MARKET REFORM REGIMES, ELITE DEFECTIONS, AND POLITICAL OPPOSITION IN THE POST-SOVIET STATES: EVIDENCE FROM BELARUS, KAZAKHSTAN, AND KYRGYZSTAN

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DEDICATION

In loving memory of Cecilia Iniguez (1973-2006),
who shared girlhood secrets and dreams and
knew things about me that I have long since forgotten.
I miss you.

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[1] Sendak, Maurice. 1963. *Where the Wild Things Are.* New York: Harper Row.

ABSTRACT

Barbara Junisbai

Market Reform Regimes, Elite Defections, and Political Opposition in the Post-Soviet States: Evidence from Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan

This dissertation shows how market reforms can inadvertently foster constituencies within the ruling coalition who are willing to publicly oppose post-Soviet autocrats. In two cases of market reforming autocracies, Kazakhstan in Kyrgyzstan, defectors from the business elite have actively challenged the president, although with varying degrees of success. In Belarus, a contrasting case of market rejecting autocracy, continued economic centralization has preempted the emergence of a class of wealthy business elites (also known as oligarchs or capitalists) who might develop the incentive and capacity to launch a political challenge to the president. Directors of Belarus's state-owned enterprises are appointed by the president and are thus too dependent upon him to take the risk of engaging in contentious politics. Although small-scale privatization has meant the slow development of private business, small and medium business owners (entrepreneurs) similarly refrain from unsanctioned political activity that could risk their livelihoods. This is true even in market reforming Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, where entrepreneurs are unlikely candidates for opposition politics. While evidence from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Belarus bolster the conclusions of a growing body of research, I provide a novel causal explanation linking market reforms to political contestation in post-Soviet autocracies. In addition to dispersing economic resources, as others have argued, market reforms engender intra-elite conflict over the allocation of power and wealth, which is skewed in favor of a small group of elites in the president's inner circle. Intra-elite conflict has forced some business elites into opposition politics, but only after the less risky options of loyalty to the regime and exit have failed.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

The Puzzle

With a few notable exceptions, deep and lasting institutional change conducive to democracy has proven elusive in the former Soviet Union, where autocrats have stayed in power by controlling political participation and restricting political contestation. At the same time, rulers in even the most authoritarian and least reformed of the Soviet successor states have failed to completely stamp out unsanctioned political activity, despite the harsh consequences individuals face should they dare threaten the status quo. While usually associated with popular protest, contestation can take on an equally overt, but often under-investigated, form: that of elite defection from the ruling coalition to the political opposition. Defection refers to instances in which political and business elites leave their valued posts in government in order to openly challenge the president and/or the system of government associated with him.[1]

Despite numerous factors favoring post-Soviet autocrats, elites who appear loyal can unexpectedly – and sometimes successfully – challenge the incumbent president or his designated successor (Kuran 1991; Hale 2005b; Olson 1990; Shvetsova 2003; Way 2005b). In fact, in almost all of the post-Soviet states, there have been surprising and theoretically interesting instances of elite defection. Why would elites whose fortunes are tied to the regime risk their privileged positions, not to mention life and limb, by establishing opposition movements that challenge the president's right to rule? In other words, facing uncertain prospects for success and certain retribution should they fail, why have some elites

[1] Terms central to the dissertation, such as elites and elite defectors, will be defined in chapter two, under the section entitled "Key Concepts." I use the gender-specific term "he" because the presidents of the countries in the population of interest have to date been men.

nonetheless chosen to defect? And, once they have defected, which strategies do elites follow? Finally, how does elite defection affect the composition of and resources available to the political opposition, of which defectors are a part?

Findings and Implications

To explore these questions, in the dissertation I undertake a longitudinal study of elite defection and political opposition movements in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Belarus. During 15 months of fieldwork in the three Soviet successor states, I conducted a total of 175 in-depth interviews with academics, political analysts, journalists, civil society activists, elites in the ruling coalition and elites who defected from the ruling coalition to form political opposition movements, other leaders and members of opposition political parties, businessmen, and representatives of Western donor and donor-funded international organizations. Interviews were semi-structured and lasted from 45 minutes to two hours. Using the snowball sample method, at the end of each interview, I asked the respondent to suggest at least one additional contact that he/she believed would be useful to interview.

Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan were chosen because, as post-Soviet autocracies governed by personalist autocrats, they display a number of similar institutional and political characteristics. Despite their similar institutional form, the cases exhibit markedly different degrees of economic liberalization, the key causal factor under investigation. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are comparable cases of market reforming autocracies, while Belarus serves as a contrasting case of market rejecting autocracy. The three cases are also broadly representative of the economic and political variation found in the post-Soviet region, which lends confidence that the factors at play in the cases under study are applicable to the larger population of post-Soviet states of which they are a part.

Finally and critically, the three cases exhibit variation on the dependent variable, the type and extent of elite defection, which numerous methodologists argue is necessary to avoid biased inferences (Geddes 1990; King, Keohane, and Verba 1994; Laitin 2003; Mahoney 2000).

Evidence from the three cases suggests that two different economic reform regimes – the adoption of market reforms (particularly large-scale privatization) versus sustained attempts to postpone such reforms – yield two distinct patterns of elite defection and, more broadly, variation in the resources available to the political opposition. I find that in post-Soviet autocracies where state-run enterprises have been privatized, as in market reforming Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, defectors from the business elite have actively and openly contested the president's right to rule, injecting money and other much-needed resources into the opposition. In contrast, where the economy remains centralized and under state control, as in market rejecting Belarus, business actors are unlikely to defect or provide financial support to the political opposition. Without large-scale privatization, an independent class of business elites (variously called capitalists and oligarchs) has not yet emerged. In a largely unreformed economy, directors of state-owned industries are managers, rather than owners of big business, and are thus virtually dependent upon the state and upon the good grace of autocrats to maintain their positions and livelihoods.

These findings suggest that market reforms can inadvertently facilitate open contestation among elite groups within the ruling coalition and aid the accumulation of resources independent of the state upon which elites can draw to challenge personalist autocrats.

Contribution to the Literature

Recent scholarship has yielded a number of explanations of elite defection, ranging

from state and incumbent weakness (Brownlee 2005; Levitsky and Way 2002; Magaloni 2008; Way 2005a; Way 2005b), to elite perceptions of the president's vulnerability (Beissinger 2007; Hale 2005b; Olson 1990), to economic dispersion and business elites' increased economic autonomy from the state (Radnitz forthcoming). The last of these approaches, which causally links economic liberalization to elite defection, builds on a growing body of research that underscores the political implications of economic liberalization. Prior research finds that market reforms disperse economic and political power to a wider array of actors outside of the state. Dispersal of resources and power, in turn, gives rise to non-state organizations, including opposition political parties and other civic organizations (Bunce 1999; Fish 1998a; Fish 1999; McMann 2003). In particular, market reforms provide the basis for economic autonomy, which is critical to both the development of political activism among citizens and the willingness of elites to publicly challenge autocratic presidents by joining or forming political opposition movements (McMann 2006; Radnitz forthcoming).

While the findings from my dissertation fieldwork bolster previous research, it also represents a departure from previous reform-based explanations and provides a novel interpretation of the causal mechanisms linking market reforms to political transformations in the post-Soviet autocracies. Rather than a direct function of economic autonomy and the accumulation of independent resources, elite defections are a consequence of the interaction between market reforms and the institutional context in which post-Soviet elites are situated. I argue that market reforms have both created opportunities for the emergence of a business elite *and* fostered intra-elite conflict over how power and resources are allocated under personalist autocratic rule. My research finds that intra-elite conflict, and not merely the

presence of autonomous resources, is key to understanding defection in the Soviet successor states.

A breakdown of the argument is as follows. Although a combination of formal and informal mechanisms binds elites in general to the president, post-Soviet personalist autocrats are typically closely associated with and responsible for protecting the interests and privileges of a particular group of elites, often referred to as the president's inner circle (Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Kharlamov 2005; Khlyupin 1998; Collins 2006; Geddes 1999; Satpaev 2007). When making decisions regarding who will control which economic sectors or individual enterprises, the personalist president is likely to privilege members of his inner circle over elites located outside of it. The interaction of these two dynamics – the dispersion of economic resources (a byproduct of market reforms) and a patronage system designed primarily to benefit the president and those closest to him (a practice endogenous to post-Soviet personalist autocracies) – may clash with one another, providing certain elites with the resources and the incentive to defect to the political opposition.

Importantly, the practice of privileging the inner circle is found in both market reforming and market rejecting autocracies. In the former, despite the adoption of reforms that bring personalist autocracies closer to the goal of a free market economy, there remain significant distortions or imperfections in the market, including rampant corruption, pervasive clientelism, and serious barriers to competition in key economic sectors. In many cases, market imperfections benefit elites, which explains in part why they are unlikely to defect from the ruling coalition. In other cases, however, distortions have created obstacles to the realization of elite ambitions, especially the desire to control scarce political and economic resources that are typically reserved for elites in the inner circle.

A particular market distortion common to post-Soviet autocracies that is key to understanding the defection of business elites is insecure private property rights (Hedland 2001; Spector 2008). In a suspended state known as "property without rights" (Hedland 2001), private ownership exists but protections are not guaranteed. This has had serious implications for elites outside of the inner circle. Not only are they excluded from the choicest economic resources, but they also lack access to impartial legal mechanisms to contest how economic assets have been allocated. Left with no formal recourse or protections, some business elites – and in particular those whose assets have been forcefully taken over by elites in the inner circle – have defected to the political opposition as a last resort.

In addition to elucidating the on-the-ground mechanisms that have led to defections of business elites from the ruling coalition, my research further shows that defection remains a highly unlikely scenario for a number of reasons rooted in elite self-interest (Bellin 2000). Defection, which entails significant personal and political risk, is but one option available to disaffected elites. Elites can also remain loyal and try to find a solution through informal channels or, should no solution be found, exit the system (Hirschman 1970). Exit can take on various forms: finding employment in the private sector, retiring from public life/government service, and/or moving one's business abroad. Both loyalty and exit are preferable alternatives to the uncertainty of defection.

By formulating defection as one of a number of choices, my approach avoids a potential pitfall in social science theory building: the temptation to ascribe regularity to prominent social phenomena, which in reality may occur less often than the theory predicts (Carmines and Wagner 2006). Distinguishing my approach from prior works that link the

rise of post-Soviet oligarchs and capitalists to the downfall of personalist presidents, I do not posit a direct causal relationship between the dispersion of resources and elite defections; neither do I frame defection as the inevitable outcome of market reforms or of incumbent weakness vis-à-vis independently wealthy business elites.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapters two and three lay out the argument at the heart of the dissertation and describe the research that led to its development. In chapter two, I define key terms, summarize existing approaches to understanding elite defections, and situate my alternative explanation within the literature on comparative democratization. Then, in chapter three, I justify the selection of the three cases, describe my fieldwork, and acknowledge the potential limitations of a small-*n* research design.

Thereafter, rather than engaging in a country-by-country analysis, the dissertation is organized thematically and is designed to address the key questions hinted at in the beginning of this chapter. How common are elite defections, and how do defections affect and reflect the composition of the political opposition of which defectors are a part? Are there differences by country, or has the opposition in all three cases followed a similar trajectory? What political impact have defections had for the personalist president? What impact have defections had on the ability of the political opposition to launch a successful campaign against the president and/or create conditions for regime change? A thematic format facilitates direct comparison between the cases throughout the dissertation and highlights theoretically important similarities and divergence among them (Brownlee 2007).

In the empirical chapters (chapters four through six), I analyze and interpret the data that I gathered on elite defectors during fieldwork. First, in chapter four, I engage in a

longitudinal comparison of opposition leaders in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan from the late Soviet period to 2008 to provide a backdrop for understanding the pattern of elite defections that has emerged in each country. I find that, although Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan have each had at least one period of widespread elite defection, for the most part these defections have done little to deter the establishment and persistence of personalist autocracies. At the same time, widespread defection of business elites to the opposition has created political crises for personalist presidents in market reforming Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, but not in market rejecting Belarus.

Next, in chapter five, I provide evidence from the three countries in support of my theory of elite defection, with a particular focus on the political import of defectors from the business elite. After summarizing the causal explanation linking individual-level variation in elite behavior to structural variation found among the three cases, I show how the rejection of market reforms in Belarus has precluded the emergence of a class of wealthy and relatively autonomous business elites who could emerge as potential challengers to President Lukashenka. I then use the theoretical framework introduced in chapter two to interpret widespread defections in Kazakhstan in 2001 and in Kyrgyzstan in 2005, both of which were sparked by heightened intra-elite conflict over scarce economic resources. The chapter concludes by linking market reforms to two additional political outcomes: the makeup of the political opposition and the probability that defections will result in the removal of the personalist president.

In chapter six, the final empirical chapter, I look at how the strengths and weaknesses of the political opposition in the three countries have impinged upon the strategies that the opposition has pursued in its leaders' attempt to rally public support behind their cause and

compel the personalist president to resign. In the assessment of the Kyrgyz case, I go beyond a discussion of the "tulip revolution" and the ouster of President Akaev in 2005 and analyze the successes and failures of the political opposition to current President Bakiev. The two examples provide a useful within-country contrast and highlight how difficult it is to convert elite opportunism into sustained action that culminates in the overthrow of the personalist president.

The conclusion recaps the main argument and findings of the dissertation, while also speculating about prospects for future elite defections from among the business elite. The Kyrgyz case, in which business elites who were either in parliament or running for parliament defected to the opposition against then-President Akaev, suggests that where business elites are located in the political structure matters. Elite defectors who have had the opportunity to develop ties with a popular constituency of some sort are more likely than elites who have lacked these ties to mobilize popular support in their favor. The ability of elite defectors to gain a quick victory over the president also appears to matter. Where defectors have been long in the opposition without a decisive victory, as in Belarus and Kazakhstan, elite and popular perceptions of them as being on the losing side of the battle are likely to mount and work against defectors' ability to attract support among other elites and the masses.

Finally, regarding future developments, in Kazakhstan since summer 2007 and in Kyrgyzstan since 2008, Presidents Nazarbaev and Bakiev have done much to stem the sources of intra-elite conflict that had led to massive elite defection in their respective countries, albeit using very different methods. Thus, although it is possible that some business elites may still risk engaging in contentious or opposition politics, should current

conditions persist, the likelihood of their doing so will remain low. At the same time, whereas Nazarbaev has taken steps to limit the political and economic power of family members in recent years, Bakiev has not yet learned an important lesson from his predecessor's overthrow. Namely, under conditions of long-standing economic crisis, the hoarding of economic resources by the inner circle has the potential to push elites vying for a piece of the shrinking economic pie into the opposition.

Chapter 2
Theoretical Foundations and an Alternative Hypothesis

Introduction

Evidence has already accrued that points to existing and emerging elite divisions as an important source of political contestation in the post-Soviet "democratic backsliders" (Fish 1998). D'Anieri (2006), Gel'man (2003; 2005), Hale (2005b), Radnitz (2006; forthcoming), and Way (2005b), for example, point to elite defections from the ruling coalition as critical to the success of the "colored revolutions." Yet, to date no study has systematically investigated when elites, and which elites, sever ties with and publicly challenge post-Soviet autocrats. Prior studies, moreover, fail to consider instances of elite defection when conditions seemed highly unfavorable to their chances of success. Instead, there has been a tendency to concentrate on periods of widespread defection that have occurred due to incumbent or institutional failure and/or at points signaling a potential transfer of power, such as during national elections (Beissinger 2007; Brownlee 2007; Hale 2005b; McGlinchey 2003; Radnitz forthcoming; Way 2005b). This dissertation thus poses important theoretical questions that have yet to be empirically studied.

An examination of elite defectors and political opposition leaders in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan from the late Soviet period to 2008 suggests that the adoption of market reforms (particularly large-scale privatization) versus sustained attempts to postpone such reforms yield two distinct patterns of elite defection and, more broadly, variation in the resources available to the political opposition. The two patterns of opposition observed in the three cases show that market reforms can play an important role in decentralizing and pluralizing centers of economic and political power, as well as in fostering constituencies that

are willing to openly oppose autocratic rule.

Where state-run enterprises have been privatized, as in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, defectors from the business elite have played an active role in challenging autocrats, although with varying degrees of success. In sharp contrast, where the economy remains centralized and under state control, as in Belarus, business elites are highly unlikely to provide financial support or defect to the opposition. These findings add to a growing body of research that underscores the political implications of economic liberalization, the most often cited of which include the dispersal of power to a wider array of economic and political actors and, at the individual level, greater economic autonomy from the state. These dynamics have been linked to the emergence of political activism and "non-state organizations, including opposition political organizations" (Fish 1998a, 40).[1]

Although my results bolster prior research, I offer a different causal explanation linking market reforms to political transformations in the Soviet successor states. Recent studies demonstrate that economic liberalization aids in the acquisition of independent financial and human resources; economic autonomy, in turn, can encourage ordinary citizens to become political active and can help fund elite-led campaigns to overturn autocratic presidents (McMann 2006; Radnitz forthcoming). Yet, possessing the resources necessary to oppose the personalist president is not sufficient to elucidate why elites, in fact, decide to defect. In other words, in and of itself the capacity to defect does not ensure that defection will take place. The act of defection is a gamble, and a potentially perilous one at that, which explains in large part why elites are unlikely to do so.

I argue that a fuller explanation of elite defections takes into account the economic

[1] For a similar argument, see Bunce 1999; Fish 1999; McMann 2003; McMann 2006; Radnitz forthcoming. For research linking market reforms to nondemocratic outcomes, see Haggard and Kaufman (1992); Hellman (1998); Manzetti (2003); McMann (2009); and O'Donnell (1973).

and political contexts in which elites are situated. Rather than a direct function of economic autonomy, elite defections can be understood as a consequence of the interaction between market reforms and particular "institutional arrangements" (Schumpeter 1950) that structure post-Soviet intra-elite relations. Market reforms have, indeed, created opportunities for elite enrichment and relative economic autonomy, but, just as important, market reforms have fostered conflict among elites over how power and resources are allocated under personalist autocratic rule. Among the post-Soviet autocracies, economic liberalization has created market economies with significant shortcomings – in particular rampant corruption, pervasive clientelism, and serious barriers to competition in key sectors of the economy. In many (or perhaps most) cases, market imperfections benefit elites, which further explains why elites are unlikely to defect. In other cases, however, market imperfections have created obstacles to the realization of elite ambitions, especially the desire to control limited political and economic resources and, hence, have provoked conflict among elites vying for power and wealth.

In the remainder of this chapter, I locate my alternative account of post-Soviet elite defections within a broader theoretical framework and lay out the linkages between market reform, intra-elite conflict, and elite defection. Before doing so, I first clarify concepts that are central to my thesis and then summarize and critique existing explanations of elite defection. I conclude by proposing testable hypotheses that follow from each of the approaches described in this chapter, including the explanation that I propose.

Key Concepts

Personalist Presidents and Personalist Presidential Autocracies

The political systems that have solidified in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan

exhibit institutional features found in personalist presidential autocracies throughout the post-Soviet space. Variously called neopatrimonial (Ishiyama 2002), super-presidential (Colton and Tucker 1995; Fish 2000; Huskey 1997; Ishiyama and Kennedy 2001; Matsuzato 2004), and patronal presidential (Hale 2005b), the post-Soviet personalist autocracies include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus (since 1994), the five Central Asian states, Georgia, Moldova (until 2000), Russia, and Ukraine (until 2004).[2] Chapter three, under the section entitled "Case Selection," provides a detailed discussion of the institutional characteristics shared by the post-Soviet personalist autocracies. Here, I simply list the main features as a means to anchor the population of cases to their structural/institutional context.

In the dissertation, I refer interchangeably to personalist presidential autocracies as personalist rule, personalist presidentialism, and personalist autocracies. Political traits commonly associated with personalist presidential rule include an executive who wields extensive informal and formal powers, underdeveloped political parties, and weak judicial and legislative branches. The personalist president sits at the apex of entrenched patronage networks that mutually benefit him and the elites that make up his ruling coalition, but which also reinforce the president's dominant position. His actual and perceived ability to dispense both rewards and punishment encourages elite loyalty to the regime, even in the absence of a strong ruling party that could prevent defections at critical junctures.

Political Opposition

According to Dahl, political opposition is loosely defined as an agent who during

[2] Belarus was the last post-Soviet state to create the office of president (in 1994). Moldova switched to a parliamentary system in 2000, and Ukraine, following the Orange Revolution, is no longer universally considered a presidential system. In contrast to the post-Soviet personalist autocracies are those post-Soviet states that are considered autocracies with limited political freedoms but have a parliamentary, as opposed to presidential, form of government (i.e., Belarus before 1994 and Moldova since 2000) and those that are considered emerging democracies (i.e., the Baltic states).

some interval or period of time "cannot determine the conduct of government… and is [actively] opposed to the conduct of government," which is under the control of another agent (1966, xvi-xvii). In other words, "an opposition" is composed of individuals not in government who are opposed to the course taken by those who are in positions of official power and take action to "modify the conduct of government" (xvii). Dahl also notes that in Western democracies, it may be hard to point to a specific opposition because the opposition in fact does influence government policy and actions by engaging with the government in "a system of coalitions, bargaining and compromise, in which no one coalition can be said to 'govern' and none is definitely and persistently in opposition" (62).

In sharp contrast, political opposition in the countries under study here is not systemic, but excluded from the political system, which is dominated by the president and his loyal (outwardly, at least) supporters. In Western democracies, an opposition party has the chance to win elections and may become the party of power. Likewise, the ruling party – or individual members of the ruling party – can be voted out of office and find itself in the opposition. In post-Soviet personalist autocracies, however, the opposition is with rare exceptions marginalized and does not have equal access to the corridors of power.[3] Administrative and legal restrictions ensure that opposition parties are kept out of parliament; among the post-Soviet personalist autocracies, no opposition presidential candidate has come to power via normal elections. The only opposition candidates who have secured the presidency have done so as the result of a "colored revolution" or through the president's forced early resignation, as occurred in Armenia in 1998 (Hale 2005b).

The definition of political opposition used here is an a-systemic (*vnesystemnaya*,

[3] Author's interview with former political and business elite and currently exiled opposition leader, Galymzhan Zhakiyanov, Almaty, February 2007.

meaning outside of the political system, with little hope of getting into power) assemblage of individuals, who may or may not head political parties, but who have publicly announced their opposition to the personalist president and/or the system of government associated with him (Dobrovol'skii 2002). The opposition may be fractured and characterized by competing factions or personalities, it may be a coalition of like-minded individuals, or it may be at times divided and at other times united. It may be made up of former members of the president's ruling coalition, of individuals who have never been in government or positions of economic or political power, or a combination of these. In chapter four, I investigate the makeup of the opposition in the three cases, describe the kinds of figures have been in the political opposition, and show how the constellation of opposition leaders has changed over time. In chapter six, I discuss how the strengths, weaknesses, and resources available to the political opposition impinge upon the strategies at the opposition's disposal.

Elites

Elites are those who indirectly or directly play a regular and substantial part in national political outcomes, including political, governmental, and economic actors (Higley and Burton 1989; Mosca 1939; Pareto 1935; Putnam 1976). Unlike in some studies of elites, cultural figures that play no significant role in government and politics are excluded (i.e., Bozóki 2003; Pareto 1966). Moreover, in my explanation, I make an analytical distinction between business elites and political elites.[4] This choice requires elaboration, given the close connection between economics and politics in the post-Soviet space (Bhatty 2002; Beissinger 1997; Stoner-Weiss 2006; Way 2005b).

Despite the merger of economic and political power in most, if not all, Soviet

[4] See Gehlbach, Sonin, and Zhuravskaya (2009) for a study that similarly distinguishes between businessmen and the traditional career politicians.

successor states, there are empirical grounds for making a distinction between business and political elites. Evidence from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan demonstrates that not all business elites and lesser-known but wealthy entrepreneurs are directly engaged in politics. In Kazakhstan, many business elites have actually distanced themselves from formal politics, although they may still lobby their interests via informal channels. Furthermore, under Prime Minister Kazhgel'din (1994-1997), Kazakh[5] business elites who had become wealthy as a result of the initial phase of privatization were later brought in to head various ministries, in the hopes that the expertise that they had gained in the world of business would improve economic policy and speed along market reforms (Suleimenov, Ashimbaev, and Andreev 2003). In Kyrgyzstan during former President Akaev's tenure, a large number of regional elites made their business fortunes first and only thereafter sought political power via seats in parliament as a way to protect their economic interests. In the last parliament elected under Akaev, at least 50 percent of elected parliamentarians had a background in business (International Crisis Group 2005; Radnitz 2006; Spector 2008). This phenomenon differentiates the Kyrgyzstan case from the Belarus and Kazakhstan cases, where few independent business elites have made their way into the legislative branch, the result of strict executive scrutiny over the selection of political candidates to elected office.

In addition to the empirical distinction between elites in business and elites in politics, a further analytical distinction between the two can be made. While political elites are often able to amass a fortune while in power, it is business elites who have a steady and independent source of wealth from which to tap in order to fund political activities. The

[5] I use the terms Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Belarusian to denote actors' citizenship or country identity, rather than their belonging to the titular ethnic groups of the three countries in this study. The official terms for citizens of multiethnic Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are Kazakhstani and Kyrgyzstani, but I find these cumbersome and prefer the shorter forms Kazakh and Kyrgyz.

financial support provided by business elites can be used to pay for the numerous expenses that accrue to the political opposition, including rallies (mass transportation, public announcement and other communications systems, toilets, tents, food, remuneration, etc.), political campaigns, opposition media (newspapers, television and radio stations, websites, and other communications technologies that can expand the range of alternative information) and daily operations (such as office space, transportation, press conferences, and petitions). Moreover, because economic and material interests (rather than ideological, programmatic, or hard-liner versus soft-liner divisions) appear to dominate elites' decision-making calculus in personalist regimes, business elites may be most driven by material self-interest and susceptible to conflicts over resource allocation (Bratton and van de Walle 1997). At the same time, business elites are arguably more vulnerable to sanctions than are political elites, given that their businesses can be easily taken away should they act in a manner threatening to the regime.

My definition of elites also encompasses the term "oligarchs" who have amassed wealth via dubious means. According to Way (2005b), oligarchs are "wealthy, politically influential individuals." He continues, while

> [p]olitical leaders in most countries rely on the support of business interests… it is only in oligarchic systems that the business-owners themselves hold legislative seats or other official posts. These oligarchs often gained their wealth through access to cheap privatization, state monopolies, or budgetary resources, and many of them joined parliament primarily to obtain legal immunity or to lobby for their own economic interests (136).

The term oligarch is not value-neutral. In fact, for ordinary citizens the term has a distinctly negative connotation. Oligarchs are not to be trusted; their greed and ambition are seen as contrary to the common good and unrelated to the interests and concerns of the average citizen. Given this perception, how can elites who are seen as the unfair beneficiaries of

privatization gain the allegiance of the average person in the electorate? In chapter six, I will return to this issue in the discussion of post-defection elite strategies, especially in regard to Kazakhstan.

Elite Defections

Elite defection refers to cases in which elites risk losing their valued posts in government and/or their livelihoods (including their business assets) by forming or joining opposition movements that publicly challenge the president and his system of rule. I restrict the analysis to instances in which elites in the ruling coalition publicly critique the president and publicly announce their formal opposition to him. Elite defections are limited to observable cases that have been documented in the domestic mass media and discussed by domestic political observers. Defectors must take public action, from calling for the ouster of the personalist president, announcing the intention to run for office as a political alternative to the president's party or his policies, to the establishment or joining of an organization whose stated goal is to create a fundamental change in the political system, in order to be included. While there may be numerous private acts of opposition and hedge betting (i.e., secretly providing funding and other resources to both the president and the opposition), such cases are beyond the scope of this dissertation precisely because they are difficult, if not impossible, to document without relying on rumor and speculation.

Previous research on elites has not included much theorizing about elite defection *per se*. Classical elite theorists, however, recognized the potential for the formation of cleavage, conflict, and group alliances. Mosca, for example, argues that conflict within the ruling elite can result from a "shift in the balance of political forces" (1939, 65) in which existing elites are challenged by "the advent of new social elements who are strong in fresh political forces"

(67). The existing ruling class can fall into decline "[i]f a new source of wealth develops in a society, if the practical importance of knowledge grows, if an old religion declines or a new one is born, if a new current of ideas spreads, then, simultaneously, far-reaching dislocations occur in the ruling class" (65). In other passages, Mosca refers to divisions within the current elite, rather than challenges from outside groups desiring entry. He writes of "cliques among rulers" (131, 333), "the ring of aristocratic cliques," and "rivalries between the great families," all of whom serve the ruler – "or, more often, rule him" (403).

The short history of elite defection in the Soviet successor states suggests two ways by which defection occurs – voluntarily and forced exit. Most examples of elite defection actually entail both of these processes. That is, some elites have first expressed publicly the desire to run against the incumbent president or have publicly criticized the president and/or government policies and have then been removed from their posts, gone into exile, or been imprisoned (BBC 2003; Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Junisbai and Junisbai 2005; McGlinchey 2004). At other times, there have been cases of elites not having publicly expressed the desire to challenge the political status quo; yet, for some reason or another, the president has fired or removed them from their posts. Examples of this abound in Turkmenistan (Pannier 2006). In this study, elites who were removed or resigned from office are only considered defectors if they thereafter appear as public opposition leaders.

Market Reform

In both the academic literature and in policy circles, market reform entails the liberalization of state control over the economy and the decentralization of economic decision-making, suggesting a movement toward a free market (Anderson and Pomfret 2003; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2008; Fish 1999; Fish 2005; Gleason

2003; Tompson 1993). The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) measures the extent of market reform in a given country "… against the standards of industrialised market economies, while recognising that there is neither a 'pure' market economy nor a unique end-point for transition."[6] The main components of market reform are large and small scale privatization, price liberalization, enterprise restructuring, reducing or eliminating barriers to trade and investment, encouraging competition, interest rate liberalization, implementing currency conversion; and developing securities markets and non-bank financial institution (EBRD 2008; Gleason 2003). I describe in greater detail how I operationalize and measure market reform in chapter three.

While reform almost always refers to policies that open up the economy to greater competition, the intention of reform might also be the opposite; that is, to (re)centralize and consolidate decision-making in the hands of fewer actors (Yang 2006). The latter process is often described as a reversal of reform (Fish 1998; Goldman 2004). Importantly, although economic reforms are intended to transform centralized economies into free market economies, in their implementation reforms often fall short of this goal (Allisa-Pisano 2004; McMann 2009). Reforms thus can result in "… a significant change in the political regime, … [while] fall[ing] short of transforming it into something else…" (Tompson 1993, 78).

Before I turn to existing explanations of defection, I would like to emphasize what this study is *not* about. The concern of this study is not to explain how political leaders garner the backing of elites in favor of the initial market reform agenda, to theorize about the elite cleavages that form around the political issue of whether to initiate market reforms, or to understand the bargaining process between elite groupings that leads to the adoption of

[6] See the EBRD's Transition Indicators, available at: http://www.ebrd.com/country/sector/econo/stats/index.htm. Accessed September 29, 2009.

particular types of market reforms. Neither is the goal to understand how bureaucrats responsible for implementation on the ground can undermine the official reform agenda, even if to protect the local population from reform's negative effects. These important issues have been explored elsewhere (e.g., Allina-Pisano 2004; Geddes 1994; Huber and McCarty 2004; Jones Luong 2002; Tompson 1993). Rather, the logic guiding the dissertation moves from the interaction of personalist presidential rule with market reforms to elite defection, the outcome of interest.

Existing Explanations of Intra-elite Conflict and Elite Defection

Existing explanations of intra-elite conflict in non-democratic regimes fall into three broad approaches, each of which focuses on different sources of elite cohesion and fragmentation. The first approach describes the historical problem of elite disunity and links it to regime type and stability. The second approach focuses on ways in which elites can overcome collective action problems, which is a necessary first step in order to successfully challenge the personalist president. The third approach looks at the capacity of presidents to maintain control over elite actors and relies in part upon the literature on state weakness to explain elites defection. In this section, I summarize the three approaches, followed by a short critique and outstanding questions.

Elite Disunity

Some scholars have distinguished between unified or well-integrated elites (i.e., sharing similar worldviews and values, and having extensive contacts with one another) and those that are a battling "aggregate of powerful individuals, a statistical artifact whose members need have no more in common than their unusual involvement and influence in

politics" (Putnam 1976, 107). For Putnam, elite unity is based in large part on the level of value consensus and commitment to the existing political-economic system. Likewise, Higley and Burton (1989) define a consensually unified elite as one in which all members (1) understand and tacitly agree upon the rules of the political game and (2) interact extensively with other elite factions, as well as with central decision-makers. Conversely, a disunified elite is one whose "members (1) share few or no understandings about the properties of political conduct and (2) engage in only limited and sporadic interactions across factional or sectoral boundaries" (19).

According to this approach, conflict is prevalent under conditions of elite disunity, when existential fear and mutual mistrust permeate relations between elite factions. Competing factions rarely interact, except when engaged in acts of aggression against one another, and elites cannot agree on the rules of political conduct. Putnam distinguishes between intra-elite conflict that normally occurs in a unified elite and the kind of partisan hostility or "oppositional mentality" that characterizes a disunified elite:

> [S]ome conflict of one sort or another is probably endemic in any national elite. Indeed, some theorists have argued that intra-elite conflict is the motor of history. The mark of a unified elite, therefore, is not the absence of disagreement, but rather sufficient mutual trust, so that its members will, if necessary, forego short-run personal or partisan advantage in order to ensure stable rule (1976, 122).

Consensually unified elites are able to bargain and do not see politics as zero sum; their personal security is not an issue and has no bearing on their interaction with other elites. Disunified elites, on the other hand, live in constant fear of retaliation and attack. Politics is a winner-take-all game in which the victors kill, banish, or imprison their opponents (Mosca 1939). According to Higley and Burton, during most of the history of nation-states, national elites have been disunified, and the lack of elite unity has been responsible for the persistence

of both highly unstable regimes and, within countries, oscillations between autocratic and democratic forms of government.

Yet, many post-Soviet states have been characterized as having a highly unified elite, a finding that casts some doubt on the argument that intra-elite conflict stems from elite disunity (Elster, Offe, and Preuss 1998; Higley, Kullberg, and Pakulski 1996). There is also the sticky problem of measuring degrees of elite continuity, given that relative levels of unity are difficult to assess and compare across cases. Moderate elite continuity is seen as conducive to democracy, but very high degrees of elite continuity detrimental to it. The question that follows is, how do we determine which level is moderate and which is high? In addition, as Gel'man (1999) argues, the system of arbitrary rule that arose out of the collapse of the Soviet Union may have become an integral part of the tacit "codes of political conduct" that guide elite behavior in the post-Soviet period, rather than a sign of elite disunity. Finally, although Higley and Burton (1997) have characterized Russian and other post-Soviet intra-elite relations as fractured, suggesting that elite disunity leads to political instability and violence, some post-Soviet cases have actually exhibited cyclical swings from intra-elite consolidation and intra-elite contestation (Hale 2005b).[7] Instead of looking for large-scale elite transformations from a condition of disunity to one of unity, an investigation of individual instances of elite defection may more fruitfully tease out the factors that keep elites unified and under what circumstances they can be expected to break rank.

Despite these conceptual issues, the emphasis on suspicion and the sense of vulnerability in a zero-sum game rightly points to the unequal relationship between elites and the incumbent president in personalist regimes. Elites and others wishing to engage in

[7] See Volkov (2002) for a very different explanation of the violence that was widespread in post-Soviet Russia in the 1990s.

political activity that could threaten or challenge the president no doubt risk falling victim to the kinds of punitive measures that Higley and Burton describe. The president's perceived power to dispense punishment and allocate rewards to elites is, in fact, the focus of the second approach to understanding elite behavior.

The Collective Action Problem and Elite Perceptions

The logic of collective action has been used to explain how highly unpopular autocracies manage to remain in power, as well as the conditions under which such regimes can be suddenly toppled. Olson argues that if at any moment elites who maintain the system perceive it as weak, if they "observe a moment of vacillation, an incident of impotence, a division in the leadership, or even the collapse of analogous regimes, all the power of an imposing regime can vanish in the night air" (1990, 17). When autocracies collapse, it is due not to mass mobilization, but rather to perceptions and expectations of elites – civil, military, and security officials – who under normal conditions can be relied upon to carry out the orders of the leadership. Building on the role of elite perceptions, Beissinger further argues that regime vulnerability demonstrated in neighboring states or in states sharing similar "institutional characteristics, histories, cultural affinities, or modes of domination" may likewise lead to defection from the ruling coalition (2007, 263).[8]

For the most part, so long as the economy and the system of distributing material and other rewards remain robust enough to continue benefiting bureaucrats and security officials, elites, irrespective of their individual opinions or personal loyalties, will continue to support the regime. Given the president's arsenal of selective incentives, elites who are primarily

[8] See also Kuran (1991) on ordinary citizens' perceptions and Medina and Stokes (2006) on vote monitoring by patrons and the creation and maintenance of voter perceptions under clientelism. On the role of perceptions of cross-case similarities in the post-communist space, see Bunce and Wolchik (2006a; 2006b).

concerned with maintaining or improving their own lot are unlikely to combine forces and challenge the president, the patron upon whom their fortunes individually and collectively depend (Hale 2005b). As a result of these factors, personalist regimes, except when faced with "calamitous economic conditions," are "relatively immune to internal splits" (Geddes 1999, 122).

Although some scholars argue that in so-called hybrid regimes "[e]lections are not the source of the government's power, and thus voters cannot transfer power to a new leadership" (Ottoway 2003, 15), the collective action approach finds that key national elections (especially parliamentary and presidential) can matter a great deal.[9] Elections matter not necessarily because they are democratic institutions, but because they can serve as focal points around which elites are able to coordinate their individual expectations about incumbent's ability to remain in power or to secure the election of a designated successor (Hale 2005; Shvetsova 2003; van de Walle 2005).[10]

The collective action problem and the key role of elite perceptions provide insight as to why elites are generally unlikely to challenge the political status quo and when widespread elite defections are more likely to take place. Members of the security forces appear to be the key potential defectors, since their unwillingness or inability to carry out orders to crack down on protestors is highlighted as the decisive factor in the success of the "colored revolutions" in Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan (Beissinger 2007; D'Anieri 2006; Hale 2005b; McFaul 2005). At the same time, we are left without an understanding of why elites

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[9] Hybrid regimes combining democratic and authoritarian elements have been called "competitive authoritarian regimes" (Levitsky and Way 2002), fragile authoritarianism" (Schedler 2001), "insecure" or "competitive electoral authoritarian regimes" (Schedler 2002), and "unconsolidated autocracies' (Way 2005b), among others.

[10] See Tucker (2007) on elections as focal points that help coordinate grievance-based protests involving ordinary citizens.

defect at other points in time, when no one anticipates a transfer of power or perceives heightened vulnerability in the personalist president or his system of rule. Finally, this approach may better explain why late adopters among the elite opt for defection once the tide already appears to be turning against the president and in favor of the opposition to him. It is less able to explain why early adopters among the elite initially defect, given that the balance of power is at early stages unclear or appears to favor the president, who at this point still commands the military and the police.

State, Institutional, and Incumbent Capacity

Complementing the collective action theory of elite behavior is a third approach focusing on institutional and incumbent weakness in personalist regimes. This approach explains elite defection as a function of leaders' incapacity to maintain power, consolidate political control, and keep elites locked in line (Brownlee 2007; Levitsky and Way 2002; Magaloni 2008; Way 2005a; Way 2005b). Because personalist rulers are wary of strong institutions that might later serve as autonomous sources of authority, they intentionally weaken the very parties and formal organizations that can help them consolidate their rule and deflect popular anger in times of economic or social crisis (Brownlee 2007; Geddes 1999; Migdal 1988; O'Donnell 1994). Just as state institutions are stripped of (or prevented from acquiring) independent power, informal institutions and identities are transformed into *de facto* centers of power (Bunce 2000; Collins 2006; Helmke and Levitsky 2004). Clan leaders, regional elites, and heads of financial-industrial groups, for example, may compete with the personalist president over scarce political and economic resources and emerge as potential strongmen or renegades willing to challenge the president's right to rule (Collins 2006; Cummings 2000; Jones Luong 2004; Junisbai 2010).

An application of the incumbent/institutional weakness approach is Way's (2005b) study of the Ukrainian Orange Revolution, in which the author argues that former President Leonid Kuchma's right to rule was fated to be challenged by the very oligarchs upon whom he relied for political support. Way argues that a system of rule which is based on oligarchs in parliament and in the administration contains "the seeds of its own destruction" (137), since opportunistic oligarchs will quickly turn against their former patron once they find signs of weakness or vulnerability. Ultimately, it appears, no ruler can maintain control over oligarchs, and those who at one point in time appear loyal are likely to challenge the president at an opportune moment.

While evidence of fundamental weakness is easy to detect once the personalist ruler or his successor has been overthrown, it is more difficult to assess relative strength and weakness while autocrats are still in office and appear firmly in power. Many of the weaknesses attributed to Kuchma's Ukraine, including the rise of an oligarchic class and the close relationship between political and economic power, are shared by other post-Soviet states that have not experienced widespread defection from the ruling coalition. We are thus left wondering, in what ways was Ukraine different from other structurally comparable cases? Why, for example, does President Nursultan Nazarbaev of Kazakhstan appear strong (i.e., solidly in control of a consolidated autocracy), whereas President Kuchma's system of rule was in hindsight "inherently weak," given that both presidents have pursued policies that have facilitated the rise and political influence of self-interested business elites in their respective countries?

Each of the approaches outlined above has contributed to our understanding of intra-elite relations and sources of intra-elite conflict. Yet, we are still faced with a puzzle. How

do we explain instances of defection despite outward appearances of a unified national elite, despite the obvious hurdles to collective action, and despite the presence of a seemingly strong president backed by the security forces?

Market Reforms, Intra-Elite Conflict, and Elite Defection

Theoretical Underpinnings

This dissertation offers an alternative understanding of the forces that have driven certain post-Soviet elites into the political opposition. Although this is not a study in democratization or regime change *per se*, the comparative democratization literature provides a useful starting point to my investigation. Within the democratization literature, I look to two schools, the preconditions/structural approach and the contingency/agency approach, to theoretically ground my explanation, suggest key variables, and devise testable hypotheses.

Despite some contention in the literature, the positive link between economic development and democracy is widely accepted (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Burkhart and Lewis-Beck 1994; Dahl 1997; Geddes 1999; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Kitschelt and Welzel 2006; Levi 1988; Levitsky and Way 2006; Lipset 1959; Markoff 1996; Moore 1966; Przeworski 1991; Przeworski and Limongi 1997; Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub, and Limongi 1996; Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub, and Limongi 2000; Rueschemeyer, Huber Stephens, and Stephens 1992). Generally, modernization-based approaches emphasize the broad societal and cultural changes associated with economic development that are conducive to the emergence of democracy. These include expansion of the middle class, widespread access to education, membership in crosscutting associations, greater tolerance for competing political ideas, and less reliance on violence to resolve social conflict. Recent studies linking development and democracy focus on improvements in human capital, as well

as improvements in voters' cognitive sophistication and material assets, both of which help individuals extract themselves from dependence on clientelistic exchanges (Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2006). Economic development can also "erode… the political strength of the patron," "break up economic monopolies," and provide elites with the resources and incentives to compete with the personalist president for power (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2006; Medina and Stokes 2006, 161, 162).

Unlike the association between economic development and democratic forms of governance, it would be difficult to link modernization directly to variation in the extent and type of elite defection. First, unlike most development indicators, which tend to reflect linear change, within post-Soviet states there have been varying degrees of elite contestation since 1991, a pattern that more accurately resembles swings or cycles (Hale 2005b). Furthermore, in many post-Soviet personalist autocracies, the economy is still dependent upon natural resource extraction or transportation, especially gas and oil, which tends to stunt the growth of other sectors more commonly associated with a modern, developed, and industrialized economy (Jones Luong and Weinthal 2001; Weinthal and Jones Luong 2006). Even in Soviet successor states with established manufacturing capabilities, as in Russia or Kazakhstan, reliance on natural resources remains substantial if not dominant. It is therefore problematic to characterize economic change as evidence of modernization or development.

Under the broad rubric of economic development, we can, however, compare the extent to which market reforms have been adopted among post-Soviet personalist autocracies and within these states over time. Such an approach is consistent with studies that posit a critical role for economic reforms in creating new centers of political and economic power (Aslund 2000; Bunce 1999; Fish 1998a; Fish 1998b; Fish 1999; Fish and Choudry 2007;

Frye 2000; Frye 2003; McFaul 2001; McMann 2003; McMann 2006; Murphy, Shleifer, and Vishney 1992; Radnitz forthcoming; Sachs 1994; Tompson 1993). Given the threat that alternative centers of power represent, it is no surprise that autocrats often deliberately forego market reforms in order to discourage competition and to maintain both their monopoly on power and their patronage base (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2006; Way and Levitsky 2006). Indeed, in many clientelistic polities, including the post-Soviet personalist autocracies, economic reforms have been stymied (Allina-Pisano 2004; Bhatty 2002; Fish 2005; Geddes 1991; Ottoway 2003).

At the same time, it is also evident that autocrats of all stripes have implemented at least some of the economic reforms promoted by international financial institutions and donor agencies. This holds true, even if, as Fish (2005) argues, such reforms have not been extensive enough to set a foundation for democracy to take hold. International pressure, the desire for entrance into Western multilateral organizations, politicians' expectations that reforms will in the future further their political careers despite significant costs in the short-term, elite perceptions of changes in the relative balance of power, and a host of other factors have been cited to explain the adoption of reforms in transition economies and new democracies (Crawford 2001; Fish 2005; Geddes 1994; Gleason 2003; Jones Luong 2002; Levitsky and Way 2006; McGlinchey 2003; Przeworski 1991; Whitehead 1996).

A second strand of the democratization literature, known as the agency or contingency or agency school, further suggests that, given structural constraints or "background factors" (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, 23) that shape the set of choices available to political actors, the actions and decisions of elites in autocracies matter a great deal in determining the success or failure of political liberalization and/or democratic

transition. Beginning with Rustow (1970), many scholars have favored an elite-centered approach to understanding regime change (Bratton and van de Walle 1997; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Przeworski 1991; Schmitter and Karl 1991; see also reviews of the literature by Geddes 1999 and Bunce 2000).[11] Scholarship in this vein investigates the interaction between hard-liners and soft-liners (or, alternatively, insiders and outsiders) in the ruling coalition, as well as at the relationship between government officials (whether they be civilian or military) and actors in civil society. Often, analysis begins at the point at which a split or division within the regime – an opportunity for liberalization that may or may not evolve into a democratic transition – becomes evident. The analysis then proceeds to explain how the processes of mass mobilization, bargaining and negotiation, and the creation of new institutions unfold.

Curiously, however, not much has been said about the process by which elites split from the ruling coalition in authoritarian regimes in the first place. Rational choice accounts of democratic transitions, for example, focus on elite interaction during the bargaining game, which can culminate in democratic transition, narrow the political space further, or produce an outcome that is something in-between (Colomer 2000; Przeworski 1991). Yet, how do we explain the evolution of competing elite interests and the formation of cleavages within the ruling coalition, which are both temporally and analytically prior to the onset of negotiations between hard- and soft-liners? In other words, on what basis are elites' interests, preferences, and capabilities initially formed, and what factors cause elite interests to conflict (Higley and Burton 1997; Katznelson 1997; Smith 2004)?

[11] In response to the social requisites approach favored by Lipset (1959) and others, Rustow wrote, "Wherever social or economic background conditions enter the theory, it must seek to specify the mechanisms, presumably in part political, by which these penetrate to the democratic foreground" (1970, 344).

The institutional context in which elites live and work provides one answer. Because different institutional arrangements create different incentives and capabilities for action, they foster different types of elite behavior (Geddes 1999). The post-Soviet cases under investigation share a common institutional form, which I term personalist presidentialism. In personalist presidential autocracies, governing institutions associated with democracy – the judiciary, the legislative branch, and political parties – exist, but are weak or underdeveloped, indeed, purposely so (Fish 1998b; 2005; Frye 1997; Hale 2006b; Hale, McFaul, and Colton 2004; O'Donnell 1994). Conversely, much power and authority are vested in the person who controls the executive, and a patron-client relationship that mutually benefits the personalist president and the political elites under him reinforces the president's dominant position. Elites face few incentives to defect and powerful incentives to cooperate with and remain loyal to the president (Hale 2005b; Olson 1990). As Hale emphasizes, the personalist president

> wields not only the powers formally invested in the office, but also the ability to selectively direct vast sources of material wealth and power outside of formal institutional channels. Importantly, this authority can be used not only to accomplish policy goals but also to preserve the president's own power by rewarding political allies and punishing or co-opting enemies (2005b, 138).[12]

Although personalist presidents require elite support, for example, in order to mobilize the masses during elections and public demonstrations of popularity, elites are at a distinct disadvantage vis-à-vis the president. Elites depend on the president for continued access to the perquisites associated with their positions and can be easily fired, fall prey to tax inspection, or be brought up on corruption charges should they fall out of favor. These are a just some of the many tools that personalist autocrats have at their disposal to punish

[12] Note that Hale focuses on informal sources of power used to keep elites in line. See also Darden (2001). In chapter 3, I describe formal sources of presidential power that encourage elite allegiance.

wayward elites. The president also has the power to "play the diverse interests of such elites so as to divide and conquer them" (Hale 2006a, 308), frustrating efforts at intra-elite cooperation, which is necessary to launch a successful challenge to the president.

At the same time, it is also true that post-Soviet personalist presidents have been faced with surprising instances of elite defections that few, if any, political scientists or domestic observers predicted or expected at the time. Unexpected defections remind us that although personalist rulers may appear to be clearly in charge of their ruling coalitions, politics – irrespective of regime type – always "involves factionalism, competition, and struggle" (Geddes 1999, 121). Indeed, market reforms and other structural changes in the economy, such as a sustained downturn or economic crisis, have been shown to engender competition between or aggravate conflicts among elites (Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Collins 2006; Mosca 1939). Intra-elite conflict, however, may be hidden from the general population and outside observers due to a combination of formal and informal core institutions (Brownlee 2007; Collins 2006; Gleason 1991; Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2006). Not only do ruling parties, social and kinship networks, and clientelism help presidents maintain their coalitions, they also create the outward appearance of a monolithic elite fully behind the personalist president.

An Alternative Explanation

Combining insights from the preconditions- and contingency-based explanations of democratization, I favor an approach that examines how institutional arrangements structure individual elite behavior and facilitate or discourage defection. In the post-Soviet context, personalist presidentialism and the market reform regime (i.e., the adoption of market reforms versus the rejection of market reforms) are key institutions that shape relations

between elites and between elites and autocrats, as well as impinge upon the resources and choices available to elites. Where undertaken, large-scale privatization creates a new class of wealthy business elites with resources independent of the state and, concomitantly, pockets of relative economic autonomy. Importantly, business elites appear only in personalist autocracies that have implemented market reforms; they are absent in personalist autocracies that continue to reject or hold off such reforms. I refer to the former as market reforming autocracies and the latter as market-rejecting autocracies.

Before continuing with my argument, a caveat is in order. It would not be honest or accurate to describe the strata of post-Soviet business elites as "new" in the sense that they are self-made millionaires or worked their way to the top from scratch. Privatization undeniably reinforces the privileges of the former Soviet *nomenklatura*, which used its positions of privilege to gain access to capital and to purchase privatized factories and other assets at impossibly low to no cost. The benefits of privatization have thus disproportionately accrued to a small group of well-connected insiders, rather than to ordinary citizens, most of whom were uprooted and impoverished by the transition to the so-called free market (Dudwick, Gomart, and Marc 2003; Freeland 2000; Goldman 2003; Junisbai 2010). By "new" I mean only that a class of business elites (also referred to as capitalists and oligarchs) did not exist prior to independence and the onset of market reforms (Radnitz forthcoming). My intention is to neither underestimate the extent of corruption that took place during privatization and continues to take place today nor deny the unscrupulous means by which a select few were able to accumulate enormous wealth in a short span of time.

In market reforming personalist autocracies, privatization not only disperses

economic resources, it generates or exacerbates conflicts, primarily economic in nature, within the elite. How so? Although a combination of formal and informal mechanisms binds elites in general to the president, the personalist autocrat is typically closely associated with and responsible for protecting the interests and privileges of a particular group of elites. Elites closest to the president may be composed of his extended family or kinship group; his *zemklyaki* (those who come from the same province or town); his financial backers and/or business associates; his political allies, who sometimes dating back to the Soviet period; or some other formulation of an "inner circle" (*okruzhenie prezidenta*) (Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Kharlamov 2005; Khlyupin 1998; Collins 2006; Geddes 1999; Satpaev 2007).

Despite the adoption of reforms that tend to decentralize economic power and decision-making, decisions over who is allowed to become a player in the world of big business ultimately remain the president's prerogative. Depending on the president's will, "…this or that group can gain or lose control over certain state structures, companies, firms, and even whole sectors of the economy" (Satpaev 2007, 295-296). In making decisions regarding who will control which economic sectors or individual enterprises, the personalist president is likely to privilege members of the inner circle, to the disadvantage and consternation of elites located outside of the inner circle.

The interaction of these two dynamics – the dispersion of economic resources (a byproduct of market reforms) and a patronage system designed primarily to benefit the president and his inner circle (a practice endogenous to post-Soviet personalist autocracy) – may clash with one another, providing certain elites with the resources and the incentive to defect to the political opposition. Personalist presidents' tendency to reserve the choicest businesses and sectors can create a "potential pool of alternative leaders outside of the state"

(Bratton and van de Walle 1994, 464), although this pool may be small. "The neopatrimonial practice of expelling rather than accommodating dissenters… [and] former insiders who have fallen out of official favor" similarly increases chances of defection among elites located outside of the inner circle (464).

Despite the adoption of reforms that bring personalist autocracies closer to the goal of a free market economy, there remain significant distortions in the economy. Private property rights in market reforming post-Soviet autocracies are far from secure (Hedland 2001; Spector 2008). In a suspended state known as "property without rights" (Hedland 2001), private ownership exists but protections are not guaranteed, and elites outside of the inner circle cannot turn to impartial formal mechanisms to contest how economic assets have been allocated. The problem is compounded by a widespread practice known as *reiderstvo*, from the English "raider" or "to raid."[13] *Reiderstvo* is, in essence, equivalent to hostile takeover, in which elites closest to the president resort to aggressive tactics to force other elites to "donate" their assets or sell at below market value. Left with no formal recourse or protections, business elites who have been victims of *reiderstvo* have defected to the political opposition.

Business elites who are excluded from the inner circle are especially vulnerable to the practice of *reiderstvo*. Because their names are legally tied to the assets they control, business elites who refuse to be bought out or "gift" their wealth to those in the president's *okruzhenie* become targets for corruption, tax evasion, and criminal investigation. Political

[13] I would like to thank Dr. Rustem Kadyrzhanov of the Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan for emphasizing the practice of *reiderstvo* in the world of post-Soviet business. A related term is "predation," which involves, among other practices, "theft, the involuntary and unrequited transfer of property rights, through the use of inside information and through intimidation, extortion, threats and actual violence against property or persons" (Buiter 2000, 609). Buiter explains, "When the returns to productive activity are low and the return to predation high, talented individuals will tend to choose the latter career over the former."

elites who have spent their careers in government, in contrast, tend not to be officially associated with specific assets or businesses and may instead use an intermediary or set up fictitious accounts. Without a paper trail tracing political elites to particular companies, the extent of their wealth and investments is difficult to determine, making prosecution difficult, as well.

Reiderstvo is central to an understanding of elite defection for another theoretical reason. *Reiderstvo* can serve as an event around which elite grievances against the personalist president and his inner circle can be focused and transformed into action. As mentioned earlier, studies taking a collective action approach have already documented how elections can serve as focal points around which elites and citizens can be mobilized against the president. While prior work looks to fraudulent elections and term limits as key focal points around which elite grievances and resources can be mobilized and protest directed, I posit that other events, not necessarily related to succession or the transfer of political power, can also serve to rally elite ambition, disaffection, and resources. Importantly, elite defection can center on concrete cases of predation or *reiderstvo*, around which specific grievances can be channeled.

As Figure 2.1 illustrates, faced with the possibility of losing their businesses or other assets "outsider" elites – those who have been excluded from the inner circle, which is made up of "insider" elites (Bratton and van de Walle 1994, 63) – have three options: loyalty, exit, and voice (Hirschman 1970). Relative to voice (i.e., public defection to the political opposition), the first two choices are preferable because they entail both less cost and less risk. Outsider elites threatened with *reiderstvo* are likely to give in to insider elite demands or try to settle their conflict through existing informal channels, including petitioning the

president. In either case, this choice entails remaining at least outwardly loyal to the personalist president. Outsider elites' second order choice is to exit or flee, either by shutting down or moving their business operations abroad. While both forms of exit may incur significant short- and long-term costs, they may be the only viable options for elites who find domestic conditions unfavorable to the continued operation of their businesses.

The third and least attractive option – voice dissatisfaction and attempt to mobilize support from among the general public and/or other elites – entails significant cost and risk. Business elites

> … who use their political access and power to challenge the ruling elite actually jeopardize their business prospects; either they can be forced to divest their assets and exit the political scene entirely, or, in extreme cases, they can lose not only their property but their lives. Those who remain silent, however, have the best chances for retaining their assets (Spector 2008,166).

In cases in which disaffected elites attempt to generate support among the masses in their campaign against the status quo, the act serves as an instance of defection from the ruling coalition. This is because personalist autocrats tend to define relationships with other political actors in terms of loyalty or disloyalty, which, in turn, divides elites into two camps: friends of the regime or its foes (Kurmanbaev 2006).

The second type of market reform regime – what I have termed market rejecting personalist autocracy – is characterized by minimal steps toward economic liberalization and the rejection of large-scale privatization. In market rejecting personalist autocracies, the emergence of a class of business elites who consider themselves relatively independent of the state is precluded. Large-scale privatization is a precursor to the appearance of private ownership of large industries and big business. Elites who head large state-owned enterprises are managers, rather than owners of big business, and are thus virtually dependent

upon the state and upon the good grace of autocrats to maintain their positions. And, as state employees, they lack independent resources upon which they might draw to challenge the president and his patronage system.

If small-scale privatization is permitted, a class of entrepreneurs heading small and medium sized businesses may develop. For entrepreneurs in market rejecting personalist autocracies, grievances against the president and the oppressive rules of the economic game are likely to mount, given the extensive regulation that they face on a daily basis. Entrepreneurs may also fall prey to threats and hindrances not unlike those with which their counterparts in the market reforming autocracies have to grapple. Yet, as is the case with managers of state-owned companies, the probability that entrepreneurs will join the political opposition is decidedly low. It is unlikely that entrepreneurs who are kept from realizing their ambitions will risk the punishment that is certain to follow unsanctioned political activity since they lack "access to state organizational, financial, media, and other resources" (Way 2002, 132) that are vital to the success of their cause.[14] Defecting from and opposing the regime is an expensive endeavor, and at the time of defection both the end point and chances of success are uncertain. Aggrieved managers and entrepreneurs in market rejecting personalist autocracies are thus left with two remedies from which to choose: (1) Find a way to work under current conditions (loyalty) or (2) close down shop or take their businesses abroad (exit).

A Note Regarding Theoretical Assumptions

Recent research on elite defection implies that control over autonomous economic resources in and of itself can propel elites into the political opposition. According to one

[14] For the very same reasons, even entrepreneurs who own small- and medium-sized businesses in market reforming personalist autocracies are unlikely to entangle themselves in politics.

view, oligarchs, who "do not take orders easily, are by nature incredibly opportunistic, and have a weak sense of loyalty," threaten the personalist president's ability to consolidate political control (Way 2005b, 137). Market reforms are seen as altering the balance of resources, such that the president is left with relatively fewer resources, while capitalists accumulate relatively greater resources (Radnitz forthcoming). In the end, "economic development tends over time to create the conditions for their downfall—one of the few 'iron laws' in political science (Radntiz forthcoming, 37-38). By permitting the dispersal of economic resources and the emergence of an oligarchic or capitalist class, personalist presidents unwittingly plant the seeds of their own destruction and release "the genie that [they] will be unable to put back in the bottle" (Radnitz forthcoming, 39; Way 2005). Both the seed and genie metaphors imply that the defection of business elites is an inescapable fate certain to bring down market reforming autocrats.

Yet, as we will see in chapter four, longitudinal data collected on elite defections demonstrate the opposite to be true. Elites in general are unlikely to defect, and it is improbable that business elites in particular will join the opposition, for a number of reasons rooted in self-interest. In addition, the data indicate that very few cases of defection have had dire consequences for personalist presidents in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. Conscious of this fact, I do not posit a direct causal relationship between the dispersion of resources and elite defections. Neither do I conceive of defection among business elites as inevitable. These stipulations distinguish my approach from prior works that link the rise of post-Soviet oligarchs and capitalists to the (inevitable) downfall of personalist presidents. My approach further differs from previous explanations, which focus overwhelmingly on the opportunities for elites to defect (pull factors), rather than on factors that may push them to

defect, including threats to their political and economic resources (*reiderstvo*).

Testable Implications

Theories of elite unity elicit two related hypotheses. We can conjecture that defecting elites in post-Soviet personalist autocracies neither agree upon the accepted rules of political conduct nor share the unifying views of the rest. Second, we can hypothesize that defecting elites consist of those who have limited interaction with other elite factions or central decision-makers. While it should be relatively easy to observe and comment upon the extent of interaction between elite factions, determining the level of disagreement over rules and values will likely prove difficult. Since elite defectors were originally members of the ruling coalition, I assume that they are familiar with the rules of the game and acted accordingly in order to maintain their positions or move up the rungs of power. Moreover, because the empirical tools available – biographies, interviews, and primary and secondary works – are not as good at delving into the intentions or psychological attributes of elites, I feel less confident in my ability to make causal inferences about the role of shared values in shaping elite behavior.

Studies that center on collective action problems and elite perceptions regarding the ability of the personalist president to hold onto power suggest that focal points can facilitate elite defection. One hypothesis based on this approach is that elite defection is limited to occasions when elite perceptions are transformed from firm belief in the ruler's power to a questioning of the ruler's ability to maintain it (i.e., during or after national elections). Other possible inferences from the elite perceptions literature are more difficult to test using a

behavioral approach and are therefore not included in the dissertation.[15]

An implication of the institutional and incumbent weakness approach is that elites who defect are those to whom sanctions do not apply well or whom it is difficult for the personalist president to monitor. The work of Collins (2002; 2004; 2006) suggests that elites most likely to be outside of the president's watchful eye are clan leaders, who head kinship-based patronage networks and control considerable human and economic resources. Clans have taken over the functions of a weak state, hindered by economic scarcity, lack of resources, and weak formal institutions. "Acting informally," Collins explains, "competing clans… divide the central state's offices and resources among themselves" (2002, 143). Another possibility is suggested by research on the balance of power between post-Soviet regional and central elites, which argues that potential challengers to the personalist president are likely to be found among elites in charge of provincial (*oblast'*) governments (Allina-Pisano 2004; Cumming 2000; Jones Luong 2002; Jones Luong 2004; Stoner-Weiss 2001; Stoner-Weiss 2006). According to Jones Luong,

> …the regional governments have posed the most serious challenge to the central state's authority both under Soviet rule and after independence. The Soviet system is responsible for creating the very local strongmen that the central government must now either co-opt or defeat in order to establish its control over the periphery (2004, 208).

Finally, an interesting disagreement over elite defection can be inferred from the

[15] There are many examples of hypotheses worth investigating but which are beyond the scope of this study. Elites who perceive themselves as likely to be on the losing end of elite struggles might decide that their best option is to break rank, publicly challenge the president, and join the opposition as a last ditch effort. While they might recognize that their chances are slim, they might also believe that if they forego a challenge, they will lose what they have anyway. Elite disagreement over the balance of power may also affect elites' perceptions and therefore their likelihood to engage in open political struggle (Jones-Luong 2002; McFaul 2002; Przeworski 1991). If both sides in the conflict think they will win the struggle in the long run, neither side is likely to give up, and elites may defect. However, if elites clearly know they are weaker or will be weaker vis-à-vis the president in the near future, they may give in and forego defection.

works of Olson (1990) and Bratton and van de Walle (1997). According to Bratton and van de Walle, the personalist president's tendency to favor elites in his inner circle and to exclude other elites from the patronage system creates "a defensively cohesive elite," while pushing outsider elites into the political opposition (1994, 464). Elites fortunate to be located in the inner circle ("insiders") tend to be more invested in and therefore more likely to remain steadfast in their support of the regime, even when signs point to an imminent transition. In contrast, outsider elites who have been "crowded out" (Collins 2004, 232) of the spoils system "… are motivated to oppose the incumbent regime" (Bratton and van de Walle 1994, 463). This is especially problematic during economic downturns, when competition over scarce material resources is fierce.

Surmising from Olson's argument, there should be few instances of elite defection, limited to points or periods in which elite perceptions are suddenly transformed from firm belief in the ruler's power to a questioning of his ability to maintain it (see also Geddes 1991). Bratton and van de Walle, on the other hand, suggest that the tendency of personalist rulers to exclude outsider elites from economic opportunity and political expression encourages outsider elites to oppose the president. One interpretation of this is that it is fairly common for elites in personalist autocracies to defect, either in protest of what they see a spoils system that severely disadvantages them or as a result of expulsion from the ruling coalition.

My explanation of elite defection can also be formulated as a set of hypotheses. In market rejecting personalist autocracies, business actors are unlikely to defect. In contrast, we should witness cases of defection by business elites in market reforming autocracies. I also posit that focal points are not limited to points in which the president may appear

vulnerable, such as when a transfer of power might take place. Specifically, I hypothesize that instances of *reiderstvo* can serve to rally elites against the incumbent president and his inner circle.

Table 2.1 summarizes the hypotheses that will be tested in the empirical chapters of the dissertation. I divide the hypotheses into two categories – hypotheses regarding the kinds of elites are likely candidates for defection and those that are concerned with the question of when elite defections are likely to take place.

Conclusion

I have argued in this chapter for a revised understanding of the causal processes that link market reforms to a particular political outcome – elite defections from the ruling coalition to the political opposition in the post-Soviet space. Prior research highlights the ways that economic liberalization provides elites with independent resources that can be mobilized against personalist presidents. My findings, in contrast, suggest a tension between the effect of market reforms and personalist autocrats' tendency to engage in exclusionary practices that benefit certain elites to the detriment of others. Not only do market reforms disperse economic power and resources, but reforms generate competition among – and at times spark overt conflict between – elites in the inner circle and elites outside of it. Intra-elite conflict in market reforming personalist autocracies has, in turn, driven some elites, in particular disaffected wealthy business elites with no other recourse, into the political opposition.

In this study, elite defection is not conceived as a predetermined or inevitable outcome. Defection is only one option available to alienated elites and is associated with substantial risk. Elites can also remain loyal and keep silent, or exit the system by taking jobs in the

private sector or retiring from public life/government service. Both are preferable alternatives to the risks associated with defection.

The Belarus case is critical to my explanation. In Belarus, I find that the absence of reform both precludes the emergence of an autonomous class of business elites and restricts the options available to both elites and entrepreneurs (owners of small- and medium-sized businesses) seeking to change the rules of the economic game. Without large-scale privatization, heads of government enterprises are appointed managers, rather than oligarchs or heads of wealthy financial-industrial groups, and thus have few independent resources on which to draw (and sustain themselves) should conflict with the personalist president and his inner circle erupt. As a result, there are two, rather than three, options available to dissatisfied managers. These are loyalty or exit.

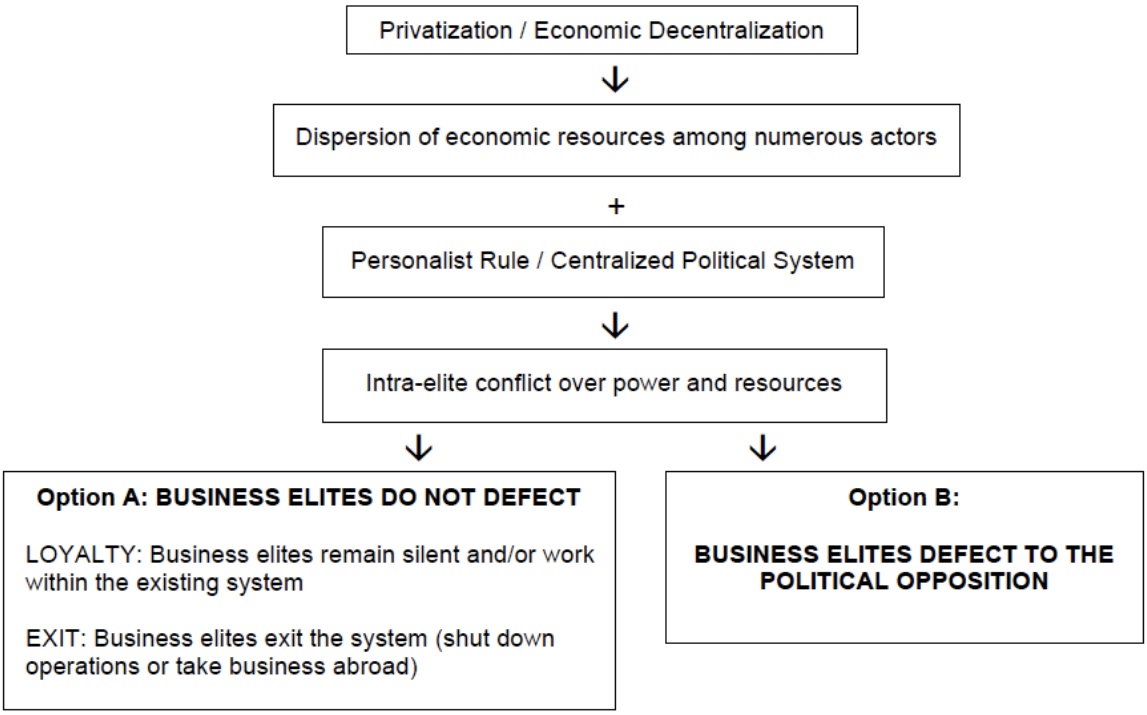
In the empirical chapters of the dissertation (chapters four through six), I test hypotheses generated by prior studies and my proposed explanation using data on actual elite defections in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. Prior to embarking on the analysis, in chapter three, I justify my choice of research design and describe the criteria for case selection. I also discuss my efforts to minimize the "small *n*, many variables" problem associated with qualitative research. Finally, I raise and respond to possible limitations of the qualitative research design underpinning this study.

Tables and Figures

Table 2.1 Summary of Hypotheses to be Tested

What kinds of elites are likely to defect?	H_1:	Elite defectors have likely had limited interaction with other elite factions and/or central decision-makers.
	H_2:	Elites who head kinship-based patronage networks that function outside the purview of the state/personalist president are likely candidates for defection.
	H_3:	Due to *de facto* decentralization and loss of state resources after the collapse of the USSR, regional elites in the provinces function outside the purview of the president and are thus likely candidates for defection.
	H_4:	Outsider elites who have been excluded from economic and political spoils are more likely to defect than insider elites who benefit from privileges associated with their place in the inner circle.
	H_5:	Under conditions in which few to no market reforms (in particular, large-scale privatization) have been implemented, business elites are unlikely to be found among anti-regime defectors.
	H_{5A}:	Under conditions in which extensive market reforms have been implemented (in particular, large-scale privatization), business elites are likely to be found among anti-regime defectors.
When are elites likely to defect?	H_6:	Widespread elite defections are likely to take place during potential points of power transfer, as in the aftermath of parliamentary or presidential elections.
	H_{6A}:	Widespread elite defections take place at other focal or rallying points, especially in connection with the practice of *reiderstvo*, which threaten elites' political power and economic assets.
	H_7:	Elite defections are likely to take place when "a highly unpopular president is likely to… be most vulnerable to ouster" (Hale 2005, 140).

Figure 2.1 Market Reform, Intra-Elite Conflict, and Elite Responses



Chapter 3
Research Design, Methodology, and Fieldwork

Introduction

Chapter three is devoted to answering fundamental questions about the dissertation's conceptualization and execution. Of the numerous possible ways to study elite defection and political opposition movements, why did I choose a qualitative, small-*n* research design? Similarly, why were Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan selected for investigation? What analytical leverage do these three cases provide? How can I be sure that the methods employed are reliable tools for data analysis and interpretation? Finally, what kinds of data were collected, and how were they collected?

By way of response, I describe the rationale behind the choice of qualitative research design and the criteria for case selection. I then compare and contrast the political and economic systems that have emerged in independent Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan and, where useful, compare them to other post-Soviet autocracies. After situating the three cases in their broader institutional and regional contexts, I outline in detail the qualitative research methodology employed, including the selection of interviewees and the in-depth interview protocol. I conclude with a discussion of potential concerns about the research design and limitations of the analysis.

Research Design

This dissertation is small-*n* study that relies on qualitative methods to examine the link between market reforms and elite defections in post-Soviet personalist autocracies. I compare Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, three cases that display similar institutional and political characteristics, but which exhibit marked variation in the key causal factor

under investigation: the extent of market reform. The cases were selected to hold constant, to the extent possible, key structural features and isolate the effect of the hypothesized causal factor – market reforms – on elite defection. Recognizing that the assumption of *ceteris paribus* (all else equal) may not obtain in qualitative studies such as this (Przeworski and Teune 1970; Lijphart 1971), I have tried to minimize this and other design pitfalls by carefully selecting two comparable cases and one contrasting case (more below) and by clearly specifying causal relationships in my proposed explanation (see chapter two). Additionally, because my study is intended to generate preliminary hypotheses about an under-investigated phenomenon and revise existing theories, a small-*n* design that seeks to identify plausible causal mechanisms is warranted (Geddes 1990).

The advantages of small-*n* research are many, despite the at times sharp debate over the merits of qualitative methods. Focusing on one or a few cases allows the researcher to intensively scrutinize hypothesized relationships between variables, which can be used to generate theory, which, in turn, can later be tested in other contexts, with additional cases, or using statistical techniques (George 1979; Lijphart 1971). Although large-*n* studies have the added advantage of incorporating multiple variables and data and from a large number of countries, quantitative research tends to be restricted to variables that are easily quantified. In addition, large-*n* studies can convincingly suggest relationships or associations between variables, but have been criticized as less successful at getting at the process or mechanisms behind these relationships (Collier, Brady, and Seawright 2004; George and Bennett 2005; Pierson and Skocpol 2002). There is also a concern that large-*n* studies may face the problem of causal heterogeneity and/or conceptual stretching since we cannot be sure that the concepts applied in diverse settings function in the same way – despite similar outcomes – or

are understood in the same way (Brady and Collier 2004; Collier and Mahoney 1996; Sartori 1970).

Along with its strengths, small-*n* research has a number of well-documented weaknesses (Collier and Mahoney 1996; Geddes 2003; King, Keohane, and Verba 1994; Lijphart 1971). According to Geddes (1990) and Laitin (2003), the accumulation of knowledge in the discipline has been hindered by the tendency to hold onto old methods like single cases and case selection for the misguided sake of methodological pluralism. Concern with the reliability of small-*n* research was voiced as early as the 1970s, when Lijphart described the comparative method as weaker than – indeed, "a very imperfect substitute" for – the statistical and experimental methods (1971, 685). Lijphart argued that the logic behind the statistical and comparative methods is the same, except that in case studies there are too many variables and too few cases (i.e., the problem of "many variables, small *n*"). King, Keohane, and Verba (1994) argue that whenever possible, research relying on a few cases should be improved by adding observations, including more cases, looking at subunits, or adding counterfactuals (see also Fearon 1991). Finally, in small-*n* research, the problem of case selection is often raised, since results may be biased by the inclusion of less than representative or extreme cases (Mahoney 2000).

Taking these suggestions and criticisms into account, I have tried to reach a compromise that increases the number of observations, while still maintaining confidence that the processes at play are similar among the cases. For each of the three cases, I closely investigate instances of elite defection that have taken place since 1991. A longitudinal approach ensures that the observations include the full range of variation, rather than extreme cases in which there are either no instances of defection or elite defection takes place on a

massive scale. Observing the same country cases over time (i.e., diachronically) imparts additional analytical leverage. The diachronic comparison of elite defections within each country allows us to observe variation, if any, in the composition of the political opposition before and after the implementation of market reforms.

Because there are numerous potential pitfalls in conducting social science research, I have tried to be a "conscious thinker" who is as deliberate as possible in designing and carrying out research (Collier and Mahoney 1996; Sartori 1970). Helpful to this endeavor have been George's (1979) three suggestions for good qualitative research. A loose summary of George's advice is to (1) carefully define the class of events or phenomena that the theory seeks to explain to select appropriate cases for intensive analysis; (2) rely on theoretical and substantive interests to choose which variables to examine; and (3) use general variables to facilitate comparison with other cases and build on existing findings. A "general commitment to theoretical parsimony" that involves restricting the analysis "…to the really key variables … [and] omitting those of only marginal importance," as Lijphart urges, can also minimize the many variables, small *n* problem (1971, 690).

I have followed each of these injunctions. In chapter two, I summarized the research to date on elite defections and generated hypotheses based on each of the different approaches. I then provided a parsimonious alternative hypothesis, which has its roots in (but also challenges) existing explanations linking economic development and market reforms to political liberalization and democratization. I defined key concepts that will be operationalized and measured in this chapter. Also in this chapter, I focus on the second and third of George's suggestions – the process of selecting representative cases and choosing theoretically interesting variables, all the while bearing in mind the need for theoretical

parsimony.

Case Selection

Given time and resource constraints, the cases were selected to maximize this study's analytical leverage in three ways. First, I sought to ensure that the sample of cases was largely representative of the economic and political variation found among post-Soviet personalist autocracies as a whole. I also sought variation in the extent of economic liberalization, a variable that has been highlighted as important in the democratization literature, as well as in the research on political activism and on the colored revolutions (see chapter two). The third, and perhaps most critical, concern in determining which cases to investigate was to ensure variation on the dependent variable. Below, I address each of these three points in turn.

A Representative Sample: Political Variation among Post-Soviet Personalist Autocracies

Although the subtle and not-so-subtle differences that make Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan unique and distinct from one another should not be downplayed, the three cases nonetheless share a number of structural traits that make them suitable for studying together. As one scholar of Belarusian politics notes, "Politically, Belarus shows more similarities with the republics of post-Soviet Central Asia than with its neighbors in Europe" (Rudling 2008, 55). In terms of shared institutional arrangements, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan all display traits characteristic of personalist presidential autocracies found throughout the post-Soviet region (more below). Moreover, as is the case with many post-Soviet states, in the early to mid-1990s all three evinced features of "pluralism by default" associated with weak or competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky and Way 2002; Way 2005a). These included a

relatively free media, a small but vocal opposition in parliament, and the growth of fledgling civic and political organizations. Since the mid-to-late 1990s, all three have become more autocratic and less tolerant of political competition, as their presidents worked to consolidate power, channel political participation, and curb political contestation (Huskey 1997; Mihalisko 1997; Olcott 2002).

Despite relative variation in political openness between Belarus, on the one hand, and Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, on the other, all three cases nonetheless lack guarantees protecting individual political and civil rights. In fact, according to the World Bank's Voice and Accountability Index (Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi 2008), Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan are located among the middling to most autocratic of the Soviet successor states (Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1). The Voice and Accountability Index ranges from -2.5 to 2.5, with higher values corresponding to better governance outcomes. Belarus has among the lowest average Voice and Accountability scores (-1.47), just ahead of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Kyrgyzstan (-0.87) and Kazakhstan's (-1.00) average scores place them squarely in the middle, behind Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia, and Russia and near the regional average of -0.94. With the exception of Moldova in 1998 and 2000, all of the personalist autocracies in the region consistently receive negative scores, which points to serious impediments to citizen participation in selecting their government and restrictions on freedom of expression, freedom of association, and media independence.

Due to widespread corruption and graft at all levels of government and throughout the economy, the personalist president has at his dispense ample and well-documented evidence of wrongdoing and abuse of office (*kompromat*) that can be readied against wayward elites at any point to keep them in line (Darden 2001). In a public meeting with business elites,

President Nazarbaev memorably captured elites' vulnerability with the statement, "I can at any moment have all of you taken to court and put behind bars."[1] Recognizing the truth behind the threat, elites tend to remain loyal – out of both the fear of sanctions, should they fall out of grace or emerge as a threat to the status quo, and the expectation of material and professional gain, should they remain faithful and fulfill their obligations. As self-interested actors aware of their susceptibility to coercion and punishment, elites are likely to refrain from acts – especially political ones – that could threaten their economic interests (Bellin 2000; Spector 2008).

Elite allegiance to the personalist president also stems from formally institutionalized practices, in particular a centralized system of career advancement in which many, if not the majority of, government posts are filled by political appointees, rather than by popularly elected officials. This system of appointments based largely on personal loyalty to the president is known as the presidential (or power) vertical (*vertikal' vlasti* or *prezidentskaya vertikal'*) and extends the long arm of the executive branch down to the local level (Dubnov 2008; Matsuzato 2004; Sakwa 2004). Because their careers and wellbeing depend to a large degree on cadre-related decisions made in the executive office, political elites may face few incentives to seek support among electoral or other constituencies.

Even in Kyrgyzstan, where elections have at times been unexpectedly contested (Sjoberg 2009) and legislation allowing for local self-governance (*mestnoe samoupravlenie*) has long been on the books, both of independent Kyrgyzstan's two presidents, Askar Akaev and Kurmanbek Bakiev, have utilized the presidential vertical as a way to maintain (or gain) control over the periphery and limit provincial and local leaders' autonomy. Indeed, despite

[1] This quote was referenced in several interviews, including with Evgenii Zhovtis, a prominent human rights lawyer, Almaty, February 2007, and with independent journalists, Almaty, February 2007.

the promise of self-governance during the Akaev years, elections for local officials had never been extended beyond the smallest territorial-administrative unit, that of the village (*aiyl okmotu*).[2] In addition, steps toward political decentralization under Akaev were effectively curtailed by numerous changes to the constitution, as well as by a lack of commensurate budgetary decentralization (Kojoshev and Shadybekov 2006; Pavlovich 2003; Pavlovich 2005; Uleev 1999). In the end, when budgets are controlled by the central government, autonomy at the local level remains tenuous.[3]

A central component of the presidential vertical is cadre rotation, which involves the shifting of appointees from posts in the central government to posts in the provincial governments and back, combined with the shuffling of appointees from province to province (Cummings 2005; Matsuzato 2001a; Matsuzato 2001b; Matsuzato 2004).[4] Rotating appointments is intended to serve a number of functions. It expands the pool of employment opportunities, which can be used to co-opt disgruntled elites and to reward or punish elites already onboard for the quality of their work and/or accomplishments during previously held positions. Cadre rotation also blurs the distinction between central and regional elites and is used to minimize opportunities for elites to establish patron-client networks that are beyond the purview of the president (Cummings 2005). A former head of Akaev's presidential administration, Kubanychbek Zhumaliev, candidly posed the issue facing decision makers at

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[2] Author's interviews with Kyrgyzstani scholar and political observer, Bishkek, August 2007. See also Matsuzato (2001) for some discussion of the limits to self-governance in Kyrgyzstan.

[3] Author's interviews with U.S. government official, Bishkek, November 2007, and with U.S. consultant specializing in self-governance reforms at the Urban Institute, Bishkek, February 2008. The former notes that among the three types of decentralization (political, administrative, and budgetary), Kyrgyzstan only experimented with limited political decentralization and never implemented either administrative or budgetary decentralization, which are necessary components of the devolution of power and local self-governance.

[4] Another component of the presidential vertical is the close scrutiny and review of candidates to parliament. Governors in Belarus and Kazakhstan have been closely involved in the weeding out process.

the political center. Describing the rationale behind Kyrgyzstan's frequent reappointments to a Kyrgyzstani journalist, Zhumaliev explained that

> … [N]ew appointments are dictated by the need for regional rotation, to avoid the temptation of selecting personnel based on family relations and friendship ties, as well as the tradition of *zemlyachestvo* [a form of localism, which includes favoring those from one's region or hometown in hiring or providing other benefits].[5]

Yet, the goal of cadre rotation is not only to preempt corruption and limit opportunities for nepotism and clientelism in and of themselves. Importantly, cadre rotation is also meant to cut short the development of patronage ties to local clients before they become entrenched and can be galvanized to further appointees' political ambitions, which could threaten the center's monopoly over power and resources (Junisbai 2009; Matsuzato 2004; Omuraliev 1993). As will be discussed in the conclusion, however, the presidents of Belarus and Kazakhstan have thus far been more successful in their attempts to prevent or curtail the development of alternative centers of political power, sometimes referred to regional "power brokers," "local strongmen," or "renegades" (Jones Luong 2004; Starr 2006), than had been Kyrgyzstan's first president. For, although Akaev was able to effectively check the independent ambitions of those who served as heads of provinces, during the 2005 parliamentary elections, he proved far less able to control the political and business elites who were scrambling for limited seats in the Jogorku Kenesh (International Crisis Group 2005).[6]

As part of their effort to block the emergence of political competitors in the

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[5] "Rokirova Rokirovke Ron', ilk Chemo Dan s Podeni Ostavlyu Doma," *Slova Kyrgyzstana*, April 24, 1997.

[6] Author's interviews with anonymous entrepreneur, director of a Kyrgyz research company, both November 2007, Bishkek, and with the director of a U.S. government-funded international NGO, October 2007, Bishkek. The Kyrgyz parliament is called the *Jogorku Kenesh*, which is Kyrgyz for Supreme Council (*Verkhovnyi Sovet* in Russian).

periphery, personalist presidents often retain the power to appoint provincial governors (and heads of city governments, or mayors), even if elections to local councils or boards are permitted.[7] As appointees, governors are fully cognizant of their dependence on the president – rather than on the will of the voters – for both getting into and staying in office. Thus, rather than serving the interests and needs of the provinces to which they are appointed, which might be the case if they were elected, governors are more accurately conceived of as the president's representatives in the periphery. Governors are charged with the implementation of executive decisions handed down to them and are thus vested with limited policy-making authority. There is, furthermore, little evidence to suggest that the principle of appointment will be altered in the near future to make local and provincial posts popularly elected positions with set terms.[8] The Kyrgyz case under President Bakiev, in fact, augurs a trend in the opposite direction. The latest constitution, adopted in 2008, specifies that formerly elected positions at the local level will now be appointed by the governor or the president.[9]

Based on publicly available data on the tenure and career paths of regional appointees, Tables 3.2 through 3.4 describe the rotation of governors and mayors of major cities in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. Note that the period covered differs slightly from case to case. For Belarus, coverage begins in late 1994, the year of Lukashenka's inaugural presidency, and ends in 2009, the most recent year for which data is available. For

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[7] To simplify and standardize terminology, "governor" and "mayor" refer to heads of provinces and cities, respectively. Governors have been called *gubernator*, *gravy*, and *akimy* in Kyrgyzstan, *akimy* in Kazakhstan, and *gravy obispolkoma* in Belarus. Mayors are *mery* in Kyrgyzstan, *akimy* in Kazakhstan, and *gravy gorispolkom* in Belarus.

[8] In both Belarus and Kazakhstan, the system of appointments is enshrined in the Constitution. Although constitutional amendments adopted in Kazakhstan in 2007 made the appointment of governors for the first time subject to the approval of local councils (maslikhats), it is too early to tell whether the councils will use this power to serve as a check on the president (Yermukanov 2007).

[9] Akipress, February 12, 2008.

Kazakhstan, I refer to data from the period 1992-2009. In February 1992, President Nazarbaev issued decrees appointing heads to all of the provinces and to the capital at the time, Almaty. While data on Kyrgyzstan's governors and mayors is available for 1991 to the present, I chose to end with appointments made prior to the "tulip revolution" of spring 2005, when first President Akaev fled the country in response to massive protests and elite defections in the aftermath of flawed parliamentary elections. After Akaev's overthrow, then interim and later elected President Bakiev quickly proceeded with numerous appointments, some which lasted only months. Because of the break in leadership and the high turnover of governors and mayors early on in the Bakiev administration, I refrain from including more recent appointments in the analysis.

One major difference among the cases is the contrast in elite turnover in Belarus with that in the other two cases. The data indicate that turnover among provincial governors in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan is more frequent than that of their counterparts in Belarus. As Tables 3.2 and 3.3 illustrate, in both of the Central Asian cases, appointee tenure is short – an average of 2.61 years in Kazakhstan and 2.46 years in Kyrgyzstan under Akaev. In Lukashenka's Belarus, however, governors and mayors average 5.77 years in office, and turnover is noticeably low (Table 3.4). In the 15 years since Lukashenka initially came to power in 1994, an average of 2.71 governors/mayors have been appointed per province/capital city, and the actual number of appointments during this period ranges from two to four. Contrast these figures with the average number of governors per province in Kazakhstan (5.38 in 17 years; the range is from four to 10) and in Kyrgyzstan (6.11 in 14 years; the range is from six to eight).

Although appointees, on average, are permitted to stay in office about three years

longer in Belarus than in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the presidents of all three countries have followed a policy of reshuffling elites between the center and the provinces. The comments of a Kazakhstani political scientist in describing the blurred boundaries between central and regional elites in his country could be applied equally well to the other two cases. He explains,

> In our system, a person today is a governor, tomorrow a minister, after that an ambassador, then a deputy, then a senator… [We do not have] a layered system like in America, in which [politicians] serve as a senator or governor for many years... In our system, a person quickly moves from one branch of government into another branch of government. Today he is in the centre, tomorrow in the region, later he is out of the country as an ambassador.[10]

In fact, as the data in Tables 3.5 through 3.7 emphasize, governors in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan have all been appointed to an assortment of government posts, serving as ambassadors, ministers, advisors to the president, and even as governors in other provinces.[11] There are examples in all three countries of governors holding various positions in the same province (such as deputy or vice governor and mayor of a city located in the province where they served as governor). However, governors generally do not serve out their entire careers in a single province. The sole exception to this rule is Aleksandr Yakobson, current governor of Gomel' province in Belarus, who was appointed first as mayor of Gomel' city and then as deputy governor of Gomel' province before being appointed governor (Table 3.7).

In addition to the similarities in the career histories of governors in the three countries, Tables 3.5 through 3.7 suggest an interesting difference between them: the likelihood that a province/major city will be headed by an appointee from that province. In Belarus, as compared to the other two cases, fewer governors/mayors have been appointed to

[10] Author's interview with anonymous political scientist, February 2007, Almaty.
[11] Tables 3.4 through 3.6 are modeled after Table 4 in Matsuzato 2004.

the province where they were born (Table 3.7). In Grodno province and Minsk city, for example, no appointees (for which information on birthplace is available) hail from the province where they have served. Vitebsk is the only province in which every governor (two out of two) was born there; in all other provinces, the majority of governors were born elsewhere. Contrast this pattern with that found in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Although the Kazakhstani data in Table 3.5 is necessarily partial – given the large number of provinces and large number of governors per province – and thus does not allow for a systematic comparison, we still find a number of instances of governors who have served in their "home" province. The same is true of Kyrgyzstan (Table 3.6). With the exception of Jalal-Abdad and Osh, in every Kyrgyz province, more than half of the governors were born in the province to which they were appointed.[12] And in the cities of Bishkek and Osh, five out of six mayors hail from the province where the city is located (Chui and Osh provinces, respectively).[13]

Yet, the contrast in the patterns of tenure and birthplace between Belarus, on the one hand, and Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, on the other, may be two different means to achieving a similar end. Although governors/mayors in Belarus remain in office a few years longer, the data suggest that they are less likely to have personal ties to the province where they serve. As a result, the length of their appointment might be less of a concern than appointment tenure is in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, where governors/mayors are more likely to come from the province to which they are appointed. Both strategies – frequent rotation in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and appointing outsider governors in Belarus – may thus be two methods to combat favoritism and corruption based in clientelism and *zemlyachestvo* and to

[12] Includes only those governors for whom information on birthplace is known.
[13] In Talas province, half of the governors were born in the province.

prevent elites from gaining power and political resources that could be used to threaten the personalist president's hold on power.

Crucially, although patronage networks and the presidential vertical bind elites in general to the president, the president is also typically closely associated with and responsible for protecting the interests of a particular group of elites. There is evidence of this dynamic in the three cases. In Belarus, President Lukashenka's ruling circle and those considered most politically influential consist of people from Mogilev *oblast'* (or province) from whence the president hails.[14] Upon coming to power, President Lukashenka brought with him many regional political elites with whom he worked and whom he trusted (Bellova-Gille 2003; Zaiko 1999). According to some political observers, the president's sons are also gaining political influence and are increasingly demanding a share of the economic pie.[15] In Kazakhstan, the president's inner circle (also referred to as the Nazarbaev clan) is made up of the president's family members and wealthy financial-industrial groups that dominate the oil, gas and other natural resource extraction and refining sectors. In Kyrgyzstan under Akaev, members of the president's and his wife's extended family and political elites from their regions of origin (the Kemin region of Chui province and Talas province) were commonly cited as belonging to the president's ruling clique. The president and his wife were northerners; and the north-south divide, which included the channeling of political and financial resources to the northern regions—to the disadvantage of political elites and ordinary citizens residing in the south—became an integral part of Kyrgyzstan's political

[14] Author's interviews with anonymous Belarusian political observer and with retired professor and frequent political and economic commentator, Leonid Zaiko, Minsk, May 2008.
[15] Author's interview with anonymous NGO leaders and political observers, Minsk, April and May 2008.

discourse.[16]

At the same time that patronage networks and informal connections dominate politics in post-Soviet personalist autocracies, formal governing institutions in these states tend to be underdeveloped, with little independent impact on political outcomes (Collins 2006; Frye 1997; Hale, McFaul and Colton 2004; O'Donnell 1994). Indeed, the post-Soviet state itself has been characterized as weak, built on dysfunctional institutions, defied by regional strongmen, and lacking popular legitimacy (Cummings 2000; Hanson 2007; Hanson 2006; Jones Luong 2004; Stoner-Weiss 1999; Stoner-Weiss 2006). Under personalist rule, the executive dominates the other two branches of government, and both the legislature and judiciary regularly defer to the will of the president.[17]

The relative weakness of the legislative branch in post-Soviet personalist autocracies has been documented in the Parliamentary Powers Index (PPI) (Fish and Kroenig 2009). The PPI scale ranges from zero to one, with lower scores denoting weaker parliaments. Scores are calculated by summing the number of powers that the national legislature possesses and dividing by thirty-two, the number of powers possessed by the national legislature. Legislative powers include the ability to influence the executive, institutional autonomy, the number of specified powers, and the ability to do legislative work. Each of these areas is, in turn, composed of a combination of individual items.

In the post-Soviet region (excluding the Baltic states), PPI scores vary from a relative

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[16] Akaev's successor, Kurmanbek Bakiev, promised to end family rule and region-based preferences, but has continued the practice. Members of his family—notably his sons and brothers—have been appointed to key political posts and are claimed to exercise their right to take over lucrative businesses, as Akaev's son and son-in-law had done in their time. Northerners Increasingly complain of being pushed out of their jobs by southerners.

[17] But see Smyth (2002) for an insightful analysis of how legislative opposition stymied former Russian President Yeltsin's reform agenda.

high of 0.59 in Georgia to the regional low of .06 in Turkmenistan (Table 3.8). In 2008, Kyrgyzstan's parliament ranked third (0.47) among the personalist autocracies, above the post-Soviet average of 0.38.[18] Kazakhstan's parliament was ranked sixth, falling right at the regional average. Of the 11 post-Soviet personalist autocracies, Belarus's parliament placed second to last, with a score of 0.25. The relative variation in three cases' legislative power more or less matches the variation found among post-Soviet autocracies, such that Kyrgyzstan places among the more "powerful" parliaments in the region, while Kazakhstan's parliament exhibits average "strength," and Belarus's parliament falls among the least "powerful." Despite this relative variation, however, if we designate .5 the threshold below which parliaments are denoted "weak," then not even the relatively "stronger" Kyrgyzstani parliament can accurately be called an independent and countervailing institution.

One variable that comprises the PPI, a scale that measures legislative influence over the executive branch (labeled *inflexec*), allows us to more closely examine the relative power of the parliament vis-à-vis the president. The *inflexec* scale ranges from zero to seven, with higher scores denoting greater influence over the executive branch. It is made up of seven dichotomous variables – the ability of parliament to impeach the president or replace the prime minister, whether members of parliament can simultaneously serve as government ministers, the power to conduct independent investigations of the executive and agencies of the executive, the power over coercive organs, the right to appoint the prime minister, and the power to appoint ministers or confirm ministerial appointments. The average *inflexec* score for the post-Soviet personalist autocracies is 1.98 out of seven, and the ranking of countries according to parliamentary influence differs somewhat from that based on the composite PPI

[18] Moldova, which scored 0.75, and Ukraine, which scored 0.59, are not included in the tabulation since the Parliamentary Powers Index began coverage in 2008.

(Table 3.9). According to the legislative influence index, Kazakhstan (with a score of one out of seven) ranks below Belarus (2/7) and Kyrgyzstan (3/7). With the exception of Georgia, parliaments in all of the post-Soviet personalist autocracies possess less than half of the formal powers associated with the ability of the legislature to influence the executive.

A similar pattern as that found in the PPI holds when comparing post-Soviet autocracies' degree of judicial independence (Table 3.10). Freedom House's *Nation's in Transit* (2009) rates a given country's judicial independence from one to seven, with higher scores denoting less independence and less democratic progress. As with the PPI, Belarus (with an average score of 6.73 during 1999-2009) finds itself between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, the countries with the least independent judiciaries in the region. Kyrgyzstan's average score of 5.50 for the period 1999-2009 places it fourth among the post-Soviet personalist autocracies. Kazakhstan falls in the middle of the pack, with an average score of 6.08. Kazakhstan scores just below and Kyrgyzstan just above the regional average of 5.78 out of 7.00. Despite the variation in the three cases' rankings, if we take a score of 3.5 (or 4.0 for a more conservative estimate) as representing a very basic level of judicial independence, then none of the three cases' judiciaries can be characterized as able to check or balance the executive branch.

In addition to a weak legislature and judiciary, parties under personalist rule play a limited political role, including in the aggregation and expression of public opinion. Nongovernment-affiliated political parties remain fledgling and weak almost twenty years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union (e.g., Golosov 2003; Hale 2006b; McFaul 1999;

McMann 2003; Rose 2000).[19] Also absent are robust, institutionalized ruling parties capable of fostering elite cohesion and minimizing elite defection. Of the three cases, Kazakhstan was the first to institute a presidential party, Otan, or Fatherland Party, which was established in 1999. Otan was renamed Nur-Otan in honor of President Nazarbaev in late 2006, following the merging of all of Kazakhstan's pro-presidential parties (Sergeeva and Makushina 2006). Political actors and observers in Kazakhstan, however, agree that Nur-Otan (and Otan before it) is less an institutionalized political party than an organization that depends heavily on the president's authority and popularity (Bekturganova 2007).[20] A high-ranking party official recently commented to journalists that one of the tasks still facing Nur-Otan is to become a real pillar for the president, since "…currently the opposite takes place—the president is the pillar of the party" (Yanovskaya 2008).

In Kyrgyzstan, former President Akaev's daughter had attempted to cultivate a ruling party (Alga Kyrgyzstan!, or Forward, Kyrgyzstan!, established in 2003) to dominate parliament. The Tulip Revolution of March 2005 effectively crushed the party's future, given that it was so closely associated with the ambitions and excesses of the first family. President Bakiev in fall 2007 announced the founding of a new ruling party, Ak Jol, or Shining Path, and then distanced himself from it (Malevanaya 2007b). Still, Ak Jol is widely considered the president's party and has a majority of seats in Kyrgyzstan's current parliament. Finally, Belarus has been described as "…a unique example in Europe of a presidential regime without an evident power or party political base other than the president

[19] For the opposing view that post-Soviet political parties do carry out the functions ascribed to parties, see, for example, Miller, Erb, Reisinger, and Hesli (2000).
[20] Author's interviews with Nurbakh Rustemov, parliamentarian and Nur-Otan party member, Almaty, January 2007, and with former parliamentarians Serik Abdrakhmanov (Nur-Otan), Astana, May 2007, Bolat Abishev (independent), Astana, May 2007, and Amalbek Tshanov (independent), Almaty, May 2007.

himself" (Marples 2006, 355). Only in spring 2008 was there talk of establishing a Belarusian party of power, Belaya Rus' (White Rus, related to the word Belarus). President Lukashenka immediately denied playing a role in the party's formation and stated on national television that the party would have to be built from the grassroots up and would not receive administrative or financial support from the state.[21]

As with political parties, other intermediaries associated with democratic governance – such as the mass media and civil society organizations – are, as a general rule, marginalized in post-Soviet personalist autocracies. Tables 3.11 and 3.12 reproduce Freedom House (2009) measures of media independence and the strength of civil society. Like the judicial framework and independence scale, scores range from one to seven, with higher scores signifying greater impediments to the development of democracy. Apart from Armenia and Georgia, the post-Soviet personalist autocracies fall well above a hypothetical 3.5 threshold for a minimal level of media and civil society development/freedom of action. In comparison with the other two cases, Kyrgyzstan has a more developed civil society and independent media (with an average score of 4.53 in both areas for the period 1999-2009), followed by Kazakhstan (averaged 1999-2009 score of 5.45 for media independence and 5.50 for civil society), and trailed at a distance by Belarus (6.48 and 6.73). Yet, as has been previously noted, in none of the three cases can it be said that the media and civil society are powerful autonomous actors with the ability to regularly and significantly affect politics and political outcomes.

It is certainly true that journalists, media owners, and social activists have played a heightened and important role during unexpected bursts of political contestation, including in

[21] Panorama Nedeli, Channel 1, April 27, 2008.

Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan (Junisbai 2010a; Kuzio 2006; Silitski 2006; Tucker 2007). However, under normal conditions, the influence of these potential watchdogs has been kept in check by government repression; indeed, the mere threat of sanctions can be enough to deter political activism (McMann 2003). In addition, when ordinary citizens spend much of their time concentrating on earning a living, as is often the case in transition economies, activism and political participation may be thought of as superfluous "luxuries" unconnected to daily needs.

Not only do ordinary citizens face barriers and sanctions should they engage in unsanctioned acts of political participation and/or contestation, but elites who choose to defect from the ruling coalition also take on enormous political, economic, and personal risk. Elite defectors put their own wellbeing and safety on the line, as well as endanger their close working associates, family members, and friends. Anyone associated with a defector is a potential threat and therefore a legitimate target for reprisal. Thus, it is common for family members to lose their jobs, regardless of whether they are in government or the private sector, and for businesses run by those close to defectors to be raided and targeted for tax evasion and corrupt practices. As is true of opposition leaders in general, elite defectors in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan have been physically attacked, jailed, and forced, along with their families, into exile. In rare cases, former allies of the president who established opposition movements have been murdered or disappeared. Due to these considerable threats, elite defectors are just as vulnerable in the more hard-line dictatorships of Kazakhstan and Belarus as they are in Kyrgyzstan, the "island of democracy," as it was sometimes called during Akaev's first decade or so in power.

A Representative Sample: Economic Variation among the Post-Soviet Personalist

Autocracies

In the previous subsection, I argued that the sample of cases selected for this study share a number of institutional features associated with personalist presidential rule, including the weakness of provincial elites, legislatures, judiciaries, and political intermediaries relative to the executive branch. I also demonstrated that, while the cases generally reflect the range of political variation found in the broader population from which they are drawn, they are also among the less politically open of the post-Soviet autocracies.

This subsection continues the argument by examining the three cases' economic structure and economic performance in the broader regional context. As Table 3.13 illustrates, Kazakhstan is the wealthiest of the three, and Kyrgyzstan is by far the poorest, with 40% of the population officially living below the poverty line. Compared to both Belarus and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan is far more rural and its economy strongly rooted in the agricultural sector. According to purchasing power parity estimates, Belarusians on average earn slightly less than Kazakhstanis ($10,900 and $11,100, respectively). Kyrgyzstanis, however, are much poorer on average, earning an estimated $2,200 in 2007. Moreover, according to Table 3.14, the only country poorer than Kyrgyzstan is Tajikistan, which was the most heavily subsidized republic under Soviet rule and is still recovering from a brutal civil war. GDP per capita in Belarus and Kazakhstan, in contrast, is surpassed only by Russia.

Belarus's leaders, unlike their Kazakhstani and Kyrgyzstani counterparts, have not been receptive to international donor assistance (Table 3.13). Kyrgyzstan is heavily dependent upon international donor assistance and was eligible for debt forgiveness under the World Bank's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC), although the government

rejected the invitation to participate in early 2007. Kazakhstan, in contrast, paid off all of its outstanding loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2001 and has not needed to draw on additional loans that were negotiated in 1999.

Despite (or perhaps in response to) the daunting economic challenges with which Kyrgyzstan continues to grapple, the government of Kyrgyzstan under Akaev and less so under Bakiev has worked hard to encourage private investment, both domestic and foreign. Table 3.15 highlights Kyrgyzstan's place as a leader among the post-Soviet autocracies when it comes to private investment in the economy. Kazakhstan finds itself in the middle, while the government of Belarus (along with autarkic Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) has greatly hindered the development of (legal) private economic activity. According to the Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom, in 2009 Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan both had "moderately free" economies, ranking 74th and 83rd out of 179 countries (Table 3.16). Tellingly, Belarus ranked 167th, placing it near the bottom of other "repressed" economies such as the Republic of Congo, Iran, and Turkmenistan. Although Kyrgyzstan's scores first among the three cases, it still lags quite a bit behind Armenia (31st) and Georgia (32nd). Reflecting variation in the degree of economic liberalization that has been adopted in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan versus Belarus (more below), private sector share of GDP in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan is relatively high, at 65% and 75%, respectively, while Belarus lags behind at 25% (Table 3.13).

Variation in the Key Causal Factor: The Extent of Market Reforms

The data show that Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan are representative of the post-Soviet autocracies in the extent to which market reforms – and privatization in particular – have been adopted. At one end of the spectrum is Belarus, which retains many features of

the Soviet command economy, including state ownership of most enterprises. At the other is Kyrgyzstan, a small and resource-poor state that has gone quite far in liberalizing its economy and which was the first post-Soviet state (including the Baltic states) to join the World Trade Organization. Resource-rich Kazakhstan falls in between these two poles, as evinced by the country's European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) market reform scores.

The EBRD's transition indicators track progress in economic reform from the beginning of transition to the present in nine areas. These include large scale privatization, small scale privatization, governance and enterprise restructuring, price liberalization, trade and foreign exchange system, competition policy, banking reform and interest rate liberalization, securities markets and non-bank financial institutions, and infrastructure. A score of 1.00 represents little or no change from a rigid centrally planned economy, and 4.00 or more means that the country meets the standards of an industrialized market economy. The maximum score on the EBRD scale is 4.33.

Not surprisingly, Belarus has the lowest economic reform scores of the three cases in all of the nine areas assessed by the EBRD (Table 3.17). In 2007, Belarus received a score of 1.00 (little or no change since the Soviet baseline economy) in the areas of large-scale privatization and enterprise restructuring and a score of 1.67 for banking reform and interest rate liberalization. In the areas of price liberalization, the trade and foreign exchange system, and banking reform, Belarus scored higher, but was still well below Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Market reform scores for Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, on the other hand, are more similar to one another. Kyrgyzstan scores higher than Kazakhstan in the areas of large-scale privatization, price liberalization, and the establishment of a trade and foreign exchange

system. Kazakhstan scores highest of the three cases in the areas of banking reform and interest rate liberalization.

Figure 3.3 draws closer attention to the extent of economic liberalization in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, as compared to one another and to the regional average. Since 1991, Belarusian leaders have either resisted or taken reluctant steps toward liberalization. Unlike in other post-Soviet states such as Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, "[i]nstead of monetary stabilization and economic liberalization, [the Belarusian leadership] opted for continuing subsidies and protection of state enterprises" (Savchenko 2000, 115). Belarus's market reform score, as a result, consistently falls below the regional average. After peaking in 1995 (but still below the regional average), Belarus reversed its very gradual course toward the market under the newly elected first president and has since rejected most reform prescriptions favored by Western donor organizations.[22] Again, Kyrgyzstan's annual average score places it well above the regional average, followed closely by Kazakhstan.

Summary

According to their Voice and Accountability scores and other measures, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan are among the more authoritarian and less politically open of the post-Soviet autocracies. The key difference is that Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are clustered among those states that have implemented extensive market reforms, while Belarus is among the least reformed economies and has yet to undertake even minimal steps toward large-scale privatization and enterprise restructuring. Figure 3.3 plots World Bank Voice and Accountability scores (*x*-axis) against scores from the market reform index that I created

[22] Belarus's total official development assistance is a quarter of the total received by either Kazakhstan or Kyrgyzstan (see Table 3.13).

using selected EBRD transition indicators (*y*-axis).

Table 3.19 highlights the similarities and differences between Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan that are critical to my argument linking market reforms to the pattern of elite defection. Based on the data, I group Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan together as comparable cases of market reforming personalist autocracies, a term introduced in chapter two. Belarus, an example of a market rejecting personalist autocracy, serves as the contrasting case. As I have argued above, all three are personalist presidential autocracies (background condition #1) with limited political freedoms (background condition #2), but the extent of market reforms (the key causal factor) in Belarus contrasts markedly with the market reform regime in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In the subsection that follows, I shift the discussion away from a focus on independent variables (background conditions #1 and #2 and the key causal factor) to focus on variation in the dependent variable.

Divergent Outcomes: The Extent and Type of Elite Defection in the Three Cases

Although the debate over no-variance research designs has not yet been conclusively settled, a number of scholars have persuasively argued against choosing cases that lack variation on the dependent variable (e.g., Geddes 1990; King, Keohane, and Verba 1994; Laitin 2003).[23] Initial, pre-fieldwork investigation into the cases suggested that there was observable variation among them (as well as within each case over time) in the outcome of interest, namely, the type and extent of elite defection from the ruling coalition. However, it was not clear how this variation should be characterized until fieldwork was underway and then completed. While in the field and during analysis, I found variation in the dependent

[23] But see Braumoeller and Goertz (2000), Dion (1998), Harvey (2003), and Ragin (2000) for arguments in favor of no-variance case selection. For more on methodological debates in comparative politics, see Brady (2004) and Mahoney and Goertz (2006).

variable to be associated with variation in two additional political outcomes: the makeup of and types of resources available to the political opposition and the probability that elite defections ultimately lead to the ouster of the personalist president.

Elites have defected from the ruling coalition at different points in time and in response to particular domestic stimuli, and the kinds of elite defectors differ between the cases and within each case over time. In two of the cases (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan), business elites have defected from the president's coalition, whereas in Belarus since Lukashenka ended privatization and renationalized the industries that had been privatized prior to 1996 business actors have not formed, joined, or provided financial support to the political opposition. Furthermore, the composition of the political opposition in the three countries has followed different trajectories. In the early years following independence in all three cases, intellectuals, nationalists, and other cultural figures formed the political opposition. Also in all three, over time, disgruntled political elites joined their ranks. In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the majority of opposition leaders is still composed of former political elites who voluntarily defected or were expelled from the ruling coalition. In Belarus, in contrast, since the late 1990s and early 2000s, activists from civil society – rather than elite defectors – have taken the lead in opposing President Lukashenka. While activists have also figured prominently among the opposition to Lukashenka in Belarus and to both Akaev and Bakiev in Kyrgyzstan, they have been largely absent from Kazakhstan's opposition, especially since 2001.

Finally, in each of the three cases, there has been at least one period of widespread elite defection from the ruling coalition. Widespread defection took place in Belarus from 1994 to 1996 and involved defectors overwhelmingly from the political elite. In Kazakhstan

in 2001, defectors included a combination of business and political elites and, in Kyrgyzstan in 2005, business and political elites similarly joined forces to launch the "tulip revolution." In neither Belarus nor Kazakhstan were defectors able to remove the personalist president from power, while defectors in Kyrgyzstan were taken by surprise when Akaev fled the country for safe haven in Russia. Table 3.20 depicts the patterns and divergence among the three cases.

Variable Selection and Measurement

I sought measures that, as George (1979) advises, are both general enough to be cross-nationally comparable and reflect the theoretical and substantive interests guiding my research. The variable measuring the *extent of political openness* is based on the Voice and Accountability Index, one of six dimensions of governance compiled and tracked by the World Bank between 1996 and 2008.[24] Scores range from -2.5 to 2.5, and negative scores indicate serious impediments to citizen participation in selecting their government and restrictions on freedom of expression, freedom of association, and media independence.

The variable measuring *the extent of market reform* is a market reform scale that I created to capture the progress in economic liberalization in each of the cases. The market reform index combines and averages country scores on three of the nine EBRD transition indicators. These are (1) large-scale privatization, (2) small-scale privatization, and (3) price liberalization. As with the EBRD's transition indicators, market reform scores range from

[24] The other World Bank indices are Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption. These aggregate indicators are based on hundreds of specific and disaggregated individual variables measuring different dimensions of governance and are based on 35 data sources provided by 33 different organizations, including survey institutes, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations.

1.00 to 4.33, where a score of 1.00 signifies little or no pro-market economic liberalization, and a score of 4.00 or greater indicates extensive liberalization of the economy, according to EBRD assessments. The market reform scores in Table 3.18 represent the average scores in the three areas for the period 1991 to 2007.

Because there are no existing measures of the key outcome of interest, *elite defection*, I created a list of political opposition leaders and elite defectors since 1991 in each of the three cases (see the section on Data Collection below). For each person on the list, I include biographical information, work history, and the year in which he/she defected or joined the opposition (and, where applicable, when he/she left the opposition). All of this information is based on interviews, existing studies in English and Russian, and newspaper and Internet articles and commentaries. In addition to the variable measuring *elite defection*, I include two additional outcome variables, *opposition leadership* and *presidential turnover* (see Table 3.20).

Both *degree of political openness* and *extent of market reform* are coded as ordinal variables. Based on their Voice and Accountability scores, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan's degree political openness is coded as middle and that of Belarus is coded as low. Based on their EBRD scores, the extent of market reform in Belarus is coded as low, while the extent of market reform in both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan is coded as high. Elite defections are conceived of as an interval variable, given that (in addition to their qualitative characteristics) I track the quantity of defectors from independence to 2008, when fieldwork for this study was completed. For simplification, only periods of widespread defection are included under the *elite defection* column. Analysis and the lists of defectors and opposition leaders since the late Soviet period can be found in chapter four.

Data Collection

Dissertation fieldwork took place in Kazakhstan from January to June 2007, Kyrgyzstan from September 2007 to March 2008, and Belarus from March to May 2008. I had originally planned to spend six months in Belarus, but had to return to Kyrgyzstan in May 2008 when the State Department ordered Fulbright fellows to immediately leave the country. Relations between the U.S. and Belarus had become strained, and diplomats on both sides were being recalled. Despite the tension between the two countries and the Belarusian government's ongoing crackdown on civil society and opposition members, I was surprised by the interviewees' willingness to speak openly to me (and at times in public venues) about politics there.

Using diverse source materials, I compiled a comprehensive list of political opposition leaders and elite defectors in the three countries. The resulting dataset includes political and business elites who have severed ties with and openly challenged the incumbent political leadership, as well as opposition leaders that have emerged from among the intelligentsia and the grassroots. Sources include interviews I conducted in the Russian language in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan with elites loyal to the regime, elite defectors, other opposition members, scholars and political analysts, journalists, and NGO leaders in the three countries; a wide array of Russian-language sources, including local (official and opposition) newspaper articles, scholarly books and journal articles, and televised news programs; and presidential decrees (political appointments and dismissals) published in official newspapers since 1990 and in print sources and electronic databases. I also refer to the published work of U.S. area studies specialists and political scientists.

Because my main interest was to discover patterns in elite defections to the political

opposition and in changes to the composition of the opposition over time, the majority of questions I asked were directed to those purposes. The interviews were semi-structured and targeted according the type of respondent (elite defector or person knowledgeable about politics and the political opposition). A sample of the questions asked is included in Table 3.21. In addition to these questions, I asked follow-up questions or clarifying questions, as needed.

I conducted a total of 175 in-depth interviews, lasting from 45 minutes to two hours. With the exception of interview with diplomats and international organizations, all interviews were in the Russian language. In Belarus, interviews took place in Minsk; the Kazakhstani interviews were held in Almaty and Astana; and in Kyrgyzstan, interviews were in Bishkek and Osh. Political observers (or experts) included academics, political analysts, and journalists, as well as civil society activists (heads of non-government organizations that are not associated with the political opposition). Political actors included elites who were members of the ruling coalition and elites who defected from the ruling coalition to form political opposition movements, plus other leaders and members of opposition political parties.[25] I deliberately included in the sample of interviewees respondents with diverse motives and points of view. Some were pro-government; others were in the opposition camp; and still others were highly critical of both groups. I also interviewed two entrepreneurs in Belarus, the heads of five private businesses and one member of the board of directors of a state-owned company in Kazakhstan, and seven business owners in Kyrgyzstan. The breakdown of interviews by type of respondent is shown in Table 3.21.

Since I had previously lived, studied, and worked in Kazakhstan for five years in

[25] See Davies (2002), Dexter (1970), Leech (2002), Lilleker (2003), Marcus (1983), Mintz (1976), and Richards (1996) for more on elite interviewing strategies and pitfalls.

total, I went into the field with a firm list of observers and opposition leaders that I hoped to interview. Based on works by American specialists, I had an initial list of well-known opposition leaders in Belarus and Kyrgyzstan. I added to my list of potential interviewees in Belarus and Kyrgyzstan by reading books and print and electronic news articles/ commentaries that were authored by Belarusians and Kyrgyzstanis in both English and Russian. I sought out these authors once I was in the field. I also read government and opposition newspapers and contacted journalists who wrote about political developments. In addition, I attended events and roundtables organized by civil society activists, analysts, and opposition parties and used these opportunities to make contact with political actors and observers. Finally, using the snowball sample method, at the end of each interview, I asked for the respondent to suggest at least one other person he or she felt would be a good contact for my research.

Every effort was made to protect respondents' right to privacy. Public figures – including appointed and elected officials, opposition leaders, and well-known political observers who appear on the Internet, television, and radio, and in the newspapers – are identified by name, except in cases where they asked to remain anonymous. All other respondents, including NGO leaders, journalists, and rank and file opposition supporters, are unnamed.

Conclusion: Limitations of the Study

Despite my best efforts to design a replicable study with valid measurements and reliable data collection methods (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994), there remain important limitations that merit attention. Because a major goal of social research is to gain an "increased generality of knowledge about the social world" (Przeworski and Teune 1970,

134), the problem of generalizing from a three-country study is a legitimate concern. It may be that the findings I report here are particular to Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan and thus say nothing about the post-Soviet autocracies that they are intended to represent. I plan to extend this study and include all of the post-Soviet personalist states during an eight-month fellowship at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. There, I will test and refine my hypothesis that the introduction of market reforms in the context of personalist autocratic rule shapes the type and extent of elite defection.

Another limitation regards the three cases' comparability. During a presentation of an early draft of my analysis to a group of well-established and young scholars of the post-Soviet region, one of the participants suggested that I drop the Belarus case because Belarus is too different from the Central Asian cases.[26] Belarus is European, was part of the Slavic "brother" nations that made up the USSR's core, and was both heavily industrialized and more economically developed than either Kazakhstan or Kyrgyzstan under Soviet rule. While all of these characterizations are accurate, I have tried to show that post-Soviet Belarus nevertheless is comparable to Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, two Central Asian states, in an important way that adds to, rather than detracts from, my study. Like Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, Belarus is a closed state, and its political leaders have deliberately hindered marketization, maintain centralized control over economic decision-making, and prevent the dispersal of economic power. In this sense, Belarus provides a valuable counterpoint to the Kazakh and Kyrgyz cases, where the degree of economic liberalization and political openness is not strikingly different from one another.

[26] Social Science Research Council's 2009 dissertation development workshop, entitled "Resources in Eurasia: Wealth, Scarcity, or Curse?," held April 16-18, 2009 at Georgetown University's Center for Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies.

On a related note, it could be said that elite defections are dependent less on the economic environment of a given state than on the overall political climate. That is, defections are more likely to take place in states that are more politically open and less likely to clamp down on dissent. In semi-authoritarian or competitive authoritarian systems, the costs to opposing the personalist president may be relatively lower and thus defectors' chances for success greater. Some scholars have noted, for example, that the "colored revolutions" took place in post-Soviet autocracies that were less despotic and had allowed the population to express some political freedoms (Bunce and Wolchik 2006b; Kuzio 2006; McFaul 2005). I conceive of my contribution to the literature not necessarily in refuting this finding, but in extending the analysis to include an additional market reform variable.

In support of the argument that market reform is a comparatively more important causal factor than political openness, however, the data I collected indicate a similar pattern of defection from the business elite in relatively "more" authoritarian Kazakhstan, which did not experience a "colored revolution," and relatively "less" authoritarian Kyrgyzstan, which did. Moreover, the data reveal that civil society actors have in the last ten years played a dominant role in the political opposition in "most" authoritarian Belarus, some role in "least" authoritarian Kyrgyzstan, but almost no role in "middling" authoritarian Kazakhstan. These findings regarding grassroots activists run counter to expectations of theories that link anti-regime political activity to more open or competitive political systems.

Finally, how credible are the findings and arguments presented here, as compared to alternative explanations of elite defection? How can we be certain that the explanations and hypotheses that I proffer more accurately account for the variation in elite defections? Throughout the analysis, I make a systematic effort to address counterarguments in light of

the data and to test the explanatory power of my approach in light of other approaches. In chapter two, I proposed testable hypotheses based on prior work on elite behavior in non-democratic political systems and based on my proposed alternative. Then, in the empirical chapters, I use evidence from the Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan to compare how well the hypotheses explain what we observe in the data.

Undoubtedly, there remain weaknesses in and trade-offs associated with this study, as there are with any research design (Lichbach and Zuckerman 1997). I have attempted to ask an interesting research question, present my findings in as honest a way as possible, and make sure that these findings are falsifiable (Smith 2002). As members of a larger community of scholars, we work not in isolation, but engage in conversation with others who constantly question our assumptions, our models, the data, and the methods we use individually. Given the collective nature of how we approach the study of politics – by debating and critiquing one another's work, by challenging existing theories, and seeking to upset prior beliefs – it seems that we are less likely to come to widely accepted truths about the political world and more likely to suggest provisional knowledge that will later be challenged and likely upset.

Tables and Figures

Table 3.1 Average Voice and Accountability Ranking, 1996-2007*

	Country	Average Voice & Accountability Score
1	Moldova (1996-2000)	-0.02
2	Georgia	-0.30
3	Ukraine (1996-2004)	-0.41
4	Armenia	-0.58
5	Russia	-0.63
6	Kyrgyzstan	-0.87
7	Kazakhstan	-1.00
8	Azerbaijan	-1.02
9	Tajikistan	-1.37
10	Belarus	-1.47
11	Uzbekistan	-1.73
12	Turkmenistan	-1.89
	Regional Average**	-0.94

* Rankings are available for 1996, 1998, 2000, and 2002-2007. ** Equals the 12 country average.
Source: Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi, 2008

Table 3.2 Tenure of Governors & Mayors of Major Cities, Kazakhstan, 1992-2009*

Province/Major city	Avg. tenure (years)**	No. of appointees	Appointees in office longest
Akmola	3.25	6	Andrei Braun (2/92-7/97); Sergei Kulagin (9/98-3/04)
Aktobe	3.08	5	Aslan Musin (9/95-4/02)
Almaty	2.57	6	Zamanbek Nurkadilov (12/97-05/01); Shalbai Kulmakhanov (5/01- 8/05)
Atyrau	2.92	6	Ravil' Cherdabaev (10/94-2/99); Aslan Musin (4/02-10/06)
E. Kazakhstan	1.90	10	Vitalii Mette (4/97-2/03)
Karaganda	4.31	4	Petr Nefedov (2/92-7/97); Kamaltin Mukhamedzhanov (10/99-1/06)
Kostanai	2.92	5	Umirzak Shukeev (8/98-3/04)
Kyzylorda	3.25	6	Seilbek Shaumakhanov (2/92-9/95); Berdibek Saparbaev (9/95-7/99); Serikbai Nurgisaev (7/99-4/04)
Mangystau	2.33	7	Bolat Palymbetov (2/02-1/06)
N. Kazakhstan	3.12	6	Vladimir Gartman (2/92-12/97); Tair Mansurov (12/03-10/07)
Pavlodar	3.32	6	Daniyal Akhmetov (1/93-12/97); Kairat Nurpeisov (6/03-9/08)
S. Kazakhstan	2.44	8	Zautbek Turisbekov (12/93-12/97); Bolat Zhylkyshiev (8/02-9/06)
W. Kazakhstan	3.88	5	Kabibulla Dzhakupov (1/93-12/00)
Zhambyl	3.06	5	Omurbek Baigel'di (2/92-10/95); Serik Umbetov (2/99-5/04)
Almaty City (former capital)	4.04	5	Viktor Khrapunov (6/97-12/04)
Astana City (capital)	3.23	6	Amanzhol Bulekpaev (2/92-12/97); Adil'bek Dzhaksybekov (12/97-6/03)
Kokshetau[1]	1.31	4	Kyzyr Zhumabaev (11/93-6/96)
Semipalatinsk[2]	1.72	3	Galymzhan Zhakiyanov (6/94-3/97)
Taldykorgan[3]	1.72	3	Serik Akhymbekov (4/93-3/96)
Turgai[4]	1.72	3	Zhakan Kosabaev (6/93-10/95)
Zhezkazgan[5]	1.31	4	Grigorii Yurchenko (2/92-6/94)

* Sample mean=2.73 years in office; median=2.92 years; mode=1.72 years; standard deviation=0.87 years.
**Current governors (as of the time of writing) are not included in the provincial tenure averages, which were calculated using the beginning and ending month and year of each appointment.
[1]Merged with North Kazakhstan province in May 1997; [2]merged with East Kazakhstan province (April 1997); [3]merged with Almaty province (April 1997); [4]merged with Kostanai and Akmolinskaya province in April 1997; [5]merged with Karaganda province in May 1997.
Sources: Asylbekov 1997 & 2001; Ashimbaev 2006 & 2008; presidential website (www.akorda.kz)

Table 3.3 Tenure of Governors & Mayors of Major Cities, Kyrgyzstan, 1991-2005*

Province/Major city	Avg. tenure (years)**	No. of appointees	Appointees in office longest
Batken[1]	2.58	4	Mamat Aibaliev (10/99-11/03)
Chui	2.56	5	Feliks Kulov (12/93-4/97); Toichubek Kasymov (12/00-2/04)
Issyk Kul'	2.80	6	Jumabek Saadanbekov (3/92-9/96); Toichubek Kasymov (9/96-12/00)
Jalal-Abad	2.10	7	Zhusupbek Sharipov (3/02-8/05)
Naryn	3.70	6	Askar Salymbekov (1/99-1/05)
Osh	2.28	8	Amangel'di Muraliev (7/96-12/00); Naken Kasiev (12/00-1/05)
Talas	2.32	7	Toichubek Kasymov (11/92-12/97)
Bishkek City (capital)	2.32	6	Medetbek Kerimkulov (4/99-4/05)
Osh City	2.50	6	Abdumanap Mamyrov (91-4/94)

* Sample mean=2.46 years in office; median=2.32 years; mode=2.32 years; standard deviation=0.59 years.
**The last governors/mayors appointed by Akaev before his ouster are not included in the tenure averages, which were calculated using the beginning and ending month and year of each appointment.
[1]Created in October 1999; formerly part of Osh province
Sources: Akipress, "Kto Est' Kto" (http://who.ca-news.org/); Toktom Legal Database; TsentrAziya, "Kto Est' Kto v Tsentral'noi Azii" (http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php)

Table 3.4 Tenure of Governors & Mayors of Major Cities, Belarus, 1994-2009*

Province/Major city	Avg. tenure (years)**	No. of appointees	Appointees in office longest
Bretsk	3.25	3	Konstantin Sumar (3/04-present)
Gomel'	2.57	3	Aleksandr Jakobson (4/01-present)
Grodno	2.92	2	Vladimir Savchenko (2/01-present)
Minsk	1.90	3	Nikolai Domashkevich (12/98-6/07)
Mogilev	4.31	4	Boris Batura (11/00-10/08)
Vitebsk	3.08	2	Vladimir Andreichenko (11/94-9/08)
Minsk City (capital)	2.92	2	Mikhail Pavlov (3/00-present)

* Sample mean=5.77 years in office; median=5.62 years; mode=N/A; standard deviation=1.45 years. **Current governors (as of the time of writing) are not included in the tenure averages, which were calculated using the beginning and ending month and year of each appointment.
Sources: *Natsional'nyi Reestr Pravovykh Aktov Respubliki Belarus': Ofitsial'noe Izdanie* (1999-2008); *Natsional'nyi Pravovoi Internet-Portal Respubliki Belarus'* (http://www.pravo.by); Official Internet-Portal of the President of the Republic of Belarus (http://www.president.gov.by); Slavic Resource Center, Hokkaido University (http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/belregions/index.html)

Table 3.5 Cadre Rotation in Kazakhstan

Province/Major City	Governor/Mayor Name*	Previous position	Next/Current position	Birthplace
Akmola	Sergei Kulagin (9/98-3/04)	Minister of Agriculture (98)	Governor, Kostanai province (04-present)	Akmola province, 1952
	Andrei Braun (2/92-7/97)	Governor, Tselinograd (former name) province (90-2)	Presidential Advisor (97); retired	Ukraine, 1937
Aktobe	Aslan Musin (9/95-4/02)	Deputy Governor, Aktobe province (93-95)	Governor, Atyrau province (02-06)	Aktobe province, 1954
Almaty	Shalbai Kulmakhanov (5/01- 8/05)	Chair, Committee on Emergency Situations (97-01)	Mayor, Almaty city (94-97)**	Almaty province, 1946
	Zamanbek Nurkadilov (12/97-05/01)	Mayor, Almaty city (91-94)	Chair, Committee on Emergency Situations (01-04)	Almaty province, 1944
Atyrau	Aslan Musin (4/02-10/06)	Governor, Aktobe province (95-02)	Minister of the Economy & Budget Planning (06-07)	Aktobe province, 1954
	Ravil' Cherdabaev (10/94-2/99)	Minister of Oil and Gas (94)	Ambassador to Ukraine and Moldova (99-03)	Atyrau province, 1940
E. Kazakhstan	Vitalii Mette (4/97-2/03)	Deputy Prime Minister (94-6)	Governor, Semipalatinsk province (97)**	E. Kazakhstan, 1947
Karaganda	Kamaltin Mukhamedzhanov (10/99-1/06)	Deputy Governor, Karaganda province (98-9)	Minister of Environmental Protection (06)	E. Kazakhstan, 1948
	Petr Nefedov (2/92-7/97)	Advisor to the Prime Minister (97-9)***	Vice Minister of Energy (00-02)	Russia, 1941
Kostanai	Umirzak Shukeev (8/98-3/04)	Deputy Head, Presidential Administration (98)	Mayor, Astana city (04-06)	S. Kazakhstan, 1964
Kyzylorda	Serikbai Nurgisaev (7/99-4/04)	First Deputy Governor, Kyzylorda province (96-9)	Special Representative of the President to the Almaty city (04-05)	Almaty province, 1956
	Berdibek Saparbaev (9/95-7/99)	Head, Apparatus of the Cabinet of Ministers (95)	Governor, S. Kazakhstan province (99-02)	Kyzylorda province, 1953

	Seilbek Shaumakhanov (2/92-9/95)	Member of Parliament (96-8)	Deputy Chair, Agency on Migration & Demography (98-99)	Kyzylorda province, 1939
Mangystau	Bolat Palymbetov (2/02-1/06)	Deputy Governor, Atyrau province (99-01)	Vice Minister of the Economy & Budget Planning (06)	Kyzylorda province, 1961
N. Kazakhstan	Tair Mansurov (12/03-10/07)	Presidential Advisor (02-03)	General Secretary, Eurasian Economic Union (07-)	Almaty province, 1948
	Vladimir Gartman (2/92-12/97)	Governor, Akmola province (97-8)***	General Director, Ingration-Astana LLP (98-)	Akmola province, 1947
Pavlodar	Kairat Nurpeisov (6/03-9/08)	Mayor, Pavlodar city (03)	Vice-Minister of State Expenditures (99-02)**	Pavlodar province, 1957
	Daniyal Akhmetov (1/93-12/97)	Mayor, Ekibastuz city, Pavlodar province (92-93)	Governor, N. Kazakhstan (97-99)	Pavlodar province, 1954
S. Kazakhstan	Bolat Zhylkyshiev (8/02-9/06)	Mayor, Shimkent city, S. Kazakhstan (01-02)	Member of Parliament (07-present)	S. Kazakhstan, 1957
	Zautbek Turisbekov (12/93-12/97)	Deputy Mayor, S. Kazakhstan (92-93)	Chair, Agency on Migration & Demographics (97-99)	S. Kazakhstan, 1951
W. Kazakhstan	Kabibulla Dzhakupov (1/93-12/00)	Mayor, Ural city (92-93)	First Vice Minister of Transportation (01-03)	W. Kazakhstan, 1949
Zhambyl	Serik Umbetov (2/99-5/04)	Governor & 1st Deputy Gov., Almaty province, (94-99)	Minister of Agriculture (04-05)	Almaty province, 1950
	Omurbek Baigeldi (2/92-10/95)	Chair, Zhambyl province council (90-92)	Member of Parliament (99-05; 05-07)	Zhambyl province, 1939
Almaty City	Viktor Khrapunov (6/97-12/04)	Minister of Energy (95-97)	Governor, E. Kazakhstan (04-07)	E. Kazakhstan, 1948
Astana City	Adil'bek Dzhaksybekov (12/97-6/03)	First Deputy Governor, Astana province (96-97)	Minister of Industry & Trade (03-04)	Kostanai province, 1954
	Amanzhol Bulekpaev (2/92-12/97)	Chair, Astana city council/ executive committee (91-92)	Member of Parliament (99-05; 05-07; 07-present)	Akmola province, 1941

* Because there are numerous provinces and numerous governors within each province, to save space governors/mayors were taken from the last column in Table 3.1, labeled "Appointees in office longest." ** Post held prior to governorship. *** Position/post held after serving as governor.
Sources: Ashimbaev 2008; *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* official newspaper

Table 3.6 Cadre Rotation in Kyrgyzstan

Province/ Major City	Governor/Mayor Name	Prior position	Next/Current position	Birthplace
Batken[1]	Mamat Aibaliev (10/99-11/03)	General Director, Kadamzhai Rtunoi Kombain	None	Batken region, Osh province 1939
	Askarbek Shadiev (11/03-1/05)	Deputy Minister of Finance (02-03)	Member of Parliament (05-07; 07-present)	Batken province, 1969
	Bartali Koshmatov (1/05-8/05)	ошол эле министрликте орун баса (02-05)	Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Water Management, & Industry	Leninabad province, Tajikistan, 1952
Chui	Apas Dzhumagulov (5/91-12/93)	Prime Minister (93-98)*	Chair, Board of Directors, Karabalta Gornodurnyi Kombinat	Chui province, 1934
	Feliks Kulov (12/93-4/98)	Vice President/Minister of Internal Affairs (93)	Mayor of Bishkek (98-99)	Chui province, 1948
	Toichubek Kasymov (12/00-2/04)	Governor, Issyk Kul' province (96-00)	Head, Presidential Administration (04-05)	Talas province, 1946
	Azamat Kangel'diev (2/04-8/05)	Head, Tax Inspection (00)	None	Chui province, 1957
Issyk Kul'	Jumabek Saadanbekov (3/92-9/96)	Chair, Government Inspection office (91-92)	Ambassador to Ukraine (98-00)	Issyk Kul' province, 1940
	Toichubek Kasymov (9/96-12/00)	Governor, Talas province (92-96)	Governor, Chui province (00-04)	Talas province, 1946
	Zhusupbek Sharipov (12/00-4/02)	Head, Oktyabr region, Chui province (99)	Governor, Jalalabad province (02-05)	Osh province, 1955
	Emil'bek Anapiyaev (4/02-12/03)	First Deputy Minister of Trade (01-02)	Special representative on the development of the resort zone of Issyk Kul' (03-04)	Issyk Kul' province, 1967
	Tokon Shalieva (12/03-4/05)	Not available	Not available	Not available
	Ishenbai Moldotashev (4/05-4/05)	Member of parliament (00-05)	None	Issyk Kul' province, 1953
Jalal-Abad	Abduzhapar Tagaev (11/92-5/95)	Minister of Communications (95-96)*	Mayor, Osh City (98-99)	Osh province, 1951

	Kurmanbek Bakiev (5/95-4/97)	Deputy Chair, State Property Fund (94-95)	Governor, Chui province (97-00)	Jalal-Abad province, 1949
	Kubanychbek Zhumaliev (1/99-12/00)	Prime Minister (98)	Minister of Transportation & Communications (01)	Jalal-Abad province, 1956
	Sultan Urmaneav (1/01-3/02)	Minister of Emergencies and Civil Defense (98-00)	Sentenced for involvement in Aksy murders (08)	Issyk Kul' province, 1948
	Zhusupbek Sharipov (3/02-8/05)	Governor, Issyk Kul' province (00-02)	Ambassador to Saudi Arabia (07-09)	Osh province, 1955
Naryn	Kemel'bek Ashyraliev (1992-11/93)	Chair, Naryn oblast Council of People's Deputies (91-92)	Head, Naryn Environmental Inspection (01)	Naryn province, 1942
	Beishenbek Bolotbekov (11/93-1997)	First Deputy Governor, Naryn province (91-93)	Deputy Minister of Architecture and Construction (97-01)	Naryn Province, 1955
	Emil'bek Uzakbaev (1997-12/98)	President, Kyrgyzaiylkomok company (92-96)	Minister of Agriculture and Water Management (98-00)	Jalal-Abad province, 1955
	Askar Salymbekov (1/99-1/05)	President, Dordoi company (93-99)	Member of parliament (05-07; 07-present)	Naryn Province, 1955
	Shamshybek Medetbekov (1/05-2/05)	Member of parliament (00-05)	Owner, *Aalam* newspaper	Naryn Province, 1963
Osh	Betrayal Sydykov (1991-7/93)	Ambassador to Uzbekistan (95-01)	Rector, Agrarian Academy (01-present)	Osh province, 1939
	Abdygany Erkebaev (7/93-12/94)	Vice Prime Minister (92-93)	Member of Parliament, Speaker (00-05)	Osh province, 1953
	Dzhanysh Rustenbekov (12/94-4/95)	Secretary of State (93-94)	Director, State Agency of Forest Management (95-00)	Chui province, 1949
	Temirbek Akmataliev (4/95-7/96)	Governor, Talas province (98-99)*	Minister of Finance (01-02)	Naryn province, 1958
	Amangel'di Muraliev (7/96-12/98)	Vice Prime Minister for Industrial Policy (96)	Prime Minister (99-00)	Chui province, 1947
	Naken Kasiev (12/00-1/05)	Secretary of State (99-00)	Head, Prime Minister's Apparatus (05)	Naryn province, 1947
	Kubanychbek Dzholdoshev (1/05-3/05)	Member of Parliament (00-05)	Member of parliament (07-present)	Osh province, 1960

Talas	Toichubek Kasymov (11/92-5/96)			Talas province, 1946
	Tashkul Kereksizov (5/96-12/97)	Upravlyayushii Delami, Presidential Administration (94-96)	Director, State Tax Inspection (98-99)	Issyk Kul' province, 1948
	Temirbek Akmataliev (1/98-4/99)	Head, Ala-Buskin Regional Administration, Jalal-Abad province (96-8)	Governor, Osh province (99-01)	Naryn province, 1958
	Ismail Masaitov (4/99-12/99)	Deputy Director, Presidential Apparatus (92-94)	1st Deputy Governor, Osh province (99)	Osh province, 1948
	Keneshbek Karachalov (12/99-12/02)	Head, Manas Regional Administration, Talas province (92-98)	Deputy Minister of Transportation & Communication (02-04)	Talas province, 1948
	Iskenderbek Aidaraliev (12/02-11/07)	Head, Talas Regional Administration, Talas province (00-02)	1st Vice Prime Minister (07-09)	Talas province, 1955
Bishkek City	Abdybek Sutalinov (91-4/92)	Deputy Minister of the Interior (88-91)	Minister of Internal Affairs (92-95)	Chui province, 1941
	Omurbek Abakirov (4/92-1/93)	1st Deputy Mayor, Bishkek City Administration (91-92)	Deceased 1993	Chui province, 1950
	Zhumabek Ibraimov (1/93-2/95)	General Director, Zhanar company (92-93)	Prime Minister (98-99) Deceased 1999	Chiu province, 1944
	Boris Silaev (2/95-4/98)	Minister of Labor & Social Protection (92-93)	Vice Prime Minister (98-99)	Russia, 1946
	Feliks Kulov (4/98-4/99)	Minister of National Security (97-98)	Arrested in 2000 for abuse of office	Chui province, 1948
	Medetbek Kerimkulov (4/99-4/05)	Governor, Osh province (94-95)	First Vice Minister (05-06)	Chui province, 1949
Osh City	Abdumanap Mamyrov (1991-4/1994)	Not available	Not available	Not available
	Medetbek Kerimkulov (4/94-2/95)	Mayor, Tokomak City (92-94)	Governor, Osh province (94-95)	Chui province, 1949
	Mukanbek Alykulov (2/95-11/96)	Director, Osh Electric Station (87-95)	Director, Osh Electric Grid (96-present)	Osh province, 1949

Zh. Raimbekov (11/96-4/98)	Not available	Not available	Not available
Abduzhapar Tagaev (4/98-99)	First Deputy Minister of Transportation & Communications (96-98)	Mayor, Balykchi City (99-00)	Osh province, 1951
Zhusupbek Sharipov (99-00)	Governor, Issyk Kul' province (00-02)*	Governor, Jalal-Abad province (02-05)	Osh province, 1955
Zhantoro Satybaldiev (01-11/03)	Minister of Transportation & Communications (99-00)	Vice Prime Minister & Special Representative to the President (03-05)	Osh province, 1956
Satybaldy Chyrmashev (11/03-4/05)	Minister of the Environment (02-03)	None	Osh province, 1956

*Position/post held after serving as governor.
Sources: Akipress, "Kto Est Kto" (http://who.ca-news.org/); Toktom Legal Database; TsentrAziya, "Kto Est' Kto v Tsentral'noi Azii" (http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php); *Slovo Kyrgyzstana* official newspaper

Table 3.7 Cadre Rotation in Belarus

Province/ Major City	Governor/Mayor Name	Previous position	Next/Current position	Birthplace
Bretsk	Konstantin Sumar (3/04-present)	Minister of Taxes and Sboram (01-04)	Member of parliament (04)	Bretsk province, 1949
	Vasilii Dolgolev (3/00-3/04)	Deputy Prime Minister (04-06)*	Ambassador to Russia & the EU (06-present)	Gomel' province, 1951
	Vladimir Zalomai (12/94-3/00)	Minister of CIS Affairs; First Deputy Governor, Brest Province; Deputy Chair, Council of Ministers	Advisor, Belarus Embassy to Russia, Kaliningrad office (present)	Grodno province, 1940
Gomel'	Aleksandr Yakobson (4/01-present)	Mayor, Gomel' city (98-01)	Deputy Governor, Gomel' province (97-98)**	Gomel' province, 1951
	N. Voitenkov (1/97-4/01)	Ambassador to the Czech and Slovak Republics (95)	None	German Democratic Republic, 1947
	Pavel Shipuk (11/94-1/97)	President, Gomel'steklo company (88-94)	Member of parliament (96-00; 00-04)	Bretsk province, 1949
Grodno	Vladimir Savchenko (2/01-present)	First Vice Governor, Grodno province (dates)	Vice Governor, Mogilev province (dates)**	Mogilev province, 1952
	Aleksandr Dubko (12/94-2/04)[1]	Governor, Grodno province (90-91)	Deceased (2004)	Not available, 1938
Minsk	Leonid Krupets (6/07-present)	Presidential Advisor/Head Inspector of Bitevsk province (07)	First Vice Governor, Minsk province (02-07)**	Not available, 1956
	Nikolai Domashkevich (12/98-6/07)	Chair, State Control Committee (95-98)	Upravlyayushii Delami, Presidential Administration (07-present)	Gomel' province, 1949
	P. Pouch (12/94-12/98)	Head, Belmestprom state concern (93-94)	General Director, Beltransgaz state enterprise (98-04)	Minsk province, 1950
Mogilev	Petr Rudnik (12/08-present)	General Director, Mogilev Elevator Factory (03-08)	Member of Parliament (08-present)	Gomel' province, 1957

	Boris Batura (11/00-10/08)	Министром жилищно-коммунального хозяйства (94-99)	Deputy Prime Minister (99-00)**	Grodno province, 1947
	M. Dashing (3/99-10/00)	Deputy Governor, Minsk province (98-00)	Deputy Prime Minister (01-05)	Minsk province, 1947
	Aleksandr Kulichkov (12/94-3/99)	Deputy Governor, Mogilev province (-94)	Minister of Trade (01-05)	Mogliev province, 1945
Vitebsk	Aleksandr Kosinets (11/08-present)	Deputy Prime Minister (05-08)	Rector, Minsk Medical University (97-05)**	Vitebsk province, 1959
	Vladimir Andreichenko (11/94-9/08)	First Deputy Governor, Vitebsk province (91-4)	Member of Parliament (08-)	Vitebsk province, 1949
Minsk City	Nikolai Ladut'ko (6/09-present)	Deputy Governor, Minsk city (07-09)	Head, Frunze rayon administration, Mink city (??-07)**	Not available
	Mikhail Pavlov (3/00-6/09)	Mayor, Baranovich city (97-00)	None; health problems cited	Mogilev province, 1952
	Vladimir Ermoshin (1/95-2/00)	First Deputy Governor, Minsk city (92-95)	Chair, Council of Ministers (00-01)	Russia, 1942

*Position/post held after serving as governor. **Post held prior to governorship.
Sources: *Kto Est' Kto v Resublime Belarus'* (http://who.bdg.by/who); *Komsomol'skaya Pravda* official newspaper; *Natsional'nyi Reestr Pravovykh Aktov Respubliki Belarus': Ofitsial'noe Izdanie* ; (1999-2008); Official Internet-Portal of the President of the Republic of Belarus (http://www.president.gov.by); Slavic Resource Center, Hokkaido University (http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/belregions/index.html)

Table 3.8 Strength of Parliament, Post-Soviet Personalist Autocracies, 2008

Country (by score)	Parliamentary Powers Index (PPI) Score*
1. Georgia	0.59
2. Armenia	0.56
3. Kyrgyzstan	0.47
4. Russia	0.44
5. Azerbaijan	0.44
6. Kazakhstan	0.38
7. Tajikistan	0.31
8. Uzbekistan	0.28
9. Belarus	0.25
10. Turkmenistan	0.06
Regional Average**	0.38

* The PPI is a combined scale of 32 items gauging parliamentary autonomy, institutional capacity, and authority/power vis-à-vis the president. Scores closer to 1 signify a stronger parliament, while scores closer to 0 signify a weaker parliament. ** The regional average is for the states listed. Moldova and Ukraine are excluded. Source: Fish and Kroenig, 2009.

Table 3.9 Parliamentary Influence over the President, Post-Soviet Autocracies, 2008

Country (by score)	PPI *Inflexec* Score*
1. Georgia	5
2. Armenia	3
3. Kyrgyzstan	3
4. Belarus	2
5. Azerbaijan	1
5. Kazakhstan	1
5. Russia	1
5. Tajikistan	1
5. Turkmenistan	1
5. Uzbekistan	1
Regional Average**	1.9

* *Inflexec* is a composite scale of seven items measuring parliament's influence over the executive. The scale ranges from zero to seven, with higher scores denoting greater influence over the executive branch. ** The regional average is for the states listed. Moldova and Ukraine are excluded.
Source: Fish and Kroenig, 2009.

Table 3.10 Judicial Framework and Independence, Post-Soviet Autocracies, 2003-2009*

Country (by score)	1999-2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	99-09 Avg.
1. Georgia	4.00	4.00	4.25	4.50	4.50	5.00	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.53
2. Russia	4.25	4.50	4.75	4.50	4.75	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.50	4.93
3. Armenia	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.25	5.00	5.00	5.25	5.50	5.10
4. Kyrgyzstan	5.00	5.25	5.25	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	6.00	6.00	5.50
5. Azerbaijan	5.50	5.25	5.25	5.50	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.60
6. Tajikistan	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	6.00	6.25	5.83
7. Kazakhstan	5.50	5.75	6.00	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.00	6.08
8. Uzbekistan	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.25	6.75	6.75	6.75	7.00	6.60
9. Belarus	6.50	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.73
10. Turkmenistan	6.75	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	6.98
Moldova**	4.00	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	4.00
Ukraine***	4.50	4.50	4.75	4.50	4.75	--	--	--	--	--	4.60
Regional Average	5.27	5.46	5.57	5.61	5.68	5.88	5.88	5.88	5.98	6.05	5.78

* The ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest level of democratic progress and 7 the lowest. The 2009 ratings reflect the period January 1 through December 31, 2008. ** Moldova switched to parliamentary system in 2000. *** The "orange revolution" occurred in 2004-05.
Source: Freedom House, 2009

Table 3.11 Media Independence, Post-Soviet Autocracies, 2003-2009*

Country (by score)	1999-2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	99-09 Avg.
1. Armenia	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.75	3.53
2. Georgia	3.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.75	3.70
3. Kyrgyzstan	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.75	4.53
4. Russia	3.75	4.00	4.75	4.00	4.25	4.50	4.75	5.25	5.50	5.75	4.65
5. Azerbaijan	4.75	4.50	4.50	4.25	4.50	4.75	5.00	5.25	5.25	5.50	4.83
6. Tajikistan	5.25	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.0	4.75	5.00	5.00	5.50	5.75	5.13
7. Kazakhstan	5.00	5. 00	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.75	5.75	5.50	5.50	5.50
8. Belarus	6.00	6.50	6.25	6.50	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.50	6.50	6.25	6.48
9. Uzbekistan	6.50	6.50	6.75	6.50	6.50	6.50	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	6.73
10. Turkmenistan	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00
Moldova**	3.75	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3.75
Ukraine***	4.00	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.75	--	--	--	--	--	3.75
Regional Average	4.81	4.93	5.05	4.93	4.98	5.13	5.28	5.33	5.38	5.50	5.13

* The ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest level of democratic progress and 7 the lowest. The 2009 ratings reflect the period January 1 through December 31, 2008. ** Moldova switched to parliamentary system in 2000. *** The "orange revolution" occurred in 2004-05.
Source: Freedom House, 2009

Table 3.12 Strength of Civil Society, Post-Soviet Autocracies, 2003-2009*

Country (by score)	1999-2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	99-09 Avg.
1. Armenia	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.75	3.53
2. Georgia	3.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.75	3.70
3. Kyrgyzstan	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.75	4.53
4. Russia	3.75	4.00	4.00	4.25	4.50	4.75	5.00	5.25	5.50	5.75	4.66
5. Azerbaijan	4.75	4.50	4.50	4.25	4.50	4.75	5.00	5.25	5.25	5.50	4.83
6. Tajikistan	5.25	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.75	5.00	5.00	5.50	5.75	5.13
7. Kazakhstan	5.00	5.00	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.75	5.75	5.50	5.50	5.45
8. Turkmenistan	6.00	6.50	6.20	6.50	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.50	6.50	6.25	6.47
9. Belarus	6.50	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.73
9. Uzbekistan	6.50	6.50	6.75	6.50	6.50	6.50	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	6.73
Moldova**	3.75	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3.75
Ukraine***	4.00	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.75	--	--	--	--	--	3.75
Regional Average	4.77	4.91	402.34	4.93	4.98	5.13	5.28	5.30	5.35	5.48	4.94

* The ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest level of democratic progress and 7 the lowest. The 2009 ratings reflect the period January 1 through December 31, 2008. ** Moldova switched to parliamentary system in 2000. *** The "orange revolution" occurred in 2004-05.
Source: Freedom House, 2009

Table 3.13 Variation in Selected Economic Indicators by Country*

	Belarus	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan
GDP per capita, 2007 estimate	$4,621	$6,753	$704
GDP per capita (PPP), 2009 estimate	$10,600	$11,00	$2,000
% pop below poverty line	27.1 (2003)	13.8 (2007)	40 (2004 est.)
% workforce in agriculture	14	32.2	55
Private sector share of GDP (2007)	25%	65%	75%
Economic Freedom Ranking**	150th/157	76th/157	70th/157
Total official development assistance	$48.1 million	$211.3 million	$185.3 million
FDI (net inflow)	$303 million	$1.7 billion	$47 million

* All data is for current year, unless otherwise indicated. ** 157 countries were ranked.
Sources: CIA Factbook 2009; Heritage Foundation 2009 (http://www.heritage.org/Index/) United Nations (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/databases.htm)

Table 3.14 GDP per Capita, USD

	Country	GDP per capita (2007 estimate)	Average GDP per capita (1992-2007)*	GDP per capita, PPP (2009 estimate)
1	Tajikistan	$555	$325	$1,600
2	Kyrgyzstan	$704	$454	$2,000
2	Uzbekistan	$704	$601	$2,400
3	Moldova	$1,159	$640	$2,300
4	Turkmenistan	$1,461	$957	$5,300
5	Georgia	$2,315	$1,135	$4,400
6	Armenia	$2,900	$1,208	$5,800
7	Ukraine	$3,055	$1,602	$7,000
8	Azerbaijan	$4,300	$1,406	$8,000
9	Belarus	$4,621	$2,363	$10,600
10	Kazakhstan	$6,753	$2,927	$11,000
11	Russia	$9,050	$4,416	$14,800

* Calculated by adding up the annual estimated GDP per capita for 1992, 1995, 2000, 2005, and 2007 and dividing by 5.
Sources: CIA World Factbook (https://www.cia.gov/publications/the-world-factbook); International Monetary Fund (http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2009/01/weodata/weoselgr.aspx); United Nations Statistical Division (http://data.un.org)

Table 3.15 Estimated Private Sector Share of GDP, 2003

	Country	Private Sector Share of GDP
1	Armenia	75%
1	Kyrgyzstan	75%
2	Russia	70%
3	Georgia	65%
3	Kazakhstan	65%
3	Ukraine	65%
4	Azerbaijan	60%
5	Moldova	50%
5	Tajikistan	50%
6	Uzbekistan	45%
7	Belarus	25%
7	Turkmenistan	25%

Source: The World Bank (web.worldbank.org)

Table 3.16 Economic Freedom Rankings, 2009

	Country	Ranking (out of 179 countries)	Score	Evaluation
1	Armenia	31	69.9	Moderately free
2	Georgia	32	69.8	Moderately free
3	Kyrgyzstan	74	61.8	Moderately free
4	Kazakhstan	83	60.1	Moderately free
5	Azerbaijan	99	58.0	Mostly unfree
6	Moldova (1996-2000)	120	54.9	Mostly unfree
7	Tajikistan	122	54.6	Mostly unfree
8	Russia	146	50.8	Mostly unfree
9	Uzbekistan	148	50.5	Mostly unfree
10	Ukraine (1996-2004)	152	48.8	Repressed
11	Belarus	167	45.0	Repressed
12	Turkmenistan	169	44.2	Repressed

Source: Heritage Foundation (http://www.heritage.org/Index/Ranking.aspx)

Table 3.17 Extent of Economic Liberalization by Country

		Large scale privatization	Small scale privatization	Enterprise restructuring	Price liberalization	Trade & foreign exchange system	Competition policy	Banking reform & interest rate liberalization	Securities markets & non-bank financial institutions
Belarus	1991	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	1995	1.67	2.00	1.67	3.67	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
	1998	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.67	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.00
	2000	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.33	1.67	2.00	1.00	2.00
	2004	1.00	2.33	1.00	2.67	2.33	2.00	1.67	2.00
	2007	1.00	2.33	1.00	2.67	2.33	2.00	1.67	2.00
Kazakhstan	1991	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	1995	2.00	3.00	1.00	4.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	1.67
	1998	3.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	2.00	2.33	2.00
	2000	3.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	3.33	2.00	2.33	2.33
	2004	3.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	3.67	2.00	3.00	2.33
	2007	3.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	3.67	2.00	3.00	2.67
Kyrgyzstan	1991	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	1995	3.00	4.00	2.00	4.33	4.00	2.00	2.00	1.67
	1998	3.00	4.00	2.00	4.33	4.00	2.00	2.33	2.00
	2000	3.00	4.00	2.00	4.33	4.33	2.00	2.00	2.00
	2004	3.67	4.00	2.00	4.33	4.33	2.00	2.33	2.00
	2007	3.67	4.00	2.00	4.33	4.33	2.00	2.33	2.00

Source: EBRD, 2008

Table 3.18 Average Economic Liberalization Ranking, Post-Soviet Personalist Autocracies, 1991-2007

	Country	Average Market Reform Score*	Extent to which country meets standards of an "Industrialized Market Economy"**
1	Kyrgyzstan	3.52	81%
2	Russia	3.40	79%
3	Georgia	3.32	77%
4	Armenia	3.24	75%
5	Kazakhstan	3.19	74%
6	Moldova (1991-2000)	2.73	63%
7	Ukraine (1991-2004)	2.71	63%
8	Tajikistan	2.69	62%
9	Azerbaijan	2.65	61%
10	Uzbekistan	2.62	61%
11	Belarus (1994-present)	1.93	45%
12	Turkmenistan	1.75	40%
	Regional Average***	2.69	62%

* Obtained by adding together and averaging scores on three items included in the EBRD's market reform dataset (extent of large- and small-scale privatization and price liberalization) for 1991-2007. **Obtained by dividing the average reform score by 4.33, the highest score possible on the scale. *** Only post-Soviet personalist states are included in the regional average.
Source: EBRD, 2008

Table 3.19 Key Background and Causal Factors*

	Comparable Cases		Contrasting Case
	KAZAKHSTAN	KYRGYZSTAN	BELARUS
Background condition #1: Personalist presidential autocracy	YES	YES	YES
Background condition #2: Serious barriers to political freedoms	YES	YES	YES
Causal factor: Market reform	YES	YES	NO

* Table is modeled after Table 1 in McMann (2009, 976).
Sources: Author's data; EBRD, 2008 (http://www.ebrd.com/country/sector/econo/stats/index.htm); Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi, 2008

Table 3.20 Variation in Background Conditions, Causal Factors, and Outcomes

	Comparable Cases		Contrasting Case
	KAZAKHSTAN	KYRGYZSTAN	BELARUS
Background condition #1: Personalist presidential autocracy	YES	YES	YES
Background condition #2: Restrictions political freedoms*	MIDDLE (-1.00/-0.94)	MIDDLE (-0.87/-0.94)	HIGH (-1.47/-0.94)
Causal factor: Extent of market reform**	HIGH (3.19/4+)	HIGH (3.52/4+)	LOW (1.93/4+)
Outcome #1: Widespread elite defection	Political & business defectors 2001	Political & business defectors 2005	Political & business defectors 1994-1996
Outcome #2: Opposition leadership***	Political & business defectors	Political & business defectors, civil society activists	Civil society activists; political defectors
Outcome #3: Presidential turnover	NO in 2001	YES in 2005	NO in 1994-1996

* Assessment of the restrictions on political freedoms (low, middle, high) is relative to the average Voice and Accountability scores for the post-Soviet personalist states combined. Country scores were obtained by averaging available Voice and Accountability Scores for the period 1996 to 2007. ** The extent of market reform (low, middle, high) is relative to a maximum score of 4.33. Scores were obtained by adding together and averaging each country's large- and small-scale privatization and price liberalization scores for 1991-2007. *** Listed in order of prominence.

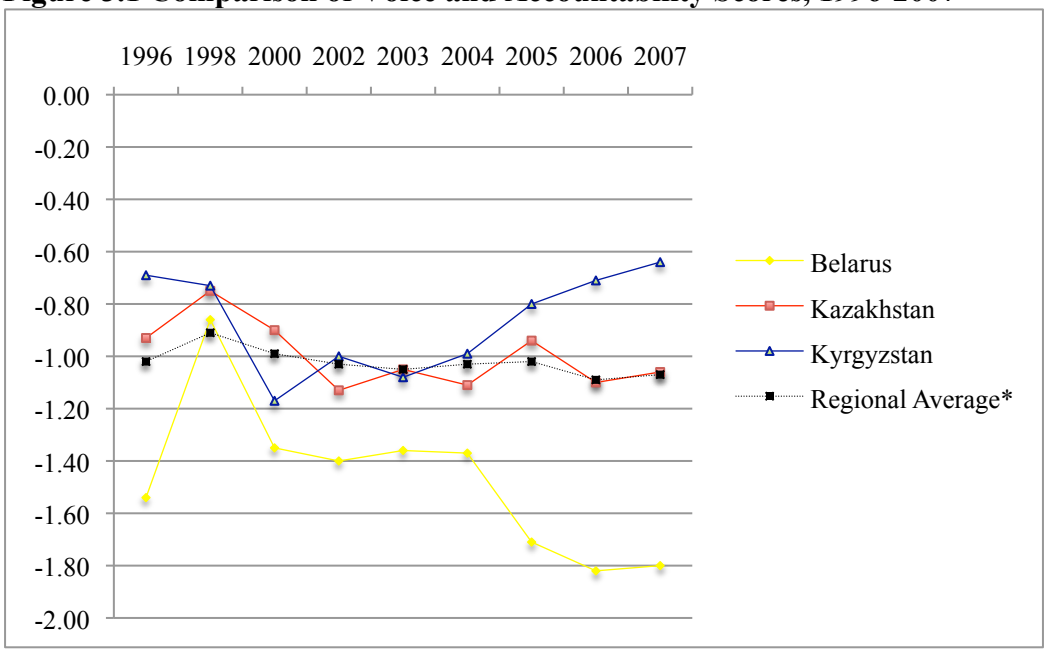
Table 3.21 Selected Interview Questions

Questions asked of elite defectors and other opposition members	• Your political ideals are widely known. I would like to know more about the practical side of your decision to oppose the president. In practical, rather than ideological terms, how would you describe your departure from the ruling coalition to the political opposition? • Practical, intelligent individuals weigh the costs and benefits of different courses of action. Thinking back to the time when you made your decision to join the opposition, what do you recall were the major factors that you took into consideration? • How did you assess your chances for success? • What kind of reaction from the president and other members of the elite did you expect? • Were you worried about being cut off from your source of livelihood by the authorities? Did you worry about how you would sustain your family after taking an oppositional stance? • Were you concerned about the effect of your decision on your safety and that of your loved ones? • In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the political opposition in Belarus/Kazakhstan/Kyrgyzstan?
Questions asked of experts (Includes political analysts, academics, journalists, elites in the ruling coalition, other opposition members [non-defectors], and non-opposition civil society activists)	• Within every governing coalition, there are times when actors' interests or policy preferences conflict. This is a normal part of politics, since whenever large groups of people get together they are bound to have differences of opinion. But within every system of governance there are ways to resolve such conflicts. Based on your knowledge of politics in your country, what are the main channels for political actors to resolve their differences when they arise? • How would you characterize the kinds of political differences or political conflicts that predominate in Kazakhstan? What do they tend to be about? • Western scholars have come with a number of hypotheses to explain political outcomes and political conflict in Central Asia. Some argue that competition between clans is the most important factor, while others argue that competition between regional elites and central elites is the most important factor. Others argue that modernization/economic development lays the foundation for political conflict between elites. Still others say that elites who are excluded from the most lucrative posts or benefits from the patronage system are most likely to oppose the president and/or his regime. Based on your expert knowledge and intimate understanding of politics in your country, do any of these explanations hold true? Or is there something else that you would argue is a better explanation? • Since independence, which elites have joined the political opposition? • As a close observer of politics in your country, what conclusions have you come to regarding the decision of elites to leave the ruling coalition and join the opposition? Do you see these developments as a compilation of unrelated individual decisions or as evidence of a more general trend? • In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the political opposition? • What kinds of resources do they possess and what kinds of resources do they lack? For example, money, public support, mass media, connections? • How would you describe the linkage between elites (apart from the president) and the broader public? Is public support widespread in your opinion? Is support confined to certain groups or cleavages in society? • What about public support for the opposition? Is public support widespread in your opinion? Is support for the opposition confined to certain groups or cleavages in society? • In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the political opposition in Belarus/Kazakhstan/Kyrgyzstan?

Table 3.22 Number of Interviewees by Type of Respondent

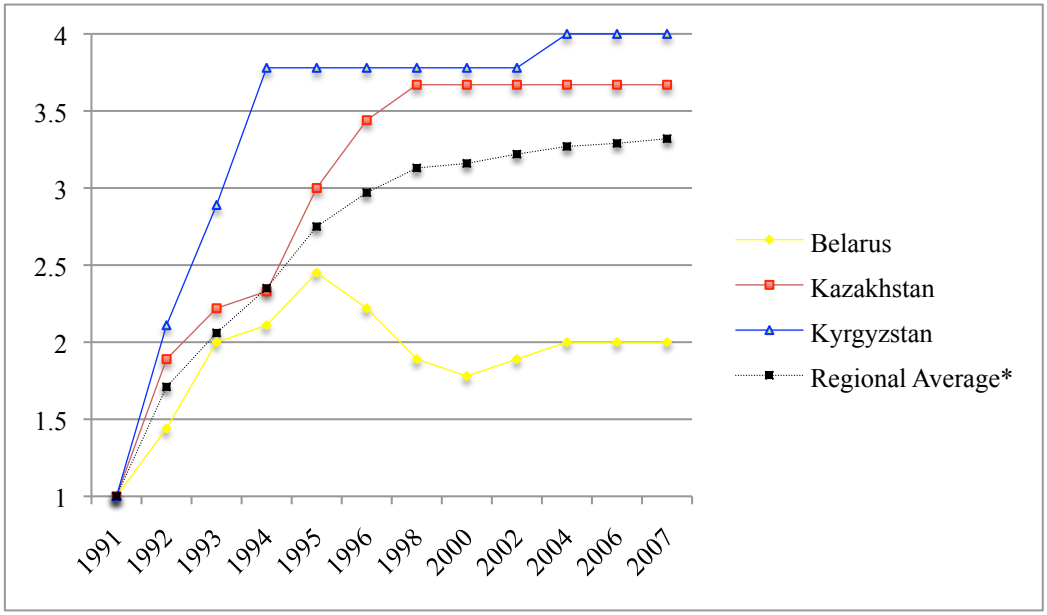
	Belarus	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan
Elites in the ruling coalition	0	7	8
Elite defectors	0	11	9
Other opposition leaders and members	3	10	6
Scholars and political analysts	6	16	14
Journalists	2	9	12
Civil society activists	5	11	10
Heads of private business	2	5	7
Foreign assistance community	3	6	12
TOTAL	22	75	78

Figure 3.1 Comparison of Voice and Accountability Scores, 1996-2007



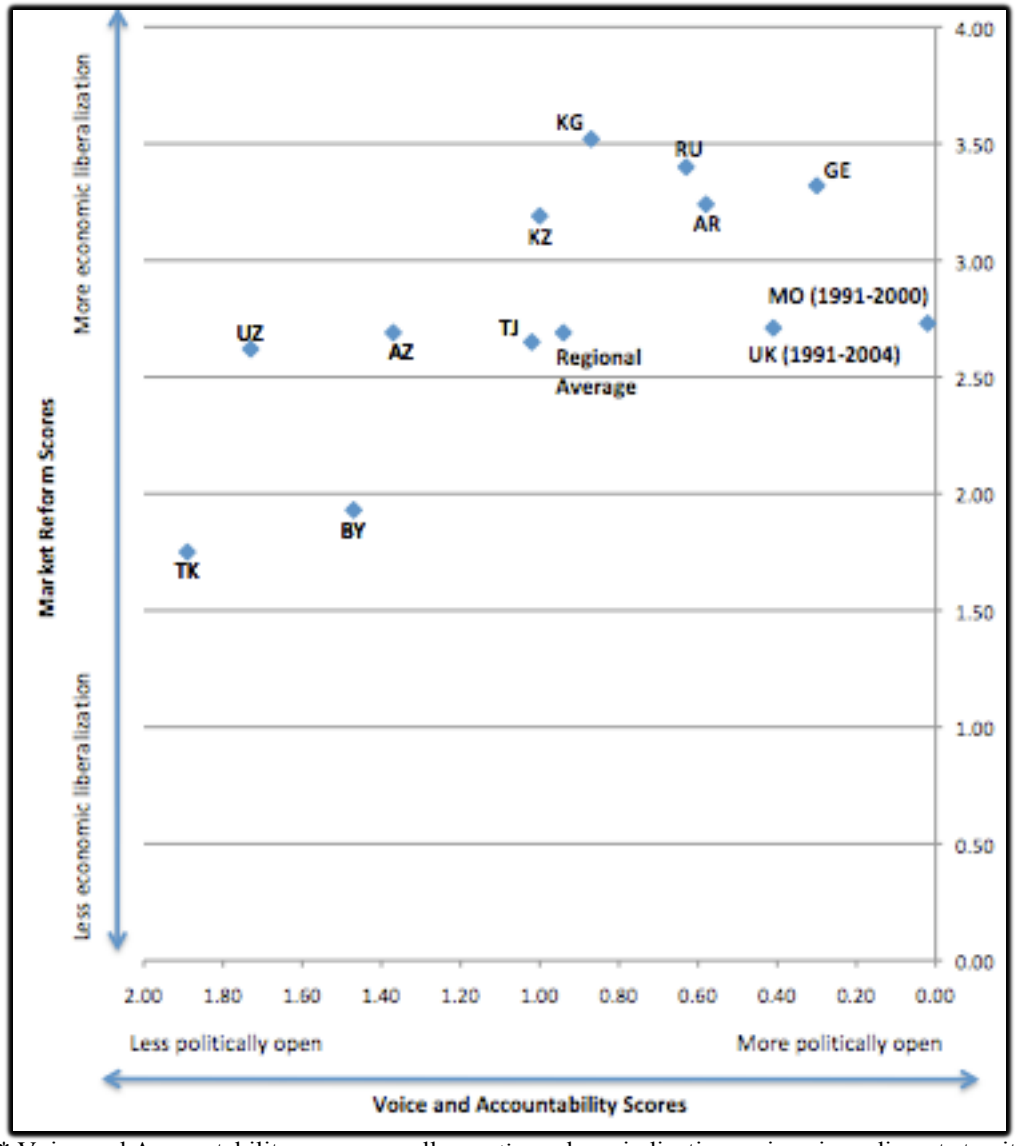
* Only post-Soviet patronal presidential states are included in the regional average.
Source: Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi, 2008

Figure 3.2 Comparison of Economic Liberalization Scores, 1991-2007



* Scores represent each country's averaged combined scores for annual large- and small-scale privatization and price liberalization. Only post-Soviet patronal presidential states are included in the regional average.
Source: EBRD, 2008

Figure 3.3 Degree of Political Openness by Extent of Market Reforms*



* Voice and Accountability scores are all *negative* values, indicating serious impediments to citizen participation in selecting their government and restrictions on freedom of expression, freedom of association, and media independence.
Sources: Tables 3.1 and 3.18

Chapter 4
Patterns and Variation in the Political Opposition

Introduction

Chapter four is a prelude to the in-depth investigation of defections from among the business elite and their political consequences to be undertaken in chapters five and six. Here, I analyze variation and patterns in elite defections in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan from the late Soviet period to the year 2008, when fieldwork for the dissertation was completed. Due to my interest in the relationship between elite defection and patterns in the make-up of and resources available to the political opposition, the analysis is broadened to include all political opposition movements for which I could find information. Using various sources, I outline the contours of the political opposition in each of the three country cases, pointing out the similarities and differences in the makeup of the opposition and how it has undergone modifications over time.

In addition to carrying out a longitudinal comparison of the makeup of the opposition, I sought to learn more about the consequences of elite defections for the ruling coalition. Is the impact of elite defection generally minimal, a ripple on the surface that quickly subsides, or do defections represent a serious seismic disturbance that shakes the political system to its core? What is the probability that elite defectors can indeed alter political trajectories and create a viable alternative to authoritarian rule?

Only by looking at defections in their entirety over time could questions like these be answered. As I argued in chapter three, a longitudinal approach that includes the complete set of observed cases can reduce the chances of sample truncation, which has been found to generate biased estimates (Geddes 1990). Limiting the analysis to successful cases of elite

defection that have culminated in electoral revolutions (Bunce and Wolchik 2006a; Bunce and Wolchik 2006b), for example, might lead *a priori* to the conclusion that defection represents a serious threat to the personalist president. Yet, data collected for this study shows that both elite-led and grassroots political opposition to personalist presidents in the Soviet region has existed for some time, often with few observable lasting consequences. Furthermore, widespread defections of the sort that have been associated with the "colored revolutions" are few and far between. A longitudinal approach can thus help mediate between extreme interpretations of defections as politically significant versus interpretations of defections as inconsequential.

Data and Methods

This main objective of chapter four is to determine how common defections are in the three cases, both in absolute terms and relative to other kinds of social actors that have been prominent among opposition leaders. Elite defectors move into the opposition from the echelons of wealth and power, a process that can be described as top-down (Zhovtis 2007). Other grassroots opposition leaders, such as intellectuals, cultural figures, leaders of national revival movements, journalists, and civil society actors, on the other hand, have entered the political fray from the bottom up. To get a sense of the form and composition of political opposition and how these have changed during the end of Soviet rule to the present, I followed a strategy of triangulation, in which I gathered data using multiple sources. During fieldwork, I collected data not only on elite defectors, but also on opposition leaders that came from outside of the ruling coalition. The sources I consulted were original interviews with a variety of Belarusian, Kazakh, and Kyrgyz political actors and observers, plus interviews with heads of Western organizations and diplomats. I also relied heavily on news

and analyses published in Russian, Belarusian, Kazakh, and Kyrgyz newspapers and journals; Internet analysis and commentary written by Russian, Belarusian, Kazakh, and Kyrgyz political observers; and on English-language scholarship (primarily U.S.) on the region.

Included in the list of elite defectors are only those elites who were mentioned by at least two sources, including interviews and print, electronic, and Internet materials. The list of defectors and opposition leaders may be conservative, given that only well-known figures are cited in the analysis. In each of the three country cases, there is at least one controversial opposition leader, who has been denounced or rejected by other opposition leaders as either not legitimate or planted by the president. These include Dzmitr Bulahau in Belarus, Misir Ashirkulov in Kyrgyzstan, and Alikhan Baimenov and Rakhat Aliev in Kazakhstan. Ashirkulov, for example, a career political appointee and long-time friend of Akaev, announced his opposition to the president in 2004. In response to the news, President Akaev was reported to have joked that Ashirkulov had "done the right thing" by joining the new Civic Union for Fair Elections opposition coalition, while the president was left as "captain of a sinking ship" (Saralieva 2004). Controversial opposition leaders are followed by an explanatory note in Tables 4.1 through 4.3.

Biographical information was gathered using publicly available sources. Biographical material on Belarusian opposition leaders is found in the online *Delovaya Gazeta*'s *Kto Est' Kto v Respublike Belarus'* (http://who.bdg.by); for Kazakhstan's opposition leaders, I consulted Ashimbaev (2006; 2008); and biographical information on Kyrgyzstan's opposition was compiled using *Kto Est' Kto*, a paid service from AKIpress (http://who.ca-news.org). Ashimbaev included biographical data on everyone in the Kazakh

dataset; for those not listed in the Belarus and Kyrgyz sources, I searched for additional information using print and Internet sources. For complete sources, see citations that follow Tables 4.1 through 4.3 below.

Divergence and Convergence in Opposition Membership among the Three Cases

Early Opposition from the Grassroots

The three cases' histories of political opposition movements both exhibit similarities and diverge from one another in interesting ways. During *perestroika* and *glasnost'* in the waning years of the Soviet Union, those who led the opposition to the regime were primarily from among intellectuals and cultural elites, such as well-known Soviet writer Olzhas Suleimenov, who established the Nevada-Semipalatinsk Anti-nuclear Movement in 1989. Throughout the Soviet Union during this period, calls for greater political autonomy and the need for political reform tended to center on issues like the need to revive and protect non-Russian languages and cultures and the rehabilitation of those who had been repressed during Stalinism. Added to these were recent and ongoing grievances, such as the very real consequences of numerous man-made ecological disasters or the anger over the government's heavy-handed response to student protests held in December 1986 against Moscow's selection of a non-Kazakh to head the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR).

A review of Tables 4.1 through 4.3 indicates that during this period of political and economic decentralization, a number of nationalist organizations and parties sprang up in all three of the cases. The first opposition organizations in the Byelorussian SSR were led by nationalist revivalists, such as archaeologist Zianon Pazniak (in Russian, Zenon Poznak) and Vintsuk Viachorka (Verchorka). In 1989, Pazniak and Viachorka, two intellectual activists from the USSR's incipient civil society, co-founded independent Belarus's first opposition

party, the Belarus Popular Front (BPF), which was officially registered as a political party in 1993. Modeled after national fronts in the Baltic states, the BPF sought, among other issues, to raise the status and use of the Belarusian language in official and everyday life (Koktysh 2000; Marples and Padhol 2006).

Likewise, a number of opposition movements in Kirgiziya, as the Kirgiz SSR was often called, during the late Soviet period were concerned largely with the marginalization of Kyrgyz culture and the dominance of Russian language and cultural practices. Kyrgyz intellectual Jypar Jeksheev founded Ashar, the "first independent social organization with significant social standing to develop" in Kirgiziya (Collins 2006, 141) in 1989. The following year, Jeksheev joined forces with Topchubek Turgunaliev, to establish another opposition organization, the Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan, which, while espousing a nationalist platform, also included many Russians and russified Kyrgyz living in the capital city of Frunze (now Bishkek) who sought greater political decentralization from Moscow and stepped up democratic reforms.[1] Other nationalist movements whose leaders came from the grassroots are the Erkindik party, chaired by academic Tursunbai Bakir-uluu, and Asaba, established by Chapyrashty Bazarbaev, Turash Dyusheev, and Melis Eshimkanov. Eshimkanov later emerged as an opposition leader during the Akaev regime and the first two years of Bakiev's presidency.

Finally, we find a similar dynamic of opposition movements headed by cultural and intellectual figures arising in the Kazakh SSR. Zhel'toksan, Azat, and Alash were to varying degrees nationalistic and religiously oriented political movements headed by writers and grassroots activists (Olcott 2002). Kazakhstan was also the home of the Nevada-

[1] Author's interviews with two Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan activists, Bishkek, November 2007.

Semipalatinsk Anti-nuclear Movement, established to bring attention to and remedy the environmental devastation that storing nuclear waste had brought about in the north of the republic. Unusual in comparison with other nationalist movements of the time, Azat was headed not by activists from outside of the political system, but by a former Communist party official, Mikhail Isinaliev, and a former minister of foreign affairs, Marat Chormanov (Babak, Vaisman, and Wasserman 2004).

While the initial wave of opposition movements was founded by intellectuals and civil society activists in all three cases, after 1991 the composition of opposition leadership begins to diverge. In Belarus, until the end of parliamentary rule with the country's first presidential elections in 1994, nationalists remained the major opposition force in politics. The BPF was able to secure 26 seats in 12th Supreme Soviet (1990-1995), although the party remained a weak minority voice with limited societal appeal (Garnett and Legvold 1999; Koktysh 2000).

In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, in contrast, the early years of independence brought new additions to the political opposition. In Kazakhstan until 1994-1995, most of those who joined the political opposition were, as with the late Soviet wave, intellectuals who had become disenchanted with political developments under President Nazarbaev. These included academic Nurbolat Masanov, writers Karishal Asanov and Mukhtar Shakhanov, founder of the pensioners' movement (the Pokolenie party) Irina Savostina, and human rights advocate Evgenii Zhovtis.[2] During *perestroika*, Masanov, Zhovtis and journalist Sergei Duvanov had begun a long collaboration that continued into independence, as their criticism

[2] Author's interviews with anonymous political observer, Almaty, April 2007, and with Evgenii Zhovtis, Almaty, February 2007, and telephone communication with Mukhtar Shakhanov, Astana, May 2007. For more on Asanov's opposition activity, see Ryskozha (2009). For more on Masanov's experience in the opposition, see Kurmanbaev (2007).

of the president and his system of rule grew. Such figures are often referred to as Kazakhstan's "old opposition," made up of idealists and grassroots activists, in contrast to the "new opposition," which is led by defectors from the business elite.

Duvanov, like a number of formerly active members of the opposition who were interviewed as part of this study, draws a sharp distinction between Kazakhstan's old and new oppositions, which consisted largely of elite defectors seeking, in his words, "to protect their businesses." According to Duvanov,

> For the most part, [the old opposition] are people who are driven by ideals or ideological principles (*ideinyi chelovek*). That is, they are those who came to be involved in politics *not* because they were offended (*obizhennye*) for some reason by the government or those in power. They are those who were aroused by *perestroika* and decided that new values had come to the world and that they needed to participate in the building of a new life based on these new values. Among these oppositioneers (*oppozitsionery*) are Zhovtis, Masanov. This was the first wave… These were members of society. They were not professional politicians. They were political scientists, journalists, those with technical education, professionals, people from different layers of society who united and formed some social organizations to make a difference, not to protect their businesses, but to fulfill an idea. They thought that Kazakhstan should take the Western path. When people ask if there was some desire [among us] to move to America, I say no. We thought, "We do not need to move. We can build democracy here." [Laughter] We were idealistic. Everything turned out to be much more complex and difficult. We haven't been able to build America here quite yet.[3]

In Kyrgyzstan during the early- to mid-1990s, most opposition leaders likewise continued to come from the grassroots. Some, like the Erkin Kyrgyzstan party representative in Jalalabad province, Bektur Asanov, and former teacher turned parliamentarian, Omurbek Tekebaev, were from the south, which was considered to be the traditional opposition stronghold to northerner Akaev's rule. A few journalists who had previously praised the president (and one who served as Akaev's press secretary) also took up opposition against him. Former Akaev supporters who turned to the opposition include Melis Eshimkanov, who

[3] Author's interview with Sergei Duvanov, Almaty, February 2007.

joined the opposition to Akaev in 1995 after having just two years before co-authored a book lavishing praise on the president (Eshimkanov 1993), Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan founder and initially an enthusiastic Akaev supporter Topchubek Turgunaliev, and Kabai Karabekov, who had been fired from his position as the president's press secretary in 1993 and re-emerged as a prolific opposition journalist and opposition member of parliament.[4] One of the first Kyrgyz defectors from the political elite to join the opposition was Chinara Jakypova, Minister of Education (1992-1993), who left Akaev's team for the non-governmental sector and was a vocal critic of the president until around 1996. Since then, Jakypova has refrained from public politics and is no longer considered an opposition member.[5]

Dissolution of Parliament and the Political Opposition

The composition of the political opposition in Belarus and Kazakhstan changed in the mid-1990s in response to moves by Lukashenka and Nazarbaev to create a more compliant parliament that would not stand in the way of their policy agendas. The opposition in Belarus and Kazakhstan became associated with former members of parliament who were removed from power. In contrast, few new opposition leaders emerged from outside of government during this time. Independent Kazakhstan's first elected parliament (the 13th Supreme Soviet) went to work in 1994, and, as was the case with the 12th Supreme Soviet that it replaced, deputies "…regularly debated legislation with vigor and sometimes even forced their will on a reluctant president" (Olcott 2005, 36). After just one year, the 13th

[4] Author's interviews with Kabai Karabekov, Bishkek, March 2007, anonymous political observer, Bishkek, November 2007, and telephone conversation with Melis Eshimkanov, Bishkek, February 2008.
[5] Author's interviews with U.S. Embassy political analyst, Bishkek, November 2007, and anonymous former National Security officer, Bishkek, December 2007.

Supreme Soviet was dissolved, and the most recalcitrant legislators from the viewpoint of President Nazarbaev found themselves out of office. Expelled from their positions, some former parliamentarians joined the public opposition. The most prominent of these were former speaker of parliament and leader of the Communist Party, Serikbolsyn Abdil'din, who was widely considered a strong counterbalance to President Nazarbaev, and parliamentarians Gaziz Aldamzharov, considered by some to be an informal leader of the opposition in the 1994-1995 parliament, and Valentin Makalkin, a member of the Progress parliamentary faction, which was composed of deputies from the Socialist Party and the People's Congress.[6]

A similar but far more pronounced pattern of opposition activity occurred in Belarus in 1995-1996, when a number of parliamentarians joined the opposition to the president after Lukashenka dissolved parliament and called for early elections. As in Kazakhstan, those legislators who had been most critical of Lukashenka's policies found themselves unable to regain their seats and out of work. These included Alyaksandr Dabravol'skii (Dobrovol'skii), Syarhei (Sergei) Kalyakin, Alyaksandr Bukhvostau (Aleksandr Bukhvostov), Vasil Bykau (Vasilii Bykov), Syamyon (Semen) Domash (also former Governor of Hrodna [Grodno] province from 1994-1996); Uladzimir Hancharyk (Vladimir Goncharik), Lyudmila Hraznova (Graznova), Andrei Klimau (Klimov), Petr Krauchanka (Kravchenko), and three former parliamentary speakers, Syamyon (Semen) Sharetskii, Stanislav Shushkevich, and Mechislau Hryb (Mechislav Grib). According to one scholar of Belarusian politics,

> The [1995-1996 parliamentary] crisis transformed the most unlikely individuals into defenders of parliamentary values and constitutionalism. Speaker Myacheslau Hryb, for one, broke with his record of lame complacency to become an outspoken

[6] Author's interviews with Serkibolsyn Abdil'din, Almaty, April 2007, with Peter Svoik, Almaty, January 2007, with anonymous political observers, Almaty, March and April 2007, and with anonymous Kazakh-language journalist, Almaty, April 2007. See also Makalin (2007).

Lukashenka critic" (Mihalisko 1997, 266).

Unlike in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan during this same period, Lukashenka was faced with a veritable stream of defectors from among his political appointees, many of whom had formed the campaign team that helped Lukashenka get into power in the first place. In a review of a biography of Lukashenka written by a former member of the ruling coalition, Silitski explains,

> [Lukashenka's] team was drawn from the generation of mavericks who, like himself, entered the political scene in the early 1990s. Most of his initial supporters were young, ambitious, and reckless politicians… who strove to replace the old guard but could not do it alone. Many of them truly hoped to transform Belarus into a modern, democratic state with a market economy. They bet on Lukashenka to break the wall, in hopes that this supposed simpleton would pave the way for them to govern behind the scenes (2005, 82).

The exodus of elites – what has been described as a "massive departure of… professionals-pragmatics from the Lukashenka team" (Koktysh 2000, 106) – began in 1994 and continued through 1996. Prominent members who became alienated and joined the political opposition include Viktar Hanchar (Viktor Gonchar), who led Lukashenka's electoral campaign and was appointed vice premier; Alyaksandr Fyaduta (Aleksandr Feduta), an activist in Lukashenka's electoral campaign and head of the department of social-political information under the Presidential Administration; National Bank chairman Stanislau Bakhandkevich (Stanislav Bogdankevich); Minister of Internal Affairs Yurii Zakharenka (Zakharenko); Dzmitri Bulakhau (Dmitrii Bulakhov), a member of Lukashenka's electoral campaign; former Minister of Defense Pavel Kazlouski (Kazlovskii); and Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Sannikau (Sannikov).[7]

One reason for the massive defection of elites in Belarus at this time, especially in comparison with a smaller defection in Kazakhstan, may be the difference in time that the

[7] For a first-hand account of these defections, see Feduta (2005).

presidents had been in office at the time of parliament's dissolution. Lukashenka, formerly a member of parliament, was a relative newcomer to national politics and had taken many elites by surprise by winning the country's first presidential election. Perhaps sensing the new president's weakness, defectors may have expected that their move to publicly oppose him would have a stronger effect than it actually did. Contrast this to the much smaller defection of disgruntled parliamentarians in Kazakhstan at around the same time. Nazarbaev had been in power since Soviet times and had the backing not only of the coercive organs and security forces, but of the majority of political elites at the time, as well. Whereas Lukashenka, having come from the provincial and lower level elite of Mogilev province, was a near outsider, Nazarbaev was a quintessential insider.[8] With the removal of Abdil'din, the president's strongest opponent in parliament, Nazarbaev emerged the clear winner. It was thus reasonable for rational elites to remain loyal rather than take the risk of defection.

The widespread defection of parliamentary deputies and close members of Lukashenka's ruling coalition did not seem to matter very much in the long run. While parliamentarians were "… outraged by the attempt to strip [them] of their immunity and at other examples of Lukashenka's concerted usurpation of [the legislature's] powers…" (Mihalisko 1997, 265) and fiercely resisted the growing strength of the executive branch, in the end, their efforts were not able to prevent the president from concentrating power in the executive. According to opposition leader Dabravol'skii (Dobrovol'skii), "after being driven away from parliament, the opposition could no longer bother [*pomishat'*] those in power [*vlast'*]" (2002, 150). Indeed, once out of office, those who formed the first wave of opposition to Lukashenka were relegated to what Silitski terms a "parallel society" (2003,

[8] In interviews with an anonymous Belarusian political observer, Minsk, March 2008, and an anonymous head of a television station, Bishkek, September 2007, both highlighted Nazarbaev's insider status, as compared to Lukashenka and Akaev when they first came to power.

50) and unable to affect the political or economic course set by Lukashenka.

The same can be said of Kazakhstan's parliamentarians turned opposition leaders. In fact, the majority of opposition leaders – whether from civil society or from the ruling elite – has been unable to create lasting and significant political change. In a 2009 interview, long-time Kazakh opposition leader Karishal Asanov describes his series of triumphs against Nazarbaev during the early years of independence (Ryskozha 2009); yet, the reader is left with the impression that these recollections of small victories remain just that, memories that most have long forgotten.

Unlike in Belarus and Kazakhstan, in Kyrgyzstan the dissolution of parliament in 1994 did not result in the widespread defection of parliamentarians, although there had been "growing legislative resistance to government corruption and mismanagement" in the 1990s (Khamidov 2002b). It was not until 2005 that Akaev's effort to usurp legislators' powers and privileges stimulated widespread defection among parliamentarians. Some Kyrgyz observers have noted that, during the 2005 parliamentary elections, Akaev unintentionally displeased a number of his former allies who had been assured of the president's support and were certain to win a seat in parliament.

Reasons for the defection of parliamentarians in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 were similar: the attempt to restructure the composition of parliament by excluding certain members from their positions of power and economic privilege, and a sense that their status and renown would help them regain their positions of power. At the same time, unlike in Belarus and Kazakhstan, defectors from the Kyrgyz parliament at this point in time were less concerned with protecting the power of parliament as a political institution against the anti-democratic incursions of the president. During his long tenure, Akaev had, like other post-Soviet

autocrats, whittled away most of parliament's autonomy and concomitantly extended the powers of the presidency using referenda and other means. By 2005, parliamentarians were accustomed to the rules of the game and had come to benefit from government corruption and parliamentary immunity.

Another key difference between the president's confrontation with parliamentarians in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 and that which had taken place in Belarus and Kazakhstan in the mid 1990s lies in their noticeably divergent outcomes. While parliamentarians in Kazakhstan and Belarus and their active supporters (themselves small in number) were marginalized with relative ease, defections from the ruling coalition – including among business elites running for office – proved to be Akaev's downfall. Chapter five analyzes the 2005 defection in more depth, but it should be mentioned here that part of the reason for the contrast in outcome lay in the different kinds of resources members of parliament had available to them in Kyrgyzstan in 2005. As a result of market reforms such as large- and small-scale privatization, members of parliament who were also business elites had at their disposal an independent source of wealth upon which to draw when the president took action they saw as threatening. They used this wealth to mobilize supporters from their towns and electoral districts, who went out into the streets to contest the election results. As one Kyrgyz political observer notes,

> Among the underlying reasons that explain the success of the Kyrgyz mobilization are the privatization and decentralization processes that have occurred in Kyrgyzstan in the past ten years. Privatization and decentralization reforms under former President Askar Akaev produced wealthy individuals and local networks that have gained significant autonomy from central authorities. [Parliamentarians] Atambaev, Sariev, Babanov and other influential leaders of the opposition have made fortunes on the chaotic mass privatization processes that occurred in Kyrgyzstan during the1990s, and have today built vast financial conglomerates (Khamidov 2006b, 41).

Elite Defectors from the Ruling Coalition

In sharp contrast to Belarus and Kazakhstan, it was highly unusual for political elites under Akaev to defect to the political opposition in the 1990s. Two exceptions were retiring Deputy Minister of National Security Miroslav Niyazov, who first publicly opposed Akaev when he retired in 1996,[9] and a very prominent member of the ruling coalition, Feliks Kulov, who defected to the opposition in 1999 and announced his intention to run in the upcoming presidential elections (Kulov 1999; Otorbaeva 1999; Sydykova 1999). While Niyazov was not punished for his defection, Kulov – considered the president's strongest opponent at the time – was sentenced to ten years of imprisonment on corruption charges in 2001.

Although some elites from Kyrgyzstan's southern political establishment had become disgruntled early on (in 1991) when Akaev was chosen to replace then First Secretary and head of the Communist Party, Absamat Masaliev, who was from the south, it was not until the 2000s that defectors from the political elite became more common than opposition leaders from outside of the ruling coalition.[10] In the second half of the 1990s, independent journalists, including sisters Bermet Bukasheva and Zamira Sydykova, columnist and assistant editor of *Moya Stolitsa Novosty* Rina Prijivoit, and editor of the *Svobodnye Gory* newspaper Lyudmilla Jolmukhamedova, continued to publicly criticize Akaev's policies, the growing concentration of wealth, and the impoverishment of the average citizen.[11] To their voices were added business elites-turned-opposition leaders Adakhan Madumarov and Daniyar Usenov, both of whom had secured seats in parliament.

From 2000 to 2005, a number of defectors from the political elite emerged as public

[9] Author's interviews with Miroslav Niyazov, Bishkek, February 2008, and with Kulov's assistant, Emil' Aliev, Bishkek, March 2007.
[10] Author's interview with anonymous parliamentary expert, Bishkek, February 2008.
[11] Author's interview with Lyudmilla Jolmukhamedova, Bishkek, September 2007.

critics of Akaev, including former Minister of Foreign Affairs Muratbek Imanaliev, presidential press secretary Kanybek Imanaliev (of no relation to Muratbek Imanaliev), and former Minister of Foreign Affairs Roza Otunbaeva. One of the reasons for these defections, according to interviews with defectors and political observers, was Akaev's cadre policy, in which political posts were being bought and sold (International Crisis Group 2004; Marat 2006). As one political observer commented, "The reality of the situation is that all of these positions were for sale, and they were sold to loyal and to non-loyal people. The president's wife was often implicated in this abuse of presidential power."[12] The sale of posts to the highest bidder would prove problematic for Akaev when it came time to shore up elite support in the face of the "tulip revolution" of 2005. In the meantime, it was also a source of alienation for political elites who, as experienced and well-educated professionals, found themselves surrounded increasingly by those who had bought their way into government. These incompetent newcomers' only objective was to enrich themselves, without any regard for affairs of the state or national interests.[13]

Other political elites who had been members of Akaev's coalition joined the opposition in response to specific policies that were widely unpopular. Parliamentarian Azimbek Beknazarov, whom Akaev had appointed General Attorney for Jalal-Abad province in the 1990s, became a vocal opposition leader when President Akaev signed a secret treaty with China in late 2001 that ceded a large swath of territory to Kyrgyzstan's larger and more

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[12] Author's interview with anonymous political observer, Bishkek, September 2007. In an interview with the anonymous head of a public opinion research company (Bishkek, November 2007), the director mentioned that someone in the Akaev administration had approached her with an offer to head the president's social research department. The appointment, however, came with a price of $300,000, and she declined the offer.

[13] Author's interviews with anonymous former National Security officer, Bishkek, December 2007, with anonymous former National Security Ministry appointee, Bishkek, March 2007; and with former political defector and current president of the Institute for Public Policy think tank, Muratbek Imanaliev, Bishkek, December 2007.

powerful neighbor (Khamidov 2002b). Although this piece of land was not in Beknazarov's electoral district, he explained that his district in the south had important similarities with the area that had been given to China, and his constituents felt a sense of camaraderie with those who had lost their land without the chance to vote on the matter and be heard. Thereafter, Beknazarov was charged for crimes that he had allegedly committed six years before, when he was working as the Jalal-Abad district attorney. Akaev's government was largely discredited when security forces opened fire on and killed nine Beknazarov supporters who had gathered to protest his arrest.

Unlike in Kyrgyzstan, where defectors from among the political elite gained momentum beginning in 1999, in Belarus after 1996 there was a long break in defections from the political elite. After a five-year lull, Mikhail Marynich and Alyaksandr Milinkevich both joined the opposition during Belarus's second presidential election, held in 2001 (Sannikov 2005; Silitski 2005).[14] Milinkevich defected to the opposition to head the election campaign of Syamyon Domash, who was an opposition candidate for president. Milinkevich and Domash had served together as vice governor and governor of Grodno province in the mid-1990s. After 2001, two more political elites – Syarhei Skryabets (Sergei Skrebets) in 2004 and Alyaksandr Kazulin (Kozulin) in 2005 –defected to the opposition. According to one source, Skryabets, a deputy in the House of Representatives from 2000 to 2004, had been a vociferous critic of Lukashenka's policies while in parliament and, as a result, did not win reelection.[15] Kazulin, a former deputy minister of education (1992-1996), had served as the rector of Belarus State University (1996-2003), but was dismissed from his position due to a corruption scandal. Kazulin has been described as a "former academic who had long

[14] See also RFE/RL Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova Report, November 1, 2006, volume 8, number 37. Available at: http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1343906.html. Last accessed March 15, 2008.
[15] Author's interview with anonymous opposition member, Minsk, March 2008.

collaborated with Lukashenka, but turned against him after being fired … in 2003" (Silitski 2006a, 141-142). Since Kazulin, no elites have defected to the opposition.

The Political Opposition in Parliament

Under Lukashenka, Nazarbaev, and Akaev, a few opposition members have slipped into the legislature (or emerged as public critics of the president while in the legislature), but at no time were they numerically large enough to serve as a serious threat to the president. As we have seen, Lukashenka and Nazarbaev in the mid-1990s rid themselves of parliaments that had predated their presidencies and made sure that the most independent deputies who had blocked the presidents' agendas in the past were not reelected. Thereafter, the legislatures were "pocket" (*karmannyi*) parliaments that rarely resisted the presidents' will. At the same time, however, until fairly recently not even "strong" autocrats like Lukashenka and Nazarbaev were able to completely lock out opposition voices from parliament. This explains, among other instances, the Respublika faction in Belarus's House of Representatives (2000-2004), members of which were not reelected in 2004; the election of Communist Party leader Abdil'din to Kazakhstan's lower house in 2000; and the unexpected emergence of parliamentary deputy businessman Tolegen Tokhtasynov and Senator Zauresh Battalova as outspoken Kazakh opposition leaders in 2001.

In Kyrgyzstan under Akaev, opposition parliamentarians were more common, but still far from the norm. Tekebaev, mentioned above, had been an opposition legislator from his first term in office in 1991 and remained in office throughout the Akaev years (Orlova 2007).[16] Other opposition parliamentarians from the south included Adakhan Madumarov and Usen Sydykov. Three northern opposition leaders who held seats in parliament were

[16] Author's interview with Omurbek Tekebaev, Bishkek, March 2007.

business elites Almazbek Atambaev, and Bolotbek Sherniyazov, and Daniyar Esenov. Despite the existence of a handful of opposition deputies throughout Akaev's tenure,

> … parliament was always dominated by pro-presidential deputies, and when the president really wanted a certain law passed, parliament passed it. From this point of view, parliament was never really a strong branch of government. The president could do what he wanted. The only thing that made Kyrgyzstan's parliament different from other parliaments, like that of Uzbekistan, for example, is that there were always opposition members in parliament who at least articulated opinions opposite to the view of the president. This gave the impression that our parliament was independent and deputies could say what they wanted. This was true [to a degree], but in reality there were very few such deputies. When it came to issues of importance to the president, the parliament did not stand in the way.[17]

Youth Activists, Civil Society, and the Political Opposition

In recent years, the composition of the political opposition in Belarus has dramatically changed. As the representative of a U.S.-funded nonprofit organization that has worked closely with the Belarusian opposition explained, "In addition to national opposition leaders, there are hundreds of young local and regional leaders in Belarus" carrying out public education campaigns and organizing street protests.[18] He notes that today's opposition in Belarus is synonymous with grassroots, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), explaining that "the overlap between opposition NGOs and opposition political parties is almost 100%."

Replacing former political elites who were pushed out of power by the president or disenchanted defectors, the Belarusian opposition is now composed primarily by young activists looking to the Baltic states and Western Europe as political and economic models

[17] Author's interview with anonymous political observer, Bishkek, September 2008.
[18] Author's correspondence with anonymous U.S. government-funded international NGO, February 2008.

for their country's development.[19] Table 4.1 lists four prominent young activists, who have been jailed several times for participation in protests: Andrei Kim, activist from the Initiative civic campaign, Zmitser (Dmitrii) Dashkevich and Pavel Sevyarynets (Severinets), leaders of the Young Front (*Malady Front* in Belarusian and *Molodoi Front* in Russian), and Aleksei Shidlovskii, a leader of the Zubr youth movement, which was formed with the help of Charter '97, an opposition-minded civic organization that was itself established by some of the parliamentarians who had been removed from office during the 1995-1996 parliamentary crisis.[20] In the face of formidable obstacles, there are a surprising number of young activists who have been willing to serve jail time for participating in politically taboo causes, including pro-Europe and anti-Lukashenka protest activities (Zolotinskii 2007). Shidlovskii is currently in political exile, while Kim, Sevyarnets, and Dashkevich have each spent time in prison for engaging in political protests, as have other youth activists.[21]

In Kyrgyzstan, as well, a number of domestic and foreign political observers have noted the relatively high profile of civil society organizations among the ranks of the opposition (Khamidov 2006; Kuzio 2006; Marat 2004). Leaders of civil society organizations commonly associated with the political opposition to Akaev have included Ramazan Dyryldaev, chairman of the Kyrgyz Committee for Human Rights (KCHR); Tursunbek Akunov, head of the Human Rights Movement of Kyrgyzstan; Nataliya Ablova, head of the Kyrgyz-American Bureau for Human Rights; Edil' Baisalov, former head of the

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[19] Author's interviews with anonymous opposition member, anonymous NGO leader, and political observer and commentator Leonid Zaiko, Minsk, April 2008.

[20] The unregistered Zubr "self-liquidated" after the 2006 presidential election, which resulted in Lukashenka's reelection for the second time. The catalyst for Zubr's dissolution, according to Shidlovskii, was the group's inability to achieve the goals it had laid out for the election. See "Belorysskoe dvizhenie 'Zubr' samolikvidiruetsya," *Podrobnosti*, May 5, 2006. Available at: http://www.podrobnosti.ua/society/2006/05/05/310651.html. Last accessed May 6, 2008.

[21] For more on individual political prisoners, see http://www.charter97.org/ru/news/hottopics/.

Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society; Tolekan Ismailova, former President of the Kyrgyzstani NGO Coalition and chair of the non-profit group Civil Society Against Corruption; and Asiya Sasykbaeva, head of the Interbilim NGO.[22] A few intrepid young people who were active in the opposition under Akaev were Baisalov, cited above, and the activists who founded Kel'Kel', an organization of election observers made up of university students in the weeks prior to the 2005 parliamentary elections.[23] Compared to the number of youth activists in Belarus, however, in Kyrgyzstan there have been far fewer young activists willing and able to offer sustained support to the political opposition. Furthermore, the contribution of organized youth movements, in particular that of Kel'Kel', to Akaev's downfall appears to have been limited (Khamidov 2006a).

In Kazakhstan, in sharp contrast to Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, young people are completely absent from the ranks of the opposition. In fact, today organized grassroots opposition to Nazarbaev is virtually non-existent. Whereas in Belarus the NGO sector is closely integrated with the opposition and in Kyrgyzstan civil society has been cited as a mobilizing force against presidents Akaev and Bakiev, in Kazakhstan, the opposition in recent years has been almost exclusively elite-based. At a rally in February 2007 marking a year since the death of prominent opposition leader Altynbek Sarsenbaev, opposition leader Tolen Tokhtasynov urged the crowd of mostly pensioners and Kazakh language speakers to bring out their families and friends to show their support for the opposition's cause. He lamented the fact that the older generation dominated the protestors and that there were no

[22] According to the International Crisis Group (2004), other members of Kyrgyzstan's hard-line or radical opposition in the last years of Akaev's tenure include Tursunbek Akunov, head of the Human Rights Movement of Kyrgyzstan; Giaz Tokombaev, leader of the Republican party; and Dosbol Nur uulu, head of the Jana Kyrgyzstan party.

[23] Interestingly, in 2007 one of the Kel'Kel' founders, Alisher MamMasaliev, joined the presidential Ak Jol party founded by current president Bakiev and now serves as an Ak Jol youth organizer and member of parliament. Author's interview with Alisher Masaliev, Bishkek, October 2007.

young people in their midst. "We need young people to participate! We need their energy and their support!" he exclaimed. The crowd cheered in agreement, but the question remained, how could the opposition attract young activists when it had been thus far unsuccessful at doing so?

The pattern found in the data suggests that the chances of civil society activists and young people actively supporting the Kazakh opposition are slim. Opposition leaders may have done little to win these two groups over to their cause, but there is an additional structural phenomenon at play, one that a comparison between the three cases highlights. In Kazakhstan, where the economy has been growing at a relatively fast pace (in large part due to the oil boom, which has been slowed by the 2008 financial crisis), young people – those who have been active in civil society in Belarus and Kyrgyzstan – are able to find more lucrative work elsewhere, especially in the private sector.

When presented with employment alternatives, young people are more likely to choose less risky and better paying work in the private sector or even in government over paid or volunteer work with opposition parties or non-governmental organizations. If opposition parties are able to hire young people with highly sought after skills, such as a background in business or a degree in computer programming, their time on the job is often short-lived. Young specialists are too often pulled away by private firms able to offer more competitive salaries.[24] In Kazakhstan it is older people, especially retirees, who are more likely to take on the low-paid work of campaigning and soliciting petitions for opposition organizations.[25]

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[24] Author's interview with anonymous public relations staff member of the Naghyz Ak Zhol opposition party, Almaty, April 2007.
[25] Author's interview with Marzhan Aspandiyarova, head of the Almaty branch of the former Naghyz Ak Zhol opposition party, Almaty, February 2007.

In Belarus, young people face a different set of incentives when considering participation in civil society and political opposition organizations. Despite widespread government propaganda that life in Belarus is more prosperous and equitable than that of its neighbors, young people are surrounded by accessible examples of economic prosperity and greater economic opportunity in the more open markets found in the Baltics and in Central Europe.[26] While pensioners and older people of working age value economic security afforded by Belarus's "socially-oriented economy," young people are more likely to negatively view the country's closed political economic system and yearn for more economic freedom (Ioffe 2008; Manaev 2006; Rotman and Danilov 2003).

Compare Belarus's position vis-à-vis its more market oriented and prosperous European neighbors with the position that Kazakhstan holds in Central Asia. Whereas Belarus has become an economic backwater compared to surrounding countries, Kazakhstan is widely considered the most advanced economy among its poorer neighbors.[27] This could explain why young people have come to play a large role in civil society groups that call for economic and political opening and a dialog with the European Union, agenda items that opposition leaders, such as Kazulin, Milinkevich, and Sannikau, also support. The participation of young people yearning for political and economic reforms that would bring Belarus closer to Western Europe in street actions has become an established feature of that country's opposition politics.

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[26] Author's interviews with anonymous entrepreneur and youth activist, Minsk, April and May 2008.
[27] According to Leonid Zaiko, during the Soviet Union Belarus's products were of better quality than those produced in Eastern Europe, but since independence has fallen behind due to a lack of competition. Government subsidies keep many industries in operation, and Belarusian products that cannot compete on the international market are still being made for the closed domestic market. Author's interview with Leonid Zaiko, Minsk, April 2008. Along with Russia, Kazakhstan has in recent years become the destination for low-paid, illegal migrant workers from the rest of Central Asia.

Likewise, young people in Kyrgyzstan may be more likely to work in (and establish) non-governmental organizations than their peers in Kazakhstan because of the dire economic situation that has been plaguing the country since independence. According to a U.S. diplomat with over ten years experience working with NGOs in Kyrgyzstan, the contrast between the development of civil society in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan is very much the result of economic factors. "Unlike in Kazakhstan," he explained, "the lack of economic opportunity [in Kyrgyzstan] has gone a long way in channeling people with energy and ambition to the NGO sector."[28] Given Kyrgyzstan's dependence upon foreign assistance, there are also opportunities for NGOs to win grants to carry out specific projects that speak to the interests and concerns of young people. This may also draw some young people into civil society, as well as into projects funded by international organizations that could be considered oppositional in nature, such as fostering political engagement and critical thinking, establishing debate clubs, and supporting independent journalists.

Business Elites and the Political Opposition

Tables 4.1 through 4.3 document a final difference in the composition of the political opposition in Belarus as compared to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan: the presence of business elites among defectors from the ruling coalition to the opposition. According to the data, elite defections in general, and especially among business elites, are unusual, even in market reforming personalist autocracies like Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In Kyrgyzstan, a few business elites joined the opposition in the late 1990s, including Almazbek Atambaev, Daniyar Usenov, and Bolotbek Sherniyazov. However, most of the business elites who defected from President Akaev's ruling coalition did so during the 2005 parliamentary

[28] Author's interview with U.S. State Department employee, Bishkek, November 2007.

elections. In Kazakhstan, defectors from the business elite have been limited to one episode in 2001, although some Kazakhstani business elites are said to still to provide clandestine financial support to the opposition.

In contrast, I encountered only two cases linking business elites to the opposition in Belarus. Anatolii Krasovskii, who has been described as Viktar Hanchar's financial backer, joined the opposition in 1995 (Silitski 2005, 88). A year later, wealthy business leader and parliamentarian Andrei Klimau (Klimov) similarly defected to the opposition. Both defections took place within the first two years of Lukashenka's presidency and at the cusp of Belarus's short experiment with market reforms. More recently, an entrepreneur (*individual'nyi predprinimatel'*) named Syarhey (Sergei) Parsyukevich announced his intention to join the opposition to President Lukashenka in 2008. Interestingly, there is no equivalent to Parsyukevich found among the political opposition in either of the market reforming autocracies in this study. In chapter five, I revisit these findings and link them to the economic reform regime.

An Aside Regarding Motive

One theme that arose out of the interviews I conducted in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, as well as in prior research on post-Soviet elite defectors, is that elites who defect to the opposition are those who were "pushed away from the feeding trough [*kormushka*]."[29] In other words, defectors are driven not by a commitment to democratic

[29] Quoted in author's interview with Nurbakh Rustemov, parliamentarian and Nur-Otan party member, Almaty, January 2007. This theme is echoed in author's interviews with Sergei Duvanov, Almaty, February 2007, with Rozlana Taukina, opposition journalist and chair of the Foundation for Journalists in Trouble, Almaty, March 2007, with two anonymous political observers for the Kazakhstan edition of a Russian business journal, Almaty, March 2007, and Astana, May 2007, and with anonymous NGO leader, April 2007. Author's interviews with four anonymous Kyrgyz political observers, Bishkek, September 2007, October 2007, and November 2007, with three

ideals, but for reasons having much more to do with their self-interested desire for power, influence, and wealth (Khamidov 2002a; Radnitz 2009). Defectors, according to this view, are those elites whom the president has offended or insulted (*obidil*) in some manner. Offended elites usually refer to those who were not reappointed or placed in another position after having been removed from office, as well as to those elites who have been excluded from some source of wealth or lucrative enterprise.

There is evidence of this occurring in each of the three cases. In Belarus, after Kazulin, the former rector of a major university, was removed from his post, he reappeared as a leader of the opposition. In Kazakhstan, some explain the unexpected defections of former Otan head and speaker of parliament Zharmakhan Tuyakbai and long-time Nazarbaev ally and former Almaty governor Zamanbek Nurkadilov in 2004 as the result of personal disputes they had with the president. Tuyakbai's defection after the parliamentary elections held that year, in which he publicly denounced the elections as illegitimate due to widespread fraud, has been described as the result of his expulsion from the Otan party list and Nazarbaev's decision not to offer him a post in government. Many political observers in Kazakhstan similarly explain the emergence of the Democratic Choice movement as rooted first and foremost in economic self-interest, rather than a desire to further the common good (Junisbai and Junisbai 2005).

Kyrgyz defectors from the ruling coalition have been understood in the same way. As the Kyrgyz head of a Western-funded NGO that promotes independent journalism in Central Asia noted, "Resource-based explanations are important to understand the development of the political opposition here in Kyrgyzstan." He continued,

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anonymous independent journalists, Bishkek, September 2007, and with two anonymous NGO leaders, Bishkek, October 2007.

> Elites who are cut off from power [*vlast'*] turn into the opposition. A person who loses power or is excluded not only loses [these] levers, but also income. Political status is important: the more influential a politician is, the more well known he is, the more are his chances to build up his financial capital. He is in a better position to protect and keep his earnings.[30]

Because so many elites have been engaged in corruption and other unsavory practices to obtain wealth, once out of power, they are in a vulnerable position. An opposition leader interviewed by Huskey and Iskakova refers explicitly to this threat: "Many officials in government are guilty of sins...but *vlast'* forgives them as long as they remain in power. When they leave, they are fair game, so there is an incentive to stay connected to the authorities and not go into the opposition…" (2009, 15). Government officials are vulnerable not only to corruption charges, but – in market reforming personalist autocracies – to attempts by other elites to confiscate or capture a piece of their economic assets.[31]

Although out-of-favor elites may still maintain connections to those in power, they have little to offer by way of a *quid pro quo* for assistance and are thus less able to use these connections for favors or protection. Two former political elites in Kazakhstan – one who joined the opposition and one who chose to exit government service and find work in the NGO sector – noted that once they were out of office, the connections that they had nurtured with other high-level elites during their time in power were now worth little.[32] After resigning from his post in the presidential administration, one of them explained, "those upon whom I used to call for help and whom I had helped in the past were suddenly closed to me."[33]

In contrast to the understanding of elite motives for defection offered by a number of

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[30] Author's interview with anonymous independent journalist, Bishkek, November 2007.
[31] Author's interview with Rozlana Taukina, Almaty, March 2007.
[32] Author's interviews with defector from the political elite Baltash Tursumbaev, Almaty, March 2007, and with anonymous former political elite, Almaty, February 2007.
[33] Author's interview with anonymous former political elite, Almaty, February 2007.

interviewees in this study, grassroots opposition leaders and members tended to be characterized as idealists eager for democracy for its own sake, rather than as means or slogan devised to further their personal self-interest. Respondents characterized the early waves of civil society-based opposition in all the three cases, as well as youth movements and civil society NGOs supportive of the current political opposition in Belarus, as seeking to further democratization, rather than as actors driven primarily by self-interest. Interviews conducted in Kyrgyzstan by Huskey and Iskakova (2009) evince a similar pattern in which political values maintain greater salience for opposition leaders from the grassroots than for elite defectors. I return to the contrast between civic-minded grassroots opposition leaders and self-interested elite defectors in chapter six.

Testable Hypotheses Revisited

The patterns and differences found in the composition of the political opposition in the three cases are an appropriate starting point for assessing the theories of elite defection summarized in chapter two. To recap, explanations of defection address two separate questions, listed in Table 2.1. The first asks, what kinds of elites are likely to defect? The second asks, when are elites likely to defect?

In response to the "who" question, the data analyzed in this chapter suggest that for the most part defectors have had long-term and close relations with the president and other elites in the ruling coalition. Defectors have been presidential appointees, in some cases holding a variety of high-ranking posts throughout government. In the case of Lukashenka, a significant number of elite defectors came directly from the original campaign team who helped him get into office in 1994. The same can be said of defectors from Akaev's political team, which gained momentum in the 2000s, and of all of the defectors from Nazarbaev's

ruling coalition. Thus, expectations of the elite consensus approach regarding the extent of contact between elite factions are not borne out in the data.

However, he elite consensus model does a better job of explaining the emergence of opposition leaders in Belarus and Kazakhstan from parliament in the mid-1990s. Members of parliament who did not regain their seats after parliament was dissolved and new elections held had not been members of the president's political team, nor had they gained political power as a result of their affiliation with the president. Vociferous critics of the president in these early independent-minded parliaments are thus accurately described as having had conflict-ridden interactions with the president's faction and as vying for power against the executive in a zero-sum game.

Explanations of defection based on incumbent and institutional weakness suggest that those outside of the president's purview and whom the president has a difficult time controlling are likely candidates for defection. Clan leaders and regional elites in the provinces are two examples of those to whom state sanctions may not apply. The data on opposition leaders and elite defectors lend some support to the hypothesis that elites with kinship ties in the countryside have an increased probability of defecting to the opposition, but only in the Kyrgyz case. However, in very few cases in the three countries have governors or mayors defected to the opposition, and those who did were not noted for having been able to mobilize the provincial population behind their cause. As we will see in chapter five, Kyrgyz defectors with strong ties to kinship or local patronage networks in the regions (i.e., the countryside, outside of the capital city) were not provincial governors, but rather business and political elites sitting in parliament or running for parliament.

Given the data presented in this chapter, it is difficult to assess the fourth hypothesis,

which expects elites who have been excluded from the inner circle to be likely candidates for defection. In chapter five, however, I find that the inner circle is a useful tool for understanding elite defectors in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the two cases of market reforming autocracies. The divide between elites inside and outside of the closed circle around the personalist president does not do as well at explaining defections in market rejecting Belarus, however.

Finally, the market reform explanation I provide in chapter two yields two testable hypotheses linking the economic reform regime to the types of elite defector. Hypothesis five and its alternative (5A) expect defections from the business elite to occur in market reforming autocracies, but not in market rejecting autocracies. The longitudinal data analyzed in this chapter show this to be the case: Business elites have defected in market reforming Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, but not in Belarus after Lukashenka reversed its reform course in 1996. A detailed explanation of why this has been the case will be offered in chapter five.

Regarding the question of *when* elites are likely to defect, the data support all three hypotheses (H6, H6A, and H7 in Table 2.1). Widespread elections have taken place during and in the aftermath of parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan and Belarus, but not in Kazakhstan. Instead, in Kazakhstan widespread elections took place outside of the election cycle. Expectations of defection during periods of perceived presidential vulnerability also find validation in the data, given that Akaev had become acutely unpopular among elites by 2005, and Lukashenka's hold on power appeared uncertain when he first assumed the presidency. Elites who had supported Lukashenka during his first presidential campaign incorrectly assumed he would be malleable and easily controlled. That elites misperceived

the president's vulnerability suggests that perceptions can lead to widespread defection and yet not result in presidential turnover. In chapter six, I find that this was also the case with Kyrgyzstan's second and current president, Kurmanbek Bakiev, who appeared in 2007 to be on the brink of losing wholesale support of political and business elites, but regained control over the situation by the end of the year.

Conclusion

Highlighting the general difficulty elite defectors have faced in influencing political outcomes, the data show that personalist presidents in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan have emerged largely unscathed from individual instances of defection and periods of widespread defection. The probability that elite defections can alter political trajectories and create a viable alternative to authoritarian rule thus appears quite low. While all three cases have each had at least one period of widespread elite defection, for the most part these defections have done little to deter the establishment and persistence of personalist autocracies.

Prior to President Lukashenka's reversal of market reforms and consolidation of power in the presidency (1994-1996), two dozen or so political elites, including parliamentarians and members of the Lukashenka government, defected in protest of the president's efforts to strip governing institutions (apart from the executive) of power and prevent economic decentralization. In Kazakhstan, President Nazarbaev's main source of political opposition has come in the form of short-lived waves of limited elite defections since the mid-1990s. While individual defections took place throughout former President Akaev's tenure, groups of defectors united under a common banner or cause were unusual. Once in the opposition, defectors were rarely able to present a serious political threat, and the

presidents ignored or marginalized them without much consequence.

Yet, the widespread defection of business elites to the opposition – even if in a temporary alliance – has created political crises for two of the three personalist presidents. In Kazakhstan, long-standing economic conflict between financial-industrial groups in President Nazarbaev's inner circle and those outside of it came to a public head in fall 2001, when some of the country's wealthiest and most influential business elites defected to the opposition. A dozen members of the Kazakhstani business establishment, several high-ranking government officials, and three members of parliament defected from the ruling coalition and formed the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (*Demokraticheskii Vybor Kazakhstana* or DVK) opposition movement. The DVK was the first time that a group of wealthy and well-connected business elites openly and publicly challenged President Nazarbaev and the system of rule he had built.

In Kyrgyzstan, a dynamic similar to the unanticipated emergence of the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan culminated in widespread intra-elite conflict and defection during the 2005 parliamentary elections. As was true of the DVK, defectors from among Kyrgyzstan's business elite – those who had benefited from the president's economic policies and who had heretofore been his loyal supporters – joined defectors from the political elite to challenge the president. Once the results were tallied, the new parliament was filled with pro-Akaev deputies, as had been planned. Akaev, however, lost power before he could enjoy this victory. In a number of cases, the president's strategy during the elections worked against him, unexpectedly alienating his allies running for office and pushing them into the opposition. Elite defections during the Kyrgyz elections were in their early stages dispersed, spontaneous, and neither pre-planned nor coordinated, unlike the formation of the DVK.

Next, in chapter five, I revisit two claims made in chapter three. Namely, the market reform regime yields variation in the types of elite defection, and elite defection is associated with two additional and theoretically interesting political outcomes – the composition of and resources available to the political opposition and the probability that elite defection results in the overthrow of the personalist president. In the process, I analyze and compare cases of widespread elite defection in Kazakhstan (in 2001) and Kyrgyzstan (in 2005) and contrast these experiences with that of the political opposition in Belarus. Then, in chapter six, I compare the human and financial resources available to the political opposition in the three cases. I ask, what does it mean for the opposition to have financial resources but few human resources (as in Kazakhstan), young activists but no funding (as in Belarus), and a combination of money and active supporters among certain constituencies (as in Kyrgyzstan)?

Tables and Figures

Table 4.1 Key Figures in Belarus's Political Opposition*

Name of Opposition Leader	Background (Professional Experience/Posts Held)	Onset of Opposition Activity/Defection
	Joined the opposition prior to the Lukashenka presidency (pre-1994)	
Zianon Pazniak (Zenon Poznak)	Led Adradzhen'ne (Revival) National Front in late 80s; led the first opposition party, the Belarus Popular Front (BPF), formed in 1989 and registered as a political party in 93. The BPF won 26 seats in the 12th Supreme Soviet (90-1995), but held few committee chairs and no ministerial posts. The BPF has had no members in parliament since then. Pazniak has been in exile in Poland since 96 (first politician from post-communist region to request and receive political asylum in the U.S. [Mihalisko 1997]). The BPF split into two parties in 99; Pazniak became leader of the Conservative Christian Party.	Late soviet period
Vintsuk Viachorka (Verchorka)	In 79, formed the Belarusian Workshop, the first informal Belarusian youth organization. In 87 formed the Confederation of Belarus Organizations, which formed basis of the BPF. After BPF split in 99, became leader of the BPF.	Late soviet period
	Joined the opposition before presidential consolidation of powers (1994-1996)	
Alyaksandr Fyaduta (Aleksandr Feduta)	Activist in Lukashenka's electoral campaign in 94; headed the department of social-political information under the Presidential Administration; in December 94 resigned to protest political censorship; since 95 worked for variety of opposition publications (*Belarusskaya Delovaya Gazeta*, *Imya*, *Narodnaya Volya*); Belarusian correspondent for *Moskovskie Novosty* (since 98).	1994
Viktar Hanchar (Viktor Gonchar)	Led Lukashenka's electoral campaign in 94; appointed vice premier in 1994, resigned same year; Parliamentarian (13th Supreme Soviet); in 1996 Supreme Soviet appointed him chair of Central Election Committee. After announcing that 1996 referendum results were falsified, removed from post by presidential order; disappeared in May 99.	1994

Syarhei (Sergei) Kalyakin	Leader of the opposition Party of Communists (94-present), which split from the Communist Party of Belarus; Parliamentarian (13th Supreme Soviet); attempted to run for president in 01, but could not secure enough signatures.	1994
Stanislau Bakhandkevich (Stanislav Bogdankevich)	Chair of the National Bank under Lukashenka (1994-1995); resigned as part of the "massive departure of… professionals-pragmatics from the Lukashenka team" in 1995 (Koktysh 2000, 106). Formed the Civic Party in 1995; party's first leader (95-99). Civic Party won 21 seats in the 13th Supreme Soviet; leader of the Civic Action parliamentary faction.	1995
Alyaksandr Dabravolskii (Dobrovolskii)	Parliamentarian (13th Supreme Soviet); member of the parliamentarian Civic Action fraction; leader of the United Democratic Party (UDP), the first registered party in Belarus (November 90). In 95 UDP and the Civic Party formed opposition United Civic Party.	1995
Anatolii Krasovskii	Businessman, opposition leader V. Hanchar's financial backer (Silitski 2005, 88); disappeared in 99.	1995
Anatolii Levkovich	Organized movement of social-democratic, human rights & unions in Brest province (85); headed Brest oblast initiative group supporting presidential candidacy of Goncharik (01); chair, Social Democratic Hramada (05-07), co-chair, United Democratic Forces political council (07-present).	1995
Yurii Zakharenka (Zakharenko)	Major General; Minister of Internal Affairs (94-95); removed from position in 95 "for massive violation of financial discipline" (*Ukaz Prezidenta* #424 dated 10/16/95) after refusing to break a Minsk transit strike (Silitski 2005, 88); a leader of the United Civic Party (96); founder, Belarusian Congress of Officers (99); disappeared in May 99.	1995
Dzmitri Bulakhau (Dmitrii Bulakhov)	Parliamentarian (12th Supreme Soviet); member of Lukashenka's electoral campaign in 94; publicly criticized Lukashenka in 96. Not accepted by the opposition: "The opposition did not need Bulakhov… The [Popular] Front would never forgive him for impeding the referendum on the dissolution of the [12th] Supreme Soviet. The others [in the opposition] saw him as an outsider" (Martynovich 2006). Representative to the CIS managing organs (00-05); presidential assistant/presidential representative in the National Assembly (parliament) (06). Died of heart failure in September 06.	1996 (but returned to government service in 2000)

Alyaksandr Bukhvostau (Bukhvostov)	Chair, Labor Party (93-99); parliamentarian (13th Supreme Soviet). Did not recognize the results of the 96 referendum. Chair, Union of Automobile and Agricultural Workers (90-03); member, Congress of Democratic Forces (96-07).	1996
Vasil Bykau (Bykov)	Belarusian writer and intellectual. Member of Adradzhen'ne National Front during *glasnost'* (89); first signatory to Charter '97. In exile since 98.	1996
Myhail Chyhir (Mikhail Chigir)	Prime Minister (94-96); resigned in protest against the 96 referendum. Lived and worked in Moscow, Russia (96-99). Was leading candidate in alternative presidential elections of 99; sentenced in March 99 to three years for abuse of office during premiership; Supreme Court overturned the decision. Sentenced in July 02 to three years for tax evasion.	1996
Syamyon (Semen) Domash	Governor of Hrodna (Grodno) province (94-96); Parliamentarian (13th Supreme Soviet). Openly spoke out against the 96 referendum; signatory to Charter '97. Vice president, Belarusian Human Rights Convention (96-97); leader, Regional Belarus, an informal union of democratic organizations and parties in the regions. In 2001 presidential candidate, but withdrew from race.	1996
Uladzimir Hancharyk (Vladimir Goncharik)	Chairman of the Federation of Trade Unions (since 86); parliamentarian (13th Supreme Soviet); was united opposition candidate in 01 presidential election; "had few ties to the mainstream democratic opposition… failed in… attempts to win over high-ranking government or economic officials, who were either too scared or too amply rewarded to switch alliances" (Potocki 2002, 148)	1996
Lyudmila Hraznova (Graznova)	Parliamentarian (13th Supreme Soviet); formed Charter '97 opposition movement.	1996
Mechislau Hryb (Mechislav Grib)	Speaker of the 12th Supreme Soviet (successor to Shushkevich); former police general; member of the Social-Democratic Party Hramada (Gramada). Became openly critical of Lukashenka during parliamentary crisis of 95-96: "The crisis transformed the most unlikely individuals into defenders of parliamentary values and constitutionalism. Speaker Myacheslau Hryb, for one, broke with his record of lame complacency to become an outspoken Lukashenka critic" (Mihalisko 1997, 266).	1996
Pavel Kazlouski (Kazlovskii)	• Minister of Defense (92-94); among the "high-ranking soft-liners who… became prominent leaders of the anti-Lukashenka opposition" (Silitski 2003, 39); attempted to run for president in 01, but could not secure enough signatures; member, Political Council of the United Civic Party.	1996

Andrei Klimau (Klimov)	In mid-90s was listed in the top five well-known entrepreneurs; headed construction company, bank and newspaper; parliamentarian (13th Supreme Soviet); member, United Civic Party (since 97); in 98 arrested; in 00 sentenced to six years for massive theft and forgery; released in 02; in 05 arrested for organizing March protest action involving thousands of participants; sentenced to 1.5 years; released in 12/06; in 2007 arrested for internet publication; released in 2/08.	1996
Petr Krauchanka (Kravchenko)	Minister of Foreign Affairs (90-94); parliamentarian (13th Supreme Soviet). Among the "high-ranking soft-liners who… became prominent leaders of the anti-Lukashenka opposition" (Silitski 2003, 39); member, Social Democratic Hramada (95-96); ambassador to Japan and the Philippines (98-99).	1996 (but returned to government service in 1998)
Anatol Lyabedzka (Anatolii Lebedko)	Parliamentarian (12th & 13th Supreme Soviets); established the Belarusian Association of Young Politicians (92); member of Lukashenka's campaign election in 94; did not receive official post in government; chair of the United Civic Party since 00; arrested several times for opposition activities.	1996
Andrei Sannikau (Sannikov)	Deputy Foreign Minister (95-96); resigned in protest of referendum; founding member of Charter '97; member of the National Executive Committee (opposition shadow cabinet); leader of the "European Belarus" opposition movement.	1996
Syamyon (Semen) Sharetskii	Formed and served as first leader of the Agrarian Party of Belarus, which won 33 seats in the 13th Supreme Soviet; elected speaker of the 13th Supreme Soviet in 1/96; in exile in Lithuania since 97.	1996
Stanislav Shushkevich	Head of the Nuclear Physics Department, Belarus State University; chairman of the 12th Supreme Soviet (1991-1994); dismissed in 1/94; parliamentarian (13th Supreme Soviet); leader of the Social Democratic Party Hramada since 98.	1996
Mikola Statkevich	Founder and head, Belarusian Union of Soldiers (91-95); one of the founders (91) and chair of the Social Democratic Hramada (since 95); chair, National Hramada (since 96); arrested in 3/05, sentenced to two years of forced labor for organizing protests in 10/04.	1996

Joined the opposition during the era of personalist presidentialism (post-1996)		
Mikhail Marynich (Marinich)	Parliamentarian (12th Supreme Soviet); ambassador to the Czech Republic (94); Minister of Foreign Economic Relations (95-99); ambassador to Latvia, Estonia, and Finland (99-01); "defected to opposition during 2001 presidential election" (Silitski 2005, 92); arrested in 4/04, sentenced to five years for allegedly stealing computers from his NGO, released in 4/06.	2001
Alyaksandr (Aleksandr) Milinkevich	Deputy Mayor of Hrodna (Grodno) province (90-96); chair, Ratusha civic union of Grodno (96-03); headed Syamon Domash's presidential election campaign in 01; chosen united opposition candidate for 06 presidential election. "Veteran civil society organizer with strong roots in the NGO sector" (Silitski 2006, 141).	2001
Aleksei Shidlovskii	Leader of the Zubr (Bison) youth movement, made up of youth activists drawn from other organizations, patterned after Otpor, the Yugoslav youth movement that had played a leading role in toppling Milosevich. Zubr formed in early 01 by the NGO Charter '97 movement and dissolved in 06; in exile since 08.	2001
Pavel Sevyarynets (Severinets)	Co-founder (97) and chair (99), Young Front (*Mlada Front*), "the largest youth organization of a national-democratic orientation" (*Kto Est' Kto v Respublike Belarus'*); leader, unregistered Belarusian Christian Democratic Party; arrested in 98 for participation in a protest action organized by the opposition; in 5/05 sentenced three years for organizing the 10/04 street protests following the parliamentary elections/referendum; released in 07.	2004
Syarhei Skryabets (Sergei Skrebets)	Parliamentarian (00-04 House of Representatives); leader of the Respublika faction of the House (included Valerii Frolof, Vladimir Parfenovich, Vladimir Reznikov, Ivan Pashkevich, and Igor Baslyk); arrested in 5/06 for fraudulently securing bank loans; released in 11/06; elected to the executive committee of the Social Democratic Hramada (07).	2004
Alyaksandr Kazulin (Kozulin)	Deputy Minister of Education (92-96); rector of Belarus State University (96-03); dismissed from post due to a corruption scandal involving a factory; chair, Hramada Social Democratic Party (elected in 05); party candidate in the 06 presidential elections; in 6/06 sentenced 5.5 years for organizing protests in the wake of the presidential elections.	2005

Zmitser (Dmitrii) Dashkevich	Leader, Young Front (Malady Front); activist in Milinkevich's presidential campaign in 06; participated in post-election protests; arrested along with 500 youth activists; sentenced to 1.5 years; released in 1/08.	2006
Andrei Kim	Leader, Initiative youth organization since 07; activist in Milinkevich's presidential campaign in 06; participated in entrepreneurs street protest in 1/08; sentenced to 1.5 years for the use of force or threat of force against police officers; released in 8/08.	2006
Syarhey(Sergei) Parsyukevich	Arrested in 3/08, sentenced to 2.5 years imprisonment for participation in an entrepreneurs' protest action; released in 8/08.	2008

*Listed in approximate chronological order; when more than one leader is listed in a given year, names are ordered alphabetically.

Sources: Author's interviews, Charter '97 (http://www.charter97.org/ru/news/hottopics), *Kto Est' Kto v Respublike Belarus* (http://who.bdg.by); *Natsional'nyi Reestr Pravovykh Aktov RB: Ofitsial'noe Izdanie* (1999-2008),' *Politicheskaya Elita Belorusskikh Regionov* (http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/belregions)' Korosteleva 2003; Koktysh 2000; Koktysh 2005; Marples and Padhol 2006; Martynovich 2006; Matsuzato 2004; Mihalisko 1997; Potocki 2002; Silitski 2003; Silitski 2005; Silitski 2006

Table 4.2 Key Figures in Kazakhstan's Political Opposition*

Name of Opposition Leader	Background (Professional Experience/Posts Held)	Onset of Opposition Activity/Defection
Sergei Duvanov	Founder, Almaty People's Front (88); founder, *Mnenie* (Opinion) newspaper (89); founder, Association of Independent Social Organizations (ANOOK) (89); co-chair, Social-Democratic Party of Kazakhstan (90-92): founder, TVIN television company (91); founder, M television and radio company (95); director, PoliTon political discussion group and publisher of the 451 Farenheit newspaper (98-00); arrested in 02, sentenced to 3.5 years imprisonment for rape; released in 04; founder and director, Radio Inkar internet radio (07).	Late Soviet period
Khasen Kozha Akhmet	Founder, Zhel'toksan nationalist party (89-92); Zhel'toksan united with Azat and the Republican party (92-93); Zhel'toksan joined the National Democratic Party (94).	Late Soviet period
Olzhas Suleimenov	Founder, Nevada-Semipalatinsk Anti-nuclear Movement (89); co-chair, People's Congress of Kazakhstan (91-92).	Late Soviet period
Imash-uly Sarkytbek	Founder, Alash nationalist party (90-92); Alash and the Republican Party joined with the Zhel'toksan party in 92.	Late Soviet period
Sabet Kazi Akataev Marat Chormanov Mikhail Isinaliev	Founders and co-chairs, Azat nationalist party (90); Azat split into two wings, Azat and the Republican Party (91). "From its inception, the movement was headed by people directly connected to the regime" (Babak, Vaisman, and Wasserman 2004).	Late Soviet period
Karishal Asanov	Soviet dissident, writer; member, People's Congress of Kazakhstan (91-92); defendant in several cases of slander against the president.	1991

Mukhtar Shakhanov	Kazakh writer/intellectual; editor-in-chief, Zhalyn magazine (84-93); chair, Alma-Ata-Helsinki-Paris Democratic Committee on Human Rights (87-93); parliamentariany, Supreme Soviet (12th session); co-chair, People's Congress of Kazakhstan (91-92); ambassador to Kyrgyzstan (93-03); editor, Zhalyn magazine (03-04); Mazhilis deputy (04-07)	1991-1992
Nurbolat Masanov (1954-2006)	Expert/author of numerous articles on Kazakhstani politics; professor, Kazakh State University (1992-1998); co-founder, Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law (93-99); member, Board of Directors, Soros Foundation Kazakhstan (96-99); member, Central Council of the Kazakhstan Republican People's Party (RNPK) (98-03); president, Kazakhstan Association of Political Science (01-07); member, Political Council, Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (02-03).	1992
Irina Savostina	Pedagogue, school teacher (78-89); leader, Pokolenie pensioners' movement (92-present); consultant on wholesale purchases, Yntymak company (93-95); deputy, Almaty City *Maslikhat* (City Council) (94-99); co-chair, Forum of Democratic Forces of Kazakhstan (99); member, political advisory council, Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (05) member, political council, For a Fair Kazakhstan (05).	1992
Evgenii Zhovtis	Expert/author of numerous works on Central Asian and Kazakhstani politics; vice president, Independent Legal Center of Kazakhstan (92-96); chair of Board of Directors, Soros Kazakhstan (99-02); founder and director, Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law (93-present).	1992
Serikbolsyn Abdil'din	Leader, Communist Party of Kazakhstan; Speaker, Supreme Soviet (91-93); chair, coordinating council of the Republic civic union (94-96); professor, Agrarian University (94-99); parliamentarian (11th & 12th Supreme Soviets; 99-04); professor, Agrarian University (04-present).	1994

Valentin Makalkin	Deputy Director, Kazakh affiliate of Intertraining Association (91-92); parliamentarian; head specialist, Federation of Unions (92-94); parliamentarian, Supreme Soviet (94-95); legal consultant, AlmatyEnergo (96-99); correspondent, *Nachnem s Ponidel'nika* newspaper (96-99); Mazhilis deputy (99-04); deputy chair, union of metallurgical industrialists (04-present).	
Gaziz Aldamzharov	Chair, Gur'ev (Atyrau) provincial council (90-92); parliamentarian, Supreme Soviet (92-95);vice president, Kaztutkoop Financial-Industrial Company (95); president, Dostyk LLC (95-97); director, Kazmalt LLC (97-01); chair, Executive Committee, Republican People's Party (99-01); inspector, Organizational/Control Department, Presidential Administration (01-03); ambassador to Belarus (03-06).	1995-2001
Baltash Tursumbaev**	Deputy Prime Minister (91-93); Minister of Agriculture (92-93); Governor, Kostanai province (93-95); Secretary of National Security (95-96); Ambassador to Turkey (96-98); Deputy Prime Minister (98-99).	1995/1998-1998
Galym Abil'siitov	Minister of New Technologies (92-94); Deputy Prime Minister (93-94); president, Technosystem (94-95); president, Institute of Systemic and Technological Projects Institip (95-present); president, Union of Packers (95-present); co-founder, Azamat political movement (96); chair, People's Front civic union (98): chair, Azamat party (99-03).	1996
Murat Auezov	Vice President, Nevada-Semipalatinsk Antinuclear Movement (89-90); Deputy, Supreme Soviet (12th session); ambassador to the People's Republic of China (92-95); deputy Chair, Azamat democratic party (96-99); executive director, Soros Foundation Kazakhstan (99-03); assistant, Senior Lecturer, Kazakh National University (98-02); director, National Library (03-present).	1996-1999
Petr Svoik	Deputy, Supreme Soviet (90-93); chair, Antimonopoly Committee (93-96); co-chair/chair, Socialist party (94-99); co-founder Azamat movement (96); deputy chair, People's Front civic union (98); deputy chair, Azamat party (99-03); member, Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan political advisory council (02-03); deputy chair, Azat party (08-present)	1996

Rozlana Taukina	Editor-in-chief, Maksimum television/radio company (91-93); president, Totem television/radio company (93-97); director, Radio Karavan (97-98); correspondent, Associated Press (99); director, Institute for War and Peace Reporting (01-03); member, political advisory council, Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (02-03); co-chair, Forum of Democratic Forces of Kazakhstan (99); chair, Journalists in Trouble Foundation (01-present).	1997
Bakytzhamal Bekturganova	Senior Lecturer, Kazakh State Agrarian University (89-93); director, Economic Sociology Research Center, Kazakh State Agrarian University (93-95); professor, Agrarian University (95-99); director, Institute of Sociology and Political Science of Kazakhstan (95-96); co-Chair, Forum of Democratic Forces of Kazakhstan (99); president, Association of Sociologists and Political Scientists (95-present).	1998-2002
Gulzhan Ergalieva	Founder, Gulzhan-TV (91-92); director, *Mir* television-radio company (92-98); member, executive committee, People's Congress of Kazakhstan (98-03); creator and host, *Obshchestennyi Dogovor* (Public Accord) talk show (00-02); editor-in-chief, *Soz* (Word) newspaper (03-04); editor-in-chief, *Svoboda Slova* (Freedom of Speech) opposition newspaper (05-present).	1998
Asylbek Kozhakhmetov	General Director, Almaty School of Management (90-98); president, CAMAN foundation for the Development of Management (94-03); president, International Business Academy (98-00); member, board of directors, Soros Foundation (98-00); co-chair, Union of Democratic Forces (99-03); deputy chair, Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan advisory council (02-03); chair, DVK and Algha DVK! (03-07); Shangyrak legal advisor (07).	1998
Akezhan Kazhegel'din	Deputy, Supreme Soviet (12th session); general director, Semei company (90-92); deputy chair, Semipalatinsk provincial administration (91-93); chair, Council of Entrepreneurs under the president (92-96); First Deputy Prime Minister (93-94); president, Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan (93-95); Prime Minister (94-97); chair People's Congress (RNPK) (98-03); in exile since 99, fled major	1998

Akezhan Kazhegel'din	Deputy, Supreme Soviet (12th session); general director, Semei company (90-92); deputy chair, Semipalatinsk provincial administration (91-93); chair, Council of Entrepreneurs under the president (92-96); First Deputy Prime Minister (93-94); president, Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan (93-95); Prime Minister (94-97); chair People's Congress (RNPK) (98-03); in exile since 99, fled major corruption charges, including abuse of office and money laundering.	1998
Muratbek Ketebaev	Head economist, Foundation for the Cultural, Social, and Scientific-Technical Development of Kazakhstan (90-91); economic advisor to the Minister of Labor (91-92); executive eirector, State Fund for Coordination of Activities of the Republic of Kazakhstan (92-93); consultant, Astana Holding (93); director, Stroitekhproekt company (93-94); vice-president, Astana Holding (94-95); consultant, Almaty School of Management (95-96); Deputy Minister for the Economy (96-97); vice president, Kazakhstan Electricity Grid Operating Company (97-98); co-founder, opposition newspaper *Respublika* (98); member, Civic Initiative Foundation; leader, *Algha! (DVK)* unregistered People's Party.	1998
Bulat Abilov	President, BUTYA company (91-00); outside advisor to the president (94-96); member, Soros Foundation board of directors (98-99); president, Kairat-Butya football club (97-99); Otan Party member (1999-2001); Mazhilis deputy, presidential Otan faction (00-01); member, Council of Entrepreneurs under the president (01-02); member, DVK advisory council (01-03); host, Sobstvennoe Mnenie talk show (02-03); co-chair, Ak Zhol and Naghyz Ak Zhol opposition parties (03-08); chair, Azat opposition party (08-present).	2001
Mukhtar Ablyazov***	Director, Madina company (91-93); president, Astana Holding company (93-97); president, Kazakhstan Electricity Grid Operating Company (97-98); Minister of Energy, Industry and Trade (98-99); chair, board of	2001-2003

Alikhan Baimenov	Deputy governor, Zhezkazgan province (92-94); vice chair, committee of the Supreme Soviet on international and interparliamentary relations (94-95); Vice/First Vice Minister of Labor (95-96); deputy head, Presidential Administration (96-97); head, Prime Minister's office (97-98); head, Presidential Administration (98-99); chair, Agency for Issues related to Government Service (99-00); Minister of Labor and Social Protection (00-01); leader, Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan opposition movement (01-02); leader, Ak Zhol opposition party (02-07); parliamentarian (06-07). Many opposition leaders, civil society actors, and political observers argue that Baimenov was "planted" by President Nazarbaev to split the Democratic Choice movement and weaken the force of its attack.[34]	2001-2007
Zauresh Battalova	School teacher, vice principal (84-93); director, private school Kuanysh (93-94); head, Semipalatinsk city and province Department of Education (94-97); director, Balaus Children's Fund (97-99); senator (99-05); member, political advisory council, Democratic Movement of Kazakhstan (01-04); member, Coordinating Council, Democratic Forces of Kazakhstan (04); director, PoliTon Discussion Club, Astana branch (05-present).	2001
Oraz Jandosov	Deputy head, Council of Economic Consultants under the president (91-93); chair, National Agency on International Investment/ First Deputy Minister of Economics (93-94); first deputy chair, National Bank (96-98); First Deputy Prime Minister (98-99); president, Kazakhstan Electricity Grid Operating Company (99-00); Deputy Prime Minister (00-01); leader, Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan opposition movement (01-02); chair, Agency for the Regulation of Natural Monopolies and Protection of Competition (03-04); co-chair, Ak Zhol/Naghyz Ak Khol opposition party (02-08).	2001-2008
Tolen Tokhtasynov	Director, Aikas company (91-95); director, financial-investment company Alel (95-00); parliamentarian (Mazhilis deputy) (00-04); leader, Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan opposition (01-03); member, Coordinating Council of Democratic Forces of Kazakhstan (04); leader, Communist Party of Kazakhstan (03-present)	2001

Galymzhan Zhakiyanov	Director Toman company (90-92); general director, Semei company (92-94); governor, Semipalatinsk province (94-97); chair, Agency for the Control over Strategic Resources (97); outside advisor to the president (97); governor, Pavlodar province (97-01); leader, Democratic Choice opposition movement (01-02); arrested 8/02 & sentenced to seven years for abuse of office; released 1/06; director, Foundation for Civil Society (07-09); resides outside of Kazakhstan for medical treatment since 09.	2001
Tolegen Zhukeev	First deputy chair, government committee on support for new economic structures (91); chair, vice presidential secretariat (91-92); head, department of political analysis under the president and cabinet of Ministers (92-94); deputy chair, National Security Committee (93); Deputy Prime Minister (94); Secretary, National Security Committee (94-95); ambassador to the Republic of Korea (95-00); ambassador to Iran (00-03); co-chair, Naghyz Ak Zhol opposition party (03-08); general secretary, Azat opposition party (08-present).	2003
Altynbek Sarsenbai-uli (Sarsenbaev) (1962-2006)	Presidential Apparatus/Cabinet of Ministers (92-93); Minister of Print and Mass Media (95-99); Minister of Culture, Information and Social Accord (99-01); National Security Secretary (01); ambassador to the Russian Federation, Finland, and Armenia (02-03); Minister of Information (04); murdered in 2/06.	2003-2006
Zharmakhan Tuyakbai	Attorney General (90-95); Chair, National Investigation Committee (95-97); Military Attorney General (97-99); Parliamentary Speaker (99-04); deputy chair, Otan party (04); chair, Social Democratic Party (OSDP) (04-present).	2004
Zamanbek Nurkadilov (1944-2005)	Mayor, Almaty City (92-94); deputy, Supreme Soviet (11-13th sessions); Mazhilis deputy (95-97); Governor, Almaty province (97-01); chair, Agency for Emergency Situations (01-04).	2004-2005

Rakhat Aliev	General director, Kazmedimport (93-95); president, Sakharnyi Tsentr (95-96); held various posts in the tax police (1996-1999); various posts, National Security Committee (KNB) (99-01); head, Presidential Security Service (01-02); president, National Olympic Committee (02); ambassador to the OSCE, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia (02-05); First Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs (05-07); ambassador to Austria and the OSCE (07); in exile since 2007. While Rakhat Aliev calls himself an opposition member, other opposition members do not recognize him as such.	2007

* Listed in approximate chronological order. When more than one leader is listed in a given year, names are ordered alphabetically. ** According to Tursumbai, he joined the opposition in 1995, when, as governor of Kostanai oblast, he criticized the amendments to the constitution (author's interview, March 2007). In 1998, some members of the opposition suggested Tursumbaev as an opposition candidate for the presidential elections (author's interview with Rozlana Taukina, March 2007). *** After his early release from prison, Ablyazov announced that he would concentrate on his business and disengage from politics, but was credited with financing one of the main opposition papers, *Respublika*.
Sources: Author's interviews; Ashimbaev 2006, 2008; Babak, Vaismann, and Wasserman 2004; Cummings 2005; Olcott 1995; Olcott 2002;

Table 4.3 Key Figures in Kyrgyzstan's Political Opposition*

Name of Opposition Leader	Background (Professional Experience/Posts Held)	Onset of Opposition Activity/ Defection
	Opposition to First Secretary Masaliev	
Jypar Jeksheev	Intellectual and cultural figure; founded Ashar, the "first independent social organization with significant social standing to develop" in the Kyrgyz SSR (Collins 2006, 141); executive committee chair (89-90); co-chair, Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan (90-93); parliamentarian (95-00).	1989
Topchubek Turgunaliev	Intellectual; organizer & co-chair, the Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan (90); initiator & leader, Erkin Kyrgyzstan political party (91).	1990
Tursunbai Bakir-uluu	Academic; chair, Rukh democratic movement (89-92); instructor/senior Instructor, Osh State University (91-93); chair, Erkin Kyrgyzstan political party's Osh branch (92); parliamentarian (95-02); chair, Erkin Kyrgyzstan, (95-02); Ombudsman (02-07).	1990
Chapyrashty Bazarbaev Turash Dyusheev Melis Eshimkanov	Co-founders of the Asaba Kyrgyz nationalist political movement.	1990
	Opposition to President Akaev	
Absamat Masaliev (and southerners who supported him)	First secretary & head of the Communist Party, Kyrgyz SSR (85-91); presidential candidate (95); parliamentarian (95, 00-04); passed away in 2004.	1991
Omurbek Tekebaev	Physics teacher (87-91); head, Department of Antimonopoly Policy & Support for Entrepreneurs (91); chair, Erkin Kyrgyzstan political party (91-92); vice governor, Jalal-Ababd province (92-94); chair, Ata-Meken opposition political party (94-present); parliamentarian (91-07).	1991

Bektur Asanov	Chair, Erkin Kyrgyzstan party, Jalal-Abad province (92-00); first deputy chair, Erkin Kyrgyzstan (00-04); chair, State Agency on Physical Education & Sport, Youth Policy & Child Protection (05-08; appointed by President Bakiev).	1992-2005
Zamira Sydykova	Former opposition journalist; founder & editor-in-chief, *Res Publika*, Kyrgyzstan's first independent newspaper (92-06); charged with slander and libel (95, 97); recipient, Courage in Journalism Award (International Women's Media Foundation, 00); ambassador to the U.S. and Canada, 2005/06-present; appointed by President Bakiev).	1992/1993-2005
Topchubek Turgunaliev	Intellectual; initially a strong Akaev supporter; joined leaders of 24 parties and civil society groups to demand President Akaev's resignation (93); arrested while campaigning for alternative presidential candidate Sherimkulov (95); rector, Bishkek Humanities University (mid-90s)l imprisoned in 97, 00; declared prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International; founder, Erkindik political party (97); co-founder and leader, People's Congress of united opposition political forces (01).	1993
Chinara Jakypova	Minister of Education (92-93); founder, Institute of Strategic Research (93); acting director, Soros Foundation Kyrgyzstan (94-96); executive, Board of Directors, Soros Foundation Kyrgyzstan (96-99); head, Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) (00-05); ceneral director, Public Policy Institute (05-present).	1993-1996
Dooronbek Sadyrbaev (1939-2008)	Film director, Kyrgyztelefilm (69-92); opposed Alai Forum campaign to extend President Akaev's mandate (94); founder, Kairain-El party (Party of the Misfortunate) (99); parliamentarian (00-07).	1994
Kabai Karabekov	Correspondent, *Vechernyi Bishkek* newspaper (89-92);presidential press secretary (92-93); political observer, *Vechernyi Bishkek* (94-99); editor-in-chief, *Komsomol'skaya Pravda v Kyrgyzstane* (99-00); parliamentarian (00-present); leader, For a Worthy Kyrgyzstan United Front opposition coalition (2/07).	1994

Melis Eshimkanov	Founder & co-chair, Asaba political movement & party (91); founder & editor-in-chief, *Asaba* newspaper (91-01); chair, Party of the People (of the Destitute or El Bei Bechara) opposition party (95-04); founder & editor-in-chief, Aghym newspaper (01-05); presidential candidate (00); deputy chair, Social Democratic opposition party (04); parliamentarian (05-07); general director, National Television & Radio Company (appointed 07 by President Bakiev).	1995-2007
Adakhan Madumarov	Worked in Ministry of Print & Information (92); political observer, National Television & Radio Company (94-95); parliamentarian (95-05); Vice Prime Minister (05; appointed by President Bakiev); State Secretary (06); leader, Ak Jol presidential party (07-present); parliamentarian (07-present); speaker of Parliament (07-08).	1995-2005
Sherimkulov	Ran for president in 95; abassador to Turkey (); not allowed to participate in 05 parliamentary elections.	1995
Usen Sydykov	Parliamentarian, Supreme Soviet (89-91); First Secretary, Communist Party, Osh province committee (90-91); chair, Jangy Kyrgyzstan Agrarian-Labor Party (94); parliamentarian (95-00); deputy executive secretary, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (00); chair, Executive Committee, People's Movement of Kyrgyzstan (04); head, Presidential Administration (05-06; appointed by President Bakiev); State Advisor to the President, 2006	1995-2005
Bermet Bukasheva	Opposition journalist (sister of Zamira Sydykova); imprisoned in 97; editor-in-chief & owner *Litsa* opposition newspaper (98-present); editor-in-chief, *Asaba-Bishkek* opposition newspaper (00-01); advisor to Parliamentary Speaker & opposition leader Omurbek Tekebaev (05); leader, Ata-Meken political party (07-present).	mid-1990s
Tolekan Ismailova	Head, Department for Cultural & External Affairs, Bishkek City Administration (88-95); coordinator, Interbilim International Center for Support & Development of NGOs (95-99); co-founder Coalition for Democracy & Civil Society (96); president, Coalition for Democracy & Civil Society (96-00); executive Director, Citizens Against Corruption (00-present); National Endowment for Democracy, International Forum for Democratic Studies Fellow (02-03).	mid-1990s

Asiya Sasykbaeva	Director, Interbilim International Center for Support & Development of NGOs (93-present); member, Board of Directors, Soros Foundation Kyrgyzstan (99-02); leader, For Reforms movement (06); leader, Ata-Meken opposition party (07-present).	mid-1990s
Miroslav Niyazov	Deputy Chair, National Security Committee (91-96); Deputy Minister of National Security (96-97); expert, Jogorku Kenesh (Parliament) (98-00); ambassador to Tajikistan (01); acting secretary, Security Council (05; appointed by President Bakiev).	1997
Almazbek Atambaev	"Long-standing opposition businessman" (ICG 2005); parliamentarian (95-00); general director, Kyrgyzavtomash Joint Stock Company (97-99); leader and co-founder, Social-Democratic opposition party (99-present); presidential candidate (00); leader, People's Congress (05); Minister of Economic Development, Industry & Trade (05-06; appointed by President Bakiev); Prime Minister (07).	1999-2005
Feliks Kulov	Vice President (92-93); Minister of Internal Affairs (93); governor, Chui province (93-97); Minister of National Security (97-98); mayor, City of Bishkek (98-99); founder, Ar-Namys opposition party (99); chair, People's Congress (01); imprisoned (02-05); Prime Minister (05-06; appointed by President Bakiev); acting Prime Minister (06-07); head, United Front for a Worthy Kyrgyzstan (2/07); head, Project on the Development of Small and Medium Energy (08; appointed by President Bakiev).	1999-2007; 2007-2008
Dastan Sarygulov	Governor of Talas province (91-92); head of state gold company Kyrgyzaltyn (92-99), which was rocked by a corruption scandal in 93; parliamentarian (95-00); Secretary of State (05-06; appointed by President Bakiev).	1999-2005
Daniyar Usenov	"Opposition businessman" (ICG 2005) who has headed various banking and financial-industrial businesses; founder, Eridan Corporation; parliamentarian & vice speaker (95-00); leader, Party of the People (of the Destitute or El Bei Bechara) opposition party (99-01); "Forced out of parliamentary election in 2000, after opposing Akaev; business interests attacked by authorities" (ICG 2005); acting Vice Prime Minister (05; appointed by President Bakiev); acting/First Vice Prime Minister (05-07); mayor, City of Bishkek (07-present).	1999-2005

Kanybek Imanaliev	Correspondent, *Asaba* independent newspaper (92-94); invited to work for the Presidential press service (94); presidential press secretary (96-00); chair of Executive Board, Uchkun Publishing/Printing House (99-05); parliamentarian (00-07).	2000
Iskhak Masaliev	Son of First Secretary of the Kirgiz SSR, Absamat Masaliev, served in the tax police (93); served in the national customs agency (94); elected to Osh City Council (99); parliamentarian (00-present); head, Party of Communists of Kyrgyzstan (04-present).	2000
Azimbek Beknazarov	Investigator, Senior Investigator, General Attorney, Jalal-Abad province (91-96); judge, Oktyabrskaya region, City of Bishkek (97-99); head, Asaba political party since 02; parliamentarian (00-07); General Attorney (05; appointed by President Bakiev).	2002-2005; 2005
Edil' Baisalov	Deputy to the Executive Director, The Coalition for Democracy & Civil Society NGO (99-01); executive director, Association of Lawyers of Kyrgyzstan (01-02); president/leader, The Coalition for Democracy & Civil Society (02-06); executive secretary, Social-Democratic opposition party (07); fled Kyrgyzstan 11/07.	2002-2007
Bolotbek Sherniyazov	Headed a private enterprise named Sher (91-98); elected to the Council of People's Deputies, Manas Region, Talas province (94); parliamentarian (00-07); vice speaker, Parliament (05)	2002
Muratbek Imanaliev	Minister of Foreign Affairs (91-92); advisor, Russian Embassy to China, (92-93); ambassador to China (93-96); head, International Department, Presidential Administration (96-97); Minister of Foreign Affairs (97-02); professor, American University of Central Asia (02-05); leader & founder, Zhany Baghyt united opposition movement (with Bakiev, Atambaev, Otunbaeva & Tekebaev) (12/04); president, Public Policy Institute (05-present).	2003-2004
Misir Ashirkulov	Rector, Bishkek International School of Management & Business (92-97); First Deputy Minister of National Security (97-98); Minister of National Security (98-99); head, Presidential Administration (99-01); chair, State Commission for Reforming Internal Affairs (02); head, Presidential Administration (02-04); Secretary of National Security (04); chair, Civic	2004

	Union for Fair Elections (5/04); on same day removed from post of Secretary of National Security by presidential decree. At the time, many opposition leaders and supporters expressed the opinion that Ahirkulov was trying to infiltrate and weaken the opposition (Saralieva 2004).	
Kurmanbek Bakiev	Vice Chair, Jalal-Abad province Council of People's Deputies (91-92); head, Regional Administration, Toguz-Toroiskii region, Jalal-Abad (92-94); vice chair, State Property Fund/vice governor of Jalal-Abad province (94-95)l governor), Jalal-Abad province (95-00); Prime Minister (00-02); parliamentarian (02-05); chair, Central Council, People's Movement of Kyrgyzstan union of political forces (04-05); president of Kyrgyzstan (05-present).	2004-2005
Roza Otunbaeva	Chair, USSR Commission to UNESCO/member, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, USSR (89-91); Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Foreign Affairs (92); ambassador to the U.S. & Canada (92-94); Minister of Foreign Affairs (94-97); ambassador to Great Britain & Northern Ireland (97-02); Deputy to the Special Representative of the UN in Georgia (02); leader, Zhany Baghyt united opposition movement (with Bakiev, Atambaev, Imanaliev & Tekebaev) (12/04); founder & co-chair, Ata-Jurt Movement (with Sadyrbaev, Madumarov & Tekebaev) (04-05); Minister of Foreign Affairs (05; appointed by President Bakiev); leader, Asaba political party (06-07); leader, Social-Democratic Party (11/07-present); parliamentarian(07-present).	2004
Marat Sultanov	Professor, Kyrgyz State University (87-92); vice chair/chair, National Bank (92-98); Minister of Finance (98-99); chair, Board of Directors, Kyrgyzgasmunaizat (98-99); co-chair, pro-presidential Adilet political party (99-00); parliamentarian/Speaker (00-07); leader, For Fair Elections (04); head, Social Fund of the Kyrgyz Republic (08-present).	2004-2008
Omurbek Babanov	Owned NK "Alliance," an oil company, which he reportedly sold to the Russian GazProm for US$100 million in 8/05 (Khamidov 2006); also owned NTS, an independent TV-station that offered extensive coverage for opposition activity during the 3/05 "tulip revolution"; parliamentarian (05-07); in exile since 07 on charges of falsifying passport.	2005-2007

Bayaman Erkinbaev (1967-2005)	Businessman; “one of the richest people in the south” (ICG 2005); “represented a sportsman and criminal network in the south…” (Spector 2008, 169); purchased large parts of a major trade center, Karasuu bazaar, 1995 & 1999 (Spector 2008); parliamentarian, Jogorku Kenesh, 2000-2005).	2005-2005
Akylbek Japarov	Member, Presidential Apparatus (92); assistant to the Deputy Prime Minister (95-97); tax inspector, Minister of Finance (97-00); parliamentarian (00-05); disqualified from registering as parliamentary candidate in 05; Minister of Finance (05-07; appointed by President Bakiev); Minister of Economic Development & Trade (07-present).	2005-2005
Ravshan Jeenbekov	Staff Member, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (92-94); parliamentary consultant (96-97); staff member, Presidential Administration (97-98); assistant to the Prime Minister (98-99); deputy chair, State Committee on Investments (99-00); assistant to the President (00-01); First Deputy, Presidential Operations Manager (01); chair, Committee on State Property & Direct Investments (01-04); presently studying abroad.	2005-2005
Naken Kasiev	Minister of Health (91-99); Secretary of State (99-00); governor, Osh province (00-05); leader, Ata-Meken opposition party (07-present).	2005
Alisher Mamasaliev	Correspondent/news anchor, Almaz radio (96-97); journalist/host, State Television and Radio Company (97-99); head specialist, the Mayor’s Press Service, City of Bishkek (02-03); commercial director, *Rynok Kapitalov* business journal (03-04); co- coordinator, KelKel-Rebirth youth movement (05-06); founder, Forum of Young Politicians (05-06); chair, Civic Platform social movement (06-07); member, Ak Jol presidential political party (07-present); parliamentarian (07-present).	2005-2006

Jenishbek Nazaraliev	Kyrgyz businessman, psychiatrist; founder & director, Nazaraliev drug addiction treatment center; leader, Asaba political party 2007.	2005
	Opposition to President Bakiev	
Omurbek Abdrakhmanov	Wealthy businessman (president of Azat furniture company); coordinator, For Reforms opposition coalition (3/07); charged with massive disorder during 4/07 anti-Bakiev meetings; leader, Atameken opposition party (07-present).	2005
Erkin Alymbekov	Manager, Small Business Association (90-92); chair, Asia Invest Joint Stock Company (92-94); chair, Executive Committee, Party of Unity (94-99); chair, Central Asian Heating Company (02-04); parliamentarian/vice speaker (05-07); leader, Atameken oppositio party (07-present).	2005
Kubatbek Baibolov	Entrepreneur, wealthy business owner; "independent-minded businessman" (ICG 2005); various posts, KGB (84-94); parliamentarian (95-07); Vice Speaker of parliament (04); leader, United Front for a Worthy Future (2/07); leader, Ak Shumkar opposition party (06); leader, Atameken opposition party (07-08); resigned from political activity in 08 in response to government pressure on businesses and on family.	2005-2008
Edil' Baisalov	See *Opposition to President Akaev* for biographical information Currently in exile	2005-2008
Azimbek Beknazarov	See *Opposition to President Akaev* for biographical information	2005
Bakytbek Beshimov	Head, Public Relations and Information, Presidential Administration (91-92); rector, Osh State University (92-98); co-founder, Social-Democratic Party (93); national manager, Program for the Development of the Ferghana Valley, United Nations (98-00); parliamentarian (98-00); vice president for Academic Affairs, American University of Central Asia (05-07); leader, Akshumkar political party (07); leader, Social-Democratic opposition party (07-present); parliamentarian (07-present).	2005
Bermet Bukasheva	See *Opposition to President Akaev* for biographical information	2005
Melis Eshimkanov	See *Opposition to President Akaev* for biographical information	2005-2007

Tolekan Ismailova	See *Opposition to President Akaev* for biographical information	2005
Ravshan Jeenbekov	See *Opposition to President Akaev* for biographical information	2005-2006
Kabai Karabekov	See *Opposition to President Akaev* for biographical information	2005-2007
Miroslav Niyazov	See *Opposition to President Akaev* for biographical information	2005
Roza Otunbaeva	See *Opposition to President Akaev* for biographical information	2005
Dooronbek Sadyrbaev (1939-2008)	See *Opposition to President Akaev* for biographical information	2005-2008
Temir Sariev	President, Kyrgyz Commodities Exchange (91-95); general director, Toton Financial-Industrial Group (95-00); parliamentarian (00-07); leader, Social-Democratic opposition party (06); co-chair, For Reforms movement (07); leader, United Front for a Worthy Future (07); leader, Ak Shumkar opposition party (07); leader, Atameken opposition party (07-present).	2005
Asiya Sasykbaeva	See *Opposition to President Akaev* for biographical information	2005
Bolotbek Sherniyazov	See *Opposition to President Akaev* for biographical information	2005
Omurbek Tekebaev	See *Opposition to President Akaev* for biographical information	2005
Cholpon Jakupova	Ph.D., History, Moscow State University; deputy director/director, Bishkek Migration Management Center (98-03); director, Adilet Legal Clinic (04-present); leader, For Reforms movement (07); leader, Ata-Meken political party (07-present); recipient, International Women of Courage Award, U.S. Department of State (08).	2006
Raya Kadyrova	Head, Office of Political Education, Ala-Too Industrial Enterprise (90-93); coordinator, Intercultural Program, Peace Corps (94-97); coordinator, Tolerance Education and Conflict Transformation (96-98); president, Fund for International Tolerance (98-present); leader, For Reforms Movement (06).	2006

Almazbek Atambaev	See *Opposition to President Akaev* for biographical information	2006-2007
Omurbek Suvanaliev	Various posts, internal affairs (police) (8h-93); dead of investigations, Tax Police (94); parliamentarian (95-97); head, provincial & city level internal affairs under Ministry of National Security (Osh province, Naryn province, City of Bishkek) (97-05); Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs (05-06; appointed by President Bakiev); Minister of Internal Affairs, 2006-2007; Chief of Staff, United Front for a Worthy Kyrgyzstan opposition coalition, (07); charged with massive disorder during 4/07 anti-Bakiev meetings; head, Department of Defense and Security, Presidential Administration, 9/07-1/08; governor, Naryn province, 2008-present.	February-September 2007
Feliks Kulov	See *Opposition to President Akaev* for biographical information	2007-2008
Alibek Jekshenkulov	Chair, Permanent Commission to Parliament on International and Interparliamentary Ties (92-94); Vice Minister, First Vice Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs (94-00); ambassador to Austria & International Organizations in Vienna (00-04); head, Department of Foreign Policy, Presidential Administration (05-06); Minister of Foreign Affairs (05-07; appointed by President Bakiev); head, International Agency for Development and Policy (07-present); announced move to opposition in early 2008.	2008

* Listed in approximate chronological order. When more than one leader is listed in a given year, names are ordered alphabetically.
Sources: Author's interviews; AKIPress, *Kto Est' Kto* (http://who.ca-news.org); Collins 2006; International Crisis Group (ICG) 2005; Khamidov 2002b; *Toktom* legal database (http://toktom.kg).

Chapter 5
Market Reforms and Variation in Elite Defection

Introduction

This chapter analyzes the effect of market reforms on political contestation in post-Soviet Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. In chapter four, we saw that business elites have at very different points in time during the course of Nazarbaev and Akaev's rule defected from the ruling coalition to publicly oppose the personalist president. In Belarus, however, once President Lukashenka came to power and put an end to the country's short-lived experiment with economic liberalization, business actors have been absent from opposition politics. What explains these two patterns of opposition leadership, given that in all three cases political freedoms are limited and the risks facing defectors, particularly among business elites, are considerable?

I link this individual-level variation in elite behavior to structural variation found among the three cases. While Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan share institutional features common to post-Soviet personalist autocracies, they exhibit variation in the extent to which each has moved toward a market economy. Belarus has been the most reluctant to adopt market reforms and Kyrgyzstan the most advanced in liberalizing its economy, with Kazakhstan falling in between the two. The Belarus case suggests that in otherwise structurally similar states, but where market reforms have been slowed, forestalled, or reversed, business actors are unlikely to support or defect to the political opposition.

As prior studies have documented, economic liberalization in the post-Soviet space has dispersed resources to actors outside of the state (Fish 1999; McMann 2007; Radnitz forthcoming). At the same time, even in market-reforming autocracies like Kazakhstan and

Kyrgyzstan, the state (embodied by government officials, the security services, and the tax police) can and does impede the functioning of market mechanisms. Impediments to the invisible hand are varied and many, but of particular interest to the argument presented here are insecure property rights and the predatory practice of *reiderstvo*, in which those in the president's inner circle have the unchecked power to raid or prey on outsider elites' business assets. Although outsider elites have been allowed to accumulate great wealth, elites closest to the personalist president nonetheless maintain privileged access to the most lucrative economic resources. The contradiction between the economic dispersal that accompanies market reforms and a highly personalized system of resource allocation has driven some business elites into the opposition. Importantly, the defection of business elites has occurred under conditions in which intra-elite conflict over resources has become acute. On these rare occasions, elite grievances have been channeled around focal points – concrete threats that have facilitated the mobilization of elite resources, both human and financial, against the president and/or members of his inner circle.

This chapter begins with a separate discussion of Belarus, a case of market rejecting autocracy.[1] Thereafter follows a combined analysis of cases of widespread defection among the business elite in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, two comparable cases of market-reforming autocracies. I use the theoretical framework introduced in chapter two to explain widespread defections in Kazakhstan in 2001 and in Kyrgyzstan in 2005, both of which were sparked by heightened intra-elite conflict over scarce economic resources. I then describe what I consider to be the key explanatory factors behind their divergent outcomes, in which the personalist president was overturned in Kyrgyzstan, while defectors were repressed and

[1] Belarus can also be thought of as the control case to which the "treatment" of market reforms has not yet been introduced.

political crisis averted in Kazakhstan. Finally, I wrap up the discussion by linking market reforms to two additional political outcomes: the makeup of the political opposition and the probability that defections will result in the overthrow of the personalist president.

Before embarking on the analysis, I would like to first note that, while intra-elite conflict may be common in personalist regimes, it can also be difficult to detect and measure. Struggles among elites for access to the president's ear and over economic and political power are generally restricted to back room political maneuvering. At the same time, behind-the-scenes struggles between elites has at times spilled over into the public realm, leaving an imprint on domestic politics that outsiders can observe and analyze. I restrict the analysis to observed instances in which intra-elite quarrels over resource allocation have been documented in the mass media and discussed by political observers. There are likely numerous other examples that remain hidden from view and inaccessible to outsiders. Such cases are, as a consequence, beyond the scope of the dissertation.

Belarus: The Contrasting Case of Market Rejecting Autocracy

Rejecting privatization, as in Belarus under Lukashenka, affects the composition of the opposition leadership by precluding the emergence of business elites who could become potential challengers to the personalist president. When Lukashenka renationalized Belarusian industries beginning in 1996, he reversed the process of privatization that had been cautiously implemented in the early 1990s and "dismantled the economic basis for post-communist *caciquismo*, i.e. the merger of power and ownership" that has characterized market reforming post-Soviet personalist states, such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Ukraine (Matsuzato 2004, 245). As Fritz similarly explains, "due to minimal privatization, a major precondition for the emergence of oligarchic groups was absent" (2007, 217). In short,

no privatization, no business elite.

Instead of being run by business elites, capitalists, oligarchs, or financial-industrial groups, major enterprises in Belarus are owned by the state. The elites appointed to direct them are managers, who are both accountable to the president for their performance and dependent upon his good will to maintain their positions (Zlotnikov 2002). As is the case with appointees generally, directors of Belarus's state-run enterprises can easily be removed, replaced, shuffled into another area of government, or sent to work in another state company at short notice (Matsuzato 2004). They are, moreover, often publicly reprimanded and punished directly by the president for not meeting production quotas (Balmaceda 2007; Zlotnikov 2002).

Dependence on the personalist president makes managers unlikely to take the risk of challenging the political status quo,[2] even if they become dissatisfied with a given appointment, with the president's cadre policy, or with the rules of the economic game in general. Additionally, directors of government enterprises in Belarus may be provoked by structural impediments and presidential favoritism that restrict their ability to gain greater power and wealth, just as business elites in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have been. Yet, as appointees in Belarus's state-controlled economy, managers lack the autonomous resources to do so. As a result, the choices available to them are restricted to loyalty or exit. Defection, unlikely as it is in market reforming autocracies, is an impossibility in market

[2] In an interview with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, opposition leader Milinkevich emphasized appointees' dependence on the personalist president and the unlikelihood of defection to the opposition: "Of course the authorities are not homogeneous. There are people there who don't like the current situation… But I think that the fear in the bureaucratic elite is so great, much greater than in society, that the bureaucratic elite itself will… not create a turnover. And also let's remember that our bureaucratic elite is entirely appointed, not elected. When the mayor of Kyiv supported the Orange Revolution, he did so because he was elected by the people. He wasn't afraid of the prime minister. We don't have people like that. Our authorities are desperately afraid of their leader, even though many don't like him" (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2007).

rejecting ones.

In addition to directors of government enterprises, Belarus has a small but growing class of entrepreneurs and small business owners, who have cropped up as a result of limited small-scale privatization. Discontent among entrepreneurs in Belarus may be widespread, given the government's extensive restrictions on private economic activity. Highlighting the country's anti-business climate, Belarus has been called "the last and only state in Europe where business start-ups are required to seek the authorities' permission to operate, rather than simply to notify the authorities of their intention to enter the market" (Istomina 2005, 48). Among the most cited obstacles to entrepreneurial activity are an excessive tax burden and onerous reporting requirements, complicated business registration and liquidation procedures, and frequent and often unnecessary audits of small businesses.[3] In addition to legal and administrative barriers are attitudinal problems, including the hostility of government officials toward small business owners and the public's distrust of profit-seeking activities and those who engage in them.[4] Yet, entrepreneurs who are unhappy with the government's strict control over the economy are unlikely candidates for the political opposition. As a Belarusian scholar and frequent political commentator told me,

> Belarusian businessmen who have left for Russia to escape the repressive environment here sometimes plead with us intellectuals who remain in the country, 'Do something to improve the political situation!' But they themselves are unwilling

[3] In anecdotal support of Istomina's findings, during my fieldwork in Belarus I also observed the country's unusual degree of government regulation over private businesses. On the entrance to each privately owned business were printed (not on paper, but on the glass door, as though it were a part of the business's name and address) the company's license number and when it was set to expire. I went to dinner at three restaurants in Minsk, and on all of the menus was typed the two-week period for which the menu was current, followed by the signature of an official from the appropriate regulatory body. In addition, one café had two categories of items. The first included higher priced menu items and the second lower priced items. Both categories of prices were established by the government.
[4] Author's interviews with anonymous head of a business association, Minsk, April 2008, anonymous opposition member, Minsk, April 2008, and Yaroslav Romanchuk, director of the Mises Center NGO and opposition member, Minsk, April 2008. See also Romanchuk 2008.

to take the risk."[5]

As the above quote suggests, more preferable and less risky ways of dealing with the government's repressive economic policy are to take one's business abroad (exit) or to remain within the system and try to find existing channels or means of protecting one's business interests (loyalty). For Belarusian entrepreneurs who are fed up with doing business domestically and who can afford the cost of taking their businesses abroad, neighboring Russia and Ukraine are natural markets for relocation.[6] A former low-level government employee and current entrepreneur who owns a small land surveying business explained that he and his partner have no interest in working in Belarus, where it is "nearly impossible" to do business.[7] Instead, he regularly makes the trip across the border to Ukraine to solicit contracts. Relative to Ukrainian land surveyors, their prices are competitive because the cost of living and labor in Belarus is much lower. Just as important, by conducting business in Ukraine they do not face the prohibitive regulation and licensing requirements that they would face if they were to officially open shop in Belarus.

Absent a class of wealthy business elites and absent financial support from the only other business groups present in the country (directors of state enterprises and small and medium sized business owners), it is difficult for the opposition to fund activities that could successfully challenge Lukashenka's right to rule. In Belarus, who can afford to pay for expensive protest activities, including the bussing in, housing, and feeding of participants, and support otherwise unprofitable and cash poor opposition newspapers, among other activities? In market reforming post-Soviet autocracies like Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, it has been defectors from the business elite, often in cooperation with defectors from the

[5] Author's interview with Leonid Zaiko, Minsk, April 2008.
[6] Author's interview with anonymous head of a business association, Minsk, April 2008.
[7] Author's interview with anonymous entrepreneur, Minsk, May 2008.

political elite, who have provided the money to cover these kinds of expenses.

As was documented in chapter four, in the Lukashenka era, only three individuals with a connection to private business were cited by multiple interviewees and published sources on Belarus's opposition leaders. These are Anatolii Krasovskii in 1995, Andrei Klimau in 1996, and Syarhey Parsyukevich in 2008. In 1995, Krasovskii joined the opposition and provided financial support to elite defector Viktor Gonchar (Viktar Hanchar), a former parliamentarian who had been Lukashenka's campaign manager during Belarus's first presidential elections and served as vice prime minister in 1994 (Koktysh 2000; Marples and Padhol 2002; Silitski 2005).[8] Klimau, a member of parliament (1995-1996), was known as one of the five most well-known entrepreneurs in Belarus in the mid-1990s.[9]

In addition to Krasovskii and Klimau, Plisko refers to unnamed "major businessmen" and "business structures" who in 1995 "provided the Civic Party with material and financial assistance…, since among the party's membership were many people well known in financial and entrepreneurial circles," including Bogdankevich, the former chair of the National Bank, Shlydnikov, the former president of a business called Amkor, and Karyagin, the president of the Union of Entrepreneurs (2002, 127-128). Even so, support from business was neither widespread nor significant because "the majority of business owners… preferred the old way of resolving disputes – not via parliament or legislation, but through their connections in government" (128). By 1996, this nominal support had already dried up. Plisko concludes,

> It was not the fault but the tragedy of Belarus's business that, due to its undeveloped and provincial state, [businessmen] could not in 1995-1996 understand the need to

[8] Krasovskii and Gonchar disappeared in 1999. Their disappearances have been traced to the government, but no one has been prosecuted.
[9] See *Kto Est' Kto v Respublike Belarus*. Available at: http://who.bdg.by. Last accessed November 16, 2009.

> maintain democratic institutions that would protect their interests and did not support the Supreme Soviet [parliament] and political parties at the time of the November referendum of 1996 (128-129).

A market reform model of elite defection accounts for the defection of Krasovskii and Klimau to the political opposition, as well as the financial support provided by unnamed businessmen at the time. Under parliamentary rule during the short period from 1991 to 1995, the government of Belarus experimented, if reluctantly, with market reforms. While Belarus has consistently scored below the regional average, as Figure 4.1 indicates, experimentation with economic liberalization peaked in 1995 and was followed thereafter by a sharp and clear reversal of reforms.[10] Given Belarus's reform peak (relatively speaking) of 1995, it makes sense that by that year at least some business elites would have accumulated the independent resources and developed the incentive (i.e., to counter the new president's economic policy, which could threaten their business interests) to challenge the new president's economic policy and right to rule. Thereafter, Belarus quickly altered its previous slow course toward the market under the newly elected president, and most reform prescriptions favored by Western donor organizations have since been rejected.[11] Since 1996, the year marking Belarus's retreat from the market, no business elites have led or joined opposition movements.

On the other hand, contrary to the expectations of my market-based explanation of opposition leadership, Table 4.1 in chapter four reveals that a Belarusian entrepreneur joined the political opposition as recently as 2008. In January 2008 in the city of Vitebsk, the capital of Vitebsk province, a number of small business owners (*individual'nye*

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[10] The three items that make up the market reform index are large- and small-scale privatization and price liberalization, as assessed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. For more on how the market reform index was created and measured, refer to chapter three.

[11] Belarus's total official development assistance is a quarter of the total received by either Kazakhstan or Kyrgyzstan (see Table 3.13).

predprinimateli) engaged in an unsanctioned street protest against the government's repressive economic policies, in particular against a recently implemented presidential decree (Decree Number 760, signed in December 2006) that introduced additional restrictions on the hiring practices of small businesses (Amnesty International 2009). The protest was led by Sergei Parsyukevich, a former police officer-turned-market vendor who also headed a local association of small business owners. Among other charges, Parsyukevich was arrested and sentenced to two and a half years in prison for assaulting a police officer. Immediately following his pardon and early release in August of that year, Parsyukevich held a press conference in which he announced his decision to actively engage in opposition politics.[12]

Although the assumptions of my model did not predict the participation of an entrepreneur in opposition politics, the case of Parsyukevich, it turns out, conforms to the model's expectations. First, Parsyukevich was a market vendor, not a wealthy businessman. Although he certainly had a great deal to lose for his protest action, the relative cost to his business was still less than that which the owner of a larger firm would face for engaging in similar activities. In addition, Parsyukevich's bottom-up emergence as an opposition leader (versus from the top-down) is more similar to that of grass roots activists from civil society, rather than those who come from power and wealth. Finally, despite (or, more accurately, because of) the penalties that government regulations exact on small business owners, Parsyukevich's public support for the opposition is an anomaly. For the reasons iterated throughout the dissertation, it is highly improbable that small business owners and wealthy

[12] For more on Parsyukevich, see "Vitebskogo Predprinimatel' Zaderzhali za Uchastie v Aktsii 10 Yanvarya i Otpravili v Minsk," *Belapan* (http://belapan.com/archive/2008/01/14/205723_205723/); "Vlasti Prodolzhayut Voinu s Predprinimatelyami," *Charter '97* (http://www.charter97.org/ru/news/2008/1/29/3421/); "Osvobozhdennyi Parsyukevich Zaimetsya Politicheskoi Deyatel'nost'yu," *Belorusskie Novosti* (http://naviny.by/rubrics/politic/2008/08/20/ic_news_112_296120/).

entrepreneurs will join the political opposition, and this is true in both market reforming and market rejecting autocracies.

In summary, elite defections appear to have been numerous in the first two years of Lukashenka's presidency, before he consolidated power, but have since drastically tapered off. Due to tentative market reforms, a fledgling class of business elites formed in the early 1990s. One Belarusian economist goes so far as to say that "an economic model of oligarchic capitalism similar to that prevalent in Russia" had crystallized in Belarus during this time (Zlotnikov 2002, 125). As the market reform model of defection predicts, in response to impending renationalization and the president's actions to concentrate power in the executive, at least two business elites defected to the political opposition in the early years of independence.

The situation, however, changed dramatically after 1996. As a direct result of the president's economic policy, Belarus's opposition is currently composed primarily of political defectors and civil society actors with limited financial resources. As was demonstrated in chapter four, very few elites have defected in the last decade, and none of these have been from business. In the words of one opposition member,

> There are no businessmen in our opposition. Wealthy people do not go into the opposition. This is much different than in Kyrgyzstan or in Kazakhstan. When I was in Bishkek [the capital of Kyrgyzstan]…, I met with the opposition there. I rode in their expensive cars. We don't have those kinds of financial resources here.[13]

Filling the void in the opposition have been grassroots youth activists. Belarus is thus a case in which the opposition is potentially rich in human resources, but economically poor, with few prospects of securing much-needed financial assistance.

[13] Author's interview with Yaroslav Romanchuk, opposition member and director of the Mises Center NGO, Minsk, April 2008.

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan: Comparable Defections with Contrasting Outcomes

As in Belarus in the mid-1990s, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have been home to defectors among the business elite. Defectors had been among those to benefit from privatization, but who later came into conflict with the personalist president and those in his inner circle. In chapter two, I outlined a causal model linking conflict over resources, in particular economic resources, to elite defections in market reforming post-Soviet autocracies. The model was diagrammed in Figure 2.1, which I reproduce here as Figure 5.2. Figure 5.2 serves as a reminder of the elements critical to the analysis of the two cases of widespread defection that have been observed in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Despite market reforms, one of the features of personalist rule is that those in the president's inner circle tend to hoard economic resources, to the exclusion of other business elites, also wealthy and influential, but who nonetheless find themselves located outside of the inner circle. Those who have been excluded from the inner circle may alienated not only by what they see as an unfair system of resource allocation, but also by their vulnerability to predation or *reiderstvo*, against which they have little formal protection. While dissatisfaction among aggrieved business elites can linger, perhaps indefinitely, the appearance of a severe and common threat can serve as a focal point that activates latent resentment and transforms the otherwise unattractive option of defection to the political opposition into an act of last resort.

The Economic Origins of Intra-Elite Conflict

The market reforming autocracies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan combine real and functioning elements of a free market (albeit with serious limitations, such as extensive corruption and significant barriers to competition in key sectors of the economy) with a set of

special privileges reserved for elites closest to the president. As we saw in chapter three, both countries' economic liberalization rankings are relatively high. Based on their average scores on the market reform index, Kyrgyzstan is first and Kazakhstan fifth among the post-Soviet personalist autocracies (see Table 3.18). As a result of presidential policies that have encouraged economic liberalization and privatization, a wealthy class of independent business owners has been solidified since the mid- to late-1990s (Radnitz forthcoming).

However, elites' autonomy and freedom to engage in economic activity are not absolute, especially when it comes to big business and big profits. Not just anyone can rise to the top, and only certain elites are allowed to play the game.[14] Once in, there are no guarantees that one's wealth will remain in his or her hands, especially when other elites close to the president jealously guard their assets against competition. As Asylbek Kozhakhmetov, a wealthy former entrepreneur and current opposition leader, explains, Kazakhstan's economy functions based on the principles of the free market only up to a point. According to Kozhakhmetov, "We have free markets at the level of small businesses and perhaps at the level of medium-sized businesses, as well. But you can only get into high-stakes big business if you openly and constantly pronounce your loyalty to the regime."[15] A neutral (i.e., non-government and non-opposition) political observer agrees that the dangers of interference from and predation by the state and the inner circle facing big business in Kazakhstan are greater than those facing small businesses. He says, "Our economic system is harshly authoritarian at the top, when it comes to big business, but at the lower level there is competition and the laws regulating economic interactions are for the most part liberal."[16]

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[14] Since 2001, when a number of business elites openly challenged the president, Nazarbaev has been even more careful about who is allowed to gain access to wealth and resources.
[15] Author's interview with Asylbek Kozhakhmetov, Almaty, April 2007.
[16] (author interview with anonymous NGO leader, 17 May 2007, Almaty)

Similarly describing the risks of doing big business during Akaev's rule, one Kyrgyz businessman noted that small and medium businesses are generally left alone, but "[i]f your business is more than $1 million, you immediately get [the] attention" of the president's family and those working for the state.[17] Defector from among Kazakhstan's business elite Mukhtar Ablyazov summarized the situation facing big business owners in the following terms:

> If you are in business and try to run away from politics, politics will catch up to you… It is frightening when at any moment someone from the state can take away your money, your goods, your property. But it is even more frightening when… at any moment… [you] can be found guilty before the law for no reason at all. In Kazakhstan, the state is stronger than any business group and [stronger than] business as a whole… [and] you can fall under pressure from some [government official, such as] an *akim* [provincial governor] or someone from the tax police. The bigger your business, the more difficult it is to keep it from attracting unwanted attention from [those working for] the state.[18]

Thus, it appears that, despite the dispersion of resources that facilitated the rise of a class of business elites in the post-Soviet period, engaging in big business is also associated with significant cost.

In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, personalist presidents have placed the interests of a select group closest to them over those of other business elites who are also wealthy but for various reasons located outside of the inner circle. In Kazakhstan, the inner circle – also sometimes referred to as the Nazarbaev clan – is made up of the president's family members and wealthy financial-industrial groups (*finansovo-promyshlennye gruppy*) that dominate the resource extraction and refining industries (Adilov 2003; Kharlamov 2005; Khlyupin 1998; Kjænet, Satpaev, and Torjesen 2008; Satpaev 2007).[19] In Kyrgyzstan under Akaev, the inner

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[17] Quoted in International Crisis Group 2004, 17
[18] *Respublika*, November 24, 2001.
[19] See also Dzhanibekov, E. (2004) 'Gosudarstvo RK – eto ne Kazakhstantsy, a transnatsionional'nye oligarkhi iz grupp tipa Evraziya, Trans Uorld i t.d.', 17 June, available at: http://www.zonakz.

circle was to a greater extent kinship-based, consisting of members of the president's and his wife's extended family, both from provinces in the north (Collins 2006; International Crisis Group 2002; International Crisis Group 2004; Lewis 2008; Marat 2006a; Spector 2008). In addition to family members, among Akaev's close allies were also included a number of political elites.

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 refer to some of the most visible elites in the inner circles of Nazarbaev (circa 2007) and Akaev (circa 2004). Data were compiled from interviews and publicly available print and Internet sources (Adilov 2003; Aliev 2000; Ashimbaev 2008; Collins 2006; International Crisis Group 2004; Lewis 2008; Kharlamov 2005; Satov 2007; Satpaev 2007; Yuritsyn 2007). The tables list commonly cited members of the circle around the president and their biographies. For those whose business holdings are known, I include the individual businesses and economic sectors in which they are involved. Note that these lists are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather "snapshots' in time of the generally agreed upon major players. Due to a lack of well-documented publicly available information and human error on my part, there may be cases in which I inadvertently exclude someone and/or provide incorrect information about individuals who are included.

A comparison of Tables 5.1 and 5.2 reveals important differences in the kinds of actors who have been close to the two presidents. Nazarbaev's inner circle is comprised of a number of financial-industrial groups with known ties to big businesses and political elites whose business holdings are not publicly known or documented. Elites in the inner circle

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net/articles/6488, accessed 22 January 2008; Epitsentr evraziiskii tsentr politicheskikh issledovanii i agentsvo sotsial'nykh tekhnologii (2005) 'Gruppa vliyaniya vo vlastno-politicheskoi sisteme respubliki Kazakhstan', 25 November, available at: http://zonakz.net/articles/10280, accessed 21 January 2008; Institut aktual'nykh politicheskikh issledovanii (1999) *Razdelennaya elita: vzaimootnosheniya finansogo-promyshlennykh grupp Kazakhstana*, available at: http://www.eurasia.org.ru/archive/1999/top5/05_28_press1.html, accessed 24 June 2009; *Profil'*, 2 April 2007, available at: http://www.profile.ru/items/? item=22527, accessed 20 January 2008.

have been given exclusive access to the country's lucrative energy and metals industries, as the list of enterprises in column two shows. The majority of those associated with Akaev in his last years in power, in contrast, were not from big business, but were rather career political appointees, what the International Crisis Group described as lacking "real political weight" and "dependent on the survival of the regime" (2004, 15). I came across three business elites described as among those in Akaev's inner circle: Tashkul Kereksizov, whom one member of the political opposition claims is the richest man in Kyrgyzstan;[20] Azamat Kangel'diev, who prior to working in the Tax Inspectorate is said to have headed various commercial enterprises; and Askar Salymbekov, whose family owns the Dordoi company, which includes one of the largest wholesale bazaars in Central Asia, among other businesses (Spector 2008). Contrast these kinds of business activities controlled by elites associated with Akaev to the millionaire (and in some cases billionaire) elites in Nazarbaev's circle who are in command of Kazakhstan's natural resources. Almost of all the financial-industrial groups close to Nazarbaev finance national print and electronic media outlets, and a number of them have appeared on *Forbes* magazine's list of the richest people in the world, some more than once.

Despite these differences, a comparison of Tables 5.1 and 5.2 also highlights key similarities between the two presidents' inner circles. Family members, in particular the presidents' children, have been prominent in both Nazarbaev and Akaev's inner circles. The presidents' children and their spouses have formed political parties and owned a number of private media outlets, two means by which they have attempted to influence domestic politics and public opinion. Moreover, as is true of Kazakhstan, the presidents' children have been

[20] Emil' Aliev, a close ally of prominent oposition leader Feliks Kulov, quoted by the International Crisis Group (2004).

linked to the most profitable businesses in their countries. In resource-rich Kazakhstan, sought-after businesses are in the oil, gas, and metals industries and in the banking sector. In resource-poor Kyrgyzstan, profitable economic sectors include service provision to U.S. air base (especially military fuel subcontracts), hotels, markets (bazaars and retail stores), casinos, restaurants, telecommunications, and gas stations (Marat 2006a; Roston 2006). Notably, Kyrgyzstan's feeble economy and lack of resource-based wealth have prevented the rise of big financial-industrial groups of the likes found in Kazakhstan. As one political observer commented,

> What could be considered lucrative are the gold mining and hydroelectric sectors. There is no other place to make really big money. The energy sector remains under the control of the government. Private businessmen were never allowed to participate in its development. There was never competition or struggle among private actors to control it. Gold was given to foreigners, and naturally those who were in power get the share, but local businessmen never participated in gold extraction and there never developed interest groups looking for access to that resource.[21]

Noting that the wealth to be had in Kyrgyzstan is on a smaller scale relative to that of Kazakhstan does not imply that competition over access to economic resources is absent. Quite the contrary, under conditions in which new sources of wealth are difficult to generate and the economy is in decline or stagnant, competition over existing resources can be quite fierce (Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Collins 2006).

Initially, the presidents' children were not involved in either politics or the economy, but beginning in the mid-1990s, they became increasingly involved in business and, eventually, national politics. In Kazakhstan from 1995 to 2007, Nazarbaev's daughter Dariga Nazarbaeva and two of his sons-in-law, Rakhat Aliev and Timur Kulibaev, gained

[21] Author's interview with anonymous political observer, Bishkek, September 2007.

dominance in both politics and the economy (Kharlamov 2005; Khlyupin 1998).[22] As was the case with Kazakhstan's presidential sons-in-law, the children of Kyrgyzstan's first family, Akaev's son Aidar Akaev and son-in-law Adil' Toigonbaev, likewise began to build up their business empires. Their first forays into business took place in 1997, and, by 2004, the younger Akaev, Toigonbaev, and other members of the president's extended family had gained a large share of the country's most profitable economic sectors (Lewis 2008).[23]

The endeavor to establish family rule did not go uncontested in either country. As the presidents' children used their privileged positions to take over or shut down competitors' businesses, a well of resentment built up among business elites who had been kept out of certain sectors and/or who had been victims of *reiderstvo*. In Kazakhstan, political observers have noted a great deal of economic and political conflict between Dariga Nazarbaeva and Rakhat Aliev, on the one hand, and other elites, both within the inner circle and outside of it (Epitsentr 2005; Satpaev 2007; Yuritsyn 2007).[24] While most business elites have refrained from overt political activity and avoid political conflict,[25] others have chafed under Nazarbaev's two-tiered system of rewards and have fought for political guarantees that would allow them to compete with those close to the president. Indeed, some of the very

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[22] Author's interviews with Petr Svoik, NGO leader, former parliamentarian and minister, co-founder of the Azamat opposition party in 1996, 31 January 2007, Almaty, and Bulat Abilov, then co-chair of the Naghyz Ak Zhol opposition party, former member of parliament under the presidential party ticket, former owner of the Butya company, co-founder of the DCK, and formerly one of the wealthiest businessmen in Kazakhstan, 19 December 2006, Almaty.

[23] Author's interviews with business elite and current opposition member Omurbek Abdrakhmanov, Bishkek, March 2007 and with former political elite under Akaev and current opposition member Alibek Jekshenkulov, Bishkek, October 2007. Author's interviews with anonymous political observers, Bishkek, November and December 2007.

[24] As will be discussed in chapter six, the influence of Nazarbaeva and Aliev appears to have weakened since 2007, when their financial-industrial group was, in essence, dissolved and its businesses placed under the control of government ministries or handed over to other elites in the inner circle.

[25] Author's interview with anonymous political observer and then public relations coordinator of an opposition party, April 2007, Almaty.

beneficiaries of privatization have come into direct conflict with the inner circle over the allocation of resources (Junisbai and Junisbai 2005).

In Kyrgyzstan, according to interviews conducted by the International Crisis Group in 2003 to 2004, some business elites who were otherwise supportive of the president for his pro-market policies had similarly become deeply frustrated by the impunity of Akaev's son and especially his son-in-law in their business dealings. Despite growing alienation, however, it appeared that Kyrgyzstan's business elites were keeping clear of politics and, outwardly, continued to express loyalty to the Akaev family. In 2003, one banker interviewed for the International Crisis Group study noted that "…everyone tries to maintain their distance from politics because they are afraid for their own business. And businessmen will never finance political parties" (2004, 10).[26]

Within two years' time, the situation changed dramatically. A number of business elites, who earlier seemed the unlikeliest of candidates for defection, emerged as key figures in the "tulip revolution," and the once far-fetched idea of business elites financing political parties and opposition protests became a harsh reality for the Akaev regime. How can this startling about-face be explained? I argue that, when economic conflict between elites in the president's inner circle and elites outside of it leaves them little choice, business elites may be forced into opposition politics. In particular, when loyalty to the president fails to fulfill the goal of protecting elites' economic interests, they may choose to defect despite the harsh

[26] It appears that business elites had reason to fear. In an article on elites that first appeared in *gazeta.kg* in 2001, business elites Daniyar Usenov, Mukhamed Ibragimov, and Zhalgap Kazakbaev fell victim to *reiderstvo* by members of the Akaev inner circle when their patron in government, Prime Minister Apas Jumagulov resigned. In an attempt to protect their businesses, they began to openly criticize the president, but were quickly punished. Usenov was sentenced for hooliganism and his businesses divided up; Kazakbaev was sentenced to 14 years imprisonment for illegally selling uranium and government property; and Ibragimov was sentenced to jail for avoiding taxes (Editors 2002).

sanctions that their actions are likely to provoke.

Before analyzing the factors that led to this unexpected change in Kyrgyz elite behavior, I first turn to an episode in Kazakhstan in which private economic conflict between the inner circle and other business elites spilled over into overt political struggle within the ruling coalition.

Cases of Widespread Defection: Kazakhstan in 2001

Throughout the second half of the 1990s, presidential son-in-law Rakhat Aliev had been strong-arming his business competitors among the elite into submission, forcing them to sell at below-market prices, hand over their businesses to him, or to close down their operations. Resorting to *reiderstvo*, Aliev became the owner of the largest beet sugar processing enterprise in the country, Sakharnyi Tsentr, earning him the nickname "the sugar king." As current opposition leader and former business elite Bulat Abilov recounts, competitors in the sugar market were forced to give up their businesses to Aliev, who had cut off their supplies and threatened other businesses that continued purchasing sugar from them. Faced with bankruptcy, they had no choice but to sell.[27]

The financial-industrial group that Aliev and his wife, Dariga Nazarbaeva, headed, also used strong-arm tactics to take over a number of non-government national radio and television stations. From 1997 to 2007, Aliev and Nazarbaeva gained ownership of a majority of the Kazakhstan's media holdings, including the *Novoe Pokolenie* and *Karavan* newspapers; the NTK, KTK, ORT-Kazakhstan (Channel 1), and Khabar television stations; Europa-Plus, Hit-FM, Russkoe Radio, and Radio Retro radio stations; Kazakhstan-Today News Agency; Alma Media; and TV-Media. Rozlana Taukina, the former owner of the

[27] Author's interview with Bulat Abilov, 19 December 2006, Almaty.

privately owned Totem television and radio company, a Kazakh and Italian joint venture, explains that a government tender held in 1997 served as a convenient way for Nazarbaeva to get rid of competitors to her recently acquired media holdings. Taukina angrily recalls the loss of her company:

> My business was taken away, not because it had gone bankrupt, but because Dariga Nazarbaeva wanted to close us and get our advertisers. After that how could I not be an opponent of this regime, which has no normal democratic law? They held a tender and in one day closed the station. If only they had given me at least three months, so I could earn money to repay the advertising debts! Tell me, how could I be indifferent and praise the regime after such treatment? I understood that this is a completely unfair regime. How could you close a prospering company? How could they remove 150 people from their jobs? … They punished me doubly, including financial punishment, because I had to pay off all of the debts [the station had incurred] from my own pocket.[28]

Long-standing grievances among business elites came to a public head in the fall of 2001, when a number of the country's most influential business elites defected to the opposition. A dozen members of the business establishment, several high-ranking government officials, and three members of parliament defected from the ruling coalition and formed the Demokraticheskii Vybor Kazakhstana (Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan or DVK) opposition movement (Petrushova 2002; Sysoev 2001).[29] The DVK was the first and to date only time that a group of wealthy and well-connected business elites openly and publicly challenged President Nazarbaev and the system of rule he had built.

The DVK's formation was catalyzed by an escalating business conflict between Aliev

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[28] Interview with Rozlana Taukina, Almaty, March 2007.

[29] See *Obrashcheniye Demvybora k Kazakhstanstam*, November 21, 2001.Available at: http://www.kub.info/print.php?sid=405. The DCK had five political demands: an independent judiciary, greater parliamentary powers, popular election of governors, liberalizing the media, and greater control over natural resource exploitation. Because those in the second tier were restricted from desired media outlets and kept out of the oil, gas, and metals industries, it made sense that these should be included in their demands, framed as key issues that would benefit Kazakhstan's citizens as a whole (rather than their own self-interest).

and other young members of Kazakhstan's business elite.[30] Widely -known business elite Mukhtar Ablyazov, at the time one of the wealthiest people in Kazakhstan, owned the increasingly profitable Bank Turan Alem,[31] which was a competitor to Nurbank, a major Kazakhstani bank owned by the Aliev and Nazarbaeva. When Aliev demanded a majority share in Turan Alem, Ablyazov refused. Crucially, Ablyazov was not the only financial-industrial group leader who had come into conflict with Aliev and other financial-industrial groups in the inner circle. Just a few weeks before the DVK went public with its political demands, 19 oligarchs, including owners of the country's largest banks, signed an open letter to the president complaining that their businesses were under threat from security organs that Aliev headed at the time (Serdalina 2001).

Those who had suffered at the hands of and whose business ambitions were curbed by members of Nazarbaev's inner circle understood that the problem was not rooted simply in the country's *economic system*, which was weighted in favor of the president's relations and close allies. They also understood that the structure of *political system* was at fault. There were no institutional checks against the arbitrary decisions of the president, just as there were no formal guarantees that would protect their enterprises from claims made by those closest to the president. In 2001, Rakhat Aliev emerged as the focal point around which the business elite's main grievances—their vulnerability to coercion and the lack of redress should

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[30] For a history of the DVK, see "Demokraticheskii Vybor Kazakhstana: Prodolzhenie Puti," *Svoboda Slova*, November 2, 2007; "K 5-letiyu Demokratichekogo Vybora Kazakhstana," *Svoboda Slova*, November 9, 2007; "Demokraticheskii Vybor Kazakhstana: 5 let Dvizheniyu, Vskolykhnuvshemu Stranu," *Svoboda Slova*, November 16, 2007; "DVK Spas Stranu ot Rakhata Alieva," *Svoboda Slova,* November 16, 2007; and "Proshloe Ne Otkazyvaetsya ot Nas, Chast' 1," *Svoboda Slova,* February 6, 2009.

[31] As sign of its success in recent years, in December 2006 Fitch Ratings and the Russian journal *Itogi* named Turan Alem Bank the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) bank of the year (Askarov 2006). In early 2009, Turan Alem was nationalized and Ablyazov accused of abuse of his position as head. He has since fled Kazakhstan. For an interview with Ablyazov in exile, see Akkulyuly (2006).

someone in the inner circle desire their businesses—intersected. A DVK co-founder and former governor of Pavlodar province explicitly refers to Aliev as a rallying point for disaffected business elites in his recollection of the events leading up to the DVK's establishment. He says,

> The circle around Nazarbaev, first of all his son-in-law Aliev, did not hide their intention to take businesses away from these people. Their demands became more and more aggressive. Rakhat Aliev demanded 51% of Bank Turan Alem from Ablyazov. That is racketeering, even worse. He demanded people's personal property and that is it. How is a person to act under those circumstances? Of course he feels aggression to the regime, outraged. *They saw a problem in one specific person—in Rakhat Aliev, or another relative of the president, or in his circle*—but over time came to understand that the problem lay not in a specific person, in those who demand something from them, but the problem was to a greater degree the political system, in the regime itself, that gives birth to this system of mutual relations [*vzaimootnosheniya*]. And these people in business came to pay attention to politics and speak [out].[32]

Rozlana Taukina and Dosym Satpaev, a widely cited Kazakhstani political analyst who has commented and written extensively on intra-elite politics, also argue that the DVK's political demands were rooted in conflicts over big business. Taukina frames the central issue as follows:

> When they push a person into a corner and make it so he can't work to feed himself, what should he do? He comes to oppose [the regime]. And so the idea of democracy comes… through the need to protect oneself. It is not because, for me, for example, that I studied philosophy and dreamed of democracy, or that I suddenly saw what it would be like to have a democratic country or that I fanatically held on to democratic beliefs. Our opposition is not like that. We all came to it through life experience.[33]

Similarly, according to Satpaev,

> In [Kazakhstan's economic] system, there is a ceiling beyond which no one is allowed to go. They [the elites who established the DVK] reached that ceiling and were not allowed to grow further. And they are all ambitious… [I]f you own something that is worth more than those in the inner circle own, that is dangerous. They will let you know that you have to share your wealth. The family and the circle are keeping them, this young oligarchy, back. If you have a great deal of ambition

[32] Author interview with Galymzhan Zhakiyanov, Almaty, February 2007, emphasis added.
[33] Author's interview with Rozlana Taukina, Almaty, March 2007.

> and money and want more, but you can't have it because those in the inner circle are blocking you, you begin to demand that the system be altered to become more liberal, more democratic. Not because you are a democrat, but because it will give you more economic opportunity, and of course political opportunity, as well.[34]

Indeed, members of the business elite who established the DVK were acutely aware of the existence of a glass ceiling, which under the current system they could not expect to surpass. Bulat Abilov clearly expresses this dynamic based on his own experience. He explains,

> I had already reached the ceiling in business. We built a major trading centre [*torgovyi tsentr*, the equivalent of a mall or shopping centre] in Almaty and purchased a series of other businesses. And so what? It was not interesting to me anymore; I had already accomplished all of that. *Why couldn't I get into other big manufacturing projects, metal processing, the oil sector, or the gas sector? They let in their own, their relatives, those close to them, others who paid big bribes.* I ran into a ceiling in which they said to me, 'Boy, feel free to build another Ramstor [grocery store/shopping centre chain in Kazakhstan]. Be content with what you have… We let you get this far; we didn't touch you. You should be happy with that'.[35]

As Collins (2006) has correctly noted, in recent years a new set of political and economic rivals to the "Nazarbaev clan" has emerged. However, far from being members of a competing group (kinship-based or otherwise), these elites were in many respects part and parcel of the business and political establishment created by the president himself. Often referred to as the "products of Nazarbaev," they were until fairly recently high-profile members of the president's team who became victims of a patronage system that privileges the president's inner circle over outsider business elites, which they found themselves a part. In the case of the DVK, President Nazarbaev's allies-turned-opponents joined the political opposition, publicly contesting the inner circle's exclusive access to the most profitable sectors of the economy.

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[34] Author's interview with Dosym Satpaev, Almaty, February 2007.
[35] Author's interview with Bulat Abilov, 19 December 2006, Almaty, emphasis added.

Cases of Widespread Defection: Kyrgyzstan in 2005

In Kyrgyzstan, a dynamic similar to the unanticipated emergence of the DVK culminated in widespread intra-elite conflict and defection during the 2005 parliamentary elections. As was true of the DVK, defectors from among Kyrgyzstan's business elite – those who had initially benefited from the president's economic policies and who had been his loyal supporters – joined defectors from the political elite to challenge the president.[36] The majority of parliamentary candidates in 2005 were wealthy businessmen, most of whom ran with the tacit or overt support of the Akaev leadership. When the results of the elections were announced, the new parliament was packed with pro-Akaev deputies, including his daughter, Bermet Akaeva, as had been planned.

Akaev, however, lost power before he had the chance to bask in his victory. In a number of cases, the president's strategy during the elections worked against him, unexpectedly alienating his allies running for office and pushing them into the opposition. The 2005 elections were hotly contested because a seat in parliament imparted security and protection. The system of immunity ensured that parliamentarians engaged in illegal activity could not be prosecuted. In addition, holding office provided an effective means of protecting and furthering elites' economic interests, as well as those of their associates. In the absence of secure property rights, elected office was an effective way to protect one's businesses and to prevent takeover by other predatory elites (Spector 2008). All of these attributions made parliament seats highly desirable to business elites, and, as a result,"[t]he controversial parliamentary elections in February-March 2005 contained the largest ever proportion of candidates from among the business elite" (Marat 2006b, 86).

[36] Intra-elite conflict and defections during the elections in Kyrgyzstan appeared dispersed, spontaneous, and not at first a coordinated event, unlike the formation of the DCK.

Surprisingly, Akaev's troubles began in the north, traditionally considered his support base, when pro-Akaev candidates in Issyk Kul, Naryn, and Talas provinces were deregistered or lost in races that pitted them against members of the inner circle, including relatives of the president's wife (International Crisis Group 2005; Knyazev 2006; Lewis 2008).[37] Among the defectors were wealthy business elites who had heretofore been allied with the president, Sadyr Japarov and Arslanbek Maliev,[38] and Ravshan Jeenbekov and Akylbek Japarov, both of whom had previously been political elites from the ruling coalition and how had held various posts in government. All were known Akaev loyalists; yet, their campaigns faced legal and/or administrative obstacles that were clearly meant to advantage rival candidates from the president's inner circle.

The examples of Ravshan Jeenbekov and Akylbek Japarov are typical of the favoritism showed to members of the president's inner circle to the detriment of other elites, also close to the president, but who unexpectedly found themselves "outsiders" who lost out to other elites with closer ties to the president. Jeenbekov was running against the president's wife's sister for a seat representing a district in Talas province and was declared the winner. Until this moment, Jeenbekov had been widely thought of as a favorite of the Akaev family and a close friend of Aidar Akaev and was sometimes called the president's "wallet" because he held the key position of chairman of the state property committee.[39] His victory was contested in the courts, which annulled the results of the election on the grounds that he had engaged in corrupt practices, including vote buying, to win his seat. In response, Jeenbekov rallied his supporters, who encircled the district court in protest. Describing the decision to

[37] Author interviews with anonymous journalist, Bishkek, September 2007, anonymous director of a state-run television station, Bishkek, September 2007, former host of a televised news program, Bishkek, October 2007; and political observer Aleksandr Knyazev, Bishkek, November 2007.
[38] According to Knyazev (2006), Maliev is one of the richest people in Kyrgyzstan.
[39] Author's interview with anonymous journalist, September 2007, Bishkek.

sideline him in favor of a member of the Akaev family, Jeenbekov recalls,

> I was one of the close circle around the Akaev family, but after what they have done to me after my participation in the elections, I will never work with them or this government again. They built me up, and then gave me over to the opposition.[40]

Japarov, running in Kochkor, a city in Naryn province near the Chinese border, had also been a member of the Akaev team. He was appointed to the presidential apparatus in 1992, served as Assistant to the Deputy Prime Minister from 1995 to 1997 and worked in the Ministry of Finance from 1997 to 2000. He had also been elected to Parliament in 2000, and was up for reelection in 2005. His opponent was candidate Turdakun Usubaliev, a former head of the Communist Party under Soviet rule. Due to changes to the electoral system that were approved in the 2003 referendum, Kyrgyzstan's bicameral legislature as of the 2005 parliamentary elections was re-crafted into a single chamber. This change reduced the total number of representatives to parliament, while also creating smaller electoral districts. Whereas prior to the changes Japarov and Usubaliev would have been campaigning for two different seats in parliament, they now found themselves competing for the same seat. Like his opponent Usubaliev, Japarov was a member of Akaev's ruling coalition and had by no means been an opposition-inclined deputy during his prior term in parliament. Nonetheless, because Usubaliev was a long-standing member of the president's inner circle, Japarov was removed from the race on a technicality to ensure Usubaliev's victory.[41]

In addition to the increased competition among elites seeking fewer slots in parliament, the introduction of more geographically compact electoral districts also played an important role in encouraging elite defections. Smaller districts facilitated the mobilization of supporters of disgruntled candidates like Japarov, Maliev, and Jeenbekov. Under the

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[40] Quoted an interview with the International Crisis Group (2005).
[41] Author's interview with anonymous director of a state-run television station, Bishkek, September 2007, and former host of a televised news program, Bishkek, October 2007.

previous electoral system, districts encompassed a larger area and voters were less likely to have personal (extended family and friends) or clientelistic ties to a particular candidate. In a country where personal connections and *zemlyachestvo* are important, the adoption of smaller districts inadvertently increased the probability of protests involving local constituents, who were more likely both to know one another and to have some kind of connection with "their" candidate than they would have been under the old rules.[42]

The defection of elites continued in the south, where prominent businessmen and local political figures running against candidates associated with the Akaev regime rallied their supporters in protest of electoral fraud.[43] Business elites with national recognition who had formerly been Akaev supporters, such as Jenishbek Nazaraliev (a medical doctor with a highly profitable drug rehabilitation clinic), Omurbek Abdrakhmanov (the owner of a major furniture chain), and Omurbek Babanov (who owned a national television station), also began openly challenging the president's right to rule. Combining their efforts and resources with those of grassroots opposition leaders and political elites who had previously defected to the opposition, business defectors helped provide transportation, food, toilets, and tents to protestors brought from all over the country to Bishkek; provided cell phones to youth organizers; and even paid thousands of dollars to rent a giant television from a company in neighboring Almaty, Kazakhstan, that was set up in the square to broadcast live coverage from the independent television station that Babanov owned.[44]

While the elections served as the focal point for elite resentment toward Akaev and

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[42] Author's interview with anonymous director of a social research institute, Bishkek, March 2007.
[43] Examples include Davran Sabirov and Aralbai Tolonov, both of whom ran against candidates who had Akaev's support.
[44] Author interviews with activists from Kel'Kel', Bishkek, October 2007, with anonymous journalist, Bishkek, September 2007, with anonymous director of a state-run television station, Bishkek, September 2007, with former host of a televised news program, Bishkek, October 2007, and with political observer Aleksandr Knyazev, Bishkek, November 2007).

his inner circle, the root of their alienation lay elsewhere. In the context of a shrinking economy, many business elites were being forced to sell or give their enterprises to those closest to the president, especially his son and son-in-law (Engvall 2007). Interviews with business elites conducted by the International Crisis Group in 2003 and 2004 indicated growing dissatisfaction among business elites, in particular among "a large group [of elites] that has lost business to the family, or else finds the limitations it effectively imposes on their growth increasingly frustrating" (International Crisis Group 2004, 17). Not only were big businesses targets for *reiderstvo*, but small-scale operations were increasingly fair game, as well. One entrepreneur explains the state of affairs for business owners by the end of Akaev's 14-year tenure:

> Things had gotten so bad that even small businesses were no longer safe. I owned a small café, one that had finally begun bringing in a profit, but was not a major income earner like the usual targets [for takeover] by those close to the president. One evening, Aidar Akaev [son of former President Akaev] came to my café with some other men. When I went to serve him, he asked me, "How much do you want for your business?" I told him that it wasn't prepared to sell. They left, but returned after hours, forced me into their car, and drove me somewhere outside of the city. There they beat me until I gave in. I said, "Name your price and the café is yours."[45]

In addition to disgruntled business elites who had suffered from *reiderstvo* were added political elites who unwittingly found themselves competing for a seat in parliament against members of Akaev's inner circle. With the reduction in the number of parliamentary seats, competition for votes was intense. Not only were political elites at times running against other elites from the inner circle, as was shown above, but business elites and local entrepreneurs were pitted against one another for limited space in the legislature. Each of those who experienced interference in their campaign, whether by the Akaev administration or by competing elites, were able to use both financial resources and support among their

[45] Author interview with entrepreneur, Bishkek, November 2007.

constituents and family members to fight back.

Widespread and dispersed protests ensued. Importantly, these were not limited to the south, which had been considered the cradle of anti-Akaev sentiment. Disaffected elites in the so-called Akaev stronghold in the north had been the first to take their cause to the streets. Suddenly, the president appeared quite vulnerable, and there were few elites left who continued to back him. Too many had been alienated by the president's blatant preference for his inner circle. As one former ally of the president summed up the situation in late winter/early spring of 2005,

> In the end, the elite was already tired of Akaev and did not want him in power anymore. The elite were, as a whole negatively inclined toward the [Akaev] family. They were upset about the family's hoarding of resources and its influence on politics. In addition, the president pushed many strong elites out of government/ power [*vlast'*], and it was, of course, natural for them to turn against him.[46]

The Kazakh and Kyrgyz Defections Compared

In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, business elites defected as a result of pervasive dissatisfaction over the allocation of economic resources and the lack of formal mechanisms to protect elites' property rights from predation and *reiderstvo*. In both countries, long-simmering tensions flared up around a particular focal point. In Kyrgyzstan, this proved to be the 2005 parliamentary elections, which pitted business and political elites against one another and against elites in the inner circle during heightened competition over limited legislative seats. In 2001, Kazakh oligarch Mukhtar Ablyazov was able to convert the latent discontent among elites over the distribution of economic resources into open political conflict. Ablyazov worked for months to mobilize business elites around a concrete threat, one that they had in the past faced or could imagine themselves a victim of in the future: the

[46] Author's interview with former political elite and Akaev ally who requested to anonymity, Bishkek, October 2007.

demand that Ablyazov simply hand over his profitable business to someone in the inner circle.

Despite their similar roots, however, the outcomes of the defections markedly differ. The defection of business elites to the opposition to Akaev led ultimately to his overthrow. Predictions generated by Bratton and van de Walle (1997) aptly fit the Kyrgyz case in 2005 under Akaev. When three key variables – regimes built on personal loyalty, shrinking economic opportunity, and exclusionary patterns of reward – combine, "a crisis of legitimacy may be a sufficient condition to undermine or topple a regime, and there need not yet be an organized opposition offering a programmatic alternative" (461).

In Kazakhstan, in sharp contrast, Nazarbaev was able to neutralize the political crisis by eliminating the common threat which had united disparate and competing elite groups, as well as by flaming elites' fears that a change in political leadership would likely lead to the systematic redistribution of economic resources. To defuse the tension that might lead other elites to join the opposition, Nazarbaev sent Aliev into a form of political exile, appointing him the Ambassador to the Organization of Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE). Aliev's departure effectively removed the focal point around which so much discontent on the part of the business elite had been concentrated. It also confirmed Nazarbaev's stature as the only arbiter capable of settling economic conflict among warring elites. Most of Kazakhstan's business elites have placed their faith in the current regime and with President Nazarbaev, preferring to bide their time until it becomes clear that the president's tenure is coming to an end. As a result, while a group of powerful business elites did indeed defect, they were unable to further their push for regime change, due to a number of factors working against them.

Within months of its sudden and unexpected public appearance, the DVK was by the spring of 2002 effectively eliminated from the political field. The defection of business elites to the opposition thus appears to share the same fate as that of previous elite defectors in Kazakhstan. The lack of a unifying enemy, in combination with the repressive measures taken against those who had "betrayed" the president, proved the movement's downfall. Business elites who formed the movement were told their assets would be confiscated or investigated by the tax police should they continue their opposition activities.[47] Political elites were forced out of their posts or lost their seats in parliament. In response, many withdrew from the DCK and returned to government service or to the private sector.[48] Others split off and formed a moderate opposition faction called Ak Zhol (Shining Path), which was later registered as a political party.[49] The two leaders who remained outspoken, Zhakiyanov and Ablyazov, were later jailed on criminal charges, including tax evasion and abuse of office. Today, both have fled the country, Zhakiyanov for medical treatment in China and Ablyazov to England to avoid prosecution in connection with the renationalization of Bank Turan Alem in spring 2009. In the end, it proved easy for the government to deprive the DVK of the business holdings that its leaders had accumulated in the period leading up to the movement's establishment, reaffirming for elites observing the events from the sidelines that resources built up can quickly and definitively be lost should they be used in a way that

[47] Bulat Abilov explained that when he joined the movement he turned his assets into cash in order to lessen his and his family's vulnerability to repression. Author interview with Bulat Abilov, Almaty, December 2006.

[48] One signatory who returned to government service is Kairat Kelimbetov, who later headed the government investment fund, Kazina. Kelimbetov has been a vocal critic of those who remained in the opposition. See Verk (2007).

[49] Since then, Ak Zhol arty has split into two competing parties due to conflict between its leaders, dissolved into another other opposition party, and most recently voted to change its name to appeal to the nationalist sentiments of the poor Kazakh-speaking population. Such changes and splits have done nothing to advance the opposition's cause, and Nazarbaev has since faced little substantive threat from Kazakhstan's elites-turned-opposition leaders.

threatens the president.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a deeper look into the causal mechanisms linking market reforms, intra-elite conflict, and elite defection from the ruling coalition to the political opposition. Evidence was provided that contrasts the absence of defectors from the business elite in Belarus since 1996 with the presence of such defectors in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in the last decade. In chapters two and three, I laid out the argument behind my market based explanation of elite defection, as well as justified the selection of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan as theoretically interesting cases that exhibit variation in the dependent variable. In chapter four, elite defections were placed in the broader context of the evolution of opposition leadership since the late Soviet period. Combined, this and the previous chapters elucidate the dynamics influencing elite behavior using both longitudinal analysis and an in-depth investigation of elite defectors in three post-Soviet personalist autocracies.

It seems appropriate, therefore, to revisit the diagram of causal factors and outcomes that appeared in chapter three as Table 3.20 and reappears here as Table 5.3. As Table 5.3 depicts, all three cases satisfy background conditions #1 and #2: They are examples of personalist presidential autocracies characterized by limited political freedoms. Despite the relative variation in political openness, all three are ranked near the regional average on the Voice and Accountability Index or below it, which places them among the middling to most authoritarian of the Soviet successor states. In addition to these background conditions, which prior studies have found to be theoretically important, is the extent of market reform. Building on existing studies, I find market reforms to be crucial to an understanding of the variation in elite defections in the post-Soviet space. Extensive market reforms have bee

implemented in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, whereas such reforms are almost nonexistent in post-1996 Belarus.

I link the proposed causal factor (market reforms) to three political outcomes: # 1 is elite defection, in particular periods of widespread defection (as opposed to instances in which individual elites have defected, which appears to be a more common occurrence); #2 is the composition of the opposition leadership; and #3 is the probability that the personalist president will be overturned as a result of defection. As has been argued throughout the dissertation, where the economy has been privatized, business elites have been active among the opposition leadership – even if for a limited time and in response to an immediate threat (as opposed to long-term goals for transforming the political system). In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, defectors from the business elite have joined forces with defectors from the political elite, and with civil society activists in the latter, to challenge the personalist president's right to rule. In Belarus, in contrast, the single instance of widespread elite defection took place early on in the Lukashenka presidency and consisted primarily of political defectors, with only one case of a defector from the business elite.

Market reforms further contribute to the composition of the political opposition, but in more diverse and perhaps unexpected ways. In the absence of privatization, business elites, as noted previously, are absent from the opposition. Thus we find that the opposition in market rejecting Belarus is led primarily by grassroots civil society activists, especially young people eager for their country to turn to away from the Soviet past and toward a European future. Working closely with an earlier generation of political defectors from the ruling coalition, youth activists have marched in the streets; have faced the courts, fines, and prisons; and yet remain steadfast members of the political opposition. Given Belarus's

reputation as "the worst of the worst" rogue states (Rotberg 2007) and the last dictator in Europe, this finding is surprising (and the consequences of which will be investigated in more detail in chapter six).

At the other extreme is Kazakhstan, where young people and civil society activists are almost completely absent from the active ranks of the political opposition. There may be like-minded or passive supporters of opposition causes among activists, but the opposition has done little to court them. The opposition leadership is instead restricted to political and business defectors who have been "stained" by their former collusion with the Nazarbaev government.[50] I this chapter, I argued that just as the lack of reform has contributed to the presence of civil society actors in Belarus, in Kazakhstan market reforms – due to expectations of continued economic opportunity – have kept young activists away from the opposition.

Somewhere in between these two poles in Kyrgyzstan, where the opposition is made up of a mix of business defectors, political defectors, and civil society activists. This may be the most advantageous combination for a political opposition to have. As Radnitz (forthcoming) posits, only opposition coalitions made up of both civil society activists and capitalists are capable of toppling autocrats. Indeed, the last row in Table 5.3 appears to support Radnitz's argument: Of the three cases, presidential turnover occurred only in Kyrgyzstan in 2005, in which a coalition of civil society activists and political and economic defectors, at first separately and later in coordination, mobilized their human and financial resources against an unpopular personalist president.

The defection of political elites in Belarus, no matter how extensive, did not rid the

[50] Author's interviews with Sergei Duvanov, Almaty, February 2007, with Evgenii Zhovtis, Almaty, February 2007, and with Petr Svoik, Almaty, January 2007.

country of Lukashenka in 1996; nor did the defection in 2005 of political and business elites from the Kazakh ruling coalition have a lasting impact on Nazarbaev's hold on power. Massive public protests in the capital of Belarus in the wake of the 2007 presidential elections, in which thousands of young people participated and camped out in the cold streets for three days, similarly failed to oust Lukashenka. Perhaps a combination of autonomous elite resources and grassroots civic engagement is indeed necessary to launch a successful challenge to the personalist president.

In chapter six, the final empirical chapter of the dissertation, I return to these outstanding questions. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the opposition vis-à-vis the personalist president? How have these shaped the strategies that the political opposition in these countries has pursued? Finally, is a coalition of civil society and business elites both a necessary and sufficient condition for the opposition's chances of success?

Tables and Figures

Table 5.1 Snapshot of President Nazarbaev's Inner Circle, circa 2007

Name (in alphabetical order)	Key Biographical Information (including businesses/enterprises, where known)
Abykaev, Nurtai	Said to be associated with the Ispatkarmet steel producer, Kazakhmys light metals extraction company, and Petroleum Kazakhstan; said to control most government media; known as a representative of the "old presidential guard" (Alekhova 2006)
Aliev, Rakhat/ Nazarbaeva, Dariga[2]	Assets included Nurbank; Sakharnyi Tsentr sugar company; Neftyanoi Tsentr oil company; Mobil gas stations; series of oil refineries; *Novoe Pokolenie* and *Karavan* newspapers; NTK, KTK, ORT-Kazakhstan and Khabar television stations; Europa-Plus, Hit-FM, Russkoe Radio, and Radio Retro radio stations; Kazakhstan-Today News Agency; Alma Media; TV-Media; since summer 2007, the Aliev-Nazarbaeva FPG has lost all of its media holdings, but Nazarbaeva maintains a majority share in Nurbank
Balgimbaev, Nurlan	Deputy Director, Prognostic Department, Rosneftgaz Russian Oil and Gas Company (91-92); MIT University (92-93); Consultant to Chevron (93-94); Minister of Oil and Gas (94-97); President, KazakhOil state oil company (99-02); President, Kazakh Oil Investment Company (02-07); Presidential Advisor (07-)
Dzhaksybekov, Adil'bek	General Director and President, Tsesna company (90-96); Senator (96-97); First Deputy Governor Akmolinsk Province (96-97); Mayor, Astana City (97-03); Chair, Administrative Council of the Akmolinsk SEZ (97-00); Minister of Industry and Trade (03-04); Head, Presidential Administration (04-08); First Deputy Chair, Nur-Otan presidential political party (08-); Presidential Advisor (08-); Ambassador to the Russian Federation (08-09)
The Eurasia financial-industrial group (Mashkevich, Aleksandr; Shodiev, Patokh; and Ibragimov, Alidzhan)	According to *Forbes*, all three were worth a little under $2 billion each in 2007; owns the Eurasian Natural Resources Corporation (ENRC); Aluminum Kazakhstan; said to control Kazakhstan's metals, energy, and coal markets; owns a series of metal and coal mines and power stations; Kazakh Mineral Resource Corporation; Eurasian Bank; the *Ekspress-K* newspaper and Irbis television station; had controlled the Agrarian and Civic parties until their merger with the presidential Otan party in 2007
Kim, Vladimir/[3] Ni, Vladimir	Kim was on *Forbes* magazine's list of billionaires two years in a row (2006 and 2007) and in 2007 was the wealthiest person in Kazakhstan, then worth an estimated $5.5 billion; Kim-Ni FPG owns a series of light metal mining companies, including Kazakhmys Corporation, Zhezkazgansvetmet Corporation, and East Kazakhstan Copper-Chemical Plant; *Vremya* newspaper

Kulibaev, Timur[4]	The combined official wealth of Dinara Kulibaeva and Timur Kulibaev in 2007 was estimated at about $4 billion; heads Narodnyi Bank; major shareholder in Kazkommertsbank; until 2007 was vice president of the KazMunaiGas state oil company; heads series of oil-related companies, from extraction, processing, to transport, including Kaztranzoil Holding Company, Kaztranzgas, Mangystau-munaigaz, oil processing plans in Shymkent and Pavlodar; Bakhus alcohol and water bottling company; series of media holdings, including NTV-Kazakhstan, *Izvestiya-Kazakhstan*, *Kontinent* magazine, and the Kazakhstani editions of the *Komsomol'skaya Pravda* and *Izvestiya* newspaper; some regional airline companies
Satybaldy, Kairat	Nazarbaev's nephew; worked in the National Security Committee in various high-ranking posts (91-98); Deputy Governor of Astana City (98-00); Vice President of KazakhOil state oil company (00-02); Deputy Chair, Otan presidential party (02-03); Managing Director of Social Problems, Strategic Planning, and Telecommunications, KazMunaiGaz state oil and gas company (02-03); Head, Department of Personnel, National Security Committee (03-05); First Vice President, Kazakhstan Temir Zholi railroad company (05-06); Member, Peoples' Assembly of Kazakhstan
Tasmagambetov, Imangali	Chair, State Committee on Youth Issues (91-93); Presidential Assistant on Organizational Issues (93-95); Deputy Prime Minister (96-97); Minister of Education and Culture (97); Deputy Head, Presidential Administration (97-98); First Assistant to the President (98-99); Governor, Atyrau Province (99-00); Deputy Prime Minister (00-02); Prime Minister (02-03); Secretary of State (03-04); Head, Presidential Administration (04); Mayor, Almaty City (04-08); Governor, Astana Province (08-)
Tazhin, Marat	Dean, Social Sciences Department , Kazakh State University (91-92); First Deputy Head, Department of Internal Politics, Presidential Apparatus (94-95); Deputy Head, Presidential Administration (95-99); Secretary of National Security (01-02); First Deputy Head, Presidential Administration (04-06); Secretary of National Security (06-07); Minister of Foreign Affairs (07-)
Tokaev, Kasymzhomart	Diplomatic Academy (91-92); Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (92-93); First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (93-94); Minister of Foreign Affairs (94-99); Prime Minister (99-02); Secretary of State/Minister of Foreign Affairs (02-03); Minister of Foreign Affairs (03-07); appointed to the Senate (07-); Senate Chairman (07-)
Utemuratov, Bulat[5]	*Forbes* estimated Utemuratov's net worth at $1 billion in 2008; shareholder in Turan Alem Bank and Narodnyi Bank; former shareholder in ATF Bank; Kazzink (zinc); Kazfosfat (phosphates); said to be a former major shareholder in television Channel 31 and owner of a series of television stations, radio stations and newspapers, including the newspaper *Megapolis* and the opposition news website Navigator

[1]According to some sources, Abykaev, a member of the senior horde and Shapyrashty tribe like President Nazarbaev, is a distant relative of the president. [2]Until 2001, Aliev was considered the president's right hand and a potential successor. Aliev's influence declined after 2001, the result of a confrontation with the Ablyazov FPG and evidence that Aliev was plotting against the president and had posted compromising material about the

president and his family on the Internet. [3]As a result of the financial crisis, in 2008, Kim is no longer included among the world's billionaires. [4]According to Kharlamov (2005), Kulibaev united with the Kazkommerts FPG in 2000 and the Utemuratov FPG in 2005-2006 and worked closely with the Ablyazov FPG. Other elites said to have been associated with the Kulibaev FPG are Nurlan Kapparov, Ulan Ksembaev, and Karim Masimov. [5]Utemuratov is sometimes listed as a member of the second tier. [6]Kharlamov (2005) categorises the Kulibaev and Subkhanberdin FPGs as one, explaining that they united in 2000. Epitsentr (2005) places Subkhanberdin in the inner circle.
Sources: Adilov 2003; Aliev 2000; Ashimbaev 2008; Kharlamov 2005; Satpaev 2007

Table 5.2 Snapshot of President Akaev's Inner Circle, circa 2004

Name (in alphabetical order)	Key Biographical Information (including businesses/enterprises, where known)
Akaev, Aidar	In 2004 was formally an adviser to the Ministry of Finance, but said to be a powerful figure in the business world (ICG 2004). Owned Manas International, company that controlled the international airport and one of two companies registered to handle U.S. Department of Defense fuel contracts for the U.S. air base, and the Bitel cell phone provider
Akaeva, Bermet	Worked for several years in Geneva for the UN; representative of the Agha-Khan Foundation in Kyrgyzstan; founded pro-presidential Algha, Kyrgyzstan! party in 2003; ran for parliament in 2005
Akaeva, Mairam	Said to be influential in government appointments; founded and headed Meerim, a children's charity
Akmataliev, Temirbek	Head economist, Department of Agriculture, Kemin region (91-94); Expert, Presidential Administration (94-96); Governor, Talas province (98-99); Governor, Osh province (99-00); Minister of Finance (01-02); Minister of Internal Affairs (2002; dismissed after Aksy events, "despite closeness to the family" [ICG 2002, 9]); Deputy Head, Presidential Administration (02-03); Minister of Ecology and Emergency Situations (02-04); Chair, World Congress of Kyrgyz (2004)
Ashirkulov, Misir*	Rector, Bishkek International School of Management & Business, 1992-1997; First Deputy Minister of National Security, 1997-1998; Minister of National Security, 1998-1999; Head, Presidential Administration, 1999-2001; Chair, State Commission for Reforming Internal Affairs, 2002; Head, Presidential Administration, 2002-2004; Secretary of National Security, 2004; elected Chair, Civic Union for Fair Elections, May 2004 (on same day removed from post of Secretary of National Security by presidential decree)
Ibraimov, Osmonakun	Head, Department of Literature, Kyrgyz State University (91-92); Head, Department of Public Relations, Presidential Apparatus (93); Vice Minister (93-96); Ambassador to India (96-98); Ambassador to Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka (98-99); Press Secretary (99-01); Secretary of State (01-05); one of the few southerners in the presidential administration (ICG 2004)
Januzakov, Bolot	Head, Political Department, Bishkek City UVD (88-95); Deputy Head, Chui Province UVD (95-96); Head, Department of Law Enforcement Organs and Defense of the Government Apparatus (96-02); Secretary of the Security Council (99-01); Chair, National Security Service (01-02); Presidential Advisor (02-03); Head, Department of Defense and Security of the Presidential Administration (03); Deputy Head, Presidential Administration (03-04)
Jumaliev, Kubanychbek	Head Scientific Worker, Frunze Polytechnic Institute (88-92(); Chair, State Committee on Science and New Technology (92-94); First Deputy Minister of Education and Science (94-95); First Deputy Secretary of State (95-96); Head, Presidential Administration (96-98); Prime Minister (98); Governor, Jalal-Abad province (98-01); Minister of Transport and Communications (01-04); Acting First Deputy Prime Minister of Transport and Communications (04); Presidential Representative to Osh City (04); had studied under Akaev at university in Leningrad

Kangel'diev, Azamat	Head of various commercial enterprises (93-96); managerial positions in the Tax Inspectorate (96-00); Head, Tax Inspection (00-04); Chair, Budget Chamber (00-04); Governor of Chui Province (04); "From Talas, he is thought to be close to both Mairam and Aidar Akaev" (ICG 2004)
Karypkulov, Amanbek	President, Kyrgyz State TV/Radio Company (96-01); Head, Presidential Administration (01-02); Ambassador to Turkey (02-05)
Kasiev, Naken	Deputy Minister of Public Health (88-91); Minister of Public Health (91-99); Secrtary of State (99-00); Governor of Osh Province (00-05)
Kasymov, Toichubek	Head, Chui Province Vet Center (91); General Director, Veterinaria State Concern (91-92); Head, Talas Province Agriculture Department (92); Governor, Talas Province (92-96); Governor, Issyk Kul Province (96-00); Governor, Chui Province (00-04); Head, Presidential Administration (04-05)
Kereksizov, Tashkul	Businessman, "grey cardinal of the Akaev regime," and long-standing Akaev family friend; described as the richest man in Kyrgyzstan by an opposition leader (ICG 2004); Consultant of Economic Issues of Industrial Enterprises of Kazakhstan (92-94); Upravlyayushii Delami, Presidential Administration (94-96); President, Association of Kyrgyz Cooperatives (96); Governor, Talas Province (96); Presidential Advisor on Issues related to the Establishment of Market Mechanisms (96-98); Director, Tax Inspection under the Ministry of Finance (98-99); Chair, State Property Fund/Minister (99-00); Chair, State Commission on State Purchases and Material Reserves (01); Presidential Advisor (03-05); Parliamentarian (05-07)
Otorbaev, Joomart	"Policy wonk"; fluent in English, but not charismatic; Professor, Slavic-Kyrgyz University (95); General Manager, Philips Electronics in Kyrgyzstan (96); Head, Zhalin Scientific and Technology Center Laboratory (97); Leader, Moya Strana political party (00-06); Special Presidential Representative on Foreign Investment (01-04); Vice Prime Minister (02-05)
Salymbekov, Askar	Frunze City Executive Committee Chair (86-91); Head of Market Management, Frunze City Executive Committee (91-93); President of Dordoi" (large bazaar outside of Bishkek) Association (93-99); Governor of Naryn Province (99-05); Parliamentarian (05-07)
Tanaev, Nikolai	Deputy Director, Chuipromstroi (85-95); President, KyrgyzKurulush construction company (95-00); Chair, State Commission on Architecture and Construction (00-01); Chair, Board of Directors of the National Electrical Grid (00-03); First Vice Prime Minister (01-02); Prime Minister (02-05); one of the first high ranking bureaucrats to officially resign after the "tulip revolution"

Toigonbaev, Adil	Kazakh businessman married to Bermet Akaeva. "Reportedly controlled important industries, with apparently powerful positions in tobacco, alcohol, building materials and oil products, and a holding that includes the daily newspaper, *Vechernii Bishkek*, the television channel KORT, and other media and publishing outlets" (ICG 2004). Took over the BLVZ water and alcohol plant and champaign factor in Bishkek from other business elites. Owned Aalam Service, one of two companies registered to handle U.S. Department of Defense fuel contracts for the U.S. air base.
Usubaliev, Turdakun	First Secretary of the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan (61-85); Parliamentarian (6th to 9th parliaments)

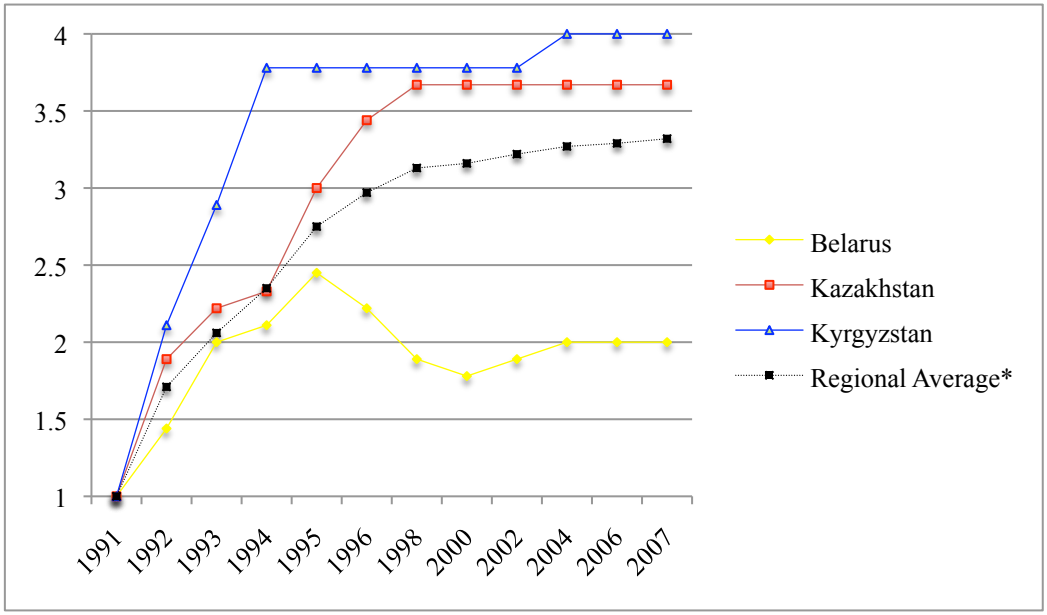
Sources: Author's interviews; AKIPress *Kto Est' Kto* (http://who.ca-news.org); Collins 2006; *Gazeta.kg*; International Crisis Group 2002; International Crisis Group 2004; Lewis 2008; Government Commission 2005; Spector 2007, TsentrAziya *Kto Est' Kto* (http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php)

Table 5.3 Variation in Background Conditions, Causal Factors, and Outcomes

	Comparable Cases		Contrasting Case
	KAZAKHSTAN	KYRGYZSTAN	BELARUS
Background condition #1: Personalist presidential autocracy	YES	YES	YES
Background condition #2: Restrictions on political freedoms*	MIDDLE (-1.00/-0.94)	MIDDLE (-0.87/-0.94)	HIGH (-1.47/-0.94)
Causal factor: Extent of market reform**	HIGH (3.19/4+)	HIGH (3.52/4+)	LOW (1.93/4+)
Outcome #1: Widespread elite defection	Political & business defectors 2001	Political & business defectors 2005	Political & business defectors 1994-1996
Outcome #2: Current opposition leadership***	Political & business defectors	Political & business defectors, civil society activists	Civil society activists; political defectors
Outcome #3: Presidential turnover	NO in 2001	YES in 2005	NO in 1994-1996

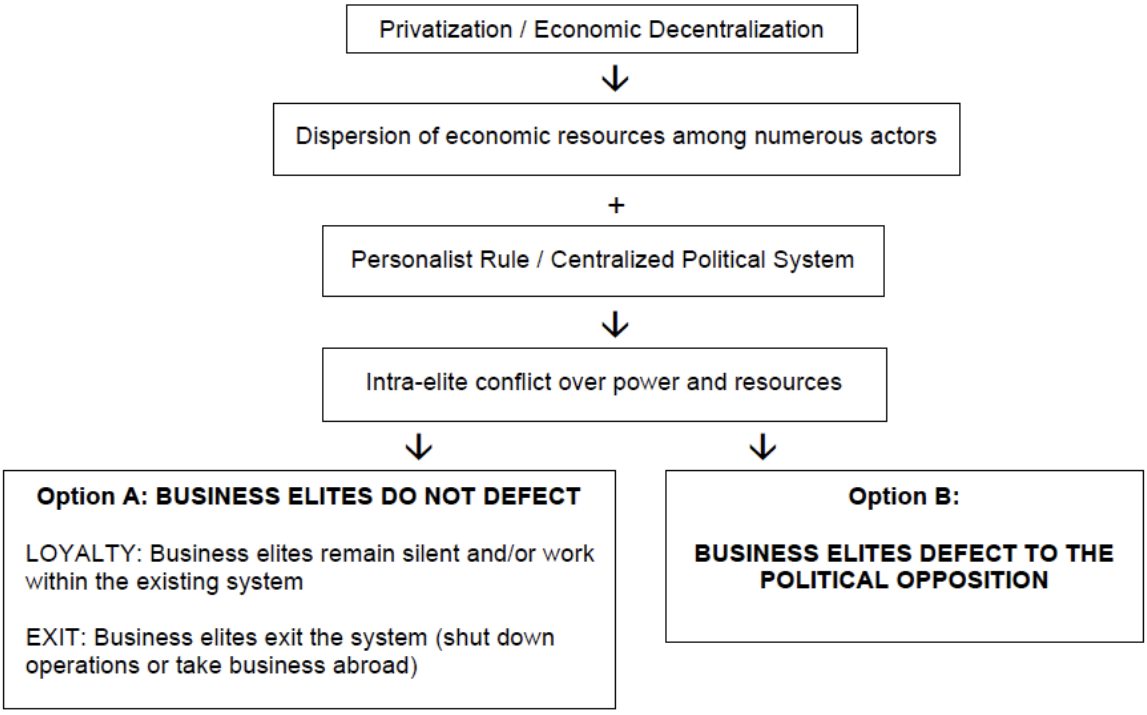
* Assessment of the restrictions on political freedoms (low, middle, high) is relative to the average Voice and Accountability scores for the post-Soviet personalist states combined. Country scores were obtained by averaging available Voice and Accountability Scores for the period 1996 to 2007. ** The extent of market reform (low, middle, high) is relative to a maximum score of 4.33. Scores were obtained by adding together and averaging each country's large- and small-scale privatization and price liberalization scores for 1991-2007. *** Listed in order of prominence.

Figure 5.1 Comparison of Economic Liberalization Scores, 1991-2007



* Scores represent each country's averaged combined scores for annual large- and small-scale privatization and price liberalization. Only post-Soviet personalist autocracies are included in the regional average.
Source: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2008

Figure 5.2 Intra-Elite Conflict & Elite Responses in Market-Reforming Post-Soviet Autocracies



Chapter 6
Opposition Strengths, Weaknesses, and Strategies

Introduction

This dissertation is first and foremost a causal tale of how market reforms can inadvertently create conditions that facilitate elite defection from the ruling coalition to the political opposition. An underlying assumption is that a study of elite defections can improve our understanding of political outcomes in personalist autocracies, where political intermediaries, such as political parties and civil society organizations, are underdeveloped and formal governing institutions are weak vis-à-vis the executive. Defection matters, for example, if defecting elites can foment political crisis from which the personalist president cannot recover. Indeed, as the Kyrgyz case highlights, defectors from the business elite may combine forces with political defectors, civic-minded activists, and local constituents to overthrow the incumbent president. It is hoped that, once in power, this "new" collection of elites will begin in earnest the arduous process of creating more democratic, transparent, and responsive governing institutions.[1]

How can we assess the chances that defections will both contribute to the overthrow of the personalist president and lay the foundations for a more democratic system to emerge? Among successful post-Soviet elite challenges to the personalist president in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine, it is still uncertain whether the defectors who came to power were able to accomplish more than substitute one personalist president for another. Particularly in the Kyrgyz case, elite defectors from the Akaev coalition proved unable or unwilling to fundamentally alter institutional arrangements in order to prevent the emergence of a new

[1] "New" here suggests that the elites in now in power, including the replacement president, are not new faces, but rather a combination of insider and outsider elites under the previous president.

personalist president out of the post-revolution rubble (Dubnov 2006; Kanazarov 2008; Khamidov 2006; Knyazev 2007; Orozaliev 2007).

In chapter five, I found that business elites have defected in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, two comparable cases of market reforming autocracies, but since 1996 have been absent from opposition politics in Belarus, a contrasting case of market rejecting autocracy. I further suggested that this key difference is consequential for the ability of the political opposition to successfully challenge the personalist president. In this chapter, I contrast the relative strengths and weaknesses of the political opposition in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan to assess the claim that support from business elites is vital to providing much-needed financial support to the political opposition. Without funding and material support, the opposition's chances of success appear limited.

By success, I mean the ability of elite defectors to achieve their goals, the details of which vary, but the essence of which may, surprisingly, be quite similar. Some defectors, even if the minority, share a genuine desire to secure political freedoms and protections for their fellow citizens and seek democratic reforms, which are in line with the goals of many opposition-minded civil society activists. Other defectors – perhaps the majority – have been driven by more self-interested goals, such as the desire to gain political office and/or protect their economic welfare. Whether idealistic or selfish, serving the common good or their own personal interests, defectors often call for a change in the system by which political and economic resources are distributed. Defectors may also seek support from society or a segment of society in their attempt to force a change in how politics are conducted.

How successful have defectors been at achieving these goals? What are the opposition's strengths and weaknesses, and how do these affect the strategies the opposition

has pursued? Finally, is, as Radnitz (forthcoming) finds, an opposition that unites grassroots activists and business elites more likely than other coalitions to compel the president to relinquish his hold on power?

Commonly Cited Weaknesses of the Post-Soviet Opposition

In none of the three cases can the opposition be described as objectively strong vis-à-vis the president and the state, as having broad societal support, or as promoting ideological political platforms that resonate among a large segment of the population. Among the key weaknesses mentioned in interviews and in published work on the post-Soviet opposition, the most often cited is the readiness and ability of the state to repress, coerce, and co-opt opposition leaders. In addition to the government's arsenal of "hard" (i.e., direct coercion) and "soft" (i.e., economic, legal and administrative barriers) repression, the opposition in all three cases suffers from internal weaknesses. These include, in no particular order, the tendency of opposition leaders to frame their position as against (*protiv*) the president or his policies, rather than promoting a specific and well-conceived agenda for change that is framed in a compelling way, and opposition leaders' personal ambition and mistrust of one another, which makes it difficult to unite and coordinate activities outside of elections (Balmaceda 2007; Huskey and Iskakova 2009; Ioffe 2004; Kennedy 2006; Khamidov 2002; Kusainov 2003; Marples and Padhol 2006; Rainer Lindner 2002; Rotman and Danilov 2003; Rudling 2008; Silitski 2005). In each of the three country cases, the otherwise fragmented opposition has temporarily coalesced under a common umbrella organization (each time with a different name) at various points, only to disintegrate after defeat. Moreover, with a few short-lived exceptions in each, the dominance of pro-government information and the small circulation of opposition newspapers make it very difficult for the opposition to get out an

alternative message.

Public mistrust of the opposition and political apathy among the general population likewise make it difficult to reach a wide audience beyond the opposition's constituency of politicized groups, some of which have lost out in the post-Soviet era and are willing to publicly express their dissatisfaction. Contrast these small, even if at times vocal, groups to the majority of citizens who may value political stability and the familiar over the uncertainty of future political changes touted by the opposition. Even in unreformed Belarus, the post-Soviet economic transition has been traumatic for ordinary people, for whom the chaos of the 1990s was not so long ago (Marples and Padhol 2002). After having resigned to and developed strategies for coping with present conditions, the specter of economic instability and political infighting that could ensue if the opposition were to come to power may be frightening for the average citizen, who may be more concerned about making a living than about abstract political freedoms.

Beyond these common structural, internal/organizational, and perception problems facing the post-Soviet opposition are weaknesses particular to the oppositions in each of the three cases, which are addressed by country and thematically below. I begin with Kyrgyzstan, the only of the three cases in which the opposition has had success in challenging the personalist president, and end with Belarus, which I characterized in chapter five as economically poor, but potentially rich in terms of its active support base. For each country case, I discuss the opposition's strengths and weaknesses and wrap up with the strategies the oppositions have pursued and the consequences of these for both the opposition itself and the personalist president. I find that the opposition's strategies sometimes build upon its strengths, but, as might be expected, its weaknesses do much to constrain the choices

available.

The Political Opposition in Kyrgyzstan

Despite the existence of a handful of anti-Akaev deputies in parliament throughout the Akaev years, the opposition has historically been weak vis-à-vis the president and remains so today. With the help of business elites who spontaneously defected to the opposition during the 2005 parliamentary elections, the established political opposition (made up of earlier defectors from the political elite, a handful of opposition leaders in parliament, and another handful of civic activists) mobilized their supporters, primarily rural, against Akaev. However, this coalition proved unable to sustain the momentum and lost the chance to fundamentally alter Kyrgyzstan's political institutions and thus prevent the emergence of a new personalist president. Akaev had indeed been overthrown, but in his place sat a new personalist president backed by a contingent of previously excluded clients (southerners), all eager to gain access to the state's coffers.[2] The transformation of an opposition that appeared "strong" in 2005-2006 to a once again fragmented and ineffective opposition in 2007 was disappointingly swift.

Strengths

In sharp contrast to the oppositions in Kazakhstan and in Belarus, the main strength of Kyrgyzstan's political opposition has been its wealthy leaders' connection to on-the-ground constituencies who can be mobilized when needed. Some have attributed this to

[2] In a joke attributed by some to Nazarbaev about the elite that came to power post-Akaev, a man finds another man covered in blood and being bitten by swarming mosquitoes. In an attempt to save the dying man, the first man beats away the mosquitoes, expecting the victim's gratitude. The victim instead scolds him, saying, "What have you done? I didn't ask for your interference!" "I just saved your life," the first man angrily responds. "If it weren't for me, those mosquitoes would have devoured you." "No," the victim sadly replies. "These mosquitoes were almost full… Now, a new swarm of mosquitoes will come, and they will be hungrier than the first!"

zemlyachestvo, the affinity for and practice of favoring those from one's hometown or region of origin (Radnitz 2005) and clan politics (Collins 2006, Knyazev 2006). *Zemlyachestvo* and clan politics are manifested in localized patron-client networks in which business and political elites provide economic and other resources to residents of their hometowns (or to their electoral districts) in return for their loyalty.

Others have attributed the opposition's ability to mobilize people in the countryside to severe poverty and ineffectual government (International Crisis Group 2005). Opposition leader Usen Sydykov ran for parliament in 2003 in district to which he had no ties whatsoever and won, although he was later disqualified on a technicality. In an interview with the International Crisis Group, Sydykov explained his ability to garner support among voters who were completely unfamiliar with him: "I haven't even worked in Kara-Kulja and I am not from that clan; that's why [the authorities] were convinced that nobody would vote for me. So why did they vote for me? They thought that if I was their deputy, I would help them" (2002, 22). A more nefarious manifestation of poverty-driven politics is vote buying, whereby candidates receive votes in exchange for goods, money, or alcohol.

The protests that ensued during the 2005 parliamentary elections were impressive because offended candidates (i.e., those who were defeated) from all over the country were championed by some local constituency willing to go out in the streets. Prior to 2005, there had been other instances in which opposition leaders were able to mobilize supporters in the countryside, but never on this scale. Perhaps the most well known of these took place in 2002, when protests broke out all over the southern province of Jalal-Abad in response to the incarceration of a defector from the political elite, former Jalal-Abad General Attorney and district judge in Bishkek and then member of parliament, Azimbek Beknazarov, who was

first mentioned in chapter four. Protests gained momentum and continued for a month. Then, at an event in which thousands of Beknazarov supporters had gathered in the town of Aksy, police fired on the crowd, and six people were killed.[3] The protestors' fury was defused only once officials reassured them that Beknazarov had been temporarily released from prison.

According to many political observers and actors, the Aksy killings and the cabinet shakeup that ensued was a turning point in Akaev's political career and confirmed the Akaev government's weakness and its incompetence.[4] The Aksy events, combined with business elites' anger over *reiderstvo* and political elites' dissatisfaction with the president's cadre policy, did nothing to improve Akaev's slipping standing with both elites and the masses. As Muratbek Imanaliev, a defector from the political elite under Akaev who formed a united opposition movement in December 2004 with other opposition leaders (including Kurmanbek Bakiev, Almaz Atambaev, Roza Otunbaeva, and Omurbek Tekebaev), explained, "I thought we had a fifty-fifty chance [of success]. We understood that the regime was so weak that it was possible that it would fall. We were not fully certain that this would be the case, but there was hope."[5] Perception of the president as isolated and lacking control was gaining ground among elites, but the presidential family nonetheless appeared determined to hang on to power by gaining seats in parliament.[6]

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[3] For an analysis of the Aksy events and their political import, see Akimov 2007).

[4] Author's interviews with political defector from the Akaev team, opposition journalist and parliamentarian, and current Bakiev supporter, Kabai Karabekov, Bishkek, March 2007, with political defector from the Akaev team and current parliamentarian from the Social Democratic Party, Bakhytbek Beshimov, Bishkek, September 2007, and with anonymous political observers and independent journalists, Bishkek, September-November 2007.

[5] Author's interview with Muratbek Imanaliev, president of the Institute for Public Policy (and who is no longer active in the opposition), Bishkek, December 2007.

[6] Author's interview with opposition leader Emil' Aliev, former assistant to Feliks Kulov and former leader of the Ar Namys opposition party, Bishkek, March 2007. According to Aliev, "Akaev was not

Weaknesses

Under Akaev, elites who defected to the opposition were not driven by ideological conflict with the president so much as by personal conflict, especially over power and sources of wealth. Elites in power, opposition leaders, civil society activists, and political observers alike share the view that "[o]pposition to the Akaev regime was made up of those who due to various reasons could not gain entrance into the trusted [or inner] circle of the main patron [the president] or whose personal political or economic ambitions were too great" (Editors 2002). Defectors' personal ambition has also negatively affected relationships within the opposition leadership, making it difficult to consolidate under a common cause. As Khamidov notes, "…relations within the opposition have long been chaotic at best and confrontational at worst" (2002).[7] Interestingly, opposition leaders themselves attribute fragmentation within the opposition to personal conflict rooted in leaders' ambitions and unwillingness to cooperate with one another (Huskey and Iskakova 2009).

Due in no small part to the highly personalized nature of Kyrgyz politics, political parties in general lack a clear political platform and their ideological standpoint tends to be vague or confused.[8] Opposition parties are no exception. For example, the oldest opposition

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going to let go of power so easily. Although he agreed not to run in the presidential election, he tried to get his family members into parliament to ensure the continuation of family rule."

[7] In a 2002 *Eurasianet* piece describing Kyrgyzstan's opposition, Khamidov lists other weaknesses, including the North-South division. He writes, "While many heads of civil society, media and human rights organizations hail from the North, an increasing number of prominent political and religious opposition leaders are southerners."

[8] This was true among the more than one hundred political parties that existed while Akaev was in power and characterizes Kyrgyzstan's political parties today. The two Communist parties during Akaev's tenure were an exception since they inherited the values and slogans of the Soviet Communist Party. However, even the communist parties were dominated by their leaders' personalities; hence, the split into two competing parties for the same slice of the electorate.

party still in existence, the Ata-Meken Socialist Party, led by long-standing opposition figure Tekebaev, joined in the run-up to the 2007 parliamentary elections with Ak Shumkar, a party comprised of business elites who had defected to the opposition to Bakiev in 2006. The two parties united for practical, rather than ideological reasons, given that Ata-Meken was a known brand with party infrastructure and support in the south, and Ak Shumkar had access to financial resources. Ak Shumkar's leaders at the time, big businessmen Kubatbek Baibolov, Temir Sariev, and Bolotbek Sherniyazov, ostensibly supported free markets and further privatization of the few economic areas still operated by the state. In contrast, as a socialist party, Ata-Meken had championed increased government intervention in the economy.

At an Ata-Meken campaign rally in November 2007, the two contrasting ideologies, now awkwardly aligned under a single party, were juxtaposed during the leaders' speeches. Tekebaev railed against the Bakiev government's failure to protect the poor and expand social services for children and other needy groups, while Baibolov told the audience that government involvement in the economy was the root cause of the country's ills. He argued that if private companies were allowed to do all of the work for which incompetent government agencies are currently responsible, efficiencies would accrue to the benefit of everyone. The crowd cheered with equal enthusiasm in response to the speeches made by Tekebaev and Baibolov, despite their ideological inconsistency.[9]

The merging and dissolution of parties, a constant feature of Kyrgyzstan's opposition, shows not only the problem of clashing personalities and the weak hold of political ideology, it also suggests that the opposition leadership lacks a clear vision of the future that can be formulated as specific policy prescriptions (Rustambek 2007). As Muratbek Imanaliev, who

[9] Author's observations, Ata-Meken rally, Old Square, Bishkek, October 2008.

is no longer active in the opposition, explains,

> Unfortunately, as with those in power [*vlast'*], the opposition has not presented a program, a project, or even an approach that will overcome the many problems our country faces… They do have some ideas that they have copied from other parties in Russia, Kazakhstan, or from social-democratic parties in Europe... From within the country, experts, including myself, have suggested concrete changes to improve how government works, but neither those in power nor those in the opposition have accepted them. Why? Because in our country ideas are not the most important thing in politics. What is most important is the struggle for personal power. Unfortunately, and this is true of the majority of countries in the CIS, power is understood not as an instrument for the achievement of a national project, to build a strong state, or to resolving common problems, but as an instrument to solve problems that concern them [elites] personally.[10]

Strategies

The Kyrgyz opposition's main strength – its ability to get people out into the streets and fund protests – and main weaknesses – personal ambition and a lack of vision – have shaped the strategies that the opposition has pursued. During the 2005 parliamentary elections, business elites were driven by a very narrow objective that they clearly articulated to key supporters among their constituents. Rather than espousing democratic ideals in speeches about the need for a counterbalance to the president, business elites expressed a single-minded goal in plain terms: to get into office, which had been stolen from them. In contexts like that of Kyrgyzstan, where ordinary people have had little direct experience with democratic processes and where the idea of democracy is widely associated with political chaos and/or severe economic inequality, this approach may be more effective at garnering

[10] Author's interview with Muratbek Imanaliev, Bishkek, December 2007. This view was echoed by critics among the NGO sector who once supported the opposition. Instead of an ideological or national project, the opposition wants above all to get back into power (author's interviews with Dinara Oshurakhunov, director of the Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society, and with anonymous director of a human rights organization, Bishkek, October 2007). In an interview cited in Huskey and Iskakova, an "opposition-minded" journalist similarly noted, "[T]hey [leaders of the opposition] don't have a vision for what the country should be like in the future. They see only themselves in the future" (2009, 18).

support than democratic slogans, or ideologically-based party platforms. An opposition leader who had who had been in parliament since independence, but who was defeated by a business elite running for office, describes how money trumped party platforms the 2005 elections:

> [Money] simply swept away my supporters like water. Even on election day, my opponent gave 200-1000 soms [$5-$25] to voters. My voters asked me directly: "what will you give us?" I would talk about my program, and they would say, "we've heard that for the last fifteen years…" (International Crisis Group 2005, 6).

It was a combination of widespread impoverishment and government's inability to provide even basic services that encouraged voters to cast their ballot for "any authoritative figure who can help in the daily struggle for survival" or "provide material support" (International Crisis Group 2004, 22). Particularly in the countryside, because people cannot turn to the government for financial and other assistance, they have instead turned to local patrons – such as their representatives in parliament – to fulfill this role (McMann 2009). Given the negligible social and public services provided by government, members of parliament and candidates for parliament promised to step in and "build bridges, improve roads, and renovate schools" (International Crisis Group 2005, 6). During the pre-election campaign, wealthy candidates provided lavish material support to communities, including charitable assistance and mass celebrations to convince constituents to vote for them, perhaps with the expectation that material support would continue after the candidate secured his place in the legislature (Marat 2006a).

The most cited examples of financial assistance to constituents, however, were not long-term investments in the community, but candidates' distribution of goods and money directly to voters during the campaign. According to the International Crisis Group (2005) and Marat (2006a), pre-election campaigns in 2005 cost on average $150,000 and up to

$750,000, and most of this money went to bribes that ranged from $2 to $25 per voter. Some candidates distributed clothing and shoes; others cheap alcohol, and still others flour and sugar. Candidates then tapped into the support they had cultivated among voters, their extended family, and friends to mobilize constituents when they found that they had lost the election. Due to widespread government fraud and vote buying by candidates, it was difficult to know who had actually received the most votes, but one thing is certain, disparately and without initial coordination between them, wealthy business elites seeking to contest the elections were able to bring out into the streets hundreds and sometimes thousands of local supporters in the countryside. Neither in Belarus nor in Kazakhstan have losing candidates been able to mobilize and sustain this level of support.

Consequences of the "Tulip Revolution"

While impressive, the opposition's control over significant financial and human resources was not enough to contribute to meaningful political transformation beyond the overthrow of Akaev. In the longer run, lack of vision has contributed to widespread cynicism that the Kyrgyz opposition's main priority is nothing more than to get back into power for selfish ends (Shermatova 2008). The example of the opposition's relationship with current President Bakiev is instructive of how personal ambition and a lack of vision have worked against the opposition as a whole, while nonetheless personally benefitting individual leaders.

Beginning almost immediately after Akaev's departure, southerners who had under Akaev been excluded from positions of economic and political power set to the business of rectifying the situation in their favor. Government posts were vacated to provide relatives and associates from the south with jobs and access to the many informal perquisites of

office.[11] As had been true under his predecessor, Bakiev's family inserted themselves into the choicest sectors of the economy, taking over private businesses and real estate, much of which had been abandoned by the Akaevs with their sudden departure the previous March.

According to Khamidov (2006), many of Kyrgyzstan's business elites that had combined forces to oust Akaev soon became disenchanted with the repetition of events under Bakiev and took up the fight against the new and still vulnerable president. Especially in his first year and a half in office, Bakiev appeared to have a tentative hold on power, and opposition forces were convinced of their impending victory.[12] Outside of the capital, deference to the central government was completely absent; in the regions, heads of local governments and individual actors were using the opportunities presented by the collapse of the central government to enrich and/or govern themselves (Khamidov 2007; Lewis 2008). Moreover, Bakiev's efforts to hold off the demands of economic elites who had helped him get into power and soon thereafter emerged as his political opponents seemed clumsy and weak. Throughout the first year of Bakiev's presidency, business elites such as Almazbek Atambaev, Temir Sariev, Kubatbek Baibolov, Omurbek Abdrakhmanov, and Omurbek Babanov tapped the social networks that had been built in the 2005 anti-Akaev protests and paid for transportation, food, and lodging to bring people from all over the country to the central square outside of the presidential administration building.

In November 2006, it seemed that the opposition had won. With thousands of protestors occupying Ala-Too Square in Bishkek, Bakiev agreed to a midnight signing of a new constitution, which increased the powers of parliament and significantly reduced those

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[11] Author's interviews with anonymous Akaev appointee, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bishkek, September 2007, with anonymous officer of the National Security Committee, Bishkek, October 2007, and with anonymous civil servant employed at parliament since 1991, Bishkek, February 2008.
[12] Author's interview with Kabai Karabekov, Bishkek, March 2007.

of the president (Dashkov 2006).[13] Then, in February 2007, Bakiev's Vice President, Feliks Kulov, who had first joined the anti-Akaev opposition in 1999, announced that he was leaving the so-called tandem with Bakiev for the opposition (Bel'skii 2007b). Boosted by Kulov's reemergence among their ranks, the opposition organized new protests in March calling for Bakiev's resignation for not having fulfilled the promises of the November constitution. As a sign of Bakiev's perceived weakness, a number of high-ranking members of the ruling coalition – including members of the security service – announced their resignation and, in some cases, support for the opposition cause.[14] It appeared that a spiral of elite defections had begun yet again, which suggested that Bakiev would be left alone to man his sinking ship, just as Akaev had been in 2005 (Omarov 2007). Adding to Bakiev's perceived vulnerability was the pattern of elite-led protest, which at times took on a violent hue and has been negatively described as street democracy (*ulichnaya demokratiya*) and hyper-democracy (Khamidov 2006; Radnitz 2005).

After the elites who brought Bakiev to power turned against him and formed a "new" opposition, it initially appeared that Bakiev would succumb to the opposition's organizational strength and his new government's political and administrative weakness (Engvall 2007; Khamidov 2006; Marat 2006a). In interviews and conversations as late as spring 2008, the consensus in the capital was that, try as he might, Bakiev was no Putin, no Nazarbaev, and certainly no Lukashenka precisely because he lacked the coercive and economic resources to consolidate power. A number of respondents even pointed to the

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[13] Although there were significant flaws in the revised constitution, some hail it as moving in the direction of a parliamentary system. Khamidov (2006) and author's interview with anonymous director of an international democracy NGO, Bishkek, October 2007.

[14] These included Deputy Minister of Culture and Information, Asanbek Sarybaev (*Litsa*, March 15, 2007); the mayor of Bishkek, Nogoev; the governor of Chui province, Syidanov; state advisor on reformation of the penitentiary system Galina Pugacheva (*Delo Nomer* March 21, 2007)

political culture of the Kyrgyz people, who, thanks to political liberalization under Akaev, had tasted freedom and would not allow a new autocrat to come to power.[15]

Yet, contrary to these expectations, Bakiev quickly shored up his resources and countered the opposition's challenge by coercing and co-opting his opponents. Within days, the protests of March 2007 ended not in victory for the opposition, but the first of Bakiev's successful campaigns against it. Unlike his response to the November 2006 protests, in March 2007, Bakiev acted decisively by breaking up the protests and using state television to show the protestors in a negative light, painting a picture of the protestors as drug addicts and alcoholics, all paid by the opposition to set up tent in the capital.[16] In response, opposition leaders Eshimkanov, Kulov, and Tekebaev announced renewed protests set for April, in which they promised to bring 100 thousand people into the streets (Bel'skii 2007a).

Bakiev had also begun to divide and conquer the opposition, using the latent mistrust among them and their personal ambitions to his advantage. He co-opted former opponents like Almazbek Atambaev. Feliks Kulov, Melis Eshimkanov, Kabai Karabekov, Adakhan Madumarov, and Omurbek Suvanaliev with offers of government posts (Ageeva 2007; Bolotbaev 2007).[17] Eshimkanov was appointed to head the state-run television and radio company (Kyrgyz Tele-Radio or KTR). Karabekov and Madumarov emerged as leaders of the new ruling party, Ak Jol, established by Bakiev in the weeks before early parliamentary elections were held in December 2007. Even Alisher Masaliev, a former democratic youth activist from Kel-Kel, the student movement that had been active in the 2005 anti-Akaev

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[15] Author's interview with anonymous head of a television station, Bishkek, September 2007; roundtable discussion on constitutional reform, American University of Central Asia (AUCA), Bishkek, October 2007.

[16] Author's interview with anonymous officer of the National Security Committee, Bishkek, October 2007.

[17] See also interviews with remaining opposition leaders in "V oppozitsii ili V Pravitel'stve?" *Belyi Parokhod*, September 21.

protests, joined the pro-presidential party to head its youth division and now is a member of parliament representing the Ak Jol faction.

A major blow to the opposition came in the form of the October 2007 referendum, which was followed by early parliamentary elections in December (Malevanaya 2007). Neither event was even remotely contested by the opposition, and opposition leaders and political observers alike viewed this as an opportunity to regain a foothold in politics (Abdyldaev 2007a). As a result of the October referendum, the electoral system was yet again changed, from single mandate electoral districts to a proportional electoral system based on party lists.[18] In the weeks leading up to the election, parties merged with one another and scrambled to garner enough candidates (no less than 90 and no more than 100) to participate.[19] Still expecting to win seats in parliament, the opposition Social Democratic Party, led by Atambaev, and Ata-Meken, which had joined with the Ak Shumkar party just prior to the election, were unpleasantly surprised by the results of the December election. The Social Democrats and the Communists were the only opposition party to win any seats, but not enough to block the new ruling party, Ak Jol. Business elites who continued to criticize the president and who were associated with opposition parties, such as Baibolov and Babanov, experienced government harassment of their businesses (Amanbekov 2007; Spector 2008). Babanov and civil society activist Edil' Baisalov, of the Social Democratic Party, faced criminal charges associated with the election and fled the country (Amanbkov

[18] In Bishkek, few voters came out to vote on the referendum. Election observers documented widespread fraud and vote rigging, but the opposition still did nothing to contest the results. Civil society activists from Citizens against Corruption, the Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society, and Interbilim held press conferences decrying the results of the referendum (see also Voronina 2007), but opposition leaders were busy planning for early elections, in which they expected that they would have a good chance of winning seats in parliament.

[19] One opposition journalist commented that he had been recruited by five different parties seeking to garner the required number of members. Author's interview with anonymous journalist, Bishkek, October 2007.

2007; Temir 2007).[20]

After three years and two elections, Bakiev appears securely entrenched in power. By replacing the single mandate district with a party list system, Bakiev was able to sever the connection between parliamentarians and their *zelmlyaki* in the countryside and thus minimize future chances that members of parliament would be able to use their positions to mobilize supporters at home against him as they had done to Akaev in 2005 (Biyalinov 2007). While the marginalized opposition continues to publicly criticize him,[21] Bakiev has entered into a phase of elite consolidation, in which the incentives for elites to fall in line behind the new personalist president currently outweigh the potential costs and benefits of defection (Hale 2005). Discontent with Bakiev's rule remains strong among ordinary people who continue to see their standards of living fall (Groznyi 2008; Pozharskii 2007) and with lower-level government officials who have been forced to give up their offices to the wave of southerners moving into the capital.[22] However, the opposition (as of yet) has not been able

[20] Both members of the Social Democratic Party, Baibolov was charged with misrepresenting himself as a Kyrgyz citizen and having an illegal passport. According to the charges, Baibolov is a Kazakh citizen and ineligible for elected office. On an inspection of the ballots prior to the election, Baisalov took photographs using his cell phone and posted them on the Internet. He was charged with "impeding the implementation of voting rights and work procedures of the electoral commission" and "causing material losses by fraud and abuse of trust" (Akipress.kg, December 11, 2007). Both were removed from the Social Democratic Party's candidate list.

[21] In response to the parliamentary election, the opposition formed a shadow parliament, which they called the people's parliament (Bukasheva 2008). I attended two of their sessions, which were dedicated to important socio-economic problems, including privatization of the electrical system. Despite being widely attended by opposition leaders and journalists (the events were covered in the evening news and in the papers), I got the distinct impression that there was little that the marginalized opposition leaders could accomplish that would change national politics. Indeed, independent critics (i.e., not affiliated with the opposition or the government) of the people's parliament claimed that it was a way for the opposition to remain in the public eye, given that their other venues had been taken from them. Author's interviews with anonymous political commentator and lawyer, Bishkek, January 2008, with anonymous legal and constitutional expert and former member of the Bakiev administration, Bishkek, February 2008, and with anonymous parliamentary expert, Bishkek, February 2008.

[22] A civil servant employed at parliament since 1991 described the massive turnover in personnel after the 2007 parliamentary elections: "All of the new deputies from the south brought in their

to mobilize these grievances to their advantage. Despite the opposition's announcement in early 2009 of their plans for a "spring revolt" and the formation of yet another "new" coalition of well-known opposition leaders called the United Opposition Movement (Marat 2009), it appears weak and divided vis-à-vis Bakiev, who is currently serving out his second term after winning 76% of the vote in the highly flawed July 2009 presidential election.[23] Bakiev's sidelining of defectors poised to take power in spring 2007 suggests that even an independently financed opposition composed of defectors from the business elite, grassroots activists, and supporters in the countryside can be outmaneuvered and out-resourced a personalist president willing to rally all the means at his disposal to consolidate power. Bakiev, once a member of the so-called democratic opposition, appears to have learned much about how to neutralize his opponents from Akaev's mistakes and from his own short time spent among the anti-Akaev opposition (Abdyldaev 2007b).

The Political Opposition in Kazakhstan

Kyrgyzstan's 2005 parliamentary elections highlighted the ability of business-and-political-elites-turned-opposition-leaders to mobilize local constituents (*zemlyaki*) behind their cause. In Kazakhstan, in contrast, the opposition suffers from an almost complete absence of constituency-based support (Kennedy 2006). In the words of Amirzhan Kosanov,

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relatives and their friends, and we were given two weeks' notice that we had lost our jobs. We had just passed the recertification exams and could not legally be fired, but that made no difference to them. People went from office to office looking for someone to protect them and keep them from being fired. They begged to keep their jobs, but it did not make a difference. In my place came a southerner with no experience, and I had to sit with her for two weeks and train her, all the time with a big smile on my face. Because I knew the ins and outs of parliament, they gave me a lower position and cut my salary by $100 a month." Author's interview with anonymous civil servant employed at parliament since 1991, Bishkek, February 2008.

[23] According the U.S.-based International Republican Institute (2009), "The opposition organized protests in several regions of the country for a few days following the election, but they were small and quickly broken up by the police. Eighty people were detained and 25 of those were sentenced to one to two weeks in prison. The opposition currently seems to have retreated in its protests and declared it will focus on organizing mass protests again in the autumn."

an opposition leader who defected from the political elite in 1998, "It is no secret that some [opposition] leaders… are like high-ranking generals [*kak generaly s yarkimi lampasami*], but with no army [behind them]" (Kosanov 2007). Granted, Kazakhstan is a much bigger and less densely populated country than Kyrgyzstan, which makes it difficult to bring protestors from remote regions into Astana and Almaty, the country's two major cities. Yet, even in the most opposition "friendly" city, Almaty, independent journalists and civil society activists complain that opposition leaders have done little to reach out to ordinary people or build up a base of support. While opposition leaders have extensive financial resources, they have a number of weaknesses that have prohibited them from gaining support among the population (Yakovlev 2007). Not the least of these is public mistrust of elites who enjoyed the fruits of power and ignored government corruption and policies that impoverished a wide swath of the population during their years in the ruling coalition, but upon defection have emerged as champions of the common citizen. Among those who have heard of the opposition, not many people have faith in the ability of self-interested elites to truly fight for the public good.

Strengths

Less than one year before the "tulip revolution," the International Crisis Group directly compared the political import of the Kyrgyz business elite with that of Kazakhstan, noting that

> The business elite still seems a long way from the situation in Kazakhstan, where real business financing has funded the opposition Democratic Choice party and promoted alternative political leaders. There is more money around in Kazakhstan, but there also seems to be a mature business elite that has a wider strategy for the country than simply its own business interests. The beginnings of such a business-political elite are also present in Kyrgyzstan, but so far it is too dependent, disunited and apolitical to have a major impact. Its automatic support for the regime cannot be guaranteed,

> however, and most will quietly shift allegiance if the wind seems to be changing (2004, 12).

Indeed, the primary strength of Kazakhstan's opposition lies in the wealth that has been injected by defectors from the business elite, including two of the country's formerly wealthiest businessmen, Bulat Abilov and Mukhtar Ablyazov. Despite their economic power, intellect, and political experience, as we will see below, a number of structural and internal factors have worked against business elites in the opposition. This suggests that, although important, autonomous sources of wealth are not enough to launch a credible challenge to the personalist president.

Weaknesses

In addition to state resources and coercive capacity, the Kazakh opposition faces other structural conditions that have not been favorable to its success. Perhaps the most significant of these is the economic growth that has been popularly associated with the Nazarbaev presidency.[24] Jointly, the boom in world oil prices in recent years and the extensive foreign investment flowing into the country have created a small middle class with enough savings to purchase consumer and durable goods that not long ago far out of reach (Daly 2008). Under conditions of economic growth, the opposition's message has limited traction among an urban population that, for the most part, expects future improvements in their standards of living.[25] Contrast the impact of economic prosperity in Kazakhstan with

[24] Author's interview with anonymous political observer and academic, Almaty, February 2007.
[25] Economic growth has influenced perceptions of the majority of Kazakhstan's business elites, as well. Expectations of future returns and fear of a redistribution of wealth that could accompany the opposition's victory (combined with fear of government reprisal) have kept elites aligned with Nazarbaev for the time being. As the young and very wealthy head of the board of directors of a state-owned company commented, "I am not the only one who is fully satisfied with the current system [*menya v polne ustraivaet*]; most of our business elites benefit greatly from present economic conditions." Author's interview, Almaty, February 2007.

long-term economic crisis in neighboring Kyrgyzstan, where the near collapse of government services has forced the poor to turn not to state agencies, but to their representatives in parliament and other local patrons, for assistance.

Even for those who have not benefited from Kazakhstan's economic growth, the government's portrayal of the opposition as a destabilizing force that threatens the country's hard-won economic accomplishments has affected attitudes toward the opposition. As a Kazakh professor without political ties to either the opposition or the Nazarbaev coalition commented, "People prefer what we have now not because we like it, but because we know what to expect from it. With the opposition you can never be sure that what they promise when they are out of power is what they will do once they get into power."[26] Few people who know of the opposition place full faith in their desire to enact democratic reforms and are certain that the power grab and chaos that took place during the 2005 "palace coup" would be repeated in Kazakhstan should the opposition come to power.

Some opposition leaders from the grassroots believe that defectors from among the business elite, if they were to come to power, would be able to create conditions for democratic institutions to take root.[27] However, many neutral political observers are less

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[26] Author's conversation with an anonymous university professor, Almaty, January 2007. She went on to say, "For example, maybe I don't like to eat potato soup everyday and would instead like kuyrdak [a meat dish made of entrails], but I don't know what is in that kuyrdak since I haven't tried it. Maybe the meat is bad; maybe it's spoiled. I know my potato soup is not fancy [*roskosh*], but it feeds me. Nazarbaev is like my potato soup, and the opposition is like the kuyrdak. Maybe I would like a change, but it could end up worse than what I have."

[27] Rozlana Taukina, opposition journalist, holds this view. She says, "Thinking people see a step above and, once in power, they want to change things, not just to return to power and turn into another Nazarbaev. They want to follow a different path and say so publicly, and this is worth a great deal. This [opposition leaders who defected from the ruling coalition] is a completely different category of people; these are people who generate ideas, who have international experience. They are modern people with good educations, with a broad and deep intellect. They are not narrow-minded bureaucrats who throughout their lives during Soviet times lived and worked only thinking of their own personal gain. They think on a larger scale and see how to do things better for future generations." Almaty, March 2007.

sanguine about the opposition's true intentions. As with their Kyrgyz counterparts, Kazakhstan's opposition has been criticized for being driven by personal concerns rather than the public good. In this view, the opposition is a refuge for those whose ambition and drive for power caused them to lose their economic and political positions. Being in the opposition gives them a platform for launching their campaign to get back what they lost.

A well-known political observer recounted a story about a gathering he had attended with opposition leaders. He was disappointed to hear them joke about how they were going to divvy up government posts among them. "After I heard that," he said, "I could no longer believe in the opposition. They are just like those in power, no different."[28] Because the opposition has yet to enter the halls of power, it is difficult to say which view is correct. The average person, however, tends to be risk averse and would prefer not to risk finding out. As with business and political elites, the general population may have placed their bets on Nazarbaev, given the high value placed on stability and the familiar.

Another structural condition that makes it hard for the opposition to position itself is Kazakhstan's ethnic diversity. Whereas Kyrgyzstan's opposition has catered directly and primarily to ethnic Kyrgyz and by and large ignored the urban Russian population, Kazakhstan's opposition has been torn over how to proceed. Russians, although declining in number, are still an important segment of the educated population, especially the urban population (i.e., Almaty) that the opposition has targeted. Unlike in Kyrgyzstan, the Kazakh opposition cannot afford to alienate Russians or Russian-speaking Kazakhs, both of whom are dominant in urban areas, the only places where the opposition has any support. In addition, excluding the first wave of nationalists, opposition leaders have tended to view and present their movements as westernizing and democratizing influences, looking to the U.S.

[28] Author's conversation with anonymous political observer, Almaty, January 2007.

and European examples instead of the pre-Soviet Kazakh past.

In recent years, however, some opposition leaders have made an attempt to actively seek out support among ethnic Kazakh-speaking Kazakhs. Two examples are Asylbek Kozhakhmetov's (former leader of the unregistered Algha! DVK opposition party) *pro bono* legal representation of squatters from a shantytown outside of Almaty called Shanyrak, who clashed with police in 2006 when the latter entered the settlement to enforce a local government order to have Shanyrak razed to make way for upscale development. Another is the 2008 decision by leaders of the Naghyz Ak Zhol party, in particular Bolat Abilov, to change the party's name to Azat in order to link the party with Kazakh nationalism and Kazakh identity. In late 2006 and early 2007, Naghyz Ak Zhol sponsored books and public events dedicated to the memory of those who were repressed and died in the December 1986 student protests in Almaty (then Alma-Ata). These were signs of the party's small steps to associate itself with the nationalist cause.[29] The irony was that two of the party's three co-chairs, Abilov and Oraz Jandosov, barely speak Kazakh and do so with noticeable difficulty and a thick Russian accent.

The third most important weakness is internal to the opposition; namely, its tense and at times acrimonious relationship with previous waves of opposition, especially among the grassroots or idealistic opposition. The Kazakh opposition has had difficulty securing not only the trust of the average citizen, but the trust and support of civil society actors, as well.

[29] Kozhakhmetov and Abilov's attempt to court the ethnic Kazakh-speaking Kazakh vote may alienate supporters among the urban Russian-speaking Kazakh population, who have little in common (in terms of both political interests and goals) with rural Kazakh-speaking Kazakhs. For more on the divided between Russian-speaking and Kazakh-speaking Kazakhs, see Laitin (1998). Author's interview with Bakhytzhamal Bekturganova, Almaty, March 2007. This is not to say, however, that Abilov and Kozhakhmetov are "full-blown" nationalists, but rather that they recognize that Kazakh-speaking Kazakhs are a constituency that has thus far been untapped by other parties/political movements.

Apart from the pensioners' movement and a few isolated pockets of those who are dissatisfied with the regime and willing to take their opposition public, support from the grassroots is notably lacking.[30] While civil society activists like Duvanov and Zhovtis continue to keep a wary eye on the Nazarbaev regime, they distance themselves from the current opposition and no longer consider themselves to be members of the opposition.

As some respondents recall, the defectors who founded the DVK did not join the opposition, but rather bypassed it, forming their own opposition movement.[31] Opposition activists who had been fighting for democracy for years, like Marzhan Aspandiyarova, who left government service to support political defectors Auezov and Svoik in 1996, first heard about the DVK's formation on the evening news, not through informal civil society channels.[32] Although Aspandiyarova eagerly joined the DVK and has remained a staunch activist for its spin off parties, Ak Zhol, Naghyz Ak Zhol, and Azat, others, such as Bakhytzhamal Bekturganova, left the opposition when business elites took up the anti-Nazarbaev cause (Smolina 2001).[33]

The fundamental divide between the opposition and civil society, according to Zhovtis, lies in fact that the new opposition is mostly made of up those who came from Nazarbaev's ruling coalition. It is hard for ordinary people to believe in the opposition's sincerity when its leaders, many of whom were once known as "the products of Nazarbaev" who made their wealth via nontransparent privatization schemes, claim they speak for and

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[30] Author's interviews with Chair of the Atameken state-controlled Union of Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan, Azat Peruashev, Astana, February 2007, and with Nurbakh Rustemov, parliamentarian, Almaty, February 2007.
[31] Author's interviews with Petr Svoik, Almaty, January 2007, and Bakhytzhamal Bekturganova, Almaty, March 2007.
[32] Author's interview with Marzhan Aspandiyarova, Almaty, January 2007.
[33] Author's interview with Bakhytzhamal Bekturganov, Almaty, March 2007.

represent the interests of the common person.[34] One way to build trust might be to work with existing non-governmental organizations that provide services and assistance to populations in need. Yet, critics of the opposition, such as Duvanov, say that opposition leaders are not interested in forging these kinds of long-term ties. Rather, they put all their energy into rallying public support only during elections. Among nongovernmental organizations, there is similar a sense that Kazakhstan's opposition does not do enough to appeal to the work and concerns of civil society organizations.[35] As one non-opposition NGO leader explained,

> In principle, I support the opposition's platform for greater democratic reforms in our country, but at the same they [opposition leaders] do not come to me for advice or to hear my concerns. They have made no effort to work with any NGOs that I know of, and I am sorry to say that many of my colleagues in the NGO sector are very critical of the opposition. NGOs have had to find our own solutions to social problems. Sometimes this involves working with government agencies, who, I would like to add, have been responsive to solutions put forth by my NGO and have welcomed our presence at public hearings on issues that concern us.[36]

As a result of these tensions, nongovernmental organizations and independent journalists who are critical of the president and his policies are just as critical of the political opposition.[37]

Strategies

As in Kyrgyzstan, elite defectors' strategy to contest their disadvantaged position relative to the inner circle highlights the Kazakh opposition's particular mix of strengths and weaknesses. Business elites who were threatened by *reiderstvo* first took their complaints

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[34] Author's interview with Evgenii Zhovtis, Almaty, February 2008.
[35] Author's interviews with Sergei Duvanov, Almaty, February 2008, and with anonymous political observer, Almaty, April 2008.
[36] Author's interview with anonymous NGO leader, Almaty, April 2008.
[37] Author's interviews with anonymous NGO leaders, Almaty, March, April, and May 2007, with anonymous journalists, Almaty, February and March 2007, with Sergei Duvanov, Almaty, February 2007, and with Evgenii Zhovtis, February 2007.

directly to the president.[38] They did not immediately choose defection, but used other means available to them to press their case. They fully expected the president's support and were even asked by Nazarbaev to present evidence documenting Rakhat Aliev's connection to a website that posted compromising information on the first family. At the same time that they tried to work behind the scenes to gain the president's trust and support, they also used the media outlets they had accrued over the years and others sympathetic to them to spread their political views and raise their public profile. Recounting this period, director of the Internews Kazakhstan media support NGO, Oleg Katsiev, explains,

> It turned out that those who suddenly went into the opposition had their own small television companies, but no one knew about it before. What does this mean? Perhaps it signifies that they were preparing for their protest in advance. They needed some mass media outlets, which would be useful in their efforts. The regional companies in Aktobe and in Pavodar [cities] and in other provincial centers were not profitable businesses at all, especially at that time, but they [the DVK founders] bought them anyway. This suggests that they were primarily needed to further their owners' interests.[39]

In the fall of 2001, Channel 31 aired a program documenting the life and political career of the governor of Pavlodar province, Galymzhan Zhakiyanov, who within a few months would emerge as one of the DVK's leaders. Unusual in Kazakhstan, the program resembled an extended advertisement endorsing a presidential candidate, although no elections were scheduled. This was just one example of elites' attempt to increase their profile among ordinary citizens and create a positive public image in the process.[40]

As the conflict between business elites and the president's son-in-law reached a head,

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[38] Author's interviews with Galymzhan Zhakiyanov, Almaty, March 2007, with Petr Svoik, Almaty, January 2007, and with a member of the Altynbek Sarsenbaev family, Almaty, January 2007.
[39] Author's interview with Oleg Katsiev, Almaty, May 2007.
[40] Petr Svoik explains that "the airing of this television program [on Zhakiyanov] was not an accident. At that time Channel 31 was controlled by – let's say was helped by – the opposition, and programs of this type were short, but they were done with public politics in mind." Author's interview, Almaty, January 2007.

it became evident that Nazarbaev had decided to support Aliev and the status quo over the DVK's demands to level the economic playing field and contain the privileges of the inner circle.[41] As in Kyrgyzstan, the president's obligation to take care of those closest to him prevailed, and his actions forced outsider elites who had heretofore been allied with Nazarbaev to defect. According to Petr Svoik, a defector from the political elite who has been in the opposition since 1996, the decision to side with Aliev over young protégés like Galymzhan Zhakiyanov, considered a presidential favorite, was a difficult one. Svoik notes,

> For Nazarbaev, there was a period of a few days when he was not sure what to do. Whom should he chose – Rakhat [Aliev], who in fact betrayed him, or the young fellows whom he himself built up? It was a hard choice. And the decision to send them [Zhakiyanov and Ablyazov] to prison was a difficult one that he made with a heavy heart. However, once he made the choice, he had to see it to the very end. If not, he would have appeared weak and not in control of the situation, which is a very dangerous thing for an autocrat.[42]

In response, regional television stations owned by DVK founders, including Rika TV in Aktobe, Irbis in Pavlodar, and Tan in Almaty, which prior to late 2001 had not aired opposition political views, suddenly became sharply critical. The stations began broadcasting programs calling for the acceleration of unrealized democratic reforms, which had been promised by the president for a number of years. DVK leaders were, in effect, attempting to use their media outlets as a campaign to win public support for their larger political agenda. The criticism they aired ranged from the domination of the president's inner circle over natural resources to government policy privileging the interests of a select few over the public good. In other words, the interests of the outsider elites which had united under the DVK banner were associated with the public good, and the privileged status of the

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[41] Although the president's press secretary announced that the president supported the DCK's political platform (*Kazakhstan Today*, November 21, 2001), in a speech on KTK, the president, standing next to Aliev, criticized the DCK founders for breaking the law and avoiding taxes (KTK, November 20, 2001).

[42] Author's interview with Petr Svoik, Almaty, January 2007.

inner circle were framed as narrow interests in conflict with national ones.

While the defectors were able to bring in thousands of supporters from all over the country to attend their founding convention, it could at no point in the existence of the DVK be said that its leaders were able to use *zemlyachestvo*-based networks to mobilize clients or supporters in the regions as defectors had done in Kyrgyzstan in 2005. In fact, what is striking about elites in the opposition, as well as those in power, is the considerable gap that separates them from popular constituencies of any kind – clan, regional, or otherwise (Satpaev 2007).[43] Without a tangible support base to activate in support of their challenge, DVK leaders used the resources they had available to them – access to the president and considerable financial resources from their businesses that permitted them to amass property and media outlets – to press their case.

Yet, it also proved quite easy for the government to deprive the DVK of the assets that its leaders had quietly purchased in the period leading up to the movement's establishment. Undisclosed "hooligans" shot at Tan TV's translation cables, putting the station temporarily out of commission. The station later lost its license for violating the law on languages, which stipulates that 50 percent of broadcasting must be in Kazakh. The Irbis station, which had been closely associated with Zhakiyanov, was taken over by the Eurasia Group, which is led by elites in the inner circle. Other stations were sold at the last minute to protect them from being shut down, becoming government property, or falling to rival financial-industrial groups. Without access to the electronic media, the DVK lost its main instrument for reaching a wider audience of potential supporters.

[43] Author's interview with Sergei Duvanov, Almaty, February 2007.

Consequences

For the time being, most elites continue to back President Nazarbaev and deeply fear political change that might threaten their privileged positions. So long as the economic pie continues to expand and remains large enough to be divided among the country's numerous competing financial-industrial groups, it is unlikely that the president will lose wholesale the support of the country's business elite.[44] Moreover, well aware that they could lose their businesses or be imprisoned (and lose everything) should they become associated with the political opposition, business elites who would like to see a change in the political system are unlikely to take overt action.

A the same time, while business elites both inside and outside of the inner circle have thus far lined up in support of President Nazarbaev, their loyalty could quickly and sharply change under the right circumstances. Precedents for this kind of sudden about-face can be found in the "colored revolutions" of Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. Business elite and former Akaev ally, Omurbek Babanov, showed live footage of the anti-president protests of March 2005 on his television station and provided a platform for opposition leaders to publicly and harshly criticize the president.[45] During Ukraine's orange revolution, oligarchs who had supported and been supported by former President Kuchma similarly used their media holdings, including national television, to successfully challenge the results of the 2004 presidential elections (Way 2005). As in Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine, in Kazakhstan current support for the president among both political and business elites belies the opportunism simmering beneath the surface. As one Kazakhstani journalist explained,

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[44] The economy's overwhelming dependence on natural resource extraction, however, makes it vulnerable to changes in the world market. Kazakhstan's current boom could come to an end without much advance notice.

[45] Author's interview with anonymous journalists, Bishkek, May 2007.

> The closer to the end of Nazarbaev's rule, the more elites want to be prepared for that end and try to get into or take over power. Among the largest financial-industrial groups, business elites are preparing their platforms, buying up media groups, and even providing some money to the opposition. For the time being, of course, they are acting as though they support the president, but what will come later is unclear.[46]

At the same time, Nazarbaev, like Bakiev after him, has done much to limit the chances that elites will defect in the future and be able to mount a successful challenge to him. Critically, since summer 2007, Nazarbaev has reined in those of his children who had been active in politics and business and who had been the source of much conflict within the elite. Beginning with a January 2007 attempted break-in at the headquarters of Nurbank, then owned by the Aliev and Nazarbaeva, a series of leaks of compromising material on Aliev and other high-ranking officials punctuated Kazakhstan's political news. Nurbank's chair and deputy chair had already both left their positions when Aliev was said to have gathered them and another former bank official on the pretext of an urgent business trip to Kiev, Ukraine. Rather than escorting them to the airport, however, Aliev's driver and bodyguards allegedly kidnapped and imprisoned the three in the basement of a private bathhouse, where Aliev is said to have shot at them with a pistol and had them beaten. All of this, it is claimed, was Aliev's preferred method of forcing them to have the owners of a certain business centre (where Nurbank headquarters were located) sell the building to Aliev at a price well below the market rate. Two of the three who were kidnapped remain missing and are suspected dead.

In February 2007, Aliev returned to Vienna, again as Ambassador to Austria and the

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[46] Author's interview with journalism NGO leader, Almaty, May 2007. Petr Svoik, a political defector who co-founded the Azamat opposition party in 1996, similarly noted that …[I]n recent years (ten years ago this was not the case because the president was younger and had many years ahead of him) elites are preparing for the president's departure. The main stimulus or vector along which elites are orienting themselves is to be prepared for some unexpected factor *x* when the president will be replaced." Author interview with Petr Svoik, Almaty, January 2007.

OSCE. Instead of facing a second round of political exile, however, within months he was completely cut off from the Nazarbaev family. In late May, Aliev was removed from his post, received belated notice that Nazarbaeva had divorced him, and lost rights to all of his business shares. Kazakhstan's Ministry of Internal Affairs opened a criminal case against Aliev, charging him with kidnapping and possible murder, and put out an international warrant for his arrest. Open information warfare was declared, and the president's advisors devised an anti-Aliev PR campaign that included negative coverage of the president's former son-in-law in the Kazakhstani press and on television (Agenstvo Nezavisimykh Rassledovanii 2007). A law requiring that at least 50 percent of all TV and radio stations' programming be in the Kazakh language was used to close the KTK television channel and *Karavan* newspaper, both of which belonged to Aliev, for three months.

Collectively, the events leading to Aliev's final fall from grace in 2007 are known as Rakhatgate (Adilov 2007a; Dosybaev 2007; Ergalieva 2007; Taukina 2007; Yan 2007). According to Aliev, all of the claims made against him were ordered from above, inspired by his declared intention to run against Nazarbaev in the 2012 presidential elections (Aliev 2009). Many Kazakhstani political observers, however, point not only to Aliev's presidential ambitions, but also to his increasingly tense relations with other members of the elite, in particular numerous "outsider" elites and at least one member of the inner circle, Nurtai Abykaev (Adilov 2007b).[47] As Rakhatgate wore on, it was also revealed that the former chairman of the board of Nurbank who had been kidnapped was a close relative to then mayor of Almaty city and current governor of Astana, Imangali Tasmagambetov, who, like

[47] Author's interview with Sergei Duvanov, civil society activist, independent journalist, and founder of Radio Inkar Internet radio station, 8 February 2007, Almaty. See also Trend Information Agency, 25 June 2007, available at: http://news.trendaz.com/cgi-bin/readnews2.pl?newsId=933388&lang=RU, and Interfax-Kazakhstan, 25 June 2007, available at: http://www.kub.kz/print.php?sid=17739, both accessed 30 June 2007.

many members of the elite, was on very poor terms with Aliev.

Neither Dariga Nazarbaeva nor another well-known son-in-law to the president, Timur Kulibaev, made it through Rakhatgate unscathed. In the wake of the scandal, control over the Khabar News Agency, which Nazarbaeva headed, was turned over to the presidential administration. When early parliamentary elections were scheduled for August 2007, Nazarbaeva – at the time a deputy in the lower house of Parliament (2004-2007), a leader of the newly created Nur Otan party, and not long ago the head of her own up-and-coming political party (Asar) – was nowhere to be found on the Nur Otan party list. The infamously powerful Nazarbaeva had quietly slipped into the shadows. In addition, during the summer of 2007, Kulibaev – who had not been known for openly harboring political ambitions, but (along with his wife) had made it into *Forbes* magazine's list of billionaires – was removed from his position as the deputy chair of the board of directors of Samruk. Samruk is one of the largest government holdings and controls Kazakhstan's shares in the oil and gas sectors, including the national oil company KazMunaiGaz.[48]

The withdrawal of the Nazarbaev children from public life signifies the disappearance of the focal point that had been the catalyst for elite defections in the past and could have done so again in the future, given continued elite displeasure with Rakhat Aliev. It also signaled to elites both inside and outside of the inner circle that the president is willing to take decisive steps to keep all elites, even those in his own family, in line, including cutting them off completely if need be. Finally, the redistribution of assets that formerly belonged to the Aliev-Nazarbaeva financial-industrial group to only the most loyal elites in the president's inner circle or under government control suggests that Nazarbaev is increasingly

[48] For one interpretation of the reasons for and significance of Kulibaev's removal, see Zubkov (2007).

selective about which elites are allowed to gain access to economic resources (private businesses) and sources of political influence (the independent media) that could potentially be used against him.[49]

In addition, since 2007, the government of Kazakhstan has stepped up its persecution of certain defectors, including Mukhtar Ablyazov and Galymzhan Zhakiyanov, both of whom are no longer in the country. In spring 2009, apparently as a result of the global financial crisis, the government of Kazakhstan confiscated Ablyazov's remaining assets in conjunction with the nationalization of Bank Turan Alem, which had borrowed heavily from abroad. Facing criminal charges, Ablyazov fled Kazakhstan, as did some of his key associates and family members, and now resides in London. Those close to Ablyazov who stayed in the country have been subject to government pressure. Combined, these developments do not bode well for future defections among the business elite and instead suggest further isolation of previous defectors to the opposition who remain in Kazakhstan.

The Political Opposition in Belarus

State control over the economy and the rejection of privatization have not only prevented the rise of a class of wealthy business elites, they have also kept the majority of the population reliant on the state for their economic wellbeing. According to Balmaceda, "an estimated 80 percent of the population depends on government salaries, stipends, or

[49] The results of the January 2007 tender for frequencies also point to a concentration of media holdings among the financial-industrial groups in the president's inner circle. During the tender, 120 applicants competed for rights to about 15 radio frequencies throughout the country. Only three companies—the Irbis television group, the Astana channel, and Ria-Arna—received them (Golyshkin 2007; Makimbai and Taukina 2007). According to some of those interviewed for this study, the financial-industrial groups that own these three companies are known for their loyalty and close ties to Nazarbaev. Although as of the writing of this chapter it is unclear which financial-industrial groups stand behind Astana and Ria-Arna, the owners of Irbis are widely considered to be the Eurasia Group, located in the president's inner circle.

pensions," and the presidential administration is said to control many, if not most, businesses in the country (2007, 207).[50] As a result, Marples explains, "[t]he average village resident or factory worker is as dependent on the [Belarusian] state today as in the Soviet period" (2003). This basic fact lends the state a source of leverage to prevent individuals from joining the political opposition, as well as contributes to the government's legitimacy in the eyes of the average citizen. Combined, leverage and legitimacy are powerful factors working against the political opposition.

At the same time, however, for those who see a better future in a market-oriented and Western-oriented Belarus, support for the opposition appears to be steady if not on the rise. In other words, despite the opposition's limited economic resources, it may be blessed with a natural, if small, constituency of young, Western-looking idealists. Whether support among youth activists and others who have been alienated by Lukashenka's economic policies can overcome the opposition's lack of internal sources of financing, however, remains to be seen.

Strengths

In response to the specter of the "orange revolution" in neighboring Ukraine, the Lukashenka coalition in 2005 decided to ante up its efforts to preempt an opposition victory at home (Balmaceda 2007; Silitski 2005). New legislation and administrative barriers which raised the stakes for nongovernmental organizations and opposition groups to continue functioning sent a warning to independent organizations that the state was ready and willing to shut them down for the slightest reason. Political topics of any kind became strictly off

[50] While in Belarus, I visited a ski resort outside of Minsk that was owned by the presidential administration. When I remarked to a companion (who was neither affiliated with the opposition nor the government) how surprised I was by this, he jokingly replied, "Oh, everything of value is owned by the presidential administration!"

limits for researchers and public opinion pollsters.[51]

Despite the criminalization of and increased restrictions on opposition activities, youth activists remained determined to contest the 2006 presidential elections (Silitski 2006a). The spontaneous emergence of a tent city in October Square following the election surprised even opposition leaders, who had done little if nothing to organize and protect the young people who were willing to risk their safety and future to protest the results. Young people's willingness to risk state sanctions was all the more impressive because no one believed that the opposition candidate, Alyaksandr Milinkevich, had come even close to winning the race. The participation of young people in opposition politics is thus the opposition's most notable strength, albeit one that the opposition has yet to incorporate effectively into a coherent strategy to oppose a generally popular personalist president. Since 2006, a number of small protests organized by youth activists all over the country have taken place, followed by the short-term jailing of participants and organizers.[52] In comparison with the situation prior to 2006, especially the 2004 referendum, in which "public protests against alleged voting violations and fraud were few and short-lived," the 2006 protests appeared to some to be an important turning point for the opposition (Silitski 2006a).

Weaknesses

Despite the increased participation and radicalization of young people, the potential strength of the opposition remains overwhelmed by Belarus's economic reality. State control over economic resources has significantly contributed to the weakness of the Belarusian

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[51] Author's interview with anonymous director of a survey and marketing business, Minsk, March 2008, and telephone conversation with U.S. diplomat, Washington, D.C., summer 2007.
[52] See, for example, "Offitsial'nyi pervomaiskii miting zavershilsya zaderzhaniem bolee dvadtsadti aktivistov oppozitsii," *Belapan News Agency*, May 1, 2008. Available at: http://belapan.com/archive/2008/05/01/228965. Last accessed May 6, 2008.

opposition in two key ways. In addition to keeping the opposition financially poor, as was argued in chapters two and five, market-rejecting policies keep the population virtually dependent on the state for their livelihoods. As a result, they are not only vulnerable to coercion should they engage in unsanctioned political activities (Balmaceda 2007; McMann 2003; Silitski 2006b), but they may also be more likely to conceive of their relationship with the government in paternalistic terms. In particular, among the general population, it may be common to view the state in a positive light for continuing to provide for individual welfare, as well as for the public good.[53]

In fact, although it is not certain that the government of Belarus will be able to prolong its costly anti-market policies in the long term, for the time being, the government is seen as a source of good in many people's eyes (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2006). Electricity, gas, and some basic consumption items remain heavily subsidized, and state-run television and presidential speeches often tout these achievements, especially in the context of the exorbitant cost of living in Russia, Ukraine, and the Baltic states. By providing tangible benefits, the government both shores up support among the general population and makes it difficult for the opposition to gain a foothold among the majority of citizens who, if not content with their lot, fear what political change may bring. As well-known Belarusian scholar and political observer Vitali Silitski has noted, "society as a whole still acknowledges and accepts the social contract…" whereby "… the government delivers an expected volume

[53] As one pensioner told me at the May Day parade in downtown Minsk in 2008, "Our president and our people will never let the capitalists privatize our factories like they have done in Russia. The working class is like the fingers on a hand; when we work together as one, we are a fist that cannot be beaten." Author's conversation with a participant in the official May Day parade, Minsk, May 2008. According to Ioffe, "What Belarusians definitely reject loud and clear is a call for blanket privatization. The application of this and other neoliberal remedes in the similar cultural environments of Russia and Ukraine has not earned the approval of Belarusians, who remain resentful of social stratification and favor a strong safety net. Upon coming to power, Lukashenka interiorized [internalized?] and acted upon these popular sentiments" (2008, 236).

of economic and social benefits to people in exchange for their political loyalty" (Maksymiuk 2006).

In support of this interpretation, Ioffe cites results from a survey conducted by the non-government Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies (IISEPS)[54] after the 2001 presidential elections (2008, 207). Those who have benefited from the government's economic policies support the president; these include "those nostalgic for the Soviet era" (Marples and Padhol 2002, 74) and those employed in factories and collective farms. Thus, according to results of the IISEPS survey, 78 percent of pensioners and 60 percent of rural residents voted for Lukashenka. Moreover, among Lukashenka voters, 71 percent responded that their economic situation had improved or stayed the same during the president's first term in office. In contrast, support for the opposition candidate, Goncharik, was concentrated among young people, aged 18 to 20, students, and small businessmen. About 40 percent of each of these groups voted for the opposition, while around 20 percent voted for the status quo. Among Goncharik voters, 61 percent responded that their economic situations had deteriorated under Lukashenka.

Strategies

Increasingly since the 2006 elections, opposition leaders like Milinkevich and Alyaksandr Kazulin are incorporating youth activists in street protests and other acts of civil disobedience. Most recently, on October 17, 2009, thousands of young people participated in the tenth anniversary of the first Freedom March (*Marsh Svobody*) held in Minsk. According to the Charter 97 opposition website,

> The tens of thousands of people who went out into the streets of Minsk was a complete surprise to most. The majority of the protestors were young people.

[54] By order of the Supreme Court, IISEPS was shut down in 2005 and is now based in Lithuania.

> Participants held a 30-meter long red and white flag [of Belarus during its short-lived period of independence from 1918 to 1925] and the flag of the European Union. [One of the] slogans of the march was, "Belarus is in Europe!"[55]

Yet, not everyone in the opposition welcomes the turn to civil disobedience as a strategy for challenging the president. Others have split with Milinkevich over his "active" strategy, the dictum of which is "If they don't want to listen to us at elections, they must listen to us in the streets" (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2007). Instead, they have taken separate, long-term approaches to political change. Some soft-line opposition members, such as Anatol Lyabedzka, have argued for a dialogue with the Lukashenka coalition. Others are working to educate Belarusian youth about the benefits of capitalism and entrepreneurship.[56] Still others believe that democratic change is inevitable in Belarus. Lukashenka will have to privatize once the end of Russian subsidized oil and gas eventually puts an end to the Belarusian economic miracle. And, due to its location in Central Europe, democratizing influences continue to creep in, despite the government's anti-West propaganda. In this view, both of these forces will have a positive, if long-term, influence on the country's political development.[57]

Consequences of the "Denim Revolution"

Despite the "revolution of the spirit" that heightened youth involvement in opposition-supported causes represents (Silitski 2006a, 147), there are significant risks to following a strategy of civil disobedience and youth activists. One persistent danger is the

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[55] "10 let nazad v Belaruse proshel Marsh Svobody," *Charter '97,* October 16, 2009. Available at: http://www.charter97.org/ru/news/2009/10/16/22875/. Last accessed October 20, 2009. See also: http://europeanbelarus.org/be/news/2009/10/29/957/. One problem is that Belarusians as a whole are ambivalent about their place in Europe; according to an opinion poll taken in January 2007, only 21 percent of respondents say they want Belarus to integrate with the EU (Masymiuk 2007).
[56] This is one of the goals of an opposition-led nongovernmental organization that holds free weekend seminars for college students. I participated in one of the seminars during my fieldwork in Belarus.
[57] Author's interview with Leonid Zaiko, Minsk, May 2008.

chance of state-sanctioned violence against protestors, which could unexpectedly and tragically end in serious injuries or death. Another risk to the opposition is that a-systemic tactics like protests will further estrange the non-protesting majority from the opposition's cause.

Overwhelmingly, Belarusians have a negative view of protestors; according to public opinion polls taken after the 2006 election, almost half of the population disapproved of the protests in Minsk, while only 20 percent approved (Silitski 2006a, 145). One opposition supporter interviewed as part of fieldwork for the dissertation noted that the reaction to young people shivering in the cold as residents of Minsk passed by on their way to work in the morning was roundly negative. According to the informant, passersby loudly complained that the protestors were disruptive, dirty, and lazy.[58] Instead of engendering sympathy for their cause, the protests may have inadvertently widened "the gap that separates this democratic subculture from the rest of society" (Silitski 2006b, 25). In addition, the opposition's call for the rebirth of a distinct, non-Russian speaking, and pre-Soviet Belarusian identity do not resonate with the majority of Belarusians, who disdain nationalist causes and look to the Soviet past with nostalgia.

As in Kazakhstan and post-Akaev Kyrgyzstan, the Belarusian opposition has not been able to transform the small windows of opportunity presented to it into success. Spontaneous self-organization is not sufficient for the opposition to prevail over the structural impediments that it faces, which include a difficult political climate, current popular support for the president and his economic policies, and a lack of internal financial resources (Dobrovol'skii 2002). Moreover, the negative experiences of the Kyrgyz opposition in the Bakiev era suggest that a protest-based strategy will fail if weaknesses internal to the

[58] Author's interview with anonymous opposition supporter, Minsk, May 2008.

opposition – fragmentation and division, personal conflict, and a lack of vision for the country's future – are not overcome.

Conclusion

The Kyrgyz example of business elites holding seats in parliament suggests that formal governing institutions can be used to bolster elites' claims against the personalist president. Kyrgyzstan's business and political elites who defected in 2005 were in or running for parliament, which gave them a natural constituency to draw on in protest. Alternatively, business and political elites in KZ who defected in 2001 had no connection to a potential based of public support. In neither Kazakhstan nor Belarus since 1996 have significant numbers of businessmen been permitted to run for and serve in parliament. In Belarus, in fact, there are no entrepreneurs in either chamber of parliament. In Kazakhstan's parliament, business elites have been few and far in between, including Bulat Abilov[59] and Tolegen Tokhtasynov in the 2000-2004 parliament and Raimbek Batalov, the head of one of Kazakhstan's financial-industrial groups, who was elected to parliament in 2007.[60] These findings suggest that the location of business elites in the larger socio-economic system may affect their chances of successfully challenging the personalist president.

Serving in parliament might once have been a way to gain a popular constituency or to use constituency-based *zemlyachestvo* to the advantage of business and political elites, as took place in Kyrgyzstan. However, the opportunities to develop local ties are now shrinking, even in Kyrgyzstan. As noted in chapter six, Kyrgyzstan's parliamentarians are currently elected by party list, rather than by single mandate electoral districts. In

[59] Abilov was stripped of his mandate after he joined the DVK opposition movement.
[60] However, Batalov is no longer included in the list of parliamentarians on the official parliament website, parlam.kz. Last accessed November 18, 2009.

Kazakhstan's lower chamber, the party list electoral system was instituted in 2007. In Belarus (and prior to Kazakhstan's switch to a party list voting system in 2007), parliamentary candidates undergo close scrutiny by governors, and only those who passed muster are included in the final list of contenders. As is the appointment of governors, the review of parliamentary candidates is a part of the vertical system of rule, in which presidential power dominates other potential centers of power, including the legislature. This unofficial review system works to weed out (although imperfectly) potentially problematic candidates and encourage legislators' loyalty to the executive. The executive's informal power of candidate appraisal and selection lent it significant control over parliamentary elections, preventing the emergence of regional strongmen or potential renegades in parliament.

Formal changes to Kazakhstan's electoral system have made the informal system of candidate approval obsolete. Yet, key features of the new system similarly encourage parliamentarians' loyalty and deference to the president, as well as pre-empt the development of popular networks linking parliamentarians and supporters in the regions. Until 2007, in the lower chamber (or Mazhilis), 67 deputies were elected to single-mandate electoral districts, while the remaining ten were elected on the basis on party lists. Under the old system, independent candidates were commonplace, and many parliamentarians were not affiliated with any party. Beginning with the 2007 parliamentary election, electoral districts were scrapped and supplanted by a united nation-wide district (*edinyi obshchenatsional'nyi okrug*) to which deputies are elected via party-list voting. Ostensibly intended to present a modern, democratic image to the rest of the world, the introduction of party list voting has heightened the importance of membership in the presidential party for those seeking a seat in

parliament. Given that no other party gathered enough official votes to reach the 7% threshold, all seats in the current legislature went to members of the Nur Otan presidential party. While the previous legislature (2004-2007) was often referred to as President Nazarbaev's "pocket parliament," the current legislature marks the first time since independence that Kazakhstan has come under formal one-party rule.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

Introduction

This dissertation highlights the key role that market reforms have played in fostering constituencies within the ruling coalition that are willing to challenge personalist autocrats in the Soviet successor states of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. The adoption of large-scale privatization has facilitated the emergence of wealthy business elites in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, while the rejection of privatization during Lukashenka's presidency has prevented the rise of big business owners (also known as capitalists and oligarchs) in Belarus. Evidence from market reforming Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan indicates that the defection of business elites from the ruling coalition has created political crises for personalist presidents. In both, business defectors have actively challenged the president, although with varying degrees of success. However, in the contrasting case of market rejecting Belarus, continued economic centralization has preempted the emergence of business elites who might develop the incentive and capacity to launch a political challenge to the president.

Recent studies linking market reforms to elite-based political contestation emphasize the danger that ambitious business elites represent to the personalist president's ability to consolidate and remain in power (Radnitz forthcoming; Way 2005b). Armed with independent sources of wealth, opportunistic business elites are likely to rally their resources against the president when he is at his most vulnerable. Yet, as the thwarted Demokraticheskii Vybor Kazakhstana movement in Kazakhstan and the failure of business elites to oust current Kyrgyz President Bakiev demonstrate, the threat that business elites

represent can, with relative ease, be defused and controlled using a number of weapons at the president's disposal. Far from absolute, the political and economic autonomy of business elites is highly uncertain, especially given that the personalist president and those in his inner circle can at any moment confiscate the property of even the wealthiest and seemingly most powerful of them. Moreover, a longitudinal examination of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz opposition shows that, even in market reforming autocracies, business elites remain unlikely candidates for defection (Bellin 2000) and are willing to do so only when continued loyalty to the president and exiting the system (Hirschman 1970) have failed to protect their economic self-interest from the impending threat of *reiderstvo* or predation (Buiter 2000).

Case Selection

Collectively, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan are valuable case studies from which to generalize and develop hypotheses linking market reforms and elite behavior. First, they are representative of the background political and economic conditions found in the autocratic Soviet successor states of which they are a part. In terms of political convergence, the cases share institutional features that predominate under personalist presidential rule, a form of governance that is widely encountered in the post-Soviet space. In addition, all three are among the more authoritarian of the post-Soviet states, according to their average World Bank Voice and Accountability scores. Finally, like the autocratic post-Soviet states of which they are a part, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan exhibit variation on a key independent variable: the extent to which market reforms have been implemented.

The Belarus case provides analytical leverage in support of the central argument of the dissertation. While not often analyzed in conjunction with the Central Asian republics, Belarus was chosen to serve as a counterpoint to the comparable Kazakh and Kyrgyz cases of

market reforming personalist autocracies. As a contrasting case of market rejecting personalist autocracy, Belarus shows how the absence of large-scale privatization directly affects political dynamics in the post-Soviet space. Without privatization, not only has the development of a class of business elites been precluded, but those who head state-run enterprises are vulnerable presidential appointees, who can be removed or replaced according to the president's will (Matsuzato 2004). Cognizant of their dependence on the president and on the system that feeds them, appointees are unlikely to defect to the political opposition or provide the opposition with financial or material support.

Belarus is critical to this study for an additional reason: Belarus provides a quasi-experimental setting to investigate the effect of market reforms on elite behavior.[1] There were small steps toward economic liberalization in the first five years of independence, but reforms were sharply and definitively curtailed after Lukashenka's first election. A diachronic, within-country comparison of the political opposition in Belarus before and after the era of market rejecting personalist rule reveals a sharp difference in the likelihood that business leaders will risk participating in contentious politics. In the mid-1990s, as Lukashenka reconfigured the political and economic system and renationalized previously privatized industries, at least two members of the business elite, Anatolii Krasovskii and Andrei Klimau, took up the cause against him and publicly defected to the opposition. Additional anonymous businessmen may have similarly supported the opposition, although in small numbers (Plisko 2002). In sharp contrast, since Klimau's defection in 1996, no one in business has supported or defected to the Belarusian opposition. Crucially, 1996 is also the year marking the end of Belarus's experimentation with market reforms and the return to

[1] For additional within country or diachronic quasi-experimental analyses, see Hale (2005a); Junisbai (forthcoming); Rivera and Werning Rivera (2009); and Rohrschneider (1999).

Soviet-style economic centralization.

Summary of the Findings

Highlighting the general difficulty elite defectors have faced in influencing political outcomes, the data presented in chapter four show that personalist presidents in all three states have emerged largely unscathed from individual instances and periods of elite defection. Prior to President Lukashenka's reversal of market reforms and consolidation of power in the presidency (1994-1996), two dozen or so political elites, including parliamentarians and members of the Lukashenka government, defected in protest of the president's efforts to strip governing institutions (apart from the executive) of power and prevent economic decentralization. In Kazakhstan, President Nazarbaev's main source of political opposition has come in the form of short-lived waves of limited elite defections since the mid-1990s. While numerous individual defections took place throughout former President Akaev's tenure, groups of defectors united under a common banner or cause were unusual. Once in the opposition, however, defectors were rarely able to present a serious political threat, and the presidents ignored or marginalized them without much consequence.

Yet, as chapter five demonstrates, the defection of business elites to the opposition – even if in a temporary alliance – has created political crises for personalist autocrats in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The Kyrgyz case, moreover, suggests that under certain conditions, the defection of business elites has the potential to overturn the personalist president. Disaffection with the president and his inner circle among outsider elites must already pervasive, and concrete grievances (mostly in economic nature) have to be channeled around a particular focal point. In Kyrgyzstan, both conditions were present in the 2005 parliamentary elections and culminated in the "tulip revolution." In Kazakhstan in 2001, in

contrast, the focal point in the form of a concrete threat to business elites (presidential son-in-law Rakhat Aliev) was present, but most elites remained firmly in support of Nazarbaev, despite their aversion to Aliev.

Unlike Akaev, Nazarbaev was quickly able to mollify business elites and prevent massive defection by eliminating the common threat that they faced. In so doing, he removed the focal point around which their disaffection and protest could be organized and confirmed his status as the only arbiter capable of settling economic conflict among warring elites. Most of Kazakhstan's business elites continue to place their faith in the status quo and with Nazarbaev, preferring to bide their time until it becomes clear that the president's tenure is coming to an end. As a result, while a group of powerful business elites did indeed defect, they were unable to further their push for regime change, due to a number of factors working against them.

Elite opportunism may indeed be the personalist president's Achilles heel, as some scholars have suggested. However, the history of elite defections and opposition movements in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan also demonstrate how difficult it is to convert opportunism into defection, let alone convert it into sustained action that ends in the removal of the president. In this sense, Kyrgyzstan's "tulip revolution" is an anomaly against the backdrop of numerous failed attempts to rein in the personalist president. Moreover, the inability of the winners of the "tulip revolution" to reduce the power of the executive and reform the political system under Akaev's successor (chapter six) further reinforces the impression that elite defection is not enough to fundamentally transform personalist politics and alter the way that resources are distributed and competition over these resources is structured.

In contrast to Akaev, Lukashenka and Nazarbaev have done much to cultivate and maintain their image as the center of power and decision-making and the protector of the interests of their key constituents. For Nazarbaev, given that Kazakh politics is overwhelmingly an elite affair, key supporters are the country's business and political elites. For Lukashenka, who early on in his presidency sidelined elites and has since the beginning followed populist policies, support lies among the population that benefits most from state control of the economy (Silitski 2005). In both Belarus and Kazakhstan, moreover, the president is widely seen as guaranteeing economic and political stability, as well as responsible for creating conditions that have permitted a chunk of middle class citizens to access consumer goods that have improved their standards of living. Both of these achievements contribute to the presidents' current popular legitimacy,[2] despite pockets of dissatisfaction and the prospect of long-term economic troubles.[3] Recalling that average citizens fear political change that could affect them negatively further helps us understand the fundamental difficulty that the opposition faces in garnering widespread public support for its cause.

In Kyrgyzstan, continuous economic decline had by 2005 deeply and irrevocably eroded Akaev's popularity and legitimacy among the masses, as well as among elites. For years, Akaev had promised that market reforms would bring wealth and improve the standard

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[2] According to an anonymous leader of a Russian cultural centre, which represents ethnic Russians residing in Kazakhstan under the International Council of Russians Abroad, a majority of Russians support President Nazarbaev precisely because of the economic and political stability he has brought the country. Author's interview, Almaty, March 2007.

[3] In Belarus, growing tensions with Russia and the likelihood that Russian gas and oil subsidies to Belarus will cease have serious negative implications for the continuation of the Belarusian economic model (Ioffe 2008). In Kazakhstan, spontaneous grassroots protests erupted in 2006 over Shangyrak (chapter four) and over the president's decision to make it illegal to import and drive cars from Japan with right-side steering wheels (Azarov 2006; Sharipova 2006). Exorbitant real estate and inflation associated with Dutch disease, as well as fluctuating oil prices are additional sources of political instability (Ivanov 2006).

of living, but due to corruption and structural constraints (in particular, the lack of natural resources to exploit and bring in income), the benefits of economic liberalization did not materialize. Instead, most people became increasingly impoverished as the years passed. Significantly, support for Akaev among elites who were competing for a piece of a steadily shrinking economic pie had plummeted by the early 2000s. Against the backdrop of an economy that never recovered from the collapse of the Soviet Union and the complete withdrawal of government from its traditional role of providing for the public welfare, defecting elites drew on localized constituencies to support their cause. In Kazakhstan, in contrast, the opposition lacks any connection to a popular or geographically based constituency. While Belarus's opposition does have a potential base of support among youth activists, "without the patronage of business, … [the opposition] "has fewer resources to finance the organization of mobilization… Instead, they are forced to rely on the spontaneous participation of courageous individuals" (Radnitz forthcoming, 17).

Contributions and Implications of the Dissertation

This dissertation illustrates that there are numerous opportunities to learn from autocracies that appear consolidated or whose rulers seem to be firmly in power. Unfortunately, policymakers, as well as scholars, often miss such opportunities because of the tendency to focus on eruptions (such as widespread political violence, political protests, and strikes) that signal the onset of large-scale political transformation (Carmines and Stimson 1989). As a result, we know very little about intra-elite dynamics in autocracies that have not undergone the conspicuous political opening or mobilization commonly associated with democratic transition. I argue that, by tracing processes over extended periods of time, we are less likely to be taken by surprise when autocratic rulers are toppled and democracy

suddenly appears to be on the march (or *vice versa*). Unexpected political eruptions are likely the culmination of observable, even if low-level, dynamics that have been simmering below the surface, but which tend to be overlooked until they become too prominent to discount.

Moreover, in studies of political contestation, the sources and consequences of political opposition to autocrats have generally been understudied. Works usually begin with the existence (or absence) of an organized opposition, rather than investigating the causes leading up to its formation and the actors who make up its leadership.[4] Often, studies of the opposition do not clearly state whether the opposition stems from cleavages within the ruling coalition or is based in societal groups outside of government that have been disadvantaged in some way and look to government for redress (e.g., McFaul 2005). Instead, it is assumed that members of the intelligentsia and/or civil society which have emerged separate from and in resistance to the regime form the backbone of opposition to autocratic rule (Bunce 2003; Dahl 1966; Dahl 1971; Dahl 1973; Lust-Okar 2004).

The post-Soviet cases of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan suggest that there may be contrasting patterns of opposition leadership and that these patterns may be linked to the market reform regime. Opposition movements and parties in market reforming personalist states may be more likely to be headed by defectors from the ruling coalition than by actors outside of it. Contestation appears to stem from dynamics internal to the personalist regime, rather than from tension or conflict between state and society.[5] In market rejecting personalist autocracies, on the other hand, pressure for political and economic transformation may be more likely to come from the grassroots, rather than from within the ruling coalition.

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[4] I thank Regina Smyth for sharing this insight.
[5] For the state versus society perspective, see Migdal (1988) and Migdal (2001).

Finally, in the literature on elite defections, focal points have been explicitly or implicitly been conceived of as windows of opportunity for elites to achieve greater economic and political power. Yet, during the Belarusian, Kazakh, and Kyrgyz cases of widespread elite defection in 1994-1996, 2001, and 2005, respectively, critical focal points proved to be specific events that threatened elites' power and livelihoods, rather than those that represented a clear opportunity for gain. These three cases, furthermore, bring into question the importance of presidential vulnerability, which has been cited as a key factor in facilitating defection (Hale 2005; Olson 1990; Radnitz forthcoming; Way 2005b). In retrospect, Akaev was arguably vulnerable when widespread defections took place during the 2005 elections, but the behavior of his inner circle suggested that neither the president nor his close allies felt this to be the case. Lukashenka and Bakiev were in similarly vulnerable situations in their initial years in power and were met with extensive defections, but overcame the threat with relative ease. Finally, Nazarbaev in 2005 did not appear any more vulnerable to defection or any less able to control economic and coercive resources relative to other elites; yet, a number of business and political elites joined forces to publicly call for rapid change to the political system.

Future Directions

During residence at the Woodrow Wilson Center during January to August 2010, I will continue my research focus on elite politics and challenges to autocratic rule in post-communist states. I will build on the localized knowledge that I have accumulated by investigating patterns of elite contestation in the remaining post-Soviet states that are (or have been until recently) characterized by strong executives with highly personalized power. As with the dissertation, I will engage the literature on market reforms in providing elites

with the resources, capacities, and motivation to compete with autocrats for power.

Further, I will bolster the dissertation by incorporating additional explanatory factors. First, I will investigate how the international context impinges on elites' decision to defect to the political opposition. In particular, I will look at how these countries' incorporation into the international market and their linkages with key regional and global actors – such as the U.S. and Western European countries, Russia, and China – play a role in elites' decision making calculus (Levitsky and Way 2006). Second, I plan to incorporate theory from the literature on social movements to explain how political opposition emerges. Third, I will consider the role of elections in the process of elite defection and how defection at other focal points might differ in terms of prospects for successful mobilization of the masses. Fourth, I will theorize more explicitly about variation in personalist rule by suggesting ways to measure the strength of personalist presidents' patronage networks and resources. Finally, I will reorganize the presentation of the material to make stronger linkages throughout between my theoretical framework and the empirical findings regarding the composition of political opposition over time, the defection of business elites, and strategies pursued by defectors/outcomes of the defection.

Based on my experience living in and researching the post-Soviet states, I have come to view politics as a primarily elite affair that rarely involves or mobilizes the average citizen. Yet, public protests during the "colored revolutions," as well as research on networks linking constituents and local leaders and on the mobilization of citizen grievances against the regime, attest to the importance of the masses – or some segment of society – in forcing political change (Tucker 2007). Beyond the dissertation and postdoctoral work, I plan to shift away from an investigation of elite politics and refocus my research on citizens and

public opinion. A future collaboration will explore public opinion in Central Asia, concentrating on sources of regime legitimacy and political activism. This project is based on an original dataset that was compiled from surveys conducted in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in 2007-2008. Included are a series of pre-tested and translated questions about respondents' perceptions of the role of the welfare state, the legitimacy of the regime, and political attitudes, among others. All question items were taken from the World Values Survey and the International Social Justice Project to ensure reliability and standardization.

I also plan to devise a new survey instrument to test how individual responses to standard democratic culture questions are influenced by how the questions themselves are framed. Building on innovative studies of public opinion in the United States, the goal is to test the relative strength of competing arguments (or frames) propagated by the regime and the political opposition in post-Soviet Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan (Piazza and Sniderman 1998; Saris and Sniderman 2004; Sniderman 2000). Early studies of the post-Communist region found that citizens supported democratic principles and evidenced some features of a burgeoning democratic culture (Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer 1999). However, public support for democracy has been found to be waning in recent years, as support for elements of authoritarian rule has risen. I will build on existing findings and test whether democratic frames versus autocratic frames have a statistically significant effect on individual preferences regarding political freedoms and government control. Baseline democratic culture questions will be taken from the Euro and Afro Barometer to ensure that the survey instrument is reliable and that the results are cross-nationally comparable.

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EDUCATION

December 2009	Ph.D. Political Science, Indiana University Dissertation: *Market Reform Regimes, Elite Defections, and Political Opposition in the Post-Soviet States: Evidence from Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan* Committee: Jack Bielasiak (chair), Henry Hale, Regina Smyth, & William Fierman
May 2006	Ph.D. Qualifying Exams: Comparative Politics and American Politics (high pass)
May 2005	Minor Completed: Social Science Research Methods
Dec 2002	Masters in Information Science (M.I.S.), Indiana University
Dec 1997	B.A. International Relations, San Francisco State University, *Summa Cum Laude*

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Comparative Authoritarianism	Post-Soviet Politics	Public Opinion
Intra-Elite Political Contestation	Central Asian Politics	Patronage Politics

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed Publications

Barbara Junisbai. 2010. "A Tale of Two Kazakhstans: Sources of Political Cleavage and Conflict in the Post-Soviet Period" *Europe-Asia Studies*, 62(1): 235-269.

Barbara Junisbai and Azamat Junisbai. 2005. "The Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan: A Case Study in Economic Liberalization, Intra-Elite Cleavage and Political Opposition." *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, 13: 373-392.

Publications Refereed by Social Scientist Editors

Barbara Junisbai. 2010. "Oligarchs and Ownership: The Role of Financial-Industrial Groups in Controlling Kazakhstan's 'Independent' Media," *After the Czars and Commissars: The Press in Post-Soviet Authoritarian Central Asia*, eds. Eric Freedman and Richard Shafer. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press.

Reports for Policy-Oriented Audiences

Barbara Junisbai. 2002. "Controlling Conflict in Central Asia," *Foreign Service Journal*, 79(9): 47-50.

HONORS, GRANTS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

Jan–Aug 2010 Kennan Institute Research Fellow, Woodrow Wilson International Center for

	Scholars ($26,400)
Fall 2009	Russian East European Institute Mellon Dissertation Write-Up Fellowship, Indiana University ($7,500, plus tuition fee remission)
Spring 2009	World Politics and Statecraft Fellowship, Smith Richardson Foundation International Security and Foreign Policy Program ($7,500)
Spring 2009	Katharine Greenough Travel Fellowship, Indiana University Political Science Department ($250)
2009	Best Doctoral Student Paper Award, Association for the Study of Nationalities ($250)
2009	Honorable Mention, Best Doctoral Student Paper Competition, Central Eurasian Studies Association
2007-2008	Fulbright-Hays Fellowship for Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad (DDRA) in the Kyrgyz Republic and Belarus ($48,782)
2007-2008	U.S. State Department Title VIII grant, Independent Advanced Research Opportunities (IARO) Program, administered by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), Kyrgyz Republic and Belarus (declined)
Spring 2007	Graduate Writing Fellowship, Indiana University Political Science Department ($1,000)
Spring 2007	U.S. State Department Title VIII grant, Research Scholar Program, administered by American Councils (ACTR/ACCELS), Kazakhstan ($8,422)
Spring 2006	Associate Instructor of the Year, Indiana University Political Science Department ($200)
Summer 2005	U.S. State Department Title VIII grant, Eurasian Regional Language program (advanced Kazakh), administered by American Councils (ACTR/ACCELS), Kazakhstan ($5,000)
2004 – 2005	Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (Kazakh), Indiana University
Summer 2004	Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (Kazakh), Indiana University
1998 – 1999	Spectrum Initiative Scholarship, American Library Association ($5,000)
May 1996	*Phi Beta Kappa* National Honor Society

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor
Y103: Introduction to American Politics (summer 2006, 50 students)
Duties: Full responsibility for the course, including course design; selecting reading materials; preparing and delivering lectures; and creating and grading assignments, exams, and papers.

Associate Instructor
Y313: Environmental Politics (fall 2005)
Y103: Introduction to American Politics (spring 2006)
Y105: Intro to Political Philosophy (fall 2003)
Y311: Democracy and National Security (spring 2004)

Intern
C750: Graduate-level course on Teaching and Learning on the College Campus (spring 2009)
Duties: Assisted professor with course organization, posting of grades and assignments; conducted a study of "master teachers" at Indiana University, which included classroom observations and interviews with professors; devised an undergraduate survey course on Post-Soviet politics using the backward course design method.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2007-2008 Dissertation fieldwork in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and the Kyrgyz Republic
Gathered and analyzed original data on elites, the political opposition, political parties, and civil society activists in each country since independence. Conducted a total of 175 interviews in Russian with elites loyal to the ruling coalition, elites who have defected from the ruling coalition to the opposition, NGO leaders, and political observers (i.e., scholars, journalists, and political analysts). Created databases of elite career patterns and level of turnover at the national (ministerial) and regional (gubernatorial) levels using newspaper archives and print and electronic databases on presidential appointments. Created database on the composition and career paths of opposition members since perestroika to the present in each of the three countries in the study.

2005-2006 Research Assistant, Indiana University Political Science Department
Collected and analyzed data on immigrant racial identity; segregation in housing and education; court cases involving Latinos and violations of voting rights; and patterns of immigrant incorporation through participation in political, religious, and civic organizations. Created original dataset of roll call votes on defense issues for the 103rd and 104th U.S. Congresses, including district and individual level data for each legislator. Analyzed data using series of Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) models.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

Presenter, "A Tale of Two Kazakhstans: Where Do the Political Fault Lines Lie?" Paper presented at the Central Eurasian Studies Society Annual Conference, University of Toronto, October 2009.

Presenter, "Economic Reform Regimes, Elite Defections, and Political Opposition in the Post-Soviet States: Evidence from Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan." Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Nationalities World Convention, Columbia University, April 2009.

Presenter, "Kazakhstan's Democratic Choice Movement: A Case Study." Paper presented at the Central Eurasian Studies Society Annual Conference, Indiana University, October 2004.

INSTITUTIONAL & PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Nominating Committee member, Visiting Fulbright Scholar Program, U.S. Embassy, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, December 2007

Presenter, "Applying to U.S. Universities: How Can I Make My Application Shine?" *Education USA: Ninth Annual Educational Fair*, organized by Soros Foundation Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, November 2007

Roundtable participant, Discussion of Proposed Constitutional Reforms in the Kyrgyz Republic, American University of Central Asia (AUCA), Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, October 2007

Nominating Committee member, Hubert Humphrey Fellowship for Mid-Career Professionals, U.S. Embassy, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, September 2007

Nominating Committee member, Master's Program in Second Language Studies, funded jointly by Indiana University and Soros Foundation Kazakhstan, Almaty, Kazakhstan, May 2007

Independent Study Advisor to undergraduate political science student. Topic: Independent Candidates and Running a Political Campaign, Indiana University, Fall 2006

Co-Chair, Panel on Nation-Building in Central Asia, Indiana University Central Eurasian Studies Department Annual Student Conference, Bloomington, IN, April 2005

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2001-2003 United States Agency for International Development/Central Asia Regional Mission (USAID/CAR)
Information Specialist
Working closely with Director's Office, technical offices, U.S. Embassies in the region, and country offices and implementing partners, led information and public outreach; served as primary point of contact and liaison for USAID with local and international media; was responsible for collecting, analyzing, investigating and distributing composite information on USAID assistance programs in Central Asia; developed the Mission's PR strategy and advised senior management on direction of program emphasis to strengthen public support; ensured that outreach to Congress, State Department, USAID/Washington, and implementing partners accurately reflected accomplishments; and publicized programs to U.S. audiences and organized press conferences and local briefings.

2001 Academy for Educational Development (AED), Almaty, Kazakhstan
Evaluation Coordinator
Compiled and submitted training results for USAID quarterly and other reports; wrote success stories for USAID; developed training results materials for USAID training website; drafted articles on AED activities in Central Asia; debriefed training participants from Kazakhstan; designed success story documentation training course for field office staff; and created electronic and paper filing systems for information management and retrieval of training results.

LANGUAGES

Russian – fluent; Kazakh – advanced; Spanish – intermediate; Mandarin – one year of coursework

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Member: American Political Science Association (APSA)
Sections on Comparative Politics, Comparative Democratization, and Qualitative Methods

Member: Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA)

Member: Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS)

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