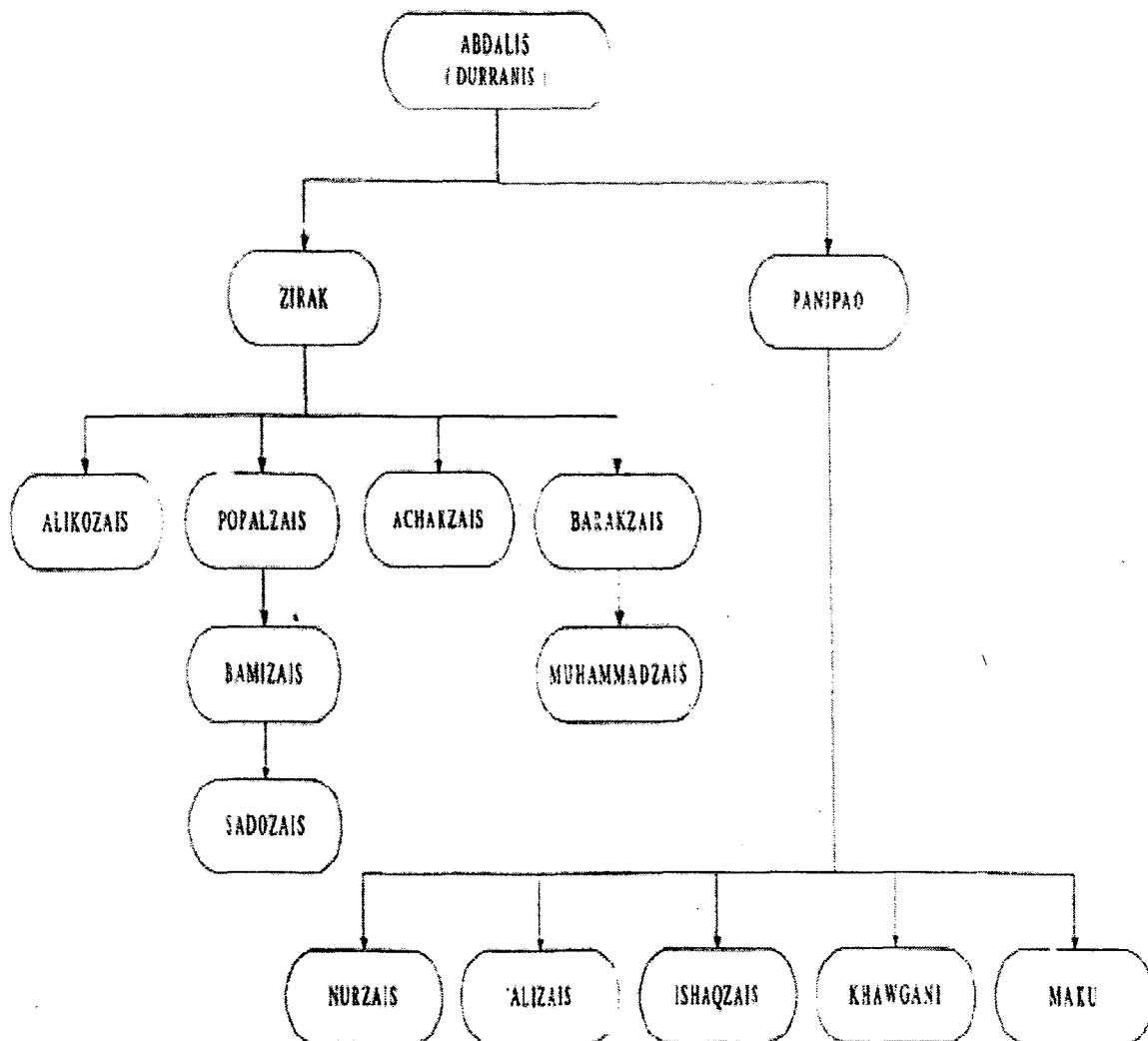
socio-political concepts like nation state, ethnicity, individualism, representative political institutions etc. So that Europeans found their Asian subjects are quite backward in development. That's why new masters tried to impose their own developmental model over their newly subjugated subjects. Naturally it invited problems. The transition was not as smooth as Europeans thought.

Now all Central Asian leaders knew that their legitimacy is no longer getting from western countries but from their own people. At the same time they are forced to adopt already universalized western political and economic institutions as part of their survival in heavily globalized, interdependent, western dominated modern world. That's why most of the Central Asian leaders adopted a middle path. On one side they all partially adopted western notions of ethnicity, democracy, political representation, human rights etc. But on other side the implementation of these concepts look quite different from their western counter parts. In Central Asian countries we witness clan competition, clan balancing, family politics, lack of support for political parties and so on. This look quite awkward to westerners but Central Asians are concern this middle path is suitable for their early stage of nation building. In future the present situation may change depend on the developments and political maturity this region is going to achieve in the coming years.

In the globalized modern world, already discussed concepts like clan, tribe etc. distinguish Afro-Asian countries from their western counterparts. I think these primordial institutions still continue in non-western countries especially in Asian countries is mainly due to their very old civilization notions, poor economic progress, slow technological development and recently adopted western political institutions and concepts. The informal institutions would certainly influence political development of non-western countries for some more years to come as a political alternative to already established western one.

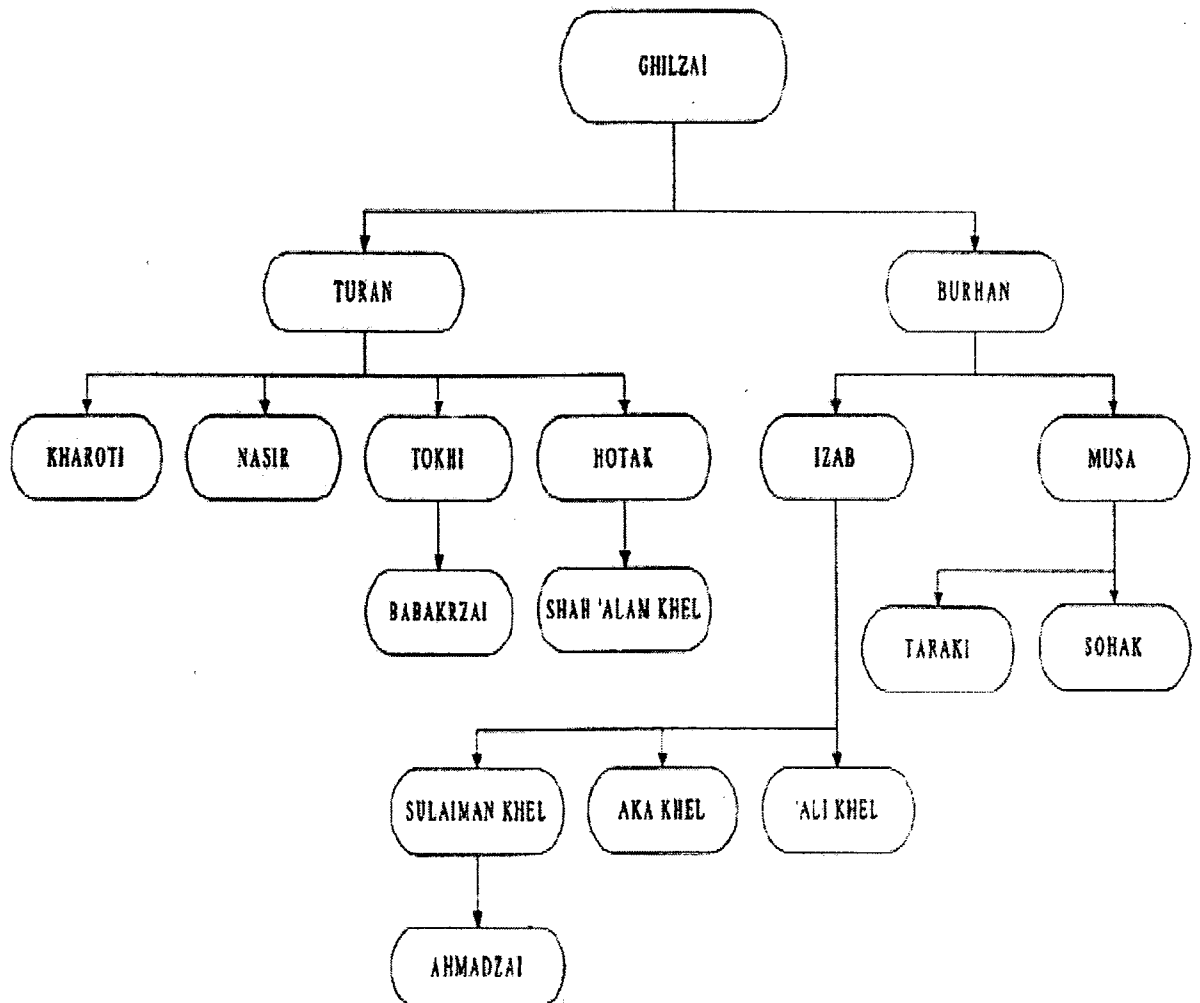
***APPENDICES:***

## APPENDIX 2.1: THE DURRANIS, GENEALOGICAL TABLE



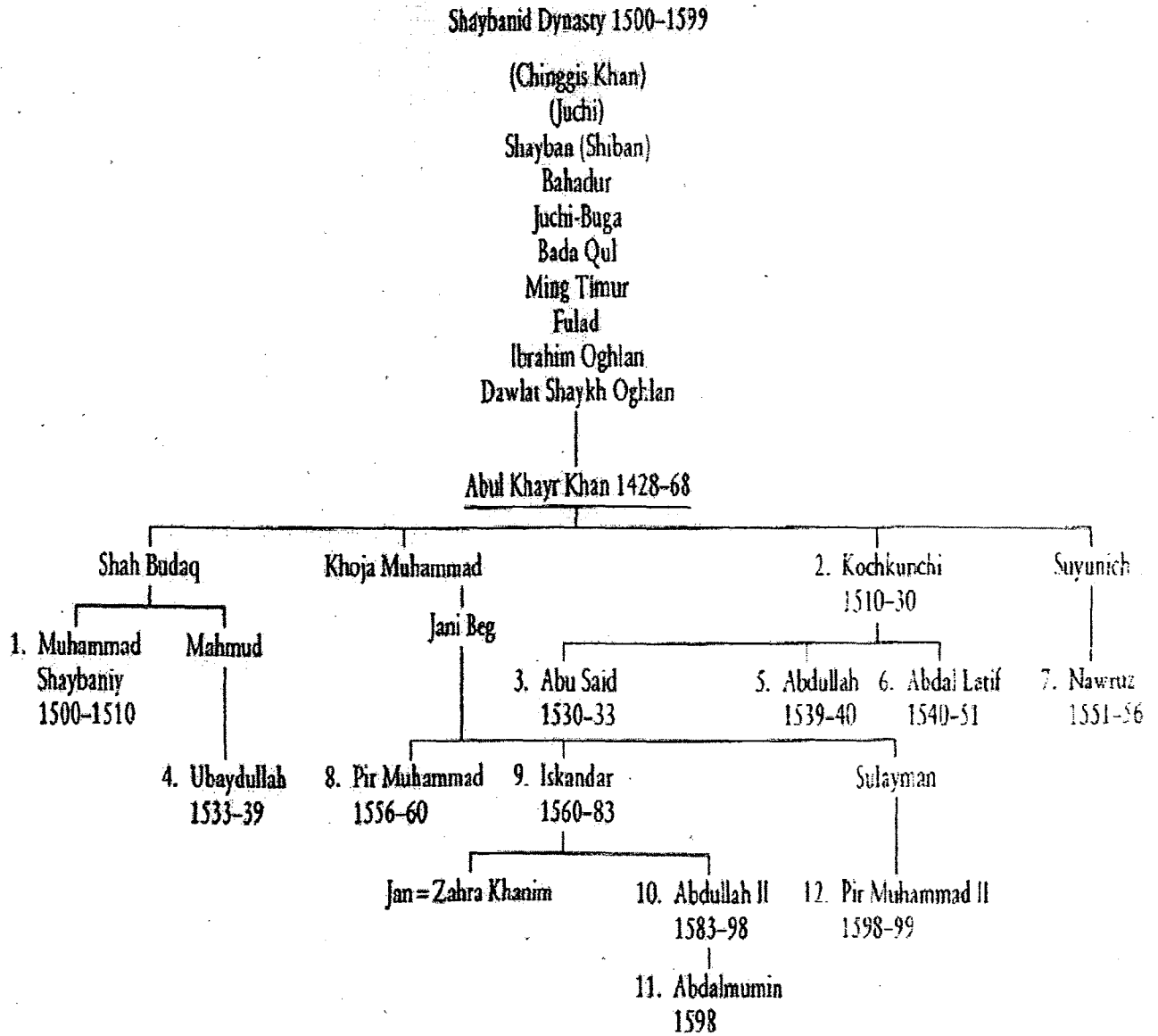
*Sources: Bellew 1973: 161; Caroe 1985: 12; Elphinstone 1972 II: 96; TSu 52-60.*

## APPENDIX 2.2: THE GHILZAIS, GENEALOGICAL TABLE



Sources: Robinson 1978.

## APPENDIX 2.3: THE SHAYBANID KHANS, GENEALOGICAL TABLE



SOURCES: Stenli Len-Pul', *Musul'manskāa dinastii*, trans. and ed. by V. V. Bartold (Saint Petersburg: M. M. Stasulevich, 1899), pp. 229-30; Borinov Akhmedov, *Gosudarstvo kochevykh Uzbekov* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1965), pp. 39, 42-48, 62-67, 103, 147.

## APPENDIX 2.4: UZBEK TRIBAL DYNASTIES 1710-1920

UZBEK TRIBAL DYNASTIES 1710-1920					
Manghit (Bukhara)		Qonghirat (Khiva)		Ming (Qoqan)	
Muhammad Rahim	1753-1758	Ishmed Biy	1717-1763	Shahrukh	ca. 1710-1721
Daniyal Biy	1758-1785	Muhammad Amin Inaq	1763-1790	Abdallah	1721-1734
Shah Murad	1785-1800	Awaz Inaq	1790-1804	Abdalkarim	1734-1750
Haydar Tora	1800-1826	Iltuzar	1804-1806	Irdana Biy	1751-1770
Husayn	1826	Muhammad Rahim I	1806-1825	Narbota Biy	1770-1792
Umar	1826	Allah Quli	1825-1842	Alim Khan	1798-1810
Nasrullahkhan	1826-1860	Rahim Quli	1842-1845	Umar Khan	1810-1822
Muzaffar al-Din	1860-1885	Muhammad Amin	1845-1855	Muhammad Ali (Madali)	1822-1842
Abdalahad	1885-1910	Sayyid Muhammad	1856-1864	Shir Ali	1842-1845
Mir Muhammad Alim	1910-1920	Muhammad Rahim II	1865-1910	Khudayar	1845-1858
		Asfandiyar	1910-1918	Malla	1858-1862
		Sayyid Abdullah	1918-1920	Shah Murad	1862
				Khudayar (2d reign)	1862-1863
				Sayyid Sultan	1863-1865
				Khudayar (3d reign)	1866-1875
				Nasiraddin	1875-1876

Sources: S. V. Bakhrushin, V. Ia. Nepomnin, V. A. Shishkin, eds., *Istoriia narodov Uzbekistana*, vol. 2 (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk UzSSR, 1963), pp. 459-63; Stekli Len-Pul, *Musul'manskiia dinastii*, trans. and ed. V. V. Bartold (Saint Petersburg: M. M. Stasiulevich, 1899), pp. 233-37; V. A. Romanov, "Nekotorye istochniki po istorii Fergany i kokandskogo khanstva (XVI-XIX vv.) v rukopisnykh sobraniakh Leningrada," *Trudy dvadtsatogo mezhdunarodnogo kongressa Vostokovedov, Moskva 9-16 avgusta, 1960*, vol. 3 (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1963), p. 65; M. G. W. W. Ya. Nepomnin, T. N. Qariniyazav, eds., *Ozbekistan SSR tarixi* vol. 1, book 2 (Tashkent: Ozbekistan SSR Fanlar Akademiyasi Nashriyati, 1963), pp. 448-60; S. V. Zhukovskii, *Snosheniia Rossii s Bukharoi i Khivoi za poslednee trekhsoletie* (Petrograd: Trudy Obshchestva Russkikh Orientalistov, 1915), pp. 200-207.

**APPENDIX 4.1: KYRGYZ TRIBES**

Kyrgyz tribes named by American traveler Eugene Schuyler (1873)	Kyrgyz tribes named by English traveler Earl Dunmore (1882)	Tribes named by Sabyr Attokurov (1995)
	Niaman : Kon, Busturogas, Mirza, Kiak	Naiman : Kara naiman, Chapkyldak, Tuuma Tukum, Shyrgoo, Kurgak Naiman, Urkunchu, Bostorgoi, Myrza Naiman, Koko Naiman, Kojo Naiman, Boo Naiman, Kiyik Naiman, Kok Naiman
	Kipchak : Sart, Kirghiz Kipchak, Kaltabaital	Kipchak : Toruaygyr, Hodjashukur, Karmysh, Omonok, Sakoo Kypchak, Atkachy, Jamanak, Jartybai, Kyzyl – Ayak, Sherden, Taz Kypchak, Alike
	Ta – it : Kara Ta- it, Sart Ta - it	Teit : Bai – Teit, Aryk – Teit, Chal – Teit, Kara – Teit, Tokum – Teit, Sary – Teit, Uygur – Teit, Chapan – Teit, Kynarsha
	Kissak : Bostan, Kiddarshah, Khangdeh	Kesek : Sibergi, Ala – Too, Karamoldo, Baykesek, Mojoi, Altynchy, Saryusun, Mala, Chuuldak, Kyzylayak, Karausun, Boloksary, Kara Kesek, Eshkara
Bogu, Sry – Bagysh, Tcherik, Tchon-bagysh, Kontche (Kutchu), Sult (Soly), Sayak, Bassyz, Saru, Munduz, Ktai	Taghay, Andigina, Boghu, Sarighbaghish, Cherib, Chungbaghiz, Kochi	Taghay, Andigine, Boghu, Sarybaghysh, Cherik, Chongbagysh, Kushchu, Solto, Sayak, Bassyz, Baru, Munduz, Kytai
<p>Source: Turdalieva, Cholpon (2006), “The Kyrgyz as Viewed By American Travellers and Explorers” (Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries), <i>Himalayan and Central Asian Studies</i>, 10 (2-3):132-133.</p>		

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