

UNDERSTANDING VIOLENT CONFLICT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
TAJKISTAN AND UZBEKISTAN

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Bloomington, Indiana, April 2007

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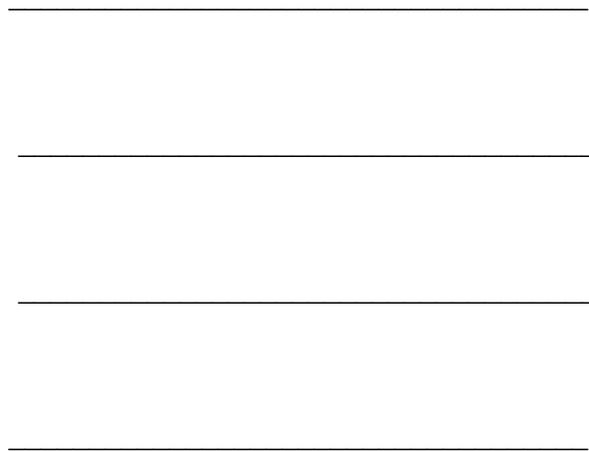
UNDERSTANDING VIOLENT CONFLICT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
TAJIKISTAN AND UZBEKISTAN

This dissertation asks how we can explain the occurrence of civil war in Tajikistan and, contrary to what the theories and explanations of violent conflict in the literature lead us to expect, its absence in Uzbekistan. The factors cited in the literature on violent conflict in general and on the Tajikistan civil war in particular as the causes of violent conflict were present both in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, nevertheless only the latter experienced civil war. The fact that the same variables did not produce the same outcome presents an empirical puzzle.

This dissertation examines existing approaches and their hypotheses on the causes of violent conflict as well as existing explanations of the civil war in Tajikistan. It applies the hypotheses of theoretical approaches to the cases of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and compares these countries to see if these theories and explanations help to understand why civil war occurred only in Tajikistan. This study concludes that factors utilized in other analyses to explain the civil war in Tajikistan also existed in Uzbekistan.

This dissertation argues that actors decide to go to arms according to their perceptions of their own power and that of their adversaries. Elites make an evaluation on distribution of power according to their perceptions about power balances. Unlike classical balance of power theories which argue that imbalances of power lead to the possibility of war, this dissertation argues that it is the even balance of power between adversaries which leads to war. However the balance of power alone cannot explain the emergence of cleavage lines in civil wars and the mobilization of the population on the ground. This dissertation presents three variables to understand these dynamics. The first is a structural variable to understand the cleavage lines

in the war and the elites' power perceptions. This dissertation argues that the difference between elite structures in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan affected elite perceptions and behaviors in the two countries in very different ways. The second is a process-related variable. This dissertation argues that power balances are not determined by structural factors only; process also changes existing power balances. The third group of variables relates to three mechanisms whose presence affects whether violent conflict occurs or not: network establishment, network activation and activation of violence specialists.



A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

In this dissertation I have retained the most common spellings of personal and geographic names in English. When there is a commonly accepted version of an Uzbek or Tajik name I used it instead of transliterating it from its original form. These names include Andijan instead of Andijon, Bukhara instead of Buxoro, Tashkent instead of Toshkent, Samarkand instead of Samarqand, Kulyab instead of Kulob, Leninabad instead of Leninobod, Hissar instead of Hisor, Khojaev instead of Xo'jaev. When there is no commonly accepted version, all Uzbek names and words have been rendered in their Latin orthography as written in 2007, with the exception of the letter "x", which is represented throughout as "kh". I transliterated the Tajik names from Cyrillic to Latin using the transliteration system as adopted by the US Board on Geographic Names. I used Library of Congress system for transliterating Russian names and words.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This dissertation is a study of violent conflict. My goal is to explain why violent conflict occurs, and describe the factors which produce it. In my search for the causes of violent conflict, I employ a comparative approach, contrasting a country which experienced civil war (namely Tajikistan) with a similar one which did not (Uzbekistan). In the literature on violent conflict, few studies make use of such a comparative approach to explain the presence or absence of civil war.

From 1992 to 1997, Tajikistan suffered a five-year civil war which took an estimated 60,000 to 100,000 lives, and displaced almost 700,000 people. Meanwhile in Uzbekistan—which in many ways is the country most similar to Tajikistan among the Central Asian republics—no similar conflict occurred.

When the five Central Asian republics gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, expectations of violent conflict were widespread. Some scholars, basing their predictions on existing theories of violent conflict in the scholarly literature, perceived a high probability of future conflicts in this region. As justification they pointed to such factors as ethnic heterogeneity, weak identification with the nation, ethnic clashes during the last years of the Soviet Union, economic problems, and high unemployment rates.

Most analysts framed their expectations of conflict in terms of identity. Scholars pointed to the differences among the population of the region—including tribal, regional, ethnic, clan and religious differences—as threats to stability.¹ For example, Rumer and Rumer wrote that:

¹ See: Boris Rumer, “The Gathering Storm in Central Asia”, *Orbis*, 37.1 (1993); Boris Rumer and Eugene Rumer “Who’ll stop the next Yugoslavia” *World Monitor* 5.11 (1992); Roger Kangas, “Problems of State Building in the Central Asian Republics”, *World Affairs* 157.1 (1994); Mehrdad Haghayegdi, *Islam and Politics in Central Asia* (New York: St. Martin’s Press 1995); Martha Brill Olcott, “Central Asia On Its Own”, *Journal of Democracy* 4.1 (1993); Martha Brill Olcott, “Central Asia’s Islamic Awakening”, *Current History* 93.582 (1994).

...ethnic, religious, regional and clan divisions have combined to pose a threat of geopolitical eruption that could upset the fragile peace in all of Central Asia...if not resolved they could exceed the rivalries that have plunged the peoples of Yugoslavia into a bloody civil war.²

Scholars who stressed ethnic identities as the primary identities in Central Asia, expected that ethnic identity would form the basis of political activity after independence. They predicted that ethnic identity would become the primary factor motivating the actions of people and elites in the region. They expected Central Asian political elites to utilize their ethnic identities, mobilizing other people around them; and foresaw that this would cause violent conflicts between the titular nation of the republics and other non-titular nations in the republics.³ Some expected inter-ethnic violence in Uzbekistan based on ethnic differences in the country.⁴ Others saw religious cleavages as the most important factor, and long before the dissolution of the Soviet Union expected that Soviet Muslims, with their different religion and culture, would be the first to rise against the Soviet regime.⁵ After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there were expectations of Islamic insurrection against the post-Soviet regimes.⁶

Among the former Soviet republics of Central Asia, only Tajikistan experienced prolonged, state-wide, and regime-threatening violence. While some violent inter-ethnic clashes did occur in Uzbekistan, these occurred before independence, were not widespread, and were short-lived. Uzbekistan witnessed nothing like the events in Tajikistan—even

² Rumer and Rumer, 1992, p.1-3.

³ David Laitin, "The National Uprisings in the Soviet Union," *World Politics* 44.1 (October, 1991); Mark Beissinger, "Elites and Ethnic Identities in Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics," in *The Post-Soviet Nations: Perspectives on the Demise of the USSR*, Alexander J. Motyl, ed., (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992); Rogers Brubaker, "Nationhood and the National Question in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Eurasia: An Institutional Account," *Theory and Society* 23.1 (February, 1994); Philip G. Roeder, "Soviet Federalism and Ethnic Mobilization," *World Politics* 43.2 (January, 1991).

⁴ Kangas, 1994.

⁵ Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union* (New York: Praeger, 1967): 21-22. Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A Guide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986): 31. Helene Carrere D'encausse, *Decline of an Empire: The Soviet Socialist Republics in Revolt* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981); Michael Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1982): 10; Boris Rumer, *Soviet Central Asia: A Tragic Experiment* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990).

⁶ See: Mehrdad Haghayegdi, "Islam and Democratic Politics in Central Asia," *World Affairs* 156.4 (1994); Haghayegdi 1995; Olcott 1993; Olcott, 1994.

though it shares with Tajikistan the same factors cited in the literature on violent conflict in general, and on the civil war in Tajikistan in particular, as the causes of violent conflict. The fact that the same variables did not produce the same outcome presents an empirical puzzle. How, then, can we explain the occurrence of civil war in Tajikistan, in contrast with its absence in Uzbekistan? This is an important question within the more general issue of why conflict erupts in some cases, but not in others with similar features.

Scholarly literature on violent conflict suggests many factors as its causes. Primordialist studies describe identity groups as having cultural differences which are deep-seated and very old. They attribute violent conflicts to differences of identity, and to the feelings of resentment that such groups characteristically have for each other.⁷ Group competition theories highlight the economic and political competition among groups as the main factors which cause violent conflict.⁸ Discrimination and repression theories stress material inequalities, and economic and political discrimination along the lines of ethnic, religious, and regional cleavages.⁹ Another theory explains violent conflicts in terms of state strength: If a state is weak, the likelihood of violent conflict in that country will be high.¹⁰ Some scholars have stressed the role of institutions, focusing on the presence or absence of democratic institutions; power sharing among groups; language laws; protection of minority rights; and institutions such as federalism. Such scholars have associated the existence of

⁷ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1996); Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origin of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); Isaacs, Harold R., *The Idols of the Tribe* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975); Stephen Van Evera, "Nationalism and the Causes of War," in *Nationalism and Nationalities in the New Europe*, ed. Charles a. Kupchan (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

⁸ See Susan Olzak and Joane Nagel, ed., *Competitive Ethnic Relations* (Orlando, Florida: Academic Press, 1986); Robert Bates, "Modernization, Ethnic Competition and the Rationality of Politics in Contemporary Africa" in *State Versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas*, ed. Donald Rothchild and Victor Olorunsola (Boulder: Westview, 1983).

⁹ See: Ted Robert Gurr, *Peoples versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century* (Washington DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 2000); Ted Robert Gurr, "Why Minorities Rebel: A Global Analysis of Communal Mobilization and Conflict since 1945," *International Political Science Review* 14 (1993): 161-201; Ted Robert Gurr and Barbara Harff, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

¹⁰ Woodward, in addition to other factors such as the economic crisis, emphasizes the weakening of state as a reason of the violent conflict in Yugoslavia. Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*, (The Brookings Institution: Washington DC., 1995).

these institutions with a low probability of conflict.¹¹ Elite theories of violence stress the role of elites in creating and provoking violence for their own material and political interests, with the aim of gaining, maintaining, and increasing their powers.¹² In addition, there are large-N studies which identify various variables as the factors behind the occurrence of violent conflicts.¹³ Chapter 2 of this dissertation discusses these approaches. It also applies their hypotheses on the causes of violent conflict to the cases of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, carefully analyzing them to see if these they are helpful in understanding why civil war would break out in one country but not the other.

The scholarly literature specifically on the civil war in Tajikistan cites various factors as its causes. Explanations cover the full spectrum of approaches in the wider literature on violent conflict: primordialist, group-competition, discrimination / repression and weak-state arguments are all represented. Scholars variously point to weak national identity; heterogeneous demographic structure; regional, ethnic and tribal allegiances; attachment to Islam; and “old tribal animosities.”¹⁴ Most commonly, scholars emphasize regional differences within the country, and see the outbreak of war as a result of conflicts between different regional groups. For them, the regional fragmentation of Tajikistan was the main cause of civil war.¹⁵

¹¹ Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Gurr 2000, Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

¹² V. P. Gagnon, Jr, “Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia,” *International Security* 19.3 (Winter 1994-1995); Paul R. Brass, *Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1997).

¹³ Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War” *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*, No. 2355 (October 2001), and James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War,” *American Political Science Review* 97.1 (February 2003).

¹⁴ See: Rumer 1993; Rumer and Rumer 1992; Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, “Tajikistan: From Freedom to War,” *Current History* 93.582 (April 1994); For weak national identity argument see Oliver Roy, “Is the Conflict in Tajikistan a Model for Conflicts Throughout Central Asia” in *Tajikistan: The Trials of Independence*, eds., Mohammad-Reza Djalili, Frederic Grare and Shirin Akiner (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997).

¹⁵ See: Nassim Jawad and Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, *Tajikistan: A Forgotten Civil War*, (London: Minority Rights Group, 1995), Roy, 1997; Tadjbakhsh 1994, Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, “Causes and Consequences of the Civil War” in *Central Asian Monitor*, 1 (1993), Barnett R. Rubin, “Tajikistan: From Soviet Republic to Russian-Uzbek Protectorate” in *Central Asia and the World*, Michael Mandelbaum, ed., (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1994), Barnett R. Rubin, “The Fragmentation of Tajikistan”, *Survival* 35.4 (Winter 1993).

Many scholars cite economic factors in the eruption of violence in Tajikistan. Their explanations highlight shortages of food supplies, fuel, and housing; the disappearance of the welfare state; the end of subsidies by the center to the republic resulting from the dissolution of the Soviet Union; high unemployment; poverty; low per-capita GDP, and high demographic growth / birth rates.¹⁶

Some scholars emphasize the economic and political inequalities between regional groups in Tajikistan, and discrimination against some of them. These scholars assert that economic and political discrimination against some regions resulted in poverty and resentment, which in turn provided an incentive for mobilization and rebellion; and that this was the reason for the civil war.¹⁷

Another explanation stresses the competition between different regional groups in the country. According to this view, groups were taken from their ecological niches through sedentarization policies and forced population-transfers, and thereby placed in contact and competition with other groups. The result (we are told) was first conflict, and then civil war.¹⁸

Yet another explanation stresses the Tajikistan leadership's refusal to implement symbolic nationalistic changes, as other Central Asian regimes did.¹⁹ Many scholars also invoke the weak-state argument, saying that as a weak state, Tajikistan lacked a strong state capacity to deal with the problems of the transition. Because of this, it was not able to resist challengers, or pursue repressive policies against them.²⁰ Still others emphasize international

¹⁶ Many studies stressed these factors. As examples see: Rubin 1993; Payam Foroughhi, "Tajikistan: Nationalism, Ethnicity, Conflict and Socio-economic Disparities-Sources and Solutions", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*.22.1 (2002); Tadjbakhsh, 1993, Rubin 1994; Jawad and Tadjbakhsh 1995, Roy 1997.

¹⁷ For an example see: Tadjbakhsh, 1993.

¹⁸ Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations* (New York: New York University Press, 2000); Roy, 1997.

¹⁹ Shahram Akbarzadeh, "Why did Nationalism Fail in Tajikistan?", *Europe-Asia Studies* 48.7 (November 1996).

²⁰ See: Barnett R. Rubin, "Russian Hegemony and State Breakdown in the Periphery Causes and Consequences of the Civil War in Tajikistan", *Paper prepared for the Carnegie Project on Political Order, Conflict and Nationalism in the Former Soviet Union* September 1995.

factors such as the influence of Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and/or Russia in the occurrence of violent conflict in Tajikistan.²¹

To summarize, the vast literature on the civil war in Tajikistan has proposed the following independent variables as possible causes: the existence and strength of regional, local, and ethnic identities; a strong Islamic identity; a heterogeneous population; a weak national identity; economic problems involving poverty, unemployment, and the loss of subsidies from the center; demographic growth; international factors such as proximity to Afghanistan (a center of violence in the region); forced population transfers; and the Tajikistan leadership's refusal to implement symbolic nationalistic changes.

In our search for the reasons for violent conflict, these variables can be controlled for by means of a comparative framework. Of the factors listed above, we will see that all of them existed in Uzbekistan as well as Tajikistan. The literature on violent conflict in general, and in Central Asia in particular, would therefore have led us to expect a similar outbreak of violence in Uzbekistan as well. The fact that this did not happen is instructive.

Uzbekistan resembles Tajikistan in many ways, making these two countries particularly good choices for a comparative study. Unlike the other Central Asian countries, the territories of today's Uzbekistan and Tajikistan have long been home to sedentary societies. The literature on Central Asia describes their societies as having been influenced by Islam to a greater extent than the other Central Asian countries. They have similar social cleavage structures in terms of the existence of ethnic groups, the salience of regional identities, and the prevalence of Islamic sentiment. Both their economies are based on agriculture. They share the legacy of the same Soviet past, having lived under the same Soviet institutions and policies, and then separated from the collapsed state. Economic factors stated as the causes of the civil war in Tajikistan were valid for Uzbekistan as well. Both countries

²¹ See: Tadjbakhsh 1993 and 1994; Rubin 1994 and 1995; Foroughi 2002.

suffered from poverty, high birth rates, and the end of subsidies from the Soviet Union. They had similar social structures, with largely rural societies. A large degree of intermingling between their populations has taken place. Yet despite these similarities, only Tajikistan had a civil war, whereas Uzbekistan merely suffered short-term violent outbreaks. Why?

This study examines numerous potential explanatory variables including social and political structure, history, economics, demographics, ethnicity, religion, regional loyalties, and the policies and institutions established by the Soviet state. By means of data compiled during fieldwork, from interviews conducted in both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, I attempt to describe the locus and relative importance of ethnic and regional identities for people in the two countries. I also compare regions to see, for example, if economic / political inequality and discrimination between regions of Tajikistan could account for violent conflict there (as hypothesized by discrimination and repression theories). To that end I analyze and compare a variety of economic data from both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan such as transfers from the Union budget, consumer price inflation, and unemployment rates. Additionally, I compare Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in terms of factors emphasized by large-N studies such as natural resources, mountainous terrain, and population density. I also consider “neighborhood” and “spillover” effects, such as the role of Afghanistan on the Tajikistan civil war. In order to assess the role of international actors in Tajikistan’s civil war, I examine the involvement of Uzbekistan and Russia. In order to evaluate the possible legacy of past conflicts, I analyze the historical legacy of the basmachi movement in both countries, and the role of Soviet resettlement policies with respect to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Such comparisons demonstrate that existing theories of violent conflict in general, and of the Tajikistan civil war in particular, do not fully explain the latter. The dubious nature of prevailing explanations is shown by the fact that the same factors which they identify as the

causes of Tajikistan's civil war were also present in Uzbekistan, where, however, the outcome was very different.

Summary of the Argument

After comparing the two countries using a variety of factors, I have identified three groups of variables as the causes of violent conflict in Tajikistan (and the lack thereof in Uzbekistan). The first is a structural variable. The second is the influence of certain particular events in the transitional period. The third involves network-related mechanisms, and the role of individual actors in these networks.

The first involves the influence of Soviet policies and institutions. Although these produced quite similar structures in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, one important difference was that the regional policies in Tajikistan left cadres from one region (Khujand) more dominant relative to others in the republic, whereas three more-or-less equally powerful elite networks emerged in Uzbekistan. This study associates the dominance of one elite network in Tajikistan with the transformation of certain oblasts into rayons, either within Khujand oblast or under republican jurisdiction. Such changes lowered the status of these "demoted" regions in Tajikistan, and weakened their elites by making them subordinate to Khujandis. By contrast, the regions in Uzbekistan protected their oblast status without interruption for a long time. This difference between the elite structures of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan became an important factor which influenced elite perceptions and behavior in the two countries differently, and contributed to the different outcomes in terms of violent conflict after independence.²²

Subsequent developments in the mid-1980's and early 1990's evolved out of these structural differences, and changed the existing balance of power in the two countries. This

²² On the importance of elite structure in the stability and instability of transitions see: John Higley and Michael G. Burton, "The Elite Variable in Democratic Transitions and Breakdowns," *American Sociological Review* 54.1 (February 1989).

dissertation employs a historical analysis to trace these developments in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. I use the method of process-tracing to identify differences in the countries, and to examine the effects of events on actors' actions and other subsequent events. Through several interviews conducted with the witnesses of events and newspaper reports, I analyze and compare developments that influenced the different outcome in the republics.

I argue that the balance of power is not determined by structural factors alone, but can be changed by process. Events in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan changed their internal balances of power. While in Tajikistan these strengthened the already high power-perceptions of the ruling elite, and increased the power-perceptions of the opposition, in Uzbekistan they decreased the opposition's power-perceptions and increased the power-perceptions of the Karimov regime.

Within a comparative framework, this dissertation identifies the effects of purges in unifying Uzbekistan's elites, and bringing them together to agree on a new republic leader. Ethnic conflicts in the republic were also important in delegitimizing the incumbent First Secretary of the Communist Party, who was seen as the implementer of the purges ordered by Moscow, and resented by members of the Uzbek elite. In Tajikistan, which did not experience significant purges as did Uzbekistan, the forces that led Uzbek elites to unite were absent. Furthermore there were no ethnic conflicts in Tajikistan analogous to those in Uzbekistan. Unlike Uzbekistan, the existing leadership and elite structure remained in place in Tajikistan. The February 1990 events in Tajikistan had the effect of strengthening the existing leadership, by enabling it to eliminate opposition within the party.

The elite structure in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as events and processes in the transitional period, influenced elite perceptions differently. They strengthened the power-perceptions of the ruling elite in Tajikistan which, unlike the elite in Uzbekistan, did not have strong intra-party challengers, and did not experience purges and major ethnic clashes. These

factors made the ruling elite in Tajikistan unwilling to negotiate with the opposition, but encouraged them to attack the entire opposition at once. This, in turn encouraged the opposition in Tajikistan to unite. Attacking the opposition all at once was destabilizing, and united the opposition. This uncompromising, repressive attitude that played a role in uniting the opposition, along with the elites' overconfidence and refusal to negotiate, led to a polarization of the political environment, and eventually to violent conflict. The power-perception of the opposition was high as well. The opposition was united in Tajikistan. Its members showed their electoral potential during presidential elections, and were able to mobilize a large number of people. Their self-confidence was also high, and they saw themselves as a serious challenger to the existing regime. It appears that in Tajikistan, both the government and the opposition saw a chance to defeat the other.

In Uzbekistan the elite structure was different; power was more evenly divided among three factions. After purges and ethnic clashes, Karimov came to power with the agreement of prominent political actors in the republic, and his remaining in power depended on how well he satisfied their expectations. He did not launch a broad attack against the opposition until he consolidated his power.²³ Initially he was not powerful—he needed to bargain and negotiate with, and make concessions to, powerful elites. Karimov did not carry out an overall attack against his rivals, so elites did not feel a sudden threat to their positions and power. He co-opted some members of the opposition, convincing one wing of it to attempt to work within the system. Through such policies, Karimov was able to divide the opposition, gradually consolidate his power, and eliminate his rivals.

The differences in the policies of the two regimes towards their respective oppositions—the result of different elite structures and processes in the two countries—in turn

²³ On the factors which determine states' reactions to collective demands, such as the structure of power relations and the perceptions of elites see: Donald Rothchild, "An Interactive Model for State-Ethnic Relations," in *Conflict Resolution in Africa*, eds., Francis M. Deng and I. William Zartman (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1991) and Donald Rothchild, *Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa: Pressures and Incentives for Cooperation* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1997).

contributed to different opposition structures. Not that political opposition is a passive force, whose chances of success are determined only by the strength of the governments they face. Analysts usually consider governments to be strong if they suppress their opposition; however, the question of how much counter-force they face is usually neglected. The power of the government is certainly not insignificant in determining what an opposition can do, but the opposition has its own dynamics. The ability of the opposition to unite in Tajikistan made it a strong force against the government.

One such intra-opposition dynamic is analyzed in Chapter 5 below, which presents the third group of variables. These are related to several mechanisms whose presence or absence made a difference in whether violent conflict occurred. Through comparative analysis, I argue that the existence of these mechanisms in Tajikistan, and their absence in Uzbekistan, brought about the variation in the two countries. I call the first of these mechanisms “network establishment.” Here I emphasize the role of a network-establishing mediator in establishing links between formerly unrelated groups, and uniting the opposition in Tajikistan. I argue that the unity of the opposition in Tajikistan made it a strong force against the government and contributed to the violent conflict in that country. The second mechanism that this study identifies is “network activation” by the political elites. Political elites in Tajikistan activated their relationships with people with whom they had previous connections. This mechanism mobilized people in different regions, and significantly contributed to the eruption of civil war. The third mechanism is the activation of “violence specialists” by political actors. Elites contacted illegal groups, and employed them in support of their causes. This was an important mechanism in the eruption and spread of civil war. As we will see, these mechanisms were absent in Uzbekistan. Although loyalties and network relations similar to those in Tajikistan existed in Uzbekistan, they were not activated by the elite. The opposition was divided, and unable to organize itself in order to activate any network against the regime. Thus, Karimov’s

tactics of dividing the opposition—co-opting some members of the opposition and potential rivals—paid off. The co-opted elites were largely satisfied with their positions, while the remaining opposition was divided and weak. As Karimov consolidated his power, the power-perceptions of the opposition declined in Uzbekistan.

In the final analysis, actors decide to take up arms based on their evaluation of their own power relative to that of their adversary's. The decision of whether to fight or negotiate, to compromise or not to compromise, arises from such considerations. Elites evaluate distributions of power according to their perceptions of power balances. The decision to resort to violence is determined by how weak and vulnerable an adversary is perceived to be, and what means and resources seem to be available for a violent strategy.²⁴ Parties will choose the option of war if they think they can win; they will not choose violence if they think they will lose. My study suggests that violence is especially associated with regimes that show no interest in bargaining with disaffected groups.²⁵

Unlike classical balance-of-power theories which argue that imbalances of power lead to the possibility of war, I argue that an even balance of power between adversaries can lead to war.²⁶ That is, when one party's perception of its own power is high and that of the other is low, the probability of war is low, since the latter will agree to the supremacy of the former. When both sides' power-perceptions are high, the probability of war is also high, since both sides will think that they can beat the other.²⁷ In Tajikistan, the ruling elite had high power

²⁴ See Mark R. Beissinger, "Nationalist Violence and the State: Political Authority and Contentious Repertoires in The Former USSR", *Comparative Politics* 30. 4 (July 1998).

²⁵ Donald Rothchild, "An Interactive Model for State-Ethnic Relations", in *Conflict Resolution in Africa*, Francis M. Deng and I. William Zartman (eds.) (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1991).

²⁶ For some classical balance of power approaches see: Inis L. Claude, *Power and International Relations* (New York: Random House, 1962); Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Addison- Wesley, 1979).

²⁷ For arguments which assert that war is more likely if power is distributed equally in international relations literature see: Geoffrey Blainey, *Causes of War* (New York: Free Press, 1988); A.K.F Organski, *World Politics* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1958); also see: R. Harrison Wagner, "Peace, War and the Balance of Power," *The American Political Science Review* 88.3 (September 1994). On domestic politics Michael McFaul makes a similar argument in his work on the regime change in Russia. He argues that in Russia more unequal distribution of power produced a more stable order, when the distribution of power between opposing sides was relatively

perceptions. Besides structural factors, process-related factors also supported this perception, such as being undisturbed by the purges and having no strong intra-party challengers. The opposition in Tajikistan also had reason to perceive themselves as powerful because of their election success, unity, and their ability to mobilize a large number of people. Both sides came to think that they could win. The balance-of-power argument is also supported by the behavior of Karimov in Uzbekistan. When Karimov first came to power, his power-perception was low, so he did not immediately attack his opponents. He consolidated his power gradually by dividing, eliminating and co-opting challengers. The opposition in Uzbekistan was not united, their ability to mobilize large segments of the population decreased, and they could not emerge as a strong power against the government. One by one they became the targets of the Karimov regime.

Similar to other studies that stress the significance of regional identities in the politics of former Soviet republics in Central Asia, and the role of Soviet policies in the formation of these identities and regionally-based elite structures, this dissertation also emphasizes the role of Soviet regional policies on the formation of elite networks, which have regional bases both in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Through interviews conducted in the region, I also show that regional identities are important for ordinary people as well as elites in both republics.²⁸ Many studies stress the role of regional identities in the politics of Central Asian countries. Some view regional identity as the primary identity in Central Asia or as the primary determinant of actors' behaviors. These studies tend to view regionally-based elite networks as unitary actors, and fail to recognize differences within regional networks. Furthermore they neglect relationships and links among members of the political elite from different regions.

equal there was confrontation. Michael McFaul, *Russia's Unfinished Revolution: Political Change from Gorbachev to Putin* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001).

²⁸ Two recent studies which stress the role of Soviet policies on the formation of elite networks in Central Asia are Roy 2000 and Pauline Jones Luong, *Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Power, Perceptions and Pacts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

This study argues for a different view of regional identities, and their role in the politics of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Unlike other studies, which view regional identities and loyalties as the only factor in the formation of elite networks, this study stresses that other factors—such as education, career and work experiences, self-interest, and personal relationships—also affect formation of elite networks. Birthplace alone does not explain the elite networks. Furthermore, regions must not be considered unitary actors or permanent and fixed categories. Political elites from the same region do not always have common interests. People from the same region can be rivals, while people from different regions can be allies. Alliances among political actors from different regions may be formed for professional relations, on the basis of common economic and political interests, or in order to win access to political and economic resources.

This study emphasizes the importance of distinguishing these political power networks from what are often referred to as “clans” in the scholarly literature. Some studies credit “clans” with bringing about regime-collapse in Tajikistan, but stability in Uzbekistan. According to this argument, Tajikistan experienced regime collapse because it lacked a balance of power among its “clans.”²⁹ I argue that using the word “clan” for these formations in scholarly works is misleading. These elite networks are not “clans” based on kinship, or even purely regional allegiances. The main element is not pure “traditionalism,” or the continuation of traditional kinship-based relationships. Based on my field research in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, I argue that the solidarity among ordinary people from the same family or kolkhoz cannot be defined as clan-based. Rather, these relationships are regional in nature, and rooted in locally-based identities. If we use the word “clan” for these relations, any relation based on solidarity among people from the same location can be defined as

²⁹ For a recent study which stresses the role of “clans” in Central Asian politics see: Kathleen Collins, “Clans, Pacts and Politics in Central Asia” *Journal of Democracy* 13.3 (July 2002); and Kathleen Collins, “The Political Role of Clans in Central Asia” *Comparative Politics* 35.2 (January 2003); and Kathleen Collins, *Clans, Pacts and Politics: Understanding Regime Transition in Central Asia*, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, December 1999.

“clan.” Scholarly and journalistic accounts of Central Asia also use the term “clan” to denote political or economic groups based on patron-client ties. In fact, the people in these groups may or may not have kinship bonds. Their members use these groups as means of increasing their power and wealth. Using the term “clan” for these structures in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan is misleading since if they are “clans,” any relation based on patron-client ties can be defined as “clan.”³⁰

The balance-of-power argument, which sees the root of the conflict in the power imbalance in Tajikistan, argues that there was one dominant power network there which created resentment among other networks, and it was this imbalance that led to war. Uzbekistan was stable, since there was a balance of power among elite networks.³¹ This dissertation argues the opposite: Tajikistan had a balance of power; Uzbekistan was a case of imbalance. Their balance of power was influenced not only by structural factors but also process. Tajikistan was not destined to have a civil war simply because it had one dominant elite network. Events during the process also influenced the outcome. Historical balances of power among political power networks inherited from the Soviet period determined initial power perceptions. If the imbalance of power had remained as it was in Tajikistan, there might not have been a war, because the opposition’s power-perceptions would not have been high enough to enable them to challenge the dominant faction. In the case of Uzbekistan, I would argue that if initial power-distributions had remained the same, sooner or later more-or-less equally powerful forces would have attempted to test their power against that of their adversaries. The initial power structures were influential in terms of the impact they had on elite perceptions, and they influenced elite behavior in the process. However, these power distributions changed as a result of the events in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It was not

³⁰ On this usage of the term “clan” also see: Edward Schatz, “Reconceptualizing Clans: Kinship Networks and Statehood in Kazakhstan,” *Nationalities Papers*, 33.2 (June 2005): 234.

³¹ Kathleen Collins, “Tajikistan: Bad Peace Agreements and Prolonged Civil Conflict” in *From Promise to Practice: Strengthening UN Capacities for the Prevention of Violent Conflict*, Chandra Lekha Sriram and Kevin Welmester, ed (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003) and also see Collins 1999.

these, but rather the newly-emerged power distributions which determined whether violence would finally erupt.

This dissertation does more than make a balance-of-power argument; it also describes the origins of these power balances, and explains why there was a power balance in Tajikistan but an imbalance in Uzbekistan. I argue that balances of power—together with elite perceptions of these power distributions—are influenced by structural, process, agency and network-related variables. The outcome of violent conflict is not explainable without the causal effect of the structure, events, the influence of actors, and their relationships.

This dissertation also questions the role of regional identities in the eruption of civil war in Tajikistan. Based on interviews conducted in Dushanbe and Qurghonteppa with witnesses to the civil war, I explore the reasons for ordinary people's involvement in the conflict. Many studies depict the civil war in Tajikistan as caused by regional rivalries between different regions of the country—between Leninabadis and Kulyabis on one side, and Garmis and Gorno-Badakhshanis on the other. This dissertation argues that parties to the war were not as homogenous as suggested by these region-based explanations. Not all people from the same region were on the same side. It was not the pre-existing regional animosities which caused the war, but the war that regionalized the conflict.

One perspective argues that the civil war in Tajikistan began in the regions, out of local problems and regional conflicts. It maintains that low-intensity conflict in southern Tajikistan developed into interregional war. According to this view, the war was caused by the resentments of local elites towards the republican leadership, or competition among the local elites in certain regions of Tajikistan.³² Unlike studies which claim that the war started as a result of intensified competition and conflicts among people in the regions,³³ or as a result

³² See Lawrence P. Markowitz, *Collapsed and Prebendal States in Post-Soviet Eurasia: Cross-Regional Determinants of State Formation in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan*, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2005.

³³ See: Roy 2000.

of resentments by or competition among the local elites, this dissertation emphasizes that the conflict started in Dushanbe as a struggle among elites at the republican level, and then spread to other regions with the acts of the militias. I argue that the bulk of the violence was committed by organized militias that were led by criminal figures during the civil war. It appears that militias and their relationships with political actors played a critical role. The activation of regional networks by the elites, the elites' decision to work with illegal groups for the support of their cause, and the establishment of militias were especially important for the beginning of the civil war and its spread to other regions of the country.

An Interactive Approach

Literature on violent conflict usually stresses either structural or agency-based factors. Structural studies emphasize macro-level factors such as the role of institutions, state policies, and economic indicators as the reasons for violent conflict. Agency-based approaches argue that it is individuals who play causal roles in the occurrence of such conflict. They stress the role of human beings—and especially the interests of elites—in gaining, maintaining, and increasing power. According to this approach, elites provoke violence in order to increase political support for themselves. Structural approaches ignore the causal role of actors' behavior, decisions, or ideas, while agency approaches neglect the role of structural factors.

Unlike approaches which stress either structural or actor-related factors, in this dissertation I propose an interactive and relational approach to the study of civil wars. My approach highlights the interactions between structure, processes, and actors and their relationships. There is a great deal of causal heterogeneity in civil wars.³⁴ In this dissertation, I have tried to identify, analyze and explain these heterogeneous processes and mechanisms

³⁴ For the argument of causal heterogeneity in civil wars see: Rogers Brubaker and David D. Laitin, "Ethnic and Nationalist Violence," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 446-447.

which may lead to violent conflict. I argue that neither structural nor agency-based approaches alone are sufficient as explanatory models, because we need take multiple explanatory factors into account. I also argue that, in addition to structural and agency based factors, process needs to be examined. In order to understand the reasons for violent conflicts, we must examine the interactions between structural factors and micro factors such as events, processes, and actors.

This study emphasizes one structural factor—the structure of the elite—as a factor shaping the likelihood of conflict. It looks at differences between elite structures in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and whether differences between these affected the outcome. As mentioned above, I identify one Soviet legacy—the differences in elite structure between the two countries—as having influenced the occurrence of civil war in Tajikistan (and its nonoccurrence in Uzbekistan).

In terms of actor-related factors, I agree that individual choices, ideas, and strategies are important. However, I take a relational approach to the role of agency. Benefiting from the arguments of relational studies, I emphasize the importance of interactions and relationships among political actors, and identify elites' interactions with each other as well as challenger elites as important causal variables.³⁵ The positions of actors change in reaction to changes in the political environment, and in interaction with other actors. People act in reaction to others' behavior, and change their actions in response to them. While highlighting the importance of agency, human decisions and actions, this study also acknowledges that individual action is not affected exclusively by agency, structures, or environment; all these factors have an influence simultaneously. It is not the separate influence of these factors, but the interactions

³⁵ See: Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, (New York: Cambridge University Press 2003); Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Charles Tilly, "Mechanisms in Political Processes", *Annual Review of Political Science* 4 (2001).

among them which influence the outcome.³⁶ Therefore, in our explanations we should look at all three variables.

This study benefits from theories of network analysis in exploring the mechanisms which ignite violent conflict. The network approach explains certain behaviors and processes through social connectivity.³⁷ It maintains that “the structure of relations among actors and the location of individual actors in the network have important behavioral, perceptual, and attitudinal consequences both for the individual units and for the system as a whole.”³⁸ The webs of relationships which link actors with each other play crucial roles in conflicts. Actors activate their network relations when they need them. This study emphasizes both the importance of networks, and the role of individual mediators in their establishment. Mediators are actors who establish links among formerly unrelated groups. Their presence or absence is an important variable in outbreak of violent conflicts.³⁹ In addition, this study highlights the importance of network activations, as well as the role of violence specialists, and their connections with political actors.⁴⁰

Methodology:

This dissertation is based partly on library research, and partly on interviews. Between June 2003 and February 2004, I conducted 192 interviews with elites and non-elites in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Since it was not feasible to represent every region of these two countries, I selected certain ones for research, carefully including rural areas and kolkhozes in addition to the capital cities.

³⁶ See: Mustafa Emirbayer and Jeff Goodwin, “Network Analysis, Culture and the Problem of Agency,” *American Journal of Sociology* 99.6 (May 1994).

³⁷ Emirbayer and Goodwin 1419.

³⁸ David Knoke and James Kuklinski, *Network Analysis* (Beverly Hills, California: Sage 1982) 13.

³⁹ See Tilly 2003.

⁴⁰ For the role of violence specialists in conflicts see: Tilly 2003 and Paul R. Brass, *Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

In Uzbekistan I worked in Tashkent, Samarkand, the Fergana region (Andijan, Kokand, Fergana, Namangan), and Syrdarya. Tashkent is the capital city where the main political elite is concentrated. Samarkand is widely regarded as the source of Uzbekistan's leading elite, including Uzbek president Islam Karimov. Literature on Central Asia generally cites Fergana as the region most likely to experience violent conflict (based on various factors including economic and demographic ones); hence its special relevance for my study. In the Fergana region I also did research on the interethnic violence in the area that occurred in 1989-1990. I conducted research in Syrdarya in order to examine the effects of the Soviet policy of forced resettlement.

In Tajikistan I conducted fieldwork in Dushanbe and Qurghonteppa. Dushanbe is the capital city, where Tajikistan's political elite is concentrated. I chose Qurghonteppa because it is one of the regions that experienced the civil war most severely, and also because of its Soviet-era history as a receiving region for forced resettlement.

I interviewed both elites and non-elites. Elite interviewing was important for this study because many of my elite informants played influential roles. Some were at the center of events during the transitional period from Soviet rule, or during the civil war in Tajikistan. I also interviewed non-elites to get their perspectives as well, which is also very important to understand conflict dynamics as experienced on the ground.

I adopted positional criteria as my method of defining the political elite. Elites as defined for this study were politicians, parliamentary deputies, bureaucrats, government officials, local officials, academics, intellectuals, opposition figures, journalists, political party leaders, local and international NGO workers, and representatives of embassies and international organizations. Beside the elites in the capital cities, I also interviewed local elites in the oblasts and rural areas [oblast hakims and officials, kolkhoz leaders, school directors

and teachers, imams, local NGO leaders and workers, local party leaders and *mahalla* (neighborhood) leaders].

The questions in my interviews with elites were designed to ascertain their perceptions of the main political cleavages in the politics of their countries, past and present, and to learn about their networks and relationships. I tried to identify the main actors, and the elite structure in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Were there any differences in the elite structures and behaviors between the two countries, and if so, did these affect the likelihood of violence? What were relations like between the ruling and challenger elites? What opportunities were created by the regime change, and how did different actors react to these? How did political elites react to the changing circumstances and power relations? I tried to understand the elites' views of the transitional period, their thoughts about politics in their respective countries, their views on the main political threats, and on the reasons for ethnic conflicts and violence. I also asked elites many factual questions designed to elicit information about specific historical events.

I interviewed non-elites to learn how they perceived the main cleavages in the country, and to learn about conflicts and violent incidents. I also asked questions to determine their perceptions of identity in relation to politics. In addition, I interviewed many common people who lived through the civil war in Tajikistan and ethnic conflicts in Uzbekistan.

In addition to these questions, in the case of Tajikistan, I asked questions designed to understand the perceptions of elites and non-elites regarding the civil war in the country—the main events and developments which brought the country to civil war, as well as the main actors, issues and events during the war.

My interviews lasted between one and four hours. The questions were open-ended. I had some fixed questions, but my questions also changed according to the subject, and what I wanted to learn from a particular interviewee. For different kinds of data that I thought

necessary to address the issues raised by this dissertation, I designed different questions. If I was trying to learn about a specific event from an informant, my questions were tailored accordingly. In some regions I asked special questions related to the aims of my research in that area. For example, in the Syrdarya region, where my focus was the forced resettlement policies of the Soviet regime in Uzbekistan, I asked questions about the history and structure of the settlements, the sending regions, and whether the place of origin still determines identities and relation among people originally from different regions but living in the same settlement. For comparison, I conducted the same research in Tajikistan's Qurghonteppa region.

I am aware of potential problems with reliability—i.e. the possibility that an interviewee might lie, or otherwise present an inaccurate picture. My methodological choice of in-depth interviews represents an attempt to minimize such problems. In contrast to surveys, personal intensive in-depth interviews facilitate establishment of trust between the researcher and subject. They also afford the researcher a greater opportunity to control the interviewing process. Open-ended questions allow the researcher to modify questions as the interview progresses, or when the informant brings up an interesting new issue.

I also used multiple sources in order to minimize reliability problems. When a subject gave new information, I checked it by questioning other interviewees. I gave special attention to gaining the confidence of the interviewees. I assured them that their names would remain confidential, and be reported in anonymous and aggregate forms. I did not tape-record the interviews. I took notes, without recording the names of the interviewees. My judgment is that interviewees were generally frank in their answers. In cases when I sensed that interviewees were not, I terminated the interview. These cases, however, were very rare.

I chose my subjects randomly among the group that I wanted to interview. This was not a statistically random sampling. The political context of the countries where fieldwork

was conducted, along with the general suspicion that would greet any stranger / foreigner asking questions, would have made it hard to arrange interviews with people chosen according to statistical sampling methods. Instead I used a non-random sample drawn from personal contacts and introductions, i.e. a snowballing sampling method. This also helped to create trust with the informants. While I did send interview requests and make phone calls to people whom I wanted to interview, this approach was rarely successful.

I also gathered data on regions, Soviet-era resettlement policies, and violent conflicts from the national libraries of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. I did research in the Library of the Academy of Sciences in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, as well as the Library of the Academy of Sciences in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Plan of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 discusses the literature on civil wars in general, and the civil war in Tajikistan in particular. In this chapter I examine various theories to see if they are helpful in explaining the violence in Tajikistan, and its absence in Uzbekistan. This chapter argues that the most commonly-cited factors do not explain why civil war happened in Tajikistan but not in Uzbekistan, as much the same conditions existed in both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Chapter 3 focuses on the structural aspect, i.e. regionally-based elite networks. This chapter analyzes the elite structures in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and identifies differences between the two as an important factor which influenced elite behaviors differently, and contributed to the different outcome with regard to violent conflict after independence.

Chapter 4 traces the historical processes during the transitional period, which brought about the different outcomes in the two countries. It emphasizes the importance of events and processes as important causal factors in the eruption of conflicts, in interaction with some structural factors identified in the previous chapter. The existence or absence of these

processes affected elite perceptions and behaviors, as well as the events which followed from these.

The presence or absence of certain mechanisms have a great effect on whether violent conflict will occur. Chapter 5 attempts to identify these mechanisms which influenced the eruption of civil war in Tajikistan. The role of mediators in connecting groups, the activation of networks by the elites, the establishment of local militias and their involvement in the war were several important mechanisms which brought about the eruption of violence there.

Chapter 6 concludes the study by summarizing the main arguments of the dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO

The Cases of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in Light of Theories and Explanations of Violent Conflict

This chapter provides an account of the literature on violent conflict in general, and on the civil war in Tajikistan in particular. It shows that Uzbekistan and Tajikistan have many similarities; many factors which are used to explain the civil war in Tajikistan existed in Uzbekistan as well. This poses a puzzle: Given these similarities, why did Tajikistan, but not Uzbekistan, experience civil war?

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE AND HISTORY

Tajikistan and Uzbekistan share many similarities in terms of history, social and political structure, institutions, and state policies. They share the same legacy of the Soviet past; they lived through the same Soviet institutions and policies. The pre-Soviet histories of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are also similar. Their populations experienced a great amount of intermingling in the past. In terms of their history, they have much in common with the other Central Asian republics. In contrast to other Central Asian societies, they are traditionally sedentary. They are numbered among the most “Islamic” societies in Central Asia. They have similar social cleavage structures in terms of the existence of ethnic groups, the salience of regional identities, and Islamic sentiment. They both inherited regional divisions coming from the history of the region before the Soviet era. The development of a feeling of national identity followed the same pattern in both countries, and the ethnic and religious heterogeneity was similar. Both had economic structures based on agriculture and a small amount of industrialization. They had similar social structures with large rural societies and

close population growth and infant mortality rates. (See: Tables 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4.) They both experienced decolonization and a period of transition after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. So none of these factors can account for the occurrence of civil war in Tajikistan but not in Uzbekistan.

Table 2.1
Average annual population growth rate 1990-1991 (Percentage)

Republics	
Azerbaijan	0.1
Kazakhstan	0.6
Kyrgyzstan	1.3
Tajikistan	2.1
Turkmenistan	2.6
Uzbekistan	1.9
Armenia	2.1
Georgia	0.0
Lithuania	0.8
Moldova	0.0

Source: *Statistical Hand Book 1993: States of the Former USSR*, (Washington DC: The World Bank, 1993).

Table 2.2

Infant mortality in Central Asian republics (number of children dying before the age of one, per thousand children born), 1989

Uzbekistan	46
Tajikistan	46
Turkmenistan	58
Kyrgyzstan	38
RSFSR	19

Source: Nancy Lubin, "Implications of Ethnic and Demographic Trends", in *Soviet Central Asia: the Failed Transformation*, ed., William Fierman (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), p. 57.

Table 2.3
Demographic indigenization of the urban and rural population, 1959-1989
 (indigenes as a percentage of the urban and rural population, by republic)

Republic	Urban Population				Rural Population			
	1959	1970	1979	1989	1959	1970	1979	1989
Uzbekistan	37.2	41.1	48.1	53.7	74.8	79.5	82.8	83.5
Kazakhstan	16.7	17.1	20.8	26.7	40.4	48.2	53.5	57.0
Kyrgyzstan	13.2	16.9	22.9	29.9	54.4	59.9	63.4	66.2
Tajikistan	31.8	38.6	42.8	50.5	63.4	66.6	67.2	68.0
Turkmenistan	37.4	43.4	47.6	53.8	83.5	86.1	87.2	87.0

Sources: 1959: TsSU SSSR, Itogi Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1959 goda, volumes for Central Asian republics, table 53; 1970: TsSU SSSR, Itogi Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1970 goda, vol.4, pp.202-316; 1979: Goskomstat SSSR, Itogi Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1979 goda, vol.4, pt. 1, bks. 2-3; 1989: Statisticheskii komitet SNG, Itolgi Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1989 goda, vol.7, pt.2, pp.192-655. cited in Robert J. Kaiser, "Ethnic Demography and Interstate Relations in Central Asia", in *National Identity and Ethnicity in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed., Roman Szporluk (Almonk NY: ME Sharpe, 1994), p.240.

Table 2.4
Percentage residing in cities in 1989

Republic and titular group	
Uzbekistan	
Uzbeks	30.5
Kyrgyzstan	
Kyrgyz	21.8
Tajikistan	
Tajiks	26.4
Turkmenistan	
Turkmens	33.8

Source: Michael Paul Sacks, "Roots of Diversity and Conflict: Ethnic and Gender Differences in the Work Force of the Former Republics of Soviet Central Asia", In *Muslim Eurasia, Conflicting Legacies*, ed., Yaacov Ro'i (London: Frank Cass, 1995), p.271.

Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were included in the Soviet Union in the same period, and the institutions and policies which the Soviet Union established in both countries were very similar. The party and state apparatus established by the Soviet Union were the same in all the republics. The main administrative parts were composed of autonomous regions, regions,

cities, districts, collective farms, village councils and villages. The party was more politically powerful than the state apparatus. There was a Central Committee of the Communist Party for each republic. At every administrative level down to the village level there was party organization. The main state structures were the legislative, executive and judicial structures. The Supreme Soviet was the most powerful of the government institutions.

The policies of the Soviet regime with regard to nation, religion and region brought about similar cleavages in both countries. Cadre policies, language, culture, russification and industrialization policies were quite similar. Their social, economic and sociocultural structures were practically the same. Their industrialization patterns were the same as well. There was a cotton monoculture in both republics. Both republics were known to be among the least russified societies in Central Asia. There was widespread literacy, and education levels were quite similar in both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (See: Tables 2.5, 2.6, 2.7). So these factors do not explain the difference in outcome between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Table 2.5
Adult literacy rates of selected former Soviet republics (percentage age 15 and above), 1990

Estonia	99.9
Lithuania	99.3
RSFSR	99.2
Uzbekistan	98.7
Armenia	97.5
Tajikistan	98.2
Kazakhstan	98.8

Source: *Human Development Indicators 2003*, UNDP.

Table 2.6

Human Development Index Rank (1990) of selected former Soviet republics and comparison with high and low development countries. (HDI is calculated on the bases of life expectancy, adult literacy, enrolment ratio, GDP and GDP per capita. A higher amount represents higher development.)

Estonia	0.814
Lithuania	0.819
Latvia	0.803
Belarus	0.806
RSFSR	0.809
Ukraine	0.797
Kazakhstan	0.781
Armenia	0.756
Uzbekistan	0.728
Moldova	0.756
Tajikistan	0.736
Norway	0.900
Algeria	0.648
Pakistan	0.440

Source: *Human Development Indicators 2003*, UNDP

Table 2.7

Knowledge of the Russian language among titular nationality 1989

Republic	titular group percentage	percentage with knowledge of Russian language
Armenia	Armenian (93)	45
Azerbaijan	Azerbaijani (83)	32
Belarus	Belarussian (78)	80
Estonia	Estonian (62)	35
Georgia	Georgian (70)	32
Kazakhstan	Kazak (40)	64
Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyz (52)	37
Latvia	Latvian (52)	68
Lithuania	Lithuanian (80)	38
Moldavia	Moldavian (65)	58
Tajikistan	Tajik (62)	31
Turkmenistan	Turkmen (72)	28
Ukraine	Ukrainian (73)	72
Uzbekistan	Uzbek (71)	27

Source: SSSR etnicheskii sostav naseleniia SSSR (USSR, Ethnic Composition of the USSR Population.) 1991, Moscow: Finansy i statistika, in Valery Tishkov, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union: The Mind Flame* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), pp. 90-91.

History:

The original inhabitants of Central Asia were Persians. Turks began to migrate to the region in the sixth century AD. The Arab conquest in the seventh century brought Islam to the region. After the weakening of the authority in Baghdad, local dynasties were established in the region. The most important of these was the Samanid dynasty in the tenth century, with its high level of economic and cultural development. Samanid rule was destroyed by the Turkic Karakhanid dynasty. It was followed by the invasion of Seljuk Turks, who reigned in the region in the twelfth century. The Mongol invasions of Central Asia started in the thirteenth century, and the region was included within the Mongol empire. After the death of Genghis Khan, his heirs divided the empire, and Chagatai established his khanate in the region. In the 14th century, the Timurid Empire ruled in Central Asia. Uzbek tribes--which originated from nomad Tatar-Kipchak groups under the rule of Uzbek Khan, and took up his name as their group name--established a decentralized khanate in the region in the 15th century. In the 18th century, this khanate was divided into three different Khanates: Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand. The Russian conquest of the khanates began in the 1860s. With the conquest of Bukhara in 1868, Khiva in 1873 and Kokand in 1876, all of Central Asia came under the rule of the Russian Empire. The Russians dissolved the Kokand Khanate; however, Bukhara and Khiva continued to exist as Russian protectorates. The rule of the local dynasties continued in these two khanates, though within diminished territories. The Russians established two governor-generalships to administer the region: the Governorship of the Steppe (the region to the north of the Aral Sea and Lake Balkhash, which included Kazakh and Kyrgyz territories), and the Governorship of Turkestan (which included southern Central Asia).¹

The area of today's Tajikistan was divided between the Bukharan Emirate and Fergana province of Russian Turkestan. Khujand was occupied by the Russians in 1866 and the

¹ Beatrice F. Manz, "Historical Background," in *Central Asia in Historical Perspective* ed., Beatrice F. Manz (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1994).

Russian province of Turkestan was formed in 1867.² This part of Tajikistan was ruled directly by military governors under a governor general. Turkestan became a Russian protectorate. During this period cotton cultivation greatly expanded, irrigation systems and railroads were built, and some industries were established in the region.³ The Bukharan Emirate, which became a protectorate of the Russian Empire, continued to be ruled by the emir. The Russians had the rights in foreign relations and received economic concessions from the emirate. In all other areas, the emir kept his powers.

Culturally and linguistically, the region which comprises Tajikistan and Uzbekistan today was never defined by sharp ethnic boundaries. The culture was a synthesis of Persian, Turkic and Arabic cultures in an Islamic context. Among the sedentary population of Transoxiana, Persian-Turkic bilingualism was widespread.⁴ People had a common culture, knew both Turkic and Persian languages, and intermarried with each other. Before the national delimitation plans of the Bolsheviks, none of the intelligentsia who wanted to change the status quo advocated creation of an Uzbek or Tajik national state. Only as a result of the Soviets' intention to divide the region according to national criteria did a nationalist polarization occur among the intelligentsia of Transoxiana.⁵ It was during the Soviet period that Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were designated as political units, home to Tajik and Uzbek nations.

Uzbekistan was created in 1924, during the national delimitation of the Soviet Union, from the pieces of Turkestan oblast, Bukharan emirate and Khivan khanate. Tajikistan was first given the status of an autonomous republic within the newly created Uzbekistan Soviet Socialist Republic. In 1925 the Pamir region became an autonomous oblast within the

² Teresa Rakowska Harmstone, *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia: The Case of Tadzhikistan* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins Press, 1970), 13

³ Harmstone 14.

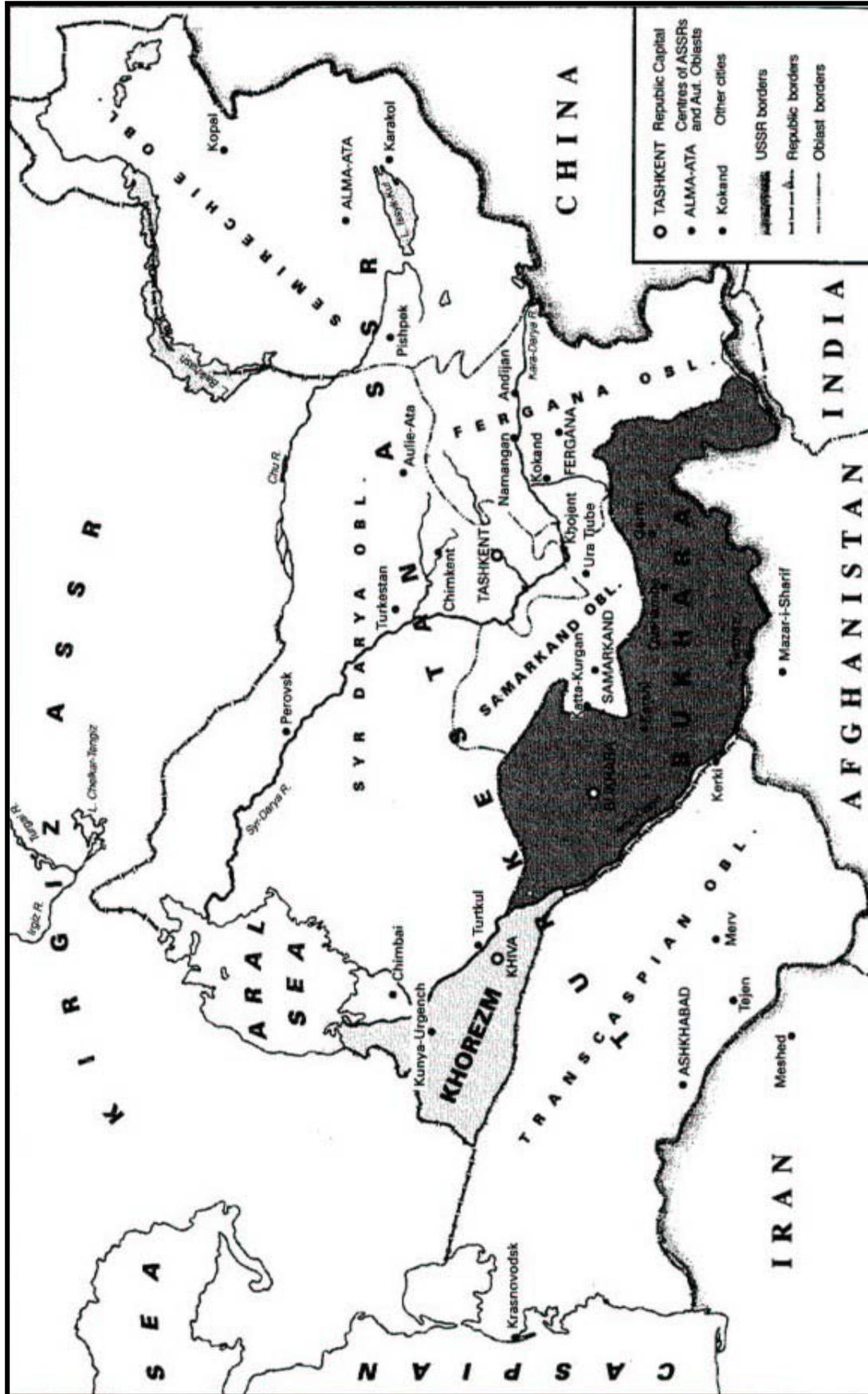
⁴ See: Bert G. Fragner, "The Nationalization of the Uzbeks and Tajiks," in *Muslim Communities Reemerge: Historical Perspectives on Nationality, Politics and Opposition in the Former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia*, eds., Andreas Kappeler, Gerhard Simon and Georg Brunner (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994).

⁵ Fragner

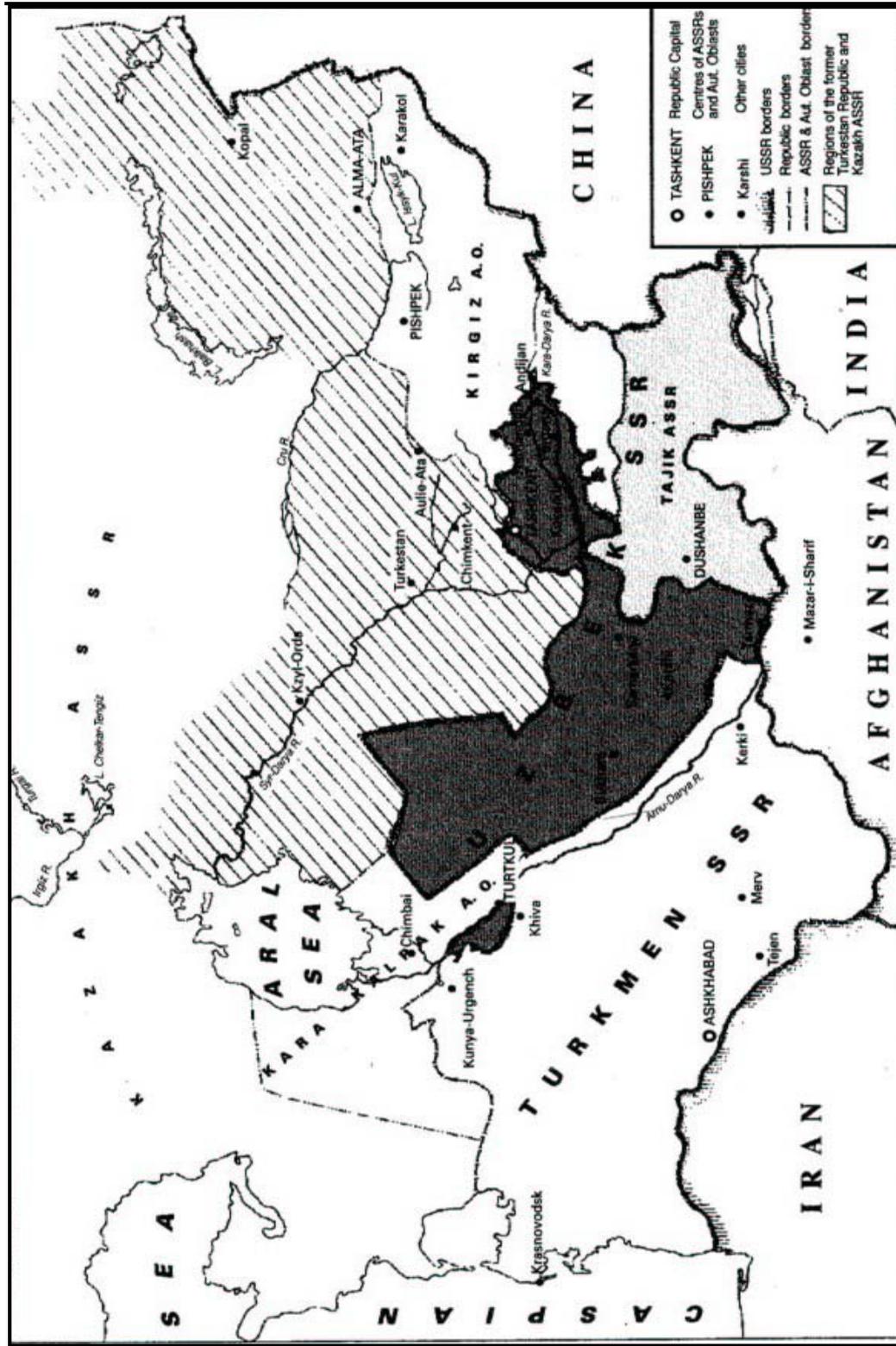
Tajikistan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, under the name of Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO).⁶ On June 22, 1929, the Tajik ASSR was transformed into a Union republic, and the Khujand region was added to the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic under the name of Leninabad province.

⁶ Harmstone 26.

Map 2.1 Central Asian Republics before National Delimitation



Map 2.2 Central Asian Republics after National Delimitation



Source : Donald S Carlisle, "Geopolitics and Ethnic Problems of Uzbekistan and Its Neighbors," in Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies, edited by Yaacov Ro'i, London: Frank Cass, 1995, p.95

Map 2.4
Map of Tajikistan, 1992



Source: The University of Texas at Austin Perry-Castaneda Library Map Collection, <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/tajikistan.gif>.

Soviet Nationalities policy: Creation of Ethnic Groups and Republics

Some have argued that national identity was weak in Tajikistan, and as a result, sub-national identities such as regional allegiances remained strong. The strength of such regional identities is often cited as a reason for the civil war in Tajikistan. However, strong regional

allegiances were characteristic of both countries. Both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan lacked a pre-Soviet national identity. Their national identities were products of Soviet-era policies in both republics.

The Soviet Union institutionalized ethno-territorial federalism, and classified all citizens according to their nationalities.⁷ However, it was the Bolsheviks who decided which groups would be counted as nations. The ethno-federalist model of the Soviet Union was designed according to Stalin's definition of nationhood. Stalin's formula defined a nation as a group sharing a common history, language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up.⁸ The first Soviet census in 1926 asked citizens to indicate their nationality. The result was about 200 different national identities in the USSR. Ethnographers, linguists and historians redefined the list by declaring some identities dialectical, subethnic, or local variants of larger *ethnie*. Many groups were renamed.⁹ Soviet federalism combined ethnicity with territory. It institutionalized nations and nationalities as constitutive elements of the state and its citizenry.¹⁰ In a region like Central Asia where there was no such understanding of ethnicity, it was not possible to determine the republic boundaries according to criteria defined by Stalin. As noted above, the criterion of language, which was considered essential to the definition of national categories, did not have much importance for the Central Asian population. In many areas bilingualism was the rule.¹¹

In Central Asia, the meaning of previously-existing group names was changed, and given an ethnic content. Some groups were declared part of the Uzbek nation, and the boundaries of an entity called "Uzbekistan" (which had never existed before) were

⁷ Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53.2 (Summer 1994): 417.

⁸ For the Stalin's definition of nation see: John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 18-21.

⁹ Valery Tishkov, "Post-Soviet Nationalism" in *Europe's New Nationalism: States and Nationalities in Conflict*, eds. Richard Kaplan and John Feffer (Oxford University Press, 1996) 25-26.

¹⁰ Slezkine 418.

¹¹ John Schoeberlein-Engel, "The Prospects for Uzbek National Identity," *Central Asia Monitor* 2 (1996): 13-14.

delimited.¹² The quality of ‘Uzbekness’, which had not previously been a culturally or politically influential category, was assigned to certain Turkic-speaking groups living within the boundaries of the newly-created Uzbekistan Soviet Socialist Republic.

The implementation of the nationalities policy was similar in Tajikistan. Tajik national identity was recognized in the national delimitation of 1924. Before the Soviet Union there was no idea of national identity among the population of Tajikistan. They did not conceive of themselves as a separate national group, i.e. the Tajik nation. During the time of national delimitation there was great confusion among the population of Tajikistan when people were asked to declare their nationality. In Khujand, for example, many could not say whether they were Uzbeks or Tajiks. Some Iranian speakers called themselves Uzbeks. Subsequently Soviet policies began to create a Tajik national consciousness.¹³ The same confusion existed in the newly created Uzbekistan as well; many could not tell they were Uzbeks, Tajiks, or Kazakhs.¹⁴

After the creation of Tajikistan, especially after 1929, the Soviet regime implemented policies which aimed at creating a sense of national identity. The Soviet Union promoted a national differentiation policy. Tajik culture was defined by Persian heritage, separate and distinct from the Turkic heritage of the Uzbeks and the nomads of the steppes, yet also distinct from Persia.¹⁵ These policies were critical to the development of Tajik national consciousness. The Uzbek nation was likewise a result of Soviet policies. Nation was developed with the Soviet policies as a part of the greater Soviet identity and counter to pan-Turkic, pan-Islamic, and pan-Turkestan ideas.

¹²Donald S. Carlisle, “Uzbekistan and the Uzbeks,” *Problems of Communism* (September-October, 1991) 24.

¹³ Harmstone 78-79.

¹⁴ Edward Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present: A Cultural History* (Stanford: Hoover Institutions, 1990).

¹⁵ Harmstone 232

Creation of National Languages:

An important component of the nationalities policy was to equip every republic created by the 1924 national delimitation with a language of its own. The literary Tajik used by the Tajiks of the plains, which was the court and diplomatic language in Turkestan, was made the language of Soviet Tajikistan. Other groups which were classified as Tajiks spoke a variety of Iranian dialects, and thought of themselves in local terms. The Tajik language was defined not as a dialect of Persian, but as a separate language which predated the creation of the Persian language. According to this theory, the Tajik language was developed during the Samanid period; it was separate from Persian.¹⁶ Literacy programs were introduced in the standard state language after 1924 and mass media in this language was formed. In schools students were taught Tajik language, literature, and history.

The contemporary Uzbek language is also a product of Soviet policies. At the time of the national delimitation sedentary and nomadic groups in Uzbekistan spoke fairly different dialects. Chagatai was generally used as the literary language. One of the major distinctions among Turkic dialects that were declared “Uzbek” concerned vowel harmony. Some of the major urban dialects (most importantly, that of Tashkent) had lost this feature that is common in Turkic languages. Because the loss of vowel harmony was associated with Iranization, many of the Uzbek language planners of the 1920s sought to select “pure” dialects that maintained vowel harmony as the basis for the literary Uzbek language. This choice was abandoned in the early 1930s. There were also major changes in the writing system for Uzbek. In 1923 a modified Arabic alphabet was accepted. The Latin alphabet replaced Arabic in 1929-30, and the Cyrillic replaced Latin in 1940-41.¹⁷ As they did with the Tajik language vis-à-vis versus Persian in Tajikistan, language planners aimed at the creation of a distinct

¹⁶ Harmstone 243

¹⁷ A. Bennigsen and S. E. Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A Guide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986) 59.

Uzbek language, and the differentiation of this language as much as possible from other Turkic languages spoken in the region.

Creation of National Histories:

A ‘national’ history for each republic was produced during the Soviet era. National genealogies were invented which traced the history of each nation from prehistoric times within each republic’s boundaries. The new national history writing attributed to ‘nation’ a continuity throughout history. In Uzbekistan, the people, historical figures and dynasties of the region were given an ethnic Uzbek identity, and were depicted as possessing a national consciousness.¹⁸

The development of a new Tajik historiography was implemented by Soviet policies. A Tajik national history was written with special attention to developing the Tajik national consciousness within the framework of the Soviet Union. The roots of the Tajik nation were traced back to late antiquity. According to this historiography, Tajiks were the direct descendants of the Sogdians.¹⁹ The Tajiks were declared to be the most ancient population of the Central Asia, and called the heirs of the Samanids.

Promotion of ‘Nativization’:

The Soviet regime promoted the local languages, culture, education and the training and development of natives and native personnel. Personnel policies took nationality into account in appointments which provided privileges to titular groups (i.e. Uzbeks in Uzbekistan, Tajiks in Tajikistan, etc.) in party, government, universities and professions.²⁰ These policies strengthened the national identity in both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. As a

¹⁸ Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations* (New York: New York University Press, 2000) 77.

¹⁹ Fragner.

²⁰ See: Bernard V.Olivier, “Korenizatsiia,” *Central Asian Survey*, 9.3 (1990).

result of Soviet policies, the newly-created national identities were internalized and gained significance in the people's allegiances.

Policies toward Islam during the Soviet period:

Uzbekistan and Tajikistan largely share the same Islamic cultural and religious history and structure, and parallel policies implemented during the Soviet period in this area brought about homogenous religious structures in both republics. Although Party policy towards Islam fluctuated over the Soviet era, until 1989 the government maintained strict control over it, and its appearance in public life in any form was never welcomed in the Soviet Union.²¹ Especially after 1927, the attitude of Soviet administration towards Islam was that it should be eradicated. The Soviet administration attacked the basic institutions of Islam. The *waqfs'* properties were nationalized, the Islamic courts were closed, *ulema*, *mullahs* and *sheikhs* were purged, and their activities were banned. *Tariqats* were declared illegal; mosques, *madrasas* and *maktabs* were closed.²² Women were forced to unveil, and atheist indoctrination was a part of school curricula.²³

During World War II, the campaign against Islam was toned down, and in 1943 a Central Asian Spiritual Administration of Muslims and Kazakhstan in Tashkent was established to control religion.²⁴ In the 1960s two *madrasas* were opened to train mullahs to work in registered mosques, and some students of religion were sent abroad to study.

However, despite these Soviet policies, the Central Asian masses remained Muslims in their consciousness and way of life. Islam as a culture and way of life persisted among both rural and urban populations during the Soviet period. In birth, marriage and death, religious

²¹ See: James Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan: A Soviet Republics Road to Sovereignty* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991).

²² Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemerrier Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union* (New York: Praeger, 1967) 144-152 and Ludmila Polonskaya and Alexei Malashenko, *Islam in Central Asia* (Reading: Ithaka Press, 1994) 92.

²³ Yaacov Roi, *Islam in the Soviet Union from the Second World War to Gorbachev* (London: Hurst, 2000).

²⁴ Bakhtiyar Babadzhanov, "Islam in Uzbekistan: From the Struggle for 'Religious Purity' to Political Activism" in *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?*, ed., Boris Rumer (New York: M.E. Sharp, 2002) 304.

rituals continued to be observed. The dietary laws of Islam were kept, and Islamic religious holidays were widely celebrated.²⁵ Despite the hostile attitude of the Soviet authorities, the traditional rituals continued.

Mullahs and *ishans* continued their activities illegally teaching Islam in the homes. There were many unregistered mosques and unregistered mullahs. People continued to pay visits to holy shrines and tombs.²⁶

The Soviet government was successful in destroying the traditional institutionalized bases of Islam, but it could not eliminate the practice of Islam by the population.²⁷ The policies of the Soviet Union toward Islam and their influences were the same in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Socioeconomic structure

The socio-economic structures of both republics were similar. The population of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan remained largely rural. According to the 1989 census, approximately 60 percent of the total republic population and 70 percent of the ethnic Uzbek population lived in rural areas in Uzbekistan. Almost the same percentage of Tajiks in Tajikistan lived in rural areas. While 53.7 percent of Uzbekistan's urban population was ethnically Uzbek; 50.5 percent of Tajikistan's urban population was Tajik. (See: Table 2.3 and 2.4.)

Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were both major producers of raw materials, particularly cotton. Moscow treated Central Asia as a source of raw materials, and did most processing of those materials outside the region. The production of finished products from these raw

²⁵ Hélène Carrère D'Encausse, "Homo Islamicus in Soviet Society," *Decline of an Empire: the Soviet Socialist Republics in Revolt*, (New York: Newsweek Books, 1979) 250-260 and Teresa Rakowska Harmstone, "Islam and Nationalism: Central Asia and Kazakhstan under Soviet Rule," *Central Asian Survey*, 2.2 (1983): 48-55.

²⁶ See: D'Encausse and also Ahmad Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003) 40.

²⁷ Martha Brill Olcott, "Central Asia: The Reformers Challenge a Traditional Society" in *The Nationalities Factor in Soviet Politics and Society* eds., Lubomyr Hajda and Mark Beissinger (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990) 261-264.

materials was also completed mostly outside of the region. The vast majority of cotton was taken out of the region to be turned into textiles in mills located in European areas of the USSR.²⁸ Their economies remained agriculturally-based. Industrialization was very limited both in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, and largely given over to cotton-related industries such as textile mills and fertilizer plants. The cotton ginning industry occupied a dominant place. In addition, there were hydroelectric power stations, coal and ferrous metal industries, and a number of non-ferrous metal, oil extracting and certain light and food industries. Extractive industries became more dominant. In Uzbekistan, natural resources like uranium and gold were exploited and gas reserves were tapped. Large natural gas and electric power plants were built. As in Uzbekistan, in Tajikistan a primary goal of the government was to raise the agricultural output, mainly cotton. Industry was based on hydroelectric power and mining. Aluminum production was an important industry in the republic. The Nurek hydroelectric station, the Tajik aluminum and the Iavan electrochemical plants were the main industrial sites. Nevertheless, agriculture and especially cotton continued to dominate the economies of both republics.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO VIOLENT CONFLICT:

This section discusses the literature on theories of violent conflict. It examines different theories of violent conflict and their hypotheses to see if they are helpful in explaining the civil war in Tajikistan, and its absence in Uzbekistan.

Primordialism:

One body of theory in the literature which aims to explain violent conflict is the primordial approach. Primordial explanations of violent conflict stem from an understanding of identity as fixed and unchangeable, acquired at birth and immutable thereafter. The

²⁸ William Fierman, "The Soviet 'Transformation' of Central Asia" in *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation*, ed., William Fierman (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991) 18-21.

scholars who work with this approach see identity groups as coherent, unitary actors. They stress that each identity group has different cultural characteristics which are deep-seated and very old. Identity groups characteristically have feelings of dislike and resentment for other identity groups. It is these identity differences and feelings of resentment which bring conflict and then violence. That is, the strength and intensity of ethnic, cultural and religious identities lead different groups to fight with each other. Some primordial explanations stress ‘ancient hatreds’ and memories of violent events between groups in the past. These past events lead to hatred among groups making it difficult to prevent violence between those groups in the present.²⁹

One variant of the primordial approach argues that ethnic, religious, regional and tribal identities and enmities were suppressed and kept frozen under the pressure of the Soviet system. After the removal of this pressure through the dissolution of the Soviet Union, violence between different identity groups erupted.³⁰ The tensions between different groups were so intense that the end of Soviet rule and its repressive effect made violent conflict among these groups inevitable.

One corollary of the primordial approach is that since it is the identity differences themselves which cause violence, a country is less prone to violence if it is more homogenous in terms of ethnic, religious and other identities. Another corollary is that if violent atrocities between identity groups occurred in the past, the risk of war will be higher.³¹

²⁹ For examples of such explanations see: Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1996); Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging* (London: Noontday Press, 1993); Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993); Stephen Van Evera, “Nationalism and the Causes of War,” in *Nationalism and Nationalities in the New Europe*, ed. Charles A. Kupchan (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Isaacs, Harold R., *The Idols of the Tribe* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

³⁰ For such theories see Branko Milanovic, “Why Have Communist Federations Collapsed?,” *Challenge* 37, (March-April 1994); Jacques Rupnik, “Europe’s New Frontiers: Remapping Europe” *Daedalus* 123 (Summer 1994) 95.

³¹ For a summary of these hypotheses see: Stephen Van Evera, “Hypothesis on Nationalism and War,” *International Security* 18, (Spring 1994): 5-39.

One problem with the primordial approach is that it does not explain why sometimes this violence seems to be inspired by ethnicity, and sometimes by religion or region. The scholars of this theory assume one identity to be more important, and that it is the strength of this identity which causes people to attack others.

Primordial views of violence give little insight about why violence varies across time and geography.³² If the intensity of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious self-identifications causes violent conflict, why is it that there is violence in some places but peace in others? And why do different groups sometimes fight, but at other times have peaceful relations?

Group competition theory:

Another approach stresses the roles of modernization and industrialization as factors which bring about conflict and violence among groups. Scholars who work with this approach stress the role of economic and social processes caused by modernization in the eruption of violence.³³ One group emphasizes competition among identity groups as the main factor which causes conflict and violence. This approach, which can be categorized as ‘group competition theory’, stresses the ethnic and racial segregation, and economic and political competition among groups. Scholars of this approach emphasize the effects of modernization in increasing the competition for labor markets, and other economic and political resources among ethnic groups. They argue that it is the different levels of economic development and career opportunities among different identity groups which cause violence. If one group denies another group access to material assets such as jobs, educational opportunities and state positions, the potential for violence between them increases.³⁴ Political and economic

³² For a critic of this approach see: Daniel S. Treisman, “Russia’s ‘Ethnic Revival’: The Separatist Activism of Regional Leaders in a Postcommunist Order,” *World Politics* 49.2 (1997).

³³ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983); Walker Connor, “The Politics of Ethnonationalism,” *Journal of International Affairs* 27, (January 1973).

³⁴ See Susan Olzak and Joane Nagel, ed., *Competitive Ethnic Relations* (Orlando, Florida: Academic Press, 1986); Robert Bates, “Modernization, Ethnic Competition and the Rationality of Politics in Contemporary

competition is the main factor in the persistence of ethnic groups, and causes ethnic conflict. The difference between group competition theories and primordialist theories is that the former do not conceive of identities as fixed and immutable. Rather they posit that identities are an outcome of political and economic processes brought about by modernization.

Discrimination and repression theories:

Another group can be categorized as ‘discrimination and repression theories.’ This body of theory stresses material inequalities, and economic and political discrimination along the lines of ethnic, religious and regional cleavages in the occurrence of violent conflict. The most prominent proponent of this theory is Robert Gurr.³⁵ He emphasizes the grievances of an identity group with respect to its economic and political rights. Gurr conceives of economic rights in terms of jobs, land and other resources, poverty, low income, high birth rates, high infant mortality rates and poor health. Political rights refer to whether policies exist which restrict the participation of this group in politics and access of its members to political office. Group disadvantages in political and economic differentials and discriminatory treatment may inspire demands for rights, protests, political movements, and violence. Resentment of limited access to political and economic rights is a factor which causes separatist demands and rebellions. One corollary of this theory is that the greater the degree of discrimination a group experiences, the more likely it is to organize for action against the sources of discrimination. Thus the greater the inequalities among groups in heterogeneous societies, the greater the salience of ethnic identities, and the greater the likelihood of open conflict. According to

Africa” in *State Versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas*, ed., Donald Rothchild and Victor Olorunsola (Boulder: Westview, 1983).

³⁵ See: Ted Robert Gurr, *Peoples versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century* (Washington DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 2000); Ted Robert Gurr, “Why Minorities Rebel: A Global Analysis of Communal Mobilization and Conflict since 1945,” *International Political Science Review* 14 (1993): 161-201; Ted Robert Gurr and Barbara Harff, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

Gurr, repression is more likely to intensify conflicts based on identities. Repressive control of a communal group is an important source of incentive for political action.

Secondly, in explaining violent conflict, this theory also emphasizes the attachment that the members of a group feel for the group itself. If a person identifies with a group that is discriminated against, he is more likely to take action against that discrimination. Strength of group identity is an important variable in Gurr's theory. He measures this with the number of traits common to a group. He asserts that "the greater the number of traits common to a group, the stronger the group identity." Shared religion, culture, language, history and place of residence strengthen group identity. In group competition theories as well as discrimination and repression theories, it is postulated that the more heterogeneous a society, the greater the likelihood of violent conflict.

Like primordial approaches, neither group competition theories nor discrimination and repression theories offer much insight into the location or time of interethnic violence. These approaches do not distinguish between non-violent and violent conflict, but assume that tensions between the bearers of different identities easily turn into violence as their conflict intensifies.

Stateness:

Another theory explains violent conflicts in terms of the degree of "stateness" in a country. Stateness is the degree to which a state can carry out the functions of states. According to these arguments, in a weak state the likelihood of violent conflict is high. In his famous definition, Max Weber defines the state as an administrative and legal order which claims binding authority over all actions taking place in the territory under its jurisdiction. It has the monopolized right to permit or prescribe the use of force in this territory.³⁶ His and

³⁶ Max Weber, "The Fundamental Concepts of Sociology," in *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, ed., Talcott Parsons (New York: Free Press, 1964) 156.

Charles Tilly's state definitions emphasize the role of the state in maintaining control over the population in a definite territory. They highlight state capacities such as the monopoly of legitimate use of force in its territory, collection of taxes, administering justice, and providing public services.³⁷ Migdal also defines the state strength with its capacities in the same vein. According to him, a strong state is one which can regulate social relations, extract resources and use them in determined ways.³⁸ The features of a weak state are the collapse of its coercive power and the rise of 'strongmen.' A strong state should be able to gain the obedience of those it claims to rule.³⁹ Another way to measure state strength is 'idea' of the state in the minds of people living under the jurisdiction of this state, and whether they perceive it as legitimate or not.⁴⁰ The relationship between state and society--whether inhabitants accept subordination to the state's authority, or see it as a legitimate entity to make decisions concerning its structure, and how acceptable or legitimate it is in the eyes of the public--are all emphasized in the definition of stateness.⁴¹

The role of stateness, and the weakness of states in the eruption of violent conflict, are widely discussed in reference to African states. Political violence in African states is explained as originating from stateness problems such as artificial borders, quasi-states, low human capital, underdeveloped economies, and a statist model of political and economic development. The rapid and unplanned transfer of power at independence and an economy based on agricultural goods and raw materials with little industrial capacity are stated as common features of weak states.

³⁷ Charles Tilly, "Reflections on the History of European Statemaking" in *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, ed., Charles Tilly (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

³⁸ Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) 4.

³⁹ See Joel S. Migdal, "Studying the State" in *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure*, eds., Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁴⁰ See Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).

⁴¹ Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stephan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996).

Institutions:

Although it is difficult to measure the level of discrimination that a group experiences, scholars have usually assumed that political democracy, state observance of rights such as freedom of association and freedom of expression are associated with less discrimination and repression. State policies which discriminate against a group's identity, including its language and religion, are associated with continued grievances.⁴² Since many approaches indicated that violent conflict is a consequence of discrimination, inequalities, and illegitimate states, scholars have suggested that democratic institutions, power sharing among ethnic groups, language laws, inclusion of the minorities into political structures, an end to economic, political, cultural discrimination, protection of the rights of minorities, local and regional self-governance, federalism, and proportional representation reduce the likelihood of violence.⁴³

EVALUATION OF THE FACTORS EMPHASIZED BY THESE THEORIES IN THE EXAMPLES OF TAJIKISTAN AND UZBEKISTAN:

Many scholars who base their explanations on primordial, group competition, and discrimination and repression approaches expected violence along the lines of ethnicity or religion in Central Asia. Those emphasizing ethnic cleavages predicted violence between titular nations and others in the republics as political elites would mobilize people around ethnic identities.⁴⁴ Those observers who emphasized religious cleavages as the most important

⁴² James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 97.1 (February 2003).

⁴³ Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Gurr 2000, Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

⁴⁴ See James Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan: A Soviet Republic's Road to Sovereignty* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991); Rogers Brubaker, "Nationhood and the National Question in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Eurasia: An Institutional Account," *Theory and Society* 23.1, (February, 1994); Philip G. Roeder, "Soviet Federalism and Ethnic Mobilization," *World Politics* 43.2 (January, 1991). Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53.2 (Summer 1994); Mark Beissinger, "Elites and Ethnic Identities in Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics," in *The Post-Soviet Nations: Perspectives on the Demise of the USSR*, Alexander J. Motyl, ed., (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992); David Laitin, "The National Uprisings in the Soviet Union," *World Politics* 44.1 (October, 1991).

divide in the region predicted even before the Soviet collapse that Soviet Muslims would rise against the Soviet regime.⁴⁵ After the Soviet Union's dissolution there were expectations of Islamic insurrection, and violence based on Islamic identity, against the post-Soviet regimes in the region.⁴⁶

In the literature which specifically examines the civil war in Tajikistan, scholars identify many factors as its causes, relying on one or all of the theories presented above. There are examples of primordialist, group competition, discrimination, and repression theories.

Identities:

One group of factors which scholars have emphasized as the causes of war in Tajikistan concerns the existence of different identities in the country. A weak national identity, heterogeneous demographic structure, the existence of regional, ethnic and tribal allegiances in the country, profound attachment to Islam and "old tribal animosities" were all suggested as factors in the outbreak of civil war in Tajikistan. Some analysts attribute the civil war to the resurgence of Islamic forces or ethnic animosities.⁴⁷ The majority of studies emphasize the regional differences in the country and explain the outbreak of war as a result of regional conflicts between different regional groups. For them, regional fragmentation of Tajikistan was the main cause of civil war in the country.

⁴⁵ Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemerrier-Quellejey, *Islam in the Soviet Union* (New York: Praeger, 1967) 21-22. Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A Guide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986) 31. Helene Carrere D'encausse, *Decline of an Empire: The Soviet Socialist Republics in Revolt* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981); Michael Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1982) 10; Boris Rumer, *Soviet Central Asia: A Tragic Experiment* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990).

⁴⁶ See: Mehrdad Haghayegdi, "Islam and Democratic Politics in Central Asia," *World Affairs* 156.4, (1994); Mehrdad Haghayegdi, *Islam and Politics in Central Asia* (New York: St. Martin's Press 1995); Martha Brill Olcott, "Central Asia On Its Own," *Journal of Democracy* 4.1 (1993); Martha Brill Olcott, "Central Asia's Islamic Awakening," *Current History* 93.582 (1994).

⁴⁷ See: Boris Rumer, "The Gathering Storm in Central Asia," *Orbis* 37.1 (1993); Boris Rumer and Eugene Rumer "Who'll stop the next Yugoslavia" *World Monitor* 5.11 (1992); Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, "Tajikistan: From Freedom to War," *Current History*, 93.582 (April 1994); For weak national identity argument see Roy, 1997.

The analysts who present civil war as a regional conflict among the different regional groups can be categorized into two groups. One group sees the regional differences and fragmentation of Tajikistan as the cause of civil war. They attribute essentialized characteristics to the “regional actors” such as “the Kulyabis being a deeply traditional and religious people” and explain the civil war with these characteristics; or see it as continuation of age-old conflicts between the warring factions: “People of Kulyab had a history of conflict with the people of Badakhshan.”⁴⁸ According to these accounts, the deeply felt attachment to regional identities among the people of these regions and/or old animosities among regions caused the war.

Since primordialist, group competition and discrimination theories emphasize a society’s homogeneity or heterogeneity, we have to consider the demographic structures of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The ethnic and religious structures of these countries were quite similar. Neither was more or less ethnically or religiously homogenous than the other⁴⁹. (See tables 2.8, 2.9 and 2.10) In terms of regional differences, they have similar cleavage structures as well. The hypothesis that heterogeneity makes a society more prone to violence cannot explain the difference in outcome between the two countries, since both have similar levels of heterogeneity. Secondly, in Tajikistan there were no violent atrocities in the past among the groups that fought the civil war, that might cause groups to attack each other in the present. Finally, the argument which stresses the role of the Soviet Union’s repression of enmities

⁴⁸ Jawad and Tadjbakhsh, p.13.

⁴⁹ We should approach the use of Soviet statistics about the nationality categories cautiously. The proportions of many nationalities in Uzbekistan and in Tajikistan changed many times during the Soviet period. During Soviet period many individuals when stating their nationality in official censuses claimed “Uzbek” or “Tajik” nationality in some cases because of pressure, as a matter of convenience, or they thought that being a member of titular nationality would bring them better opportunities. Especially in Uzbekistan, in Samarkand and Bukhara, many Tajiks were recorded as Uzbeks in their passports. They continued to use the Tajik language and did not lose their Tajik identity. Therefore these official censuses may not reflect the real national categories. However, these Soviet statistics are the only numbers we have which show the demographic structure of these former Soviet republics and these are the only ones which are used in the studies on these republics in the literature. About the unreliability of official “Uzbek” and “Tajik” categories, see: William Fierman, “Political Development in Uzbekistan: Democratization?” in *Conflict, Cleavage, and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrot, eds., (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997); John Schoeberlein Engel, “The Prospects for Uzbek National Identity,” *Central Asia Monitor* 2 (1996). I detected the same phenomenon during my interviews in Samarkand and Bukhara, Uzbekistan, October-November 2003.

between different groups is also unsatisfactory, since it fails to explain why most of the former Soviet republics would remain nonviolent.

Table 2.8
National composition of Uzbekistan, 1989

Nationalities	Population	Percent of total
Uzbek	14,142,475	71.00
Russian	1,653,478	8.30
Tajik	933,560	4.70
Kazakh	808,227	4.00
Tatar	467,829	2.30
Karakalpak	411,878	2.00
Kyrgyz	174,907	0.80
Ukrainian	153,197	0.70
Turkmen	121,578	0.60
Jew	65,493	0.03
Armenian	50,537	0.02
Azerbaijani	44,410	0.02
Total	19,810,077	100.00

Source: *Pravda Vostoka*, June 15, 1990, p.3 in Gregory Gleason, "Uzbekistan from Statehood to Nationhood", in *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States*, eds. I. Bremmer and Taras (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.338.

Table 2.9
National composition of Tajikistan 1989

Nationalities	Population	Percent
Tajiks	3,172,900	62,3
Uzbeks	1,196,900	23,5
Russians	387,100	7,6
Tatars	71,300	1,4
Kyrgyz	66,200	1,3
Other	198,600	3,9
Total	5,093,000	100.0

Source: Natsional'nyi sostav naseleniya SSSR. Finansy I Statistika (Moscow, 1991) in Muriel Atkin, "Tajikistan: Reform, Reaction and Civil War" in *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, eds., Ian Bremmer and Taras (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.608.

Table 2.10
Percentage population of Muslim origin, 1979 and 1989.

Republic	Population of Muslim origin (percentage)	
	1979	1989
Tajikistan	86	90
Uzbekistan	86	89

Source: 1979 and 1989 Soviet censuses.

The factors that these theories present as the main causes of violence lead us to overpredict violent conflict in general, and suggest that violent conflict should have occurred in Uzbekistan. Primordialists argue that the causes of violence are intensity of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, regional and religious self-identifications. However, the cleavage structures of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are very similar. Could it be that national identity was strong in Uzbekistan but weak in Tajikistan, or regional identity was stronger in Tajikistan than in Uzbekistan? Although it is very difficult to measure the strength of an identity, in my questionnaire I asked questions aimed at assessing this. One question was “In your opinion do people in Uzbekistan (Tajikistan) think of themselves in the first place according to nationality or region? For example ‘Am I Uzbek or Kyrgyz or Tajik, or, am I from Fergana or Samarkand (Khujand or Kulyab)?” The second question was, “Which is more important for you: being Uzbek (Tajik, Kyrgyz, according to nationality of the informant), or being from a region, for example being from Fergana (Samarkand, Tashkent, Khujand, Kulyab etc)” (See Table 2.11). In Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, a similar percentage of people who answered these questions believe that region is more important for people in general in the country and for themselves. Meanwhile, a similar percentage of people in both countries said that nationality is the most important for him or her, although the rates are higher in Uzbekistan by around 4 percent. More people in Tajikistan answered “both.” This may show that regional allegiances are slightly more important for more people in Tajikistan. I was expecting more people to

answer “region” to both questions in Tajikistan, simply because regional cleavages were one of the major factors of mobilization during the war and one would expect war to strengthen identities and antagonisms among groups.⁵⁰ However, even after the war in Tajikistan I could not find a big difference with Uzbekistan in terms of the strength of regional or national identities, although the strength of regional identity vis-à-vis nationality seems higher in Tajikistan (which again may be interpreted as the result of the war experience).

Table 2.11

Responses to survey on national and regional identification (percentage)

Uzbekistan		Tajikistan	
1st question	2nd question	1st question	2nd question
Nation	28.8	23.5	55.8
Region	57.6	58.8	20.5
Both	13.5	17.6	23.5

Note: Sample includes 59 people in Uzbekistan, 34 in Tajikistan.

A survey of public opinion in Tajikistan, also after the war, finds that 52 percent of Tajiks surveyed affiliate with their ethnic identity, 5 percent with their region and 24 percent with their national citizenship. This survey finds even less affiliation with region in Tajikistan. In a similar survey done in Uzbekistan, 51 percent of Uzbeks affiliate with their ethnic identity and 22 with their citizenship. The Uzbekistan survey did not ask about regional affiliation. These surveys suggest that in terms of ethnic and national affiliation, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are not very different.⁵¹ There is no evidence to show that regional loyalties were stronger or deeper than Uzbekistan in Tajikistan, or vice versa. In my research, I found

⁵⁰ For the argument that antagonisms between identity groups are a result of civil war rather than a cause of it see Susan Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*, (Washington D.C: Brookings Institution 1995) and David Laitin, “Secessionist Rebellion in the Former Soviet Union,” *Comparative Political Studies* 34.8 (October, 2001).

⁵¹ Steven Wagner, *Public Opinion in Tajikistan* (IFES, 1996); Steven Wagner, *Public Opinion in Uzbekistan* (IFES, 1996).

that affiliation with region was quite similar in the two countries. Thus, the existence of regional identities does not appear to bring about violent conflict among different identity groups.

Differences among regions:

Scholars often stress the existence of regions in Tajikistan, and their cultural differences and separateness from each other, as a primary factor in the occurrence of civil war. Scholars who analyze the civil war in Tajikistan within the framework of discrimination theories argue that economic and political inequalities, and discrimination against some regional groups in Tajikistan, were the reasons behind the actions of people from these regions in the civil war. They assert that because there was economic and political discrimination against some regions, the resulting poverty and resentment provided incentives for the mobilization and rebellion of people from these regions. They note that Leninabad was the richest region, and was politically dominant in Tajikistan. Garm and Badakhshan were poor, and the people from these regions were not so influential in the politics of the republic.⁵² According to this explanation, the actions of people from these regions against the established authority in the republic were a result of their resentment. However, this explanation does not reflect the real situation of the civil war in Tajikistan. The war did not pit rich regions against poor ones. For example the Kulyab region, whose people were said to have allied with the Communist government, was among the poorest regions of Tajikistan. (For the cash income per capita of regions in Tajikistan see Table 2.12) The standard of living in Kulyab was behind that of other regions, and unemployment was very high in this region.⁵³ Kulyabis could also have had the feelings of discrimination and resentment that were said to play a

⁵² For an example see: Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, "Causes and Consequences of the Civil War", *Central Asian Monitor* 1, 1993.

⁵³ Aziz Niyazi, "Tajikistan I: The Regional Dimension of Conflict" in *Conflicting Loyalties and the State in Post-Soviet Russia and Eurasia*, ed., Michael Waller, Bruno Coppieters and Alexei Malashenko (London: Frank Cass, 1998).

determining role in their actions in the war. The argument which asserts that Garmis' and Badakhshanis' exclusion from the system led them to revolt against it is not satisfactory either. Politically, Kulyabis were not dominant; their position in these terms was not so different from Badakhshanis or Garmis.

When we compare this situation to Uzbekistan, there were economic and political differences among regions in Uzbekistan as well. Some regions were richer and some were politically more dominant. For example, regions such as Karakalpakistan, Khorezm and Surkhandarya were politically excluded, and had few members in republic-level government and party organs. These regions could have had the feelings of inequality in their political and economic status, and could have revolted.

The qualities of remoteness and cultural distinctiveness are present in Uzbekistan's regions as well. The Khorezm region is very far from other parts of the country geographically. The Fergana Valley of Uzbekistan is separated from other regions of the country by mountains. The eastern and western parts of the republic are geographically distant and have very poor transportation links. The Karakalpakistan Autonomous Region has a different ethnic group within its territory. The identity of people living in the Badakhshan Autonomous Region, the Pamiris, was presented as one of the factors showing that civil war was a result of the regional fragmentation of Tajikistan. If these different identities and inequalities caused the civil war, we might expect the Karakalpaks and Karakalpakistan to play a similar role in Uzbekistan. Karakalpakistan has autonomous status, including its own Supreme Council and Cabinet of Ministers. It has a separate cultural identity and a history of territorial identity and autonomy. This region is economically underdeveloped, and there is severe environmental damage in the region. Karakalpaks have a sense of distinctiveness from Uzbeks and consider themselves as a separate ethnic group (and are considered to be one by Uzbeks). They have their own separate language and literature. The Karakalpakistan economy

is worse than that of any other region in Uzbekistan. The quality of life as measured by the availability of goods and services is lower than most of the other regions of Uzbekistan. In addition, there is a huge geographical distance between Tashkent and Karakalpakistan.⁵⁴ The primordialist and discrimination arguments would lead us to expect antagonism in Karakalpakistan, and resulting conflict based on their different identity. This did not happen. The regional differences in terms of economic and political inequalities, distinct identities and remoteness did not cause war in Uzbekistan.

Table 2.12
Cash Income by Region, Tajikistan

Region	Cash Income per capita (rubles per month)		
	1985	1990	1991
Tajikistan (entire country)	799	1058	1929
Leninabad Oblast	811	1026	2019
Khatlon Oblast--Qurghonteppa	812	1165	1855
Khatlon Oblast-Kulyab	613	750	1401
Gorno-Badakhshan Oblast	710	923	1834
Dushanbe	1324	2050	3996

Source: State Statistical Agency, "Macroeconomics and Balance Indices of the National Economy of Tajikistan," 1992. United Nations Development Program, *Tajikistan Human Development Report*, 1995.

Institutions:

Some theories maintain that institutions prevent violence such as democratic institutions, power sharing among ethnic groups, language laws, inclusion of minorities into political structures, federalism, proportional representation, local and regional self-governance and the protection of the rights of minorities. Uzbekistan and Tajikistan inherited very similar institutions from the Soviet era. After independence, both countries went through a transition period, and many institutions cited by these theories were still absent. Both Tajikistan and

⁵⁴ Reuel R. Hanks, "A Separate Space?: Karakalpak Nationalism and Devolution in Post Soviet Uzbekistan," *Europe-Asia Studies* 52.5 (2000).

Uzbekistan were regions separated from a collapsed state. Both had the common experience of Soviet institutions and policies. They share many similarities in this sense: the same institutions, the same state collapsing and the same institutional legacy.

Stateness:

The literature on Tajikistan argues that the weakness of the state led to the country's collapse into civil war. However, many of the factors stated as indicators of state weakness existed not only in Tajikistan, but in all Central Asian countries. These included artificial borders; quasi-states; underdeveloped economies; a statist model of political and economic development; the rapid, unplanned transfer of power at independence; and economies based on agricultural goods and raw materials, with little industrial capacity.

It is important to note that Central Asian states differed from weak states described in the literature from other areas of the world. For example, at independence, the Central Asian states already had large bureaucracies run by experienced and educated administrators from the titular population.⁵⁵ Human capital was not low in Central Asia. These states had some degree of social penetration, centralized policy-making authority, and administrative competence. They had inherited administrative structures that were designed to rule a heterogeneous society and agricultural economy.⁵⁶ In the literature on African states, it is often stated that what made African states weak was the strength of their societies, their diffuse organization, with strongmen in resistance to the state, and their centralism. In Central Asia there were no such strongmen. People who might have been considered strongmen were organically tied to the state itself. The oblast party committee (obkom) first secretaries and their associates were the agents of the center in the regions. They accepted and implemented

⁵⁵ See: David Holloway and Stephen John Stedman, "Civil Wars and State Building in Africa and Eurasia" in *Beyond State Crisis?: Postcolonial Africa and Post-Soviet Eurasia in Comparative Perspective*, eds., Mark Beissinger and Crawford Young (Washington D.C: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2002).

⁵⁶ Pauline Jones Luong, "The Future of Central Asian Statehood" *Central Asia Monitor* 1 (1999).

orders from the center, and in return received privileged access to political and economic benefits, as well as control over the distribution of these resources.⁵⁷ This was the common structure of all the Central Asian countries.

It may also be misleading to explain the civil war based on the degree of state strength. States experiencing civil wars are weak by definition; they lack authority on their territory. Therefore, to say that weak states are prone to civil war is *ex post*. One needs indicators of state weakness before civil wars occur to evaluate the impact of state weakness as a causal factor.⁵⁸ When we look at Uzbekistan and Tajikistan before the war we do not see any difference in terms of state strength. Both had the same strengths and weaknesses in terms of the factors used to explain the degree of stateness in literature. State failure theories which stress decolonization and quick political transition cannot explain the difference, because these features were common to both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

FACTORS FOUND INFLUENTIAL IN THE OCCURRENCE OF VIOLENT CONFLICT IN LITERATURE ON CIVIL WAR:

Economic indicators

One of the main factors used to explain the occurrence of conflict and violence in literature on violent conflict is the economic conditions in a country. Many scholars associated the economic situation with the probability of violent conflict. Some scholars who study the civil war in Tajikistan point to economic variables as important factors in the eruption of the violence in Tajikistan. They variously blame the lack of food supplies, fuel and housing; the disappearance of the welfare state, and the end of subsidies by the center to

⁵⁷ Luong.

⁵⁸ Holloway and Stedman.

the republic; unemployment; poverty; low per capita GDP; high demographic growth; and high birth rates.⁵⁹

These economic indicators are very similar in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The rates of GDP per capita were very close in both countries. GDP per capita measuring purchasing power parities was higher than Uzbekistan in Tajikistan until the civil war in the country. The rate of consumer price inflation which some scholars associated with the likelihood of violence (as an example see Foroughi, 2002) was lower than Uzbekistan in Tajikistan before the eruption of violence in the latter. It is possible to observe the detrimental effects of civil war on these indicators. In 1992 consumer price inflation increased widely in Tajikistan as a result of the war. GDP per capita decreased extensively in the same period. Using post-1991 data for the influence of economic indicators on the likelihood of violent conflict would therefore be misleading. As for transfers from the Union budget, although the ratio in Tajikistan was higher, the Soviet center subsidized a large part of the budget of Uzbekistan as well. It was actually very close to the rate in Tajikistan, respectively 43 percent and 47 percent. Some scholars argue that the loss of subsidies put the patronage networks in conflict over the diminished resources in Tajikistan.⁶⁰ But this situation was valid for all republics getting large subsidies from the center. Many republics—especially Uzbekistan—saw reduced resources resulting from the loss of subsidies from the center, but this did not cause war.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union affected all the Central Asian republics in some similar ways. Factories stopped, people could not get their salaries, subsidies from the Union

⁵⁹ Barnett R. Rubin, “The Fragmentation of Tajikistan,” *Survival* 35.4 (Winter 1993); Payam Foroughi, “Tajikistan: Nationalism, Ethnicity, Conflict and Socio-economic Disparities-Sources and Solutions,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 22.1 (2002); Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, “Causes and Consequences of the Civil War” in *Central Asian Monitor* 1, (1993), Barnett R. Rubin, “Tajikistan: From Soviet Republic to Russian-Uzbek Protectorate” in *Central Asia and the World*, ed., Michael Mandelbaum (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1994); Nassim Jawad and Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, *Tajikistan: A Forgotten Civil War* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1995), Oliver Roy, “Is the Conflict in Tajikistan a Model for Conflicts Throughout Central Asia” in *Tajikistan: The Trials of Independence*, eds., Mohammad-Reza Djalili, Frederic Grare and Shirin Akiner (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997).

⁶⁰ Barnett Rubin, “Russian Hegemony and State Breakdown in the Periphery” in *Post-Soviet Political Order: Conflict and State Building*, eds., Barnett Rubin and Jack Snyder (New York: Routledge, 1998) 140.

budget ended, real wages diminished, income differentials grew, standards of living declined, and mass unemployment emerged. Although the unemployment rates for Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were underreported, the available registered unemployment rate was the same in both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.⁶¹ In these indicators of GDP per capita and GDP measured by PPP, consumer price inflation, and transfers from the Union budget, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have very close rates (See Tables 2.13-2.16). Economic factors identified as the causes of the civil war in Tajikistan were present in Uzbekistan as well. Poverty, high birth rates, the end of subsidies from the Soviet center, and unemployment were present in Uzbekistan as well as Tajikistan.⁶²

Table 2.13

GDP per capita (current rubles), Soviet Republics

Republic	GDP per capita (1990)
Armenia	2,711
Azerbaijan	2,066
Belarus	3,927
Estonia	5,078
Georgia	2,748
Kazakhstan	2,790
Kyrgyzstan	1,875
Latvia	4,681
Lithuania	3,478
Moldova	2,907
Russia	4,227
Tajikistan	1,404
Turkmenistan	2,073
Ukraine	3,178
Uzbekistan	1,603

Source: *Statistical Hand Book 1993: States of the Former USSR*, (Washington DC: The World Bank, 1993)

⁶¹ Registered unemployment rate in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan was 6.8 for December 1992 period as thousand (rate is from *Statistical Hand Book 1993: States of the Former USSR* (Washington DC: The World Bank, 1993). The real unemployment is believed to be much higher in both countries. This official unemployment rate is also much lower than any other former Soviet republic at the time.

⁶² It should be noted that the statistics used to measure economic indicators in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are not totally reliable because of the problems with Soviet statistics and difficulty in collecting data at the time. However, these are the only figures we have to make an evaluation and the data presented in this chapter are from the most commonly used sources in the literature.

Table 2.14
Central Asian republics: GDP and GDP per capita
Purchasing power parities

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Kazakhstan	56,333	54,954	62,874	68,698	71,821	74,269	65,731	57,821	53,502
GDP									
\$ m	3,600	3,500	3,900	4,200	4,400	4,500	3,900	3,400	3,100
per head (\$)									
Kyrgyzstan	9,223	9,794	10,159	11,924	12,939	13,938	13,974	10,757	9,622
GDP									
\$ m	2,300	2,400	2,500	2,900	3,000	3,200	3,200	2,400	2,100
per head (\$)									
Tajikistan	12,946	13,761	14,004	16,291	16,538	16,981	16,124	10,757	9,954
GDP									
\$ m	2,900	3,000	2,900	3,300	3,300	3,200	3,000	1,900	1,700
per head (\$)									
Turkmenistan	8,177	8,775	9,420	10,811	10,512	11,166	11,067	10,757	11,060
GDP									
\$ m	2,500	2,700	2,800	3,100	2,900	3,100	3,000	2,800	2,800
per head (\$)									
Uzbekistan	30,465	31,725	32,417	36,803	39,668	46,070	47,769	44,374	41,059
GDP									
\$ m	1,700	1,700	1,700	1,900	2,000	2,300	2,300	2,100	1,900
per head (\$)									

Source: *EIU Country Report 4th quarter 1994*, p.81 calculated from the sources of IMF, World Bank, Statistical Handbook of States of the Former USSR, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Bulletin for Europe vol. 44 1992.

Table 2.15
Consumer price inflation (percentage)

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Uzbekistan	2.1	7.3	106.0	598.0	851.0
Tajikistan	n/a	4.0	85.0	913.0	2,195

For Uzbekistan November 24, 1994 som 23: \$1
For Tajikistan September 2, 1994 ruble 2,215:\$1
Source: *EIU country report 4th quarter, 1994*, pp.15-19

Table 2.16

Transfers from union budget as percentage of total government revenue in 1991 in ex-Soviet republics

Republic	Transfers (percentage)
Armenia	17.1
Azerbaijan	0.0
Belarus	16.3
Estonia	0.0
Georgia	0.0
Kazakhstan	23.1
Kyrgyzstan	35.6
Latvia	0.0
Lithuania	0.0
Moldova	0.0
Russia	n/a
Tajikistan	46.6
Turkmenistan	21.7
Ukraine	5.9
Uzbekistan	42.9

Source: *Statistical Handbook: States of the former USSR* (Washington DC: World Bank 1992) in Barnett Rubin "Russian hegemony and the state breakdown in the periphery" in *Post-Soviet Political Order: Conflict and State Building*, eds. Barnett Rubin and Jack Snyder (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p.141.

Factors associated with an increase in social tension and violent conflict--such as economic decline, unemployment and a decline in national wealth and standard of living--existed in other Central Asian republics as well. However, the non-occurrence of violence in other republics indicates that the economic situation itself is not a sufficient explanation for the eruption of violent conflicts. The economic situation may create social tensions, but accumulated social tensions do not lead directly to violence, as these economic theories predict.

Opportunities and Conditions Favoring Civil Wars

Among the authors who study the causes of civil wars, some emphasize opportunities and conditions that favor insurgency and establishment of rebel organizations. For example,

Collier and Hoeffler⁶³ find that rather than grievances such as inequality, lack of political rights or ethnic and religious divisions in a country, civil war is related to opportunities to build a rebel organization. According to them, the desire for economic gain is what explains political violence. Opportunity is determined by access to finance, the scope of extortion of natural resources, donations from a diaspora population and a geography with the mountains and forests needed to incubate rebellion. In this model, opportunity provides more explanatory power than grievances. According to Collier's and Hoeffler's findings, dependence on primary commodity exports--especially on easily lootable natural resources such as gold, diamond and oil--is a powerful risk factor; these activities provide scope for resource predation by rebel organizations. A dispersed population increases the risk of conflict. Their study finds weaker evidence that mountainous terrain might also be advantageous to rebels. Both opportunities and grievances increase with population. Countries with a highly concentrated population have very low risk of conflict, whereas those with a highly dispersed population have a very high risk. Thus, poverty, low economic growth, external financing from diasporas, and dispersed population all increase the risk of war. High levels of secondary school enrollment, particularly among males, reduce the risk of war. Collier and Hoeffler find a significant positive relationship between natural resource dependence and the risk of civil war. Civil war is more likely in countries with large populations.

In a similar study which aims at identifying the causes of civil wars, Fearon and Laitin⁶⁴ stress poverty, political instability, rough terrain, and large populations as major factors. They argue that financially, organizationally, and politically weak central governments make insurgency more feasible and attractive, because of weak local policing, or inept and corrupt counterinsurgency practices. Fearon and Laitin use low per capita income as

⁶³ Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War" *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper* 2355 (October, 2001).

⁶⁴ Fearon and Laitin, 2003.

the proxy of police and counterinsurgent weakness. They claim that insurgency and civil war are more likely in rough terrain, poorly served by roads and at a distance from centers of state power. They also argue that recruiting young men to become guerrillas is easier when the economic alternatives are worse.

Both the Collier-Hoeffler and Fearon-Laitin studies reject the arguments that heterogeneity of the population structure and grievances resulting from discrimination and repression determine the occurrence of civil wars. Their studies are large-N studies; they use data sets of more than 100 countries. Mine is a two-case study. I cannot test their theories with two sets. However, I can illuminate here the relationship between independent and dependent variables in the cases of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in trying to understand which variables might explain the occurrence or non-occurrence of civil war.

When we compare Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in terms of factors stated in above studies such as economic growth, secondary education level of the population (see Table 2.19 for secondary education levels of the population in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan), unemployment among young men and GDP per capita, we cannot find significant differences which might have influenced the outcome. The argument that a large population is more prone to civil war would predict a civil war in Uzbekistan. The argument regarding natural resources would also predict a civil war in Uzbekistan which is richer in natural resources. It has natural gas, gold, uranium, silver, coal, copper, and oil. However, mountainous terrain, which the Collier-Hoeffler study finds to be a weaker relationship, is more predominant in Tajikistan than in Uzbekistan. Ninety-three percent of Tajikistan is mountainous. Yet mountainous terrain is not determinative by itself, as indicated by the situation of mostly peaceful Kyrgyzstan (which is 93 percent mountainous). In terms of political instability, Tajikistan could be considered even more stable in the late 1980's and in 1990-91, as it remained free from large scale violent ethnic conflicts and the purges that swept Uzbekistan,

and with more elite stability. Also in terms of population density, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan do not have such big differences (37.4 percent and 44.4 percent respectively, see Table 2.17, 2.18) although population density is higher in Uzbekistan, especially in the Fergana Valley. By contrast, conflict literature on Central Asia presents this density as a risk factor for the occurrence of violent conflict in the Fergana Valley.⁶⁵ Based on state penetration in the peripheries it can be argued that there was no big difference between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan at the onset. For example, at the beginning of independence some parts of the Fergana region of Uzbekistan were under the control of Islamic movements.

Some explanations stress the role of a dense, rural social structure full of unemployed young men as a factor which makes a country more prone to violent conflict.⁶⁶ However, this was the case for both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan--even more so in the case of Uzbekistan. The social structure and organization of villages was the same in both countries. Islamic organizations operated in rural regions of both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, especially in the Fergana Valley. Unemployment was as high in Uzbekistan as in Tajikistan, if not more so in Uzbekistan (especially among young men in the Fergana region).

⁶⁵ For example see *Calming the Fergana Valley: Development and Dialogue in the Heart of Central Asia*, Report on the Fergana Valley Working Group of the Center for Preventive Action, Preventive Action Reports, Vol.4 (New York: The Century Foundation Press, 1999).

⁶⁶ See: David D. Laitin, "National Revivals and Violence," *Archeology of European Sociology* 36 (1995).

Table 2.17
Population Density by Regions of the Republic of Tajikistan

Region	Area (square km)	Population in 1991	
		Total population (thousands)	Population density (per square km)
Tajikistan total	143.1	5,358	37.4
Badakhshan Oblast	63.7	167	2.6
Dushanbe City	0.1	592	4,672
Khatlon Oblast	24.6	1,781	71.9
Kulyab*	12.0	668	55.7
Qurghonteppa*	12.6	1,113	88.4
Leninabad Oblast	26.1	1,636	62.7
Regions of Republican Subordination	28.7	1,182	41.1
*Components of Khatlon Oblast			
Sources: National Economy of the USSR, 1990 and 1991, <i>Tajikistan Human Development Report</i> , 1995. UNDP			

Table 2.18
Population Density by Regions of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Region	Area (square km)	Population in 1989	
		Total population (thousands)	Population density (per square km)
Uzbekistan total	447.4	19906	44.4
Fergana region (Andijan, Namangan, Fergana)	19.2	5356	278.9
Zarafshan valley (Bukhara, Novai, Samarkand)	166.6	3919	23.5
Mirzachol (Jizzak, Syrdarya)	25.6	1316	51.4
Southern Uzbekistan (Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya)	49.2	2849	57.9
Amudarya region (Karakalpakistan, Khorezm)	171.2	2230	13
Tashkent region (Tashkent oblast, Tashkent city)	15.6	4236	271.5

Source: *Uzbekiston Entsiklopediyasi, 1997.*

Table 2.19
Secondary school enrollment, male (percentage gross)

	1990	1991	1992
Tajikistan	102	100	97
Uzbekistan	104	102	100

Source: World Development Indicators database.

SPECIFIC FACTORS STATED IN THE LITERATURE ON THE TAJIKISTAN CIVIL WAR

The role of Afghanistan

In studies of the Tajikistan civil war, some scholars stress the role of Afghanistan, and the support that Tajikistan's opposition received from the groups in Afghanistan. They argue

that the money, weapons, and manpower that Afghanistan movements provided for Tajikistan's opposition played a major role in the eruption of violence.⁶⁷

Some, such as Foroughi, argue that Soviet involvement in Afghanistan, which exposed future participants in the Tajik civil war to violence, encouraged the outbreak of civil war in Tajikistan. As Foroughi notes, Tajik recruits who were sent into Afghanistan during the invasion were not only exposed to violence but also established links with the Afghan movements.⁶⁸

It is very difficult to measure the availability of third-party support to either rebels or governments *ex ante*. Fearon and Laitin use as a proxy the number of civil wars ongoing in neighboring countries in the previous year, which might be expected to increase the availability of arms, support and guerillas,⁶⁹ but they find insignificant influence of this in their study. Both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are neighbors to Afghanistan. Therefore, the neighboring effect does not differentiate one country from the other.

Although the length of those borders was different (Tajikistan has a much longer border with Afghanistan compared to Uzbekistan), there is no evidence to suggest that this difference was a critical factor at the onset of the war. Also, as some informants reported, there were some border violations from Afghanistan side to Uzbekistan.

Although some accounts suggest that Afghanistan was the origin of most of the weapons used in the Tajik civil war, this was not the case. Only a small proportion of the weapons used in the war actually came from Afghanistan. Most weapons were taken from Russian troops or from KGB or MVD units in Tajikistan. Russian troops were the main provider. Combatants bought weapons from Russian troops. Pointing to weapons from Afghanistan as a cause of war becomes more misleading when we think that the weapons did not come from Afghanistan to Tajikistan until the end of 1992. Until the end of 1992 weapons

⁶⁷ Tadjbakhsh 1993; Foroughi.

⁶⁸ Foroughi.

⁶⁹ Fearon and Laitin, 2003.

were bought, given or stolen from army and police forces within the country. This was the case for both sides of the civil war.⁷⁰

It is true that Afghanistan provided refuge for the United Tajik Opposition after 1993. Tajik opposition forces continued their attacks against the Rahmonov regime from their military bases in Afghanistan. Some people came from Afghanistan to fight on the side of the opposition forces. However, these all occurred after 1993, after the violence had actually started in the country. Until the opposition forces set up camp in the northern regions of Afghanistan, that country provided little help to them. People who came to fight from Afghanistan numbered only around a few hundred. Therefore, these cannot be the critical factors accounting for the emergence of civil war in Tajikistan.⁷¹

If expected international support is an important factor in resurgents' cost-benefit calculations, it can be argued that a resurgent movement in Uzbekistan should have expected to attract the international support that the Tajikistan opposition movement received. There would not be any big difference in these terms between the countries. In Afghanistan, President Rabbani, Gulbeddin Hekmetyar, Ahmad Shah Masud, and the Taleban were mentioned as supporters of the Tajik opposition. However, it would have been realistic for Islamic movements in Uzbekistan also to expect the support of these forces. Indeed, they actually received some: the Islamic groups of Namangani and Yuldashev in Uzbekistan had connections with the forces in Afghanistan. They had the aid of forces in Afghanistan in the

⁷⁰ Author's interviews with political leaders and participants to civil war in Dushanbe. Also see: Muriel Atkin, "Tajikistan: Reform, Reaction and Civil War" in *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, eds., Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 619-620 for the argument that the influence of Afghanistan in the war was very limited and a minority of weapons actually came from Afghanistan. Shirin Akiner, *Tajikistan: Disintegration or Reconciliation?*, (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2001) makes a similar evaluation about the influence of Afghanistan in the civil war in Tajikistan. Also see Muhammad Reza Djalili and Frederic Grare, "Regional Ambitions and Interests in Tajikistan: The Role of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran" in Djalili, Grare and Akiner.

⁷¹ For similar accounts which argue that Afghanistan was not a critical factor at the onset of the war in Tajikistan see: Shahram Akbarzadeh, "Why did Nationalism Fail in Tajikistan?," *Europe-Asia Studies* 48.7 (November, 1996); Georgi Derlugian, "Ethnic' violence in the Post-Communist Periphery," *Studies in Political Economy* 41 (Summer 1993); also see: Atkin, 1997 619-620; Akiner, 2001; Djalili and Grare, 1997.

form of military support, manpower and refuge; and also enjoyed the support of the Uzbek diaspora in Afghanistan.⁷²

In fact, the various Afghan forces were at war with each other. None of the Afghan factions paid much attention to Tajikistan. Therefore, their support to any groups outside Afghanistan remained marginal.⁷³ They were attempting to improve their own positions as well. For example, Ahmad Shah Masud, while supporting the Tajik rebels, seemed in fact to be seeking to improve his own position, so that he could negotiate more effectively with the Russian and Tajik governments with whose support he hoped to overthrow Hekmetyar.⁷⁴ Apart from Russian and Uzbek interference, ‘internationalization’ of the Tajik conflict remained limited. The influence of external actors at the beginning of the war was not that large. External actors became involved after the events had already started. But the role of Uzbekistan and Russia at the end of the war was important. They influenced the result of the war through the support that they gave to ex-Communist forces. The Uzbek and Russian armies assisted the pro-Communist forces during their capture of Dushanbe in November.

Furthermore, like the Tajiks, many Uzbeks from Uzbekistan also served as soldiers in the Soviet army during the Afghan war. Like the Tajiks, many Uzbeks fought with Afghan mujahidin in Afghanistan, and received training in the camps of radical Islamic movements.⁷⁵

It appears that Afghanistan factor did not play a critical role at the onset of the civil war in Tajikistan, and its influence during the war was less than often argued. In terms of external support, there are many similarities between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. External support cannot be shown as a cause of the violent conflict in Tajikistan. This was a factor that came onto the scene after the war actually started.

⁷² For the examples of these relations see: Rashid, 2003.

⁷³ Akbarzadeh, 1996.

⁷⁴ Djalili and Grare, 1997.

⁷⁵ Rashid, 2003, 44.

Soviet Resettlement policies

Olivier Roy names geographical fragmentation, strong regional identities and weak national feeling among the factors which led to civil war in Tajikistan. However, he does not see regional identities merely as remnants of old clan affiliations. On the contrary, he stresses that these were reshaped and restructured by the population displacements of the Soviet period. He emphasizes the collectivization and the role of the *kolkhozes* in the formation of community identity in Tajikistan. According to his argument, through population displacements and the reformation of groups around the *kolkhozes*, the system ‘territorialized’ solidarities. With sedentarization, groups were taken out of their niches and put into competition with other groups. People from different origins came together in a new environment. This led to their identities becoming fixed, and caused them to compete with each other over land. Through sedentarization and forced population transfers, he argues, groups were taken from their ecological niches and placed in contact and competition with other groups; and this led to conflict and then to civil war in Tajikistan.⁷⁶

However, my research in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan suggests that there were no differences between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in terms of settlements. The settlement policies, and their influence on people’s relationships and identities, appear to have been very similar in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In order to see the immigration patterns, and evaluate the effects of population displacements and settlement structure on the civil war, I conducted research in the Qurghonteppa region in Tajikistan. In order to see the effects of the forced immigration policies of the Soviet Union in Uzbekistan I conducted the same research in the Syrdarya region where, similar to the case in Tajikistan, people were taken from their villages and settled in newly established settlements. This part was mostly written with the data

⁷⁶ Roy, 2000; Olivier Roy, “Is the Conflict in Tajikistan a Model for Conflicts Throughout Central Asia” in Djalili et. al., 1997.

gathered in the field. I conducted interviews with people in both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan who lived during the population transfers of Soviet regime in different periods.⁷⁷

In the mid-1920's, the Soviet regime started a new settlement policy with the aim of increasing cotton production, and making the country self sufficient in cotton. To that end it forcefully settled people in the Qurghonteppa region, to work on cotton plantations. The policy of forced migrations in Tajikistan began with the bringing of Uzbeks from the Fergana Valley during the actions taken against the *kulaks* (rich peasants). Beginning in 1925, many such Uzbeks were forcefully brought to the region after being declared kulaks by the Soviet regime. Before these forced migrations, very few people lived in the Vakhsh valley, which was mostly a swamp. Before the settlements, Uzbek nomads like Lokays, Kungrats and Katagan were living in the region. Beginning in 1927, the Soviet regime began to forcefully settle people from mountainous regions to the valley. In the Vakhsh Valley, construction of a large irrigation system began in 1931. From this time, people were brought here to work in canal construction and in cotton cultivation. During the 1930s, people from the Garm and Kulyab regions were brought to Qurghonteppa and settled in collective farms. Forced immigration continued until 1960. In this period people from the mountainous regions of Garm, Kulyab and also from the Pamir continued to be brought to the region. Apart from the nomadic Uzbek tribes, the entire population in Qurghonteppa was composed of resettled immigrants from Garm, the Pamirs, Kulyab, the Fergana Valley, and other parts of Uzbekistan.

The reasons people came to the region vary. Some were forced by the government as the result of the forced migration policies. In Garm and Kulyab some villages were entirely emptied and their entire population brought to Qurghonteppa by the government by force. In

⁷⁷ The sample size is 12 people in Qurghonteppa, 14 people in Srydarya. Sample size is not large, because I needed to talk to old people who actually lived through the immigrations themselves. I also conducted research in Academy of Sciences Library in Tashkent about the resettlements during Soviet era in Uzbekistan. I also would like to thank a native researcher who shared the results of his research in Qurghonteppa, Tajikistan with me and should remain anonymous here.

some cases the government told large families that they should send a certain number of their members to the Vakhsh valley, and it was up to the family to decide which ones. But some people reported that they came of their own will, because they expected life in the valley to be better than life in their own village. In addition, the Soviet government implemented some policies encouraging people to come to the region. For example, it offered two hectares of land to those who moved to the valley. Many came for the opportunities provided by newly-opened land for cultivation. There were also people who came to escape punishment by changing their location.

The majority of the collective farms that people were settled into were homogenous in terms of regional origin. People coming from the same region were settled in one village. Many villages were composed mainly of people coming from the same region, with only a small minority of people from another region. For example, where a majority of the village was from Garm, there was usually a minority from Kulyab, and vice versa. People in Qurghonteppa lived in homogenous villages. If the great majority in one village was from Garm, the majority in another village was from Kulyab. There were also entirely Uzbek villages. The majority of villages in Qurghonteppa were ethnically and regionally homogenous. Some villages were heterogeneous in terms of the regional origin of their inhabitants. In these mixed villages the population composition was roughly 50 percent from Garm and 50 percent from Kulyab or others. But these cases were very few. Only approximately 20 percent of all villages in the region were like this. Other villages were homogenous, composed of a majority from one region or ethnic group, and a small minority from another region or ethnicity.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Author's interview with a native researcher who conducted a research in the region of Qurghonteppa on the demographic composition of villages, January 2004, Qurghonteppa, Tajikistan.

Villages were not very far from each other--often only one kilometer apart. The population in towns was mixed in terms of regional origin and ethnicity. People from all ethnic and regional groups lived together in towns.

The settling of people from the same region in the same villages was partly the choice of the people themselves. People preferred to live with their relatives, countrymen and the people they knew and from whom they could get help. In some cases people who were originally settled in one village moved to another in order to be with the people they knew. The people who came from the same region chose to live together with people from their own region.

People who came during the implementation of resettlement policies maintained their regional identities over the following decades. As one informant in Qurghonteppa put it, “Even members of the third generation still identify themselves with their grandparents’ origin. Even members of the third generations do not say ‘I am from here, from Qurghonteppa.’ They say where their ancestors came from.”⁷⁹ Even today, people not only know where their grandparents came from, but also know where others’ ancestors came from. People know who came from where down to their villages. For example, in response to questions about place of origin, answers would not be as vague as “Karategin region,” but would name specific places such as Tavildara, Hayit, Tajikabad etc., (all in Karategin region); likewise, those from Kulyab would name Baljuvon, Soviet, Kangurt, etc.

When asked if there were parts of the Valley which remained outside of the clashes during the civil war, people noted that villages whose inhabitants were more or less evenly split in terms of regional origin were less involved. They said it was mostly majority-minority villages that were involved in the civil war. Mixed villages mostly remained outside of the violence as long as they could. When the clashes intensified, they were forced to become

⁷⁹ This is not the case only in Qurghonteppa as an immigration region, but for all Tajikistan including the capital. Author’s interviews in Dushanbe, 2004.

involved. Only one or two villages in Qurghonteppa were able to sustain this neutral position during the course of war. Also in towns where the population was mixed in terms of population, there were no clashes at the beginning. Some informants reported that in evenly split villages, when the Kulyabi fighters came, the Kulyabi members of the kolkhoz talked to them and convinced them not to attack their village. When Garmi fighters came, the Garmi members of the village did the same thing. In this way they were able to remain outside of the fighting for a long time.

The situation in Syrdarya in Uzbekistan is quite similar. Policies implemented and structures established in the kolkhozes during the Soviet period were the same. Syrdarya region, which was called Mirzachul (“Hungry Steppe”), was a desert before the settlements began.⁸⁰ The native population of the region was Kazakh nomads. The settlements started in 1925 in Syrdarya. First, people were brought from mountainous regions. During the 1930s, people who were declared *kulaks* were sent to this region to cotton plantations. In the 1930s, many Uzbeks from the Fergana Valley began to come to Syrdarya. During the 1940s, both Uzbeks and Tajiks came from the Dushanbe and Leninabad regions of Tajikistan. Beginning in 1956, during the “Virgin Lands” campaign of the Khrushchev era, a mass population transfer speeded up development of the desert, which was turned into an agricultural area. Settlement continued in the 1960’s. The whole region became a cotton plantation to which people from various regions came and settled. People came from Fergana, Andijan, Samarkand, Jizzak, Bukhara, Khorezm, Tashkent, Kokand and Namangan to work in kolkhozes in Syrdarya.

As in Tajikistan, the new arrivals were settled in kolkhozes with their place of settlement decided by the authorities. Similar to the situation in Tajikistan, immigrants had

80 For a history of the kolkhozes and sovkhoses in Uzbekistan see the multiple volume work under the name of *O'zbekiston Kolkhoz va Sovkhozlari Tarikhi*. For the memories of people who came during the resettlements see *Khayot Sahifalari: O'zbekiston Qishloq Khojalik Veteranlarining Khotiralari* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1983). Also see: A.F. Abdunabiev, *Mirzachulni Uzlashtirish Tarihidan* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1959).

various reasons for coming. Many people were forcefully brought by the government, and some came voluntarily. In some cases a whole village, and in some cases a part of one, was forcefully taken from their territories and settled in the steppe. One informant reported that because conditions were very difficult, some wanted to return to their native villages, but the government did not let them. Some people came of their own will, following relatives. Some thought that because conditions in their own village were very bad, coming to newly opened regions would raise their living standards. The government was also providing benefits to the newcomers. They were exempt from taxes for five years. Living with people from the same village was also the wish of the people themselves. When they were settled into kolkhozes separate from their relatives, many people looked for them and tried to live with them.

As in Qurghonteppa, people in Syrdarya lived in homogenous kolkhozes, and the majority of kolkhozes were ethnically and regionally homogenous. There were, for example, Tajik, Korean and Tatar kolkhozes. Most were also homogenous in terms of members' region of origin. People who came from the same region were settled together in the same kolkhoz. There were some mixed villages as well, but they were the minority. In the town center people were mixed ethnically and regionally. As in Tajikistan, the distances between kolkhozes in Syrdarya were often only a kilometer or so. Thus in both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, people were taken from their regions of origin, and in the majority of cases put into homogenous kolkhozes in a region which was very heterogeneous ethnically and regionally.

As in Tajikistan, people in Uzbekistan still remember where their families and others came from. All the people whom I talked to knew exactly where various families came from—not only the region but the names of the villages. They give the names of the villages rather than the oblast names. For example, when asked where they or others are from, they

mentioned names such as Zamin, Bahmal, Sentab, and Farish (in Samarkand oblast), Begovat (in Tashkent oblast), and Besharik and Baghdad (in the Fergana Valley).

There seems to be no difference between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in terms of settlement patterns. We can conclude that it was not settlement policies which caused the civil war in Tajikistan. These settlements, and their influences on people's identities and relationships, appear to be very similar in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. If it were settlement policies which caused the war in Tajikistan, we could rightfully expect similar developments in Uzbekistan as well. Therefore, the argument which presents the settlement policies as a reason of civil war in Tajikistan cannot be upheld.

Basmachi

Reacting to the Bolshevik invasion and the brutal destruction by the Bolshevik army of Kokand's autonomy (which dated back to 1918), a guerrilla movement known as *basmachi* gained strength in much of Central Asia. Its participants were conservative elites who sought the restoration of the old order, although there were a few *jadids* among the participants. Some scholars have emphasized the legacy of the *basmachi* movement as a factor which contributed to the eruption of civil war in Tajikistan. However, the *basmachi* movement was influential, not only in Tajikistan, but in many other parts of the region, including Uzbekistan. One of the strongholds of the *basmachi* movement was the Fergana part of Uzbekistan. Long after anti-Soviet activity was ended in other republics, the *basmachi* revolt against the Soviet authority continued in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan throughout the 1920's and into the early 1930's.⁸¹

Although there are many similarities between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, Tajikistan had a civil war and Uzbekistan did not. Many factors used to explain civil war in Tajikistan existed in Uzbekistan as well. Therefore these factors cannot explain the different outcomes.

⁸¹ See: *The Basmachi Movement in Soviet Central Asia (A Study in Political Development)* (Peshevar: Emjay Books International, 1985); Martha Bill Olcott, "The Basmaci or Freemen's Revolt in Turkestan, 1918-24," *Soviet Studies* 33.3 (July 1981).

CHAPTER THREE

Political Power Networks

This chapter discusses the role of elite networks in the politics of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In both countries, these networks are regionally based. Regional identities were not Soviet-era creations, but had been important to both the people and the political elites in these territories during the pre-Soviet period. However, they acquired the meaning and the structure they have today as a result of Soviet policies.

Soviet state policies of collectivization, cadre management, and recruitment reinforced and politicized regional identities, leading to the continuation and strengthening of regionally-based political power networks in both republics.¹ However, different regional policies in the two republics created different elite structures. Soviet policies in Tajikistan allowed cadres from one region to dominate. In Uzbekistan, by contrast, three more-or-less equally powerful elite networks emerged. This would later become an important factor which influenced elite behaviors in two countries differently, and contributed to the different outcomes in terms of the presence or absence of violent conflict. This chapter will argue that regional identities and loyalties, while important, are not the only factor in the formation of elite networks. Furthermore, it is critical to distinguish these political power networks from what the scholarly and journalistic literature often refers to as “clans.”

¹ See: Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*, (New York: New York University Press, 2000) and Pauline Jones Luong, *Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Power, Perceptions and Pacts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

REGIONAL IDENTITIES IN TAJIKISTAN AND UZBEKISTAN

Since Barthold, the literature on Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (or the territories corresponding to them) has long affirmed region as one of the most significant determinants of identity.² The ancestors of today's Tajiks and Uzbeks were mostly sedentary. Many Uzbeks who had previously led a nomadic life became sedentary after the 16th century. As sedentary societies, they developed an allegiance to the land they inhabited—in contrast to the traditionally nomadic Kazakhs and Kyrgyz peoples, whose loyalty was to ancestry, i.e., to their tribes and clans. Pre-Soviet loyalties and traditional identities based on locality continue to determine identity in present-day Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Today, people from different regions of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan see themselves as different from one another. People from different regions (but the same ethnic group) differentiate themselves through dialect, physical appearance, traditions, and customs.³ Informants from both countries stated that even after three generations, they identify with the region of their paternal grandfather's origin. Popular belief holds that in order to identify with a region, one's ancestors must have lived there for at least three generations. When asked where they are from, people generally give their grandfather's place of origin rather than their own birthplace, when these are different. This is true of both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.⁴

People in both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan claim the ability to distinguish between the accents of people from different regions, and thus identify a speaker's place of origin.⁵ Regions in both countries have their characteristic dialects. Also, outlying villages may have

² See: V.V. Bartol'd, *Istoriia Kulturnoi Zhizni Turkestana* (Leningrad: Izd vo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1927); also see: V.V. Bartol'd "Sart," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed., vol. 4.

³ Author's interviews in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan both with ordinary people and native sociologists, July 2003-February 2004. Also see the Chapter 2 in this dissertation.

⁴ Based on author's experiences in the region and on interviews with researchers and sociologists in Tashkent, Dushanbe and Qurghonteppa.

⁵ Author's interviews in Fergana Valley, Samarkand and Tashkent in Uzbekistan and in Dushanbe and Qurghonteppa in Tajikistan, July 2003-February 2004.

dialects which are different from the dialect spoken in town. However, many people are capable of affecting different accents, or speaking in a more literary form.

Most people seem to accept ancestral origin more readily than dialect as an identity. One informant in Tajikistan said that he considered himself a Garmi his whole life. His mother was from Garm. His father was from Khujand, but left the family when my informant was a baby and never returned. This informant told me that majority of his close friends were Garmis. But when the war started in Tajikistan, he was crestfallen to learn that they did not consider him to be “one of them,” i.e., he was considered a Khujandi, not a Garmi.

“Which region are you from?” is a very common question, both in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. People ask this of each other very freely. Although people in Tajikistan say that it became a more sensitive question after the war, it is still asked often, if not as freely or as early in the conversation as before.

Regional identities are determined not only by greater regions, but also by smaller localities. For example, an individual from Besharik (a town near Kokand, in Uzbekistan’s Fergana oblast) will identify himself / herself as being from Besharik, not from Kokand or Fergana.⁶ People from the Leninabad oblast say (for example) that they are from specific subregions such as Urateppa or Isfara, while people from Kulyab region will specify Baljuvon, Dangara, etc.⁷ Of course such identities are situational, and will change from situation to situation. The same person might sometimes be “from Besharik” and sometimes “from Fergana.” In the same way, one might be “from Dangara” in one situation and “from Kulyab” in another.

Great differences, especially cultural differences, are claimed for the people of different regions. For example, one informant from Fergana said of people from the

⁶ Author’s interviews with people in Besharik, Kokand and Fergana, in Uzbekistan, September 2003.

⁷ Author’s interviews with people in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, January 2004.

Samarkand-Bukhara and Khorezm regions, “They live in deserts. I do not understand their poems and songs. We do not feel the same things. They are far away and alien.”

Regional allegiances are reflected among young people in terms of social behavior, group conflict, and marriage. Some informants reported that in universities, students from the same region tend to eat and drink together, and live together in dormitories. Groups of young people from different regions occasionally fight with each other. Informants reported that spouses are also generally chosen from among people from the same region.⁸

This identification with region of origin continues when people move far away. For example, Uzbeks who went to Siberia to work during the Soviet period defined themselves according to their region of origin, e.g., as *Samarqandlik* or *Farghonalik*.⁹ They socialized with people from the same region, and supported each other in their new location.¹⁰ The same phenomenon can be observed among Tajiks in Russia, who make use of regionally-based mutual-support networks in order to go to Russia, find work and accommodation, register, and so on.¹¹

A number of questions in my questionnaire attempted to determine the relationship between regional identity and political identification. These questions included: Do you think that people from this region would benefit more if a person from this region was elected president (or named as presidential advisor, prime minister, minister, etc.)? Do you think the people from the president’s region benefit more than people from other regions of the country? Do you think that there are enough people from this region in the government in

⁸ Author’s interviews with university students and university professors in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

⁹ The suffix –lik means in Uzbek –from. Samarkandlik means from Samarkand, Ferganalik means from Fergana and so on. In Tajik the suffix which causes the same meaning is –i, such as Samarkandi, Kulyabi, Garmi, etc.

¹⁰ Author’s interview with a native sociologist and researcher in Tashkent, July 2003.

¹¹ Author’s interview with two native sociologists who conducted research on immigrants from Tajikistan to Russia, Dushanbe, January 2004. Also see Saodat Olimova and Igor Bosc, *Labor Migration from Tajikistan*, (Dushanbe, Tajikistan: International Organization for Migration, July 2003).

Tashkent? Which is more important to you: to support a politician from your region, or to support a politician with good abilities from a different region?¹²

I asked these questions to 17 people in Andijan, 14 in Kokand, 21 in Fergana, 7 in Namangan, and 18 in Samarkand. (See table 3.1 for the responses.) They included local elites, local politicians, academics, NGO leaders, aksakals (*mahalla* leaders), and also some ordinary people. In their answers to these questions, some people in the Fergana Valley stated that it would be better for the region if there were more people from their region in the central government in Tashkent. They think that Samarkand benefits more from government services. However they also tend to think this is normal, because the president is from Samarkand, and many representatives in the government are from Samarkand and Tashkent, and thus they benefit more. As one informant in Fergana said, “Samarkand benefits more, but this is natural. Since the president is from Samarkand, of course he will benefit his region more.”

However, many people also responded that it does not matter for them if there are many people from their region in the government, because when people become ministers or prime ministers they enter into the government system. Politicians think about their own benefit, not that of the region. Some also said it does not matter who is in Tashkent in the government, because politicians agree to everything the president says. One informant in Andijan said:

If you ask me, it would be good if there were more people from Andijan in government positions, and if there were more people from Andijan around the president. But the most important matter in Uzbekistan politics is the problem of people in important posts using their positions for their own benefit. They issue laws for their own benefit. If I come to a post, I will recruit people from Andijan. But if they do not work well I will recruit people who are good and work well. I will recruit people with good abilities irrespective of their region.”

¹² I adapted some questions of the survey conducted by Posner to understand the perceptions and attitudes towards the role that identity plays in politics. See: Daniel Nolan Posner, *The Institutional Origins of Ethnic Politics in Zambia*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Harvard University, November 1998.

Another informant in Kokand said, “If there were many people from Kokand in the government, I do not think that the situation would change. When people become ministers or the prime minister, it is not important where they are from. Once they enter into the system, there is no difference between politicians from Kokand or from other regions.” Another informant in Fergana said, “Even if there were more people from Fergana, if they are not interested in our problems, it does not mean anything that they are from Fergana. If they say ‘yes’ to everything and approve policies—and this is just the situation right now—they are of no use, no benefit. Usmonkhojaev was from Fergana, but what was his benefit to Fergana, to the people of Fergana? Nothing.”

The respondents who said they would support a candidate from their region and the respondents who said they would prefer a candidate with good abilities were almost equally divided. Many also said they would look for both regional origin and good abilities in a politician.

In Samarkand, I asked informants if they thought people in this region benefit more, since the president is from Samarkand. 12 people said ‘no’, and only 6 people said ‘yes’. The answers were surprising. I was expecting more people to say yes, but many people in Samarkand responded to this question with complaints. Many said that Samarkand is very expensive; that the factories are not working; that there are not enough jobs. One informant stated that “the situation is very hard here. Uzbekistan is expensive. The borders are closed. Kazakhstan is cheap, food is cheap there. But government does not let us go there. They want Uzbeks dead. Many people from Samarkand go to other countries to work.”

Another informant said “The fact that the president is from Samarkand is of no advantage to us. He brings no benefit to Samarkand. Tashkent developed a lot after independence. There is no change, no development in Samarkand. They built only one hotel and named it the President Hotel. That is the only new thing!”

Based on these findings it is hard to make a strong case for a connection between regional affiliation and political identification. These answers may reflect a lack of trust in the political system, in the functioning of the democratic regime in their countries, and a lack of belief that their choice and vote and support of a candidate will make a difference. It may also show a lack of trust in the politicians.¹³

Table 3.1
Responses to survey on regional identity and political identification relationship

	Andijan	Kokand	Fergana	Namangan
Do you think that people from this region would benefit more if a person from this region was elected president (nominated president's advisor, prime minister, minister)?	Yes 7 No 9 No difference 1	Yes 8 No 3 No difference 3	Yes 9 No 8 No difference 4	Yes 5 No 2
Do you think the people from the president's region benefit more than people from other regions of the country?;	Yes 10 No 7	Yes 11 No 3	Yes 15 No 6	Yes 6 No 1
Do you think that there are enough people from this region in the government in Tashkent?;	Yes 7 No 10	Yes 2 No 10 No difference 2	Yes 5 No 16	Yes 0 No 7
Which one is more important for you: to support a politician from your region or to support a politician with good abilities from a different region?	From my region 3 Good abilities 5 Both 9	From my region 3 Good abilities 3 Both 8	From my region 7 Good abilities 8 Both 6	From my region 2 Good abilities 2 Both 3

However, regional identity is still significant. Beginning from the *qishloqs* and *mahallas*, continuing through the contacts established among people from the same region

¹³ I asked these questions to my informants first in the Fergana region of Uzbekistan, where according to many reports, recently began to lose the status it once had as one of the dominant regions in politics of the country. I could not find a meaningful correlation between regional identity and political identification in informants' answers. I continued to ask these questions to my informants in Samarkand, however, answers were similar to ones in Fergana and the majority of people were very much complainant of the current situation and stated that Karimov's being from Samarkand was not influencing their situation in a good way.

and reaching to higher levels in politics, these regional relationships form the basis for support networks.¹⁴ A majority of informants answered the question “In which area does regionalism show itself most clearly?” with “recruitment for work.” They also acknowledged other factors which play a role in recruitment, such as “gifts” or bribes, and whether the applicant or his family is in a position to provide some service in return. Many informants reported factors such as these as being widely considered during recruitment.

Political figures, like ordinary people, agree that recruitment (in their case, recruitment to politically and economically significant posts) is the most common area in which regionalism plays a role. Regional identity works as a network-building factor among political elites. The majority of informants among political actors in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, including government and political leaders, stated that regionalism is important in the political life of their countries—especially in the allocation of government positions, and other political and economic posts. The majority of politicians interviewed said that region is taken into consideration in the allocation of posts in politics. In recruitment to these posts there are informal quotas for people from different regions. They said that the government tries to keep a balance among regions, although there are hierarchies among regions, with some groups being stronger. These groups are in competition with each other. The informants reported that this was the same during the Soviet era as well. I will discuss this feature of the politics in both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in detail below.

¹⁴ See: Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*, (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

REINFORCEMENT OF REGIONAL IDENTITIES AND FORMATION OF ELITE NETWORKS BY SOVIET POLICIES

Although (as noted above) regional identities existed prior to Soviet power, Soviet policies transformed their significance by politicizing regional allegiances. Regionalism in these countries does not represent a continuation of traditional social structures into modern times. Rather, it is a product of the interactions between Central Asian societies and the Soviet system. Soviet policies resulted in the emergence of cleavages in the republics, and in the formation of political cleavages and networks among the political elite.

Such policies included:

Collectivization policies: Soviet policies of collectivization and forced settlement aimed at aiding cotton production contributed to the rural character of society in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. This influenced the preservation of traditional social structures and values in society. Soviet policies toward the particular structure of village life contributed especially significantly to regionalism in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Regional identities were maintained within the kolkhoz.¹⁵ The kolkhoz structure, and the relations it brought, were the same in both republics. People mostly lived in kolkhozes, which were composed of population from the same region. The kolkhoz structure contributed to the strengthening of regional identities. The people maintained their regional identities through the kolkhozes, in which they lived together with people from the same region.

The kolkhoz was the main source of its members' work, social welfare and social services, income, irrigation, and housing. The Soviet system gave the *brigadirs* (kolkhoz brigade leaders) immense powers within the kolkhoz they directed. The *brigadirs* had control

¹⁵ See: Roy 2000.

over the economic resources in the kolkhoz, and the power to distribute these resources as they wished. They enjoyed the sole authority to distribute benefits to the people in the village. The *brigadirs* were also responsible for meeting the agricultural production quotas set by the state, and mobilizing *kolkhozniks* (kolkhoz peasants) to achieve this aim. My informants mentioned the forcefulness of kolkhoz leaders. They could even use physical force against the people who did not obey their orders. In this way, by controlling the benefits and their distribution, they were able to maintain control over the population within their kolkhoz. They used the distribution power under their control in order to create clients, and thus to build support. They also established connections in the party through network relationships.

Informally, the kolkhoz continued to provide protection and support for its members after they left the kolkhoz. When they moved to cities, former kolkhoz members received support (e.g. assistance in finding employment and accommodation, or help in times of difficulty) from a network of other former members of the same kolkhoz, as well as the kolkhoz *brigadir*'s Party connections.¹⁶

The territorial-administrative divisions within the republics: As a part of its territorial-administrative structuring, the Soviet regime divided Uzbekistan and Tajikistan into regions. The new territorial-administrative system strengthened regional identities for ordinary people as well as political elites. It contributed to their politicization and persistence.

Today's Uzbekistan has five main regions: Tashkent, Fergana, Samarkand-Bukhara, Kashkadarya-Surkhandarya, and Khorezm-Karakalpakistan.¹⁷ Uzbekistan was created during the national delimitation of the Soviet Union in 1924 from the parts of the Turkestan oblast, the Bukharan Emirate and the Khivan Khanate. The Bukhara Emirate became a Russian

¹⁶ Author's interviews with kolkhozniks and former kolkhozniks and two native sociologists in Tajikistan. Also see Roy 2000.

¹⁷ See: Donald Carlisle, "Power and Politics in Soviet Uzbekistan: From Stalin to Gorbachev," in *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation*, ed., William Fierman (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991).

protectorate in 1868. Khiva was invaded in 1873 and became a Russian protectorate as well. The Kokand Khanate was dissolved after the Russian conquest, and it became the Turkestan Governorship under the administration of a Russian governor. In 1918, after the Bolshevik Revolution, the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was established in the territories of the Turkestan Governorship. In 1920 the Bolsheviks conquered the Bukharan Emirate, and established the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic in October of that year. In the territories of the Khivan Khanate, the Khorezm People's Republic was established. During the 1924 national delimitation, most of the Khorezm People's Republic remained in Uzbekistan, while the Bukhara Emirate and Turkestan oblast were divided between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The territory of today's Bukhara and Kashkadarya-Surkhandarya oblasts were parts of the Bukharan Emirate, whereas Tashkent, Fergana, and Samarkand were parts of the Turkestan oblast. The territory of today's Khorezm and Karakalpakistan were within the Khivan Khanate.

The territorial-administrative structure of the republic established by the Soviet regime was more or less in conformity with the traditional divisions among regions in Uzbekistan. Tashkent, Fergana and Khorezm were established as oblasts. Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya, Bukhara and Samarkand became separate oblasts. Andijan and Namangan were established as separate oblasts within the Fergana Valley later, and Syrdarya was a separate oblast as well. Although some changes were made to this structure since the establishment of the republic, the basic territorial-administrative structure was preserved in Soviet Uzbekistan.¹⁸ (For the territorial-administrative structure of Uzbekistan and the changes to it throughout the years see Table 3.2)

¹⁸ See: S.K. Abdurazakov, *Administrativno-Territorialnoe Ustroistvo Uzbekskoi SSR* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan 1987).

Table 3.2 The administrative-territorial structure of Uzbekistan

Turkestan ASSR (1920-1924)	Uzbek SSR (1925)	Uzbek SSR (1926)	Uzbek SSR (1938)	Uzbek SSR (1941-3)	Uzbek SSR (1960-3)	Uzbek SSR (1973)	Uzbek SSR 1988-90
Bukharan People's Republic	Zaravshan Oblast	Bukhara Okrug Urta-zaravshan Okrug	Bukhara Oblast	Kashkadaria Oblast Surkhandaria Oblast	Kashkadaria Oblast Surkhandaria Oblast	Bukhara Oblast Navoi Oblast ^a	Kashkadaria Oblast Surkhandaria Oblast Bukhara Oblast
Samarkand Oblast	Samarkand Oblast	Samarkand Okrug	Samarkand Oblast	Samarkand Oblast	Samarkand Oblast	Samarkand Oblast Jizzak ^b Oblast	Samarkand Oblast Jizzak Oblast
Syrdarya Oblast	Tashkent Oblast	Tashkent Okrug Khujand ^c Okrug	Tashkent Oblast	Tashkent Oblast	Tashkent Oblast Syrdarya Oblast	Tashkent Oblast Syrdarya Oblast	Tashkent Oblast Syrdarya Oblast
Khorezm People's Republic	Khorezm Oblast	Khorezm Okrug	Khorezm Oblast	Khorezm Oblast	Khorezm Oblast	Khorezm Oblast	Khorezm Oblast
Fergana Oblast	Fergana Oblast	Andijan Okrug Kokand Okrug Khujand Okrug	Fergana Oblast	Andijan Oblast Namangan Oblast Fergana Oblast	Andijan Oblast Fergana Oblast	Namangan Oblast Fergana Oblast	Andijan Oblast Namangan Oblast Fergana Oblast

^aNavoi Oblast was created in April 1982 from parts of Bukhara and Samarkand oblasts. In September 1988, the entire oblast was merged with Samarkand oblast.

^bJizzak Oblast was created by Rashidov during his tenure as first secretary in order to provide an extended base of patronage for his home district. It was abolished in the 1980s after his death and indictment on corruption charges, then later restored under President Karimov, who is also from the Samarkand oblast.

^cKhujand became part of the Tajik SSR in 1929.

Source: Pauline Jones Luong, *Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Power, Perceptions and Pacts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.85.

Tajikistan was established from the parts of the Bukharan Emirate and Kokand Khanate. After the dissolution of the Kokand Khanate, its territories came under the administration of the Turkestan governorship; parts which belonged to the Bukharan Khanate continued to be ruled by the Emir as a Russian protectorate. After the Bolshevik revolution, today's Tajikistan came under the rule of the Turkestan oblast and the Peoples' Republic of Bukhara.

The Khujand region of today's Tajikistan was a part of the Turkestan oblast, while other parts were under the administration of the Bukharan Emirate. After the delimitation of

the Badakhshan region along the Panj River between Russian and British armies in 1895, Gorno-Badakhshan became a part of the Russian Empire. In 1925 the Pamir region became an autonomous oblast within the Tajikistan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, under the name of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO).¹⁹ During the national delimitation implemented by the Soviet regime, Tajikistan was first given the status of an autonomous republic within the newly created Uzbekistan Soviet Socialist Republic in 1924. On June 22, 1929 Tajik ASSR was transformed into a Union republic. The Khujand region, which had not originally been part of the Tajik ASSR, was added to the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic.²⁰

Upon its establishment as a full Union republic in 1929, Tajikistan included Khujand, Urateppa, Penjikent, Hissar, Dushanbe, Garm, Qurghonteppa, Kulyab and Gorno-Badakhshan as oblasts.²¹ This structure was based on more-or-less traditional divisions among the sedentary society of Tajikistan, whose members defined themselves according to locality. Khujand was a separate region, Penjikent and Urateppa were separate areas for the regional loyalties of their inhabitants, and Gorno-Badakhshan, Qurghonteppa, Garm, Kulyab and Hissar were historically different regions.²²

Obkom first secretaries' control over appointments and resources in their oblasts: In the Soviet system, the Communist Party structure was organized territorially. Oblasts were the main administrative units. Under them were cities, rayons and villages. At each administrative

¹⁹ Teresa Rakowska Harmstone, *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia: The Case of Tadjikistan* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins Press, 1970) 26.

²⁰ Khojent was named Leninabad in 1936. It was renamed as Khojent again in February 1991. People in Tajikistan still use both names interchangeably to refer to the region and the city. The name Sogd which was given to the region by authorities in August 2000 is not preferred by the public in their references.

²¹ See Rakhim Masov, *Istoriia Topornogo Razdeleniia*, (Dushanbe : "Irfon", 1991) for the national delimitation in Tajikistan also see Abdugani Mamadazimov, *Politicheskaya Istoriia Tadjikskovo Naroda* (Dushanbe: Donish, 2000).

²² See: Muzaffar Olimov and Saodat Olimova, "Regiony Tadjikistana: Proshloe i Nastoiashee" in *Mezhtadjikskii Konflikt: Pu't k Miru* (Moskva: Rossiiskaia Akademiia Nauk. Institut Etnologii i Antropologii, 1998).

level, an appropriate executive body of the party was assigned to “originate policies, distribute tasks, select and distribute personnel, and maintain strict supervision over the execution of its orders.”²³

Within this structure, oblast party committee (obkom) first secretaries held power over appointments and resources in their oblasts. The Soviet territorial-administrative and economic structure vested vast political and economic authority in the regional elites. They were the distributors of political and economic benefits, with the power to appoint or dismiss local officials in their region. The centralized structure of the Communist Party, which gave great powers to a small number of ruling elites, helped consolidate regionally-based networks of elites who were free to promote their “loyal kinsmen.”²⁴ With the disposal of all resources at the hand of local officials, people in decision-making positions used the opportunity to benefit themselves and their friends, families, and others in a position to provide reciprocal benefits.²⁵ Regional leaders used their positions to build loyalty and support in the oblasts. Their positions made them important providers of resources and career advancement. They entered into patron-client relations with the elites in their regions, i.e., with kolkhoz and district leaders and managers of factories. The Soviet system thus created incentives for individuals and elites to invest in patronage relations. In order to have a political role at the republican level, local administrators had to operate within official categories of oblast and rayon. Local elites learned that political and economic benefits and opportunities require status within officially established regions. This created incentives for elites to adopt regional

²³ *Handbook of Central Asia*, Bureau of Social Science Research, Human Relations Area Files Inc. (New Haven, 1956) Vol.III 824.

²⁴ Roland Dannreuther, “Creating New States in Central Asia” *Adelphi Paper* No. 288, (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, March 1994) 13.

²⁵ T.H. Rigby and Bohdan Harasymiw, eds., *Leadership Selection and Patron-Client Relations in the USSR and Yugoslavia* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983) 6.

identities and maintain regional differences. Both elites and the general population had incentives to identify with their regions.²⁶

Elites needed the regions and their status in order to maintain support for themselves. The significance of the Soviet-era territorial-administrative structure for the elite networks and their support bases can be seen in the efforts of dominant factions to make changes to it, with the aim of strengthening their own power bases and breaking the bases of their adversaries. In 1973, Uzbek first secretary Rashidov made his hometown of Jizzak—formerly the town center of a rayon within Samarkand oblast—into a separate oblast, in order to expand the patronage bases of Jizzak elites. But after Rafiq Nishanov came to power in 1988, he abolished the oblast status of Jizzak. It again acquired oblast status in March 1990. In Tajikistan, some claim that the 1993 unification of the Kulyab and Qurghonteppa regions into the Khatlon oblast was a similar effort by the Kulyabi elite to take this cotton-rich region under its control.²⁷

Long-term stability of cadre policies

The stability of cadre policies during the Brezhnev period contributed to the strengthening of regional allegiances, and to the development of region-based networks among political elites. During Brezhnev's leadership, local officials at obkom, gorkom and raykom levels spent their entire careers in the same region. This facilitated development of patronage networks, localism, and personal allegiances within the regions. By serving in the same regions for a long time, political elites strengthened their political power bases. Very few Central Asian

²⁶ Pauline Jones Luong, *Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Power, Perceptions and Pacts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 67; Roy, 2000, 98; for the role of obkom first secretaries see Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970); Jerry Hough, *The Soviet Prefects* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969); for corruption see: James Critchlow, "Corruption, Nationalism and the Native Elites in Soviet Central Asia," *Journal of Communist Studies* 4.2 (1988).

²⁷ Author's interviews with political elites in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

leaders served in Moscow or in other republics. Their primary option was to serve in their own republic.²⁸

Titularization of party and state apparatus in the republics:

Another factor which contributed to the emergence of regional cleavages as important factors in the politics of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and to the formation of elite networks based on regional allegiances, was the titularization of party and state apparatus—i.e. the expectation that Uzbeks would hold leadership positions in Uzbekistan, Tajiks in Tajikistan, and so forth. The increase in the number of titular cadre in the government and state apparatus of the republics (and corresponding decrease in the number of non-titulars) made cleavages within the titular groups more important. The number of non-titular cadres—especially the Russians, who were the major non-native nationality in administration—decreased over time. Towards the last years of the Soviet era, and after the independence of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, the titularization of cadre meant that ethnic cleavages significantly lost their importance in the politics of both countries. Instead, regionalism arose as an important political cleavage among the native political elite.

Titularization increased in the 1960s and 1970s, and this contributed to the flourishing of local patronage networks. The Brezhnev years, which introduced the stability of cadre policies, meant not only that cadres worked in the same oblast and positions for a long time, but in effect produced a new version of *korenizatsiia* (indigenization). In Uzbekistan, especially during the Rashidov reign, Uzbekization (i.e. the increase in the number and

²⁸ James Critchlow, "Prelude to 'Independence': How the Uzbek Party Apparatus Broke Moscow's Grip on Elite Recruitment in *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation*, ed., William Fierman (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991) 142; and Neil Melvin, "Patterns of Centre-Regional Relations in Central Asia: The Cases of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan" in *Ethnicity and Territory in the Former Soviet Union: Regions in Conflict*, ed., James Hughes and Gwendolyn Sasse (London: Frank Cass, 2002) 170; John Miller, "Nomenklatura: Check on Localism?" in *Leadership Selection and Patron-Client Relations in The USSR and Yugoslavia*, eds., T.H. Rigby and Bohdan Harasymiw (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983); Steven L. Burg, "Central Asian Elite Mobility and Political Change in the Soviet Union," *Central Asian Survey*, 5.3/4 (1986).and Luong, 2002, 88.

proportion of Uzbek cadres) of party ranks accelerated. During the early 1930's there was an Uzbekization of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan. At its height, Uzbeks comprised 64 percent of the party membership. However this fell to 47 percent at the end of the 1930's, and during World War II the ratio of Uzbek members in the party was 34 percent. Until 1955 this percent remained low, although it increased compared to the war period. During the Khrushchev and Brezhnev years, an increase in Uzbekization began. In 1960 the percentage of Uzbek party members was 51 percent. In 1981 it was 61 percent. In 1990, Uzbeks accounted for 66 percent of the party ranks.²⁹ (See Figure 3.1)

The situation in Tajikistan was similar. Between 1925 and 1937, Tajiks comprised almost half of the members of the Tajikistan Communist Party. Between the 1940's and 1960's, Tajiks constituted 45 percent of the Communist Party.³⁰ This changed greatly by 1980, when Tajiks were 61 percent of full-time party functionaries in the Tajikistan Central Committee, as well as party committees on the regional, municipal and district level. The percentage of Tajiks in the total population in 1979 was 59 percent.³¹

The titularization of cadres in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan increased even more towards the end of the Soviet period. In Uzbekistan, the data about ethnic patterns in regional and district staff show a great increase in the number of Uzbek cadres from the 1940's to the 1980's.³² In 1986, 71 percent of the newly-accepted members of the CPSU in Uzbekistan were Uzbeks, the total share of Uzbeks in the population of regularly-employed people then being 65 percent. Among the first secretaries of party organs, and chairman of state and public organizations, the share of Uzbeks and other Central Asians was even more marked.³³

²⁹ Donald Carlisle, "Uzbekistan and the Uzbeks," *Problems of Communism* (September-October 1991) 37.

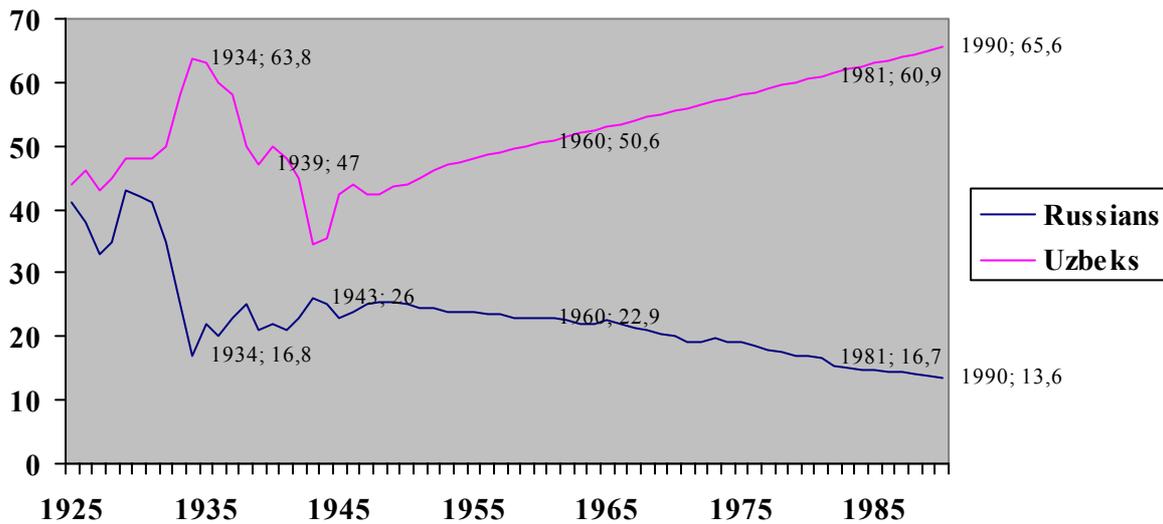
³⁰ Harmstone, 1970, 99.

³¹ Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy towards the Nationalities in the Soviet Union: from Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-Stalinist Society*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 275.

³² see: Michael Rywkin, "Power and Ethnicity: Party Staffing in Uzbekistan (1941/46, 1957/58)," *Central Asian Survey* 4.1 (1985); and Michael Rywkin, "Power and Ethnicity: Regional and District Party Staffing in Uzbekistan (1983/84)," *Central Asian Survey*, 4.1 (1985).

³³ Critchlow, 1991, 139.

Figure 3.1: Percentage of Uzbeks and Russians in the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, 1925-90



Sources: for 1925-79. *Kommunisticheskaya partiya Uzbekistana v tsifrakh* (The Communist Party of Uzbekistan in Figures), Tashkent: “Uzbekistan”, 1979; for 1981, 1986, and 1990, *Partiynaya zhizn’* (Moscow), no.4, 1990, pp.69-73, cited in Donald Carlisle, “Uzbekistan and the Uzbeks, *Problems of Communism*, (September-October 1991).

Moscow’s use of regional cleavages: The Soviet regime also contributed to the development of regional allegiances and networks by appointing and promoting cadre within their own region. In so doing, the regime maintained a balance among regions, and reinforced regional cleavages among elites.³⁴ One important contribution of the Soviet system to the regional identities and regionally-based power networks of elites was the creation of political hierarchies among regions. Some regions in both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were given more economic and political importance by the Soviet regime. This increased the dominance of certain regions in each republic. In Uzbekistan the Fergana, Samarkand and Tashkent oblasts

³⁴ Donald Carlisle, “Islam Karimov and Uzbekistan: Back to the Future?,” in *Patterns in Post-Soviet Leadership*, ed., Timothy J. Colton and Robert C. Tucker (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995); and see Carlisle, 1991.

gained economic and political dominance. The elite from these regions enjoyed greater opportunities for promotion to significant posts than the elite from other regions of the republic. In Tajikistan, although elite from other regions were given important posts in the party and government, Khujandis had the upper hand in appointments to important political posts.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF GOVERNMENT POSITIONS AND PARTY POSTS AMONG THE POLITICAL ELITES ACCORDING TO REGIONAL ORIGIN

In Uzbekistan there have long been three more-or-less equally powerful regionally-based elite networks. This is corroborated in the accounts of those interviewed for this study. Many informants stated that in Soviet times, important positions were shared from cadres from Tashkent, Samarkand, and Fergana. These networks are still valid, although Fergana elites have recently been losing ground relative to the others. However, my informants also claim that regionalism is not the only factor in the formation of elite networks. I agree that an exclusive focus on regionalism is simplistic.

One informant said:

Regional elite groups are strong in politics. Although regional identity is important in the formation of elite groups it is not the only factor. In recruitment, this regional identity is important. If someone comes to a post, he will bring people from the same region to posts. In politics today, power belongs especially to Samarkand and Tashkent, which are rivals. The government keeps a balance between these regions.³⁵

³⁵ Author's interview with one of the prominent parliamentarians in the National Assembly of Uzbekistan. Tashkent, September 2003.

Another said:

Regionalism is strong in Uzbekistan. This comes from the history and geography of the country. There are many differences among regions. Their people look different. Their languages and customs are different. The three regions of Samarkand, Fergana and Tashkent have different histories; they belonged to different historical khanates. They were historically separate. This is reflected in politics as well. Everyone recruits people from his own region if he comes to a post.³⁶

Recruitment to political posts according to regional origin is emphasized in the accounts of other informants as well, including high officials. One of the former advisors in the presidential apparatus said: “Everyone tries to employ people from his own region, and this mentality is influential in politics as well. It influences politics. There are three strong groups: Samarkand, Fergana and Tashkent.”³⁷ Another former advisor stated that: “Regionalism is very strong in Uzbekistan, and it is influential in politics as well. Its influence is seen in recruitment to posts. People are given posts based on their regional origin. Today Samarkand and Tashkent are strong, and the government keeps a balance between different regions”.³⁸

Historically, the earliest leaders of Soviet Uzbekistan were from the Samarkand, Bukhara, Tashkent and Fergana regions. Akmal Ikromov, who was from Tashkent, became the Uzbek Party first secretary in 1925, and Fayzulla Khojaev, from Bukhara, was Uzbekistan’s first prime minister. They maintained their positions until they were sentenced to death in 1937 during the Stalinist purges.³⁹ Yoldosh Okhunboboyev, from Fergana, was president of the Supreme Soviet. He was not purged, and died in 1943.

In the period after the Stalinist purges, the Tashkent and Fergana regions became the main providers of native cadres. Cadres from these regions were brought to important posts in

³⁶ Author’s interview with a local government official from Fergana, Uzbekistan, 2003.

³⁷ Author’s interview with a former advisor in the presidential apparatus in Tashkent, 2003.

³⁸ Author’s interview with a former advisor in the presidential apparatus in Tashkent, 2003.

³⁹ Carlisle, 1995.

the republic party bureau and secretariat. Usmon Yusupov, who was from Fergana, became the first secretary of Communist Party of Uzbekistan in September 1937 after Ikromov. Abdujabbor Abdurahmonov, from Tashkent, became the Chairman of Council of Ministers in 1938. In this period, cadres from Samarkand and Bukhara were appointed only to secondary positions.⁴⁰ Yusupov and Abdurahmonov remained in their posts until 1950, and then they were transferred to Moscow.

In 1947, during Yusupov's tenure, Amin Niyazov (who was from Fergana) became the president of the Supreme Soviet. After this post he became the first secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan from 1950 until 1955. After him, Nuriddin Akramovich Muhiddinov became the first secretary in December 1955. It was Khrushchev who supported Muhiddinov's rise to power. On his return from a tour from Asia, Khrushchev stopped in Tashkent, and had Niyazov removed and Muhiddinov named the first secretary. During the Khrushchev era Muhiddinov rose rapidly to posts that no Central Asian politician had reached before him. He was a candidate member of the Presidium of the CPSU, and a member of the CPSU Secretariat. This suggests a patron-client relationship between Khrushchev and Muhiddinov.⁴¹

Muhiddinov was from Tashkent, as was his successor, Sabir Kamalovich Kamalov, who became first secretary in December 1957. Although cadres from the Tashkent and Fergana regions dominated the top leadership positions in the republic for over twenty years following 1937, this pattern changed with the promotion of Sharof Rashidov, native of Jizzak (Samarkand region), to the post of Communist Party of Uzbekistan first secretary in March 1959.⁴² Rashidov had been Chairman of the Uzbekistan Writers Union in 1949-1950 before his promotion to Chairman of the Supreme Soviet in August 1950. Following his promotion

⁴⁰ Carlisle, 1991, p.103.

⁴¹ See Carlisle, 1991, p.105. Also from author's interviews with native political scientists, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, November 2003.

⁴² Gregory Gleason, "Uzbekistan: from Statehood to Nationhood?" in *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States*, eds., Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 339.

in 1959, he remained first party secretary for 24 years, until his death in 1983, at the beginning years of a new wave of purges. Rashidov was succeeded by Inamjon Usmonkhojaev in November 1983. Prior to his promotion, Usmonkhojaev had not been prominent in republic politics. Although he had served in the All-Union Party Secretariat in Moscow as an instructor 1969-71, he had never served in the secretariat of Uzbekistan.⁴³ He was from the Fergana region, and does not appear to have been at all linked politically with Rashidov. After coming to power, Usmonkhojaev started an anti-corruption campaign and there followed a large purge of the political elite which removed many high-level republic officials.⁴⁴ Just a few years later, however, in January 1988, Usmonkhojaev was himself accused of corruption, and removed from the party leadership. He was succeeded by Rafiq Nishanov, who was originally from Tashkent but had spent most of his career outside of Uzbekistan and was reportedly known as a longtime foe of Sharof Rashidov.⁴⁵ Nishanov's tenure, however, was very short. His removal coincided with the end of the purges in Uzbekistan. He was succeeded as first secretary by Islam Karimov who, like longtime leader Rashidov, was from the Samarkand region.

Although the most important positions in the party and government organs in Soviet Uzbekistan were shared among cadres from Fergana, Tashkent, and Samarkand, the elites from other regions also received a significant share within the framework of various alliance relationships. However, elites from regions other than Fergana, Tashkent and Samarkand were excluded from the top positions, which were rotated among Fergana, Tashkent and Samarkand elites.

⁴³ William Fierman, "Political Development in Uzbekistan: Democratization?" in *Conflict, Cleavage, and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrot, eds., (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁴⁴ Carlisle, 1991.

⁴⁵ Fierman, 1997.

Table 3.3: Native Leadership of Uzbekistan and their birth places

<i>First secretaries</i>	<i>Place of birth</i>	<i>Chairman, presidium of supreme soviet</i>	<i>Place of birth</i>	<i>Chairman, council of ministers</i>	<i>Place of birth</i>
A.Ikramov 1925-1937	Tashkent	Iu.Okhunboboyev 1925-1943	Fergana	F.Khojaev	Bukhara
U.Yusupov 1937-1950	Fergana oblast	A.Muminov 1943-1947 A.Niyazov 1947-1950	No data Fergana	S.Segizbaev 1937-1938 A.Abdurrahmonov 1938-1950	Tashkent Tashkent
A.Niyazov 1950-1955	Fergana	S.Rashidov 1950-1959	Jizzak, Samarkand oblast	A.Mavlianov 1950-1951 N.Muhiddinov (1951-1953) U.Yusupov (1953-1954)	Kazakhstan Tashkent Fergana oblast
N.Muhiddinov 1955-1956	Tashkent			S.Kamalov (1955-1957)	Tashkent
S.Kamalov 1957-1959	Tashkent			M.Mirzaahmedov 1957-1959	No data
Sh.Rashidov 1959-1983	Jizzak, Samarkand oblast	Ia. Nasriddinova 1959-1970 N.Matchanov 1970-1978 I.Usmonkhojaev 1978-1983	Fergana Khorezm Fergana	A.Alimov 1959-1961 R.Kurbanov 1961-1971 N.Khudaiberdiyev 1971-1984	No data Bukhara Jizzak, Samarkand oblast
I.Usmonkhojaev 1983-1988	Fergana	A.Salimov 1983-1986 P.Khabibulaev 1986-1989	Tashkent Samarkand	G.Kadirov 1984-1989	Tashkent
R.Nishanov 1988-1989	Tashkent	M.Ibragimov 1989-1991	No data		
I.Karimov 1989-1991	Samarkand	S.Yoldashev 1991	Fergana	M.Mirkasimov 1991 S.Mirsaidov 1990.office abolished	Tashkent Leninabad, Tajikistan

Source: Demian Vaisman, "Regionalism and Clan Loyalty in the Political Life of Uzbekistan," in *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, ed., Yaacov Ro'i (London: Frank Cass, 1995), p.122.

The political elite structure of Tajikistan was also composed of networks among political elite which had regional bases. In Tajikistan, during the first years of the republic,

senior posts in party and government went especially to Tajiks from Pamir and Garm. Shirinsho Shotemur, a Pamiri, was the first secretary from 1929 to 1930. Between 1930 and 1932 Shirinsho Shotemur was the second party secretary and in the period from 1933-1937 he was the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet. Ibrahim Ismailov, who was the second party secretary between 1932-1934, and Saifullo Abdulloev, second party secretary between 1936-1937, were also from Pamir. Nusratullo Makhsum, the chairman of the Supreme Soviet between 1923-1933, and Munavarsho Shagadaev, the chairman of the Supreme Soviet between 1937-1950, were from Garm.⁴⁶

As in Uzbekistan, leaders of the Communist Party of Tajikistan were accused of bourgeois nationalism in 1937-38 and purged. In the wake of this in October 1937, Moscow appointed a Russian first secretary, Dimitri Zakharovich Protopopov.⁴⁷ After his removal, all first secretaries of the Tajik Communist Party were Khujandis. The first Khujandi Tajik, Bobojon Gafurov, appointed in 1946. The period from Gafurov's ascension to the end of Soviet power saw Khujandi domination of important posts both in the party and government in Tajikistan. Khujandi leaders Tursunbay Uljabayev, appointed in May 1956, and Jabor Rasulov, appointed in 1961. The last two first secretaries, also Khujandis, were Rahmon Nabiev (1981-1985) and Qahhor Mahkamov(1985-1991).

In interviews, many informants in Tajikistan confirmed the Khujandi elite's dominance in government and party organs during the Soviet period. As one informant said, "During the Soviet period, the government practiced regionalism in recruitment to posts. The government was dominated by Khujandis. Everybody was recruiting people from his own region. There were people from other regions as well, but the majority was from Khujand."⁴⁸ Another said: "The state was run by Khujandis. Khujandis were the leaders and they recruited

⁴⁶ Compiled from author's interviews with native political scientists and politicians in Dushanbe in Tajikistan, January 2004.

⁴⁷ Harmstone 1970, p.41

⁴⁸ Author's interview with the head of one of the committees in the parliament in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

other Khujandis.”⁴⁹ An still another stated: “The first secretary, prime ministers, key ministers, finance, economy: these were all from Khujand during the Soviet period. In the 1980s representatives of other regions – Kulyab, Karatekin, Badakhshan – also had representatives in the government, but key ministers continued to be from Khujand. The people from other regions were given mid-level positions; high positions went to Khujandis.”⁵⁰

Table 3.4: The leaders of Tajikistan

First secretary/President	Years in office	Regional origin
Abdukadir Muhiddinov	1924-1929	Bukhara ^a
Shirinsho Shotemur	1929-1930	Gorno-Badahshan
Urunbai Ashurov	1936-1937	Not available
Bobojon Gafurov	1946-1956	Khujand
Tursunbay Uljabaev	1956-1961	Khujand
Jabbor Rasulov	1961-1982	Khujand
Rahmon Nabiev	1982-1985	Khujand
Qahhor Mahkamov ^b	1985-1991	Khujand
Qadriddin Aslonov ^c	September 1991-November 1991	Garm
Rahmon Nabiev	November 1991-1992	Khujand
Akbarsho Iskandarov	November 1992-1993	Gorno-Badahshan
Emomali Rahmonov ^d	1993-	Kulyab

^a Tajikistan was part of Uzbekistan SSR until 1929. Bukhara remained within Uzbekistan when Tajikistan became a separate SSR in 1929.

^b Mahkamov became president after 1990 presidential elections and remained in this position until September 1991.

^c Aslonov became acting president when Mahkamov resigned before the presidential elections.

^d Rahmonov was acting president until November 1994 and became president after this date.

Despite Khujandi domination of the top posts, certain other posts were open to elites from other regions as well. Informants reported that during the Soviet period, in order to keep the balance among regions, there was a practice of appointing people from different regions to important positions.⁵¹ An attempt was made to maintain a balance among people from

⁴⁹ Author’s interview with the deputy chairman of one of the parties in Tajikistan, Dushanbe.

⁵⁰ Author’s interview with an academician in Tajikistan Academy of Sciences in Dushanbe.

⁵¹ Author’s interviews with political actors, government and state officials, party leaders in Tajikistan.

different regions in the party, government and administration. As one informant stated “They [i.e. the Soviet center] were balancing the regions like a scale.”

Kulyabis, Garmis and Badakhshanis were appointed to important posts. Thus, for example, if the Communist Party first secretary was from Leninabad, the Prime Minister was from Kulyab and the speaker of the Supreme Soviet was from Garm or Badakhshan.⁵² The important posts of the chairman of the Supreme Soviet, prime minister, and the chairman of the Communist Party were all mixed among cadres from Badakhshan, Kulyab and Garm. During Soviet times the Tajik prime minister was usually from Kulyab or Garm and the vice prime minister from Badakhshan. The chairman of the Supreme Soviet was from Badakhshan or Garm. The minister of culture was usually from Badakhshan. Especially during the 1950s the number of people from other regions in the state and government organs increased. Tursunboi Uljabaev, first secretary between 1956-1961, appointed people from different regions. For example, Nazarsho Dodkhudoev, from Badakhshan, became the chairman of the Council of Ministers. Mirzo Rahmatov from Garm became the chairman of Parliament.⁵³

During the late 1980's and early 1990's, many people from regions other than Khujand occupied high posts. Narzullo Dustov, the Vice President, was from Badakhshan. Akbarsho Iskandarov, from Badakhshan, was the deputy of the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet. The Vice Prime Minister Buri Karimov was from Garm. Goibnazar Pallaev who was the chairman of Supreme Soviet was from Badakhshan. His successor Qadriddin Aslonov was from Garm. Izatullo Hayoyev, who was Chairman of the Council of Ministers between 1985 and 1990, was from Kulyab. Akbar Mirzaev, Prime Minister in 1991, was from Kulyab. The Kulyabi Mirzashaev was the Minister of Culture.

As we can see, although after 1946 all first secretaries were Khujandis, many other posts shifted among elites who came from Garm, Kulyab, and Badakhshan. Tajikistan was the

⁵² Muriel Atkin, “Thwarted Democratization in Tajikistan” in *Conflict, Cleavage and Change in Central Asia and Caucasus*, eds., Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrot (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁵³ Author's interviews with a deputy minister and a political scientist in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, January 2004.

only republic in Central Asia where there was no alteration among regions for the post of First Secretary.

Differences in Regional Structure between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

Although there were many similarities between the regional policies in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (as detailed above), some differences in regional policies resulted in different elite structures. The regional policies in Tajikistan left cadres from a single region with continuous dominance in the affairs of the republic. By contrast, three regions shared power in Uzbekistan. This would become an important factor influencing the elite behaviors in two countries, and contributing to the different outcomes after independence.

During the Soviet Union, some regions of both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan had economic importance, while others remained behind economically. Moscow assigned higher posts to individuals from regions which were more important economically. Regions less economically-important for Moscow were given lesser political status.⁵⁴ The Soviet regime created hierarchies among different regions in the politics of both republics.

In the case of Uzbekistan, economic development in industry and agriculture was an important factor in the recruitment of cadre from the Tashkent and Fergana regions beginning from the late 1930s. Fergana was important for agriculture because of its fertile land and water resources, and it was the major cotton growing region. Tashkent was significant for industry, because of its location and urban population.⁵⁵ Much of Uzbekistan's industry was located in Tashkent city and oblast.⁵⁶ Samarkand was the capital city of Uzbekistan until 1930 and had fertile land suitable for cotton production. Other regions, less suitable for industry

⁵⁴ Luong, 2002.

⁵⁵ See Igor Lipovsky, "The Central Asian Cotton Epic," *Central Asian Survey* 14.4 (1995). For the economic structure of each region in Uzbekistan see: *Uzbekskaiia SSR Ensiklopediia*, (Tashkent: Uzbekistan 1981) 464-98.

⁵⁶ Gleason, 1993, p.344.

and large agricultural production, were economically less-developed.⁵⁷ Fertile land was scarce in these regions and the population was rural.⁵⁸ Their small economic contribution was a factor which determined their low political importance.

In Tajikistan the Leninabad region was the heart of the Tajikistan economy: it had five out of the nine largest Tajik cities and most of its industrial plants. Moreover, almost 40 percent of the population of the republic lived in the Leninabad oblast.⁵⁹ In 1950, it accounted for 40 percent of the industrial production of the republic and one-fourth of its cotton acreage. It also had the largest textile mills.⁶⁰

Because of its high contribution to the Union economy the elites from the Leninabad region received higher positions in the politics of the republic. According to informants from many different regions, Moscow chose Khujandis as leaders for several reasons. First, Khujand was the most developed part of Tajikistan. In contrast to other areas, which were undeveloped, Khujand had been a city for centuries, and was the most industrialized region. Second, education was more advanced in Khujand. Khujandis were more educated, and knew Russian. Many had gone to Moscow for education.

Informants also stress the importance of Khujand's historical relationship with Russia, and its economic significance for Moscow. They emphasize that Khujand was part of the Turkistan governorship and had long established relations with Russia. Besides being most industrially developed region of the republic Khujand was the most important region of Tajikistan for Moscow because of its importance in the cotton and agricultural production of the country as well. It was the region which made the greatest contribution to republics economy. They emphasize that because of these features of Khujand, Moscow preferred leaders from Khujand.

⁵⁷ Carlisle, 1991.

⁵⁸ A. I. Ishanov, *Rol Kompartii i Sovetskogo Pravitelstva v Sozdanii Natsionalnoi Gosudarstvennosti Uzbekskogo Naroda*, (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1978).

⁵⁹ Harmstone, 1970, pp.47-48.

⁶⁰ Harmstone 1970. p.54.

For example one informant stated that “It was very natural for Moscow to choose Khujandis as leaders. Khujand was good in everything. It was developed, in education; in industry, it had factories, textile plants. There were ready cadres in Khujand. Khujandis had good relations with Russia. Many Khujandis were going to Moscow for their education.”⁶¹

Another informant said:

Khujand was a part of the Turkistan governorship and had long-established relations with Russia. This region was important for Russia for its cotton and agricultural production. It was very rich, and more developed compared with other regions of Tajikistan. Education is more developed and it is an industrial region, it is the most industrially developed part of Tajikistan. During Soviet times 20-30 percent of the GDP was coming from Khujand, now 40 percent of the GDP comes from Khujand region.⁶²

Other informants also made similar statements: “It was the most important region for Moscow; it was the region which made the greatest contribution to the Republic’s economy. That’s why there were a lot of people from this region in the party and government. There were ready cadres in Khujand who were educated and so on. Khujand was an old city. Cities produce elites. In the south there were no ready cadres.”⁶³

The area of the former Stalinabad⁶⁴ and Qurghonteppa oblasts comprised the best cotton growing regions in the republic- the Hissar Valley and the Vakhsh Valley. In the early 1950s the Vakhsh Valley produced 40 percent of Tajikistan’s cotton.⁶⁵ Stalinabad produced 30 percent of the industrial production of the republic.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Author’s interview with one of the vice ministers in Tajikistan, Dushanbe, 2004.

⁶² Author’s interview with one of the prominent Tajik historians, Dushanbe, 2004.

⁶³ Author’s interview with one of the leaders of the Peoples Democratic Party of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, 2004.

⁶⁴ The name of Dushanbe was changed to Stalinabad after the republic became a Union SSR. It was renamed Dushanbe in 1961.

⁶⁵ Harmstone 1970, p.55.

⁶⁶ Harmstone 1970, p.55.

Other regions—Kulyab, Garm, and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast—were less important economically. Kulyab produced a small amount of cotton and had animal husbandry. The Garm region did not produce cotton. The population in the region specialized in growing vegetable, fruit and cereal crops. Garm provided a major share of the agricultural production of the republic in these crops.⁶⁷ Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast was the least suitable of all for economic production, mostly because of its mountainous terrain.

Besides these advantages of Leninabad and its elite, the significance of the dominance of a single elite in Tajikistan, unlike in Uzbekistan, was maintained by differences in the two republics' territorial-administrative structures. This difference was very important in letting Leninabadi elite maintain their dominant position in the republic for years to come without meeting the challenge of any other faction. Whereas oblasts in Uzbekistan maintained their status for a long time, in Tajikistan significant changes to the territorial-administrative system transformed some oblasts into rayons, either within Khujand oblast or under republican jurisdiction. This lowered the status of these regions, weakened the elite from these regions, and made them subordinate to Khujandis. The Khujandi elite maintained their dominant position in Tajikistan by reshuffling the administrative status of other regions. As a result of the loss of their oblast status, the elites from these “demoted” regions could not develop powerful network structures comprising the whole region. They were unable to rival the domination of Khujandi faction in Tajikistan politics.

As described in this section, during the Soviet period there were changes in the territorial administrative borders within both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. However, Tajikistan experienced far more changes to its territorial and administrative structure. In Uzbekistan regions maintained their oblast status. By contrast, in Tajikistan many oblasts lost this status; only Leninabad and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast kept their oblast status the whole

⁶⁷ Aziz Niyazi, “Tajikistan I: The Regional Dimension of Conflict” in *Conflicting Loyalties and the State in Post-Soviet Russia and Eurasia*, ed., Michael Waller, Bruno Coppieters and Alexei Malashenko (London: Frank Cass, 1998) 150.

time. In Uzbekistan, all rayons were under the jurisdiction of a particular oblast. In Tajikistan, changes implemented in the 1950's meant some oblasts were abolished, two former oblasts were taken within the Leninabad oblast, while others were given the status of independent rayons and taken directly under central republican jurisdiction.

In 1929 Tajikistan had nine oblasts: Khujand, Urateppa, Penjikent, Hissar, Dushanbe, Garm, Qurghonteppa and Kulyab oblasts and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast. As Table 3.5 shows, in 1947 Qurghonteppa and Urateppa oblasts were abolished and in 1951 the Dushanbe oblast was as well. In 1955 the Kulyab and Garm oblasts disappeared.⁶⁸ In 1956 only Leninabad and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast remained oblasts. Urateppa and Penjikent were absorbed by Leninabad oblast, while others were given the status of rayons under direct republican jurisdiction. Kulyab became an oblast again in 1973 and Qurghonteppa in 1977.⁶⁹ Kulyab and Qurghonteppa were united in 1988, but divided again in 1989.⁷⁰ In Tajikistan, except for Urateppa and Penjikent, abolished oblasts were given the status of rayons under the republican jurisdiction. They were not transferred to other oblasts, but became independent rayons under republican jurisdiction. This removed one step in the hierarchy and facilitated control of these regions by Dushanbe.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Harmstone, 1970, p.53.

⁶⁹ Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*, (New York: New York University Press, 2000) 98.

⁷⁰ Shirin Akiner, *Tajikistan: Disintegration or Reconciliation?*, (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2001) 15.

⁷¹ See: *Handbook of Central Asia*, Bureau of Social Science Research, Human Relations Area Files Inc. (New Haven 1956) Vol.III, 739-740.

Table 3.5: Tajik SSR, administrative-territorial division

Oblasts/ Rayons	Date of creation	Date of abolition	Date of recreation
Garm	Oct. 27, 1939	Aug. 24, 1955	
Kulyab	Oct. 27, 1939	Aug. 24, 1955	1973
Leninabad	Oct. 27, 1939		
Stalinabad	Oct. 27, 1939	April 10, 1951	
Rayons under republic jurisdiction	April 10, 1951		
Urateppa	Nov. 19, 1945	Jan. 23, 1947	
Qurghonteppa	Betw. 1941-1945	Jan. 23, 1947	1977
Gorno-Badakhshan AO	Jan. 2, 1925		

Source: *Administrativno-Territorialnoe Delenie SSR.*, 1941, 1949, 1954. *Kommunist Tadzhikistana*, 1945 march 14, Dec. 23; 1947 April 27; 1948 Aug. 27; 1950 July 26, 30, Sept. 22, 30; 1951 April 13; 1952 December 26; 1953 Sept 18, 23; 1955 Aug. 26; 1956 Jan. 28. in *Handbook of Central Asia*, Bureau of Social Science Research, Human Relations Area Files Inc. (New Haven 1956) Vol.III, p.736.

These changes to the territorial-administrative system in Tajikistan meant that former oblasts were demoted, and became rayons on a par with other rayons. Once historical regions, they had been given the status of oblasts in the first territorial-administrative structuring, only to now find themselves divided into small rayons, and placed under the jurisdiction of the central administration in Dushanbe.⁷² For example, when the oblast Garm (comprised of Tavildara, Komsomolabad, Tajikabad, Faizabad and Jirgital rayons) was abolished, Garm became a rayon equal to its former rayons. Transformation of some oblasts into rayons under the direct jurisdiction of republican authority brought about the separation and division of these regions. The regions and the elites of these regions were fragmented.

Tajikistan was unique among the Central Asian republics in being subjected to the demotion of oblasts to rayons and subsequent inclusion of some of them under direct republican jurisdiction. The breakdown of the oblast status of regions and their inclusion into either the Leninabad oblast or the direct republican jurisdiction area as rayons weakened the elites from these regions and lessened their power vis-à-vis the Khujandis. This was an

⁷² V.V. Bartold, "O Natsionalnom Razmezhevanii v srednei azii," *Vostok*, 5 (1991).

important difference from Uzbekistan, in which regions protected their oblast status without interruption for a long time.

As explained above, the internal territorial-administrative system of the republics gave incentives to elites to use their resources as the administrators of their regions. In this way they furthered their interests through support networks they established, distributing benefits under their control and using their regional identities as bases of patronage. Their power assumed the separate structure of their region, and their own status within it. When an oblast was broken up, the patronage bases of elite from the regions thus “demoted” diminished. By dividing them into small rayons and making them dependent on central administration, the new territorial-administrative structure prevented their elites from developing large network structures encompassing their regions as a whole. Taking them under either the authority of Khujandi oblast or direct republican jurisdiction allowed the Khujandi elite to gain control in these regions. Since elites from Khujand were dominant in the center as well, Khujandis gained the upper hand with respect to decisions (including appointments) in these regions. According to my informants, it became a problem for the other regions’ elites that Khujandis were appointed to their rayons as administrators.⁷³ Kulyab and Qurghonteppa regained oblast status too late (in the 1970’s) to develop a strong network to rival Khujandis.

As a result of these changes, the previously large area under control of elite from “demoted” regions diminished, together with their benefits and the network structure established with these benefits. In addition, they were under the authority of the republican jurisdiction. Now the elites of these rayons had authority and control in smaller territories, and they remained divided. They became dependent on the central republican administration, which was under the dominance of the Khujandis. The territories under their authority shrank along with their powers and patronage opportunities. Divided, they could not form a network

⁷³ Author’s interviews with political scientists and politicians in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

comprising the whole region and develop a strong network structure and rival Khujandis for republican level posts.

Thus differences in regional administrative structures encouraged creation of different elite structures. The regional structure in Tajikistan left cadres from one region, Leninabad, with greater dominance in the republic's affairs. The other regions were also given posts, but they were weaker in the party and government. In contrast, in Uzbekistan there were three elite networks, all with substantial power. The result was that power was divided more evenly, among elite from Tashkent, Samarkand and Fergana factions.

ELITE NETWORKS: REGION AND BEYOND

In the literature on political power networks in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, some scholars call these groups "clans" and some others argue that regional identity is the only factor in the formation of these networks. In this section I will argue that using the word "clan" for political power networks, and depicting them as based on kinship, is misleading with respect to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. I will also argue that regional identity is not the sole factor in the establishment of political power networks; other factors are also important. These power networks are neither "clans" based on kinship, nor purely regional allegiances.

Because of the factors outlined in the previous section, elite networks have regional bases in both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Regionalism is an important framework for understanding elite networks in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, but should be viewed with some caution. It would be a simplification to view regional identity as the only factor in the formation of elite networks. These networks which have regional bases are not purely affinitive, as described by some scholars in the literature. Although elite networks have regional bases, they cannot be considered as unitary actors. For example, there is not always common interest among political elites from the same region, and it is not always possible to

predict the actions of elites through their regional origin. When conditions change, elite alliances and networks can also change. They are not permanent and fixed categories.

Regional identities and loyalties are not the only factor in the formation of elite alliances; joint interests among actors are also important. When one party does not find a relationship suitable any more, coalitions can be broken. Regional loyalties are not only determined by birthplace; career, work, and educational experiences are also important. This shows the significance of state policies in the development of political networks with regional bases, contradicting the pure “traditionalism” argued by some scholars.

Some scholars claim that elite networks in Central Asian politics are the result of traditionalism, emanating from the customs and traditions of pre-Soviet times. These scholars use the concept of “clan” to explain elite alliances and maintain that kinship is the most important characteristic of “clans.” They stress that regional elites are connected by blood relationships and a common place of birth. They conceptualize networks as clans formed out of blood relations, a collection of extended families, family connections, and relatives by blood and marriage. In the formation of elite networks, which are defined as “clans,” kinship is seen as more important than regionalism, marriage ties or economic alliances. These scholars stress blood relationships and genealogy as the defining characteristics of elite networks, the so-called “clans”.⁷⁴

Clans refer to “unilineal descent groups which unite a series of lineages descended from a theoretical common ancestor, the genealogical links to whom are often either not remembered or who may be purely mythological.”⁷⁵ Members of a clan may have a common name and ancestor and assume that they are related. Actual or assumed, kinship is the defining characteristic of clans. It denotes kin-based divisions and relations.

⁷⁴ For examples see: Demian Vaisman, “Regionalism and Clan Loyalty in the Political Life of Uzbekistan,” in *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, ed., Yaacov Ro'i (London: Frank Cass, 1995); and Kathleen Collins, “Clans, Pacts and Politics in Central Asia” *Journal of Democracy* 13.3 (July 2002); and Kathleen Collins, “The Political Role of Clans in Central Asia” *Comparative Politics* 35.2 (January 2003).

⁷⁵ Thomas Barfield, *The Dictionary of Anthropology*, (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 2000).

Unlike Turkmen, Kyrgyz and Kazakhs, the vast majority of Uzbeks and Tajiks—members of long-settled societies of Central Asia—do not have such a social structure. The Turkmen, Kyrgyz, and Kazakhs have clans and tribes based on kinship lineages. They have a name which is kinship-based, and their clans and hordes are defined by descent. Only Uzbek tribes such as the Loqays or Kongrats have that kind of structure. Clans are connected under a larger structure. For example, Kazakh hordes and Afghan *ulus* are composed of smaller units which come together and form the larger unit of hordes and *ulus*. Some tribes are under one *ulus* and some tribes are under one horde. Hordes and *ulus* connote a structure which is composed of smaller parts which form together the bigger structure of horde and *ulus*.⁷⁶ In the case of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, local units, regions, and subregions are the determinants of identity. People have identities which are locally based.

It is problematic to use the word “clan” for so many different social formations. Some writers stress the solidarity among ordinary people from the same family, from the same kolkhoz and define this relationship as “clan”.⁷⁷ These relations among people at the *qishloq* and *mahalla* level should not be confused with clans. Rather than clannic, these relations are regional, based on identities which are locally based. People who have moved from one region to another nevertheless maintain a sense of belonging to their region of origin. They usually live in the same *mahalla* in the new town. Although these relations are not necessarily political, they are frequently the basis for various sorts of assistance. When a person from one region needs a job or help in another matter, he is likely to go to a well-connected fellow countryman. Many people reported that everybody tries to employ people from their own region. These networks may connect with each other in this sense, from kolkhozes to region based networks. When, for example, an Andijanlik comes to Tashkent he tends to search for a fellow Andijanlik for help. This fellow countryman may then go to another, well-connected,

⁷⁶ See: Barnett R. Rubin, “Russian Hegemony and State Breakdown in the Periphery” in *Post Soviet Political Order: Conflict and State Building*, eds., Barnett R. Rubin and Jack Snyder (New York: Routledge 1998) 147.

⁷⁷ As an example see Collins, 2002 and 2003.

Andijanlik in the government to ask for assistance.⁷⁸ This pattern is suggested by the report of one informant who stated, “If a person attains an important position, people will know where this person is from. Because it is important information for them. It is important for their career chances.”⁷⁹ During my interviews, one of my questions asked people to name important political figures from their region in the capital. I saw that people knew who from their region held important political positions. Regional identity is important for getting help when needed. The relations on which these interactions are based are confused by use of the word “clan.”

Another way the term “clan” is used in scholarly and journalistic accounts on Central Asia, is to denote political or economic groups which are based on patron-client ties. These groups are usually depicted as having a kinship element. In fact, people in these groups may or may not have kinship bonds, and these groups are instruments for people in the group to increase their power and wealth. Using the term “clan” for these structures in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan is misleading. If they are “clans,” then any relationship of this sort based on interest and patron-client ties can be defined as clannic. The elite networks which were defined as “clans” did not have the primordial feature based on kinship as their defining character in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. They are more similar to patron-client networks, which may or may not involve family ties among members of the network. Also, they did not include all the inhabitants of a region; in these networks there were alliances among people from different regions as well.

When ordinary people themselves use the term “clan” in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, they seem to use it in a pejorative sense which implies that the “clan” works for its own interests. The term is used in similar ways to refer to structures at both the local and national levels. Many informants both in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan stated that there are many “clans,”

⁷⁸ For similar observations see Roy, 2000.

⁷⁹ Author’s interview with a political scientist in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, July, 2003.

even in a small region. What they mean by “clan” here is the powerful families which have economic and political control in a region. Even in one city there may be three or more such “clans.” These are prominent extended families. The members of one family act together, and they try to benefit their family’s interests. They play a dominant role in the economic and political matters in a town. Different families may ally with each other out of common interests, but they may also clash with each other when their interests clash. Different families compete with each other for available resources within the town.⁸⁰ People also use the word “clan” for important economic and political forces at the high levels in the capital, i.e., for groups with power over the whole country.

One informant state that: “Clans are important in the economy. They determine who controls which sector, which economic resources. The major income-producing resources of the country are oil, gas, cotton, and gold. They are trying the get these. This is the source of the biggest conflict among clans.”⁸¹

Another said:

“Clans and regionalism are different from one another. People like other people from their own region. They want to see them, be with them, etc. For example, if I am appointed to Samarkand, I want to work with people from Tashkent. [Informant is from Tashkent.] If someone is from Tashkent, we will understand each other better. We speak the same language. We understand each others’ jokes. Is not this natural? Do you not do so? Do you not want to work with people from your own region? But these clans, they are different. They want to use the state for their own benefit. We do not even know how they operate. They are closed, but very strong and very influential. They seek financial resources, and access to these resources of the state—oil, gas, cotton, gold. Other interests—export, import—these are important for clans. They want to prevent other people from importing from other countries. They have trade privileges in the country. In

⁸⁰ Author’s interviews with a native NGO leader and a former local politician, Kokand, Uzbekistan, September 2003 and two political scientists in Dushanbe in Tajikistan, January 2004. For the examples of these in Tajikistan also see: Kirill Nourzhanov, “Alternative Social Institutions and the Politics of Neopatrimonialism in Tajikistan,” *Contemporary European Research Center Bulletin*, 1996.

⁸¹ Author’s interview with one of the Uzbek academicians, Tashkent.

the cotton and gold sectors, other people cannot work. There are government officials among them, and there are others outside, who have dealings with these officials. [He mentions some names.] In these relations, they protect and promote their own interests. They do not want the economy to be open to others. Because of this, they do not want liberalization. They do not want democratization and privatization. They do not want change, they want to preserve authoritarian mechanisms. There are different clans, they clash with each other as well. They have clashes over their interests.”⁸²

The way people in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan use the term “clan” is metaphorical. It is misleading to follow this usage in scholarly works, and depict these “clans” as based on kinship. People in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan acknowledge that some members of these “clans” (as they call important economic and political groupings at high levels in the capital) may have familial relations, but kinship is not seen as the defining and core bond. The network includes non-kin and people from other regions as well. These elite networks are based on professional relations, and also include people from different regions.⁸³ The local “clans” in the towns do not have a clan structure either. They are not connected under a larger structure. They are not a part of a bigger clan in this region. The elites in regions also try to find a connection to important figures from their region or from other regions in the politics of their country in order to benefit their interests. Kinship is only one variety of these bonds.

It is common to talk about the Leninabad clan, Kulyabi clan and so on in the literature on Tajikistan. However, the group called the Leninabadi clan did not have the clan structure of Kazakhs or Kyrgyz. Using the concept of clan implies that there are smaller clans included within the Leninabadi clan; it is a higher structure of other clans in Leninabad. In reality, however, the “Leninabadi clan” is an organization of party and state apparatchiks, united for the interests of the members of this group.⁸⁴ Similarly, what is called “the Samarkand” clan is not a clan which existed previously. It is a political faction composed of cadres from

⁸² Author’s interview with a former advisor in the presidential apparatus, Tashkent.

⁸³ Author’s interviews with various informants in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

⁸⁴ Also see: Rubin, 1998.

Samarkand, who may have been born there, or worked or gotten an education there, and it may include people from other regions who are linked to this group . It is a political network created among cadres, not the categorical or demographic group which is implied by the word “clan.”

These groups which are mistakenly called “clans” are political power networks which aim to control political and economic power within the republic, and gain the assets and privileges resulting from this control. They maintain their position and power through the distribution of the assets under their control. They are definitely not kinship groups, nor is regional origin their sole determinant . They are power networks organized for the control of administrative and economic assets. These political power networks are not coherent units. Membership is not permanent; people from the same region or people who were within the same group do not take on the side of their group permanently. The main factor is its utility in providing power and control over resources and assets to the actor. Relations can be established with people from other regional groups, and people can change sides. When common interests change and clash, these elite coalitions can change.

For example, Abdujalil Hamidov was the chairman of the Khujand oblast executive committee. He was a member of the so-called “Leninabadi clan.” But he opposed Nabiev, a Leninabadi, and sided with Abdumalik Abdullojonov who was another member of the “Leninabadi clan” and also opposed Nabiev. Later, Hamidov and Abdullojonov cooperated against the new president Emomali Rahmonov (a Kulyabi) and made plans to oust him from power. However, after Rahmonov won in the elections and dismissed Hamidov from his position, Hamidov changed sides and became Rahmonov’s client. Thus he was able to gain reappointment to the post of governor of Leninabad.

It warrants special emphasis that regions cannot be considered unitary entities. There are many sub-factions. Although these sub-factions can ally with each other against a common competitor, they can also clash. As one informant put it:

“It is not correct to talk about one united Kulyabi group. For example, in Kulyab we can talk about two important groups within the Kulyabis: Shurobodi and Baljuvoni. There was competition between these two groups. Before the war, during the Soviet period as well, they were in competition, rivals to each other. At the local level in Kulyab they shared the local power among themselves. Sangak Safarov was from Baljuvon. Langari was from Shurobod. Their relations were not good. They did not like each other. Rahmonov is also from Baljuvon.”⁸⁵

Another informant stated: “We can not say that Leninabadis act together, Kulyabis act together. Within the Leninabad elite and within the Kulyab elite there are many different clans, groups, cliques etc... In Tajikistan within a small *qishloq* there are many different clans.” These factions may make alliances with each other, they may compete with each other or they may ally with other regional factions. It is very complex. Some informants have stated that in the wake of the war, Kulyabis have come to hold all important political posts, and since there are few elites in important posts from other regions, there is now competition between Kulyabis and people from Dangara. Dangara, a region in Kulyab, is the origin of the current president as well. This is a struggle for power among elite groups which have regional bases. When conditions change, alliances can also change and other cleavage lines can even emerge.

It is true that political, economic, and business groups have a regional basis. However, it is not the only factor in relations among individuals, and does not explain how they act together and cooperate. Common interest is an important driving force of elite networks. Regional coalitions among elites are not essential. Personal financial and political interests

⁸⁵ Author’s interview with a “Kulyabi” political scientist in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, January, 2004.

and access to political and economic resources are significant. These power networks are more complex. Groups are not the unitary, fixed formations that a categorical understanding of regional identities implies. During Rashidov's reign, there were people from Tashkent in important positions. These *Toshkentliks* did not act with other *Toshkentliks* who were rivals of Rashidov. We cannot understand why these people were in the positions they occupied only by looking at their birthplace. During the Rashidov years, for example, politburo members M. Musakhanov and A. Salimov were *Toshkentliks* who spent their previous careers in Tashkent and Moscow. A.A. Khojaev, who became a new member in 1976, was a *Toshkentlik* whose career had taken him to Samarkand and Namangan. During the Usmonkhojaev years many *Toshkentliks* occupied important positions, although Usmonkhojaev himself was by birth a *Farghonalik*. Some of these *Toshkentlik* were acquaintances of his from the Tashkent Polytechnical Institute. During Usmonkhojaev's tenure, the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet was A.U. Salimov. He attended Tashkent Polytechnic Institute and taught there, then became prorector of the Institute. Usmonkhojaev was educated in this institute. The new Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Khaidarov, was also a graduate of this institute.⁸⁶

Self-interest, career, work, and education experiences all seem important in the formation of networks. These are neither "clans" based on kinship, nor purely regional allegiances. The main element is not the pure "traditionalism," nor continuation of traditional kinship-based relations as argued by some scholars. The mere factor of place of birth does not explain the elite networks. There were rivalries among people from the same region and alliances among people from different regions.

Muhiddinov, the first secretary between 1955-1957, was from Tashkent, but his main rivals—Nuriddinov and his wife Nasriddinova—were also *Toshkentliks*. Nasriddinova was

⁸⁶ Donald Carlisle, "Power and Politics in Soviet Uzbekistan: From Stalin to Gorbachev," in *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation*, ed., William Fierman (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), and Donald Carlisle, "The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-1983)," *Central Asian Survey* 5.3/4 (1986).

born in the Fergana region, but through her husband she was in the Tashkent clique.⁸⁷ It was said that Muhiddinov was effective in Rashidov's coming to power; he supported Rashidov, a Samarkandlik, against his own rivals in the Tashkent elite. Khrushchev wanted Rashidov as First Secretary, and Muhiddinov was a client of Khrushchev.⁸⁸ Rahmankul Kurbanov, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers at Rashidov's tenure, was from Bukhara. However, he had spent his entire career in Fergana. Although he was from Bukhara and would be expected to be close to the Samarkandi faction, he was a rival of Rashidov and an ally of Nasriddinova. He acted with her against Rashidov. These show that elite groups are not like traditional clans, but networks established among elites to further their interests.

The importance of factors other than birthplace and regional identities in the formation of elite networks is corroborated in the accounts of some informants interviewed for this study. In Fergana and Tashkent, some informants stated that there is no one from Fergana who worked with the current president, who studied with him at the same institute, or grew up with him. They stated that they think that is why there are very few people in important positions from the Fergana region. Some informants, who claimed to note an increase in the number of cadres from Kashkadarya, linked this to Karimov's position as obkom first secretary in Kashkadarya before becoming president. They say he knows and worked with people from Kashkadarya, and that is why he now recruits them.⁸⁹

Loyalty to one's regional group is not a definite or reliable criterion. Some informants reported that many politicians cooperate with the strongest network, and shift allegiances from time to time. In this sense they are simply following what they perceive as their own private interests. Thus, one may be from Tashkent originally, but cooperate with the so-called Samarkand group, which is currently strongest. Many *hakims* (governors) of oblasts, although

⁸⁷ Donald Carlisle, *The Uzbek Power Elite : Politburo and Secretariat (1938-1983)*, *Central Asian Survey* 5.3/4 (1986).

⁸⁸ Donald Carlisle, "Uzbekistan and the Uzbeks," *Problems of Communism*, (September-October 1991).

⁸⁹ From author's interviews in Fergana and Tashkent with local and central politicians, Uzbekistan.

they are from different regions, are said to be clients of a powerful group--mostly the Samarkand group, since they are the most powerful currently, or the Tashkent group which is second in power after the Samarkand group.⁹⁰

An informant mentioned a vice prime minister and said:

He is from Tashkent, but he is not in the Tashkent group. He is in the Samarkand group. There are many people like him. Groups are not established on grounds of regional identity alone. Some people also enter into other groups. Between 70 and 80 per cent of provincial hakims are in Jurabekov's group. People try to strengthen their connections with the strongest group. They act together with this group. Loyalty to one's region is not a definite, unchanging, and reliable factor. Wherever they see their interests, they go there. People have a relation with you based on your position. If you lose your position they end their relations.⁹¹

He continued:

For example, take the Samarkand group. These people are not concerned about Samarkand or its people. Their aim is to put their men into important positions, and get their share of power. This is their aim. They are united in the pursuit of power. They are fighting mostly for provincial hakimiyats, and for minister-level positions—important ministries like finance, internal affairs, national security, economy. They share the ministries among themselves. Some relations are established through marriage. The SNB [Security Service of Uzbekistan] head and the head of the Customs Committee arranged marriages between their children.”⁹²

Some other forms of network establishing are male gatherings such as *gap* or *osh*.⁹³

Someone is invited to an *osh* or *gap*, for example, and he goes and sees who else is in the *osh* or *gap*. He understands that these people invited to the *osh* are from the same network. They give support and help to these people in every matter, in work, in business. *Gap* and *osh*

⁹⁰ Author's interview with a politician, a former presidential apparatus member in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, September 2003.

⁹¹ Author's interview with a former presidential advisor. Tashkent.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ In Uzbek *gap* means talk, conversation; *ash* means meal.

gatherings are not based on region of origin, since people from different regional origins are also invited. Osh gatherings are composed of men who know each other, such as peers, schoolmates, work colleagues, or individuals who are related through marriage. They are connected to each other and operate like patronage networks with patrons and clients.⁹⁴

It should be emphasized that groups can disintegrate when the members are not satisfied with the resources that patronages relation provide. If a patron fails to provide the interests of a network member, this client will look for a patron who will provide them, as we saw for instance in the example of Hamidov. As long as a patron can supply the resources needed by clients he will have their support; otherwise clients will leave the network. In the case of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, the sole provider of resources was the state. From kolkhoz leaders to obkom secretaries, local leaders had control of these resources. They could form patronage relations by distributing these benefits and resources—i.e. by providing employment, promotions, assistance, welfare, permits, access to important goods and services, land, etc. These benefits served as the basis of a network.⁹⁵

This chapter argued that the networks among both ordinary people and political elites are the products of Soviet policies. They were formed on the basis of territorial-administrative structures, from *qishloqs* to oblasts. The Soviet Union's policies of balancing regions in the appointment of cadre, stability of cadre policies, and the concentration of power in the hands of local leaders contributed to the institutionalization of political elite networks based on regional identity. Access to resources was through a post in the party and administration. The struggle to obtain resources from the government took place through these regional networks. However, networks were not purely regional. Regional identity (whether through kinship, birthplace, or location) was never the sole factor in the establishment of political power networks. Under the Soviet system, in many cases alliances were made on the basis of work

⁹⁴ Author's interview with a native sociologist and researcher in Uzbekistan, August 2003.

⁹⁵ See James C. Scott, "Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia," *The American Political Science Review*, 66.1 (March 1972).

or school. Alliances among political actors from different regions could be formed for professional relations, common economic and political interests, and for access to political and economic resources. In order to understand the processes in the republics at unstable times it is important to understand these relations.

CHAPTER FOUR

Transitional Context, Events and Processes

This chapter traces the processes in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan during the post-Brezhnev years, examining key events in order to determine what differences might have affected the likelihood of civil war. The initial power structures in these republics (as detailed in Chapter 3) influenced subsequent developments during the transitional period of the mid-1980's to early 1990's; in turn, these developments changed the existing balance of power. In particular, the presence or absence of certain key events significantly impacted elite perceptions, behaviors, and subsequent events. While the events in Tajikistan increased the power-perceptions of the opposition, those in Uzbekistan decreased the opposition's power-perceptions and increased the power-perceptions of the Karimov regime.

A number of factors raised the probability of conflict in Tajikistan, by changing balance-of-power perceptions. These included: 1) purges, 2) ethnic clashes, 3) continuity versus discontinuity of leadership, 4) the actions of Tajikistan's acting president, and 5) different power-consolidation processes on the part of the presidents of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

I will argue that all of these are related, and that each of them influenced events that followed. For example, the purges in Uzbekistan had the effect of uniting the native elite, which encouraged them to agree on a new leader; in turn, the specifics of Karimov's rise to power influenced how he acted once he was in power. The absence of major purges and ethnic clashes in Tajikistan helped maintain the position of the existing leadership, and did not foster a perception among them that their positions were threatened. Instead, the elimination of the existing intra-party opposition bolstered the power-perceptions of the Tajik Communist Party elite. As a reaction to acting President Aslonov's actions, they decided to bring Nabiev

and other members of the old guard to power. Nabiev, sharing the same perceptions, began a crackdown against the entire opposition.

As a part of my analysis of the transitional context, I will also look at the similarities in the two republics during this period. I will argue that in both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the structure and agenda of the opposition parties and movements, the policies toward Islam and nationalist revival, and the republican Communist Party leaderships' adoption of the agenda of the opposition movements were all very similar, and therefore do not appear to explain the different outcome in the two republics.

PURGES IN UZBEKISTAN

As discussed in the second chapter, during the reign of Brezhnev the republics had achieved a kind of “quasi-autonomy” from the center. They were relatively free in the management of their affairs in comparison to previous periods, and Moscow had especially lost control of cadre appointments, particularly at local levels in oblasts and rayons. After Brezhnev's death, the new central administration began a campaign to reassert its control over the republics. The main tool of this recentralization effort was an anticorruption campaign, and the purging of cadre of the Brezhnev period. This campaign, which began under the brief terms of Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko, was accelerated by Mikhail Gorbachev. Of all Central Asian republics, the purge was most wide-ranging and severe in Uzbekistan.¹ I argue that the purges in Uzbekistan unified elites in that republic. Meanwhile in Tajikistan, which did not witness such an extensive purge, no similar reaction occurred among the elites.

¹ For the purges in Uzbekistan in this period see: James Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan: A Soviet Republic's Road to Sovereignty* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991); James Critchlow, “Prelude to ‘Independence’: How the Uzbek Party Apparatus Broke Moscow's Grip on Elite Recruitment in *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation*, ed., William Fierman (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991); and Donald Carlisle, “Power and Politics in Soviet Uzbekistan: From Stalin to Gorbachev”, in *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation*, ed., William Fierman (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991).

After Rashidov's death in October 1983, the Soviet center brought corruption accusations against the Uzbek administration of the Rashidov period. The Uzbek administration was accused of falsifying the cotton production figures in the republic, and a great purge began. Over the next five years, thousands of native officials in Uzbekistan were changed. Although it was announced that Rashidov died of a heart attack, there were rumors that he had committed suicide when he realized the likely launch of a purge that would implicate him.

The purges in Uzbekistan resulted in the removal of numerous officials at all levels of the party and state organs. By January 1985, 40 of the 65 oblast party secretaries, 10 of the 13 obkom first secretaries and 260 city and rayon secretaries had been removed from their posts.² The following year 750 persons were purged from leadership positions, including 8 obkom secretaries, 100 secretaries of city and district committees, 40 chairmen of city and district executive committees, and 18 ministers and other agency heads. In 1987 it was announced that 90 percent of the directors of state and collective farms had been removed from their posts in Uzbekistan.³

Many accused officials were also arrested. They included high-level officials such as former second secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, a former Chairman of the Council of Ministers, a deputy chairman, and the former first secretaries of five oblast party committees. One of the obkom first secretaries was sentenced to death.⁴ The scale of the purge was so great that in September 1988 it was declared that over a four year period, 58,000 senior officials had been replaced.⁵

² Carlisle, 1991b, p.114.

³ Critchlow, 1991a, p.136.

⁴ Critchlow, 1991a, p.135.

⁵ Donald Carlisle, "Uzbekistan and the Uzbeks," *Problems of Communism*, (September-October 1991): 34.

In Tajikistan, where politics in this period were very tranquil, there was no great purge comparable to that of Uzbekistan.⁶ First Secretary Rasulov of the Communist Party of Tajikistan died of natural causes in 1982, and he was succeeded by Nabiev. Although Nabiev was removed from this post during the purges on charges of corruption, he was not arrested. Mahkamov replaced Nabiev in 1985. The existing elite structure largely remained in place.

The respective tranquility in Tajikistan, compared with the upheaval in Uzbekistan, appears to have had a major impact on the behavior of the elites in the following period. Every member of the Uzbek political elite had reason to feel threatened by the scale of the purges which were uprooting the entire existing elite structure. Furthermore, the Uzbek elite were very resentful of the intrusion of the center into their affairs and the scale of the purges. Members of the Uzbek elite felt a need to unite against the center in order to protect themselves and their positions. In this period, as discussed below, we see an agreement among the elite on the election of a native politician as the new leader of the republic. It is likely that the purges encouraged the Uzbek elite to unite against the center. The purges thus appear to have had a profound impact on elite perceptions and actions, thus shaping the course of subsequent events.

The influence of the purges in Uzbekistan, and their absence in Tajikistan, affected elite perceptions and behaviors differently in the two republics. In Tajikistan, the native elite did not face a similar threat to their positions by the center. The forces that led the Uzbek elites to unite against the center did not exist in Tajikistan. Because the Tajik elite did not experience the interventions faced by their comrades in Uzbekistan, they likely did not feel the level of resentment against the center.

⁶ See: Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*, (New York: New York University Press, 2000); and Kathleen Collins, *Clans, Pacts and Politics: Understanding Regime Transition in Central Asia*, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, December 1999.

ETHNIC CLASHES

At the end of the Soviet period, ethnic clashes erupted in many republics of the Soviet Union. The first ethnic conflict in Central Asia broke out in June 1989 in Uzbekistan, between Uzbeks and Meskhetian Turks in the Fergana Valley. For almost three weeks there were riots and violent attacks against Meskhetians. The riots, which began in the town of Kuvasi, turned into pogroms against the Meskhetians in many other towns of the Fergana Valley including Fergana, Kokand, Margilan, and Namangan.⁷ There were reports that when some Meskhetians were evacuated to Tashkent, there were attacks on them in the Buka and Parkent districts of Tashkent as well.⁸ As a result, hundreds of people—the great majority of them Meskhetians—died. Soon almost all Meskhetians had to leave Uzbekistan as a result of the attacks.

Another ethnic clash, this one involving Uzbeks and Kyrgyz, erupted in the Osh region of Kyrgyzstan (on the border with Uzbekistan) in the beginning of June 1990. Uzbeks from the Uzbekistan side gathered at the border and tried to cross it to help fellow Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan.⁹ At the time, there were also reports that Uzbeks might attack Kyrgyz living in Uzbekistan. A crowd of Uzbeks gathered and surrounded a Kyrgyz *mahalla* in the town of Andijan, located on the Kyrgyzstan border.¹⁰

Tajikistan's ethnic clashes in this period were much smaller than those in Uzbekistan. In July 1989 there were clashes between Tajiks and Kyrgyz in the Isfara Valley. There were also reports of clashes between Tajiks and Uzbeks in Ganchi and Penjikent, and between

⁷ Author's interviews in Fergana and Kokand with Meskhetian Turks and Uzbeks. About events in Fergana see: *Kommuna*, 16 June 1989; *Yosh Leninchi*, 8 July 1989; *Kommuna*, 9 June 1989; *Sovet O'zbekistoni*, 16 June 1989; about events in Namangan see: *ITAR-TASS* 12 June, 1989; in Kokand, *Pravda*, 12 June 1989: 8; *Izvestia*, 9 June 1989: 12. About spread of events see: *Pravda*, 10 June 1989: 8. Also see: *The Associated Press*, 5 June 1989, 6 June 1989, 7 June 1989, 9 June 1989.

⁸ *BBC Summary of World Broadcast* 23 February, 1990; *ITAR-TASS* 24 February, 1990; *Associated Press*, 4 March, 1990; *Associated Press* 5 March, 1990; *BBC Summary of World Broadcast*, 5 March, 1990; *ITAR-TASS*, 6 March, 1990.

⁹ For the events about Uzbeks trying to cross the border see: *ITAR-TASS* 8 June, 1990; *Izvestia*, 19 June 1990: 2. And Author's interviews in Andijan, Uzbekistan.

¹⁰ Author's interviews in Andijan, Uzbekistan.

Arabs and Tajiks in Kobadian in 1990-91.¹¹ However, apart from one reported death in the Isfara events, there were only injuries and damage to property. These events were only short-term, involved relatively small numbers of people, and did not attract attention as did the larger events in Uzbekistan.

The ethnic clashes in Uzbekistan had important repercussions. Immediately afterwards, First Secretary Rafik Nishanov was removed from his post. According to accounts of various politicians and academics of Uzbekistan, the ethnic clashes undermined his legitimacy. His attitude during the events (his explanations made light of the clashes) and his handling of the situation were widely criticized. He was accused of being unable to understand or handle the events, and of underestimating them. Nishanov was also disliked for his role as Moscow's representative in implementing the purges in the republic. It was during the time of Nishanov that purges reached their climax in Uzbekistan.¹² My informants said that the majority of the Uzbek elite were opposed to Nishanov and his policies.

One informant said that

1984-1988 were hard times for the Republic. The central government used the cotton issue in order to get control of the Republic, to regain power. Then the Fergana events happened. Everybody wanted a strong leader. When the Fergana events took place, Nishanov was in Moscow. He refused to come back. He tried to make light of the situation. People thought that he did not behave as a leader of Uzbekistan. He turned over his colleagues to investigators as well.¹³

While there was a change of the leadership after the purges and ethnic clashes in Uzbekistan, in Tajikistan the leadership did not change. In Tajikistan, since there were no big ethnic clashes and no great purges as in Uzbekistan to call into question the legitimacy of the

¹¹ Author's interviews with a Tajik political scientist and a sociologist in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. About Isfara events see *ITAR-TASS* 14 July, 1989; *ITAR-TASS* 22 July, 1989; *Kommunist Tadzhikistana*, 28 June 1989: 1 in *Current Digest of The Soviet Press*, 9 August, 1989 41.28: 25.

¹² See: Carlisle 1991a and 1991b.

¹³ Author's interview with a leader of People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, 2003.

first secretary at the time, Qahhor Mahkamov continued to lead the republic. Unlike in Uzbekistan, in Tajikistan the existing leadership and elite structure remained in place. This difference would also influence subsequent political developments in the two republics differently.

FEBRUARY 1990 EVENTS IN TAJIKISTAN

A series of events in February 1990 that included mass demonstrations in Dushanbe demanding change in republic leadership constitutes an exception to the late Soviet-era political tranquility in Tajikistan. The demonstrations were provoked by rumors that the government would distribute apartments to Armenian refugees. In response to this news, around 100 people gathered in front of the Communist Party Central Committee building and demanded an explanation from First Secretary Mahkamov. As a result of soldiers who shot at the crowd, nine people died and many were wounded. In the following days violence continued in the city. Crowds looted stores, and damaged buildings and public transportation vehicles. There were also attacks against Russians. The government declared martial law, and First Secretary Mahkamov called Soviet army troops to duty. The troops fired on demonstrators. Order was restored after three days.¹⁴

¹⁴ Author's interviews with two journalists and various residents of the city, January 2004, Dushanbe, Tajikistan. For the accounts of the events see: Muriel Atkin, "The Politics of Polarization in Tajikistan," in *Central Asia: Its Strategic Importance and Future Prospects*, ed., Hafeez Malik (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994); Muriel Atkin, "Thwarted Democratization in Tajikistan" in *Conflict, Cleavage and Change in Central Asia and Caucasus*, eds., Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrot (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); John Schoeberlein, "Conflict in Tajikistan and Central Asia: The Myth of Ethnic Animosity," *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 1.2 (1994). For some journalistic accounts of the events see: *Izvestia*, 13 February 1990: 8; *Pravda*, 15 February 1990: 2; *Izvestia*, 15 February 1990: 3. According to many, events were not against Armenians or interethnic as was depicted in some accounts. In Dushanbe people were on the waiting list for housing for 10 years or more. The rumors that Armenian refugees would be given priority in housing caused anger among the population. Some accounts deny that the events were spontaneous, and claim that some young people from outside were given money, alcohol and drugs to participate in the riots. In the resulting disorder some people attacked Russians or other Russian speakers (the term Russian speaker was used to define people who used Russian language as their main language while living in diaspora, such as Ukrainians, Belarussians, Germans, Armenians, Jews etc.).

During the events, a group of young Communist Party and government officials attempted to change the leadership of the republic. The existing leadership accused Buri Karimov (the director of Gosplan-State Planning Committee- and Vice Chairman of the Council of Ministers), Nur Tabarov (Minister of Culture), and Otakhon Latifi (Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers) of organizing a coup d'état in order to bring Buri Karimov to power. This group of young Communist Party and government officials joined the protestors and demanded a change in leadership. Demonstrators called for Karimov to become the leader of the republic. All of these figures were dismissed from their posts in a Supreme Soviet session that followed the events.¹⁵ The incumbent leadership thus quickly eliminated this intra-party opposition.

The leadership also blamed opposition movements, especially Rastokhez and Islamic groups, for the February events. The government brought charges against Rastokhez for provoking the events, and for being an unregistered organization. More than a score of people were sentenced for varying numbers of years. A state of emergency was declared in Dushanbe which lasted until July 1991.¹⁶

The February events strengthened the existing leadership by enabling it to eliminate opposition within the party. They took place just before the elections to Tajikistan's Supreme Soviet. In the elections, the Communist Party received approximately 95 percent of the seats. On 25 May, 1990, Mahkamov was elected First Secretary of the Communist Party of Tajikistan. Tajikistan's sovereignty was declared on August 24, 1990, and on November 30, 1990, the Supreme Soviet elected Mahkamov president.

¹⁵ Author's interview with a journalist who followed the events and two native politicians, Dushanbe. On accusations and dismissal of Karimov, Tabarov and Latifi see: *Izvestia* 18 February 1990: 2; *Pravda*, 20 March 1990: 8; *Pravda* 5 March 1990: 2; *BBC Summary of the World Broadcasts*, 23 February, 1990; *BBC Summary of the World Broadcasts*, 6 March 1990.

¹⁶ Atkin, 1997a, pp.284-285.

KARIMOV'S RISE TO POWER IN UZBEKISTAN

Uzbekistan's leadership changed right after the June 1989 events in Fergana. As mentioned above, many political and academic elites in Uzbekistan told me that there was broad resentment of Nishanov's leadership among the Uzbek elite. My informants also seem to share the broad perception that the 1984-1989 period was an especially difficult time. These were the years of the cotton affair, the purge of thousands of state and party officials, and ethnic conflicts. Some informants reported that Nishanov's behavior during the Fergana events convinced them that he was incompetent as a leader. They noted, for example, that he was in Moscow at the time of the Fergana events, and that he did not come back home immediately to take charge.¹⁷ In the eyes of the Uzbek elite, Nishanov was a man of Moscow who carried out the orders of the center with respect to the purges of thousands of Uzbek elites.

This was the background of Nishanov's replacement by Karimov. According to the Uzbek political elites interviewed for this study, prominent Uzbek elites representing different regional interests wanted to get rid of Nishanov, and were looking for a new leader who would protect their interests. They were united because of their common resentment of Nishanov and Moscow. Several reported that powerful members of the Uzbek political elite came together and agreed on Islam Karimov. These informants mention the names of Ismoil Jurabekov and Shukrulla Mirsaidov—two prominent members of the Uzbek political elite of the period—as prominent figures favoring Karimov's selection as the new leader. Another actor who was mentioned as influencing their choice is Qudrat Ahmedov, then Chairman of Gosplan. According to informants, Ahmetov had good connections in Moscow and was close to Pavlov, then Prime Minister of the USSR. These people came together and agreed to

¹⁷ Author's interviews with various members of the Uzbek political and academic elite in Tashkent.

support Karimov's nomination as first secretary.¹⁸ None of these powerful men who nominated Karimov could have become the first secretary themselves, although each would probably have preferred to do so. The problem was that none of them wanted any of the others to occupy this central post. Since their power was more or less equal, an attempt on the part of any one of them to claim leadership would have been rejected by the others. This does not exclude the possibility that some or all of them were looking for an opportunity to step in at the critical moment. Carlisle maintains that local politicians were so effective in assisting Karimov's rise to power that they even "thought of him as their puppet." For a long time Karimov continued to "owe much to the local forces that have aided his appointment."¹⁹ It appears that powerful members of the Uzbek elite agreed on a name that they thought would balance the interests among various powerful actors, and who was not as powerful at the time as the people who nominated him. Therefore, he would presumably remain dependent on the people who brought him to power.²⁰

As one informant put it:

The 1980s were the years of chaos for Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan suffered a lot because of this cotton affair. Nishanov was Moscow's man. He was sent from Moscow. The Uzbek elite who suffered a lot because of purges were very much against him, and they started to look for a leader who would provide balance. They found Karimov. He came to power as a result of the choice of Uzbek elite, they nominated him. Moscow was in trouble in those years. They were also in chaos. There were ethnic conflicts all around the country. They accepted this nomination for the sake of stability, because their priority was to maintain stability in the republics.²¹

¹⁸ Author's interviews with three native politicians who were also politicians and close to events at the time. On the elite agreements in Uzbekistan also see Collins 1999.

¹⁹ Donald Carlisle, "Islam Karimov and Uzbekistan: Back to the Future?" in *Patterns in Post-Soviet Leadership*, ed., Timothy J. Colton and Robert C. Tucker (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995) 196.

²⁰ Carlisle, 1995.

²¹ Author's interview with a high level official in one of the ministries in Uzbekistan, Tashkent, 2003.

Another informant said:

Local elites, a group of powerful Uzbek elites, came together and suggested Karimov as the first secretary. In order to avoid competition among one another, they chose him. This group nominated Karimov, and convinced the center to approve this. Karimov became the first secretary through this proposal from Uzbekistan, initiated by powerful local men.²²

According to many informants from the Uzbek elite, Moscow had to accept this initiative by the local elites at that time. Moscow was very busy with the several conflicts in its territory, from the Transcaucasus to the Baltics. There was chaos and instability in Central Asia and other regions. According to many informants, Moscow's desire to maintain stability—a top priority at the time—inclined it to accept Karimov's nomination.

In June 1989, Karimov became the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan. He was an economic technocrat, not a party apparatchik. Born and raised in Samarkand, Karimov had worked in the Ministry of Finances between 1966 and 1983, at which point he became the Minister of Finance of the Uzbek SSR. He remained in this post until 1986, when he became the chairman of Uzbekistan Gosplan. He had never served in the republic bureau or secretariat, or held the position of chairman of the Supreme Soviet. This represented a change from former first secretaries Niyazov, Rashidov, Usmonkhojaev, and Nishanov, all of whom had served as chairmen of the republic's Supreme Soviet before ascending to the top leadership of the republic.²³ Under Nishanov, Karimov was appointed Obkom First Secretary of distant Kashkadarya oblast. His appearance as the first secretary in June 1989 was surprising, as he was not among the top politicians of Uzbekistan.²⁴ Therefore, when Karimov became the first secretary he was in a position to maintain a balance among the different political actors and groups who agreed on his candidacy, and who would support him as long as he met certain expectations.

²² Author's interview with a leader of People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan and a close associate of Karimov.

²³ Carlisle, 1991a, p. 36.

²⁴ See Carlisle, 1991b.

As illustrated above, in the late 1980's Tajikistan saw neither the great purges nor major ethnic clashes that rocked Uzbekistan. There were no major changes in political leadership, and the political elite structure remained in place. Although there was an election in Tajikistan (as in Uzbekistan) in this period, it did not bring any change. Rather, the small in-party opposition was eliminated and Mahkamov was reappointed as first secretary without difficulty. While Karimov was a new leader, brought to power with the support of prominent political actors at a time of disturbances in the republic, Mahkamov was the old leader appointed by Moscow. When Karimov came to power, the Soviet center was losing its strength. After becoming the first secretary Karimov criticized the purges, and presented himself as the native leader of Uzbekistan.²⁵

During the transitional period just described, other important developments were occurring in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. There were major changes in the policies of the Soviet center towards republics in terms of religion and national culture, as nationalist ideas and movements were emerging all over the USSR. In the following section I will look at Moscow's policies towards both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in the areas of Islam and nationalism, to consider whether there were differences in their application in the two republics. I will also compare the nationalist issues and movements that emerged in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan during the glasnost years, and analyze the policies of republican governments towards them. In my view, these factors were similar in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, and therefore cannot account for the different outcome in terms of the occurrence of civil war.

²⁵ See Critchlow 1991 and Carlisle 1991a. Also see: Karimov's speech in the republic Party Congress printed in *Pravda Vostoka*, 5 June, 1990 and the interview with Karimov in *Izvestiya* 28 January 1991 in *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, 27 February 1991: 30.

POLICIES TOWARD ISLAM AND NATIONALISM DURING THE SOVIET PERIOD

Aside from the purges, Moscow's policies toward Tajikistan and Uzbekistan during the last years of the Soviet Union were very similar. Glasnost came both to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan later than other parts of the Soviet Union. In both republics, pressure against religion and national culture continued until 1988. Party officials criticized writers who were accused of idealizing the past through their praise of native historical figures. Party members were criticized for attending Islamic funeral ceremonies. Although the regime showed a more conciliatory attitude toward the Orthodox religion at the end of 1986, party officials continued to warn against the dangers of Islam. For example, in November 1986 Gorbachev visited Tashkent, where he mentioned the dangers of religion and emphasized the need to "struggle against religious manifestations" and "reinforce atheistic propaganda".²⁶

A policy shift occurred in 1988, when a more tolerant attitude toward Islam was visible in the press. Newspapers in both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan presented more positive portrayals of Islamic religious leaders, and printed interviews with them. More changes came in 1989 with the opening of a large number of mosques and madrassahs, and an increase in religious publications such as the Koran and collections of hadith (words and deeds attributed to the Prophet Muhammad).²⁷

²⁶ William Fierman, "Policy toward Islam in Uzbekistan in the Gorbachev Era," *Nationalities Papers* 22.1 (1994): 227.

²⁷ For Uzbekistan see: Fierman, 1994, pp.234-35, for Tajikistan see Atkin 1997a, pp.282-283.

NATIONALIST ISSUES WHICH EMERGED DURING THE GLASNOST PERIOD

During the glasnost period, developments were similar in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, the other Central Asian republics, and throughout the USSR. In both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, writers and scholars raised nationalist issues that had until recently been taboo. Critical articles began to appear in newspapers on each republic's respective problems, and the Soviet policies that had caused them. The main issues in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were quite similar: the economy, health, religion, culture, and the environment. Writers criticized especially the excessive focus on cotton production, Moscow's use of the republics as raw material reservoirs, and the problems of cotton workers; and also criticized environmental pollution, malnutrition, and high infant mortality rates. They demanded the end of the cotton monoculture. Other articles criticized the policies against Islam, and stated that Islam should be given as much freedom as Orthodox Christianity. Authors criticized history texts printed in the Soviet Union, and asserted that the history of the Russian conquest and Soviet period should be reexamined. They also demanded that the titular language of each republic (e.g. Uzbek for Uzbekistan) be recognized as the state language, and that Russian words be eliminated from these languages. Articles in both republics criticized the practice of titular conscripts being sent outside of the republic for military service. There were also articles criticizing Russians and Russian speakers for coming to Central Asia to work, thus depriving the titulars of housing and jobs. These criticisms often accompanied complaints about the low standard of living and unemployment.²⁸

²⁸ On Uzbekistan see: Fierman, "Glasnost in Practice: the Uzbek Experience," *Central Asian Survey* and Critchlow 1991b; on Tajikistan see: Muriel Atkin, "Tajikistan: Reform, Reaction, and Civil War," in *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, eds., Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

OPPOSITION MOVEMENTS

Glasnost, which reached its height in both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in 1989-1991, was accompanied by the formation of many opposition movements. The development of opposition movements in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan followed a similar path in both republics, and the movements took on a similar shape in terms of their aims, and the issues which they raised.

National and Islamic movements in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

The largest of the movements advocating cultural revival and national autonomy in Tajikistan was Rastokhez. Although established on September 14, 1989, it remained illegal until it was officially recognized on June 21, 1991.²⁹ Its chairman was Tohir Abdujabbor. Its agenda was similar to other popular movements established throughout the Soviet Union at the time. Rastokhez advocated the revival of the Tajik language and its recognition as the state language, the development of Tajik culture and nationalist historiography, and republic sovereignty. The movement also advocated democracy, and recognition of the equality of all the citizens of the republic, irrespective of nationality or religious affiliation.³⁰ Some Rastokhez members were former Communist Party members (though not *apparatchiks*) who had left the party in the second half of the 1980's. Many members were writers, artists, teachers, and other members of the urban intelligentsia.

The second largest organization was the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT), which was established on August 10, 1990. It emerged first as a splinter group which split from Rastokhez under the leadership of Shodmon Yusuf. DPT held similar views to Rastokhez,

²⁹ About the parties and movements in Tajikistan see Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, "The 'Tajik Spring of 1992,'" *Central Asia Monitor* 2 (1993); and Grigorii G. Kosach, "Tajikistan: Political Parties in an Inchoate National Space," in *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies* ed., Yaacov Ro'i (London: Frank Cass, 1995). For a short guide to Tajik opposition movements and parties see: Bess Brown, "Tajikistan: The Fall of Nabiev," *RFE/RL Research Report*, 1. 38 (25 September 1992): 17.

³⁰ See the interview with Tohir Abdujabbor in *Javanan-i Tajikistan*, 1 January 1990 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 16 February, 1990.

including the revival of national identity, language and culture; the establishment of parliamentary democracy and a market economy in the republic.³¹ The membership profiles of DPT and Rastokhez were very similar as well: they recruited members from the same group of people, and there were many people in DPT from the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan. The founder of the party, Shodmon Yusuf, was a philosopher in the Academy of Sciences. There were also a few Russians in DPT's leadership circles.

The membership of Lali Badakhshan, another important organization in Tajikistan, was overwhelmingly Pamiri. It advocated reforms which would benefit Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast, which was inhabited mainly by Pamiris; and also advocated the democratization of Tajikistan. The founder of this organization was Amirbek Atobekov, a Pamiri.

Another new organization in Tajikistan was the Islamic Revival Party (IRP), which was formally established on July 9, 1990 as an all-Union Islamic party in Astrakhan (Russia). Later, in October of the same year, the Tajik branch of the party was established.³² According to interviews with IRP members, the IRP had in fact existed underground since 1973, when Said Abdullo Nuri and five friends were said to have established it in Qurghonteppa.³³

At the time of its formal establishment in October 1990, the leader of the Tajikistan branch of the party was Muhammad Sharif Himmatzoda. Two other important leaders were Said Abdullo Nuri and Davlat Usmon. In November 1990 the Tajikistan Supreme Soviet outlawed the party.³⁴ In its program, the IRP aspired to bring "the values of the Quran and the Sunna" to the people and "to eradicate state atheistic propaganda."³⁵ Although it openly aimed to restore the role of Islam in society, the IRP leaders stated that they did not see the

³¹ Atkin 1997a, p.285.

³² For a history of the IRP in Tajikistan see: Muzaffar Olimov and Soadat Olimova, "Politicheskii Islam v Sovremennom Tadjikistane," in *Islam Na Postsovetskoi Prostranstve: Vzgliad Iznutri*, eds., A.Malashenko and M.Brill Olcott (Moscow, 2001).

³³ Author's interviews with leaders and representatives of the IRP in Dushanbe. Infact, the IRP celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2003.

³⁴ *Izvestia*, 22 November 1990.

³⁵ Kosach, 1995, p.127.

possible establishment of an Islamic state in the near future. The IRP leaders also advocated political and economic reforms, and shared the ideas of nationalist movements on the revival of Tajik culture. The IRP also defended the establishment of parliamentary democracy in Tajikistan.

As the above discussion suggests, the major opposition parties and movements in Tajikistan shared many similar aims in terms of popular sovereignty, civil liberties, nationalism, and religious freedom.³⁶

The first opposition movement in Uzbekistan, called Birlik, was established on November 11, 1988 by members of the intelligentsia—most prominently, scientists Abdurahim Polatov and Shuhrat Ismatullaev, and poet Muhammad Solih. Birlik's members advocated making Uzbek the state language. They also raised social, economic, health, and ecological issues. They criticized the cotton monoculture, and the policies of the center which made the republic a source of raw materials. Until independence, Birlik advocated the establishment of a sovereign republic within the USSR, but did not support full independence. It called for democratization, the development of human rights, and permission for demonstrations and rallies.

Although it started as a small group of individuals from the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences and Tashkent State University, Birlik was successful in drawing large popular support. It played a significant role during the glasnost period in the development of the political agenda of Uzbekistan. It was able to draw tens of thousands of people to its demonstrations.

The Communist Party elite began to see Birlik's ability to draw such crowds to its demonstrations as a threat.³⁷ Because of this, Birlik did not have very good relations with the

³⁶ Muriel Atkin, "Tajikistan: Ancient Heritage, New Politics," in *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States* eds. Ian Bremmer and Taras (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 374.

³⁷ Gregory Gleason, "Uzbekistan: The Politics of National Independence," in *New States, New Politics: Building The Post-Soviet Nations* eds, Ian Bremmer and Taras (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

authorities. Especially after the Fergana events in June 1989, and the Buka and Parkent events in Tashkent in early 1990, the authorities began to accuse Birlik of provoking violence. There were also disagreements within the movement itself. On September 17, 1989 a group of activists spoke out in a central committee meeting against the mass demonstrations, and announced that they would leave the movement.³⁸ This illustrates the different opinions within the movement on the question of strategy. Some leaders, such as Muhammad Solih, were against the mass-mobilization and demonstration tactics of the movement. They believed their aims could be reached without mass demonstrations. Others such as Abdurahim Polatov saw these methods as necessary to pressure the Communist Party.³⁹

These tensions led to an official split in 1990. On February 20, Muhammad Solih's group established the new party Erk and elected Solih as its chairman. Solih criticized Birlik for "having become carried away with public demonstrations."⁴⁰ Erk's charter called for independence, a multi-party democratic system, a market economy, the privatization of enterprises, liberalization of the political process, and increased human rights.⁴¹ Erk members declared that they would follow a parliamentary path of opposition, not one of mass demonstrations which could lead to violence.⁴² Solih repeatedly stated that Erk would prefer to work within the system."⁴³

There were also representatives from Uzbekistan when the All-Union IRP held its founding congress in Astrakhan, and these people established an Uzbekistan branch on

³⁸ Daria Fane, "Ethnicity and Regionalism in Uzbekistan: Maintaining Stability Through Authoritarian Control," in *Ethnic Conflict in the Post-Soviet World: Case Studies and Analysis* eds., Leokadia Drobizheva, Rose Gottemoeller, Catherine McArdle Kelleher, Lee Walker (New York, Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1996).

³⁹ William Fierman, "Political Development in Uzbekistan: Democratization?" in *Conflict, Cleavage, and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, eds., Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrot (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 370.

⁴⁰ Fierman 1997, p.372

⁴¹ "Uzbekistan: Current Political and Economic Developments," *Zentrum fur Turkeistudien Working Paper* 15, (Essen, May 1994) 17.

⁴² Fane, 1996, p.283.

⁴³ "Uzbekistan: Current Political and Economic Developments" *Zentrum fur Turkeistudien Working Paper* 15: 17

January 26, 1991. Its chairman was Abdulla Utaev. As in Tajikistan, the party was soon outlawed in Uzbekistan.

Reaction of governments to opposition movements in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan

Some analyses of events in Tajikistan stress the critical role of the republican government's policies in the last years of the Soviet Union and the beginning of the independence period in the eruption of civil war. One such explanation posits that the Tajikistan leaderships' refusal to implement symbolic nationalistic changes and emulate other Central Asian regimes in this area was the most important factor leading to civil war.⁴⁴ According to this argument the government of Tajikistan, unlike those of other Central Asian states, failed to co-opt the themes of nationalism. As we will see, however, the reaction of governments to the emergence of nationalist themes and opposition movements in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan was very similar.

When Karimov came to power in Uzbekistan, he tried to build good relations with the opposition movements. Beginning in fall 1989, the regime granted them the freedom to promote their ideas, and Karimov created new opportunities for these movements to operate.⁴⁵

Fierman reports that:

Over the next few months Islam Karimov began to conduct a dialogue with Birlik and other informal organizations and to recognize that they had a positive role to play in the republic's political life. By early fall the Tashkent oblast party committee held its first official meeting with leaders of Birlik, as well as the groups Intersoyuz and democratic movement of Uzbekistan...Karimov began to speak of informal movements as a 'natural and objective' phenomenon in democratic development and an 'indicator of the politicization of our society'... he explicitly recognized past CPUz mistakes with regard to informals and said that now the party had moved from 'total non-recognition to constructive dialogue with them.'⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Shahram Akbarzadeh, "Why did Nationalism Fail in Tajikistan?," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 48.7, (November 1996).

⁴⁵ Fierman 1997, p.369.

⁴⁶ Fierman 1997, p.369

The authorities allowed Birlik to continue to operate and hold congresses. On May 26-27 they allowed around 600 members of the movement to attend Birlik's third congress in Tashkent.⁴⁷ The authorities registered Erk as a political party and Birlik as a social movement, which allowed them to function, hold meetings, and recruit supporters.⁴⁸ They did not persecute other political forces, including IRP.

Karimov co-opted much of the opposition's platform relating to language, environment and health. He voiced the same concerns as the opposition in these matters. Probably he did so in order to appropriate these issues from the opposition, to increase his legitimacy in the eyes of public and also to increase Uzbekistan's autonomy from the Soviet center.

The Communist leadership in Tajikistan also appropriated many ideas of the opposition movements. As in Uzbekistan during the 1986-1989 period, the Communist Party of Tajikistan and its leader Mahkamov had criticized nationalism and nationalistic sentiments. Party officials criticized Tajik writers for paying too much attention to the Tajik people, and forgetting about internationalism. However, as in Uzbekistan, a shift in these policies came in 1989. Tajikistan's Communist leadership began to find it politically useful to adopt Tajik national themes and interests. Initiatives included

- the appearance of nationalist concerns in official newspapers
- the establishment of a cultural foundation to preserve Tajik heritage
- the language law of July 22, 1989 which established Tajik as the state language, and advocated a transition from the Cyrillic to Perso-Arabic alphabet
- the call for the use of Tajik instead of Russian for place names and personal names

⁴⁷ Fierman 1997, p.373.

⁴⁸ *Government-Opposition Relations in Uzbekistan*, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, (Washington DC, March 1997).

Policies towards Islam began to change in this period in Tajikistan as well as in Uzbekistan. The Soviet regime relaxed some of its policies, which led to the opening of new mosques and Islamic schools.⁴⁹

The rise of opposition political movements was similar in the two republics, as were the nationalist and/or Islamic platforms of these movements. Also similar was the pattern of suppression and co-optation by the regime. Parallel to analogous reactions in Uzbekistan, after the February 1990 events in Tajikistan, the regime blamed Rastokhez and the Islamic movement, and began a crackdown on the opposition. Like the authorities in Uzbekistan, the Tajikistan regime refused to recognize the IRP when it was established, and did not grant it legal recognition until the end of 1991.

As we will see below, however, the patterns of the transition following August 1991 were quite different.

THE AUGUST 1991 COUP, AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS IN UZBEKISTAN AND TAJIKISTAN

Some commentators claim that because Mahkamov, unlike Karimov, supported the August coup, the Tajik leader was obliged to leave his post. However, the behavior of Karimov and Mahkamov was quite similar. They both took an ambiguous and cautious stance towards the coup, until it was clear that the coup would be unsuccessful. While Mahkamov kept silent, Karimov made a series of carefully worded ambiguous statements.

Karimov was on an official visit to India when the coup occurred. He returned immediately, but even in his absence local authorities took emergency measures in Uzbekistan. They issued a vaguely worded statement declaring certain emergency measures, but were careful to write in a way which could be interpreted as an expression either of

⁴⁹ Atkin 1997a, p.283.

neutrality or support for the coup.⁵⁰ The document did not mention the removal of Gorbachev, but only called for discipline and order. Until Karimov took charge, Mirsaidov and his allies made statements supporting the coup. One eyewitness reported that Karimov argued with Mirsaidov about this after coming back to Tashkent.⁵¹

After he returned, Karimov made ambiguous statements which could be interpreted as supporting either the coup or Gorbachev. He cautiously explained that he would only be able to give his opinion of the changes after "becoming thoroughly acquainted with detailed plans for implementing the promises made by government circles"⁵² Some statements could be interpreted as support for the coup, e.g. maintaining that perestroika had hit an impasse and that "glasnost and the signboard of democracy frequently camouflage political ambitions and a striving for power." On August 20, when he appealed to the people, he said "No matter what forces may have opposed us and called our activity a dictatorship, we have always been advocates of strong discipline and order, and no one can deny this. . . ."⁵³

The situation in Tajikistan did not change with the news of the coup, and the authorities did not issue any statement. Rather, Mahkamov and Prime Minister Khayoyev went to Moscow to participate in a plenary session of the CPSU Central Committee without making any statement about the recent events.⁵⁴

Neither Karimov's nor Mahkamov's behavior can be interpreted as support or rejection of the coup. Both behaved cautiously. However, while the opposition in Tajikistan was able to mobilize against the stand of the Mahkamov regime during the coup, the opposition in Uzbekistan could not manage this. The opposition in Tajikistan took the

⁵⁰ Author's interview with a higher official who was very close to the events at the time.

⁵¹ Author's interviews with an official in Tashkent.

⁵² *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 22 August, 1991: 3, translated in *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, 43.33 (1991): 26.

⁵³ *Izvestia*, 13 September 1991, translated in *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 43.37 (1991): 14.

⁵⁴ About the attitude of Mahkamov during the coup see: *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 27 August 1991: 2 in *Russica Information Inc. - RusData DiaLine, Russian press*, 27 August, 1991; *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, August 22 1991: 3 translated in *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, 43.33 (1991): 26; *Kommunist Tajikistana*, August 30, 1991 translated in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, September 25, 1991.

opportunity to mobilize against the leadership, accusing it of supporting the coup. On August 29, opposition members held a joint meeting in Dushanbe's Lenin Square expressing their solidarity with Yeltsin and the government and parliament of RSFSR, and condemning the participants of the coup and the people who supported the State Committee for the State of Emergency. They criticized the Tajikistan authorities' position of indifference towards the events, and argued that the authorities were not able to evaluate the events correctly.⁵⁵ In Uzbekistan, the opposition could not mobilize against the stand of the authorities during the coup. I will argue that one important reason for this was that the opposition was unable to unite in Uzbekistan, or adopt a common position. Thus divided, the opposition could not mobilize the population against the regime, as happened in Tajikistan. The leadership of Uzbekistan changed course after the failure of the coup was certain, and claimed to have never supported it. In Tajikistan, opposition demonstrations appeared effective, for example by forcing Mahkamov to resign.

THE POST-COUP PERIOD IN UZBEKISTAN AND TAJIKISTAN

After the coup, and during the process of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Tajikistan entered into a phase of instability that would eventually take the country into civil war. Uzbekistan, on the other hand, experienced the consolidation of the power of its president in this period.

The road to civil war in Tajikistan

The series of events which would take Tajikistan to civil war started after the August 1991 coup in Moscow. As noted above, the opposition used the coup as an opportunity to organize a large demonstration in the capital on August 29. They criticized the stand of the president and the first secretary of the Communist Party of Tajikistan, Qahhor Mahkamov,

⁵⁵ See: *Dushanbe Radio Dushanbe Network*, 31 August 1991, in *FBIS-USR-91-028*, 6 September 1991: 76.

accusing him of supporting the coup. Furthermore, they demanded his resignation and new elections. These demonstrations were effective, forcing Mahkamov to resign on August 31.⁵⁶ This was a surprise to many, including many Communists who thought that his resignation harmed their party. In all other Central Asian states, the first secretaries retained their posts.

The first presidential election of Tajikistan in the independent period was scheduled for November 24, 1991. On August 31, the Supreme Soviet chose Qadriddin Aslonov, the chairman of parliament, as acting president who would serve until elections. To the surprise of many, Aslonov made a large number of major changes that would destabilize the political situation, and polarize different forces in the republic. One of his first steps was to ban the Communist Party. During his term, the Lenin statue in the main square of Dushanbe was removed (with the approval of the mayor Maqsud Ikromov), and the IRP was legalized. Aslonov was able to stay as acting president for only 23 days before the parliament ousted him on September 23. Upon Aslonov's removal, Parliament removed the ban on the Communist Party, banned the IRP again, elected Rahmon Nabiev (the former Communist Party first secretary who had served before Mahkamov) as the chairman of the parliament, and also appointed him acting president.⁵⁷

Aslonov's policies and the reactions of Communist played an important role in the polarization of the political atmosphere in Tajikistan. Although Communists had apparently supported Aslonov's acting presidency, viewing him as a good Communist, many suspected him of shifting quickly to the opposition. The Communists felt they had made a big mistake in believing in him.⁵⁸ According to some he was a supporter of the opposition's demands, although he seemed close to the Communists. According to others, he just wanted to do the same things that were being done in other ex-Soviet republics.

⁵⁶ *Izvestia*, 5 September 1991.

⁵⁷ On the events in this period see: *Izvestia*, 23 September 1991: 1; *Izvestia*, 24 September 1991: 1-2.

⁵⁸ Author's interviews with the party members of the period in Dushanbe.

One informant said: “In my opinion, Aslonov remained between the Communists and the opposition. He always remained a Communist. He wanted to do what other presidents were doing in the other republics. However, the Communists thought that he was harming us, and they returned to Nabiev.”⁵⁹

Another informant said that “Aslonov chose the opposition side. The Communists brought him to power. They believed in him. But they were astonished later. They made a mistake in believing him. He decided that statues of Lenin should be destroyed, and the Communist party should be closed. He chose to support opposition demands.”⁶⁰

Although his actions in removing statues of Lenin and banning the Communist Party paralleled those in Uzbekistan, his actions precipitated a reaction by Communist hardliners because he was only an interim president, and he had undertaken major initiatives without a consensus among major political actors. The Communists reacted immediately, returning the pre-1985 first secretary to power, as they thought he would preserve the status quo. After Aslonov’s dismissal, a three-week opposition demonstration in Dushanbe starting September 23 protested the changes in government, and demanded new presidential elections.

The results of the presidential election on November 24, 1991—and accusations of irregularities during the election—further polarized forces in the republic. The opposition was able to unite around a common candidate, Davlat Khudonazarov (a cinematographer and reformist deputy in the USSR Congress of the People’s Deputies). Electoral results showed that the opposition had considerable electoral power: Khudonazarov received 30 percent of the votes, but Nabiev became the president with 58 percent. The opposition did not accept the results, claiming election fraud. Many opposition figures reported such irregularities as Nabiev supporters changing real ballot boxes with fake ones full of votes for Nabiev, or

⁵⁹ Author’s interview with a leader of one of the parties in Tajikistan, Dushanbe.

⁶⁰ Author’s interview with a vice minister in one of the ministries in Tajikistan, Dushanbe.

giving extra ballots to Nabiev supporters.⁶¹ According to the opposition, Khudonazarov actually received at least 40 percent of the votes.

After the elections, Nabiev started a crackdown against the opposition targeting political parties and opposition figures. Through these actions, it appears that Nabiev was trying to consolidate his power and bring his supporters to key posts. He replaced Aslonov as Chairman of the Supreme Soviet with one of his clients, Safarali Kenjaev.⁶² Harassment of the DPT and IRP began. Many members of DPT, Rastokhez and IRP were arrested in the beginning of 1992. New laws curtailed the freedom of the press and the right to assembly. In particular, the law on the press adopted in spring 1992 made criticism of the government a crime. Mirbobo Mirrahim, one of the leaders of Rastokhez, was put on probation for allegedly insulting Kenjaev. Legal proceedings were brought against the leader of the Democratic Party, Shadmon Yusuf, for insulting the honor and dignity of President Nabiev. The mayor of Dushanbe, Maqsud Ikromov, was arrested on March 6, 1992 on corruption charges, but according to many, the real reason was related to the removal of the Lenin statue.⁶³ The Minister of Internal Affairs (MVD), Mahmadayoz Navjuvanov, was dismissed in March, charged with refusing to use force against demonstrators during the September demonstrations. Safarali Kenjaev made a speech on TV against Navjuvanov, blaming him for exceeding his authority. In March, supporters of Navjuvanov gathered in Shahidon Square in Dushanbe and called for Kenjaev's resignation.⁶⁴ This demonstration became the beginning of large demonstrations in the capital.

During this period, Nabiev's efforts at consolidation appear to have hardened lines of division, and united the opposition. After the presidential elections, his priority was placing

⁶¹ Author's interviews with opposition leaders of the period, Dushanbe.

⁶² *Narodnaya Gazeta*, Dushanbe, 3 December 1991, translated in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 17 January 1992.

⁶³ Author's interviews with political figures of the period, Dushanbe 2004 January. About these events and crackdown against opposition figures also see: *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 10 March 1992.

⁶⁴ On accusations against Navjuvanov by Kenjaev and following events see: *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 28 March 1992 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 31 March 1992.

his own network in power. His personnel changes antagonized those who were purged, and encouraged them to become opponents of the Nabiev government. The attack against both nomenklatura and the opposition strengthened and enlarged the opposition to Nabiev. In addition to the Pamiri supporters of Navjuvanov (himself a Pamiri), many other groups who were dissatisfied with the government began coming to this square and joining the demonstrations. They demanded the dissolution of parliament, new elections, the release of Dushanbe mayor Ikromov, and the removal of Safarali Kenjaev.⁶⁵

My informants confirmed that the meetings in Shahidon Square brought together the opposition against the government. As one opposition leader said: “There were some differences of opinion between the Islamists and the democratic opposition. On some issues we had cooperated before. Earlier Rastokhez, the DP, Lali Badakhshan, and the IRP were working separately, sometimes cooperating. But the main alliance began during the meetings in Shahidan. The IRP and the democratic opposition united in order to oppose the government.”⁶⁶

After almost a full month, opposition demonstrators received no response to their demands. Finally, on April 22, 1992, Kenjaev met the demands of demonstrators and resigned.⁶⁷ The demonstrations quickly stopped as a result of the resignation. Pro-government demonstrations began on April 24, this time in Ozodi Square (formerly Lenin Square). Demonstrators on Ozodi Square supported Kenjaev, demanding that he be restored to his position.⁶⁸ After these demonstrations, Kenjaev was appointed as the head of the Committee of National Security, formerly the KGB. As a response to the counter-demonstrations and

⁶⁵ About the arrest of Ikromov and resulting demonstrations see: *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 23 March 1992: 3 in *FBIS-USR-92-040*, 10 April 1992: 93-94.

⁶⁶ Author's interview with the leader of one of the opposition parties, Dushanbe, 2004.

⁶⁷ *ITAR-TASS*, 22 April 1992.

⁶⁸ Author's interview with one of the leaders of Kenjaev's supporters.

Kenjaev's appointment, opposition supporters began their demonstrations again. After these developments, demonstrations in both squares took the shape of permanent encampments.⁶⁹

At this point an important development occurred which would bring the country to civil war: Nabiev decided to establish a presidential guard, organize local militias, and arm his supporters. Nabiev established a National Guard on May 2, 1992. On May 3, 1992 the parliament restored Kenjaev to his place as Chairman of Parliament.⁷⁰ Just two days later, on May 5, the National Guard tried to break up the demonstrations.⁷¹ Dozens of people died. Nabiev distributed 1800 automatic rifles to people on Ozodi Square. In May 1992, after the distribution of weapons, street fights began in Dushanbe. In two days, as many as 60 people died.⁷²

During the May 1992 crisis, the opposition forces took the capital under their control and established a revolutionary council. After these successes of the opposition, Nabiev agreed to form a coalition government on May 11. However, the majority of the newly established coalition government went to the ruling elite, with few positions going to the opposition. Among those few were Davlat Usmon (deputy chairman of IRP), who became deputy Prime Minister. Also Mirbobob Mirrahim of Rastokhez, and the deputy chair of the Tajik Language Foundation, became Chairman of the State Television and Radio Committee. However, the local governments in Leninabad and Kulyab did not recognize Nabiev's concessions, or the legitimacy of the new government. The fighting in the capital did not stop, but rather intensified. By mid-May the demonstrations in the capital were over. People left Dushanbe and returned to their hometowns, at which point fights began in these regions.

Nabiev's actions against the opposition appear to have been shaped by two major factors. The first was the country's elite structure (as explained in Chapter 3), which thanks to

⁶⁹ *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 27 April 1992.

⁷⁰ *ITAR-TASS*, 3 May 1992.

⁷¹ Walter Ruby, "Tajik President Creates Guard to Crush Protests", *Christian Science Monitor* 6 (May 1992).

⁷² Gregory Gleason, *The Central Asian States: Discovering Independence* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997) 106.

Soviet regional policies centered around one dominant faction. The second factor is that this elite structure remained unchanged in Tajikistan. The ruling elite had become used to being in control of the leadership and holding important positions. They lacked strong intra-party challengers, and were able to easily eliminate challengers from this quarter. This likely left Tajikistan's ruling elite with the perception of being powerful. Many informants reported that the Khujandi elite were very self-confident throughout the conflict, and seemingly unable to comprehend the threat of another group taking control of the country. Some informants reported that even at the end, the Khujandi elite did not lose this self-confidence, and expected that no matter what the outcome, the "low" qualification of other groups would force them to turn to Khujandis to rule the country.⁷³

One informant stated:

Over the course of a long period, the Leninabadis had gotten used to ruling the country, being in the leadership, and holding important positions. It did not occur to them that they would be overthrown one day. Even at the end the Leninabadi elite did not lose this self-confidence. The Leninabadi elite waited for the Kulyabis to offer them to be president. The Leninabadis expected to be asked to assume political leadership. Even if people from other regions were to come to power, the Leninabadis were confident that it would soon become apparent that they were incapable of running the country, and that the new regime would have to call on the services of the Khujandis.⁷⁴

Another informant said:

Khujandis always thought that after some time, they would come back again. They thought that way. Even when Rahmonov became the head in the 16th session, Khujandis thought that 'for the time being it was all right for a Kulyabi to be the leader, and that anyway after two years they themselves would be leaders once again. This is what they thought. They thought that the Kulyabis still need to deal with the opposition who had kept Dushanbe. After the Kulyabis finished off the opposition, they would come to power. However in the end they were eliminated, declared

⁷³ Author's interviews with various politicians both from Khujand and other regions of Tajikistan.

⁷⁴ Author's interview with a prominent Tajik historian in Dushanbe.

persona non grata, sent out of the country, etc. Things did not happen as Khujandis expected.⁷⁵

Other informants gave similar accounts. For example, according to one, “Khujandis never thought that they could be replaced by Kulyabis. But this is exactly what happened in the end.”⁷⁶ Another stated: “Khujandis did not participate in the war. They waited, and thought that Garmis and Kulyabis would fight, and exhaust each other; and then at the end, the Khujandis would intervene and be the leaders again.”⁷⁷

This overconfidence of the old elite seems to have disinclined them to communicate or negotiate with opponents either inside or outside of the party; and emboldened them to attack all the opposition at once. This uncompromising and repressive attitude seems to have played a role in uniting the opposition. Meanwhile, the elite’s overconfidence and refusal to negotiate led to a polarization of the political environment, and eventually to violent conflict.

Karimov’s consolidation of power

Developments took a different shape in Uzbekistan. Karimov, like Nabiev, sought to consolidate his power after he came to power. However his actions, influenced by the elite structure and processes in Uzbekistan, were different from those of Nabiev. As described above, power was geographically more evenly distributed in Uzbekistan than in Tajikistan. In addition, as a result of the events and processes which brought Karimov to power, he needed to negotiate and give concessions to the powerful elites; he did not carry out an overall attack against the opposition inside and outside the party until he consolidated his power. In addition, he tried to co-opt his rivals whenever possible. He also convinced one wing of the opposition that they could work within the system. His tactics divided the opposition. Unlike his counterparts in Tajikistan, Karimov did not implement an overall attack against his rivals,

⁷⁵ Author’s interview with the head of one of the state committees who was close to events at that time, Dushanbe.

⁷⁶ Author’s interview with one of the leaders of an opposition party in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

⁷⁷ Author’s interview with a Tajik academician in Dushanbe.

and therefore elites did not feel a sudden threat to their positions and power. As a result Karimov was able to consolidate his power gradually.

Events in the immediate aftermath of the August coup went more smoothly in Uzbekistan than Tajikistan. Karimov resigned from the Communist Party on August 23, 1991. On August 26, 1991 Uzbekistan nationalized the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the KGB; and on August 30, 1991, the property of the Uzbekistan Communist Party. Remnants of the Uzbekistan Communist Party became the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan in September 1991.⁷⁸

Carlisle argues that Karimov's rise to power in June 1989 was unexpected, and that he remained politically insecure during the next five years. As noted above, Karimov was an outsider to the party nomenklatura. According to Carlisle, Karimov was dependent on the local politicians who engineered his promotion. This situation prolonged and complicated Karimov's consolidation of power, which did not happen until January 1992.⁷⁹

Karimov did not repress the opposition immediately after becoming party first secretary. He had to balance the interests of different factions. He had come to power with the agreement of prominent political actors in the republic, but his staying in power depended on how well he satisfied their expectations. His position was not yet unchallengeable against other prominent former communists who had considerable support in the Supreme Soviet.

In October 1991, about one month after Uzbekistan's declaration of independence, around 200 Supreme Soviet deputies signed a letter criticizing Karimov's policies and calling on him to resign. The most prominent supporter of this action was vice president Shukrulla Mirsaidov.⁸⁰ Critchlow notes that in June 1991, people in Tashkent were talking about the

⁷⁸ Gregory Gleason, "Uzbekistan: from Statehood to Nationhood?" in *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States*, eds., Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 349.

⁷⁹ Donald S Carlisle, "Geopolitics and Ethnic Problems of Uzbekistan and Its Neighbors," in *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, ed., Yaacov Ro' (London: Frank Cass, 1995) 79-80.

⁸⁰ Fierman 1997, p.378. About the criticisms in the Supreme Soviet session see: *Pravda*, 3 October 91, in *FBIS-USR-91-041*, 22 October 1991: 77.

feud between the two. A rumor was circulating that Karimov planned to oust Mirsaidov at a Supreme Soviet meeting, but the resistance by his supporters was so strong that he could not do this.⁸¹ Shukrulla Mirsaidov was Karimov's old ally and friend. They knew each other from when they both worked in the Ministry of Finance. Mirsaidov was also among the people who brought Karimov to his post in June 1989. After this date Karimov had to share power with him, probably as a part of the agreement that brought Karimov to the post of first secretary. Because Karimov was not all-powerful, he found himself in a position where he needed to negotiate and share power with the intra-party rivals at the beginning. At first Mirsaidov became the prime minister. After Karimov became the president, Mirsaidov came to the post of vice president in March 1990. However, as Karimov began to attempt to consolidate his power, a power struggle began.⁸²

After the actions of the Supreme Soviet, Karimov concentrated his efforts in consolidating his authority over Mirsaidov and his allies in the parliament. After the abolition of the Communist Party, he created the Peoples' Democratic Party of Uzbekistan. He became the chair and took the party under his control. He abolished the post of vice presidency. He consolidated his power over the parliament and judicial branch. With the changes made in the constitution, he acquired the authority to appoint and dismiss the prime minister and his deputies, the cabinet of ministers, and judges. He also gained the right to dissolve parliament.

The struggle between Karimov and Mirsaidov culminated in early 1992, when Karimov downgraded the post of vice presidency on January 8. On January 16, student demonstrations erupted in Tashkent.⁸³ Although the stated reason was to protest the price increases and economic conditions, Carlisle concludes that they were actually related to

⁸¹ Critchlow, 1991b.

⁸² Carlisle, 1991a.

⁸³ On the details of events during the Tashkent student demonstrations see: *Izvestiya*, 20 January 1992: 1-2 in *FBIS-USR-92-008*, 27 January 1992: 74-75; *Moscow News*, no.5, 2-9 February 1992: 5 in *FBIS-USR-92-039*, 8 April 1992: 85-86; *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 18 January 1992: 3; *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 21 January 1992: 1.

Mirsaidov's downgrading and the power struggle in the political elite.⁸⁴ My informants also confirmed that there were such suspicions at the time. Many thought that there could be a relationship between these events and Mirsaidov's downgrading. The demonstrations had come just after Mirsaidov was ousted from power, and Karimov at the time also implied that Mirsaidov could be behind the events. During the demonstrations Abdumannob Polatov and Muhammad Solih, respectively the leaders of Birlik and Erk, tried to calm the crowd. In commenting on the crisis, Karimov acknowledged the positive role of some of the opposition groups. According to some reports, he also publicly promised the registration of Birlik party and the IRP. Fierman states, "He also stated that unlike certain individuals who were invested with power, Birlik did not engage in filthy provocation. The later was almost certainly a reference to Shukrulla Mirsaidov... [whom] Karimov had recently demoted."⁸⁵ Karimov was successful in getting rid of Mirsaidov and many of his supporters, over time replacing them with his own supporters.⁸⁶ Only after January 1992 was Karimov safe in his post; only then did he begin consolidating power. Unlike Nabiev, Karimov refrained from attacking his opponents until he consolidated his power. Only after consolidating his power did he begin to establish authoritarian control.

In order to increase his legitimacy and create a power base for himself, Karimov tried to gain the support of the Samarkand elite. Because Karimov was not an insider in the party nomenklatura, he lacked his own personal political machine, and this made him rely on the old Communist establishment. Carlisle and Fierman argue that Karimov's rehabilitation of Sharaf Rashidov should be viewed as a concession to the establishment, and a means to enhance his own legitimacy. To this end he tried to win the support of the Samarkand elite by rehabilitating Rashidov. Carlisle writes, "this unexpected turnabout must be read as a

⁸⁴ Carlisle, 1995, p.198.

⁸⁵ Fierman, 1997, p.383.

⁸⁶ On the power struggle with Mirsaidov and related events see: *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 16 January 1992: 1, in *FBIS-USR-92-015*, 18 February 1992: 118.

Karimov tactic in a continuing struggle to win the support of Uzbek regional elites which [were] still rooted in the old order.”⁸⁷

As one informant stated: “Karimov was not a top figure. He was not one of the top Samarkand politicians. He was not one of them. But when he came to power he brought many members of the old Samarkandi elite, if not to their same old posts, to other posts of a similar level. He tried to win their support.”⁸⁸

In the literature on Central Asia some authors, such as Kubicek and Dannreuther, establish a link between liberalization and violent conflicts in the region. They argue that repressive policies and authoritarian rule are safeguards for the stability in the region.⁸⁹ Kubicek argues that a key source of the peace and order in Uzbekistan was the authorities’ repressive policies. Dannreuther argues that sacrifice of political liberalism and the repression of opposition is a contributory factor to stability in Central Asia. These explanations suggest that authorities repressed opposition in Uzbekistan, but not in Tajikistan, and that this is one of the explanations for the different outcomes in terms of civil war in the two countries. However, this was actually not the case. In fact, as described above, the opposition was repressed in Tajikistan. Moreover, the Uzbekistan leadership was not always repressive. Indeed, periodic thaws punctuated authoritarian control in Uzbekistan. I argue that these were related to the consolidation efforts of Karimov and the events in Tajikistan. The regime in Uzbekistan became more repressive against the opposition as a reaction to events in Tajikistan after May 1992.

Karimov did not launch an overall attack against the opposition at the beginning. This may be because of the position of Karimov within the party and the existence of strong intra-party rivals. Perhaps he hoped that they would draw away support from the intra-party

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 82.

⁸⁸ Author’s interview with a member of one of the prominent Samarkand elite families.

⁸⁹ Paul Kubicek, “Authoritarianism in Central Asia: Curse or Cure?” *Third World Quarterly* 19.1 (1998); Roland Dannreuther, “Creating New States in Central Asia” *Adelphi Paper* No. 288, (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, March 1994): 71-72.

opposition. A thaw in Uzbekistan's political life followed independence. During the first years of Karimov's rule, relations between government and the opposition movements were not bad. Karimov opened up new opportunities for informal groups to operate. He entered into dialogue with Birlik and other informal organizations. In the fall of 1989, the Tashkent Oblast Party Committee held its first official meeting with leaders of Birlik, Intersoiuz and the Democratic Movement of Uzbekistan.⁹⁰

The government's promises to cooperate with the opposition might have played a role in the division of the opposition in Uzbekistan. If the government had been less eager to conduct dialogue and repressed all opposition groups, the latter might have been more inclined to unite against the government. It appears that a cooperative attitude played a role in the splitting of the opposition fronts in Uzbekistan. One wing of Birlik left the group and established its own organization. Not only the division of Birlik, but the inability of all the opposition to unite against the government in Uzbekistan can be related to the initial pro-dialogue attitude of the regime towards the opposition. Opportunities for the opposition to operate, along with the regime's promises of cooperation and recognition, might have played a role. The government differentiated among various elements of the opposition. Authorities showed a relatively positive attitude towards Erk. Erk was the only officially recognized opposition party to the PDP (People's Democratic Party).⁹¹ Erk members had reason to believe that they would be freer to air their ideas, and that they could remain within the system. Fierman writes that

Many interlocutors interviewed in Tashkent in 1989 and 1990 felt that Muhammad Solih had been 'bought off' by the regime. Some were certain that Islam Karimov had even urged Solih to break off from Birlik and form his own organization...there is evidence that in 1990 Islam Karimov facilitated the creation of Solih's moderate group.⁹²

⁹⁰ Fierman, 1997, p.369.

⁹¹ PDP is the government party, successor of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, its chairman was Karimov until 1996. In June 1996 he departed from the party.

⁹² Fierman, 1997, pp.372-373.

Karimov used not only the opposition political movements to balance one another, but intra-party opposition as well. When the intra-party opposition against him was high, Karimov was less oppressive of the opposition movements. In the fall of 1991, around the time when the Supreme Soviet deputies signed a letter against Karimov, and he did not have an unchallengeable position vis-à-vis other actors, we see a “political thaw” in Uzbekistan. Karimov allowed a presidential race in which he permitted his rival to appeal openly for support. Other political forces such as Birlik and IRP were not persecuted. Birlik achieved formal registration.⁹³ Even after the Tashkent demonstrations in January 1992, Karimov praised the positive role played by the opposition groups. He announced that Birlik party and the IRP would soon be registered. However, after he eliminated his in-party rivals and made agreements with the political power networks within the party, he launched an overall attack against all the opposition by July 1992.⁹⁴

Karimov’s consolidation of power appears to have encouraged him to repress such opposition groups as Birlik, the IRP, and even Erk. A second factor which made Karimov regime more repressive against the opposition groups in Uzbekistan was the influence of the events in Tajikistan in May 1992. As Daria Fane notes, the major crackdown against the opposition in Uzbekistan began in the summer of 1992. At this time, the Karimov regime became more repressive against the opposition as a reaction to events in Tajikistan.

The key turning point was May 1992 when Tajikistan’s president Nabiev was forced to accept a coalition government that included the opposition. As the situation in Tajikistan accelerated into civil war at the end of 1992, Uzbekistan’s domestic crackdown intensified, until by 1994 most of the key figures that were identifiable as sources of potential challenges to Tashkent had been silenced-beaten, arrested, or driven out of the country...

⁹³ Fierman, 1997, pp.372-373.

⁹⁴ Fierman, 1997, p.383.

Much of Uzbekistan's fear of instability, including ethnic and communal violence, was driven by the specter of neighboring Tajikistan's disintegration into civil war...the government of Uzbekistan set itself on a course systematically to wipe out domestic sources of opposition. Uzbekistan's domestic crackdown can be linked directly to the events in Tajikistan, and a timeline of their parallel development shows how Uzbekistan's authoritarianism developed in reaction to events in the neighboring state.⁹⁵

Bess Brown also sees early summer 1992 as the key turning point:

The brief honeymoon of greater tolerance for political diversity in Uzbekistan ended up abruptly in June 1992. The previous month a coalition of self designated democratic, nationalist, Islamic parties and movements in Tajikistan had succeeded in forcing Tajik president Rakhman Nabiev to include several members of the opposition in his government. Karimov immediately condemned this limited power sharing arrangement....⁹⁶

In May 1992, when Tajikistan's opposition forced Nabiev to give in, Karimov began attacking his own opposition, and pressures against them intensified. The Uzbekistan regime began to use arrests, beatings and other types of coercion.⁹⁷ A group of men attacked and badly beat Abdurahim Polatov on the street. The regime began to suppress Erk as well. As a result of the intensified suppression against his party, Solih resigned from the Supreme Soviet in July 1992. He eventually abandoned the official political process and left the country.⁹⁸ In July 1992 the parliament passed a law which gave it the right to curtail the powers of deputies before the expiration of their terms. In August, Mirsaidov resigned from his seat in the parliament.⁹⁹ Abdulla Otaev, head of the IRP, was abducted from his home by six armed men in December 1992 and never heard from again. In the following months the regime used

⁹⁵ Fane, 1996, p.271, 282.

⁹⁶ Bess Brown, "Tajik Civil War Prompts Crackdown in Uzbekistan," *RFE/RL Research Report*, 2.11 (12 March 1993).

⁹⁷ Fane, 1996, p.285. On the repression against the opposition in this period see: *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 11 July 1992: 2 in *FBIS-USR-92-092*, 22 July 1992: 75; on the change in initial policies of dialog with the opposition see: *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 11 July 1992: 2 in *FBIS-USR-92-092*, 22 July 1992: 75-76.

⁹⁸ About Solih's resignation from the seat in the parliament see: *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 1 August 1992: 3 in *FBIS-USR-92-103*, 14 August 1992: 89.

⁹⁹ *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 22 August 1992: 3 in *FBIS-USR-92-117*, 13 September 1992: 117.

many methods to force other non-compliant deputies to leave office as well. At the same time the Uzbekistan regime coopted the former supporters of the opposition. For example, the leader of the party Progress of the Homeland, which was a supporter of the government and Karimov, established at the end of May 1992, was a former Birlik activist Usmon Azim.¹⁰⁰

In Uzbekistan, Karimov's consolidation strategies were successful in increasing his power vis-à-vis other potential opponents. He was able to concentrate power in the executive branch, especially in the presidency. He monopolized power in the hands of the president and the main policy-making organ within the executive apparatus—the Office of the President. In addition, in order to gain control over the regions, Karimov created the powerful institution of regional governors (hokims). The hokims of the regions and city of Tashkent, which were given very wide powers in the territories under their control, are appointed and dismissed by the president, and are directly accountable to him.

Karimov was thus able to take decision-making in the country under his control. As a result of his strategies, power became concentrated in the hands of Karimov and people around him. According to the accounts of many interviewees, however, although he became the strongest actor in the republic, he was still obliged to take into consideration the other powerful actors and the balance among them.

The different power consolidation methods of Nabiev and Karimov had important repercussions. The techniques of the Karimov regime were successful in dividing the opposition and incorporating some members of the opposition into the system. He was able to eliminate challengers within his party as well. In Uzbekistan the opposition could not manage to unite, and remained divided. The tactics of authorities played a role in this. In trying to consolidate its power in Tajikistan the Nabiev government simultaneously attacked opponents inside and outside the party. This united the opposition actors in Tajikistan. Both in Tajikistan

¹⁰⁰ *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 20 August 1992: 3, *FBIS-USR-92-117*, 13 September 1992: 117; Fierman, 1997: 389.

and Uzbekistan, there were also dynamics within the opposition which affected the level of unity of the opposition. These dynamics will be identified in the next chapter.

In this chapter I have attempted to describe critical differences between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in terms of events and processes and to explain their impact on elite perceptions, behaviors, and subsequent events. The influence of the purges in Uzbekistan and their absence in Tajikistan produced different elite perceptions and behaviors in the two republics. It appears that the resentment created by purges in Uzbekistan unified the Uzbek elite against the intrusions of the center, and induced them to find a common solution to protect their positions. It was this resentment that made the Uzbek elite come to an agreement on the election of a new republic leader. The existence of major ethnic clashes in Uzbekistan, and their absence in Tajikistan, had important consequences as well. While the ethnic clashes in Uzbekistan delegitimized the incumbent first secretary and led to his removal, there was no comparable purge and ethnic conflict in Tajikistan at this time, and no similar delegitimization or change of the existing leadership.

The events and processes helped strengthen the power perceptions of the existing leadership in Tajikistan. They perceived themselves as powerful and unchallengeable. The ruling elite in Tajikistan was undisturbed by the purges that swept the Uzbek elite, and the major ethnic clashes that would delegitimize it. Intra-party challengers were weak, and these were eliminated after the events in Dushanbe. Until Aslonov's actions they did not feel any threat to their positions, and after his quick removal, they brought a former first secretary, Nabiev, to power. He, sharing the same perceptions, began a crackdown against the entire opposition.

Aslonov's actions polarized the political forces. In fact, Aslonov did many of the same things that were done in Uzbekistan, e.g., removing statues of Lenin and banning the Communist Party. In Uzbekistan such actions did not create a reaction. One difference is that

unlike Karimov, Aslonov was only acting president, chosen to serve until the elections were held. In addition, he undertook major initiatives without a consensus among major political actors. It appears that these factors undermined his legitimacy and created a reaction from the Communist hardliners.

A crucial difference between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan lay in the attitude of the opposition groups during presidential elections. Unlike the united opposition in Tajikistan, in Uzbekistan the opposition was not able to agree on the name of a common candidate in the presidential elections. Perhaps as a result, the leading opposition candidate in the presidential elections in Uzbekistan received fewer votes than the opposition candidate in Tajikistan—allegedly only 12 percent. The opposition's greater success in Tajikistan strengthened them and confirmed their power-perceptions.

Another important difference between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan during the transitional period was the actions of the new party leaders against other political actors. As a result of their different power perceptions resulting from the structural differences that I explained in Chapter 3 and of different events and processes in the republics explained in this chapter, presidents Nabiev and Karimov behaved differently against intra-party and external opposition. As I explained in Chapter 3, regional policies had left one faction dominant in Tajikistan. This ruling elite was not disturbed by the purges and ethnic conflicts, and eliminated its rivals within the party. These strengthened their confidence and made them unwilling to negotiate with the opposition. Nabiev, in an effort to bring his own supporters to every post, attacked both the in-party challengers as well as the outside opposition. His broad attacks against the entire opposition encouraged forces to unite in an enlarged front opposing the government. In Tajikistan the opposition was united; they had showed their electoral potential during presidential elections and they were able to mobilize large among of people. Their self-confidence was also high and they could see themselves as a serious challenger to

the existing regime. It appears that both the government and the opposition saw a chance that they could win against the other.

In Uzbekistan power was more evenly distributed among three powerful factions. Purges had the effect of uniting the native elite and encouraged agreement among them on a new leader. The specific circumstance of Karimov's rise to power influenced how he acted once selected. He had come to power with an agreement of prominent political actors in the republic but his staying in power depended on how he satisfied their expectations. When Karimov came to power, he needed to bargain, negotiate, and give concessions to powerful elites; he did not launch a broad attack on all opposition until he consolidated his power. Perhaps he thought that permitting political activity by opposition groups would help curtail opposition within the party. In addition, he convinced one wing of the outside opposition that they could work within the system, and in this way he was able to divide the opposition. In addition, he tried to co-opt some members of the opposition, and win over to his side the Samarkand elite that had been purged during the 1980s. Since Karimov did not carry out an overall attack against his rivals, elites did not feel a sudden threat to their positions and power. As a result, Karimov was able to consolidate his power gradually. However in Tajikistan attacking all opposition at once was destabilizing and united the opposition. After Nabiev came to power he tried to consolidate his authority, putting his supporters into important positions and purging others. In Uzbekistan, however, for pragmatic reasons Karimov temporarily agreed to the vice-presidency of one of his opponents. As he consolidated his power, Karimov began to attack his opponents and one by one the regime targeted opposition which could not unite and develop a joint counter-program.

The policies of the central party towards Uzbekistan and Tajikistan were very similar during the glasnost years, as were the policies of the republican governments towards religious and national issues. Nor were there noticeable differences in the issues raised by the

popular movements, the structure and agenda of the opposition movements, or the reaction of governments towards these movements and their ideas (or to the August coup). Therefore none of these seem capable of explaining the different outcomes in the republics. Rather, the difference appears to lie with the impact of events and processes on elite perceptions and behaviors. Processes were causal factors in the eruption of conflicts, in interaction with some structural factors identified in the previous chapter. The presence or absence of these factors can significantly affect the outcome. The events in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan changed the initial power structures. While the events in Tajikistan increased the power-perceptions of the opposition, the events in Uzbekistan decreased the opposition's power-perceptions and increased the power-perceptions of Karimov regime. The ruling elite in Tajikistan maintained its self-confidence throughout the conflict. Power evaluations of the opposition were also influenced by the actions of governments and within opposition dynamics. These dynamics will be discussed in the next chapter. One important theoretical conclusion resulting from these analyses is that not only structural factors, but also events and processes are important. Actor behaviors are influenced by both structure and processes, not only one of these. While structure influences process, process also influences the structure. It is not the separate influence of structure, processes and agency, but the interactions among them which shape the outcome. This chapter has also shown that actor actions are relational. Agents act in response to others' actions. The actions of opposition in both countries were influenced by the actions of governments and vice versa. There are multiple determinants of actor behaviors - structure, agency, process, and actions of other actors.

CHAPTER FIVE

Network Establishment, Network Activation and Violence Specialists

This chapter will identify the mechanisms which shaped the eruption of civil war in Tajikistan. The mechanisms of network establishment and network activation by the elites, together with the establishment of local militias and their involvement in the war, were important factors which brought about the eruption of violence. The existence of these mechanisms in Tajikistan, and their absence in Uzbekistan, led to different outcomes in the two countries in terms of civil war.

The first part of the chapter will discuss the role of a mediator, Turajonzoda, who established links between formerly unrelated opposition groups. In so doing, he turned the opposition into a strong force, united against the government. This contributed to the emergence of violent conflict in Tajikistan.

The second part will discuss the network activations of political elites during the demonstrations in Dushanbe, when elites on both sides brought their supporters to the capital for support. By “network activation” I mean the use which they made of their previously-established relationships and connections, which they invoked in order to secure support and protect their own interests. I identify this as an important mechanism because it represented the first significant mobilization of regional networks, bringing people in from regions and significantly contributing to the eruption of civil war. Another mechanism in the eruption of civil war that I identify was the activation of violence specialists by political elites. Their establishment of contact with illegal groups and mobilizing them for support helped ignite the civil war in Tajikistan. These mechanisms were absent in Uzbekistan. Although similar loyalties and network relations existed in Uzbekistan, the elite did not activate them.

Finally I will explore some questions raised in the literature on violent conflict theories and the civil war in Tajikistan, such as the role of regionalism, and the ordinary people's motivation.

THE ROLE OF NETWORK-ESTABLISHING MEDIATORS

A comparison of Turajonzoda in Tajikistan and his counterpart Muhammad Yusuf in Uzbekistan shows the importance of individual actors in conflict situations. Turajonzoda acted as a mediator among different groups, and played a large role in the unification of the opposition in Tajikistan. I argue that the presence of such a personality can be critical in conflict situations. Why did Turajonzoda choose to side with the opposition? Why was there no such personality in Uzbekistan? Or if there was, why did he not make the same choice as Turajonzoda? The example of Turajonzoda shows the significance of networks and agency during conflicts.

Qazi Akbar Turajonzoda

Qazi Akbar Turajonzoda was a very significant personality during the events in Tajikistan. Of all the Central Asian republics, only in Tajikistan did different segments of the opposition unite. Many informants mentioned Turajonzoda's efforts to bring together people with different viewpoints in the opposition.¹ Turajonzoda worked as a mediator and broker, establishing links among groups (some of them formerly unrelated) that would form the united opposition. These groups included various Islamic groups as well the nationalist opposition. Without his efforts and his previous ties to different opposition groups, this unification might not have been achieved.

¹ Author's interviews with various members of political and academic elite of Tajikistan.

Turajonzoda was born in Kafernihon, near Dushanbe, into a family of Sufi dignitaries. His grandfather, Sufi Abdukarim, was a respected religious authority who was purged in the 1930s and sent to Siberia. His father was Ishon Turajon, a Naqshibandi leader. Turajonzoda received his religious education in a madrassah in Bukhara, and then in the Islamic institute in Tashkent. He then went to Jordan to continue his education at Amman University. After later working in the Department of International Relations of the Muslim Spiritual Board of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, he was appointed Qazi Kalon (Supreme Judge of Islamic Law, the head of the Muslim Spiritual Board) of Tajikistan in 1988.

The Qaziyat (the Muslim Spiritual Board of Tajikistan) had been subordinate to the Muslim Spiritual Board of Central Asia and Kazakhstan in Tashkent and was also under the control of the party and government in Dushanbe. However, as the new qazi, Akbar Turajonzoda made a number of changes after his appointment. He was a very active qazi and took advantage of the relaxation of pressure on religion. During his term as qazi, many new mosques and madrassahs were opened. Thanks to his efforts, an Islamic institute to train teachers and clerics was opened in Dushanbe in 1990. Also, new publications on Islam were published during his term.

Some of Turajonzoda's actions as qazi provoked anger among imams. For example, he established a commission to examine the imams, in order to replace certain old imams who were deemed insufficiently knowledgeable about the Quran and Sharia. In accordance with the statute of the Muslim Spiritual Board of Tajikistan, Turajonzoda had very significant powers over the imams working in the mosques, including the right to hire and fire them. Turajonzoda's efforts to take the imams under his control caused some imams to resent him. The positions of his family members in the Qaziyat also aroused some resentment. Turajonzoda's father Ishon Turajon and his brother Saidnuriddin Turajonzoda were members of the Council of Ulema of the Qaziyat. His other brother Mahmudjon Turajonzoda was also

known to have informal links to the Qaziyat. Some imams accused Turajonzoda of bringing the Qaziyat under his family's domination.² In the later events in Tajikistan, imams who resented Turajonzoda sided with the government. It appears that self-interest and personal matters played a more important role in this division than religious or ideological differences.

Many scholars writing on the civil war in Tajikistan point to Khaidar Sharifzoda from Kulyab as an example of a religious figure who acted out of regional loyalties. In fact, however, it appears that his opposition was based more on personal matters. Sharifzoda was accused of appropriating the donations of parishioners for his own personal needs. Gretskey writes, "When summoned by the Qazi he craved the latter's indulgence and expressed his readiness to leave the post of chief imam khatib of Kulob province and be placed in a mosque in his native qishloq."³ However, when he returned to Kulyab he started a campaign against the Qazi, accused him of as being a Wahhabi and an enemy of the Kulyabi people. Sharifzoda was eventually to play an important role in mobilizing the Kulyabis on the side of pro-government forces.

Turajonzoda was the link which united official imams, Sufis, and political Islamists.⁴ Turajonzoda had the support of many other imams of mosques. In addition, he had the support of Sufi sheikhs and their followers because he came from a family of Sufi dignitaries and his father was a respected Sufi sheikh. One of the prominent leaders of the IRP, Mullah Said Abdullo Nuri, was the editor-in-chief of the Qaziyat's newspaper *Mimbari Islam* until its closure on May 29, 1992. Turajonzoda and Nuri had also known each other previously.

A dispute emerged between the traditionalists and the IRP over the latter's status as an Islamic party, which the traditionalists saw as contrary to Islam. They did not object to existing relations between state and religion, or approve of the direct involvement of religion

² Shirin Akiner, *Tajikistan: Disintegration or Reconciliation?*, (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2001).

³ Sergei Gretskey, "Profile: Qadi Akbar Turajonzoda," *Central Asia Monitor*, 1 (1994).

⁴ Author's interview with a representative of the IRP.

in politics. Accordingly, they accused the IRP of disrespecting or betraying Sunni Hanafi tradition. The Qazi had good relations both with the IRP and the traditionalists, who were composed mostly of Naqshibandi and Qadiri Ishans. Although these groups were suspicious of each other, in September 1991 Turajonzoda was able to convince them to unite against the government. His intervention helped prevent a possible clash between the “official” imams of the mosques, and the “unofficial” mullahs and the political wing of Islam represented by the IRP. He was a figure who could be accepted by both sides, and who had relationships with all relevant groups.⁵

People personally acquainted with Turajonzoda report that he chose to side with the opposition only after a long period of reflection.⁶ Initially Turajonzoda himself opposed the establishment of an Islamic party, did not support the IRP, and did not participate in its activities. It appears that at first he hoped that he could change the system from within. This is suggested, for example, by his initially good relations with state authorities and election to the Supreme Soviet in 1990. Working within the system in the Supreme Soviet, he presented proposals to establish laws which would make religious holidays state holidays, make Friday the day of rest, introduce observance of sharia in meat processing, and lower taxes that mosques paid on their land. These, however, were all rejected. At this point Turajonzoda began to support opposition causes. He apparently came to the realization that he could not make the changes he wanted by operating within the system.

Turajonzoda’s experiences in the Supreme Soviet brought him into contact with the nationalist opposition as well. During his tenure as a deputy of the Supreme Soviet he established relations with the leaders of the democratic opposition and discovered that they had common interests. They began to realize they could advance these among the majority of

⁵ Author’s interviews with leaders of the IRP.

⁶ Author’s interview with three members of the IRP who know Turajonzoda personally.

the deputies, most of whom were Communist apparatchiks. One of the democratic deputies with whom Turajonzoda began to work was Tohir Abdujabbor, the leader of Rastokhez.

Almost every informant whom I asked about Turajonzoda spoke of his charisma. He had a reputation for being intelligent, very knowledgeable, and able to speak foreign languages. People who witnessed the events during demonstrations in Dushanbe say that he could move or stop the people with one word. He knew how to talk and influence people.⁷ According to informants, he had the image among the populace of an honest and good man and a respected religious figure. He was also a skilled politician, which also helped him in bringing the opposition together. Gretskey, who was advisor to Turajonzoda between 1991 and 1993, writes that at the end of April 1992 the Qaziyat became the headquarters of the opposition, and that in general, Turajonzoda provided the overall leadership.⁸

Turajonzoda was influential in the coming together of the opposition groups in the presidential elections as well. In advance of presidential elections, the Qazi attempted to convince Nabiev and Khudonazarov to make an alliance during elections. According to this plan, Nabiev would run for presidency and after he won the elections he would bring Khudonazarov to the post of vice-president. However, their personal antipathies towards each other prevented this. When each party within the opposition tried to put forward its own presidential candidate, Turajonzoda persuaded all the parties to support Khudonazarov.

To summarize, Turajonzoda had relations with both “official” and “unofficial” mullahs, and was the link between the nationalist and Islamic opposition. Because of his position, he was able to mediate among the different opposition groups. Turajonzoda was not a member of any political party. He did not join any of the parties within the united opposition. Rather, he played the role of major link uniting opposition groups.

⁷ Author’s interviews with religious figures, IRP members and Tajik politicians.

⁸ Gretskey, 1994, p.23

Mufti Muhammad Sadik Muhammad Yusuf of Uzbekistan and the inability of the opposition to unite in Uzbekistan

A person in Uzbekistan who might have played a similar role was Mufti Muhammad Sadik Muhammad Yusuf, who had similar qualities, and possessed similar network relationships. Like Turajonzoda he was the head of his republic's official Islamic establishment; had ties with both "official" and "unofficial" Islamic groups; and was a deputy in the Supreme Soviet. However, he did not play the role of a mediator.

Muhammad Yusuf was from a well-known and respected religious family from the Fergana Valley. He was born in Andijan in 1953. His father was the mullah of Bulagbesh mosque. He graduated from the Mir Arab Islamic Higher School in Bukhara, and from the Imam Al-Bukhari Institute in Tashkent. He also attended an Islamic university in Libya.⁹ He served as deputy rector and then rector of the Imam Al-Bukhari Institute in Tashkent, before being appointed mufti and head of the Muslim Spiritual Board of Central Asia and Kazakhstan in February 1989.¹⁰ After becoming mufti he made important progress in terms of reviving Islamic education and practice in Uzbekistan. Under his leadership, and parallel to what happened in Tajikistan at about the same time, the Board built and restored many mosques and madrassas. Like Turajonzoda, he was elected deputy to the USSR Congress of People's Deputies.

Again like Turajonzoda, Muhammad Yusuf was a respected religious figure. As a deputy of the Supreme Soviet, he had a political role as well. He participated in the delegation that went to Fergana after the ethnic conflict in 1989. During the presidential elections his

⁹ Abdumannob Polat, "The Islamic Revival in Uzbekistan: A Threat to Stability?" in *Islam and Central Asia: An Enduring Legacy or an Evolving Threat?*, eds., Roald Sagdeev and Susan Eisenhower (Washington D.C: Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2000) 42.

¹⁰ Martha Brill Olcott, "Islam and Fundamentalism in Independent Central Asia," in *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, ed, Yaacov Ro'i (London: Frank Cass, 1995).

name was mentioned as a possible candidate.¹¹ In fact, there were reports of demonstrations in Kokand, Namangan, and Fergana in September 1991 demanding that the mufti should be president. Like Turajonzoda, he also had relations with the “unofficial” Islamic groups. He is said to have been a student of Rahmatulla Alloma, the major religious figure in Andijan. As a native of the Fergana Valley, he had a lot of supporters there, including members of religious parties Adolat and IRP.¹² However the mufti did not run in the presidential elections; instead he announced that voters should vote for Karimov.

As in Tajikistan, there was a clash of opinions in Uzbekistan between Islamic groups which supported the creation of an Islamic political party, and traditionalists who opposed this on the grounds that it contradicted Hanafi teachings. Muhammad Yusuf tried to reconcile the two sides. In May 1990, they held a meeting. Islamists intent on forming a party (led by Hakimjon Qari Marghiloni and Abduvali Qori Mirzaev) apparently thought that they needed an alliance with the traditionalists (led by the Kadi of Namangan oblast, Umarkhon Qori Namangani).¹³ However, the latter group would not be persuaded, except for some of the members from Namangan. According to the traditionalists, religion should not interfere in politics, and the state has the right to control religion in the country.¹⁴

The mufti himself also consistently rejected the idea of creating an Islamic party. When the Uzbek branch of the IRP was established in January 1991, Muhammad Yusuf criticized its establishment, and stated that Islam does not recognize political parties or

¹¹ There were some reports that he would run for president during the presidential elections. For example, the former Qazi of Kyrgyzstan suggested that the Mufti run for president. However these reports were denied by the Board with a statement by its vice chairman Zakijon Kadirov, stating that although some people on their own initiative were collecting signatures for the Mufti to run, the Mufti would not be a candidate. See: “Mufti Considers Running for President”, *Interfax*, 20 November 1991 in *FBIS-SOV-91-224*, 20 November, 1991: 89 and “Mufti Intends not to Run for Presidency”, *Interfax*, 26 November 1991 in *FBIS-SOV-91-228*, 26 November, 1991: 90.

¹² Fane 1996, p.285.

¹³ Bakhtiar Babadzhonov, “Islam in Uzbekistan: From the Struggle for “Religious Purity” to Political Activism,” in *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm*, ed., Boris Rumer (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2002) 312.

¹⁴ Babadzhonov 2002, p.315. for a description of the events since Muhammad Yusuf became the mufti see: Bakhtiar Babadzhonov, “Sredneaziatskoe Dukhovnoe Upravlenie Musulman: Predystoriia i Posledstviia Ego Raspada,” in *Mnogomernye Granitsy Tsentral’noi Azii*, eds. M.Brill Olcott and A.Malashenko (Moscow, 2000)

factions.¹⁵ On many occasions he spoke against creation of a religious party, saying that political parties fracture the community of believers. Moreover, unlike Turajonzoda, he never changed his position on this matter.

Internal rivalries also prevented Uzbekistan's Muslim groups from presenting a credible challenge to the government. A schism arose between Muhammad Yusuf's supporters, and another faction of official mullahs who wanted the former mufti (and Muhammad Yusuf's predecessor) Shamsuddin Babakhanov to be reinstated as chairman of the Spiritual Board. Each side accused the other of taking orders from the government. At one point the Council of Imams even attempted to oust Muhammad Yusuf and elect a temporary administration for the spiritual administration of Muslims of Central Asia. However, in this they were ultimately unsuccessful.¹⁶

Relations between the mufti and the major non-Islamic opposition movements were very complex as well. During the events when Muhammad Yusuf was temporarily removed from his post, the Birlik movement called his removal "a victory for the popular forces that are trying to put an end to state interference in the affairs of religious congregations"¹⁷

Muhammad Yusuf did not tend to confront government officials. Unlike Turajonzoda, he continued to support the government. In the presidential elections, for example, he supported Karimov against Muhammad Solih, the leader of Erk. As in the case of certain other potential challengers, Karimov maintained very good relations with the mufti until 1992. In the long run, however, despite Muhammad Yusuf's support for the president and his position against the Islamic party, he was not able to escape suppression. Perhaps Karimov viewed the mufti as a threat because of his authority. In any case, Muhammad Yusuf was

¹⁵ Polat, 2000, p.44.

¹⁶ See: *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 16 January 1992: 3 in *FBIS-USR-92-026*, 10 March 1992: 101-102; and *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 13 July 1991: 1.

¹⁷ *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 9 July 1991: 1.

dismissed from his post in December 1992. In 1993 he was forced to leave the country, under the threat that charges would be brought against him.

In addition to the split between traditionalists and political Islamists within the Islamic umbrella, there was also a divide between Islamic groups and nationalist movements.¹⁸ Despite nationalist leaders' expression of sympathy for the religious leaders, there was no formal alliance between the two sides in Uzbekistan.¹⁹ The relation between nationalist movements and the IRP was a complex one. Aburahim Polatov was present at the IRP organizing meeting in Uzbekistan. The leaders of Birlik stated that although they did not endorse the agenda of the IRP, they nevertheless supported the party's right to exist.²⁰ The close relation between the national opposition and Islamic opposition that was established in Tajikistan was never formed in Uzbekistan.

Within Uzbekistan's national opposition itself—i.e., between Birlik and Erk—there were always personal conflicts and differences of opinion. Birlik accused Erk of making too many concessions to the authorities, while Erk accused Birlik of being too radical. They did not usually participate in each other's activities, or support one another's initiatives.²¹ Whereas the opposition in Tajikistan was able to agree on a common presidential candidate, the opposition in Uzbekistan remained divided during that country's presidential elections. Perhaps partly because of this, Erk leader Solih received only a small share of the votes, only 12 percent according to the officially reported tally; by contrast, in Tajikistan the official report of votes in Tajikistan gave the opposition about 30 percent. The Uzbekistan opposition might have attracted more votes and taken on greater legitimacy if they had been able to field a single candidate. Divided, they demonstrated their vulnerability, and became targets of a government crackdown during the summer of 1992.

¹⁸ Author's interview with one of the prominent experts on religious movements in Central Asia, November 2003, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

¹⁹ Babadzhanov 2002.

²⁰ Olcott, 1995.

²¹ see: *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 20 May 1992: 3 in *FBIS-USR-92-065*, 3 June 1992: 91.

In sum, the unification among opposition groups in Tajikistan, but not in Uzbekistan, was an important difference between the two countries. In Tajikistan Turajonzoda played the role of mediator among the opposition groups, but in Uzbekistan Muhammad Sadik Muhammad Yusuf did not (despite many similarities between the two religious leaders). Unlike Turajonzoda, Muhammad Yusuf never supported the Islamic party or other opposition groups. Even if he had behaved like Turajonzoda, we cannot be sure whether events in Uzbekistan might have unfolded according to the Tajikistan pattern. However, it seems clear that the networks which Turajonzoda created, and his decision to activate them, influenced the outcome.

NETWORK ACTIVATIONS DURING THE DEMONSTRATIONS IN DUSHANBE

As indicated above, I use the term “network activation” to refer to the practice by elites, in times of crisis, of calling upon and obtaining the support of others with whom they are connected in some way. While these networks have regional bases in both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (as we saw in Chapter 3), regional allegiance was not the only factor in their formation. Common interest, career contacts, and work experiences were also important. The networks included non-kin and people from other regions as well. The activation of such networks by the elites in Tajikistan was what ignited the violence there.

Some scholars have argued that low-intensity conflict in southern Tajikistan developed into interregional war, and that the civil war was caused by resentment of the local elites in Kulyab towards the Leninabadis, or competition among the local elites in Qurghonteppa.²² According to this view, as a result of perestroika, provincial and local elites in Kulyab lost the patronage of the Leninabadis, and therefore access to state resources and protection. This

²² See Lawrence P. Markowitz, *Collapsed and Prebendal States in Post-Soviet Eurasia: Cross-Regional Determinants of State Formation in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2005.

allegedly produced large-scale disaffection on the part of local elites, who no longer saw their interests as tied (whether formally or informally) to the republican leadership. In Qurghonteppa, we are told, competition among local strongmen was a major reason for the war there.

This line of reasoning seems faulty. If the Kulyabi elite resented the Leninabadis, this does not explain why so many Kulyabis would enter into war in alliance with the Leninabadis, under the same patronage relationship. Furthermore—contrary to the analysis just mentioned—the civil war did not start in the regions. Nor was the Popular Front (a collection of militia groups supporting the Nabiev government) rooted in local antagonisms. It was not established by local politicians in Kulyab for self-defense. Rather, the armed conflict started in Dushanbe. The most important factors in its outbreak, and later spread to other regions, were the activation of regional networks by the elites, their decision to work with illegal groups in support of their cause, and the establishment of militias under the leadership of criminal figures.

Through their networks Nabiev, Kenjaev and their clients organized counter-demonstrations; brought people from outlying regions; distributed weapons to the demonstrators in Ozodi Square; and formed the National Guard and Popular Front. One important Kulyabi client of Nabiev was Akbar Mirzoyev, head of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of the Kulyab oblast. He and Sangak Safarov, a Kulyabi crime boss, were the main organizers of support for Nabiev during his presidential election campaign. After Nabiev became president, Mirzoyev became the Chairman of the Council of Ministers. With the help of clients such as these, Nabiev and Kenjaev were able to activate local elites in Kulyab and Qurghonteppa in support of their cause. The opposition activated its own networks in parallel fashion.

One instance of network activation which played a major role in the eruption of violent conflict began with a conflict between Speaker of Parliament Safarali Kenjaev and Minister of Internal Affairs (MVD) Mahmadayoz Navjuvanov. Navjuvanov, who had held that post since 1987, was fired in March 1992 for allegedly having refused to use force against demonstrators during the previous September. In the television broadcast of the Tajik Supreme Soviet Presidium session, Kenjaev accused Navjuvanov of exceeding his authority. Navjuvanov, a Pamiri, in turn accused Kenjaev—one of the most prominent speakers of the old order—of discriminating against the Pamiri people. Kenjaev was an orphan born in Hissar, a region to the west of Dushanbe, and spent his career as a judge in the Leninabad region, which he adopted as his region of origin. As an orphan Kenjaev was raised by Turajonzoda's father, and Turajonzoda was like a brother. Despite these connections, Kenjaev sided with his Leninabadi patron Nabiev. This conflict between Kenjaev and Navjuvanov polarized the situation, and led to the activation of regional networks. Pamiri supporters of Navjuvanov gathered in Shahidon Square in Dushanbe, and called for Kenjaev's resignation.²³ As discussed above in Chapter 4, this launched a period of opposing demonstrations in the capital. IRP leaders also called upon their networks, with the result that many people from Qurghonteppa, and some from Kulyab, came to demonstrate against the government. Abdullo Nuri, who was living in Turkmenistan Kolkhoz in Qurghonteppa at the time, mobilized his network of mullahs and followers in this region, so that they joined the IRP supporters on Shahidon Square.

The supporters of Kenjaev initiated a counter-demonstration demanding that he be restored to his position. On April 24, they began pro-government demonstrations in Ozodi Square. The demonstrators were composed mostly of people from Kulyab and Qurghonteppa.

²³ On accusations against Navjuvanov by Kenjaev and following events see: *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 28 March 1992 in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 31 March 1992.

Nabiev and Kenjaev used their connections; in particular it was Kenjaev's ally Sangak Safarov who summoned people from these regions to Ozodi Square.²⁴

Thus elites on both sides activated regional networks in support of their causes, and brought people from the regions to the capital. According to witnesses, truckloads of people from Kulyab and Qurghonteppa were brought to both squares. This was the first major mobilization of regional networks by both sides, and it also mobilized people in the regions.

THE NATIONAL GUARD AND THE ACTIVATION OF VIOLENCE SPECIALISTS

Another important development which would bring the country closer to civil war was Nabiev's decision to establish a presidential guard, organize local militias, and arm his supporters. After seeing that his power was being challenged by a wide coalition able to mobilize large numbers of people, Nabiev and allies made use of regional loyalties to mobilize support and strengthen their power base. He and Kenjaev utilized their patron-client relationships to organize local militias. On May 2, 1992 Nabiev established the National Guard as a private army under his direct control. Its head was Sangak Safarov, who had spent 23 of his 64 years in prison for various crimes. On May 3, 1992 parliament voted to restore Kenjaev as its chairman.²⁵ On May 5, the National Guard tried to break up the demonstrations, killing dozens.²⁶ Nabiev distributed 1800 automatic rifles to people on Ozodi Square, after which fights broke out in the streets of Dushanbe. In two days as many as 60 people died.²⁷

²⁴ Author's interview with one of the leaders of Kenjaev's party, Socialist Party of Tajikistan.

²⁵ *ITAR-TASS*, 3 May 1992.

²⁶ Walter Ruby, "Tajik President Creates Guard to Crush Protests", *Christian Science Monitor*, 6 (May 1992).

²⁷ Gregory Gleason, *The Central Asian States: Discovering Independence* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997) 106.

In mid-May, the demonstrations in Dushanbe returned to their home regions to Qurghonteppa and Kulyab, taking their conflict with them. They kept the weapons Nabiev had distributed to them on Ozodi Square. Armed clashes broke out in these regions between supporters of the government and the opposition. Violence was committed by organized militias led by criminal figures. The main figure behind the militia known as the Popular Front of Tajikistan was Sangak Safarov—a crime boss, organizer of Nabiev’s election campaign, leader of the demonstrators in Ozodi Square, and head of the National Guard. Such violence specialists played a paramount role in the spread of violence to the regions. In Kulyab, Safarov’s militia attacked opposition supporters. His Popular Front purged dissidents and took control of Kulyab. In June, Safarov’s Kulyab militia came to Qurghonteppa and began armed clashes with opposition supporters in this region. By August and September the fighting in Qurghonteppa was very severe.²⁸ Safarov’s militia and its “branch” in Qurghonteppa (led by local figures like Feyzali Saidov) recruited combatants locally.²⁹

Establishing contact with illegal groups and employing them to support the government, were important developments which ignited the civil war. Nabiev and Kenjaev took advantage of the ability of these illegal groups to mobilize violence. According to the accounts of some members of the Tajik elite from Kulyab and Khujand, Nabiev and Kenjaev sent messages to people like Sangak Safarov and Yakup Salimov, asking for their support. During the Soviet period people like Safarov and Salimov, two prominent militia leaders, were the bosses of criminal groups which were powerful in the streets. Safarov had served in jail for 23 years for various crimes, while Salimov had spent four years in prison for racketeering. In Dushanbe they were known as “the Kulyabi Mafia.” Their followers mainly consisted of thugs and former inmates (during the war they recruited people by liberating prisoners from jail), and were organized into region-based networks. Their role in the shadow

²⁸ Author’s interviews with politicians and civilians in Qurghonteppa.

²⁹ Author’s interviews in Qurghonteppa with local politicians and civilians.

economy involved things like offering protection to people doing illicit business, settling disputes when they arose, and collecting debts. In this way they accumulated economic and political power. They were well-connected, and enjoyed close relationships with local and republic-level political authorities (who often dealt in the shadow economy). During the civil war, politicians turned to such groups. Thus people like Yakup Salimov and Sangak Safarov, with their connections in the regions, became the leaders of the militias during the war.³⁰

Kenjaev activated his connections with Kulyabi criminal groups in the same way that Navjuvanov appealed to his Pamiri supporters. The IRP, on the other hand, had a network of mullahs with many young male followers, whom they recruited for the war effort. IRP militias were often led by local mullahs, who acted as field commanders during the war.³¹

The conflict resulted in the activation of networks linking criminal groups with political elites, ranging from obkom officials to kolkhoz leaders. These networks connected Nabiev and Kenjaev to Mirzoev, and to Safarov and Salimov. These relationships are revealed in the list of field commanders. While the main leaders (Safarov and Salimov) were crime bosses, Langari Langariev was a former MVD officer in Dushanbe; Mahmadsaid Ubaydullaev was the deputy chair of the executive committee of Kulyab; Abdumajid Dostiev was the chair of the executive committee of the Bohtar rayon; Fayzullo Kuvvatov was the chair of the executive committee of Vakhsh rayon; Sherali Mirzoev was the Kalininabad rayon executive committee chair; and Mahmud Boimatov was the Bohtar rayon Communism kolkhoz chair.³²

Mullahs were the main opposition field commanders in Kulyab and Qurghonteppa. Prominent examples would include Abdullo Abdurahim, Saidashraf Abdulahadov, Kari Kiyamiddin Muhammadjon, Mullah Amriddin and Mullah Abdugaffor.³³

³⁰ Author's interviews with a Kulyabi political scientist and a Khujandi sociologist in Dushanbe.

³¹ Author's interviews in Qurghonteppa.

³² Safarali Kenjaev, *Tojikistonda To'ntarish*, Vol.1 (Uzbekistan, 1994).

³³ Safarali Kenjaev, *Tojikistonda To'ntarish*, Vol.1 (Uzbekistan, 1994).

Markowitz claims that the root of the Tajikistan conflict was the state's loss of the monopoly of violence in Kulyab and Qurghonteppa.³⁴ However, the establishment of the Popular Front was not an example of the state's loss of the monopoly of violence. Rather Nabiev and Kenjaev—top government figures—played a major role in its establishment and mobilization. Other state actors such as government agents, local leaders, and MVD officers committed violence on behalf of and in support of the government. Thus it was the political elite who organized the violence, activating violence specialists in support of their cause in order to advance their own power and wealth.³⁵

A WAR OF REGIONAL ANIMOSITIES?

As described in the Introduction, the civil war in Tajikistan is usually depicted as having been caused by regional rivalries, with Leninabadis and Kulyabis on one side and Garmis and Gorno-Badakhshanis on the other. In support of this interpretation, scholars usually point to the fact that Nabiev was from Leninabad, Safarov and Mullah Sharifzoda were from Kulyab, and Khudonazarov was a Pamiri. However, parties to the war were not as homogenous as these region-based explanations suggest.

Not all people from the same region were on the same side, and both sides of the conflict contained people from every region. Some people from the so-called “pro-opposition” regions supported the government. Likewise, some people from “pro-government” regions supported the opposition. Nabiev's supporters included Badakhshanis Nazrullo Dustov (his vice president between November 1991 and May 1992) and Shodi Shabdollov (secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1988-1999,

³⁴ See Markowitz, 2005.

³⁵ On the role of governments and their agents, official or illegal, in the occurrence of violence see: Mark Beissinger, “Nationalist Violence and the State: Political Authority and Contentious Repertoires in the Former USSR,” *Comparative Politics* 30.4 (July 1998) and Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

afterwards chairman), as well as Garmis Saidulla Hayrullaev (who served as vice prime minister in 1991-1992) and Munavar Nazriev (a Communist Party leader).

Many opposition members, including some of its leaders, came from Khujand and Kulyab. Kulyabi opposition figures include Mullah Abdullo Abdurahim (a prominent IRP leader, and one of its founders); Said Ibrahim (also of the IRP); Odina Hoshim (a prominent artist); Rajab Ali Safarov (a republic-level transport minister during the Soviet period); Asaev (a prominent mathematician); and Sharofaddin Imamov (deputy chairman of Rastokhez). Khujand was represented by DPT members Abdunabi Sattarov, Jumabay Niyazov, Latifi, and Haluknazarov; as well as by many Rastokhez members, including its leader, Tohir Abdujabbor.³⁶

People from the same region did not always make common cause with one another. For example while Shodi Shabdollov was leading the Communist Party in 1991, Davlat Khudonazarov was the presidential candidate of the opposition; both were Badakhshanis. Haidar Sharifzoda, a Kulyabi mullah, was pro-government; Mullah Abdurahim, also a Kulyabi, was a prominent IRP leader who fought on the side of the IRP during the civil war.

Rastokhez, the DPT, and the IRP had supporters in Kulyab and Leninabad. Some of them attempted to demonstrate and express their support for the opposition, but were repressed by the ruling regime. In Kulyab, support for the opposition was high. There were many Kulyabi followers of IRP leader Abdullo Nuri, and they had their own mosque there. The Kulyabi branch of the IRP was very well-organized at the time. The IRP had support in Khujand as well.³⁷

Many Kulyabis were tortured and killed while fighting against the Kulyabi militia. After returning home from the demonstrations in Dushanbe, the first thing that the Kulyabi

³⁶ Compiled from the author's interviews in Dushanbe and Qurghonteppa with various political actors.

³⁷ Author's interviews with various IRP politicians in Dushanbe. Also see: Muriel Atkin, "Tajikistan: Reform, Reaction and Civil War," in *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, eds., Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 615; Muriel Atkin, "Tajikistan's Civil War," *Current History* (October 1997): 338; *FBIS Soviet Union Daily Report*, 30 September 1991: 97.

militia under Sangak Safarov did was to attack opposition supporters in their region. By the end of June, the Popular Front was successful in ending the opposition's support there.

Kulyab.³⁸ As one informant put it:

I was in Kulyab during the war. Safarov was the strongest man there at the time. He could do whatever he wanted. I am a Kulyabi myself. He was killing the people opposed the government, regardless of their region. The people who were against their aims were tortured and killed by the Popular Front. I was tortured, I am a Kulyabi. They killed Jienkhan Rizaev who was the Kulyab obkom secretary, a Kulyabi. Because he was against them.³⁹

The lack of cohesiveness among people from the same region also applied to Qurghonteppa. There were many Kulyabi supporters of the IRP in Qurghonteppa as well. In Qurghonteppa, informants stated that some Kulyabis supported the opposition and some Garmis supported the Communists. However, their numbers declined during the civil war as both sides acquired a more homogenous character.

CRACKS WITHIN THE KHUJAND ELITE

The Khujandi elite was not unified, and did not act as a group. Many of its members did not support Nabiev, come to the squares during the demonstrations, or become involved in the war.

This lack of unity is visible even before the war. For example, Khujandi Mahkamov had worked for the dismissal of fellow Khujandi Nabiev, when the latter was first secretary between 1982 and 1985. Nabiev allegedly did not want Abdumalik Abdullojonov, another Khujandi politician, to rise to power, with the result that Abdullojonov was among the Khujandis who were against Nabiev (although he worked for Nabiev during the presidential

³⁸ Author's interviews with IRP members from Kulyab and a researcher in Dushanbe and Qurghonteppa.

³⁹ Author's interview with a Kulyabi politician in one of the opposition parties who was in Kulyab during the war, Dushanbe.

elections campaign in November 1991). And when Nabiev lost his position as first secretary in 1985, Mahkamov told a congress of the Tajikistan Communist Party that Nabiev was unable to deal with the economic problems of the republic or cope with corruption, and implied that he was removed from his office because of his poor leadership. When Nabiev was nominated for the post of president against Mahkamov in November 1990, he criticized Mahkamov's handling of the economic problems and February events.⁴⁰

Nor did the Khujandi elite act as a unitary group during the war. Most of the Leninabadi elite in the province, and some of the Khujandi leaders in the capital, did not support Nabiev. Relations between Nabiev and other Khujandi leaders especially began to deteriorate after September. Prominent Khujandi politicians opposing Nabiev included Sabit Hojiev; Abdumalik Abdullojonov (Minister of Grain Production between 1987-1990, head of the large Bread [*Non*] Conglomerate in 1990, prime minister after September 1992); Abdujalil Hamidov (chairman of the Khujand oblast executive committee); Guljahon Bobosodiqova (an important female leader within the Khujand elite); Rifat Hojiev (leader of the Leninabad Communist Party); and Sayfiddin Turaev. The anti-Nabiev group supported some other members of the Khujandi elite like Abdujalil Hamidov and Rashid Alimov (ambassador of Tajikistan to the UN) whom they preferred as leaders.⁴¹

As one informant said: "A group of Khujandis were against Nabiev and Kenjaev. They did not support them. Especially Sabit Hojiev and Abdullojonov. They were all against Nabiev. There was a split within the Khujandi elite. They did not want Nabiev. They did this out of self interest."⁴²

⁴⁰ See: Bess Brown, "Tajikistan: The Fall of Nabiev," *RFE/RL Research Report*, 1.38, 25 September 1992: 15.

⁴¹ Compiled from author's interviews with various Khujandi politicians.

⁴² Author's interview with a leader of Socialist Party which was founded by Kenjaev.

According to another informant:

At the time, Khujandis here in Dushanbe supported Nabiev, but the Khujand local government did not support him. Nobody came to the Square from Khujand. They did not bring people here to support Nabiev. Khujand did not get involved with the war. Relations between Leninabad's Communist Party leader Rifat Hojiev and Nabiev were not good. He was against Nabiev. Abdullajanov was also against Nabiev. All conflict was personal. A group within Khujandi elite did not want Nabiev to be leader. They wanted Hamidov and Alimov to be leaders.⁴³

REGIONALIZATION OF THE CONFLICT

Thus, pre-existing regional animosities did not cause the war. Rather, the conflict reinforced regionalism and thus became “regionalized.” As the war progressed, it strengthened the regional identities, and the parties to the conflict began to be more regionally homogenous. In particular, the pro-Communist forces began to be identified with Kulyab, while the opposition came to be identified with Garm and Pamir. This image—and later the reality—of the war—came to be one of Kulyabis versus Garmis and Pamiris. People began to be killed just for being Kulyabi or Garmi.

Every informant I interviewed claimed that before the war, relations between people from different regions were good, that no enmity existed among them, and that it was the war that created such antagonisms. As one informant from Qurghonteppa said, “Before the war, relations between people from different regions were very good. There was no differentiation among people like ‘You are from Garm, you are from Kulyab.’ Now there is enmity among people from different regions. The reason for this is the war.”

This view was confirmed by a party leader in Dushanbe who stated that “Before the war, young people were going to other regions for education, for work, for internships. Now

⁴³ Author's interview with a vice minister who was close to Nabiev at the time.

nobody wants to go, and they do not go. People are afraid of other regions, and of people from other regions.”

In illustrating the quality of relations prior to the war, some informants mentioned that there were many mixed marriages among people from different regions. In Qurghonteppa, for example, people told me that marriages between Karategin and Kulyabi people were very common. As one Kulyabi informant put it, “Relations were good. There were many mixed marriages between Karategin and Kulyabi people. My wife is from Karategin. There were only differences of accent between these two groups, nothing more.”

Some informants acknowledged that during the Soviet period, regional identity was important in the recruitment of people to political and economic posts. An informant from Qurghonteppa Hokimiyat explained that “relations among the people from different regions before the war were good. There were small problems, but relations were generally good. If a manager was from Garm he would recruit Garmis. There were such problems.”

Although regionalism was not the cause of the conflict, it became a tool for attracting support and mobilizing people for the war effort. The Communists and opposition forces used regional loyalties for their own aims, during the demonstrations and for the war effort. Kenjaev turned to his regional connections, while Navjuvanov and Nuri did the same thing. Nuri was Garmi and had a lot of Garmi supporters, although he had supporters among Kulyabis and Khujandis as well.

Government and opposition leaders recruited people based on regional identities, loyalties, and networks. For example, during the demonstrations in Dushanbe the government supporters mobilized Kulyabis, with the discourse that Garmis and Pamiris were against Kulyabis and “their” people in Dushanbe needed them.⁴⁴ Both sides to the conflict did this. Many informants in Dushanbe and Qurghonteppa stated that during the war in both regions,

⁴⁴ Author’s interviews with various villagers in a kolkhoz in Qurghonteppa.

when Garmis took control of a region, Kulyabis could not pass through it, but Garmis could. In turn, when Kulyabis took control of a region, Garmis could not pass through it, but Kulyabis could. According to some informants from Qurghonteppa, although sides were for the most part based on regional origin, some people from Garm were initially on the side of government and joined the Kulyabis. However, they became a small minority during the process.⁴⁵ Also, the fighting was in fact producing more united regions, as people like Safarov were killing or driving out dissenters within their regions.

When the militias began to kill people according to their regional origin, the process itself made regional identity and regionalism one of the most important factors in war. Just being from Garm or the Pamirs became grounds for being killed by pro-government forces, while the opposition came to treat Kulyabis similarly. In order to create loyalty, the warring parties used regional identities and allegiances to create antagonism towards those from other region, and thereby generate support for themselves. The process forced the majority to side with people from their own region. One informant stated: “The beginning of the war was ideological: Islamists and democrats against Communists. People went to their regions from the squares. Then war started in the regions.”⁴⁶ Another said: “Politics was important, not regionalism. But when people left the squares in Dushanbe and went to their own regions, they took their weapons with them, and the war took a regional character. At first there was no war between regions.” Another informant said: “After the war started, people forgot about party, ideas, etc. The main issue became this region and that region. They began to kill people because they were from this region or that region.”⁴⁷

The war process also had the effect of eliminating moderate figures and replacing them with more aggressive ones. After the initial stages of the war, once-powerful moderate

⁴⁵ Author’s interviews with people in Qurghonteppa and author’s personal conversations with Garmis who supported government during the civil war.

⁴⁶ Author’s interview with a leader of an opposition party in Dushanbe.

⁴⁷ Author’s interview with a local politician in Qurghonteppa.

political figures lost their positions as people began to listen to local leaders advocating more aggressive policies. Central leaders such as IRP leader Himmatzoda lost their power over local leaders. Moderates were eliminated, sometimes physically, by the hardliners. For example, Jienkhan Rizaev, (chairman of the Kulyab region and widely regarded as a moderate figure ready to compromise) was killed by Sangak Safarov. On the opposition side, such moderate leaders as Sadirov Rizvan were killed, and replaced by individuals advocating more radical positions.⁴⁸

HOW DO ORDINARY PEOPLE GET INVOLVED. AND WHY DO THEY FIGHT?

Recruitment to the war effort was very organized in kolkhozes. Mobilization started in Qurghonteppa during the demonstrations in Dushanbe. In the Turkmenistan Kolkhoz, where Abdullo Nuri was living and which supported the opposition, the majority was from Garm, but there was also a Kulyabi minority. People who did not support the opposition were forced to leave the kolkhoz. Many people from this village went to the square in Dushanbe. Informants from the kolkhoz reported that many outsiders came to the village because Nuri was living here. They called the people together, and said that everyone would go to the square. Some went willingly, others were taken by force. The people who gathered the villagers were the men from the opposition. Although some were men from the kolkhoz, others came from outside to recruit people for the squares.⁴⁹

According to one informant in Turkmenistan Kolkhoz:

The majority is from Karategin in this village. This sovkhos supported the opposition. People who did not, left the village. Many people from this village went to the square in Dushanbe. There were men who came to the village. They called for people to get together, and ordered

⁴⁸ Author's interview with the vice-president of an opposition party, Dushanbe.

⁴⁹ Author's interviews with residents in Turkmenistan kolkhoz, Qurghonteppa.

them to go. They took the unwilling ones by force. The men who gathered people were men from the opposition. Some men were from here, but also men came from outside to recruit men for the square. Problems began in the mahalla. Before, there was no such thing like the problem of where you are from. This started after the meetings in Dushanbe. ‘You are from Karategin, you are from Kulyab’ began in this period.

In the kolkhoz of Feyzali Saidov (the Popular Front leader of Qurghonteppa), which had a Kulyabi majority, mobilization proceeded in much the same way. According to informants, deputies called their connections in the village and they organized mobilization there. People who participated in demonstrations came and told villagers what was happening in the squares of Dushanbe. They encouraged the villagers to organize, with statements like “Our people are suffering, [so] we have to go and help them.” They told them what supplies were needed. They gathered food and arranged the buses. A center was established in the kolkhoz, through which all such activities were coordinated. Whenever someone brought food, money etc., the center would record who brought what. Announcements were made in the mosques as to when and how people would go. Many people went to Dushanbe from this kolkhoz.⁵⁰

During the civil war, local militias led the fighting and recruitment for the war effort. The UTO (United Tajik Opposition) army and Popular Front were composed of these militias. Men whom militias deemed eligible to fight were drafted regardless of whether they wanted to be involved. Both among the volunteers and those forcefully drafted, some did not take up arms, but worked in support positions such as taxi drivers. As one informant in Qurghonteppa put it, “Some people joined of their own will, some by force. There was pressure and compulsion for people to join.”

The motivations of combatants were complex. Many joined out of compulsion; some, out of a desire to revenge death of relatives killed in the war; others (often criminal elements)

⁵⁰ Author’s interviews with residents in Feyzali Saidov kolkhoz, Qurghonteppa.

seem to have been primarily motivated by the opportunity to engage in robbery and looting.⁵¹ As noted above, in order to increase their ranks, the militias freed murderers and other criminals from jails, and made them soldiers. According to some accounts, the Kulyab militia freed around 400 people from prisons in Qurghonteppa who are said to have joined them.⁵² Informants from Qurghonteppa claim that militias on both sides engaged in such practices, and that even front commanders included many ex-criminals: One informant said: “Murderers, criminals... they took these people out of jail and made them soldiers. In Qurghonteppa, both sides did this. Narcotic users and alcoholics became soldiers.”

The fighting developed a dynamic of its own. As armed militias started to fight, people who otherwise would not have engaged in hostile action were forced to participate. These militia groups policed dissent; they violently punished those who did not obey, through physical attacks, murder, or rape.

Many young men were forced to join. Many informants report that the militias told them, “you will come with us or we will kill you.” Many people were killed for failing to provide the support that the militias demanded. The militias sometimes killed civilians even if they claimed to be sympathetic, but failed to contribute money or allow their children to fight. One informant said: “There were some families. They could not say they did not support the militias. But they did not send their kids, did not give money. They killed them. People could not say ‘we do not support’ because of fear. They obeyed them and did whatever they said.” Some informants, for example, told of a rich Garmi who was killed by opposition forces because he refused to give money. Other informants told of Kulyabis who were killed by the Popular Front for the same reason. One informant described one such unfortunate individual: “He was from Garm. He was killed by Garmis. He had resisted them. They wanted money. He was rich. They came at night and took him from his house and killed him. There are many

⁵¹ Reasons of involvement were compiled from author’s interviews with various informants in Qurghonteppa.

⁵² *FBIS Report Central Eurasia*, 16 October 1992: 99. Many people in Qurghonteppa also mentioned this act of feeding of prisoners during the interviews.

stories like this. Kulyabis also did this. If you did not obey, they would kill you. Many obeyed because they were afraid.”

On the IRP side, it was the mullahs who mobilized people. One tactic which they used was to scare people by threatening them with religious sanctions, such as declaring their marriages invalid—i.e. that their wives would be forbidden (haram) for them—if they did not support the opposition. They used their religious authority to force people to do what they said. An informant said: “I went to a wedding, entered and saw that a mullah was speaking. He said, ‘Take food to Shahidon Square.’ Someone stood up and said this was none of his business. The mullah said he would not approve their marriages religiously if they did not do as he instructed. When mullahs say things like that, people are afraid. It is a very serious thing in our belief. They listened to him and did what he said.”

Over time, revenge became an increasingly important reason for violence. According to one informant, “As the war went on, people forgot about ideology. Ninety percent of people fought not because of religion, region, etc., but for local revenge, revenge for their relatives, friends.”⁵³ Some people joined to avenge relatives and friends who were killed in the war. Another informant in Qurghonteppa said: “Why were people participating? Because they killed his relatives, because of revenge.” Thus, some Kulyabis who supported the opposition before the war, eventually switched to the government side during the war, and fought for the Popular Front after their relatives had been killed by the opposition.⁵⁴

Many people seem to have had hopes of being able to profit from benefits grabbed during the war. They stole, looted and attacked people for the sake of personal enmities, economic gain, land-grabs and so on. During the chaos many people were killed for small gains. One informant said: “Personal interest, robbery. People were fighting for these. They even killed people to rob, even to rob their clothes.”

⁵³ Author’s interview with a political scientist who was in Qurghonteppa during the civil war, Dushanbe.

⁵⁴ Author’s interview with the leader of an opposition party during the war, Dushanbe.

It appears that some of the personal gains that combatants sought appear were privileges and resources that their new positions in the civil war, or positions they hoped to obtain, would bring them. One informant reported that a police chief had admitted fighting to get his job. “People fought for their own aims. I talked to a police chief. He said, ‘I fought to get this post.’ People fought for their own interests, in order to benefit from the opportunity to grab.”⁵⁵

Not all of the violence was directed at members of rival political groups or armies. According to some informants, more young men died because of the arguments within the militia groups than because of clashes between groups. When militias came to a village, they sometimes killed people without knowing or asking who was who, or from which region they were from. Such incidents were common. One informant in Qurghonteppa said: “There was chaos. The leaders had taken militia members to a village and left them there. Some people invited them to dinner. They ate the villagers’ meal, but for some reason—anger, perhaps—they killed the villagers. These were soldiers of Popular Front. [Informant is a Kulyabi]

Militias made use of atrocities in order to elicit support. One informant said: “There were provocations. They killed a person from one side and told that the other side did this. For example they killed a Kulyabi and said that this was the work of Garmis.” Another informant said: “Some people killed a doctor. He was from Khujand. People said that Pamiris killed him. Then some said that Garmis killed him. There were a lot of rumors, a lot of provocations.”⁵⁶ In this way identities became more antagonistic, militia groups increased support for themselves by making people fear others, and the war came to take a regionalist shape.

The chaos was aggravated by rumors which constantly circulated. According to one informant: “Everything we knew was based on rumors. Nobody knew anything, just

⁵⁵ Author’s interview with an official in one of the international organizations in Tajikistan, Dushanbe.

⁵⁶ Author’s interviews in Qurghonteppa.

rumors.”⁵⁷ For example, when one person was killed, some blamed the Pamiris, others Garmis. There was even uncertainty about the identity of the victim, with some saying that he was a Khujandi, and others saying he was a Kulyabi. Many stories featured a certain *hamam* (bathhouse) in Qurghonteppa, where people were said to be tortured and killed. The stories however disagree as to whether the perpetrators were Kulyabis or the opposition, with each side accusing the other.

Some even blamed the atrocities on foreign provocateurs: For example an informant in Qurghonteppa said: “People came from Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Russia. There was a group like this who wanted instability and war in Tajikistan. They did this—they killed people.” Another informant: “There are rumors that small groups from Russia, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan did this. They killed these people purposefully and blamed others.”⁵⁸ My informants really did believe these rumors. Given the sheer quantity of rumor-mongering, and the destruction of their old way of life, it was easy for them to become suspicious about everything.

Pro-government and opposition groups made use of various discourses—based on Islam, ethnicity, regionalism or democracy—according to the circumstances and intended audience. Although the war was neither Islamic, nor ethnic, nor regional, all of these factors played a role in the war as mobilizing discourses.

Discourses are used by political entrepreneurs as strategies to justify their actions to the people. Writing in the context of Afghanistan, Shahrani states that:

As generalized social organizational principles Islam, ethnicity, and kinship have been equally available to individuals and collectivities in the society at large as well as to those who have controlled the central government powers. They could be applied and manipulated not only to further common or similar collective national goals but also to pursue

⁵⁷ Author’s interview with a local politician in Qurghonteppa.

⁵⁸ Author’s interviews in Qurghonteppa.

separate, often divergent and sometimes conflicting and contradictory aims by individuals, groups and institutions. Other sources of tension in the social processes emanate from the fact that ethnic, kinship and religious ideologies like other social organizational principles are also filled with internal ambiguities, contradictions, limitations and conflicts.... social organizational principles whether based on ethnicity, kinship, religion or any other sources of social identity are not in themselves causal in the actual organization of social relations. Rather individuals, organized social pluralities and governments apply such principles according to the specific political, economic and historical contexts in which they find themselves.⁵⁹

In Afghanistan, Shahrani reports that the state's reliance on kinship and ethnic groups as administrative units of indirect rule resulted in opposition among various segments of the tribes. He also gives the example of the politicization of Islam in the form of Shi'a-Sunni conflicts. He states that this antagonism had existed for a long time, but that the reason for its politicization was the concern of some Pashtun chiefs over the prominence of Qizilbash and Bayat Shi'a troops and officers in the Durrani court. For example, Shah Mahmut exploited a minor incident and it turned into a riot between the Shi'a and Sunni communities. Shahrani provides other examples such as the use of Islam by Amir Abdur Rahman, and the use of ethnicity by Nadir Shah against Tajik Habibullah.

In Tajikistan we see a similar multiplicity of available discourses. So far I have stressed the importance of regional identity in the network formation of elites. These networks were activated for the war effort, in which political and armed entrepreneurs made use of regional loyalties for mobilization purposes. In order to secure the support of local populations, they used the language of regionalism. The rural structure of the Republic embodied within the kolkhoz system, together with the regionally-based organization of elite networks, ensured that region would become a significant mobilization tool in the war.

⁵⁹ M.Nazif Shahrani, "State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan: A Historical Perspective," in *The State, Religion and Ethnic Politics: Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan*, eds., Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986) 24-25.

Yet regions were not unitary actors in Tajikistan. Many people from different regions were on the same side. Moreover, the Khujand elite was split. At the same time, regional identities remained important for people. Networks were organized according to regional origin, and regional loyalties were used by the political and armed entrepreneurs for mobilization purposes. In the course of the war, these regional allegiances became more important. It was not regional antagonisms among people from different regions that started the war, but the war that made regional identity an important factor.

Along with the discourse about regionalism, Islam provided the core of another discourse. Many informants stated that opposition supporters were called “Wofchik” (“Wahabis”) and government supporters were called “Yurchik” (from Yuri, the common Russian name) by their opponents. The government portrayed the opposition as Islamic fundamentalists seeking to overthrow the secular system, and replace it with sharia law. In this way government sought the support of people who feared the establishment of an Islamic state in Tajikistan. With this discourse they also tried to obtain the support of Russians, Uzbeks, and other minorities who would be scared by the possibility of an Islamic state in the country. Government supporters also presented the opposition as Tajik nationalist radicals who would attack and expel all minorities from the Republic. They presented themselves as the protectors of the country against these “Islamic fundamentalists” and “radical nationalists.”

Several informants spoke of defending the country against the establishment of an Islamic state. One said: “Kulyabis did not seek the establishment of an Islamic state. The opposition wanted to establish an Islamic state. People were divided between those demanding democracy, and the ones who want an Islamic state. Garmis were supporters of an Islamic state.”

The opposition—especially the Islamic wing of the opposition—also used Islamic rhetoric to mobilize people, emphasizing that Communists were atheists. As we saw, mullahs who supported the IRP used their Islamic authority to recruit people, scaring them with Islamic sanctions.

The Communists also used Islamic rhetoric against their opponents. One of the important parties in the opposition front was Lali Badakhshan, which was overwhelmingly composed of Pamiri people. Against this party, the pro-government forces used an Islamic discourse and portrayed Pamiris as “kafirs” (“infidels”) for being from a different sect of Islam than the majority of Tajikistan’s Muslim population. Pro-Communists used this argument against Khudonazarov during the presidential election campaign, labeling him a “Badahshani kafir” because he was a Pamiri Ismaili.

Democracy was another theme of discourse used by the parties in the war. In my interviews, both the supporters of both pro-government forces and the opposition defined their conflict as a fight for democracy. As one informant stated, “the war was between Islamic people versus people who wanted a democratic country. People from other regions came to fight against Islamists. Karategin, Garm was the center of Islamic people.”⁶⁰ This informant contrasted democracy with Islamic rule. However, another contrasted democracy with Communism. Thus each side could portray itself as the supporters of democracy, and the other side as its opponents.

People mixed together different discourses in their accounts. As one informant said: “There were many divisions: Leninabad and Kulyab versus Garm; Islam versus Communism; Wofchik versus Yurchik; Wahabis versus Communists. It was possible to hear all these divisions invoked as factors dividing the sides in the conflict.” The religious and regional discourses were mixed. Some informants, for example, asserted that “Garmis were religious

⁶⁰ Author’s interview with the vice chair of one of the parties in Tajikistan.

fanatics. They were Wahabis.” In their accounts, the enemy was both Islamic fundamentalist and Garmi, while for others the enemy was both Kulyabi and Communist and unbeliever.

In this chapter I have sought to explain how people who had been living together peacefully for years could suddenly attack each other. Based on my fieldwork, my analysis suggests that the war in Tajikistan did not start as a result of ordinary, local conflicts which somehow became intensified. Rather, armed clashes began in Dushanbe as a result of elite struggles. I showed how armed clashes spread from Dushanbe to Kulyab and to Qurghonteppa, with the coming of militias to these regions. Subsequently, ordinary people often found themselves in a situation in which they could not escape involvement.

I have also highlighted the role of the political elites on both sides in activating their networks to bring their supporters to the capital for support. I have also emphasized the relationships of political actors with armed militias, led by people who had been street criminals before the war. The political elite activated and used these network relations to provide support for themselves and attack their opponents. Similar loyalties and network relationships existed also in Uzbekistan, where mafia-like criminal groups likewise enjoyed close connections in the state and party apparatus.⁶¹ However, these networks were not activated there. The opposition was divided, and could not organize itself enough to activate any network against the regime (as discussed in Chapter 4).

One important mechanism in conflict situations is the role of mediators. Mediators establish links between unrelated groups. In this chapter, I have discussed the role of Turajonzoda in connecting the formerly unrelated opposition groups in Tajikistan—in contrast to his closest counterpart from Uzbekistan, Muhammad Yusuf, who behaved

⁶¹ From author’s interviews in Uzbekistan.

differently. This had an important influence on the unity of the opposition, and the likelihood of violent conflict in their respective countries. It also shows the significance of actor choices.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

As detailed in Chapter 1, the main object of this study has been to explain why, despite many similarities between the two countries, Tajikistan witnessed a civil war whereas none occurred in Uzbekistan. Common theories of the reasons for violent conflict in general, and civil war in Tajikistan in particular (as surveyed in Chapter 2), would have led us to expect similar violent conflict in Uzbekistan. A comparison of these two countries therefore leads us to question our assumptions.

My approach is interactionist. That is, rather than stressing either structural factors or agency-based factors, I focus on the interactions between structural factors and microfactors such as process, actors, and relations between actors. I identify key differences between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in the following areas:

- * elite political structure;
- * process and events during the last years of Soviet power, and immediately following independence
- * mechanisms of network establishment, and network activation by parties to the conflict; and the role of violence specialists, and their connections with political figures.

Balances of power—and the elite perceptions of these power distributions—are influenced by structural, process, agency, and network-related variables. Macro-structural explanations alone are not explanatory. While elite structure is important, it influences the outcome only in interaction with process, events, and mechanisms. We cannot explain why there was a balance in Tajikistan but an imbalance in Uzbekistan, without considering causal effect of structure, events, and the influence of actors and their relations.

Chapter 3 analyzed structural causes, describing the main structural factor which affected the likelihood of civil war, i.e., political power networks. In both countries, these were regionally organized. During the Soviet period, government positions and party posts tended to be divided among the political elites according to their region of origin. However, differences between the Soviet-era regional policies in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan resulted in different elite structures in the two republics.

I argue that the demotion of some oblasts into rayons, and their subsequent inclusion into Leninabad oblast, or placement under direct republican jurisdiction, fragmented the elites from these regions in Tajikistan. This produced different political elite structures and behaviors in the two countries. These “demotions” on the administrative ladder weakened and divided the elite from these regions, damaged their power bases, and lessened their power vis-à-vis the Khojendis, who dominated the central republican administration. Tajikistan was unique among Central Asian countries in the degree to which it was dominated by a single regional group. In all the other Central Asian republics there was rotation in the region of origin of the first secretary, but in Tajikistan, this post was consistently held by Khujandis. Likewise, only in Tajikistan were abolished oblasts placed under central republican jurisdiction. By contrast, in Uzbekistan the regions protected their oblast status without interruption for a long time. Furthermore, in Uzbekistan three relatively equal elite structures competed for power. These Soviet legacies appear to have had a profound impact after independence by affecting elite behaviors in very different ways.

Thus regional identity (though important) was only one factor in the formation of political power networks. We cannot understand network relations solely through their regional origin; likewise, regional origin alone does not predict the behavior of elites, since the elites from one region do not consistently behave as unitary actors.

I see political elite structure, power relations, and elite perceptions as important variables in conflict situations. Political elite structure in the Soviet era influenced actors' behavior and perceptions in the transition period, and thence the outbreak of civil war (or lack thereof). The different ways in which political networks were structured in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan affected developments in the mid-1980's to the early 1990's. The initial power structures in these republics provided the framework in which elites made their decisions, and influenced subsequent developments and elite perceptions and behaviors. However, developments in the transition period in turn changed the existing power balances. Whereas events in Tajikistan *strengthened* the already high power-perception of the ruling elite and *increased* the power-perception of the opposition, the events in Uzbekistan *weakened* the opposition's power-perceptions and *strengthened* the Karimov regime's power-perceptions. Thus, subsequent developments can only be understood through the interaction of structure with process. While structure influences process, process influences the structure as well. Power balances are not simply determined by structural factors; rather, process also changes existing power balances.

Chapter 4 examined processes. In search of salient differences between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, I laid out micro-factors such as process and events, and showed their importance in influencing the different outcomes in the two republics. These factors appear to have had a major impact on elite perceptions and behaviors, and consequently influenced the subsequent course of events. One major difference was that there were extensive purges in Uzbekistan, but none in Tajikistan. I argue that the purges in Uzbekistan forced the elite to develop a unified strategy against the center, and thus inclined them to agree on the candidacy of a single individual to become the new leader in the republic. It seems that Karimov was brought to power by agreement of the Uzbek top political elites, who agreed to support him as long as he met their expectations for him as first secretary. This put Karimov in a position to maintain

a balance among the various political actors and groups who agreed on his selection. Meanwhile in Tajikistan, where no purges occurred, the political elite did not face a threat to their positions from the center. Therefore, no forces analogous to the Uzbek elites, who united and developed a common strategy against the center, arose in Tajikistan.

The ethnic clashes in Uzbekistan which de-legitimized the incumbent leader, Nishanov, were another particularly influential process. The first secretary's de-legitimation and removal was related to ethnic clashes in the republic. By contrast, the absence of a major purge or major ethnic clashes in Tajikistan left the existing leadership and political elite structure in place. The legitimacy of the incumbent first secretary was not questioned in this period, and Mahkamov continued as leader of the republic.

The interaction and mutual influence of structural factors and processes affected the behaviors of the elites differently in the two countries. As a result of the interactions between the structural factors of power distribution, and such micro-factors as purges and elite agreements, the leaders behaved differently towards intra-party opposition and opposition from outside the party. The dominant position of one political network in Tajikistan brought about a more self-confident party elite. The absence of strong intra-party challengers allowed the incumbent elite to eliminate the intra-party opposition and reinforced the incumbents' sense of power. Feeling themselves invulnerable to challengers, they appear initially to have thought that their leadership would continue in the post-Soviet era. This sense of power seems to have weakened their inclination to bargain with other actors, with the result that they attacked opposition forces all at once. However in Uzbekistan, where no single faction dominated politics, those in leadership positions were obliged to recognize the power of other strong political actors. When Karimov initially became first secretary, his power was still somewhat circumscribed, and so he had to balance the interests of different factions. Aware that his power rested on his ability to do this successfully, Karimov was compelled by the

existing power structure to deal with other powerful political actors. He was obliged to negotiate and share power with powerful intra-party rivals from the beginning; and this required him to consider their moves, bargain and negotiate with them, grant them concessions, and in some instances co-opt them.

Events which serve to polarize groups, and poison the political atmosphere in a country, add to the potential for conflict. After Mahkamov's resignation, Aslonov was appointed acting president in Tajikistan. Although he did many of the same things that were done in Uzbekistan (e.g., removing statues of Lenin, banning the Communist Party), his actions elicited a reaction from Communist hardliners, and speeded up the polarization process in Tajikistan. The changes scared the established elite, and forced them to recognize that if they did not take action to prevent further such developments, they could lose power. Therefore they reacted immediately, bringing the pre-1985 First Secretary Nabiev back to power in hopes that he would preserve the status quo.

After his return to power, Nabiev tried to consolidate his authority, putting his supporters into important positions and purging others. He attacked both intra-party challengers and outside opposition figures. This broad assault on multiple fronts enlarged and united the opposition, destabilizing the situation in Tajikistan. Karimov by contrast felt a need to bargain, negotiate, and make concessions to powerful elites. He could not immediately launch a broad attack on the whole opposition until he had consolidated his power. Initially he tried to build good relations with the opposition movements. He also convinced one wing of the opposition that they could work within the system. In addition, he tried to co-opt some elements of the opposition. Together, these tactics divided the opposition. As Karimov consolidated his power, he began his attacks against his party opponents and opposition. Unable to unite and develop a joint counter-program, they were targeted and defeated one by one.

In addition to the differences between the two governments' policies towards their respective oppositions, differences in dynamics within the opposition groups also affected the degree to which they remained united. This in turn affected the outcomes. Analysts usually consider governments to be strong when they suppress their opposition; however, we need to also take the degree of counter-force into account. Opposition groups, far from being a passive force, have their own internal dynamics. This affects the structure and strength of the opposition, which is also important in determining a government's ability to repress it. In Tajikistan, the opposition was able to unite and challenge the government as a formidable force. In Uzbekistan, by contrast, the opposition remained divided, unable to mobilize a large population against the established political order. Opposition figures thus became easy targets of the attacks of the Karimov regime.

Chapter 5 considered network-related factors. I stress the role of mediators who establish links among formerly unrelated groups. The presence or absence of such actors appears to be an important variable in violent conflicts. In Tajikistan, Turajonzoda's role contributed to the unity and strength of the opposition, which in turn made it a significant force against the government. Although in Uzbekistan Muhammad Yusuf's situation in many aspects resembled that of Turajonzoda, he behaved quite differently.

The examples of Turajonzoda and Muhammad Yusuf also show the importance of networks, and the role of mediators in establishing these networks. They also illustrate the significance of actor choices. I argue that the actions of individual key figures can make a crucial difference in conflict situations. Actors do not behave only under the influence of structure, or under the influence of their positions in the network. Although these are certainly important, such things as agency, actor decisions, and ideas are also significant. Using a concept from network analysis, we could say that the holes among groups in Uzbekistan could

not be closed. These holes existed in Tajikistan as well, but were closed with the influence of a mediator, Turajonzoda.

Another important factor emphasized in this study is the role of network activations in conflict situations. I stress the mobilization of the regional networks by the elites on both sides for the support of their causes in Tajikistan. This was an important process leading to civil war in Tajikistan. Elites activated their regional networks, and their associates in the regions mobilized people there. However, these networks were not activated in Uzbekistan, although the elites could have done so. One important reason was that Karimov managed to keep his opposition divided, and even to co-opt some of his rivals. This meant that part of the elite was satisfied with their positions, while the remaining opposition was divided and weak. As Karimov consolidated his power, he used his powerful security forces against any mobilization which remained isolated. The opposition was thus in no state to activate any network against the regime.

I emphasize the critical role played by violence specialists. Such actors may become the spark that turns a peaceful dispute into a violent one. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan shared not only similar patterns of loyalties (including regional ones) and relationship networks, but also had similar patterns of relations between political actors and criminal groups. Both countries had mafia-like groups who controlled the shadow sectors of the local economies, and who cultivated client-like relations with political figures in the state and party apparatus. In the case of Tajikistan, violence specialists had been involved in criminal activities, and were powerful on the streets before the civil war. The militia leaders were criminals, and their followers were mainly composed of thugs, former inmates, and other criminals. Furthermore, during the war the militias recruited people with similar backgrounds, by releasing prisoners from confinement. These groups were employed by the politicians during the civil war, and played a vital role in its spread to other regions of Tajikistan. The cozy relationship between

violence specialists and elites, especially political actors, is an important point. Nabiev and Kenjaev both took advantage of the ability of these illegal groups to mobilize violence. Thus state actors were directly responsible for provoking, generating, and committing violence.

This dissertation makes a balance-of-power argument. In the final analysis, actors' perceptions of their own power relative to that of their adversaries is critical to their decision of whether to use violence. When one side's power-perception is high, and that of its adversaries is low, the probability of war is also low; this is because a party which perceives itself as weak will be more likely to accept its lot. When both sides' power-perceptions are high, the probability of war is much higher, since each side will think that it can defeat the other. In Tajikistan the ruling elite had high power-perception, reinforced by process-related factors such as being undisturbed by purges, and the lack of strong intra-party challengers. Their opposition also had reason to perceive themselves as powerful owing to their electoral success, unity, and ability to mobilize large crowds. Thus, both sides came to think that they could win. The balance-of-power argument is supported by the behavior of Karimov in Uzbekistan. When Karimov first came to power, he realized his weakness, and waited until consolidating power to attack his opponents. His disunited opposition saw their ability to mobilize the masses decrease, and so they could not emerge as a strong force against the government.

The civil war in Tajikistan was not caused by regional animosities. Rather, regionalization occurred *in the course of* the civil war. That is, the war regionalized the conflict. This took place by means of the activation of regional networks, and intensified during the violent conflict. Persecution by militias, and murders based on regional origin, made regional identity and regionalism salient in the war. Nevertheless, as has been shown, parties to the war were not composed of homogenous groups of people from the same region. Regionalism was exploited in the conflict in order to attract support and mobilize people for

the war effort. Elites also used religious, ethnic, or other allegiances in order to mobilize people, when these were more suitable.

Some scholars have argued that the war started as a result of intensified competition and conflicts among common people. This does not appear to be the case. Contrary to what is usually assumed in analyses of civil wars, the civil war in Tajikistan did not start with ordinary people's sudden attacks against each other. Rather, the armed conflict started in Dushanbe as a result of elite struggles, with militias and their relationships with political actors played a critical role. The elites' activation of regional networks, their decision to work with illegal groups in support of their cause, and the establishment of militias under the leadership of criminal figures, were especially important in starting the civil war, and spreading it to other regions of the country.

The activities of the militias led individuals among the common people to become involved. Some did so voluntarily, whereas others were forced to participate. Some pursued their own interests with respect to personal enmities and economic opportunities (often in the form of robbery or looting). Some fought for the privileges and resources that position and power could bring. The fighting developed a dynamic of its own. As armed militias started to fight, people who otherwise would not have engaged in hostile action were forced to follow. The militias punished people who did not follow and support them. In the tragic cycle of violence, some sought revenge for relatives killed in the war.

It is difficult to understand violent conflicts without considering the role of agency. I argue that actors' actions are relational. Human behavior is a result of our involvement in social relationships with other people. Actions have multiple determinants including agency, structure, and social relations. The actions of various actors also mutually influence one another. For example, the actions of opposition in both countries were influenced by the actions of governments, and vice versa.

All told, my study of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the wake of the Soviet collapse suggests that no one single cause of violent conflict can be identified. Rather, there is a great deal of causal heterogeneity. I have tried to identify, analyze and explain these heterogeneous processes and mechanisms which may lead to violent conflict. I argue that the *interactions* among structures, processes, networks, actor choices, and relations among actors are determinative. Alone, none of these factors is explanatory. By focusing on these interactions, we can come closer to accounting for the significant variations in the outcome, and better understand the outbreak of civil war.

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