The perception of the Arab Spring in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan: A study of political change and learning from 2005 to 2015

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Abstract

What impact has the "Arab Spring" had upon authoritarian Central Asian regimes? Scholars and journalists have raised the possibility of a "Central Asian Spring," uprisings across the region ousting the incumbent authoritarian regimes. However, short of the possibility of an outright revolution, how the Arab Spring has reshaped the region has not been addressed. This thesis examines the Arab Spring's impact on Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan's approach to maintaining regime security. It questions how the ruling authorities of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have responded to pressures, perceived or anticipated, for political change, and how these responses were framed and legitimized. It utilizes a comparative analysis of elite rhetoric from 2005 to 2015 supplemented with fieldwork interviews to identify an evolution in regime maintenance. I apply the demonstration effect to the elite-level to explain how regimes may be influenced by events elsewhere as they seek to forestall challenges to their leadership. This thesis found that the Kazakh regime's rhetorical and behavioural response to the Arab Spring suggested that it influenced their perceptions of regime security through an elite-level demonstration effect. This suggests that uprisings outside of a region can influence authoritarian regimes through an elite-level demonstration effect even in the absence of widespread unrest at home. The absence of an elite-level demonstration effect in Kyrgyzstan presented plausible evidence that an elite-level demonstration effect is less likely to occur after domestic revolution. These findings have wider implications for traditional understandings of political change and authoritarian stability as they address why political change appears in some societies and not others. Above all, these findings demonstrate that the internal dynamics of transformation in "stable" authoritarian regimes merit examination, even in the absence of unrest at home.

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Abbreviations

CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SDPK	Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan

Chapter 1 Introduction

Since its independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991, instability in Central Asia has been limited to instances of domestic unrest, associated with local conflicts and grievances. For example, Kyrgyzstan saw revolution in 2005 and 2010, and ethnic violence between its Uzbek and Kyrgyz population in Osh in 2010. During Uzbekistan's 2005 Andijan massacre, militants freed 23 imprisoned men accused of Islamic extremism. In 2011, oil workers, demonstrating for fair wages and safe working conditions, clashed with police in Zhanaozen, Kazakhstan. In 2016 protests against changes in land code crossed Kazakhstan from Western Atyrau and Northern Aktobe to Eastern Semey (BBC News 2016). In Khorog, Tajikistan in 2012, militants attacked Tajik troops sent to detain those suspected of killing General Abdullo Nazarov, who commanded troops in its Gorno-Badakhshan autonomous region (McGlinchey 2013, 4). Even Turkmenistan, by far the most closed and authoritarian of the Central Asian states, has seen protest. In 2014, residents of Ashgabat protested against the removal of air conditioning units from their apartment windows (RFE/RL's Turkmen Service 2014). These examples reveal that the conditions that have inspired domestic unrest in one context have not triggered an identical response elsewhere in the region. Although electoral fraud contributed to the onset of Kyrgyzstan's 2005 Tulip Revolution, protest has not materialized over electoral fraud in Kazakhstan, making a lack of protest as notable as its emergence (McGlinchey 2009, 130).

Despite the fact that protest has remained localized, Central Asia has been subject to continuous predications of regional instability. In Blank's (2012, 147) words, "most observers of Central Asia generally (though there are exceptions) argue that the region's stability is precarious at best." Multiple predictions of Central Asia's imminent collapse from 2005 to 2016 illustrate this tendency. In 2005 the Institute for War & Peace Reporting threatened that "Central Asia Faces Political Instability" if democratic reforms were not implemented (Masanov 2005). In 2008 the Brookings Institution reported on "Turmoil in Central Asia" (Linn and Olcott 2008). It criticized the international community for its preoccupation with Afghanistan and for "paying far too little attention to the storm brewing just beyond the country's northern borders, in Central Asia" (Linn and Olcott 2008). Scholarly and journalistic speculation of a 2010 "Central Asian Spring" is another case in

point. In a Central Asian Spring, popular uprisings across the region would oust the incumbent governments like the 2010 Arab Spring uprisings, which toppled the regimes of Tunisia and Egypt and sparked protests across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Ultimately, academics and analysts rightly concluded that Central Asia would not see its own Spring (Zikibayeva 2011; Radnitz 2011; De Cordier 2012; Kendzior 2012; Blank 2012, 152). Yet predictions of instability continued into 2012 when *Foreign Policy* included Central Asia in its list of "10 Conflicts to Watch in 2013" (Arbour 2012). The accompanying justification described the region as "a laundry list of countries on the brink" (Arbour 2012). The rationale behind this label included Tajikistan's deteriorating relations with Uzbekistan and potential separatism in its Gorno-Badakhshan region, "festering ethnic tensions" in Kyrgyzstan, and former President Islam Karimov's impending succession in Uzbekistan (Arbour 2012). Terrorist attacks and socioeconomic grievances in Kazakhstan rounded out the list (Arbour 2012). Yet, as Kendzior (2013) pointed out, these criteria applied to Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan not only in 2012 but also in years prior, making the region a repeat in conflict predictions. As Kendzior (2013) problematized it, "What experts tend to underestimate is how long a nation can remain on the brink." However, the trend of predicting instability in Central Asia has persevered. In 2016, Forbes reported that "Across Central Asia, A Bleak Economic Outlook Raises Threat of Instability" (O'Casey 2016).

Popular speculation of Central Asian instability shares a focus on the possibility of outright unrest or revolution. A similar trend is reflected in the literature. For example, scholarship has concentrated on what factors have contributed to the rise, spread, or lack of the colour revolutions (McFaul 2005; V. Bunce and Wolchik 2006; Beissinger 2007; J. A. Tucker 2007; V. Bunce and Wolchik 2009; Ó Beacháin and Polese 2010; Way 2008, 2010; Hale 2005, 2015). But prediction of outright unrest or popular revolution is only half of the picture. The other half is how uprising affects ruling authorities. Academic literature has addressed how uprising affects ruling elites in terms of the counter measures illiberal regimes have employed to thwart the possibility of unrest or revolution. The majority of this scholarship has centred on the impact of domestic and regional uprisings on ruling authorities. To illustrate this point, multiple studies have examined how former Soviet states responded to the post-Soviet colour revolutions in Georgia in 2003, Ukraine in 2004, and Kyrgyzstan in 2005 (Herd 2005; Ambrosio 2009; Ostrowski 2009; Wilson 2009; Silitski 2010a, 2010b; Stoner-Weiss 2010; Horvath 2011; Finkel and Brudny 2013; Vanderhill and Aleprete Jr. 2013; Spector 2015).

Academic literature's preoccupation with the impact of domestic and regional uprisings on ruling authorities has had two consequences. Firstly, ruling elite's perception of uprisings external to their region have often been overlooked. Of course, notable exceptions do exist. Wilson (2009) compared the impact of the colour revolutions on Russia and China, and found that although both shared an understanding of the causes and national implications of the colour revolutions, they implemented differing pre-emptive domestic policies. More recently, Koesel and Bunce's (2013) compared the impact of the colour revolutions and the Arab Spring uprisings on China and Russia. Koesel and Bunce (2013) found that both China and Russia perceived the colour revolutions and the Arab Spring uprisings as a threat to regime stability. Unlike Wilson (2009), however, Koesel and Bunce (2013, 756) found that Russia and China used parallel strategies to pre-empt revolution at home: through rhetoric and policies designed to prevent diffusion.

A second consequence of the academic literature's focus on the impact of domestic and regional uprising on ruling authorities is that what Whitehead (2001, 6) termed "mechanisms of transmission," remain under-theorized on the elite level. In other words, while the above cases focus on *if* an impact has been felt and the *nature* of the impact, *how* the impact has been transmitted on an elite level is another matter. Beissinger's (2007) "elite defection model" and "elite learning model" offered two examples of explanatory mechanisms of elite transmission in regards to modular collective action. Beissinger (2007, 259) drew upon Tarrow's (1998) use of the term modular to refer to collective action "based in a significant part on the prior successful example of others." Beissinger (2007, 263) also established that that modular phenomena require "common institutional characteristics, histories, cultural affinities, or modes of domination." Seemingly for these reasons, Beissinger (2007) based his examination on the post-Soviet states. In Beissinger's (2007, 268–69) "elite defection model," elites take note of the course of modular action and its potential to negatively impact the institutions they represent. Elites then choose to defect before defection is no longer an option, as evidenced by elites in the former Soviet Union remodelling themselves into nationalists during the *glasnost* period (Beissinger 2007, 269). In Beissinger's (2007, 269) "elite learning model," elites learn from the successes and shortcomings of models of modular collective action and implemented additional institutional constraints and repressive measures to thwart subsequent challenges. Beissinger (2007, 270) found evidence of the elite learning model through limitations on civil society in Russia, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan following Ukraine's 2004 Orange and Kyrgyzstan's 2005 Tulip Revolutions. In particular, the restriction of democratic NGOs and political opponents, and the establishment of closer relations with Russia for support

against future revolutions evidenced elite learning (Beissinger 2007, 270).

Cross-regional influence has extended to predications of regional instability in Central Asia, as evidenced by predications of a Central Asian Spring. However, the impact of uprising elsewhere on Central Asian ruling elites has been largely overlooked. Radnitz (2011) and Blank (2011) are two exceptions to this trend as they examined the immediate impact of the Arab Spring uprisings on Central Asian authorities. Radnitz (2011) identified three reasons why Central Asian leaders were "Yawning Through the Arab Spring." Firstly, as a result of weak social ties linking the Arab world and Central Asia, Central Asians did not draw inspiration from the MENA events (Radnitz 2011, 4). Similarly, perceptions of political opportunities, or a perceived alteration in the structural conditions conducive to protest, did not carry over from the MENA to Central Asia (Radnitz 2011, 4). Secondly, Central Asian leaders learned how to become more resilient in the face of challenges following the colour revolutions (Radnitz 2011, 4). Examples included banning Western NGOs, creating pro-government youth groups, and strengthening ruling parties, to name a few (Radnitz 2011, 4). Finally, Radnitz (2011, 5) identified differences in the structure of civil society between the MENA and Central Asia. In the MENA, protestors were able to act through established civil society organizations, trade unions, student groups, Islamic movements, and some political parties. In Central Asia, however, these structures were not in place as a result of its Soviet legacy (Radnitz 2011, 5). Whereas Radntiz (2011) explained why Central Asian ruling elites were apathetic towards the Arab Spring uprising, Blank (2011, 6) identified measures Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan took to "fight the Arab Revolutions." In Kazakhstan, Blank (2011, 6) attributed President Nazarbayev's decision to hold an early election, instead of a referendum to extend his term in office, as one such measure. Blank (2011, 7) also identified Nazarbayev's simultaneous strengthening of parliament and regional governments, while decentralizing executive power as another such measure. This move widened Nazarbayev's elite circle, lessened the power of the clans and factions nearest to him, and increased his ability to handpick his successor (Blank 2011, 7). For Blank (2011, 7), other measures included the Uzbek government's taking control over mobile phone companies and order that suspicious activities and mass texts be reported, and Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan's selective reporting of news. Presumably this selective reporting regarded the Arab Spring uprisings.

Because the impact of uprisings elsewhere on Central Asian ruling authorities has been largely overlooked, questions remain as to how they have been perceived over time by Central Asian ruling authorities. In particular, have the Arab Spring uprisings impacted Central Asian leaders' perceptions of regime security? Have they acted as a catalyst of political change in Central Asia, despite

the absence of a Central Asian spring? More widely, what are the effects of uprisings elsewhere on authoritarian and semi-consolidated authoritarian regimes in the absence of large-scale demonstrations at home? What theoretical mechanism can account for any effects felt? Particularly, in the absence of Beissinger's (2007, 263) prerequisites for modular phenomenon including "common institutional characteristics, histories, cultural affinities, or modes of domination"? To this end, this thesis questions if and why the Arab Spring has acted as a catalyst for change regarding Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan's approach to regime security, and whether rhetorical, behavioural or policy change gave rise to elite learning. This thesis utilizes Hall and Ambrosio's (2017, 143) definition of authoritarian learning as "a process by which authoritarian regimes adopt survival strategies based on the prior successes and failures of other governments." The research is driven by the following primary question and supported by two sub questions:

- What impact has the Arab Spring had upon Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan's approach to maintaining regime security?

- How have the authoritarian elites of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan used policies to respond to pressures, perceived or anticipated, for political change?

- How were these responses framed and legitimized?

This examination is carried out utilizing a loosely comparative analysis of official rhetoric, elite behaviour, and policy from 2005 to 2015. The purpose of this approach is to identify an evolution in regime maintenance brought about by the new people power dynamics, including the use of social media and horizontal mobilization, seen in the Arab Spring uprisings. This approach goes beyond conventional emphasis on structural conditions and focuses on the agency of the regime.[1] I pay particular attention to what I term "elite-level" demonstration effects. Patel, Bunce and Wolchick (2014, 59) have defined the demonstration effect as "the power of precedent." In its conventional sense, the demonstration effect is commonly used to explain the onset and spread of popular mobilization (Huntington 1991; Whitehead 2001; Patel, Bunce, and Wolchik 2014). For example, the demonstration effect of Tunisia's uprising in 2011, which ousted President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, inspired subsequent protest in Egypt. In Central Asia, scholars have engaged with debates over transnational influence

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[1] For example, see Skocpol (1979) for a structural analysis of the causes of revolutions.

in relation to Kyrgyzstan's 2005 Tulip Revolution. Tursunkulova (2008) questioned to what extent prior examples of domestic and regional protest influenced the onset of mobilization in Kyrgyzstan's 2005 Tulip Revolution. Tursunkulova (2008) compared the influence of Kyrgyzstan's 2002 Aksy protests, in which a protest supporting the imprisoned Azimbek Beknazarov became violent, with Georgia's Rose and Ukraine's Orange Revolutions. Additionally, Heathershaw (2009) engaged with theoretical debates over the nature of transnational influence in relation to Kyrgyzstan's 2005 revolution. Heathershaw (2009, 298) did not dispute that the Rose, Tulip and Orange Revolutions were linked in some way, but that any " 'diffusion' effect" was not the result of rational imitation of a model. Rather, the " 'diffusion' effect" was dependent on the "*power of representation,*"[2] or how the colour revolutions were represented on an elite and popular level in local discourses (Heathershaw 2009, 298).

I apply the demonstration effect to the elite level where regimes may be influenced by events elsewhere as they seek to prevent challenges to their leadership. An elite-level demonstration effect may be expressed in three ways. Firstly, it can be expressed through changes in the ruling authorities' narrative. In other words, are specific events discussed? How are these events framed in elite discourse? How does this framing differ or reiterate established elite framing of similar events? Secondly, an elite-level demonstration effect may be expressed through changes in behaviour. Have the ruling authorities changed their behaviour from an established precedent or implemented a new behaviour? Finally, an elite-level demonstration effect may be expressed through a change in policy. Changes in the ruling authorities rhetoric, behaviour or policy which suggest that the Arab Spring was perceived as a threat would evidence an elite-level demonstration effect. Of course, there are methodological limitations with linking an event to a change in policy, particularly under illiberal regimes. These will be elaborated upon in the following chapter. However, a change in policy, which appears to be related to the aforementioned event, triangulated by changes in narrative and behaviour, would evidence that said policy change was brought about by an elite-level demonstration effect. Changes in narrative, behaviour, and policy may therefore occur independently of each other, or simultaneously, as evidence of an elite-level demonstration effect. The elite-level demonstration effect is therefore a mark of political change which is not limited to conventional focus on regime shifts, and may be expressed through narrative, behaviour or policy. The nature of the aforementioned changes can be evolutionary, occurring over a period of time, rather than revolutionary, in terms of an overthrow of leadership. This necessitated the longitudinal approach, and

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[2] Italics in original.

the delimited time frame from 2005 to 2015, adopted in this thesis' research design.

Because an elite-level demonstration effect extends the "power of precedent" from the popular to an elite level, it acts as a mechanism which opens the possibility of authoritarian learning and policy transfer. Traditional approaches to learning under illiberal contexts have measured learning though the adoption of policies or behaviour to thwart uprising or to maintain power. This is evidenced by both Beissinger's (2007) elite learning model and Hall and Ambrosio's (2017, 143) definition of authoritarian learning. But similar to measuring political change based solely on policy or regime shifts, this approach risks failing to capture learning evidenced by changes in rhetoric or behaviour that are not implemented through policy. Because changes in narrative, behaviour and policy evidence an elite-level demonstration effect, and hence an indication of the effect felt on a regime from uprising elsewhere, an elite-level demonstration effect indicates learning from events elsewhere. In other words, elites learn from events elsewhere and the elite-level demonstration effect is found in how they respond in terms of rhetoric, behaviour or policy. Learning can therefore occur prior to, or parallel to the elite-level demonstration effect.

This thesis argues that when taken together, the Kazakh regime's rhetorical, behavioural and policy responses in the wake of the Arab Spring indicated that concerns over the spread of anti-regime activities impacted perceptions of Kazakh regime security through an elite-level demonstration effect. This finding is significant because it suggests that uprisings elsewhere, including those outside of a region, affect authoritarian regimes through an elite-level demonstration effect even in the absence of widespread unrest at home. It demonstrates that the relationship between seemingly disconnected events should not be overlooked. Moreover, it also illustrates a point made by Khamidov (2016) when interviewed by the author, that "perceptions matter—leaders' perceptions." The occurrence of an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring in Kazakhstan, and its absence in Kyrgyzstan, informed the conditions under which it is more or less likely to occur. The fact that Kazakhstan is more closely integrated within the post-Soviet space than with the countries in the MENA, indicated that close social and cultural ties are not needed for an elite-level demonstration effect. The absence of an elite-level demonstration effect in Kyrgyzstan, which saw domestic revolution in 2005 and 2010, suggested that it is less likely to occur when a revolution has already taken place. While there is not clear evidence of a causal relationship, the case of Kyrgyzstan presents plausible evidence that an elite-level demonstration effect is less likely to occur in the wake of domestic revolution, and even less likely in the wake of two

revolutions. Although further research is needed to support this, this thesis has taken the first step to advance this strand of research by establishing the initial conditions for the absence of an elite-level demonstration effect.

This thesis found that in Kazakhstan the presence of an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring uprisings indicated learning. In particular, the regime's treatment of information and communication technology (ICT) following the 2011 Zhanaozen unrest evidenced learning from the role attributed to ICT in facilitating collective action in the MENA. The absence of an elite-level demonstration effect in Kyrgyzstan suggested that any lessons learned regarding protest, revolution, or instability originated from its domestic sphere. However, these lessons varied from leader to leader. For example, former President Bakiyev learned how to consolidate power from his ousted predecessor Akayev, but not what factors drive popular unrest. Former President Otunbayeva learned the importance of a peaceful transition of power, and set a precedent for future generations. Finally, former President Atambayev learned that dishonest elections cause unrest, but also how to consolidate power. Despite differences between the presence and absence of an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and variations between the lessons each leader learned, each leader shared a notable commonality. The ruling elites of both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan utilized a strategic framing of revolution to legitimize the incumbent government, regardless of whether revolution was framed negatively (in Kazakhstan) or positively (in Kyrgyzstan).

In examining the perception of the Arab Spring in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, this thesis makes three principal contributions. Firstly, its main contribution is the development of the mechanism of the elite-level demonstration effect, what it entails, the conditions which foster its occurrence, and its relationship to political change and learning. This is important because a government's understanding of protest elsewhere can shape response to domestic events and foreign policy.[3] For example, because perceptions of regime security and perceived threats were translated into legislative action, this likely informed Kazakh and Kyrgyz policy decisions in areas relevant to foreign governments, such as security collaboration and economic reform. As such this research provides rich and customized data that can assist analysts and decision-makers in developing more effective policies in Central Asia. The mechanism of the elite-level demonstration effect also contributes to knowledge of illiberal forms of governance and to the field of authoritarian learning. This is

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[3] For example, see Toktomushev (2017) for an examination between regime security and foreign policy in Kyrgyzstan.

particularly relevant in today's globalized society which has seen a marked reversal in liberal democratic trends. Freedom House (2018a, 1) reported that political rights and civil liberties reached their lowest level in 2017 in over a decade, while Ambrosio and Hall (2017, 144) observed that authoritarian governments have successfully learned to thwart democratic pressures. The elite-level demonstration effect, in which regimes anticipate and respond to pressures for liberalization through state policy, can also have implications for future civil resistance under authoritarian regimes by raising the cost of collective action. Secondly and methodologically, this thesis shows that political change can be evaluated through an evolution in narrative and behaviour. A policy-centred approach may overlook rhetorical and behaviour political change that is not translated into policy. This is particularly useful when attempting to identify political change in illiberal contexts. As a result, this thesis has helped to produce knowledge on how to conduct research in countries where scholars and journalists can face various difficulties. Finally, through the author's original translations of Russian text, this thesis has made local narratives available to an English-speaking audience.

The thesis proceeds as follows. Chapter Two sets out the research design and justification for the selected methodology. It begins by addressing why the research has adopted a longitudinal approach to identifying political change in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and sets out the delimited time frame from 2005 to 2015. A longitudinal approach reflects the four assumptions underlying this research, which are then outlined. The discussion then turns to the selection of the Arab Spring uprisings as a catalyst for political change in Central Asia, and how their relationship to the region advances the development of the mechanism of the elite-level demonstration effect. The discussion then addresses the selection of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan as case studies, and how their similarities and differences enable an effective comparison to produce insights in relation to regime security and political change. This is followed by a detailed discussion of the methods of data collection and analysis. In particular, the rationale behind the method of narrative analysis, a description of how relevant statements were identified, and how thematic analysis for the purposes of identifying an elite-level demonstration effect and learning, was undertaken. The selection of presidential texts, and the use of supplementary interviews with local experts is also discussed. Finally, the limitations of the study are acknowledged, as well as the methods employed to overcome them. Particular attention is given to the challenges of identifying political change and learning under an authoritarian regime.

Chapter Three provides an overview of five fields deemed relevant to the research questions at large and in relation to Central Asia. These included diffusion and the demonstration effect, new ICT, social movement theory, authoritarianism, and democratization. These fields are relevant because the Arab Spring uprisings challenged their conventional understandings, thereby necessitating a review of their relationship to stability and political change. The discussion opens with a review of diffusion and conventional understandings of the demonstration effect. It reveals a lack of scholarly consensus on the usage of these terms thereby necessitating the clarification of the mechanism of an elite-level demonstration effect undertaken in this thesis. Secondly, the discussion turns to new ICT, what distinguishes it from its older counterparts, and whether it facilitates or hinders collective action. How civil resistance movements and illiberal regimes have harnessed the benefits of new information and communication technology are considered. Thirdly, the discussion presents the various responses given in answer to the question of when and why people mobilize. Conventional approaches to social movements, including the resource mobilization paradigm and political opportunity structure are reviewed. The applicability of political opportunity structure to authoritarian contexts is questioned. The application of social movement theory to Central Asia is also explored. Fourthly, what constitutes an authoritarian regime and transitions to democracy are presented. The discussion utilizes the post-Soviet states to illustrate the limitations of the transition paradigm, and how prior focus on authoritarian resilience has prioritized examination of regimes shifts or their absence, as opposed to identifying continuous political change under authoritarian regimes. It also reviews different types of authoritarian learning and provides and overview of the lessons learned in the post-Soviet space after the colour revolutions. Finally, various pathways to democracy are evaluated, as well as Central Asia's failure to follow the aforementioned trajectories after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In doing so the discussion addresses why Central Asia became authoritarian.

Chapter Four, entitled "A Central Asian Spring?" engages with conflict studies to explore various explanations of instability. It utilizes the theoretical framework of civil war scholarship to identify political, economic, demographic and social drivers of instability. Political factors which can cause instability include regime type and state capacity. Internal economic drivers of instability include economic growth, income inequality, horizontal inequalities and perceived economic grievances, poverty and unemployment. External economic factors include climate change and its effect of rapid urbanization. Social and demographic factors include a youth bulge and the use of ICT. The chapter assesses to what extent these factors were present in Tunisia, Egypt and Central

Asia in 2010 using empirical indicators. The chapter then addresses cultural and historical particularities affecting uprising including imperial legacy, regional integration, and civil society. The purpose of this is not a comparison between the two regions, but to determine whether these factors were present in the MENA at the time of the Arab Spring uprisings, and if so, whether they were also present in Central Asia. The presence of similar variables, yet different outcomes in the region in 2010 establishes the need for a longitudinal approach to the case studies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Chapter Five is the first of two Central Asian case studies and focuses on Kazakhstan's regime. It opens by establishing the Kazakh regime's receptiveness to learning and awareness of cross-border influence. Taken together, these open the possibility that the Kazakh regime experienced an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring, and that said effect gave rise to learning. It accomplishes this through a three part analysis. It presents the Kazakh regime's perceived narrative of the causes and consequences of conflict in general and in relation to national and regional uprisings. The same procedure is carried out in relation to the causes and consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings, in order to assess whether the Arab Spring was perceived differently, and whether that perception evidences an elite-level demonstration effect. Finally, having established evidence of an elite-level demonstration effect in Kazakhstan brought about by the Arab Spring uprisings, the discussion turns to the 2011 Zhanaozen unrest, in order to test the relationship between the demonstration effect and learning.

Chapter Six is the second Central Asian case study, and focuses on four of Kyrgyzstan's leaders. It is divided into four sections corresponding to each Kyrgyz President's term in office within the delimited time frame. These consist of Askar Akayev (1 January 2005 to 24 March 2005), Kurmanbek Bakiyev (24 March 2005 to 7 April 2010), Roza Otunbayeva (7 April 2010 to 1 December 2011), and Almazbek Atambayev (1 December 2011 to 31 December 2015). Each section begins by establishing the leadership's receptiveness to learning and the awareness of cross-border influence necessary for an elite-level demonstration effect. It then sets out each leader's perceptions of the political, economic, social and demographic causes and consequences of conflict in general and in relation to national and regional conflicts. It is at this point that the examination of Akayev and Bakiyev diverges from that of Otunbayeva and Atambayev. Akayev and Bakiyev's tenure in office ended before the onset of the Arab Spring. Akayev's section concludes at this point because the data available from the delimited time frame does not allow for an evaluation of his learning, while Bakiyev's concludes with an evaluation of learning from his predecessor

and the Rose and Orange revolutions. Examination of Akayev and Bakiyev functions as a point of comparison and opens the possibility of showing whether subsequent Kyrgyz leadership perceived the causes and consequences of uprising differently, and whether it learned from its predecessors or further afield. Examination of Otunbayeva and Atambayev continues with a presentation of their perception of the causes and consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings, which do not evidence an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring uprisings. Finally, an evaluation of learning under Otunbayeva and Atambayev is undertaken, to determine whether they learned from lessons closer to home or further afield in the absence of an elite-level demonstration effect.

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis by revisiting its main research questions in relation to the thesis' findings: the presence of an elite-level demonstration effect in Kazakhstan and its absence in Kyrgyzstan. It applies these findings to develop the theoretical mechanism of the elite-level demonstration effect. Specifically, it presents what conditions influence its presence or absence, and its relationship to learning. It addresses developments in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan since 2015 to determine how the presence and absence of an elite-level demonstration effect influences learning in the medium term. In Kazakhstan, it focuses on the regime's reaction to the 2016 protests against changes in land code, and how it differs from the regime's response to the Zhanaozen protests five years prior. Discussion of Kyrgyzstan addresses its 2016 constitutional referendum, which allowed former President Atambayev to further consolidate power. Finally, the wider implications of these findings are discussed. Namely, why political change is seen in some societies and not others, and the resulting implications for the fields of authoritarianism, civil resistance and learning.

Chapter 2 Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This methodology explores the possible relationship between the Arab Spring and political change in the selected case studies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and how the Kazakh and Kyrgyz regimes respond to challenges to authoritarianism. This methodology also seeks to demonstrate how political change is reflected in elite discourse, and how elite discourse is used to frame and legitimize policies aimed at forestalling the liberalization of the political system. Specifically, the possible impact of the Arab Spring uprisings as a catalyst for change regarding Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan's regime security will be explored. To answer the proposed research questions, I adopt a longitudinal approach to identify political change in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The delimited time frame ranges from 2005 to 2015. It therefore begins two years following Ukraine's Orange Revolution and ends four years following the onset of the Arab Spring uprisings. The time frame has been delimited to this ten year period precisely because it includes these as well as other examples of domestic, international and regional uprising. It therefore enables a systematic tracking of the ruling authorities' longitudinal treatment of conflict to gauge the nature of the impact, if any, of the Arab Spring events on the Kazakh and Kyrgyz regimes. This approach reflects the four assumptions underlying this research. Firstly, it assumes that regime security is a primary goal of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (S. Cummings 2012, 94). Secondly, it assumes that regime maintenance is a continuous, evolving process (S. Cummings 2012, 69). Thirdly, this research assumes that even when the region is not marked by instability, ruling elites are both aware and wary of mobilization elsewhere. Lastly, it assumes that changes in elite perceptions may be reflected in discourse.

2.2 Selection of the Arab Spring uprisings and case studies

Although the Arab Spring uprisings do not constitute a case study, examination of their relationship to Central Asia raises the question of why these events have been selected as a potential catalyst for political change.[4] Selection of the Arab Spring uprisings and their effect on Central Asia also raises the question of what bridges the examination of two seemingly disconnected regions. The answer goes beyond the structural similarities between Central Asia and the MENA in 2010, which resulted in speculation of a Central Asian Spring and will be elaborated upon in Chapter Four. Rather, the Arab Spring uprisings have been selected as an example of uprising elsewhere which further develops the mechanism of an elite-level demonstration effect. Selection of the Arab Spring uprisings as a potential catalyst of regime change in Central Asia enabled consideration of how ruling authorities perceive protest elsewhere, and whether protest elsewhere impacts national perceptions of regime security under two circumstances: in the absence of domestic unrest and Beissinger's (2007, 263) prerequisites for modular phenomena including "common institutional characteristics, histories, cultural affinities, or modes of domination." Selection of the Arab Spring uprisings also furthered the relationship between the elite-level demonstration effect and elite learning, and whether elites are more likely to learn from lessons at home or further afield.

Having established why the Arab Spring uprisings were selected as a catalyst of political change in Central Asia, the discussion will now turn to why the Central Asian states of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were selected as case studies. As Radnitz (2010, 9) pointed out, the presence of post-Soviet legacies and a degree of cultural similarity between the Central Asian states enables the identification of causal variables and the testing of hypotheses. Central Asian states share Soviet economic, political and cultural legacies, which lessen the potential variables that can account for their differing post-Soviet trajectories (Radnitz 2010, 9). Consequently, Central Asian cases are well-suitable for comparison. Although this thesis does not employ a formally comparative method, the cases of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are similar, yet different enough to enable an effective comparison which would produce interesting insights in relation to regime security and political change. Alongside their shared Soviet economic, political and cultural legacies, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have multiple differences. For example, unlike its neighbour Kyrgyzstan,

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[4] The author acknowledges that the Arab Spring uprisings were heterogeneous. Each country which saw uprising experienced a different trajectory, with leadership ousted in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen. For the purpose of this thesis, the Arab Spring is treated homogenously as protest elsewhere. It is thus the fact that widespread mobilization occurred and rapidly spread across the MENA, and not its end result, that is of interest to the argument at hand.

Kazakhstan is resource rich. Additional differences are elaborated upon in Chapter Four. Above all, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan differ in two critical ways for this research. Firstly, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan exhibit varying degrees of authoritarianism. Kazakhstan is more authoritarian and politically sensitive than its neighbour Kyrgyzstan. This is not only reflected in official measures of regime characterization, but also in the author's experience conducting interviews. Unlike in Kazakhstan, no one interviewed by the author in Kyrgyzstan requested anonymity. Secondly, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan differ in terms of their experience with widespread domestic unrest. Although both countries have experienced protest, protest in Kazakhstan is much rarer than in Kyrgyzstan. Moreover, Kazakhstan has not seen widespread unrest since its independence. Kyrgyzstan, on the other hand, saw domestic revolution in 2005 and again in 2010.[5] In examining Kazakhstan, this research investigates a case where widespread protest has not occurred. It assesses whether the impact of uprising elsewhere has been felt in Kazakhstan even in the absence of widespread unrest at home. In Kyrgyzstan, this research assesses whether the impact of uprising elsewhere is felt at home, even with its history of widespread unrest. The key differences between the case studies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan inform under what conditions a regime is more or less likely to experience an elite-level demonstration effect.

2.3 Data collection and analysis

Several authors have highlighted the relationship between elite discourse and political change. For example, McGlinchy (2011, 135) stated, "Political change and revolutions are seldom "now out of never." Rather, political change is almost always foreshadowed by identifiable changes in discourse, symbols, and spectacles." Similarly, Koesel and Bunce's (2013, 755) method of detecting "diffusion-proofing" in Russia and China, in which regimes adopt strategies to pre-empt collective action, draws attention to changes in rhetoric, not just to changes in policy. Koesel and Bunce (2013, 755) identify diffusion-proofing by simultaneously tracking changes in rhetoric and policy. They scrutinize the timing

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[5] Because both scholarship and the government in Kyrgyzstan often refer to these events as revolutions, the same terms are used throughout this thesis, notwithstanding the debate regarding what constitutes a revolution. For further discussion on the term "revolution" in relation to the 2005 ousting of Askar Akayev in Kyrgyzstan, see Cummings (2008).

of changes in rhetoric and policy, and whether they occur at the same time as mobilization against authoritarian regimes (Koesel and Bunce 2013, 755). More recently, Kakachia, Minesashvili and Kakhishvili's (2018, 2) examination of Georgia's foreign policy towards Russia highlighted the sequential relationship between perceptions, discourse, and policy change. Specifically, changes in perceptions precede changes in discourse, and changes in discourse are followed by changes in policy (Kakachia, Minesashvili, and Kakhishvili 2018, 2). For Kakachia, Minesashvili and Kakhishvili (2018, 3), discourse functions as a "channel through which changes in identities manifest themselves," which culminate in foreign policy changes.

Because political change is often accompanied by a transformation in discourse, narrative analysis is well-suited to uncover whether the Arab Spring uprisings impacted Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan's approach to regime security, any resulting policies, and how their responses were framed and legitimized. As such, the primary research method utilized was narrative analysis. While the examination centred around the ruling authorities' discourse, key policy documents and laws from 2005 to 2015 were also taken into consideration. Narrative analysis focused on the Kazakh and Kyrgyz leaders' speeches from 2005 to 2015. Because the seat of Kazakhstan's presidency has been occupied by Nursultan Nazarbayev since 1991, examination of elite narrative is focused on his speeches. However, as Kyrgyzstan has seen multiple leaderships from 2005 to 2015, its analysis has been divided into four sections which correspond to Kyrgyzstan's presidential leadership within the delimited time frame. These include Askar Akayev (1 January 2005 to 24 March 2005), Kurmanbek Bakiyev (24 March 2005 to 7 April 2010), Roza Otunbayeva (7 April 2010 to 1 December 2011), and Almazbek Atambayev (1 December 2011 to 31 December 2015). The interim presidency of Ishenbai Kadyrbekov in 2005 after Akayev's ousting is excluded from the following discussion because of its exceedingly brief duration; it lasted only several hours. Additionally, the period from Kurmanbek Bakiyev's interim presidency to his election as president, from 25 March 2005 to the early election held on 10 July 2005, is treated as a continuous period of leadership.

Although Kyrgyzstan officially became a parliamentary democracy following its 27 June 2010 referendum, its case study focuses on the narrative of the president, as head of state, rather than on the narratives of its prime ministers who technically headed the government from the referendum onward as set out in Kyrgyzstan's constitution (Government of the Kyrgyz Republic 2010). The reasons for focusing on Presidents Roza Otunbayeva and Almazbek Atambayev rather than on their Prime Ministers were threefold. Firstly, focus on Kyrgyzstans' Presidents enabled analytical consistency in examining its elite narrative. Following Kyrgyzstan's 2010 revolution, the seat of Prime Minister remained

empty until 17 December 2010, it was then occupied by Almazbek Atambayev through 23 September 2011. From that point onward, and within the parameters of the delimited time frame, five Prime Ministers held office in Kyrgyzstan. These included Omurbek Babanov (2011 to 2012), Zhanatoro Satybaldiyev (2012 to 2014), Djoomart Otorbaev (2014 to 2015), and Temir Sariyev (2015 to 2016). Secondly, the reconfiguration of the distribution of power following the 2010 referendum resulted in a premier-presidential type of semi-presidentialism, rather than a true parliamentary system (Fumagalli 2016, 185). And, finally, according to the author's interview with E. Juraev (2016), former President Atambayev was in effect the head of state during his presidency.[6] E. Juraev (2016) stated:

> *Behind the curtains he is the one who calls all sorts of executive policies, not the Prime Minister… And contrary to Atambayev's claim that Kyrgyzstan is this first parliamentary sort of republic and what have you not, democracy, we don't have parliamentary anything. The parliament has just become a puppet, or enough of the majority in the parliament has become so pliable that they'll play along with whatever Atambayev will propose.*

I acknowledge that Cummings et al. (2013) problematized conflating the state, regime and government in Kyrgyzstan specifically and in post-Soviet scholarship at large. According to Cummings et al. (2013, 446) "The state refers to the locus and structure of power; the regime to the rules and limitations governing power's access and use; and government to the particular group of political actors who are exercising power at any given time." However, I examine presidential rhetoric because it corresponds to Cummings et al.'s (2013, 446) definition of government, "the particular group of political actors who are exercising power at any given time." In this light, the discourse of presidential leadership is considered representative of the state. My use of the term regime refers to the government at large.

Analysis of elite speeches in Russian and English enabled consideration of discourse directed at local, regional, and international audiences.[7] Due to language limitations, it was not possible to analyse speeches written in the local language. Comparing the ruling authorities' narrative in the local language, which is directed at its domestic audience, with its English and Russian counterpart, constitutes an avenue for future research. Although segments of elite speeches

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[6] E. Juraev is written to distinguish him from S. Juraev, who the author also interviewed.

[7] All translations from Russian to English are by the author. All transliterations utilize the Library of Congress system. The presidents' names do not correspond to this system but use the established transliteration. Any variations of the spelling of the presidents' names within the text are the result of authors utilizing different systems of transliteration.

were drawn from the media, the majority of documents analysed were elite speeches in their entirety. These were chosen over the media's portrayal of conflict and books authored by the presidents of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to meet the key research objective. The main objective of this research is to analyse how the ruling elites of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan perceived the Arab Spring uprisings impact on regime security, as opposed to the media's portrayal of that perception. While state media would best represent the state's position over independent media, state media does not reprint speeches in their entirety. Rather, selected quotes are utilized for emphasis. There is therefore a certain degree of selection bias already present in state media. The same is true of books authored by the presidents, some of which contain selected past speeches. To avoid that level of selection bias, elite speeches in English and Russian were collected from the Official Site of the Government of Kazakhstan, the Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Official site of the President of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, and via internet search engines utilizing Google and Yandex. In Kazakhstan, 98 speeches by President Nazarbayev contained relevant data, as did 85 collective presidential speeches in Kyrgyzstan.[8] Elite speeches were supplemented utilizing a Nexis search for worldwide and domestic media articles which contained the President's name and the year of interest, or the President's name, year of interest, and the Arab Spring. Approximately 37 worldwide and domestic media articles contained relevant data and supplemented presidential speeches in Kazakhstan. In Kyrgyzstan approximately 100 worldwide and domestic media articles contained relevant data and were used to supplement presidential speeches Kyrgyzstan. The difference in the amount of relevant worldwide and domestic media articles between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan reflects the fact that Kyrgyzstan has continuously experienced more protest than Kazakhstan, in addition to two revolutions. For example, over the course of 2011 and 2012, a project monitoring freedom of assembly in Kyrgyzstan recorded 428 protests (Azimov and Sayakova 2012).[9] By adopting this procedure, the documents collected were representative of the official viewpoint.

Analysis of elite speeches consists of a manual approach to coding narrative data rather than utilizing an established formal approach. Because I hold a constructivist approach to knowledge, an interpretivist approach enables ontological and epistemological openness as a part of the enquiry. The adoption

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[8] The breakdown of speeches by leader in Kyrgyzstan which contained relevant data is as follows: Bakiyev (24); Otunbayeva (19); Atambayev (43).

[9] For additional statistics on the amount of protests held between 2010 to 2014, please see (*Delo* 2014) at http://delo.kg/index.php/health-7/7138-kyrgyzstan-buzyashchij

of a qualitative methodology offered several systematic methods of analysis such as content analysis or discourse analysis. Because content analysis requires prior selection of the words, phrases or events to be coded, it would not have allowed the data collected to speak for itself. In other words, the use of content analysis would have risked cherry-picking data rather than examining the available data as a whole in order to explore patterns of language and discourse. Utilizing content analysis also risks overlooking allusions to instability and its consequences which could not be accurately captured by a single codebook category. Thus, the method that is adopted allows for a certain amount of interpretation of the meaning of the discourse.

It is also critical to consider the end goal of the selected method. Since formal content analysis enables systematic coding, it is particularly useful for translating qualitative data into a quantitative result. However, a quantitative product would not answer the research questions which ask how responses to uprising elsewhere are framed and legitimized. I also considered using formal discourse analysis as another possible systematic approach. However, discourse analysis is most appropriate when seeking to make a contribution to the application of discourse analysis, and theories of discourse analysis, as a way to understand regime responses to the Arab Spring. As the main theoretical contribution of this research is the development of the elite-level demonstration effect, discourse analysis would not contribute much added value to the thesis' main theoretical contribution. Nevertheless, the method used does employ a more informal form of discourse analysis, since the intention is to systematically analyse the language of official discourse and texts and interpret that in relation to the themes of the thesis, ie, the extent to which this discourse reflects elite learning and an attempt to forestall political change. Finally, the use of a programme such as NVivo would have aided in the manual approach to coding. However, in NVivo it is not possible to store and view material simultaneously in the original and English translation, which is necessary in order to ensure that individual sections of text are treated consistently throughout data analysis.

Narrative analysis consisted of a three part analysis of presidential rhetoric. Firstly, for each leader I established the foundation necessary for an elite-level demonstration effect and whether it gives rise to learning. I accomplished this by demonstrating each leader's receptiveness to learning and awareness of cross-border influence. In order to demonstrate receptiveness to learning, I identified key words such as lessons, learning, study, conclusions, shows, and teaching. I then examined each word within its context to draw out key themes. In order to demonstrate awareness of cross-border influence I identified key words including transnational, borders, as well as examples in

which a leader acknowledged the regional or global consequences of domestic events. These examples demonstrated each regime's understanding of the impact of external events on internal processes.

Secondly, I outlined how the leaders of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan perceived the causes and consequences of conflict at large and in relation to examples of domestic and regional upheaval. In practice this involved identifying key words such as conflict, instability, coup, revolution, disorder, protest, and their drivers, or what factors the regime perceived as causing the aforementioned unrest. The regimes' perceived causes of conflict were then analysed in context and categorized according to whether the regime presented them as political, economic, social or demographic factors influencing the onset conflict. The same procedure was repeated for national and regional examples of unrest. Leaders' mentions of unrest within the delimited time frame were also identified and examined in the context. The leaders' perceived causes of the aforementioned examples were then categorized as political, economic, social or demographic factors influencing the onset of unrest. Examples of national and regional unrest in official discourse illustrated or supplemented the regime's narrative of the causes of conflict at large. In this way both contributed to a representative account of each leader's perception of the factors which influence the onset of uprising. The consequences of unrest at large, as well as how each leader portrayed the consequences of examples of national and regional conflict, were identified utilizing key words such as results and consequences. The consequences were then analysed thematically. Establishing how the Kazakh regime and Kyrgyz leaders' framed the causes and consequence of unrest at large and in relation to national and regional examples enabled a comparison with how the ruling authorities framed the causes and consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings. In other words, it formed the baseline from which to determine whether the Arab Spring uprisings were framed differently in elite discourse.

Lastly, I outlined how the leaders of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan framed the causes and consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings. In Kyrgyzstan this is limited to Otunbayeva and Atambayev. This was accomplished by identifying each leader's direct references or allusions to the Arab Spring uprisings. Each leader's narrative of the drivers of the Arab Spring uprisings were analysed in context and categorized according to their political, economic, social or demographic nature. The consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings were then identified and analysed thematically. An evolution in the ruling authorities' rhetorical treatment of the Arab Spring uprisings which suggested that they were perceived as a threat, compared to treatment of conflict in general and in relation to national and regional examples, would evidence an elite-level demonstration

effect brought about by the Arab Spring uprisings. Behaviour or policy changes would further evidence an elite-level demonstration effect. Because an elite-level demonstration effect is a measure of political change, its presence is indicative of a change in a regime's perception of regime security, while its absence indicates continuity in a regime's perception of its own security.

The division between the causes and consequences of conflict, and the causes and consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings was set out for two reasons. Firstly, this division enabled a comparison between the ruling authorities' treatment of unrest in general and in relation to domestic and regional events, with their treatment of the Arab Springs. Secondly, the division was designed as a methodological countermeasure to avoid attributing a discursive or policy change inspired by another event, to the Arab Spring. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan experienced unrest at home, albeit to varying degrees. In order to determine the independent impact of the Arab Spring on the ruling authorities, and to distinguish its impact from other events, I utilize direct references or clear allusions to the causes and consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings. In this way any discursive changes brought about by other events were not attributed to the critical juncture of the Arab Spring uprisings. This approach overcomes the challenge Koesel and Bunce (2013, 755) pointed out in regards to identifying "diffusion proofing." Koesel and Bunce (2013, 755) acknowledged that it is difficult to determine precisely what elements of "diffusion-proofing" are brought about by events elsewhere when "at least some elements of a diffusion-proofing strategy are likely to overlap with the strategies leaders use to manage threats that arise solely from the domestic arena."

2.4 Limitations

This research design has taken into consideration the limitations of identifying an elite-level demonstration effect. This is due to the fact that it is impossible to determine precisely how authorities perceive a threat (Davenport 2007, 8). This difficulty is further complicated under authoritarian regimes. In authoritarian states it can be difficult to determine genuine support for politicians and policies, and hence to uncover what is actually happening on both an elite and popular level (Matveeva 2009, 1096). Moreover, in Central Asia, not every manoeuvre made by its leaders was a reaction to the Arab Spring (Radnitz 2011; Kendzior

2012). Disagreements over the impact of the Arab Spring on Kazakhstan are present in the literature. For example, Dave (2012, 265) described Nazarbayev's veto of a constitutional amendment in 2011 which would have set in motion a referendum to extend his term in office until 2020, as "preempting any Arab Spring–inspired democratic sentiment." Instead of a referendum, Nazarbayev held early presidential elections twenty months early on 3 April 2011. Blank (2011, 6) held a similar interpretation in that Nazarbayev held "an instant election rather than a stage-managed referendum to give him life tenure, because that latter option was too egregious a move in the current climate." On the other hand, Radnitz (2011, 2) noted that it is difficult to determine a correlation between Nazarbayev's decision to hold early presidential elections in April 2011 and apprehension over domestic revolution, because he was not facing opposition at the time. Technically, Kazakhstan has held all of its presidential elections early (Pannier 2015), thus the holding of the 2011 election was no different.

To overcome the limitations associated with identifying an elite-level demonstration effect under an authoritarian regime, I supplemented narrative analysis with fieldwork interviews. The purpose of fieldwork interviews was threefold. Firstly, to validate my understanding of policies, their implementation in practice, and their concrete outcomes. Secondly, interviews bridged the gap between elites' public and private reaction. My research design is therefore conscious and critical of the motivation of elite narrative and behaviour as opposed to accepting it at face value. Finally, fieldwork interviews were conducted to acquire what a Moore (2013, 131) termed a "snapshot of local realities," ultimately contributing to a more informed analysis. Interviews were transcribed and analysed thematically.

Having passed ethical clearance (AREA 14-176), an ethical amendment (AREA 14-176 amendment Oct 16), and risk assessment I carried out fieldwork from mid September to the end of November 2016 in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In Kazakhstan I conducted 10 interviews in Almaty and Astana, and 13 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The number of interviews conducted with local scholars and experts in each country is therefore more or less equal. I utilized my institutional affiliation to KIMEP University in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and an OSCE Academy conference "Post-Communism 25+: Reflections on Social, Economic & Political Transitions" held 6 to 8 October in Issyk Kul, Kyrgyzstan, to make contacts and identify interview subjects. Interviewees were asked for oral as opposed to written consent and were not provided with an information sheet in light of the sensitivity of my topic. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to provide the interviewee with sample questions and a format that also allowed for follow up questions. I utilized the method of snowballing to identify

additional interviewees. While this poses the risk of identifying interviewees within a certain circle, the risk of biased data was diminished by the fact that interviewees were not my main source of data and were used to supplement and triangulate narrative data.

Of course, there are also similar limitations associated with identifying learning under authoritarian regimes. According to Hall and Ambrosio (2017, 145) "Studying learning is fundamentally about studying change – the process by which prior events and experiences shape future outcomes." Yet, at the same time, not all political change is the product of learning (Hall and Ambrosio 2017, 145). Hall and Ambrosio (2017, 145) differentiated between learning and policy change in that "the term "learning" is often used quite broadly to represent any policy change connected in some way to a temporally preceding policy, mixing the intentional adoption of policies, on the one hand, with processes in which this intentionality is lacking, on the other." In an authoritarian setting, identifying learning becomes even more complicated. As Ambrosio (2017, 185) pointed out, identifying "the cause (learning) and effect (policy)" is a challenge because forming knowledge is an internal process which policy-makers seldom publicize. In other words, it is impossible to know which action has driven another action. In a similar vein, Kubicek (2011, 115) observed in his study of whether Central Asian leaders learned from Kyrgyzstan's 2010 revolution, that ruling authorities may not specify which events drove learning, and consequently it is difficult for researchers to pinpoint learning's exact source. As a result, it is necessary to identify elite learning based on inference from the evidence available (Kubicek 2011, 116). A further challenge, according to Kubicek (2011, 120) occurs when "Whereas a shift in policy in the predicted direction might be persuasive evidence of learning, it would be more difficult to demonstrate learning if one's policies were already aligned with the 'lesson'."

Scholarship has put forward several methods to overcome the fundamental limitations associated with identifying learning under authoritarian regimes. For example, as Hall and Ambrosio (2017, 144) put it:

> *It is difficult to "prove" authoritarian learning, and studies of this type must often rely on: a correlation between examples of prior implementation of an authoritarian practice and the adoption of similar policies by other autocratic governments later in time; or examples of prior authoritarian failures and later policies which seek to correct these errors.*

Ambrosio (2017, 192) applied this method to identify learning by Ukraine's former President Yanokovych, who applied the strategies utilized by MENA leaders in the Arab Spring uprisings ("repress, bribe, promise, mobilise, and divide"), to Ukraine's Euromaidan protests. However, learning is not limited to the copying of

strategies used elsewhere, and identifying learning in this way cannot account for the reinterpretation of the aforementioned strategies within a different context. Kubicek (2011, 120) offered another method to overcome the challenges associated with identifying learning when the expected lessons already in place: if leaders have made links between specific events and policies, it is possible to identify a correlation between the direction of policy and anticipated learning. In this case policy change is evidence of learning. Nonetheless, a potential shortcoming of this approach is its policy-centrism; it risks overlooking rhetorical and behavioural evidence of learning which is not policy-based.

In order to identify whether an elite-level demonstration effect gave rise to learning in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, I build on Kubicek's (2011, 120) method of identifying learning when the expected "lessons" are already in place: identifying links between specific events and policies to identify a correlation between the direction of policy and anticipated learning. I identify a correlation between a perceived cause of conflict, and policy or behaviour to offset the aforementioned cause, to evidence learning. Specifically, a correlation between a perceived cause of the Arab Spring uprisings, and a policy or behaviour to offset the cause would suggest the Kazakh and Kyrgyz have learned from the Arab Spring uprisings. In this way learning can be, but is not limited to, the copying of methods used by authoritarian regimes elsewhere, nor is it limited to policy change, as presumably not all learning is successfully translated into policy. The approach to data gathering and analysis laid out in this methodology therefore enables a consideration of the possible relationship between the Arab Spring uprisings, political change and learning in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Chapter 3 Literature review

3.1 Introduction

Prior to the Arab Spring, literature on political change in the Middle East broadly fell into the categories of democratization and authoritarian resilience. As late as 2010, Middle East watchers questioned, "Why are there no Arab Democracies?" (L. Diamond 2010b). Seemingly, one of the only regions untouched by what Samuel Huntington (1991) termed "Democracy's Third Wave," scholarship set out to answer exactly why that was the case. Explanations for a lack of democratization and regime stability in the Arab world eventually moved beyond early scholarship's focus on religion and culture, towards strategies for overcoming dissent (Gause 2011, 2). The majority of scholars explained regime stability in Arab states due to the relationship between the military and security services, and the state's control over the economic sphere (Gause 2011, 2–3). This trend is evident in Volpi's identification of three main approaches to regime stability in Arab states in the 2000s (Volpi 2013b, 974). These included cultural and religious explanations, the socio-economic circumstance of given states, and the regimes' political and institutional set up (Volpi 2013b, 974).[10] However, all this changed on 17 December 2010. Following the self-immolation of fruit-vendor Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia, the Arab Spring uprisings catapulted across the region. Four leaders fell as a result of national demonstrations, among them Tunisia's Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, followed by Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, Libya's Muammar Gaddhafi, and Yemen's Ali Abdallah Saleh. The uprisings rapidly crossed national boundaries with Syria, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Algeria, Oman and Kuwait seeing various degrees of unrest.

After the initial uprisings, explanations for regime stability in the Arab states were called into question. Emphasis on the military as an explanation for regime stability, shifted towards the makeup of the regime, the military, and the military's level of institutionalization and competence (Gause 2011, 3). For example, in Egypt and Tunisia, where the military was institutionalized and

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[10] See for example Brumberg (2002), Albrecht and Schlumberger (2004), and Bellin (2004).

professional, it backed protestors (Gause 2011, 3). In Libya and Yemen, where the military was less institutionalized and acted as an extension of the regime, some units continued to support the regime while others sided with the opposition (Gause 2011, 3). The economic perspective on regime stability also shifted after the Arab Spring uprisings. In oil producing states, only Libya faced unrest, but in non-oil states such as Egypt and Tunisia, privatization and economic growth did not stave off unrest (Gause 2011, 4–5). This is not to say that Middle East analysts were not aware of potentially flammable regional dynamics prior to the Arab Spring uprisings (Lynch 2014, 5). Rather, Arab regimes had managed to counter challenges such as youth bulges, al-Jazeera and Arab satellite television, unemployment, democratization as a global norm, internal and external calls for democracy, an increase in civil society, globalization, and "transnational Islam" (Lynch 2014, 5). Moreover, even though Middle East analysts knew that many regimes in the MENA were short on legitimacy, they did not question their stability (Teti and Gervasio 2011, 322). Despite knowledge of these potentially incendiary factors in the MENA, the Arab Spring protests were met with surprise (Gause 2011). Other authors made sense of the Arab Spring uprisings through comparisons to prior revolutions (Carothers 2011; Goldstone 2011; Hale 2013; Landolt and Kubicek 2014). For example, Carothers (2011) compared the Arab Spring uprisings with the 1989 revolutions seen across Eastern Europe, whereas Landolt and Kubicek (2014) compared the uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia to the post-Soviet colour revolutions.

While it appears that the events of the Arab Spring are far from Central Asia, geographically and in terms of a similar scenario happening, the questions that its emergence has posed are relevant to the region. This is because Central Asia has been theoretically treated in the same way. Political change or lack thereof has often been explained in terms of the democratization and authoritarian resilience paradigms. As a result, the questions that the Arab Spring has brought to the forefront regarding political change are also relevant in Central Asia. For example, what caused the rapid spread of the Arab Spring uprisings across national borders and the mobilization of politically apathetic populations? Why did some states see unrest and not others? Indeed, regimes that have emerged unscathed from protest in the MENA also call for a re-evaluation in traditional understandings of authoritarian stability. Vopli (2013a) addressed these implications in his case study of Algeria, which experienced protests shortly after Tunisia, but notably neither fell nor adjusted its methods of governance during the uprisings, relying on a mix of repression and democratic concessions

to ride out the Spring storms.[11] Vopli (2013a, 104–5) noted that because Algeria weathered the Arab Spring, does not mean that it is stable, but merely that it was not susceptible to the protest techniques employed in these uprisings. However, this does not it indicate the regime's capacity to weather future protest (Volpi 2013a, 104–5). To extend Volpi's (2013a) argument further, because a region or regime has weathered the third wave and the Arab Spring, as is the case in Central Asia, also does not mark it as inherently stable. Notably, the uprisings erupted in Tunisia, formerly regarded as the most stable authoritarian regime in the MENA (Pace and Cavatorta 2012, 126). Therefore, what are the implications of the Arab Spring uprisings for "stable" authoritarian regimes both regionally and elsewhere?

The immediate implications of the Arab Spring uprisings therefore concern examination of authoritarian regimes with attention paid to the internal dynamics of elite transformation. As Bayat (2013, 589) problematized it, "Middle East watchers were concerned less with the theme of change than continuity, less with exploring internal forces of transformation than explaining how authoritarian rules endured." Stability in the MENA, understood as a lack of opposition, was mistakenly equated with calm (Teti and Gervasio 2011, 322). Simultaneously, change was measured in terms of regime type, as opposed to change occurring within a regime (Albrecht and Schlumberger 2004, 385). Yet, as shown above, this led to Middle East analysts "missing" the Arab Spring. To overcome this tendency in relation to authoritarian regimes elsewhere requires a strategy put forward by Valbjørn and Bank (2010) in their discussion of post-democratization in the Middle East; namely, a focus on what is actually happening, as opposed to external facades of stability and authoritarian resilience.

Five fields of literature offer different perspectives in response to the immediate implications of the Arab Spring uprisings. These include, diffusion and the demonstration effect, ICT, social movement theory, authoritarianism and democratization. Because of their relevance to the Arab Spring uprisings, and to the theoretical treatment of political change at large and in Central Asia, each of these fields is reviewed in the following chapter. The discussion will first examine diffusion, contagion, and the demonstration effect as explanations for the unfolding and thwarting of protests across national boundaries, in general, in relation to the Arab Spring uprisings, and in Central Asia. This is followed by a discussion of the implications of new ICT for facilitating civil resistance and their co-optation by authoritarian regimes. The discussion then turns to social movement theory. It focuses on the limitations of the political opportunity structure

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[11] For further discussion of why Algeria did not see an Arab Spring see Del Panta (2017).

paradigm in explaining the onset of collective action under authoritarian regimes. Authoritarianism at large and in relation to Central Asia is examined, with a particular focus on regime shifts or a lack thereof. Finally, the discussion addresses democratic transitions, the end of the democratization paradigm, and the construction of authoritarianism in Central Asia.

3.2 The demonstration effect, diffusion, and the Arab Spring uprisings

The demonstration effect and diffusion are frequently drawn upon as explanations for the spread of protest on a popular level. For example, diffusion has been put forward as an explanation accounting for challenges to communism from 1987-1990 (V. Bunce and Wolchik 2010), contentious politics in the former Soviet Union in 1988 (Beissinger 2002, 79–91), and the spread of the post-Soviet colour revolutions (V. J. Bunce and Wolchik 2006). Additionally, Gurr (1970) engaged with the demonstration effect in his monograph *Why Men Rebel.* Yet, scholarship has not yet arrived at a consensus as to what constitutes diffusion, contagion and the demonstration effect, and the relationship between them. The discussion will first illustrate the lack of scholarly consensus as to what constitutions a demonstration effect and diffusion. This is followed by a discussion of the relationship between the demonstration effect and learning. The discussion then introduces debates regarding diffusion's role in the spread of the Arab Spring uprisings. It also reviews criticisms of diffusion's explanatory role at large and in relation to the Arab Spring. Finally, scholarship which engages with the debates surrounding the demonstration effect in Central Asia is presented.

Comparing Huntington (1991), Whitehead (2001), Patel, and Bunce and Wolchick (2014), Beissinger (2007), and Saideman's (2012) treatment of the demonstration effect and diffusion illustrates the lack of scholarly consensus regarding what constitutes the demonstration effect. On the one hand, Huntington (1991) and Whitehead's (2001) treatment of the demonstration effect exemplified that the demonstration effect is sometimes, but not consistently, considered synonymous with other theoretical mechanisms. Huntington (1991, 100) treated the demonstration effect as synonymous with contagion, diffusion, emulation, snowballing and the domino effect. However, he distinguished between initial democratization, caused by triggers, and subsequent democratization, brought about by demonstration effects (Huntington 1991, 104). Unlike Huntington

(1991), Whitehead (2001) differentiated between the demonstration effect and contagion. Whitehead (2001, 21) categorized the demonstration effect as an "international aspect of democratization by consent" which influences "the underlying distribution of popular preferences and expectations." This definition suggests that it generates the consent necessary for a transition to democracy. While both scholars view the demonstration effect as furthering democratization, its precise use differs between them. On the other hand, Patel, Bunce and Wolchik (2014, 59) and Beissinger (2007) offered almost identical definitions, but in relation to different terminology. Patel, Bunce and Wolchik (2014, 59) defined the demonstration effect as "the power of precedent," yet characterized it a driver of diffusion, thereby suggesting it is an active mechanism. Beissinger (2007) offered a similar definition in his discussion of modular political phenomena, which he described as "the power of example." The lack of scholarly consensus is further complicated in that Beissinger (2007, 264–65) clearly distinguished between contagion and emulation, unlike Huntington (1991, 100). Beissinger (2007, 265) saw contagion as a spill-over effect brought about by geographic proximity; it therefore functions as the force propelling diffusion and indicates that diffusion has occurred. For Beissinger (2007, 265), the power of example differed from contagion because it is not dependent on geographic proximity, but on rational association with the benefits of positive example. Finally, Saideman (2012) associated contagion and the demonstration effect with direct and indirect mechanisms of diffusion. Contagion is a direct mechanism that refers to "political and physical processes that actually spill over from one country to others" (Saideman 2012, 714). Diversely, the demonstration effect is an indirect mechanism that refers "to the lessons learned by others" (Saideman 2012, 715).

For Saideman (2012) and Huntington (1991), the demonstration effect is intrinsically linked to learning. Huntington (1991, 101) provided three answers in response to the question, "what did demonstration effects demonstrate?" Demonstration effects provided an example of successful regime change to elites and the population at large, a model to follow, and illustrated possible challenges (Huntington 1991, 101). As Huntington (1991, 101) put it, "the later democratizers also learned about dangers to be avoided and difficulties to be overcome." Notably, Huntington (1991, 104) also specified context as a limitation of the demonstration effect; demonstration effects are more effective in states with cultural commonalties and located in geographic proximity. Therefore, while these authors agree that diffusion, contagion, and the demonstration effect are related to a certain extent, their use of shared terminology differs. This necessitates further theoretical development and clarification of the demonstration effect undertaken in this thesis.

A similar lack of consensus on the relationship between diffusion, contagion, and the demonstration effect is reflected in debates regarding the onset and cross-border spread of the Arab Spring uprisings on a popular level, and their prevention on an elite level. For example, Patel, Bunce and Wolchik (2014, 57–58) asked why the Arab Spring protests erupted in Tunisia, subsequently spread to Egypt, but then erupted in some MENA states but not others. They found that Tunisia's example spread to Egypt because of the similarities between the two states, and additionally that a regime's capacity to secure itself was more significant than the opposition's numbers and previous experience in explaining the outcome of the protest (Patel, Bunce, and Wolchik 2014, 72). Notably, Volpi (2013b) and Heydemann and Leenders (2011), identified a simultaneous process of contagion and diffusion occurring on a popular and elite level. For example, Volpi (2013b, 969–70) identified a " 'contagion effect' " of regional mobilization and repression, and asked why certain authoritarian regimes remained in power, as in the case Morocco and Algeria, while others fell, like Tunisia and Libya. Volpi (2013b, 983) found that a lack of possibility for institutionalized political change explained the demise of a regime. Unlike in Tunisia and Libya, Moroccan and Algerian elites offered various concessions to protestors alongside police repression, which effectively limited the protests, as did the protestors' awareness that reform was a possibility (Volpi 2013b, 984). Finally, Heydemann and Leenders (2011, 647) identified a "wave effect" of protests in which a "diffusion of ideas, discourses and practices" occurred on a popular and elite level. For instance, the tactic of occupying public spaces, which originated in the occupation of Cairo's Tahir Square, was widely emulated in subsequent protests across the region (Heydemann and Leenders 2011, 648). Heydemann and Leenders (2011) pointed out that this "wave effect" is a parallel process, with learning occurring at both a popular and elite level, amongst populations and regimes. Therefore as opposed to looking the spread of the Arab uprisings on a popular level, Heydemann and Leenders (2011, 648) examined regime containment of the Arab uprisings. They attributed the trailing off of the uprisings after success in Egypt and Tunisia to the learning and adaptation of tactics necessary to thwart challengers (Heydemann and Leenders 2011, 648). In this way Heydemann and Lenders (2011), linked diffusion, but not the demonstration effect, to learning.

Scholarship has also criticized social science's focus on diffusion as an explanation for transnational influence. For example, Heathershaw (2009, 298) acknowledged that comparative political science has used demonstration effects, cross-national influence and the power of example, to explain international diffusion, contagion and modularity in the coloured revolutions, yet pointed out three principal shortcomings stemming from this conventional approach. Firstly,

the large-N study favoured by the comparative approach fails to take into account the level of qualitative detail necessary to make generalizations regarding influence across case studies (Heathershaw 2009, 298–99). Secondly the comparative approach does not possess the "theoretical tools" to distinguish between when an event is imitated, or when it subtly encourages another event (Heathershaw 2009, 301). Finally, the reduction of the aforementioned phenomena into neat categories is in opposition with the fact that such "such processes cannot by their very nature be directly *copied* by agents or accurately *measured* by political scientists" (Heathershaw 2009, 302).[12] Furthermore, Onuch (2014, 212), in her comparative examination of popular revolution in Argentina and Ukraine, pointed out that social science has favoured elite-focused or structural approaches when analysing revolution. This has led to an overdependence on diffusion as an explanation, which gives too much importance to agency and prior examples of mobilization, and falls short of explaining why the average individual protests (Onuch 2014, 212).

To illustrate, scholarship has also identified limitations to the explanatory power of diffusion in regard to the Arab Spring uprisings. For example, Weyland (2012) and Way (2011) identified the limitations of diffusion as a mechanism accounting for its transnational nature. Weyland (2012, 919–20) pointed out that while normative approaches can explain the shared ambitions of the protestors, it cannot account for the rapid nature of the spread of the protest because the diffusion of values is a time-consuming process, and the states hosting uprisings did not share identical value systems. Weyland (2012, 920) also disputed rational accounts of diffusion, in which the actor makes an informed decision based upon calculations of feasibility, because the overthrowing of an autocrat does not logically imply a similar possibility in various contexts. Ultimately, Weyland (2012, 917) credited the wave of contention across the MENA to the spontaneous decision of populations to emulate protest based on the success of Tunisia. Way (2011) also argued that diffusion itself is limited in bringing about regime change. Way (2011, 14) highlighted that in 1989 Central and Eastern Europe experienced a structural shift in power before widespread protest broke out as a result of the former Soviet Union's decision to no longer enforce the Brezhnev Doctrine. In effect, this challenged the structures supporting contemporary authoritarian rule (Way 2011, 14). Way (2011, 14) observed that the varying trajectories seen in Bahrain, Syria, Libya, and Yemen illustrated the limits of diffusion in bringing about democratization in the absence of other structural changes.

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[12] Heathershaw's italics.

In Central Asia scholars have engaged with debates surrounding the demonstration effect in relation to Kyrgyzstan's 2005 revolution. Tursunkulova (2008) questioned whether regional or domestic precedents have had a greater influence on the onset of Kyrgyzstan's 2005 Tulip Revolution. Tursunkulova (2008) focused on Georgia's 2003 Rose Revolution, Ukraine's 2004 Orange Revolution, and the domestic precedent of Kyrgyzstan's 2002 Aksy protests. Tursunkulova (2008, 359) found that both regional and domestic precedents influenced the onset of the Aksy protests, and that the ruling authorities, activists, and the population at large learned from the 2002 events. Additionally, Heathershaw (2009) found that the representation of the colour revolutions, as opposed to protestors following their example, influenced the onset of Kyrgyzstan's 2005 Tulip Revolution. Heathershaw (2009, 298) argued that the diffusion seen in Kyrgyzstan's Tulip Revolution did not stem from rational emulation of a prior model of events. Rather, the concept of the " 'coloured revolutions' " was subject to the "power of representation," or how the idea of the colour revolutions was reframed in popular and elite discourses (Heathershaw 2009, 298).

3.3 New information and communication technology: fuelling people power or authoritarian resilience?

Popular discourse surrounding the role of ICT in the Arab Spring has highlighted its ability to facilitate mobilization under authoritarian rule (Cottle 2011, 649; Khatib and Lust 2014, 2; Rod and Weidmann 2015, 338). Social media, in particular, has been attributed a starring role, with the uprisings labelled as Facebook and Twitter Revolutions. The conviction that ICT has the capacity to test authoritarian rule originates from a specific interpretation of the demise of the Soviet Union that has endured through the present day. In this reading, technology contributed to the end of the Cold War by enabling newfound access to information (Kalathil and Boas 2003, 32; Shirky 2011, 33; Morozov 2011, xi–xii). Pearce and Kendzior (2012, 283) observed that this view has shaped both policy and scholarship. For example, in her *Remarks on Internet Freedom* Hilary Clinton (2010) stated, "Even in authoritarian countries, information networks are helping people discover new facts and making governments more accountable." However, this viewpoint is not universal. While there is agreement that ICT played a role in the Arab Spring, at least in Tunisia and Egypt, to what end remains a

point of contention. Some scholars have argued that ICT has helped overcome the collective action problem by facilitating dialogue and mobilization, aiding the development of civil society, and promoting transparency and accountability (L. Diamond 2010a, 70–71). Others have noted that authoritarian regimes have also harnessed the benefits of ICT (Morozov 2011).

In general, however, the role of ICT in the Arab Spring supported the argument that ICT are neither wholly positive nor negative (Lynch 2014, 96), but multifaceted. ICT are not inherently beneficial or detrimental but are tools that can be used to either promote or repress collective action (Gerbaudo 2012, 8; Howard and Hussain 2013, 31; Kalathil and Boas 2003, 2; Morozov 2011, xvi). In other words, as Tucker et al. (2017, 48) pointed out, social media by its nature is not democratic or undemocratic, rather it consists of a space in which factions struggle to promote their democratic or illiberal interests. Above all, the debate surrounding the so-called Facebook and Twitter Revolutions has prompted questions regarding the relationship between the Internet and protest, and the transnational nature of the Internet. To this end, the following section will firstly clarify what distinguishes ICT from earlier technology. The debate concerning the role of ICT in the Arab Spring will be discussed, followed by quantitative evidence of the relationship between the Internet, democracy, and activism. Finally, the influence of ICT on new strategies of authoritarian repression will be explored.

According to Weidmann (2015, 264), the digitalization of information has resulted in three characteristics distinguishing modern ICT such as the Internet and mobile phone, from earlier ICT, such as the radio, phone and television. Firstly, digital information is pervasive in terms of speed and coverage (Weidmann 2015, 264). The speed of transmission enables information to be conveyed almost instantaneously across corners of the globe and new ICT has extended network coverage (Weidmann 2015, 264). In remote locations physically installing a landline is more difficult than expanding a wireless network; wireless networks therefore enable increased access to communication as opposed to earlier technologies (Weidmann 2015, 264). Secondly, the character of transmitted information has changed in that new ICT is able to transmit sound, images, videos, or text that has been digitalized (Weidmann 2015, 264). Earlier ICT transmitted only one type of information such as a landline telephone that is restricted to transmitting sound (Weidmann 2015, 264). Lastly, networks are no longer limited to broadcast, such as the television or radio, or peer-to-peer, such as the telephone (Weidmann 2015, 264). In a broadcast network information flows in one direction, whereas in a peer-to-peer network information flows between individuals (Weidmann 2015, 264). Through the contemporary digital network known as Web 2.0, users can broadcast information and transmit peer-

to-peer information; Facebook and Twitter are prominent examples of social media websites which enable broadcasting and individual communication (Weidmann 2015, 265).

As a result of technological advances, some scholars have argued that modern ICT has fundamentally changed the nature of collective action. Howard and Hussain (2013) and Breuer, Landman and Farquhar (2015) have advanced this perspective. Based on a comparative analysis of 23 states across the MENA, Howard and Hussain (2013, 118) argued that the use of digital media was a causal factor in the Arab Spring as it laid the foundation for collective action. While dissent existed prior to the Arab Spring, digital media allowed individual and localized grievances to transform into a collective movement (Howard and Hussain 2013, 25). In models of regime weakness and movement success, mobile phone use in particular was a key factor (Howard and Hussain 2013, 103). Moreover, Howard and Hussain (2013, 22) found that digital media also enabled a method of civic organization that was emulated across the region. Although not directly stated, the allusion to emulation suggests that a popular level demonstration effect gave rise to learning. Based on talks with Tunisian bloggers and activists, and a survey of internet users, Breuer, Landman and Farquhar (2015) found that social media facilitated Tunisia's 2010 mobilization. For example, because a developed ICT infrastructure already existed in Tunisia, the Internet and social media were able to provide access to censored information (Breuer, Landman, and Farquhar 2015, 782). This in turn enabled potential protestors to calculate the risks involved, as well as to formulate a collective identity in opposition to the regime (Breuer, Landman, and Farquhar 2015, 782). Breuer, Landman, and Farquhar (2015, 782) highlighted that the Internet served as a resource which helped overcome the collective action problem.

Whereas for Howard and Hussain (2013, 32) the nature of technology itself fundamentally changed the nature of collective action and democratization tactics, and was a causal factor in the Arab Spring uprisings, Lynch (2014, 97) argued that new media can positively affect collective action, but the availability of political opportunity structures (POS) contributes more to overcoming the collective action problem than technology itself. For Lynch (2014), it is not the nature of the technology itself that has changed the nature of collective action, but the various mechanisms enabled by new ICT. For example, demonstration effects, diffusion and contagion resulted from a regional audience following the uprisings via satellite television and social media, and protestors' subsequent emulation of effective tactics (Lynch 2014, 99–100). In this way, ICT restructured the nature of political opportunity by facilitating organization and communication of protestors while simultaneously reducing transaction costs (Lynch 2014, 93).

Lynch (2014, 96) noted that the 2011 Internet and mobile network blackout in Egypt was ineffective in halting the protest, thereby supporting his assertion that the Internet was not a causal factor in the protests. Lynch (2014, 94) also observed additional limitations of ICT in that its advantages do not necessarily carry over into forming lasting movements or creating political parties capable of challenging well-established regimes.

Beyond the Arab Spring uprisings, Rød and Weidmann's (2015) quantitative analysis of the relationship between new ICT and protest under authoritarian regimes found little correlation between the two variables. In examining whether the Internet empowers activism or authoritarianism, Rød and Weidmann (2015, 339) hypothesized that authoritarian regimes which are highly concerned about public opinion would adopt and expand Internet access only if it was to their benefit, such as by providing opportunities to censor information or influence citizens via propaganda. A large N regression analysis including authoritarian regimes from 1993 to 2010 confirmed their hypothesis (Rod and Weidmann 2015, 342). Rød and Weidmann (2015, 339) also questioned whether Internet penetration affected democratic progress, but found no link between the two variables. Data from 2006 to 2010 revealed that states which experienced democratic progress during this window had lower levels of Internet penetration, whereas six states with higher levels of Internet penetration took an autocratic turn (Rod and Weidmann 2015, 339). From these joint results Rød and Weidmann (2015, 345) concluded that the expansion and adoption of the Internet under authoritarian regimes is a strategic choice that does not positively affect democratic change. However, this finding is not uniform as Ruijgrok (2017, 499) argued that Internet use makes protest possible in nondemocratic environments, and found that Internet use increased the amount of protests in authoritarian regimes from 1990 to 2013.

In the post-Soviet context Pearce and Kendzior (2012) also tested the common assumption that ICT promote activism under authoritarian rule. Pearce and Kendzior (2012, 283–84) conducted a mixed methods study of Azerbaijan from January 2009 to August 2011 to determine whether the government's "networked authoritarianism" effectively discouraged political activism. This research drew upon MacKinnon's (2011, 33) concept of "networked authoritarianism," defined as "when an authoritarian regime embraces and adjusts to the inevitable changes brought by digital communications." Pearce and Kendzior (2012, 286) cited the "donkey blogger" incident as an example of networked authoritarianism, in which the two creators of 2009 YouTube video which parodied the government were subsequently harassed and arrested. Pearce and Kendzior (2012, 283) found that networked authoritarianism in

Azerbaijan was effective in discouraging both offline protest and Internet activism. Pearce and Kendzior (2012, 293–94) also reported an absence of the donkey blogger incident in state run print, television and media sources, and limited coverage in opposition sources; information was available only via the Internet. Additionally, Kendzior and Pearce (2012, 294) reported that social media activists were arrested in Azerbaijan after the 2011 uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia, and state coverage of the uprisings did not discuss the use of social media or the campaigns of the activists, instead highlighting the number of deaths and the lack of similarities between the states of MENA and Azerbaijan. This suggested silence and exclusion formed part of the Azerbaijani government's response to uprising elsewhere.

The concept of networked authoritarianism and the donkey blogger incident are examples of how authoritarian regimes have responded to new ICT and the way online action can generate offline consequences. They evidence the emerging dynamics of authoritarian resilience that have developed alongside online activism. For example, the donkey bloggers left what Deibert and Rohozinski (2010, 21) termed a "technological fingerprint." From this regimes are able to identify users based on online activity, including those searching for restricted material (Rod and Weidmann 2015, 338–39). The donkey blogger incident also illustrated that censorship need not be omnipresent to be effective (Rod and Weidmann 2015, 339). Making an example out of the two bloggers was effective in dissuading Internet users (Pearce and Kendzior 2012, 295) and encouraging self-censorship. Evidence that complete online censorship is not necessary is also supported in King, Pan and Roberts' (2013) study of China. King, Pan and Roberts (2013, 14) found that a limited degree of online freedom of speech enabled Beijing to keep track of public opinion and to prevent online social ties from developing into collective action offline.

Another example of how authoritarian regimes have responded to new ICT is found in Deibert and Rohozinksi's (2010, 15) identification of three generations of controls in their examination of the paradox of Russian cyberspace: ostensible Internet freedom under an authoritarian regime as measured by the OpenNet Initiative. The first generation of controls functions by blocking access to specific websites (Deibert and Rohozinski 2010, 22). An example is the "Great Firewall of China. However, first generation controls are not entirely effective as they can be circumvented (Deibert and Rohozinski 2010, 30). Second generation controls involve legal and normative restrictions that can officially limit access to information (Deibert and Rohozinski 2010, 24). For example, security risks can legally justify limiting Internet access during periods of popular upheaval (Deibert and Rohozinski 2010, 25). Lastly, third generation controls consist of information

campaigns which can discredit opposing perspectives (Deibert and Rohozinski 2010, 27). Evidence of "trolling" in Russia supports this assertion, in which workers are paid to enhance the image of the Russian state and damage the image of Russia's opponents (Walker 2015). Third generation controls also involve legal jurisdiction over a state's cyberspace. Deibert and Rohozinksi (2010, 27) described this in terms of the creation of national cyberspace which enables complete state control over web content.

The idea of national cyberspace ties into debates regarding Internet sovereignty, a concept that emerged with China's (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China 2010) *White paper on the Internet.* These remarks stated that, "within Chinese territory the Internet is under the jurisdiction of Chinese sovereignty" and acknowledged that the same principle applies to the national Internet of all other states (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China 2010). The *White paper on the Internet* evidenced Kalathil and Boas' (2003, 136) observation that the state is ultimately in charge of adopting and expanding Internet access on a physical and policy level and therefore shapes how it is used. However, the role of the state on virtual territory is somewhat at odds with the traditional role of the state as established by the 1848 Treaty of Westphalia, which affords a state sovereignty over its territory. The arguably transnational nature of the Internet is therefore in contrast to the territorial boundaries which a regime controls and which define the boundary of a state (Hoffmann 2011, 6). While China views its physical borders as corresponding to its virtual borders, the debate remains as to where virtual sovereignty begins or ends, what overarching authority should determine this, and what are the digital rights of citizens. MacKinnon (2012, 14) observed that while a system of checks and balances eventually developed in democracies to limit power, a parallel system has not yet been established for the digital realm. Moreover, this debate is not unique to authoritarian regimes. Morozov (2015) observed that while China and Russia are often reprimanded for limiting and monitoring the online activity of their citizens, they are following the example set by the United States. Furthermore, illiberal actors within democracies have appropriated and utilized authoritarian Internet strategies in democratic contexts (J. Tucker et al. 2017, 47–48).

Scholarship on the role of the Internet and social media in Central Asia reflects similar debates about the nature of ICT in that its use depends on who is using it. On the one hand Imamova (2015) offered a techno-optimist perspective, that the Internet and social media facilitate discussion in Uzbekistan. However, despite the steady opening up of Uzbekistan since President Shavkat Mirziyoyev came into office in 2016, the Internet remains highly censored (Swerdlow 2018).

On the other hand Lewis (2016) and Anchesci (2015) advanced a techno-pessimist perspective.[13] Lewis (2016) found that after the 2011 unrest in Zhanaozen, Kazakhstan, the regime was able to sustain and reproduce a dominant narrative of the events online. The Kazakh regime accomplished this by inviting bloggers to Zhanaozen who in turn shared a state-backed version of the events online (Lewis 2016, 2013). This is significant because maintaining a dominant discourse furthers the resilience of the Kazakh regime (Lewis 2016, 14). Anceschi (2015) also argued that the Kazakh regime has been able to co-opt the Internet and social media for its own benefit. Finally, McGlinchey and Johnson (2007) examined why Internet policy has differed between Central Asian regimes, despite a unified approach towards repressing domestic media, and found that where foreign aid contributed to ICT development, as in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, it led to a less repressive Internet environment, unlike in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

The use of new media in Central Asia further complicates the relationship between new ICT and the collective action problem. Bekmagambetov et al. (2018) argued that in Kazakhstan, exposure to online material critical of the state lessened college students' trust in state institutions, and as a result increased the likelihood of protest. However, Kulikova and Perlmutter (2007) and Melvin and Umaraliev (2011) offered different perspectives on the role of new media and social transformation in Kyrgyzstan's two revolutions. Kulikova and Perlmutter (2007, 46) found that the blog "Akaevu.net" offered an alternative source of information when traditional media channels were closed during Kyrgyzstan's first Tulip Revolution. However, Melvin and Umaraliev (2011, 19–22) pointed out that although new media informed its readers and contributed to rather than facilitated the mobilization of protestors during the 2010 revolution, it also became an extended "battleground" during the June 2010 ethnic unrest in Kyrgyzstan. Melvin and Umaraliev (2011, 22) therefore identified a further limitation of new media; within a split society, new media reflects the aforementioned divide, and as a result does not bring about political transformation in these cases.

3.4 Social movement theory and political opportunity structures

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[13] See Shafiev and Miles (2015) for a techno-pessimist discussion of the Internet in Tajikistan.

Social movement theory seeks to answer the question of when and why people mobilize. Although there are many possible definitions of what constitutes a social movement, for the purposes of the following discussion McCarthy and Zald's (1977, 1127–28) definition of a social movement is employed. According to McCarthy and Zald (1977, 1127–28), a social movement is "a set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution for a society." In response to the question of when and why people mobilize, scholarship has put forward two main paradigms: the resource mobilization paradigm and political opportunity structure, also known as the political process model. The following discussion will first set out the differences between the two paradigms. Because the resource mobilization paradigm was later replaced by political opportunity structure (McAdam 1982), the remaining discussion centres around this paradigm. It addresses how political opportunity structure's sequential emphasis on a structural opening, followed by the physical manifestation of contention, challenges its applicability to authoritarian contexts. This is supported by an assessment of the applicability of social movement theory when applied to the onset of the Arab Spring uprisings and the Central Asian colour revolution.

McCarthy and Zald (1977, 1214) developed the resource mobilization paradigm based on dissatisfaction with earlier scholarship's understanding that a combination of discontent and structural conditions gave rise to social movements. The resource mobilization paradigm therefore differed from the established understanding of what causes social movements in three ways. Firstly, it noted that social movements can, but do not necessarily, arise from grievances (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1216). Rather, multiple sources of support, ranging from individuals to organizations may support the moment, even if they are not advocating for the values behind the movement itself (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1216). Secondly, in the resource mobilization paradigm, the main strategy is not centred on convincing authorities to bring about change; instead, the strategy focuses on mobilizing support from various factions of society, and the choice of tactics is dependent on competition and cooperation between these various factions (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1217). Finally, unlike traditional perspectives, the resource mobilization paradigm acknowledges that social movement utilizes its environment to further its aims (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1217).

Political opportunity structure made its first appearance in Eisinger (1973). Although definitions of political opportunity structure vary, Tarrow (1994, 18) defined it as "consistent—but not necessarily formal, permanent or national –

dimensions of the political environment which either encourage or discourage people from using collective action." In other words, a political opportunity structure is a change in circumstance, which is viewed as conducive or unfavourable to collective action. Tarrow (1994, 18) listed four significant changes in political opportunity structure: increased access to participation, having influential supporters, alternations in the ruling configuration, and a division amongst the elite. Tarrow (1994, 17) argued that because popular mobilization is dependent on political opportunities the "when" explains the "why." By means of political opportunity and ensuing mobilization, social movements, cycles of protest, and revolution begin (Tarrow 1994, 26).

For the most part, social movement theory and the concept of political opportunity structure has been developed in and applied to a Western democratic context (Buechler 1995, 460; Bayat 2005, 892; Alimi 2009, 219). Consequently, recent scholarship on social movement theory has identified limitations with political opportunity structure and its applicability to contentious action in authoritarian contexts. A commonly identified limitation of political opportunity as a prerequisite for collective action is that it overemphasizes structural factors and does not take into account the agency of the movement itself in creating opportunities in unfavourable circumstances (Morris 2000, 447; Bayat 2005, 898). The creation of political opportunities becomes particularly relevant when considering contentious collective action under authoritarian regimes in which openings are less likely to present themselves. Moreover, actors are less likely to be aware of potential openings due to restricted media and a limited spread of information (Kurzman 1996, 165). If mobilization were dependent upon a structural opening, independent of the role of agency, it is logical to assume that contention would not arise in unfavourable circumstances. However, Chenoweth and Lewis' (2013) quantitative analysis found otherwise. In their comparison of the causes of the emergence of nonviolent and violent campaigns, Chenoweth and Lewis (2013, 420) found that the factors leading to the onset of nonviolent and violent campaigns differed except for the shared determinant of population size. Therefore, nonviolent resistance is developing under conditions which are not favourable for collective action (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013, 422). As such, Chenoweth and Lewis (2013) provided quantitative evidence which challenged the prerequisite of a structural opening for mobilization that political opportunity structure has deemed necessary. Although this addresses the emergence, rather than the outcome of nonviolent campaigns (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013, 422), its implications are widespread for the potential onset of nonviolent collective action under authoritarian regimes.

Scholars have also reached a consensus regarding another limitation of political opportunity structure: it only acknowledges contention once it physically

arises. In particular, contention occurring under authoritarian regimes is often less visible than its democratic counterpart (Beinin and Vairel 2013, 14; Alimi 2009, 233). Alimi (2009, 233) observed that because the political opportunity framework takes note of contention only when it physically arises, analysis potentially overlooks the occurrence of less visible contention in repressive settings. Although a lack of political openings under authoritarian regimes restricts mobilization, it is not indicative of an absence of contention (Alimi 2009, 233). In a similar vein to Scott's (1985) concept of "everyday resistance," Bayat (2010) engaged with veiled contention under authoritarian regimes in the Middle East through the concept of "social nonmovements." Bayat (2010, 14) defined "social nonmovements" as:

> *the collective actions of noncollective actors; they embody shared practices of large numbers of ordinary people whose fragmented but similar activities trigger much social change, even though these practices are rarely guided by an ideology or recognizable leaderships and organizations.*

Bayat (2010) identified several distinctions between nonmovements and social movements. While social movements are ideologically motivated, actively pressuring the state to meet specific demands through attention-grabbing group activity, nonmovements are composed of quiet action by individuals in ordinarily life, occurring in opposition to government regulations (Bayat 2010, 19–20). Critically, Bayat's (2010, 26) distinctions between nonmovements and social movements draws attention to the role of agency under circumstances that curb freedom of speech, association and expression. In this way, the concept of "social nonmovements" holds more promise of capturing the popular dynamics below the surface of authoritarian regimes than political opportunity structure. A "social nonmovement" acknowledges the everyday contention in occurring in repressive settings without the structural opening prescribed by political opportunity structure.

Application of political opportunity structure to the onset of the Arab Spring embodies the debate between its advocates and critics. For example, Alimi and Meyer (2011) maintained that a structural opening facilitated the emergence of mobilization across the MENA, whereas Leenders (2013) argued that in Dar'a, Syria, an opening for mobilization was the result of a misperception and not the result of a change in structural conditions. Alimi and Meyer (2011, 476) noted that the catalyst for the Arab uprisings is often singularly attributed to the self-immolation of Bouazizi, thus to the role of agency in the emergence of uprising. However, Alimi and Meyer (2011, 476) attributed the emergence and spread of the uprisings to the structural conditions present at the time of Bouazizi's self-immolation, which made his self-immolation conducive to contagion.

Alternatively, Leenders (2013) attributed the mobilization in Dar'a, Syria to a change in perception, rather than to a change in political opportunity structure. The population of Dar'a identified an opportunity because after the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, they perceived that they could challenge the Syrian regime, despite the fact that the regime had not seen an alternation in state strength or an internal divide (Leenders 2013, 275). Thus, the established understanding of political opportunity in terms of internal regime weakness does not capture the dynamics in Dar'a, where political opportunity was perceived as a result of external developments in Tunisia and Egypt (Leenders 2013, 285). Leenders (2013) echoed Kurzman's (1996, 164) examination of the 1978 onset of protest in Iran, where protest emerged due to a misperception of structural opportunity, brought about by the opposition's growing ranks, but was successful nonetheless. Ultimately, Leenders (2013, 277) ascribed the Syrian mobilization to established social networks that enabled "perceptions of opportunities," brought about by the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, to reach a widespread audience. In the case of Dar'a, the dissemination of information which Leenders (2013) found resulted in mobilization is reminiscent of the effect of Nathan's (2013, 21) concept of an "information cascade." Nathan (2013, 21) defined an "information cascade" as when "a shift in the publicly available information about the public mood alters the calculation of the next group." Thus, for the emergence of mobilization, perceptions of political openings seem to matter just as much, if not more, as actual structural openings.

Direct engagement with social movement theory to collective action Central Asia is noticeably limited. An abundance of research has engaged with what factors have influenced the onset of protest in Central Asia, ranging from fraudulent elections (J. A. Tucker 2007; Kulov 2008), informal actors and networks (Radnitz 2005, 2006; Temirkulov 2008; Radnitz 2010; Temirkulov 2010) to state capacity and society learning to protest (McGlinchey 2009). Yet limited research has directly engaged with social movement theory. Kulov (2008), Achilov (2016) and Niyazbekov (2018), provide three examples of research which has directly engaged with social movement theory in Central Asia. Firstly, Kulov's (2008) examination of the onset of the 2005 Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan identified fraudulent elections as a factor contributing to a political opening. This builds on the work of Tucker (2007, 543) who found that the knowledge of electoral fraud affected mobilization in that it leads aggrieved citizens to recalculate the potential costs and benefits of mobilization, making participation more likely after knowledge of electoral fraud has become widespread, but before elected officials have been sworn in. Tucker (2007, 544) stressed that grievance alone is not sufficient to generate mobilization, but must be combined with an alteration in the status quo to result in protest. Secondly, Achilov (2016) found

that economic grievances and resource mobilization have influenced the onset of protest in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. However, Achilov (2016, 711) also pointed out the limitations of political opportunity structure in Kazakhstan, when he noted that it could not explain the rise of protest in Kazakhstan from 2004 to 2012, despite the government's restrictive structural conditions. Finally, Niyazbekov (2018) applied the paradigms of political opportunity structure, resource mobilization, collective action frames, and relative deprivation to explain why Kazakhstan has not seen a colour revolution.

Scholarship examining the onset of protest in Central Asia has also explored the limitation of structural conditions of which Radnitz (2010) is a notable example.[14] Radnitz (2010, 2) advocated for an examination of economic opportunities because structural factors alone could not explain the widespread dispersion of protestors and their unprecedented yet coordinated mobilization across Kyrgyzstan in 2005. Radnitz (2010, 21) put forward the theory of "*subversive clientelism*: the development of the capacity to mobilize citizens through clientelist ties."[15] Radntiz (2010, 7) utilized "subversive clientism" to explain the differing trajectories of protest in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, and the widespread mobilization seen in the Tulip Revolution as opposed to the local mobilization seen in Uzbekistan's Andijan Uprising. Radnitz (2010, 13–14) noted further implications for authoritarian regimes, in which the economic foundation supporting mobilization is in place in advance of physical mobilization. While Radnitz (2010, 199–200) acknowledged the various factors traditionally regarded as influencing political opportunity, such as elite allies, political stability, and elite conflict, but observed that it is necessary to examine the economic motives behind elite defection to appreciate the relationship between political opportunity and "political-economic-forces."[16]

3.5 Authoritarianism, political change and learning

Prior discussion of the Arab Spring, the role of ICT, and social movement theory has engaged with the way various perspectives account for the emergence and spread of mobilization under authoritarian regimes. It has examined the

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[14] See also Beissinger (2007) for a discussion of the influence of structural conditions on mobilization.

[15] Italics in original.

[16] For further discussion of why people have protested in Kyrgyzstan see for example Radnitz (2005, 2006) and Khamidov (2006, 2013).

implications of popular uprising on authoritarian regimes both regionally and elsewhere. Scholarship on authoritarianism seeks to identify what factors impact transitions from authoritarianism to democracy, and what constitutes an authoritarian regime. Because authoritarian precedes democracy conceptually, scholarship on authoritarianism and democratization are closely interlinked. In practice, however, democratization has not followed authoritarianism. The disparity between expectations of democratization and the reality of authoritarianism is reflected in the literature, with the authoritarian resilience paradigm replacing the democratization paradigm in the early 2000s (Pace and Cavatorta 2012, 127). Application of the transition paradigm in the post-Soviet space illustrates this shift, both in scholarship and in practice, from expectations of a democratic transition, to realities of authoritarian resilience. The following will firstly examine the rise and fall of the field of transitology, which was challenged by the rise of regimes that incorporated democratic and authoritarian elements. This is followed by a review of the various typologies describing nondemocratic regimes that have developed in response to the challenging of assumptions initially prescribed by the transition paradigm. Finally, the post-Soviet space will be examined as an example of the shift from earlier focus on democratization, to authoritarianism and strategies of resilience. Discussion will focus on the colour revolutions as examples of regimes shifts or as regime dynamics, and on authoritarian responses to the colour revolutions. Finally, the discussion will turn to the related field of authoritarian learning.

The field of transitology is driven by the assumption that fallen authoritarian regimes necessarily transition to democracy. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) and Linz and Stepan (1996) have advanced this perspective. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986, 6) defined transition as "the interval between one political regime and another." Notably, this definition suggests movement from one form of government to another (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 65). It also implies a definite end point. Transition ends when a prior regime has been replaced with a democratic alternative, or when the initial stages of liberalization return towards previous authoritarian rule, or a "revolutionary alternative" transpires (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 6). Liz and Stepan offered (1996, 3) an alternative definition of a democratic transition:

> *A democratic transition is complete when sufficient agreement has been reached about political procedures to produce an elected government, when a government comes to power that is the direct result of a free and popular vote, when this government de facto has the authority to generate new policies, and when the executive,*

legislative, and judicial power generated by the new democracy does not have to share power with other bodies de jure.[17]

Linz and Stepan (1996, 5) noted that a consolidated democracy has been achieved when "democracy is 'the only game in town.'" Yet despite this theorizing, the disjuncture between transitology and political reality led to the questioning of the transition paradigm. According to Bunce (2000, 723), the term democratization and its normative dimensions were overextended by application to regimes exhibiting any form of change, including liberalization, when in fact many authoritarian regimes were becoming hybrid. Moreover, Carothers (2002, 6) observed that states considered to be undergoing transition were not following the trajectory set by the transition paradigm, or were not transitioning to democracy, and called for an end to the paradigm. Carothers (2002) located third wave regimes that have not followed the prescribed route to democracy in a "gray zone" between democracy and authoritarianism.[18]

The end of the transition paradigm is also reflected in the development of various typologies to describe nondemocratic regimes that are neither authoritarian nor wholly democratic. Originating with Linz's (1964) examination of Franco's Spain, scholarship has debated the most accurate typology to characterize nondemocratic regimes. Linz (1964, 291) problematized the existing regime classification, which categorized regimes as either democratic or totalitarian. As totalitarianism and democracy are ideal regime types, it is possible to argue that an authoritarian regime is an imperfect version of the ideal (Linz 1964, 293). However, Linz (1964, 293–94) argued that authoritarian regimes constituted a distinct type, as opposed to an imperfect regime located on the democratic and totalitarian spectrum. Linz (1964, 297) offered the following definition of authoritarian regimes:

> *Authoritarian regimes are political systems with limited, not responsible political pluralism: without elaborate and guiding ideology (but with distinctive mentalities); without intensive nor extensive political mobilization (except some points in their development); and in which a leader (or occasionally a small group) exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones.*

Since Linz's (1964) definition of authoritarianism, the continuously evolving political landscape has necessitated new subcategories of regime classification (Linz 2000). These typologies share an emphasis on the unique blend of autocratic and democratic elements in authoritarian states that have not followed the prescribed transition from authoritarianism to democracy. Pye (1990) referred to this phenomenon as the "crisis of authoritarianism." The majority of these

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[17] Italics in original.
[18] See also Ambrosio (2014).

typologies fall under the category of "hybrid regimes" (L. J. Diamond 2002). Examples include "post-totalitarian" and "sultanistic" (Linz and Stepan 1996), "competitive authoritarianism" (Levitsky and Way 2002, 2010), "semi-authoritarianism" (Ottaway 2003), and "electoral authoritarianism" (Schedler 2006). As Diamond (2002, 21) pointed out, there is a lack of scholarly consensus as to what constitutes both " 'democracy' " and "ambiguous regimes." Discussion of regime classification in Central Asia also reflects debates regarding how to categorize illiberal regimes. For example, Schatz (2009, 205) distinguished between degrees of "soft" authoritarianism in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and the "hardest" authoritarian" Central Asian states of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. For Schatz (2009, 203), a "soft" authoritarian regime discursively frames the boundaries of political debate in order to establish its agenda and to achieve its political outcomes; it thus utilizes "persuasion" rather than coercion alone.[19]

Another strand of scholarship has categorized Central Asian regimes in terms of their informality or neopatrimonial tendencies (Collins 2002, 2006; Schatz 2004; Ilkhamov 2007, 2010; McGlinchey 2011; Isaacs 2014; Hale 2015). For example, for Collins (2006, 431) "informal regimes of clan politics" is a more accurate label to characterize Central Asian regimes than authoritarian or totalitarian, which suggest consolidated and institutionalized regimes. According to Isaacs (2014, 229–30), the application of the informal-formal dichotomy to post-Soviet Central Asia stemmed from dissatisfaction with the transition paradigm and democratization scholarship. Indeed both Hale (2015) and McGlinchey (2011) have also categorized Central Asian regimes via the informal, and have utilized the concept of concept of patronal politics to explain varying regime trajectories. Hale (2015, 9–10) defined patronal politics as a system in which patrons mould political and economic influence through a system of reward and punishment. For Hale (2015, 11), patronal politics in post-Soviet Eurasia has taken the form of single pyramid vertical power. However, Hale (2015, 12) argued that the strength of this vertical power is also its weakness because it is highly vulnerable to crises of succession when the upcoming leadership is unpopular and former elite allies, sensing an opportunity, compete for power. Hale (2015, 12) evidenced his argument through the colour revolutions as the events in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine shared a crisis of succession, an opponent who was a member of the previous administration, combined with an unpopular upcoming leader. For Hale (2005, 2015) what has been commonly viewed as regime change, in terms of movement towards democracy or a retrenchment of authoritarianism, is in fact a reflection of fluctuating, cyclical "regime dynamics"

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[19] For a more recent discussion on authoritarian persuasion see Schatz and Matveeva (2012).

characteristic of post-Soviet Eurasian regimes. On the other hand, McGlinchey (2011, 7) argued that Gorbachev's intervention or lack thereof during perestroika, resource availability, and Islamic revivalism, have contributed to contemporary variations in patronage politics in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, respectively.

Although Hale (2015) and McGlinchey (2011) characterized Central Asian regimes as patronal, their treatment of the relationship between patronal politics and neopatrimonialism differs. Hale (2015, 483) distinguished patronal politics from neopatrimonialism, in that the former seeks to cultivate public support. McGlinchey's (2011, 8) characterization of Central Asian politics as patronal acknowledges its closeness to neopatrimonialism, and thereafter uses the terms patronage politics and neopatrimonial interchangeably. Application of the informal and neopatrimonial to characterize Central Asian regimes has also been criticized. For example, Isaacs (2014, 230) argued that neopatrimonial is not a regime type but explains a regime's internal legitimization and authority, and that the informal-formal binary is not clear-cut as a result of the interaction between these dynamics. Finally, Isaacs (2014, 230) pointed out that there is a normative aspect in the application of the informal to Central Asia; it is seen as "deviant" and at odds with liberal democracy.

Following the end of the democratization paradigm, scholarship on authoritarianism in the post-Soviet space has been characterized by a focus on regime shifts or a lack thereof. In particular, examination has centred on the colour revolutions, which were met with democratic optimism, similar to the collapse of the Soviet Union (Hale 2015, 3). Scholarship has debated what factors influenced the colour revolutions or a lack thereof across the post-Soviet space (McFaul 2005; V. Bunce and Wolchik 2006; Beissinger 2007; J. A. Tucker 2007; V. Bunce and Wolchik 2009; Ó Beacháin and Polese 2010; Way 2008, 2010; Hale 2005, 2015). Scholarship also turned its attention to strategies of authoritarian resilience, with consensus centring around the fact that regimes do not rely on coercion alone. This scholarship has focused its attention on states that did not see a colour revolution, but sought to prevent a similar occurrence (Herd 2005; Ambrosio 2009; Ostrowski 2009; Wilson 2009; Silitski 2010a, 2010b; Stoner-Weiss 2010; Horvath 2011; Finkel and Brudny 2013; Vanderhill and Aleprete Jr. 2013; Koesel and Bunce 2013; Spector 2015). Koesel and Bunce's (2013) comparative examination of Russia and China's response to the colour revolutions and the Arab Spring is of particular interest as they highlighted the issue of internal response to external threats. Koesel and Bunce (2013, 753) pointed out that literature on authoritarian resilience has addressed state response to domestic threats, yet state integration within the international system justifies an examination of the interaction between international threats and

domestic response. Koesel and Bunce (2013, 753) investigated when authoritarian leadership is more likely to act pre-emptively to deter cross-national mobilization, either when a threat appears in their regional neighbourhood or when a regime that has experienced uprising resembles their own. Koesel and Bunce (2013, 756) found that both Russia and China perceived the colour revolutions and the Arab Spring as a threat, despite their differing geographic proximity and the type of regime that experienced upheaval, and responded with similar rhetorical and policy strategies in each case. Marat's (2016a) comparative study of Kazakhstan and Tajikistan has also contributed to this body of literature. Marat (2016a, 531) examined how regimes strengthen themselves after they have faced violent challenges, and found that the Kazakh and Tajik regimes extended their coercive apparatus not only through increased policing, but also by constructing a narrative which framed their actions as empathetic to grievances.

While learning undoubtedly plays a role in how a regime counters potential revolution, other scholarship has engaged with learning more directly. For example, Hall and Ambrosio (2017) have provided a much needed overview on the field of authoritarian learning. Hall and Ambrosio (2017) identified three types of learning including policy transfer, isomorphism, and diffusion. Policy transfer refers to the adoption of policies between states, whereas isopmorphism "explains how institutions are copied because of constraints, either internal or external" (Hall and Ambrosio 2017, 146). Finally, diffusion "examines how policies and knowledge spread across state borders" (Hall and Ambrosio 2017, 147). In the Middle East, Heydemenn (2007, 1–2) linked the phenomenon of "authoritarian upgrading," defined as "reconfiguring authoritarian governance to accommodate and manage changing political, economic, and social conditions," to authoritarian learning. In regards to the Arab Spring uprisings, authoritarian learning has explored how regimes learned to counter anti-regime protests (Heydemann and Leenders 2011, 2014; Bank and Edel 2015). Scholarship has also addressed learning in the post-Soviet space from prior protest (Beissinger 2007; Lane 2009; Kubicek 2011; Polese and Ó Beacháin 2011; Hall 2017a, 2017b; Ambrosio 2017; Niyazbekov 2018).

Scholarship has also identified multiple lessons that Central Asian regimes have garnered from the colour revolutions. For example, as discussed in the introduction, Beissinger's (2007, 270) elite learning model found that following the Orange and Tulip Revolutions, Russia, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan limited civil society by restricting democratic NGOs and political opposition. Moreover, these regimes also established closer relations with Russia (Beissinger 2007, 270). Cooley (2012, 98) found that following the colour

revolutions, Central Asian regimes treated democratization as simultaneous with regime change led by external actors in order to justify the shutdowns of organizations engaged in democracy promotion. Central Asian regimes, backed by Russia and China, also created their own norms and institutions which promoted sovereignty and cultural relativism (Cooley 2012, 98). For example, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) send their own monitors to regional elections, thereby reinterpreting, to their own advantage, the Western practice of sending monitors to elections (Cooley 2012, 98). Other examples of pre-emptive measures included increased restrictions on the media and Internet, the banning of youth groups modelled on OTPOR (Serbia), KMARA (Georgia), PORA (Ukraine), creating new youth groups such as Russia's *Nashi* and Kazakhstan's *Zhas Otan*, and preventing foreign activists from entering other countries (Polese and Ó Beacháin 2011, 124).

Other scholars have engaged with Kazakhstan specifically because of its ability to resist unrest.[20] For example, Kubicek (2011, 122) found that after the colour revolutions Nazarbayev consolidated his power over formal and informal institutions in Kazakhstan. In 2006 Nazarbayev became the head of the new State Commission for Democratic Reforms, whose reforms gave Nazarbayev the right to more appointments to the upper and lower houses of parliament, to continue to appoint regional officials, and to run for unlimited terms in office, thereby "preventing him from becoming a 'lame duck'" (Kubicek 2011, 121). Following the colour revolutions Nazarbayev also arrested his former son-in-law Rakhat Aliyev, and "purged" his security forces, both of which indicated unease over potential opponents (Kubicek 2011, 121). However, Kubicek (2011, 122) noted that these measures are not a drastic change from prior methods, and could have been a reaction to domestic politics, or with the intention of making Nazarbayev an essential mediator between clan factions. However, scholarship on Kazakhstan has yet to formally address whether the regime learned from the Arab Springs uprisings.

No doubt the difficulty associated with identifying learning in authoritarian contexts has led some scholars to identify lessons without establishing their methodological process for identifying learning. For example, Anceschi (2015, 278) observed that measures restricting Internet activists activity in Kazakhstan in 2015 demonstrated that the Kazakh regime "rapidly assimilated the many lessons of Egypt and Tunisia." While this seems feasible, it does not clearly explain how learning was measured, by setting out that Kazakhstan copied

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[20] See also Isaacs (2010).

Egypt's Internet blackout, for example. Similarly, Niyazabekov (2018, 424) observed that the Kazakh regime learned from the 2011 Zhanaozen unrest that unresolved socioeconomic grievances can give rise to mobilization. Again, while this appears plausible, and Niyazbekov's paper provided invaluable data on the amount and causes of protests in Kazakhstan from 1992 to 2009, this assertion would benefit from discussion of the author's method of identifying learning.

3.6 Democratization

The scholarship on democratization seeks to identify the relationship between democracy the free market, culture and education. It also addresses themes related to the transition from authoritarian to democratization. Therefore, space constraints require a delimitation of the field. The following acknowledges arguments of political culture and the free market but focuses on three schools of thought: the role of requisites, elites, and international processes in constructing, sustaining, or hindering democracy.[21] Economic requisites and the role of elites can be characterized as internal, domestic processes. However, a recent strand of literature has turned to role of international variables in facilitating democratization, and thus the interaction between domestic and external processes.

To this end the following section firstly reviews the debate between economic development and democracy, and whether it is a requisite. This is followed by a discussion of the role of elites in facilitating or thwarting democratization. Lastly, the influence of external processes on democratization will be addressed. In the aforementioned cases, the theoretical literature will be applied to post-Soviet Central Asia. In each case, post-Soviet Central Asia challenges the cross-regional applicability of these theoretical generalizations. Therefore, while all democracies are faced with the challenges of moving on from authoritarian rule, institution building, and elite cooperation, the details of this practice have varied from region to region (V. Bunce 2000, 716). Central Asia is one such case.

One school of democracy has debated the role of requisites in generating and sustaining democracy. In particular, attention has focused on the relationship

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[21] For a political culture approach to democracy in Central Asia see Omelicheva (2015), Collins and Gambrel (2017), and Junisbai, Junisbai and Whitsel (2017).

between economic development and democracy. The main proponent of this argument is Lipset (1959) who argued that economic development is a "social requisite of democracy." To determine the relationship between economic development and democracy, Lipset (1959, 75) tested the variables of "wealth, industrialization, urbanization and education" and found that the level of these variables was consistently higher in democratic countries. The relationship between economic development and democracy has also provoked contention. Przeworksi and Limongi (1997) questioned Lipset's (1959) correlation between democracy and economic development, and the modernization theory that upholds this perspective.[22] Modernization theory holds that modernization occurs through a sequence of processes, such as industrialization and urbanization, and eventually culminates in democratization (Przeworski and Limongi 1997, 157–58). By this logic, once an authoritarian regime reaches a certain level of economic development, it would become democratic (Przeworski and Limongi 1997, 158). However, evidence from Kazakhstan does not support a correlation between economic development and democracy, where a high level of economic development has not resulted in democratization (Kubicek 2010, 44). This supported Przeworksi and Limongi's (1997, 177) finding that democracy can occur at any level of development, but does not emerge as a result of economic development. Przeowrksi and Limongi (1997, 177) also found that once democracy has been established, it is more likely to endure in a richer state. In Kazakhstan, this points to the question of whether its resource wealth has impeded its democratic trajectory.[23] Ross (2001, 356) found a strong statistical correlation between resource wealth and democracy impediment, and suggested that this finding is not geographically limited to the Middle East, but may also be applied to Central Asia. However, Schatz (2006, 265) engaged with Ross' (2001, 356) claim, and pointed out that it cannot account for variations in authoritarianism; Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are significantly more authoritarian than Kazakhstan, yet all are resource rich.

While the aforementioned debates highlighted requisites for democratic stability, another school of thought has examined the role of elites in facilitating democratic transitions. Rustow's (1970, 352) model of democratization challenged social and economic requisites as it required "national unity" as its sole "background condition." Thus, while there is agreement that certain requisites are conducive to democratic genesis and sustainability, the specific requisite remains a point of contention. Unlike Lipset's (1959) structural focus,

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[22] See also Moore (1966) as an early proponent of modernization theory.
[23] For further discussion of the relationship between oil and democratization see Houle (2018).

Rustow's (1970) approach emphasized the role of elite actors in establishing a successful transition to democracy. For example, in what Rustow (1970, 352) termed the "preparatory phase," he noted that for the protagonists, "the issues must have profound meaning for them." Elite involvement is also evident in the conclusion of the "preparatory phase" which required a "deliberate decision on the part of political leaders," and hence leads to the "decision phase" (Rustow 1970, 355). Decision requires negotiation and consensus among elite actors, similar to O'Donnell and Schmitter's (1986) discussion of pacts. Similar to economic development, the prerequisite of national unity is also problematic when applied to the multi-ethnic states of post-Soviet Central Asia. Kubicek (2010, 42) and Melvin (2004, 126) observed that preserving national unity and preventing ethnic and clan fragmentation have been employed as a justification for authoritarian rule. This is in line with Kubicek's (1998) argument, that authoritarianism has kept Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan stable.

In Rustow's (1970, 346) model, democratization is an internal process; cases in which external influence played a role are explicitly excluded. However, a strand of scholarship focuses explicitly on the role of external processes in facilitating democratization. This literature has focused on the role of diffusion (Starr 1991; K. S. Gleditsch and Ward 2006; Brinks and Coppedge 2006), and the influence of international institutions and norms (Pevehouse 2002; Levitsky and Way 2005, 2010). Two notable examinations of the effect of international processes on democratization are Huntington (1991) and Whitehead (2001). Huntington (1991, 15) argued that democratization occurs in waves, in which transitions from nondemocratic to democratic rule, or in which liberalizing measures, outnumber democratic reversals. Huntington (1991, 16–21) grouped transitions to democracy into three waves, and two reverse waves which trailed the first and second waves of democratization. Diamond (2002) and McFaul (2002) also identified a reverse wave following the third wave, which McFaul (2002) termed the fourth wave. Huntington (1991, 45) identified five changes which appeared to play a role in the third wave of democratization. Three of these changes stressed structural conditions. These included problems of authoritarian legitimacy, a rise in economic growth, and the Catholic church's turn towards reform (Huntington 1991, 45). Two of these changes stressed internal-external interactions. These included the new policies of external actors, such as the United States' advancement of human rights and democratization, and the demonstration effect (Huntington 1991, 45).

Similar to Huntington, Whitehead (2001, 4) stressed the interaction between international context and domestic factors in facilitating or hindering democratization. Whitehead (2001, 4) conceptualized international factors

according to the categories of contagion, control and consent but specified that these are not mutually exclusive. Firstly, democratic contagion refers to the rate of democratization in a grouping of states (Whitehead 2001, 5). While contagion accounts for the spread and the rate of democratic transmission, it does not take into account how and why democratization occurs in some cases and not in others, and the role of actors (Whitehead 2001, 6). Secondly, control concerns the role of external agency in democratic intervention (Whitehead 2001, 9). Therefore, unlike contagion, control can account for implementation, boundaries, rate, and "mechanisms of transmission" (Whitehead 2001, 10). Thirdly, consent draws attention to how international processes facilitate or hinder the consent required for democratization (Whitehead 2001, 15). For example, Whitehead (2001, 21) described the role of a demonstration effect as providing an example of modernity and the desire to imitate a capitalist democratic lifestyle.

The impact of external factors on democratization in Central Asia is not straightforward. As Lewis (2008) pointed out in his examination of Kyrgyzstan's Tulip Revolution, its causes were domestic but regional actors in particular overemphasized the role of external actors and civil society for their own purposes.[24] For example, as previously discussed following the colour revolutions, Central Asian regimes regarded external democratization as an internal threat, and tactical measures were embraced to counter cross-border influence, such as restricting the activity of foreign NGOS (Cooley 2012, 98). Similarly, the War on Terror enabled Central Asian regimes to crackdown on the political opposition as potential terrorists and extremists (Cooley 2012, 98). Therefore, as Whitehead (2001, 24) acknowledged, the division between external and internal elements is therefore simultaneously helpful and artificial; democratization processes involve a combination of domestic and international factors.

Central Asia's "catapult to independence" (Olcott 1992) has illustrated the limitations of the various democratization paradigms previously described. By the end of the 1990s, it was undeniable that Central Asia had taken an authoritarian turn (Melvin 2004, 119), and scholarly attention turned its focus to the deliberate construction of authoritarianism across the region (Matveeva 1999; Gel'man 2008). For Jones-Luong (2002) a lack of popular mobilization in Central Asia prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, directly contributed to the emergence of authoritarianism. Jones-Luong (2002, 13–14) argued that a lack of mobilization did not incentivize elites to break with the Soviet past, but to maintain regional networks of patronage supporting their power. Jones-Luong (2002, 3) also

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[24] O Beachain (2009) seconded this perspective in his examination of the Rose and Tulip Revolutions.

pointed out that elite perception of changing power structures is directly related to the implementation of political reform; reform will be implemented only if it is perceived as beneficial, allowing elites to influence distribution of goods and services and hence retain power. On the other hand, Melvin (2004, 126) argued that the region justified use of authoritarian policies to resolve problems of institution building, state-building, protection of ethnic communities, prevention of regional and clan fragmentation, and economic reform. Liberalization was possible in each state following the collapse of the Soviet Union, however the decisions of individual leadership, when confronted with the challenges of independence, led to the emergence of authoritarianism, and to the varieties of authoritarianism seen across the region (Melvin 2004, 137).[25] Thus, the region is not inherently authoritarian as Gleason (1997) suggested, but authoritarianism has been deliberately constructed (Melvin 2004, 136). Economic development, past legacies and political culture did not determine, although they may have influenced, the trajectory of political change in post-Soviet Central Asia (Melvin 2004, 137).

Although optimism about democratization in Central Asia rose after Kyrgyzstan's first Tulip Revolution in 2005, authors such as Juraev (2008) questioned the emphasis placed on its democratic nature. Five years on, Juraev (2010) concluded that despite the Tulip Revolution, authoritarianism in Kyrgyzstan was "back on track" due to a lack of political ideals, family and clan involvement in politics, and an absence of international support for democratization in Kyrgyzstan. Following Kyrgyzstan's "latest revolution" in 2010, Collins (2011, 163) pointed out the role of agency in the path towards democratization citing Kyrgyzstan's former interim President Roza Otunbayeva. But what about now? According to various research, the world has been seeing a rollback from democratization. For example, Lührmann et al. (2018, 1) found that 24 countries across the world experienced declines in democracy in 2017. Furthermore, Freedom House (Abramowitz 2018b) reported that 2018 was the twelfth consecutive year in which more countries have experienced democratic declines than gains. This trend has also been reflected in Kyrgyzstan. For example, in 2017, Freedom House (2018) reported a sharp decline in Kyrgyzstan's "Democracy Score." On a scale from most democratic (1.0) to least democratic (7.0), Kyrgyzstan's score rose from 6.0 in 2017, to 6.7 in 2018 (Freedom House 2018, 1). Although Kyrgyzstan saw a peaceful transfer of presidential power in 2017 from former President Atambayev to his former Prime Minister Sooronbai Jeenbekov, the election was not free and fair due to the use

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[25] See also Schatz (2006) for his discussion on the variations of authoritarianism seen in Central Asia.

of state resources to deter political competition (Freedom House 2018, 2). Kyrgyzstan also saw a decline in political pluralism and media freedom in 2017 (Freedom House 2018, 2). In Central Asia, only Uzbekistan's unexpected liberalization since President Shavkat Mirziyaev took office in 2016 has defied the region's mirroring of the global trend away from democracy. Since, Mirziyaev took office some political prisoners have been freed, some restrictions on freedom of speech have been lessoned, blacklisted citizens have been taken off the Security Service's list, and government institutions have become more accountable (Human Rights Watch 2018).

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has identified five fields of scholarship relevant to the research question including diffusion and the demonstration effect, new ICT, social movement theory, authoritarianism and democratization. It has examined each of these fields at large and in relation to Central Asia. In doing so, this chapter has made three main points. Firstly, it has shown that varying perspectives offer a wide range of explanations for the onset and spread of mobilization, as well as for its absence under authoritarian regimes. Secondly, it has demonstrated that apart from a few exceptions (Wilson 2009; Koesel and Bunce 2013) the majority of these explanations are limited by state or region. Finally, it has shown the importance of perception on a popular and elite level. Indeed perceptions of a political opportunity seemed to matter just as much for popular level mobilization in Iran in 1978 (Kurzman 1996) and in Dar'a, Syria (Leenders 2013). On an elite level, it has shown that political change under authoritarian regimes will be adopted only it if is perceived as prolonging the position of the incumbent (Jones Luong 2002, 3). In examining if and why the Arab Spring has acted as a catalyst for change regarding Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan's approach to regime security via an elite-level demonstration effect, this thesis offers a transregional perspective which builds on each of the aforementioned fields. It then addresses whether an elite-level demonstration effect gives rise to learning. As such, this thesis also addresses the immediate implications of the Arab Spring uprisings in terms of a re-evaluation of authoritarian "stability" even in the absence of unrest at home. To this end the following chapter addresses what theoretical drivers can account for protest and their applicability to Tunisia, Egypt and Central Asia in 2010.

Chapter 4 A Central Asian Spring?

4.1   Introduction

Central Asia has not seen widespread, popular mobilization prior to or following the onset of the Arab Spring. Of the colour revolutions, only Kyrgyzstan's 2005 Tulip Revolution occurred in the region. Apart from Kyrgyzstan's two revolutions, prominent examples of civil resistance in Central Asia remain few and far between. Other examples include Uzbekistan's 2005 Andijan massacre, and Kazakhstan's 2011 Zhanaozen uprising. More recently in 2016, Kazakhstan saw its largest demonstrations in the last twenty years, with protestors opposing land reform (Pannier 2016). Yet Central Asia has been subject to continuous predictions of regional instability (Kendzior 2013) that to date have failed to materialize. In line with these predications of instability, scholars and journalists raised the possibility of a "Central Asian Spring." In a Central Asian Spring, uprisings across the region would oust the incumbent authoritarian regimes. Speculation of a Central Asian Spring assumes that the factors which were conducive to the Arab Spring uprising also exist in Central Asia. On the surface, several commonalities exist in the MENA and Central Asia (De Cordier 2012, 4). Politically, the governments of both regions are largely nondemocratic, albeit to different extents, and have been led by longstanding dictators. Both regions also share the legacy of empire. Economically, the MENA and Central Asia are characterized by income inequality and corruption. Levels of economic growth, poverty, and unemployment were largely similar between the two regions in 2010. Demographically, the MENA and Central Asia shared the phenomenon of a youth bulge and saw urban population growth in 2010. However, Central Asia is not "Arab," despite assumptions stemming from the presence of oil and Islam (Kendzior 2012; De Cordier 2012, 2).

Because speculation of a Central Asian Spring assumes similarities between the MENA and Central Asia, it is in some ways akin to cross-national studies of conflict which compare variables from time periods and regions, and place less emphasis on how cultural, historical and regional particularities influence uprising (Newman 2014, 15). The political, economic and demographic factors previously listed have illustrated that to a certain extent there are common

structural variables between the MENA and Central Asia. However, this list also illustrated that shared political, economic and demographic factors have not produced a similar outcome in the two regions. Therefore, similar variables have interacted differently in local contexts (Newman 2014, 16). Thus, despite the commonalities between the MENA and Central Asia, local cultural and historical particularities have clearly influenced potential for uprising in the two regions. Nevertheless, differing cultural and historical particularities between countries does not always result in a different outcome. For example, Onuch's (2014, 217) study of mobilization in Argentina in from 2001 to 2002 and in Ukraine in 2004, determined that the trajectories leading to mass mobilization were very similar, despite taking place in vastly differing regions.

Academics and analysts ultimately concluded that Central Asia would not see its own Spring (Zikibayeva 2011; Radnitz 2011; De Cordier 2012; Kendzior 2012; Blank 2012, 152), although this is not to say that political change will not come to Central Asia. In fact, Radnitz (Smith et al. 2011, 21) noted that political change is inevitable, but questioned whether it will be brought about by popular mobilization. Zhao (Zikibayeva 2011, 5) also noted that future instability in Central Asia could be triggered by water security, ethnic clashes, and transitions of power, but that these would most likely result in local disturbances as opposed to widespread uprising. However, can they be so sure? After all, the Arab Spring caught scholars and analysts by surprise (Gause 2011), defying theoretical assumptions. This poses the question, do factors which are conducive to uprising offer sufficient explanation for the onset of the Arab Spring and the lack of a Central Asian Spring?

To answer this question, this chapter adopts a two-fold approach. Firstly, it draws on the theoretical framework of civil war scholarship to identify potential political, economic, demographic and social drivers of instability. Although the Arab Spring is not an example of a civil war (apart from the trajectories of specific states such as Libya and Syria), the variables which give rise to instability in intrastate armed conflict are also applicable to the emergence of nonviolent uprising. In this sense, it is the variables driving uprising which are critical, not the violent or nonviolent character of the instability itself. Through this approach, this chapter distinguishes itself from prior analysis of the likelihood of a Central Asian Spring (Clem 2011; Schmitz and Wolters 2012; Koldunova 2016). Political factors identified which can cause instability include regime characterization and state capacity. Internal economic drivers of instability identified include economic growth, income inequality, horizontal inequalities and perceived economic grievances, poverty and unemployment. External economic factors identified include climate change and its effect of rapid urbanization. Social and

demographic factors identified include a youth bulge and the use of ICT. Cultural and historical particularities identified which can affect uprising include imperial legacy, regional integration, and civil society.

An examination of the political, economic, social and demographic factors related to the likelihood of uprising allows the researcher to question how they relate to the development of an elite-level demonstration effect. Firstly, this conflict literature is used to explore how 'ripe' for instability the countries under examination can be considered to be. This is important to make the case that these are societies which have some conflict risk factors, and thus the possibility of instability and a demonstration effect is not remote. Thus, in order to appreciate how regimes perceive the risk of conflict at home, it is necessary to first set out established theories about why conflict occurs and whether they were present in Central Asia and the MENA and 2010. (This is also relevant to the presentation of the research 'problem' and context, which involves understanding the risk of upheaval in the reason, and indeed why a 'Central Asian Spring' has not occurred, despite some of the conditions for instability being present.) Establishing the theoretical causes of conflict and their presence in Central Asia shows how the regimes of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have framed causes of conflict to legitimize changes in their rhetoric, policy, and behaviour.

Having identified potential drivers of instability, this chapter will assess the extent to which these factors were present in Tunisia, Egypt and in Central Asia in 2010 using empirical indicators as seen in Table 1. Examination of states in the MENA is limited to Tunisia and Egypt as the first two states which saw protest. The purpose of the chapter is not a comparison between the MENA and Central Asia, per say, but to determine whether these variables can shed light on instability in the MENA, and if so, whether these factors are present in Central Asia. Apart from country specific circumstances and local particularities, similar variables were present in the MENA and Central Asia in 2010. The presence of similar drivers of instability but of varying outcomes in the two regions confirmed that local context affects the emergence or lack of instability. Additionally, it highlights a limitation of civil war's theoretical framework—that of differentiating between "decisive" and "relevant" factors (Newman 2014, 33). This chapter also establishes the need for a longitudinal examination of the selected case studies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan undertaken in chapters five and six.[26] As Kissane (2016, 121) stated, "Process-based theories are also better at explaining 'the dogs that don't bark': societies which are objectively conflict prone, but in which no violent conflict ensues."

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[26] See Blank (2011) for a synchronic approach.

4.2   Political Factors affecting uprising

4.2.1 Regime characterization and state capacity

Cross-national research has evaluated the impact of regime type and political institutions on instability. In particular, it has addressed whether and how democratic, transitioning, autocratic, neopatrimonial and anocratic regime types affect the onset of conflict. Scholarship has also examined whether transitions to democracy or authoritarianism impact upheaval. Among regime types, it is generally accepted that consolidated democratic states are the least likely to experience instability (Newman 2014, 25). Consolidated democracies are the least likely to experience instability because democratic institutions have established means to resolve domestic strife (Hegre et al. 2001, 34). Free and fair elections, checks on executive authority, and opportunities for participation lower potential for conflict, as does the cost of "subverting democratic institutions" (Gates et al. 2006, 895). In this way the relationship between consolidated democracies and decreased potential for instability is also a comment upon state capacity. Potentially for this reason, a state's level of institutional effectiveness is often used as an empirical measurement of its state capacity (Newman 2009, 426). A consolidated democracy is by implication a capable state. However, not all democracies are stable, capable states. For example, Hegre et al. (2001, 34) found that a transition to democratization or authoritarianism can result in short term instability, although the long term effects of a consolidated democratic or authoritarian system differ (Hegre et al. 2001, 43). State capacity therefore merits evaluation alongside regime characterization as a factor affecting prospects for uprising.

Apart from consolidated democracies, scholarship has found that autocratic regimes are more stable than anocratic regimes (Hegre et al. 2001; Gates et al. 2006; Goldstone et al. 2010). An autocracy is more stable than an anocracy because it limits elite competition in addition to challenges from the opposition or other actors (Gates et al. 2006, 894). Because institutional mechanisms are not in place to check the power of the executive, competing access to power is restricted—the cost of action outweighs its benefits and reinforces the status quo political order (Gates et al. 2006, 895). However, an autocracy is not more stable than a democracy when faced with a transition of

power. In fact, the risks posed by succession make autocracies less stable than democracies (Gates et al. 2006, 895). This is because struggles over succession can result in state weakness and an opening for those interested in challenging the regime (Gurses and Mason 2010, 145). Scholarship has agreed that succession under neopatrimonial regimes in particular poses a challenge to regime stability. Gurses and Mason (2010) have argued that personalist and neopatrimonial regimes are more prone to instability compared to other types of weak states, partly because of the risks associated with succession. When regimes characterized by patronage and coercion are confronted with a "shift in the balance of power"—brought about by regime change, economic crisis and demographic challenges—the risk for violence increases (World Bank 2011, 88). In 2010, the neopatrimonialism regimes of Tunisia, Egypt and Central Asia were therefore at heightened risk for violence in the event of regime change, economic or demographic pressures.

Cross-national research has reached the consensus that anocratic regimes, or those that combine democratic and autocratic elements, are less stable than fully democratic or autocratic regimes (Hegre et al. 2001; Gates et al. 2006; Goldstone et al. 2010). Anocratic regimes are more unstable than consolidated democracies or authoritarian regimes for three reasons. Firstly, the combination of a factionalist "winner-take-all approach to politics" by political elites and partially democratic institutions makes anocratic regimes increasingly prone to instability (Goldstone et al. 2010, 197–98). By this measure a regime supported by a party of power is simultaneously its strength and its weakness (McGlinchey 2011, 39). Goldstone et al. (2010, 197) found that chances for the onset of conflict increased 30 fold in partial democracies with factionalism than in full autocracies. Moreover, Goldstone et al.'s (2010, 204) study of the onset of conflict between 1955 to 2003 found that political institutions were by far the most accurate predictor of instability as opposed to various economic, demographic or geographic factors. Statistically insignificant factors included Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, the GINI coefficient, corruption, and demographic youth bulge (Goldstone et al. 2010, 207), all of which will be discussed in the following sections. Secondly, scholarship has found that the combination of certain variables with a semi-democratic political system can generate grievances which ultimately drive upheaval (Hegre et al. 2001, 33; Newman 2014, 25). For example, Goldstone et al. (2010, 197) highlighted that infant mortality rates, being surrounded by four or more countries that have experienced armed conflict, and ethnic discrimination were variables that increased potential for the onset of conflict in anocratic regimes. Similarly, Herge et al. (2001, 40–41) found that the level of development, ethnic heterogeneity, and the occurrence of a civil war in a state within the past year affected potential for instability. For these reasons,

Hegre et al. (2001, 38) found that an "intermediate regime is estimated to be four times more prone to civil war than democracy." Lastly, as discussed in the preceding paragraph, an anocratic political system lacks the stabilizing mechanisms of an ideal autocracy which eliminates all challenges to the regime. However, cross-national conflict research has not yet addressed the impact of elite learning on potential instability. This factor is particularly relevant in Central Asia and Russia, where the regimes have learned from the colour revolutions to become more resilient against future upheaval, and in this way have partially mitigated the destabilizing effects of a pseudo-democratic political system.

Measures of regime characterization in 2010 indicated that Tunisia, Egypt and Central Asian states ranged from anocratic to strongly autocratic in 2010 and were perceived as such by their citizens. On the Polity scale which ranges from +10 (strongly democratic) to -10 (strongly autocratic), Tunisia was the most democratic at -4, followed by Egypt and Tajikistan at -3, Kazakhstan at -6, Uzbekistan at -9, and Turkmenistan at -9; Kyrgyzstan was rated -88 (transition) on the Polity scale (Center for Systemic Peace 2014). With scores of -9, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan were strongly autocratic, and were therefore theoretically less prone to instability aside from the risks posed by succession in Uzbekistan. Tunisia, Egypt, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan received similar scores, indicating that all were at relatively comparable degree of authoritarianism. The World Bank's (2010k) indicator of "Voice and Accountability," provides another useful dimension of regime characterization, as it measures how citizens' interpret their civil and political freedoms. Voice and Accountability (World Bank 2010k) "captures perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media." A percentile rank from 0 (lowest) to 100 (highest), with a higher score indicating better governance, valued Kyrgyzstan at 20.4, Kazakhstan at 15.2, Egypt at 13.7, Tunisia at 10.0, Tajikistan at 9.5, Turkmenistan at 2.4, and Uzbekistan at 1.9 (World Bank 2010k). Notably, not all of these ratings corresponded to the Polity score. While Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan again received the lowest scores, Kazakhstan and Egypt were perceived as more democratic by their citizens than Tunisia. The fact that Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan were perceived as more democratic by their citizens and did not see Arab Spring type unrest, while Egypt and Tunisia were perceived as slightly less democratic but saw uprising, suggests that perceptions of democracy affect potential for uprising more the actual level of democracy.

The World Bank's "Government Effectiveness" Indicator provides another indication of citizen's perceptions of governance. The Government Effectiveness indicator evaluates "perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the

civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies" (World Bank 2010j). As such, it can be interpreted as a measurement of state capacity (Newman 2009, 428) and of perceptions of state capacity. This is because it assesses how a state's citizens perceive institutional effectiveness as opposed to regime type. However, Government Effectiveness scores suggested that perception of state capability did not necessarily correspond to the onset of uprising. Government Effectiveness in Tunisia, Egypt and Central Asian states in 2010 revealed that perceptions of higher state capacity did not deter unrest. Percentile ranking found that Tunisia and Egypt had the highest state capacity in 2010 at 63.3 and 43.1, followed by Kazakhstan at 40.7, Kyrgyzstan at 31.6, Uzbekistan at 26.3, Tajikistan at 19.1, and Turkmenistan at 3.3 (World Bank 2010j). Despite having higher levels of state capacity compared to Central Asia, both Tunisia and Egypt saw unrest. Additionally, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, the Central Asian states with the lowest Government Effectiveness ranking, did not see uprising in 2010. Thus while state capacity, regime characterization, and perceptions of regime characterization are undoubtedly significant in terms of uprising, they do not provide a clear answer as to why Tunisia and Egypt saw unrest, while Central Asia did not see a Spring.

4.3 Economic factors

4.3.1 Economic growth

In addition to regime characterization and state capacity, scholarship has investigated the impact of economic factors on prospects for upheaval. The following section will discuss how economic growth, income inequality, horizontal and economic grievances, poverty and unemployment impact instability. It will assess to what extent these variables were present in Tunisia, Egypt and Central Asia in 2010 and whether they offer definitive explanations for the onset of uprising in the MENA and the lack of a Central Asian Spring. The World Bank (2011, 7) pointed out that many states confront these pressures but do not see uprising because of institutional coping mechanisms. By extension, the varying state capacities of Tunisia, Egypt and the Central Asian states would affect their

ability to dampen the impact of economic hardship and reduce potential for uprising.

Literature on the relationship between economic growth, measured in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita and instability has argued that high economic growth reduces prospects for instability (Alesina et al. 1996; Londregan and Poole 1990). This is supported by examples such as Alesina et al. (1996, 190), who found that countries with low GDP per capita were more prone to government collapse in the form of a coup d'état. Similarly, Londregan and Poole (1990, 177–78) found that the likelihood of a coup d'état is reduced by high economic growth and high levels of income. Even in democratic states, voters do not endorse candidates who cannot deliver economic performance, and in autocratic states the possibility of a coup provides a similar incentive for the incumbent (Londregan and Poole 1990, 175). Therefore, even autocratic governments are motivated to perform well economically (Londregan and Poole 1990, 178). This highlights the correlation between economic growth and governmental legitimacy. From this perspective, if economic growth reduces the likelihood of protest, then Tunisia and Egypt should have seen a decrease in economic growth in 2010. In 2010, the annual percentage of GDP per capita growth was highest in Turkmenistan at 7.8%, followed by 5.8% in Kazakhstan, 5.5% in Uzbekistan and 4.2% in Tajikistan (World Bank 2010b). Tunisia and Egypt had the lowest rates of economic growth at 2.5% Tunisia and 3.1% (World Bank 2010b). Only Kyrgyzstan did not see growth, with a GDP per capita decrease of -1.7% (World Bank 2010b). This data suggests that there is a correlation between economic performance and unrest in Tunisia, Egypt and Kyrgyzstan.

Although economic growth appears to be a relevant factor in the emergence of instability, GDP per capita data has several limitations. Firstly, measures of economic growth cannot capture specific regional and national circumstances. For example, Blake (Smith et al. 2011, 4) highlighted that wealth from hydrocarbons has allowed resource rich Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to mitigate the effect of economic difficulties on their populations. Thus, while Fearon and Laitin (2003, 85) found that "deriving at least one-third of export revenues from fossil fuels is estimated to more than double a country's odds" of instability, natural resource wealth can cushion the impact of poor economic performance at least in the short term. Secondly, GDP per capita cannot measure activity of the type of shadow economy characteristic of many Arab states and of Central Asia (De Cordier 2012, 6–7). Data from Transparency International's *Corruption Perceptions Index* (2010) indicated that corruption is rife in Tunisia, Egypt and Central Asia. On a score from 10 (very clean) to 0 (highly corrupt),

Tunisia was most corrupt at 4.3, followed by Egypt at 3.1, Kazakhstan at 2.9, Tajikistan at 2.1, Kyrgyzstan at 2.0, and Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan at 1.6 (Transparency International 2010). Corruption in itself can generate grievances and weaken institutional coping mechanisms (World Bank 2011, 7). However, this depends on how corruption is perceived and who is benefiting from it. In Tunisia and Egypt elite corruption aggrieved the population (Clem 2011, 234). However, De Cordier (2012, 12) claimed that in Central Asia the population often assumes that the president is free of the corruption found at the local level. Thirdly, economic growth is a nationwide indicator, and cannot account for the distribution of wealth within a country (De Cordier 2012, 6; Clem 2011, 233). For example, in the MENA and in Central Asia, the presidents, their families and close associates hold the majority of wealth (De Cordier 2012, 4). Lastly, GDP per capita does not capture the relationship between increasing economic growth and citizens' rising expectations (De Cordier 2012, 7; Clem 2011, 233). In order to overcome these limitations, the following sections will discuss the distribution of wealth within a country in terms of income inequality, followed by horizontal inequalities and perceived economic grievances.

4.3.2 Income inequality and horizontal inequalities

Cross-national research has debated the relationship between vertical and horizontal inequalities and instability. Vertical inequality refers to the level of inequality within the population at large, while horizontal inequalities refer to inequalities between various groups within a population (Bartusevicius 2014, 35). Bartusevicius (2014, 38) defined vertical inequality as:

> *an unequal (asymmetric) distribution of certain goods within a given society. The goods over which inequalities exist are defined broadly; they can include material assets (e.g. income or land), but also opportunities (e.g. to participate in politics) or access (e.g. to education, health or social services).*

Therefore, the relationship between vertical inequalities and instability refers to when an uneven distribution of goods or opportunities between the population at large results in grievances and triggers unrest. A similar relationship applies to the relationship between horizontal inequalities and instability in that an uneven distribution of goods or opportunities between a group within the wider population results in grievances and becomes a catalyst for unrest. The following section will

first address the relationship between vertical inequality and instability, followed by horizontal inequality and instability.

Scholarship examining the relationship between vertical inequality and instability has often used income inequality as a variable measuring grievance (Muller 1985; Alesina and Perotti 1996; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004). The hypothesis of Alesina and Perotti's (1996, 1214) study illustrated how income inequality can result in unrest. Alesina and Perotti (1996, 1214) hypothesized that income inequality can trigger unrest when a group of poor citizens "face" a smaller group of exceeding rich members of their society, become disillusioned with the current state of socioeconomic affairs, and demand change. Although Alesina and Perotti (1996, 1214) referred to a group within the population, and thus to horizontal inequality, their hypothesis also illustrated how vertical inequalities can propel unrest. However, the findings of cross-national research on the relationship between income inequality and conflict are mixed. Fearon and Laitin (2003) and Collier and Hoeffler (2004) did not identify a causal relationship between income inequality and upheaval. On the other hand, Muller (1985) and Bartusevicius (2014) identified a causal relationship between unequal income distribution and unrest. Muller (1985, 60) is of particular interest as he found that high income inequality and an anocratic regime were significant variables in the emergence of instability, criterion that apply to Tunisia, Egypt and Central Asia. However, the significance of the regime type and income distribution has also been debated. Bartusevicius (2014, 46) found that the relationship between inequality and upheaval was not affected by regime type, absolute income, or economic growth.

Data from the Gini index, which measures the equality of income distribution on a scale of 0 (equal) to 100 (unequal), revealed similar levels of income inequality in Tunisia, Egypt and Central Asia (World Bank 2010c). In 2010, the Gini coefficient revealed higher income inequality in Tunisia at 35.8, than in Egypt at 30.8 (World Bank 2010c).[27] In Central Asia, the Gini coefficient revealed that the greatest income inequality was present in Tajikistan at 30.8, followed by Kyrgyzstan at 29.9, and Kazakhstan at 28.6 (World Bank 2010c).[28] No data was available for Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan (World Bank 2010c). Although income distribution can also be measured by income shares of population quintile, quintile data was not available from the World Bank in 2010 for Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. Applying the findings of Muller (1985) to Tunisia, Egypt and Central Asia in 2010 would suggest that the regions shared a similarly high potential for instability—both regions were composed of

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[27] Data available for 2008.
[28] Data available for 2009.

anocratic regimes and shared almost identical levels of income inequality. With a Gini index of 35.8, Tunisia had the most unequal income distribution in 2010 compared to Egypt and to the Central Asian states. Notably, both Tajikistan and Egypt shared a 30.8 Gini coefficient, yet Tajikistan did not see uprising in 2010. Moreover, Kyrgyzstan at 29.9 saw revolution in 2010, but had a more equal level of income distribution that Tunisia and Egypt. Thus, while income inequality was present in Tunisia, Egypt and Central Asia, it did not provide a definite explanation for the onset of the Arab Spring and the lack of a Central Asian Spring.

In addition to vertical inequalities, cross-national research has examined the relationship between horizontal inequalities and instability. Horizontal inequalities differ from vertical inequalities in that they involve a cultural aspect; inequality is felt between a particular group in society and the close-knit ties of the group better facilitate mobilization. A shared group identity increases the likelihood of shared grievances, which in turn increases mobilizing potential. Stewart (2002, 3) defined horizontal inequalities as "the existence of severe inequalities between culturally defined groups" that are "multidimensional – with political, economic and social elements." For Stewart (2002, 3) when political, economic and social inequalities overlap with cultural divisions, "culture can become a powerful mobilizing agent." Similarly, Ostby (2008, 143) noted that the shared aspect of horizontal inequalities increases both group discontent and unity, and in this way facilitates mobilization. As the World Development Report (World Bank 2011, 81) highlighted, "Economic and social inequality and perceived injustice matter. Security and economic stresses may be amplified by the way people perceive their identity—and their treatment by others may be based on that identity." The notion of identity is central to horizontal inequalities, as it defines societal groups and how they perceive each other (Stewart 2002, 6). Stewart (2002, 35) has also highlighted that political exclusion can result in horizontal inequalities. This suggests that exclusion as a collective grievance can exacerbate tensions and lead to instability. In this way, horizontal inequality is related to the phenomenon of group domination of power, in that domination of a particular group necessarily excludes other minority groups. For example, in the context of Central Asia, group domination of power can manifest itself through clan ties (McGlinchey 2011, 41–42). Notably, exclusion is most likely to encourage leaders to instigate uprising, while economic, social, and cultural inequalities are most likely to motivate the general population to uprising (Stewart 2010, 2).

It is difficult to determine whether horizontal inequalities were a factor conducive to uprising in Tunisia and Egypt. This is because the data measuring

socio-economic and political horizontal inequalities is limited (Stewart 2002, 2). For example, Ostby (2008) measured economic and social horizontal inequalities using data from the Demographic and Health Surveys. Stewart (2010, 5) noted that this source is an exception to a general lack of data on "ethnic, regional or religious" horizontal inequalities. Stewart's (2002, 19) table of horizontal indicators in Uganda presents various measures of economic and social indicators such as GDP per capita and enrolment in secondary education. GDP per capita has been discussed in the context of whether economic growth is a factor conducive to uprising, while enrolment in secondary education is addressed in the following section. In this way this chapter has used empirical data to address various aspects of horizontal inequalities. In discussing why a Central Asian Spring is not likely to occur, Radnitz (Smith et al. 2011, 19) noted that ties between Central Asian states are weak, and that despite its shared post-Soviet experience, the region lacks the shared identity and grievances which facilitated transnational protest in the Arab Spring. This implies that the unifying effect of horizontal inequalities was not present in Central Asia in 2010, at least to the same extent as in the states which saw an Arab Spring.

4.3.3 (Perceived) economic grievances, poverty and unemployment

Alongside economic inequality and horizontal inequalities, analysts have evaluated whether perceived economic grievances, poverty, and unemployment are factors conducive to conflict. Economic grievances are a part of horizontal inequalities, and in this way the previous section overlaps with the following discussion. Horizontal grievances and relative deprivation highlight the importance of how perception of one's economic position can affect potential for uprising. However, horizontal inequalities vary from relative deprivation in that both affluent and deprived members of society may instigate uprising (Stewart 2010, 1). Gurr's (1970) theory of relative deprivation states that economic conditions do not necessarily propel collective action, rather a gap between a population's expectations and the reality of their personal circumstances. Gurr (1970, 23) described relative deprivation as "the tension that develops from a discrepancy between the "ought" and the "is" of collective value satisfaction, and that disposes men to violence." Notably, relative deprivation is likely to arise when a society is modernizing; improved economic and social conditions result in raised personal expectations (Gurr 1970, 97). When improved economic and social conditions do not result in improved personal circumstances, relative

deprivation can arise. From a relative deprivation perspective, individual economic circumstances do not result in grievances and upheaval unless there is a mismatch with personal expectations. Poverty data illustrates this as the poverty headcount ratio was higher in Uzbekistan than in Tunisia, yet Uzbekistan did not see unrest. In 2010, the national poverty headcount ratio, or "the percentage of the population living below the national poverty lines", was greatest in Kyrgyzstan at 33.7%, 25.2 in Egypt, 17.7% in Uzbekistan, followed by 15.5% in Tunisia, and 6.5% in Kazakhstan (World Bank 2010e). Data was not available for Tajikistan and Turkmenistan (World Bank 2010e). Although some scholars have identified a correlation between poverty and instability (Londregan and Poole 1990; Alesina and Perotti 1996, 1211–12; Fearon and Laitin 2003), poverty does not provide a clear indicator as to why the MENA saw unrest in 2010 while Central Asia did not.

For Newman (2014, 24), Gurr's (1970) theory of relative deprivation is a more likely explanation as to why the MENA has seen unrest, despite economic growth and social progress. As previously established, both Tunisia and Egypt saw economic growth in 2010. Additionally, social progress in the MENA has been made in leaps and bounds, such as an increase in access to education for both men and women (Malik and Awadallah 2011, 2). Increased access to education has resulted in what Malik and Awadallah (2011, 3) termed a "revolution of aspirations," similar to what Gurr (1970, 24) termed "value expectations." However, in the MENA increased aspirations have not been met with increased economic opportunity as the public sector based hydrocarbon economics could not accommodate a bulging work force, and resulted in economic and social grievances (Malik and Awadallah 2011, 3). Therefore, Gurr's (1970) theory of relative deprivation seems a plausible factor in the onset of uprising in the MENA. The absence of relative deprivation also seems to be a plausible explanation for why Central Asia did not see uprising in 2010. While it is difficult to measure perceptions of relative deprivation, Umarov (Smith et al. 2011, 22) has identified a connection between lower expectations and poverty in Uzbekistan. Because of poverty, Uzbekistan's citizens have less expectations for the future. For Umarov (Smith et al. 2011, 22) the states which saw an Arab Spring had higher future aspirations because of their wealth, while in Uzbekistan poverty makes everyday survival a priority as opposed to revolution. However, this does not apply to Kazakhstan. The 2011 Zhanaozen uprising was not the first time that economic grievances gave rise to protest in Kazakhstan (McGlinchey 2013, 2). More recently, Achilov (2016, 715) found that economic grievances can predict a rise in collective protest in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. This suggests that there is more potential for relative deprivation to result in grievances and uprising in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

Increased access to education in the MENA but a lack of economic opportunity illustrates the relationship between relative deprivation, unemployment and instability. The World Bank (2010f) defines unemployment as "the share of the labor force that is without work but available for and seeking employment." Unemployment as a driver of instability can occur for two main reasons. Firstly unemployment can propel instability when there is "over-education" for the positions available (Goldstone 2002, 10). From this perspective a group of people need to attain a certain level of education to be aware of their unfavourable circumstances and to instigate collective action (Bartusevicius 2014, 46). It is difficult to pinpoint whether education played a role in the onset of uprising in Tunisia and the lack of uprising in Central Asia, as data on tertiary level of education and unemployment in 2010 is only available for Egypt and Kazakhstan. In Egypt the rate of male and female unemployment with tertiary education was 36.5% and 42% respectively (World Bank 2010h, 2010g). Kazakhstan's rate of male and female unemployment with tertiary education was much lower at 16.6% and 22% (World Bank 2010h, 2010g). More data is necessary to determine the role that education and unemployment played in the Arab Spring and the lack of a Central Asian Spring. However, Egypt's high rate of education and unemployment combined with subsequent unrest suggests that improved access to education and a lack of economic opportunity resulted in social discontent as described by relative deprivation theory.

Unemployment can also trigger instability when there are no viable economic opportunities. Civil war literature has addressed the relationship between unemployment and a lack of economic opportunities through the opportunity-cost theory. In particular, it has addressed the relationship between unemployed young men and violence (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; World Bank 2011, 78; Berman et al. 2011) According to the opportunity-cost theory the decision to participate in conflict is the result of a "cost-benefit calculus" (World Bank 2011, 78). Even if grievances are present uprising will not necessarily occur if the costs outweigh the benefit. Alternatively, when the benefits of participation outweigh the costs the collective action problem is overcome. According to opportunity-cost theory, unemployment lessons the cost of participation in conflict (World Bank 2011, 78). Collier and Hoeffler (2004, 588) found that enrolment in secondary education, per capita income and high economic growth rate as costs, reduce the likelihood of the onset of conflict. As Newman (2014, 30) phrased it, "if young men have nothing to lose – no job and no educational opportunities – they may be more likely to participate in armed conflict." However Berman et al. (2011, 498) did not identify a statistically significant relationship between unemployment and violence at a 99.95% confidence level.

Unemployment data for Tunisia, Egypt and Central Asia in 2010 supported Berman et al.'s (2011) finding. In 2010 total and male youth unemployment varied across Tunisia, Egypt and Central Asia. In Tunisia and Egypt total unemployment was 13.0%, and 9.0% (World Bank 2010f). Total unemployment in Kazakhstan was 5.8%, in Kyrgyzstan 8.6%, in Tajikistan 11.6%, and 10.9% in both Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan (World Bank 2010f). Notably, data for male youth unemployment, which "refers to the share of the labour force ages 15-24 without work but available for and seeking employment" (World Bank 2010i), was higher than the percentage of total unemployment in all countries except for Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan's rate of male youth unemployment in 2010 was 5.5% (World Bank 2010i). Apart from Tunisia which had a male youth unemployment rate of 30.2% in 2010, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan had the highest rates of unemployment in Central Asia but did not see unrest (World Bank 2010i). Uzbekistan had a male youth unemployment rate of 19.6%, while Tajikistan and Turkmenistan shared a 19.7 % male youth unemployment rate (World Bank 2010i). Egypt had a lower male youth unemployment rate at 14.8% than Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan yet saw uprising (World Bank 2010i). Kyrgyzstan's male youth unemployment rate was similar to Egypt's at 14.4%, and both saw uprising in 2010 (World Bank 2010i). The data reveal varying percentages of total and male unemployment across Tunisia, Egypt and Central Asia which do not correspond with the states which saw uprising. As such, it is likely that poverty and unemployment are significant alongside when considered alongside other economic, political and social variables that drive unrest (Newman 2014, 44).

4.3.4 Other economic factors affecting uprising

Economic factors affecting uprising can be further subdivided into internal and external pressures. The World Bank (2011, 7) has done this, categorising corruption, low income and unemployment as "internal economic stresses" which drive conflict. By extension GDP per capita, income and horizontal inequality, perceived economic grievances and poverty can also be categorised as "internal economic stresses." The World Bank (2011, 7) also identified an "external economic stress": climate change. It is difficult to determine whether climate change as an independent factor is conducive to conflict. Climate models are unable to predict change with 100 percent accuracy, and previous climate change has occurred rapidly and without warning, instead of increasing at a steady and

predictable rate (Evans 2010, 4–5). In fact, Gleditsch (2012, 7) stated that there is little evidence that climate change is a factor propelling conflict. However, there is evidence that the direct and indirect effects of climate change can influence uprising through access to resources and rapid urbanization.

Climate change is a mechanism which can directly influence conflict through competition over resources; for example a glacier melting can increase tensions over access to water (Evans 2010, 15). Competition over water resources is currently occurring in Central Asia (Trilling 2016) but to date has not resulted in intra or interstate conflict. However, the findings of Bernauer and Siegried (2012) suggest that competition over water resources will not result in interstate conflict in Central Asia. Water security in Central Asia is therefore representative of the debate between climate change and conflict. Secondly, climate change can directly heighten the risk of food insecurity (Evans 2010, 15). Food insecurity can result in protests, riots, and intra and interstate conflict (Brinkman and Hendrix 2010, 2), but the likelihood of these events occurring is dependent on state capacity. As Brinkman and Hendrix noted (2010, 2–3), food insecurity and subsequent conflict is more likely to occur in developing countries; for this reason food insecurity is not an independent factor driving conflict. It does however remain significant. Notably, Arab Spring protesters called for bread, freedom and dignity.[29]

Lastly, climate change and access to resources can have indirect social and economic consequences, such as mass migration (Evans 2010, 13). From this perspective rapid urbanization results in violent conflict. However, the correlation between urbanization and conflict is controversial, as Buhuag and Urdal (2013) found that weak institutions, low economic growth and pre-existing intrastate conflict are greater predictors of urban instability than rural-urban migration. Statistics measuring the "average annual rate of change of the urban population" between 2005 and 2010 for Tunisia, Egypt and Central Asia showed the greatest urban population increase in Tajikistan. Tajikistan's urban population grew at a rate of 2.34% followed by Turkmenistan at 1.77% (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division 2014). The rural-urban growth in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan was higher than Tunisia's rate of 1.38% and Egypt's rate of 1.68% (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division 2014). Kyrgyzstan saw 1.13% urban population growth, followed by Uzbekistan at 1.02% (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division 2014). Kazakhstan had the lowest urban population growth at .74% (United Nations, Department of

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[29] For further discussion see also Newman (2018).

Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division 2014). Data from 2010 to 2015 show an increase in urban population growth across Central Asia but no change in Tunisia and Egypt (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division 2014). Data on rural-urban migration is not indicative of a direct correlation between urbanization and unrest. However, the interaction between climate change and social and economic factors is illustrative of how climate change and access to resources are rarely independent drivers of instability but amplify other stresses (Evans 2010, 6) such as weak state capacity and low GDP per capita.

4.4   Demographic and Social Factors

4.4.1 Youth bulge

Prior discussion has addressed the effect that climate change and access to resources have on migration. The following section readdresses the relationship between demographics and conflict from an economic perspective. It assesses how a demographic youth bulge can contribute to economic grievances which in turn drive instability. A youth bulge is when more than 20 percent of the population falls between the ages of 15 and 24 (De Cordier 2012, 8). Urdal's (2004, 3) model illustrates the relationship between a youth bulge, grievances and conflict. In Urdal's (2004, 3) model, a youth bulge combined with "expansion in education" and a "lack of economic opportunities" leads to grievances and culminates in deprivation conflicts. Urdal's (2004, 3) model also specified that a youth bulge and "limited political recruitment" can lead to grievances and deprivation conflicts. A youth bulge directly contributes to a lack of economic opportunity because the current job seeking population, between the age bracket of 15-24, is larger than the previous generation (Urdal 2004, 4). Urdal (2004, 16) found that the presence of a youth bulge increased potential for violent conflict under the condition of economic inertia. A youth bulge is therefore not an independent driver of instability. A youth bulge becomes a demographic burden when combined with economic pressures. In fact, a youth bulge is not always negative in relation to economy, as population growth can raise labour productivity (Urdal 2004, 16). Alongside the youth bulge, scholarship has also examined the impact of population growth on conflict. Goldstone (2002, 4–5) found that while rapid growth in the work force and an increase in educated youth contribute to

instability, population growth does not. This is at odds with the findings of Collier and Hoeffler (2004, 588) who found that "the risk of conflict is proportional to a countries population," and Fearon and Laitin (2003, 75) who found that a large population size is conducive to insurgency.

Applying Urdal's (2004, 4) model to the Egypt and Tunisia provides an example of the relationship between a youth bulge, increased education opportunities, and unemployment which resulted in grievances and culminated in deprivation conflicts. Between 1996 to 2006 the work force in the MENA increased by three times as much annually as the remainder of developing world, thereby resulting in one of the highest levels of youth unemployment as a consequence (Malik and Awadallah 2011, 2). The unprecedented increase in unemployment in the MENA was the result of a youth bulge and of more females entering the work force (Malik and Awadallah 2011, 2). Notably, both Handoussa (2010, 6) and Malik and Awadallah (2011, 3) characterized the unemployed predicament of youth as a form of exclusion. Malik and Awadallah (2011, 3) stated, "Unlike Western Europe, where class-based struggles have historically driven political change, the Middle East is witnessing a truly *generational* struggle for inclusion."[30] In this sense, exclusion and its relationship to group domination of power appear to have compounded the youth bulge as a driver of instability. Population statistics in 2010 showed the largest youth bulge in Egypt as 20.3% of the population fell between the ages of 15-24 (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division 2015). While there was technically not a youth bulge in Tunisia in 2010, at 18.7%, a significant percentage of the population was between the ages of 15-24 (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division 2015). Apart from Kazakhstan, which had 19.3% of the population between the ages of 15-24, all of Central Asia had a youth bulge in 2010 (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division 2015). Tajikistan had the largest youth bulge at 22.6% followed by Kyrgyzstan at 22.3% (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division 2015).[31] Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan also saw a demographic youth bulge in 2010, with 22% and 21.8% of the population between the ages of 15-24 (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division 2015).

The majority of Central Asia meets the specifications of Urdal's (2004, 3) model in terms of demographics and economic inertia. However, there are various reasons why a youth bulge does not always result in upheaval. A youth

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[30] Italics in original.
[31] See Roche (2010) for discussion of the relationship between a youth bulge and conflict in Tajikistan.

bulges do not always result in upheaval because an opportunity to protest does not present itself (USAID 2010, 2). From a social movement perspective, a political opportunity structure is lacking. Therefore, the combination of a youth bulge and a lack of a political opportunity structure potentially explains why the more authoritarian states of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan did not seen unrest. Alternatively, according to the conditions specified in Urdal's (2004, 4) model, economic inertia was not present in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in 2010, a fact which their GDP per capita confirms. Secondly, widespread grievances do not always translate into unrest. Actors, context and triggers affect the onset of uprising (USAID 2010, 2). Moreover, as Bartusvicius (2014, 38) highlighted, "deprivation of certain goods does not necessarily lead to frustration in every individual. The chance of frustration depends on the value one attaches to the good one is deprived of." Therefore, increased education but a lack of employment opportunities does not aggrieve all individuals in the same way. Thirdly, migration potentially explains why a youth bulge does not always erupt in conflict. Urdal (2004, 17) has described net migration, as a "safety valve." Labour migration takes unemployed and underemployed members of the population out of the state, thereby restricting their opportunity to protest (De Cordier 2012, 8). The inverse is also true as restricted opportunities for migration alongside a youth bulge increase potential for unrest (Urdal 2004, 17–18). However, migration can introduce citizens abroad to alternative discourses which could result in the eventual questioning of the state of affairs at home (De Cordier 2012, 12). Additionally, a side effect of migration is a rise in the use of ICT (De Cordier 2012, 8). Alongside economic growth, these three reasons potentially explain why the youth bulge in Central Asia did not result in uprising. Moreover, as Egypt and Tunisia met the conditions of Urdal's (Urdal 2004, 4) model, a youth bulge adds explanatory value as to why the MENA saw uprising in 2010.

4.4.2 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Scholars have debated whether there is a relationship between ICT and conflict by examining whether ICT help overcome the collective action problem. A recent study by Ruijgrok (2017) supported the correlation between ICT and conflict. Ruijgrok (2017) found that the increased access to information provided by ICT enhances potential for protest in authoritarian states through four mechanisms: ICT lower the cost of communication for the opposition, trigger changes in attitude towards the government, lesson the information uncertainty for would-be

protestors, and expose citizens to images and videos which can inspire mobilization. Additionally, Achilov (2016, 713) found that in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, even a slight rise in computer usage, such as "from 'never' to using 'occasionally' " increased the likelihood of mobilization between 20 and 40 percent. Other studies have not been so optimistic about the relationship between ICT and conflict. For example, Rod and Wiedmann (2015, 348) found that governments interested in maintaining control of information have higher levels of internet expansion; in this way they are better able to shape and monitor public opinion. Additionally, Rod and Wiedmann (2015, 348) found that between 2006 to 2010 states with lower Internet levels saw more democratic regime change than states with higher internet levels. Regardless, both Ruijgrok (2017) and Rod and Weidmann's (2015) findings suggested that ICT is not an independent factor driving the onset of conflict and that contextual factors such as regime characterization must be taken into consideration. In fact, Dafoe and Lyall (2015, 403) have compiled a list of "conditioning factors" which affect the relationship between ICT and conflict. Several of the "conditioning factors" on ICT listed by Dafoe and Lyall (2015, 403) have already been or will be discussed in relation to conflict in this chapter. "Conditioning factors" that have been or will be addressed include: ethnicity and other group characteristics, such as population size and density; grievances; the level of internet penetration; and the aims of the actors themselves (Dafoe and Lyall 2015, 403). Other relevant "conditioning factors" that have not been discussed include: organizational capacity and the proclivity to use technology, potentially affected by socio-economic status and age; whether technology is affordable; and support for the current government (Dafoe and Lyall 2015, 403).

Bearing these "conditioning factors" in mind, one way to assess whether ICT can potentially explain the rise and spread of the Arab Spring and the lack of a Central Asian Spring is to compare levels of internet penetration and mobile phone users between the two regions. In Tunisia in 2010, 36.8 per 100 people were Internet users, followed by 21.6 in Egypt (World Bank 2010a). In Central Asia in 2010, Kazakhstan had the highest number of Internet users at 31.6 per 100 people, followed by Uzbekistan at 20.0, Kyrgyzstan at 16.3, Tajikistan at 11.6, and Turkmenistan at 3.0 (World Bank 2010a). However, as Goble (Smith et al. 2011, 45) pointed out, the amount of Internet penetration is not as significant as the presence of Internet usage itself, as those with access to alternative sources of information are able to inform others. By extension, the same would hold true for mobile cellular telephone subscriptions, in that the quantity of subscriptions is not as significant as the ability to access alternative information. In 2010, mobile cellular telephone subscriptions per 100 people were the highest in Kazakhstan at 122 per 100 people, followed by 105 in Tunisia, 99 in Kyrgyzstan

and 91 in Egypt (World Bank 2010d). Turkmenistan had the lowest number of mobile cellular telephone subscriptions at 63 per 100 people (World Bank 2010d). Uzbekistan and Tajikistan had a slightly higher rate of subscriptions at 75 and 78 per 100 people (World Bank 2010d).

Despite knowing the level of Internet penetration and mobile phone subscriptions in 2010 in Tunisia, Egypt, and Central Asia, there are two main limitations with these statistics. Firstly, these statistics do not show Internet usage. Is the Internet used for acquiring news or for watching videos online? Secondly, these statistics do not show geographical usage of the Internet. Is Internet and mobile phone access concentrated in urban as opposed to rural areas? Data for Internet usage in various regions in Central Asia in 2010 was only available for Kazakhstan. The Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (2010) reported that "Communication" was the main use of the Internet at 39.2%, followed by "Searching the Information and On-line Services at 37.5%. Furthermore, "Communication" usage was highest in the capital Astana (Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics 2010). Thus, while the Internet under authoritarian regime can provide alternative information and organizational capacity it does not necessarily follow that the Internet is being used for this purpose. Secondly, Internet penetration statistics do not show the restrictions that authoritarian regimes have placed upon the internet. Freedom House's Freedom on the Net (Freedom House 2012, 26) describes this relationship as "Internet Freedom vs. Internet Penetration." In 2011 Freedom House's Freedom on the Net (2012, 19–20) initiative described the Tunisian, Egyptian, Kazakh and Kyrgyz Internet as "Partly Free." Freedom House (2012, 20) rated Uzbekistan's Internet as "Not Free." Notably in Uzbekistan, discussion and news pages mentioning the Arab Spring uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain and Libya were blocked on social networking sites in February 2011 (News Briefing Central Asia 2011). Consequently, while there is Internet penetration in these states, there is not necessarily Internet freedom. Because Tunisia, Egypt and Central Asia had similar levels of Internet freedom in 2011 yet saw different outcomes, suggests that ICT are a relevant but not decisive factor.

4.5 Particularities affecting uprising in Central Asia

4.5.1 The imperial and Soviet experience

Alongside relevant political, economic, demographic and social factors, historical and cultural particularities can also influence potential for uprising. In other words, whether or not the aforementioned factors are conducive to uprising in the present is influenced by historical legacies and local context. In the MENA and Central Asia, one way that the influence of history has been examined is through the legacy of empire. In fact, many states which saw intrastate conflict in the 20th century were past colonies; this is because former colonies lacked the resources necessary to develop state capacity and construct national identity (Newman 2014, 31). The following section will not address the relationship between colonialism and potential for conflict at large, but will present how scholars have addressed the relationship between empire, statehood and potential for conflict in Central Asia. It will then address two additional consequences of Central Asia's Soviet experience that carried over into 2010 and weigh their impact on a potential Central Asian Spring. These include Central Asia's integration within the post-Soviet space, and an underdeveloped civil society.

Literature assessing the relationship between empire, statehood, and instability in Central Asia is limited. Cummings and Hinnebusch (2011, 3) have examined how the MENA and Central Asia's differing imperial experiences can account for similarities and differences in the regions' post-imperial trajectory. This refers to how the MENA's experience as part of the Ottoman Empire, followed by English and French colonialism, and Central Asia's experience under the Russian empire and Soviet rule, have impacted post-imperial developments in the two regions (S. Cummings and Hinnebusch 2011, 13–18). In particular, Cummings and Hinnebusch (2011, 5) hypothesized that differing levels of post-imperial stability in the MENA and Central Asia are a result of their imperial experience. In this view, the MENA and Central Asia's imperial legacies have influenced potential for uprising. Cummings and Hinnebusch (2016, 8) applied this hypothesis to the Arab Spring, and argued that because of its imperial legacy, the MENA was more susceptible to upheaval than Central Asia for several reasons. Firstly, the Middle East experienced more of a "legitimacy deficit" than Central Asian states, partly because Western intervention resulted in anti-imperialist sentiment, and partly because of strong Islamic movements (Hinnebusch and Cummings 2016, 8). Additionally, Central Asian states have been legitimized by their ties with Russia (Hinnebusch and Cummings 2016, 3). Nor have they suffered a loss of legitimation from "pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic identities" (Hinnebusch and Cummings 2016, 5). McGlinchey (2011) has also examined the impact of Soviet rule on stability in Central Asia, and argued that Soviet intervention in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan affected

propensity for upheaval. General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's facilitation of leadership change in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in the 1980s resulted in elite unity, whereas Gorbachev's lack of facilitating leadership change in Kyrgyzstan, resulted in a fragmented elite and an unstable executive which ultimately increased prospects for instability (McGlinchey 2011, 11–12). Thus, while this chapter has concentrated on whether the conditions for instability in Central Asia were ripe in 2010, the foundation for these conditions was potentially laid during the imperial and Soviet period.

4.5.2 Relations with Russia and regional actors

A significant effect of Central Asia's imperial experience is that its states and societies have been fundamentally shaped by relations with Russia (De Cordier 2012, 3). Russia's physical shaping of Central Asia is evident in Central Asia's state formation. The Central Asian states of today first came into existence during the 1924 to 1936 Soviet delimitation of territories in which the Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Turkmen and Uzbek ethno-linguistic groups were granted republics (S. Cummings 2012, 4). Russian influence in Central Asia is also evident in that Russian is a lingua franca in Central Asia, spoken by elites, in municipal areas, and between varying ethnic groups De Cordier (2012, 3). Above all, as a result of Central Asia's Soviet legacy, the region is more influenced by happenings in the post-Soviet space than by events in the Arab World (Kendzior 2012; De Cordier 2012, 8; Smith et al. 2011, 19–20). In particular, Central Asian attention is directed towards Russia (Smith et al. 2011, 19). Central Asian integration within the post-Soviet space has influenced its prospects for upheaval in several respects. As previously discussed, according to one author, "perceptions of political opportunities" did not extend from the MENA to Central Asia because of a lack of social ties between the Central Asian and Arab world, and Central Asia's post-Soviet integration (Radnitz 2011, 4). This observation notably echoed that of Kurzman (1996, 153) who found that "perceived opportunities," led to protest in Iran in 1978, rather than a change in "structural opportunities." Kurzman (1996, 153) defined "perceived opportunities" as "the public's awareness of opportunities for successful protest activity," and "structural opportunities" as "the vulnerability of the state to popular political pressure." Popular misperceptions of political opportunities led to protest in Iran in 1978, because structural opportunities had not changed (Kurzman 1996, 164). Kurzman's (1996) case of Iran in 1978 demonstrates that misperceiving a political opening can affect the

onset of protest without a structural opening, although neither a perceived or structural opening inspired a Central Asian Spring in 2010.

Central Asia's integration within the post-Soviet space has also shaped its prospects for upheaval because of the status quo interests of regional actors. Actors with interests in the region include the Central Asian regimes themselves, Russia, China, and multilateral regional organizations. The status quo interest of regional actors can be economically motived, for example Central Asian regime change could impact China's energy interests (Hinnebusch and Cummings 2016, 7). Alternatively, status quo interest can be related to the fact that states are affected by the political system of neighbouring states. A quantitative study by Hegre, Gissinger, and Gleditsch (2003, 270) found that a different political system in a neighbouring state reduces the lifespan of a state's political system by half. Democratic political change and outright revolution in a neighbouring state therefore threatens the longevity of the political system in neighbouring authoritarian states—a factor which is well known by Central Asian regimes (Blank 2011, 8). Central Asian regimes have been wary of political change since the colour revolutions, but have learned from them to become more resilient (Zikibayeva 2011, 1; Radnitz 2011, 4; Smith et al. 2011). For example, Radnitz (2011, 4) highlighted that Central Asian regimes have learned how to maintain power without relying on using outright repression. Radnitz (2011, 4) observed that Kazakhstan has been particularly successful in this regard, winning its campaign for the 2010 chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) which it used to assert international legitimacy. Uzbekistan, on the other hand, has remained repressed but has used its "geopolitical leverage" to its advantage (Radnitz 2011, 4). For example, the European Union removed an arms embargo on Uzbekistan in 2009, instated after the Andijan massacre, despite Uzbekistan's continuing human rights abuses (Lungescu 2009). In 2009, the United States also followed suit in order to protect its supply route into Uzbekistan, known as the Northern Distribution Network (Kucera 2011b).

Russia and multilateral regional organizations have also shown their wariness of potential regime change on several occasions. Blank (2012, 151–52) noted that the Arab Spring was a topic of discussion during former Russian President Dimitry Medvedev's visit to Tashkent. During this visit, Uzbek President Islam Karimov (President of Russia 2011) told Medvedev:

> *the current events in North Africa and the Middle East and the emerging situation in Afghanistan are all issues that Russia and Uzbekistan cannot disregard, primarily from the perspective of synchronizing our positions and conducting an open exchange of*

views on the situation and the issues to be addressed in the nearest future.

Additionally, Sergei Lavrov (2012), Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated, "As for international affairs, I would like to mention that we would not like the events of the Arab Spring to become a tradition…All the more, we would not like someone considering the Central Asia region in such a context." Status quo regional organizations with members and interests in Central Asia include the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). The status quo nature of the SCO was apparent in a meeting between the Council of the Heads of the Member States of the SCO held on 14-15 June 2011. During this meeting, President Nazarbayev stated, "I call to create an SCO council for settling territorial and regional conflicts and use it to carry out preventive measures in potential hot spots in the area of its responsibilities. In the past years we have witnessed two serious political conflicts and coups in the neighbouring Kyrgyzstan" (Satayeva 2011). Additionally, Kilner (2011) reported that the CSTO held joint military exercises from 19-27 September 2011 which General Nikolai Makarov of the Russian army stated were in preparation for potential uprisings.

4.5.3 Civil society

Central Asia's Soviet legacy has also stalled the development of the region's civil society by limiting the growth of independent organizations (Radnitz 2011, 5). As a result, current political activists are limited in numbers, and do not enjoy widespread popularity (Smith et al. 2011, 18). Geography has also affected the development of civil society. Vast landmasses with low population densities also pose obstacles to the formation of civil society organizations (Hinnebusch and Cummings 2016, 7). There is also less of a history of activism in Central Asia than in the MENA (Smith et al. 2011, 66). For example, the transition to independence in Central Asia was not marked by nationalist movements (S. Cummings 2012, 60–61). When mass movements have occurred in Central Asia, as in the colour revolutions, the protests were not a grassroots phenomenon, but were led by political elites and financed by their business counterparts (Radnitz 2011, 5). Central Asia's limited history of civil society has led one author to note that that in Central Asia no organization is broadly supported or has the organizational capabilities necessary to facilitate protests (Radnitz 2011, 5). To a certain extent, this is true. Opposition in Central Asia commonly starts and

finishes on an individual level, and in the event that is expressed on a group level, it is most often is limited to clan, regional or personal networks (De Cordier 2012, 11). However, Central Asia's limited history of uprising has refuted the myth of political apathy in the region, as does a rise in collective protest from 2004 to 2012 in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (Achilov 2016, 700).

Democratization literature has traditionally highlighted the involvement of civil society in the transition process. From this perspective, Central Asia's lack of a robust civil society limits potential for bottom up political change. However, the states which saw an Arab Spring did not have a robustly developed civil society. Moreover, traditional civil society actors in the MENA, including Islamists, did not participate in the Arab Spring protests in Tunisia and Egypt (Cavatorta 2012, 76–77). This suggests that a developed civil society is not a necessary precondition for protest and may well be an advantage. Cavatorta (2012) listed three defining characteristics of the Arab Spring activism which fall outside the realm of traditional civil society and explain the protestors' success. Firstly, young protesters, aggrieved because of a lack of opportunities, created non-ideological coalitions that appealed to a wide range of people; this activism also lacked a central leader which made it harder for the regime to repress (Cavatorta 2012, 78–79). Secondly, turning online for freedom of expression naturally led to online activism, utilizing the Internet to organize demonstrations, and the spread of relevant information across the region (Cavatorta 2012, 79–80). Thirdly, the socio-economic demands of trade activists merged with young protesters' call for political change thereby uniting a wider range of protestors (Cavatorta 2012, 80). The non-traditional characteristics of Arab Spring activism therefore challenge the conventional perspective in which civil society is necessary to instigate political change. In practice, however, a lack of civil society or the participation of civil society actors was not a barrier to organizing collective action or an indicator of the outcome of protest in the Arab Spring uprisings. Thus a lack of established civil society in Central Asia does not necessarily hinder future activism or political change. In particular, this could have implications for the potential of civil society activism under authoritarian rule.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the political, economic, social and demographic variables which theoretically contribute to uprising, and has assessed to what

extent they were present in Tunisia, Egypt and the Central Asian states in 2010. It has addressed the question of whether these variables explain the onset of the Arab Spring uprisings and the lack of a Central Asian Spring. Examination of these variables revealed structural similarities between Tunisia, Egypt and the state of Central Asia which suggested that both regions were theoretically primed for unrest in 2010. Theoretical factors present in Tunisia, Egypt and Central in 2010 and conducive to uprising included: anocratic regime characterization, low state capacity, low economic growth, income inequality, poverty, high youth unemployment, horizontal inequalities, perceived economic grievances, a demographic youth bulge, and Internet and mobile phone penetration. Because widespread uprising did not occur in Central Asia in 2010 despite the aforementioned factors, the region defied theoretical expectations and to some extent challenged the applicability of theoretical models to the region. As World Bank (World Bank 2011, 7) pointed out, the majority of countries experience stresses, yet do not see uprising because of institutional coping mechanisms. However, measures of state capacity show that despite a lack of institutional coping mechanisms and the presence of economic stresses, Central Asia did not see its own Spring. This is not to say that these theoretical models are not relevant or valid when considering the onset or lack of uprising. Political, economic, demographic and social factors undoubtable play a role in driving conflict. However, the lack of a Central Asian Spring corroborates the fact that the onset of uprising is problematic to predict and explain even when all the factors align, and regional particularities are taken into consideration. In light of this the following chapters will examine the selected cases studies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan from 2005 to 2010, to determine whether Central Asian regimes have experienced an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring uprisings.

Table 1

| Factors relevant to understanding uprising[i] | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Political | | | Economic | | | | | Demographic and social | | | |
Country	Major unrest[ii] 2010 – 2011	POLITY score[iii]	Voice and accountability[iv]	Government Effectiveness[v]	Economic Growth[vi]	Corruption[vii]	Income inequality[viii]	Unemployment[ix]	Poverty Head-count ratio[x]	Youth bulge[xi]	Population change (%)[xii]	Mobile users[xiii]	Internet users[xiv]
Tunisia	Y	-4	10.0	63.2	2.5	4.3	35.8	13.0/ 30.2	15.5	18.7	1.38	105	36.8
Egypt	Y	-3	13.7	43.1	3.1	3.1	30.8 [xv]	9.0/ 14.8	25.2	20.3	1.68	91	21.6
Kazak-hstan	N	-6	15.2	40.7	5.8	2.9	28.6	5.8/ 5.5	6.5	19.3	0.74	122	31.6
Kyrgy-zstan	Y	-88 [xvi]	20.4	31.6	-1.7	2.0	29.9	8.6/ 14.4	33.7	22.3	1.13	99	16.3
Uzbek-istan	N	-9	1.9	26.3	5.5	1.6	No data	10.9/ 19.6	17.7	22.0	1.02	75	20.0
Tajiki-stan	N	-3	9.5	19.1	4.2	2.1	30.8 [xvii]	11.6/ 19.7	No data	22.6	2.34	78	11.6
Turkm-enistan	N	-9	2.4	3.3	7.8	1.6	No data	10.9/ 19.7	No data	21.8	1.77	63	3.0

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[i] Indicators are for 2010 unless noted otherwise.

[ii] Major unrest refers to "a conflict between a government and a non-governmental party, with no interference from other countries," (Department of Peace and Conflict Research n.d.).

[iii] Polity scores range from +10 (strongly democratic) to -10 (strongly autocratic) (Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2016, 16). Data acquired from the Center for Systemic Peace (2014).

[iv] The percentile rank score indicates the percentage of countries in the world that rank lower than the selected country. A higher score indicates better governance. Data acquired from the World Bank (2010k)

[v] Refers to the percentile rank of countries that score lower than the selected country. A higher score signals better governance. Data acquired from the World Bank (2010j).

[vi] GDP per capita growth (annual %). Data acquired from the World Bank (2010b).

[vii] Corruption is measured on a 10 point scale from 10 (very clean) to 0 (highly corrupt). Data acquired from Transparency International (2010).

[viii] GINI index measures income distribution from a scale of 0 (perfect equality) to 100 (perfect inequality). Data acquired from the World Bank (2010c).

[ix] Refers to total unemployed percentage of the work force, followed by the percentage of unemployed youth ages 15-24. Data acquired from the World Bank (2010f) and the World Bank (2010i).

[x] Refers to the percentage of the "population living below the national poverty lines" (World Bank 2010e). Data acquired from the World Bank (2010e).

[xi] Percentage of the total population between the ages of 15-24. Data acquired from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).

[xii] Refers to rate of change of urban population (%). Data for 2005 to 2010; refers to rate of urban population growth. Data acquired from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2014).

[xiii] Refers to mobile phone users per 100 people. Data acquired from the World Bank (2010d).

[xiv] Refers to Internet users per 100 people. Data acquired from World Bank (2010a).

[xv] Data for 2008.

[xvi] In transition.

[xvii] Data for 2009.

Chapter 5 Kazakhstan's narrative of conflict and the Arab Spring uprisings: 2005 to 2015

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter on Kazakhstan is the first of two Central Asian case studies which seeks to gauge the regime's perception and response to the Arab Spring uprisings as expressed through discourse, behaviour and policy. It argues that when taken together, the Kazakh regime's rhetorical and behavioural responses in the wake of the Arab Spring indicate that concerns over the spread of anti-regime activities impacted perceptions of Kazakh regime security through an elite-level demonstration effect. In light of the fact that political events in the former Soviet Union have the most influence on developments in Kazakhstan (Kendzior 2012), the transregional impact of the Arab Spring on Nazarbayev's government is particularly telling. It suggests that the elite-level demonstration effect is a theoretical mechanism which can account for how ruling authorities' respond to events elsewhere. It also informs the conditions under which it is most likely to appear. Namely, that close social and cultural ties are not necessary preconditions for the occurrence of an elite-level demonstration effect. The Arab Spring's impact also suggests that uprisings elsewhere, including those outside of a region, affect authoritarian regimes even in the absence of widespread unrest at home and without a history of revolution through an elite-level demonstration effect.

The discussion is divided into five sections. The first section establishes the Kazakh regime's receptiveness to learning and awareness of cross-border influence, both of which underpin an elite-level demonstration effect and the possibility that its presence is a measure of learning. The Kazakh regime's receptiveness to learning is established by identifying references to learning from various disciplines, its recent history, as well as from national, regional, and international events including the Arab Spring uprisings. These open the possibility that the regime has learned from events elsewhere. The regime's awareness of cross-border influence is established through its references to the relationship between domestic security and external processes, as well as through the mechanisms and factors which further these practices. The second section sets out the regime's perception of the political, economic, social and

demographic causes and consequences of unrest in general and in relation to domestic and regional events. This chapter does not argue that these are objective causes of conflict. Rather, it presents the official narrative. The purpose of this is to establish a comparison with the regime's treatment of the causes and consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings, as discussed in the third section. Rhetorical change in which the regime's treatment of the Arab Spring differed from its prior treatment of conflict, and which suggests that the Arab Spring was perceived as a threat, would evidence an elite-level demonstration effect. Similarly, changes in the ruling elites' behaviour which indicated that the Arab Spring was perceived as a threat would also evidence an elite-level demonstration effect. The fourth section tests whether the presence of an elite-level demonstration effect indicates learning. To test this, the regime's response to the 2011 Zhanaozen unrest is compared with its understanding of the drivers of uprisings in the Arab Spring. A behaviour or policy designed to thwart a perceived cause of the Arab Spring uprisings within the context of the Zhanaozen unrest would confirm that the elite-level demonstration effect is a measure of both political change and learning. Finally, the chapter concludes with an evaluation of the theoretical implications of the mechanism of the elite-level demonstration effect.

5.2 Receptiveness to learning and awareness of cross-border influence

Between 2006 to 2015 Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev has demonstrated a receptiveness to learning and awareness of the potential impact of external events on internal processes in Kazakhstan. This is significant because when taken together these factors establish the foundation necessary for an elite-level demonstration effect and introduce the possibility that the Kazakh regime has learned from international events including the Arab Spring uprisings. Nazarbayev's narrative has referenced learning in Kazakhstan in relation to various academic disciplines, from Kazakhstan's recent history, and in relation to national, regional, and international events including the Arab Spring uprisings. These statements demonstrate that the Kazakh regime has strategically utilized references to learning to frame and legitimize its actions. Nazarbayev has demonstrated awareness of cross-border influence by acknowledging the relationship between domestic security and global processes,

as well as by providing examples of explanatory mechanisms which can drive cross-national influence. Each of these factors is discussed in turn below.

From 2006 to 2012, the Kazakh regime has indicated that it has learned from the social sciences and humanities. For example, Nazarbayev (2006f) highlighted the importance of the social sciences and its sub disciplines including history, sociology and ethnography as illustrative of problems in society and providing "effective recipes of social mobilization." This suggests that as early as 2006 the regime was interested in what combination of factors can give rise to social instability. Six years later, Nazarbayev (2012e) again emphasized the importance of making scientifically informed decisions on social issues to avoid their escalation into social problems and conflicts. In this way, the government has portrayed learning from science as a preventive measure against instability. Nazarbayev has also alluded to learning from world history on at least three occasions. Firstly, the regime has "examined the experience of all democratic states" (Nazarbayev 2007f). Secondly, discussing Kazakhstan's political trajectory Nazarbayev (2007d) stated, "studying and analysing world experience we precisely choose an evolutionary path." Finally, Nazarbayev (2012e) reiterated that "all decisions taken must be thoroughly calculated" and made "on the basis of studying world experience."

The Kazakh government has also expressed learning from its recent history. Firstly, Nazarbayev (2007d, 2008c)[1] has made reference to lessons acquired from the Soviet Union and from the first four years of Kazakhstan's independence. For example, on one occasion, Nazarbayev (2008c) referred to former President Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost* (openness) in combination with the introduction of democracy, and pointed out its negative consequences. According to Nazarbayev (2008c) the negative consequences of the combination of *glasnost* and democracy included widespread poverty, "filth," and "no one to clean up the mess." Nazarbayev (2008c) added that, "This needs to teach us something." Nazarbayev (2008c) therefore attributed the failure of *glasnost* to the pace of reform: Gorbachev introduced democracy too quickly in a state without a liberal democratic tradition. As a result, the Soviet Union saw negative consequences. Nazarbayev's (2008c) statement is significant for several reasons. Firstly, Nazarbayev's (2008c) use of the word "teach" implied that Kazakhstan learned from Gorbachev's mistakes and will not repeat them. This statement also demonstrated that the Kazakh regime again utilized a reference to learning from history's mistakes to legitimize its current policies.

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[1] The Official Site of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Nazarbayev 2010b) dates this interview as 21.07.2010 but it can be found elsewhere online dated as 21.11.2008.

While *glasnost* was undoubtedly problematic, Nazarbayev's (2008c) immediate discussion of the negative consequences of the colour revolutions following his statement on *glasnost* suggests that the primary concern at hand was justification of Kazakhstan's gradual democratic reform. Nazarbayev (2008c) described the domestic climate in the wake of the colour revolutions, including "our neighbour, Kyrgyzstan suffering, the poor people of Georgia, and we observe what is happening now in Ukraine." Nazarbayev (2008c) further emphasized the consequences of moving too quickly towards democracy when he stated "we are moving there gradually…we move there by steps, otherwise we will turn over the cart on the bend and disrupt the whole situation." In a similar vein, Nazarbayev (2007d) made reference to lessons learned during the early stages of Kazakhstan's independence from 1991 to 1995. Nazarbayev (2007d) stated:

> *this period gave us extremely instructive lessons, above all the realization that without a stable and strong economy political development will proceed painfully and slowly and may lead to nationwide discontent and the destabilization of states. Such catastrophes are happening in some friendly states.*

In this statement, Nazarbayev (2007d) delineated mistakes made in the transition period and their consequences. Namely, that a strong economy is necessary for political development otherwise a state risks instability. However, Nazarbayev's rhetoric suggested that Kazakhstan learned from this time period and consequently implemented the policy of a strong economy before political reform. As a result, it has not seen widespread upheaval.

Nationally, the Kazakh regime has also acknowledged learning from the December 2005 presidential elections, and the 2011 Zhanaozen unrest. For example, in regards to the December 2005 presidential election campaign Nazarbayev (2006a) noted that Kazakhstan's citizens were "counting on" potential destabilization. In response to this discursively constructed threat, Nazarbayev (2006a) added:

> *We should recognize that the lack of deep traditions of democracy and the perception of freedom as permissiveness are quite capable of destabilizing the country, destroying all our plans for the future, and throwing us far back. This is the lesson which we have learned from the presidential race.*

Regarding the 2011 uprising in Zhanaozen, Nazarbayev stated (2012a), "we must draw the appropriate conclusions from this situation, learn from it, and always take it into account."

Regionally, Nazarbayev also demonstrated learning from the colour revolutions in Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine, as well as from ethnic and separatist

conflicts within the post-Soviet space. For example, in a speech in which he pledged assistance to Kyrgyzstan, Nazarbayev (2007c) stated:

> *Everything that is happening today in our neighbours shows that genuine democracy can be founded only where there is stable development and where people want to live in peace with each other. These events also demonstrate that freedom of speech does not signify freedom of responsibility.*

In this statement, Nazarbayev's (2007c) use of the verbs "show" and "demonstrate" suggest learning. Nazarbayev (2007b) also alluded to learning from Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan when asked whether he supported the consolidation of political parties or a multiparty system. In response to this question, Nazarbayev (2007b) commented on instability in Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan and stated, "In solving all of these questions we must take into account world experience. What is happening now in Ukraine? …In Kyrgyzstan, this scenario is repeated one to one. Do we need that?" Additionally, Nazarbayev (2015b) has also specified which regional events he has used "to draw conclusions from." These include ethnic and territorial conflicts in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, the Fergana valley, conflicts between Azeris and Armenians, the Caucasus, Transnistria, and in Baltic states (Nazarbayev 2015b). The Kazakh regime has therefore framed itself as having learned from national and regional events about various causes of conflict, and has portrayed its subsequent course of action as having successfully prevented unrest at home.

On multiple occasions Nazarbayev also acknowledged the possibility that the Kazakhstan has learned from the Arab Spring. Nazarbayev (2011d) asked:

> *In the last year in the territory of many countries, above all in Arab countries, swept a whole wave of speeches, directed against the government of these states. What do you think, what conclusions could the governments of post-Soviet states draw for themselves after these events?*

In response to his question, Nazarbayev (2011d) highlighted the importance of "social justice, improving people's living standards, and turning the economy in that direction." On another occasion, Nazarbayev (2012c) pointed out another "lesson" from the Arab Spring and the "Eurozone Crisis," that "In XXI century are impossible such socio-economic models which based on "milking" natural resources of the "third world". At the same time it is non-perspective to borrow for non-productive purposes, refuse from industrial development and investment into the human resources [*sic*]."

Kazakhstan has demonstrated an awareness of cross-border influence from 2007 to 2015 by acknowledging the relationship between domestic security

and global processes. This is significant because it generates the possibility that the regime has learned from events which fall outside the post-Soviet space. For example, Nazarbayev (2007h) observed that, "the problems and catastrophes of the modern world have a transnational character." Nazarbayev (2007c) also stated that "If any country becomes unstable, all of global stability falls under threat." Later on in his incumbency, he provided several examples of this. In 2012, Nazarbayev (2012g) observed that the global financial crisis influenced external risks through "global political shifts, volatile energy prices and resource conflicts." Nazarbayev (2012g) termed this influence "the new order" and observed that it affects the internal security of every state, and can also lead to internal instability and unrest. Two years later, Nazarbayev (2014b) stated, "We are not indifferent to what goes on in our region. Growth at the expense of separation from neighbours, at the expense of their "downfall" into chaos and disorder, ultimately makes us weaker together as a region and the world as a whole." More recently, Nazarbayev (2015a) asserted the need to prevent global challenges from negatively impacting state-building. Therefore, for the Kazakh regime, instability elsewhere clearly impacts domestic stability. Yet, the opposite also applies, as Nazarbayev (2010c) commented that stability in Kazakhstan has contributed to regional and global security. Because these examples occurred prior to and following the Arab Spring, they open the possibility that the uprisings in the MENA impacted regime security in Kazakhstan.

Nazarbayev has also referenced two explanatory mechanisms which drive cross-border influence including the domino effect and the media. This suggests that in addition to awareness of transnationalism and its consequences, the regime has taken note of the mechanisms which may cause transregional events to hit closer to home. On at least two occasions Nazarbayev (2011e, 2012h) utilized the term "domino effect" to describe the spreading economic crisis. Additionally, Nazarbayev (2013a) described the media as a driving force which influences the outcome of events in his statement that, "the media sphere is becoming not only a translator of events occurring in the surrounding world, but in many respects acquires force of one of the leading substances, determining their course in individual countries and in the world as a whole." Nazarbayev's multiple references to learning, and aware of cross-border influence, open the possibility that the Kazakh regime experienced an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring uprisings, in which the regime was influenced by events elsewhere and sought to prevent challenges to its leadership.

5.3 Perceived causes and consequences of conflict

5.3.1 Perceived political and economic factors affecting uprising

Having established the Kazakh regime's receptiveness to learning and its awareness of transnationalism, the following section will set out the Kazakh government's perception of the political, economic, social and demographic causes of conflict. The purpose of this is to set up a comparison with the Kazakh regime's perception of the perceived causes and consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings. If the Kazakh regime perceived the Arab Spring differently from prior unrest and as a threat, it would evidence an elite-level demonstration effect in which the Arab Spring uprisings have impacted Kazakhstan's perception of regime security.

Previously discussed causes of instability in relation to learning included establishing a stable and a strong economy before undertaking political development (Nazarbayev 2007d), a "lack of deep traditions of democracy" (Nazarbayev 2006a), and the "new order" (Nazarbayev 2012g). A review of the Kazakh regime's discourse from 2005 to 2015 revealed additional factors which it perceived as conducive to uprising. For Nazarbayev acquiring statehood, democratization, and modernization are paramount factors which drive instability. For example, Nazarbayev (2010d) observed that the acquisition of independence can result in instability, civil wars, and conflict. Additionally, Nazarbayev (2006b) stated, "We must not allow situations when the process of democratization and political modernization in a country are used like a catalyst of destabilization, of regional and ethnic conflicts." In the same speech Nazarbayev (2006b) pointed out that the processes of democratization and modernization required balancing international standards with democratization's potential positive and negative side effects. The Kazakh regime's narrative revealed the adoption of three principal strategies to prevent democratization from resulting in instability. These included maintaining a strong state and elite, implementing economic before political reform, and assuming a gradual pace of reform. Thus, the inverse of these strategies including weak leadership, political before economic reform, and a rapid pace of reform, are the political and economic factors which the Kazakh regime perceives as driving instability. These are discussed in turn below.

Firstly, the Kazakh regime has stressed that a strong state and elite has kept Kazakhstan stable throughout its democratization process. Nazarbayev (2005d) stated, "Progressive democratization of society, but not the weakening of state authority, which is responsible for the stability and future of the country - that is the path we are following." Accordingly, for the regime, democracy and

strong government are not opposites (Nazarbayev 2007a). Rather, strong government is a prerequisite for democracy. This is also visible in Nazarbayev's (2006a) statement that "as we develop our democratic traditions we should also envision a strict enough system to protect them." It follows that for Nazarbayev (2006d), dominant political parties also contribute to successful reform and political stability. On several occasions, Nazarbayev has stressed the negative consequences of weak leadership. For example, the Kazakh regime has used Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan as representative examples to illustrate the negative consequences of weak leadership.[2] Nazarbayev (2007b) attributed instability in Ukraine to Former President Viktor Yushchenko's desire for constitutional reform and his relinquishing of power to parliament. He (2007b) stated, "As a result this led to instability of the state. The nationally elected president cannot be a guarantor of the stability of the state and now began to demand his full powers back. In Kyrgyzstan this scenario is repeated one to one. Do we need that?" Other consequences of weak leadership for Kazakhstan included social setbacks, "the loss of control" (Nazarbayev 2006b), as well as chaos and conflict (Nazarbayev 2013c).

Secondly, Kazakhstan has prioritized the order of reform to prevent democratization from resulting in conflict. As previously discussed, Kazakhstan learned from the early years of transition that without a stable and strong economy, political development can result in nationwide destabilization (2007d). As such, the Kazakh regime has adopted the principal of "democracy through economic growth" (Nazarbayev 2005e). Nazarbayev (2007f) has also described this strategy as "first economy, then politics" and has used Kazakhstan's lack of widespread upheaval to justify this approach. Nazarbayev (2007f) pointed out the consequences of following an alternative approach in that "examples of countries who acted on the contrary, they are well known to all of us, we see what results similar policy brought in a number of countries of the post-Soviet space." Nazarbayev (2014a) also attributed the 2014 crisis in Ukraine to earlier policy focused on politics rather than economics. Nazarbayev (2014a) stated, "However, two decades of independence in this country they engaged little with the economy and the well-being of the common people, but were more fond of politics. I view this as the main reason of the present crisis in Ukraine." In the same speech Nazarbayev (2014a) also noted that since independence Kazakhstan has "developed without zigzags and backward movements, without social upheaval and internal conflicts," thereby alluding to the success of Kazakhstan's policy of economics before politics. The regime (Nazarbayev

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[2] See Koch (2018) for further discussion of Kazakhstan's framing of instability in Kyrgyzstan.

2006d) has also justified its policy of "economy, then politics" citing Lipset's (1959) correlation between democracy and economic development, a reference that is indicative of learning.

The regime's discourse on economic factors driving conflict has also addressed the relationship between high economic growth and exacerbated social tensions. Literature on conflict has discussed these factors in terms of income inequality, perceived economic grievances, and poverty. For example, Nazarbayev's (2011e) statement, "In today's world the majority of people are deprived of the possibility to fully participate in the economy, to receive all of the benefits of global economic growth. It turns into disparities, social tensions and conflicts," alluded to income inequality as a driver of conflict. In a similar vein Nazarbayev (2012h) stated that "One of the greatest problems in the world today is the increasing social instability. Its root cause is social inequality." On the other hand, Nazarbayev's statement (2007e), "rapid economic growth in many cases is accompanied by social stratification, an income gap between the rich and the poor… creating ground for the emergence of new challenges and threats," alluded to horizontal inequalities. However, Nazarbayev (2006g) attributed Kazakhstan's economic success, governmental policy, and the behaviour of national elites, to preventing ethnic and religious conflict in "a country which in the opinion of the majority of experts should have met with widespread ethnic and religious conflict."

For the regime, additional economic factors driving conflict include poverty, one industry towns, what Nazarbayev (2012g) termed "the new order," and unemployment. In response to an interview question about the likelihood of a colour revolution in Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev (2005b) drew on Victor Hugo, identifying poverty a cause and consequence of revolution. Nazarbayev (2006c) also stated that "the roots of revolution, ultimately, lie in social disorder" that arises when poverty creates cheap labour and economic grievances. It follows that the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan is illustrative of the roots of revolution, as its causes according to Nazarbayev (2007c) were "unresolved social problems and a low standard of living." Notably, local unrest in Zhanaozen, which culminated in violence between police and demonstrators on 16th December 2011, was not attributed to economic grievances despite the fact that with workers and residents living in Zhanaozen's Mangistau region were cut off from the benefits of its oil profits (Dave 2012, 272–73). Rather, Nazarbayev (2012a) noted that **"**The situation in Zhanaozen has shown that one-industry towns are prone to social risks." However, on another occasion Nazarbayev attributed the uprisings to criminal actors (Karsybekov 2012). Additionally, Nazarbayev (2012g) observed that the global financial crisis influenced external risks through "global political shifts, volatile energy prices and resource conflicts." Nazarbayev (2012g)

termed this influence "the new order," which he perceived as affecting the internal security of every state, which could lead to internal instability and unrest. Finally, Nazarbayev, categorized unemployment as both a driver of conflict (Nazarbayev 2012h), as well as a driver of radicalization and criminalization (Nazarbayev 2012d).

Lastly, in order to prevent democratization from becoming a driver of instability, the Kazakh regime has adopted an evolutionary pace of reform. According to Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan chose an evolutionary approach to development based on its study and analysis of world experience (Nazarbayev 2007d). Therefore, for the regime, the pace of reform is directly linked to its positive or negative outcome. This is visible in regards to the constitution in which Nazarbayev (2005a) asserted, "Reckless amendments would wreak chaos in the country." Later on in his incumbency Nazarbayev continued to reiterate Kazakhstan's evolutionary path. For example, Nazarbayev (2012e) stated, "The success of the modernization process in many ways depends on the principles on which it is implemented. Firstly, the principle of evolutionary. There should be no 'running ahead.'" Notably, the regime has juxtaposed its narrative of an evolutionary path against a narrative of forced democratization. Nazarbayev (2007d) stated, "We specifically chose the evolutionary path. We are against the forced implementation of democracy, especially from outside." The regime has therefore alluded to the fact that popular revolution is the result of interference in domestic affairs. It has also specified mechanisms which further external interference, namely NGOs. This is evident in Nazarbayev's (2005c) statement "We know examples when foreign NGOs "pumped" money into political associations and destabilized society. How this ends, we are seeing now in some states." The regime has also emphasised the consequences of forced democratization throughout the 2005 to 2015 delimited time frame. For example, Nazarbayev (2006b) described the consequences of forced democratization as violence and chaos. Additionally, Nazarbayev (2015a) "A succession of recent civil wars and bloody conflicts in different regions of the world showed that premature and forced democratization do not guarantee stability of the state and do not ensure successful economic modernization."

The regime's association between revolution and interference is an example of Cooley's (2012, 24) finding that Central Asian regimes associated the colour revolutions with forced regime change. Because the regime's narrative of interference occurred against the background of the colour revolutions, it also substantiated Koesel and Bunce's (2013, 755) criteria of identifying "diffusion-proofing," or when regimes adopt strategies to pre-empt collective action. To identify "diffusion-proofing" Koesel and Bunce (2013, 755) relied on "timing and whether changes in rhetoric and actions occur in conjunction with waves of

popular mobilizations against authoritarian rulers." The regime's discursive connection between its narrative of interference and the colour revolutions is also an example of what one anonymous interviewee characterized as the flexibility of conspiracy theory in Kazakhstan. The interviewee (Anonymous 1 2016) stated, "The conspiracy theory here is very flexible here in Kazakhstan and in Central Asia. So you could add everything there. It doesn't have a clear pattern for each phenomenon it only combines them and makes a Frankenstein-style very weird paradigm." Nargis Kassenova, Director of the Central Asian Studies Center at Kimep University in Almaty, supported this observation. Kassenova (2016) stated:

> *Colour revolutions yes, it's part of the narrative. It's like oh, you know, instability, mobilization, NGOS, supported by the West—it's part of this narrative. Something happens then some smart person writes that a colour revolution is in the making. Although it has nothing to do with a colour revolution.*

Both observations supported Heathershaw's (2012, 611) claim that conspiracy theories as a form of discourse make "specific claims against the establishment" while in actuality, "reproducing the prevailing political ideas."

5.3.2 Perceived social and demographic factors affecting uprising

The Kazakh regime has directly linked five social and demographic factors to conflict. These include the choice of the people, migration, religion, ethnicity and interpretations of democracy. Firstly, when asked in an interview "What is the secret of Kazakhstan's "resilience" before the colour revolutions," Nazarbayev (2006c) responded that "There is no secret… It is a choice of society in favour of stability, evolutionary economic, social, and political modernization of Kazakhstan." In other words, society chooses between revolution or stability and subsequent modernization. Nazarbayev (2015a) has also alluded to the fact the people choose to protest to avoid work. Nazarbayev (2015a) stated, "In the last years citizens of some countries forgot how to work. Protests have become fashionable. People hurried to a protest for daily work. For that provocateurs paid their salaries."[3]

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[3] This statement was originally in Kazakh. On my request, my Kazakh friend translated it into Russian. This English translation is my result.

Secondly, Nazarbayev (2012h) has acknowledged the destabilizing effects of migration. Nazarbayev (2012h) stated "Growing demographic imbalance generates new waves of migration and increases social tensions. In Kazakhstan, we face migration pressure in certain regions of the country where illegal immigrants destabilize local labor markets." Indeed, the state commission which conducted an enquiry into the 2011 Zhanaozen unrest, blamed *oralmans*, ethnic Kazakhs who have returned to Kazakhstan, with instigating the unrest, despite the fact that the commission found that only 26 per cent of the workers laid off in Zhanaozen were *oralmans* (Marat 2016a, 538). Former advisor to the President, Ermukhamet Ertysbayev also alluded to immigrants destabilizing local labour markets during the Zhanaozen uprising when he asserted that the actors responsible for inciting unrest were not Kazakh (Tengri News 2011). Ertysbayev stated, "what is happening in Zhanaozen is absolutely not characteristic of the Kazakh mentality. Kazakhs have never protested against central authority" (Tengri News 2011). However, former United States Ambassador to Kazakhstan and Georgia, William Courtney (Smith et al. 2012, 7) termed the unrest, "Kazakh-on-Kazakh violence." On multiple occasions, Nazarbayev (2008b, 2011e) has noted the challenges associated with rapid rural to urban youth migration, including unemployment. However, the regime has not directly linked rapid rural to urban youth migration with conflict.

For Nazarbayev, other social and demographic factors affecting uprising included religion, ethnicity, and interpretations of democracy. For example, Nazarbayev (2006e) noted, "The use of religion for political mobilization of the population - this has been repeated many times in the course of history. The course always ends in tragedy." Nazarbayev (2012h) also asserted that unregulated religious freedom "would produce chaos." Nazarbayev (2007c) also pointed out that multiple ethnicities and faiths living together has caused "social tension and even conflict" in other countries, apart from Kazakhstan. Lastly, Nazarbayev (2012f) found that inaccurate interpretations of democracy cause conflict. This cause and its potential risks are evident in Nazarbayev's (2012f) statement that:

> *The notion of democracy all too often suffers from a biased interpretation in post-Soviet countries; it is seen as an opportunity to be beyond the law. This, in turn, has triggered internal conflict and interethnic clashes. A lack of political culture and previous experience has engendered disrespect towards state institutions and a movement towards violence – this is a slippery slope for any country* [*sic*].

Nazarbayev (2012f) supported his observation by citing the multiple examples of violence across Central Asia including ethnic conflict in Osh, as well as unrest in Andijan, and Zhanaozen. However the 13 May 2005 violence in Andijan,

Uzbekistan, in which its residents protested in support of 23 men accused of Islamic extremism and more than 700 people were killed (Mirovalev 2015), was perpetrated by the Uzbek authorities.

Similarly, the violence in Zhanaozen in which the Kazakhstan's Prosecutor General listed fourteen fatalities (Smith et al. 2012, 43), was also perpetuated by the Kazakh authorities. The official report of Kazakhstan's Prosecutor General listed fourteen fatalities and acknowledged the violent nature of the interaction between police and demonstrators. The report stated that "in some cases, use of weapons and special devices by the police was of disproportional character, reaction to the acts of the attackers was unequal to the threat thus leading to death and injures [*sic*] of citizens" (Smith et al. 2012, 43). However, Kazakhstan's Prosecutor General deemed the action of police necessary "to end mass disorder and to protect civilians," and added that "in most cases police officers acted in accordance with law under a real threat to the lives and health both of civilians and the police officers themselves" [*sic*] (Smith et al. 2012, 42–43). The regime therefore justified its violent reaction to the unrest in Zhanaozen by framing it as a response to action threating civilians.

5.3.3 Perceived consequences of uprising

Throughout the preceding sections, the consequences of instability have been discussed alongside the causes of conflict. These included social setbacks (Nazarbayev 2006b), chaos (Nazarbayev 2013c), poverty (Nazarbayev 2005b), a combination of chaos and violence (Nazarbayev 2006b), "disrespect towards state institutions" (Nazarbayev 2012f), and tragedy (Nazarbayev 2006e). This list highlights two aspects comprising the regime's portrayal of the consequences of instability. Firstly, for the regime, the consequences of revolutions are developmental, demographic, and social. Secondly, the consequences of revolutions affect the population at large to a greater extent than they affect an ousted leader or government. Developmentally, the regime's portrayal of revolutions highlighted that revolutions do not resolve society's problems, rather, they hinder development (Nazarbayev 2006c). Nazarbayev (2006a) stated, "We should recognize that the lack of deep traditions of democracy and the perception of freedom as permissiveness are quite capable of destabilizing the country, destroying all our plans for the future, and throwing us far back." On another occasion, Nazarbayev (2012g) stated that political, ethnic and religious conflicts lead to "poverty, devastation, hunger, protracted civil war and setbacks to the Middle Ages." Nazarbayev highlighted that without internal stability in a country,

"nothing will be" (The News 2009). In Kazakhstan, plans for development will not materialize, and its independence and security will be lost (The News 2009). Ertysbayev's (2007) description of the consequences of the Orange Revolution also emphasized the developmental consequences of revolution through the progressive erosion of Ukraine's statehood in which Ukraine almost lost the "integrity of the country." Additionally, Ertysbayev (2007) noted that money spent on "orange smoke vanished" and Ukraine's economy needed assistance.

Demographically and socially, the regime has emphasized that revolutions do not improve the life of the average person. Three years after the Tulip Revolution Nazarbayev (2008c) noted the consequences of the colour revolutions, including "Kyrgyzstan suffering" and "the poor people of Georgia." Regarding the Orange Revolution, Ertysbayev (2007) questioned, "Who won from this? Not the Ukrainians." The regime has also emphasized that even in the medium to longer term, revolutions do not improve living standards. Seven years after the Tulip Revolution, Nazarbayev noted that in Kyrgyzstan, "the life of common people there isn't getting any better" (Tengri News 2012b). In highlighting the developmental, social, and demographic consequences of revolutions, the regime has emphasized that revolutions do not accomplish their original purpose. For example, Ertysbayev (2007) noted that the revolution of 1917 resulted in dictatorship, and even revolutions named after flowers result in tragedy. Ertysbayev (2007) stated, "Revolution in Georgia. Everything began with red roses and in four years turned into a bloody massacre." Moreover, Nazarbayev noted that "revolution always eats its initiators" (Kuzhekov 2010).

The regime's narrative of the consequences of revolution is also present in state-produced television documentaries. For example, Kazakhstan produced a documentary which portrayed the revolutions in Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan as an epidemic, which was aired in Uzbekistan (BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit 2006a). An anonymous interviewee (Anonymous 3 2016) also highlighted the consistent timing and content of state-produced documentary films, and stated "If you look at every single propaganda type of movie, they always show them before the election. Because they always say the same story. They demanded more freedom and look where it got them." Because the colour revolutions followed fraudulent elections, the timing and content of the regime's documentaries suggests an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the colour revolutions in which the regime has tried to pre-empt collective action emphasising its potential consequences. The airing of a similar documentary following the Arab Spring uprisings would suggest the occurrence of an elite-level transregional demonstration effect.

5.4   Perceived causes and consequences of the Arab Spring
uprisings

5.4.1 Perceived political and economic causes of the Arab Spring
uprisings

Two strands of the Kazakh regime's narrative regarding the political causes of conflict remained consistent in its account of the political causes of the Arab Spring, in particular the pace of reform and its association with interference. The regime represented the Arab Spring uprisings as an inevitable consequence of a conservative pace of political development. Nazarbayev (2011b) noted, "there exist three development strategies in the Islamic world...Unfortunately, recent developments have clearly shown that conservative approach will unavoidably sooner or later lead to outbursts of protests" [*sic*]. The regime has also carried on portraying political change as a binary choice between evolutionary or revolutionary change. For example, in 2012 the regime codified the principle of "evolution not revolution" in the format of "G-GLOBAL principles" (Nazarbayev 2012c). Following the Arab Spring, the Kazakh regime continued to emphasize the role of interference in countries which have seen revolution. However, this strand of its discourse appears to demonstrate a different tone after the Arab Spring in two ways. Firstly, unlike pre-Arab Spring rhetoric, the regime's narrative of external involvement in the Arab Spring focused less on juxtaposing an evolutionary path to development with forced democratization, but instead placed greater emphasis on international intervention in the MENA. The regime has discredited international intervention in Libya by describing it as a violation of international law (Nazarbayev 2011d; Interfax Kazakhstan 2012) and of the norms of territorial integrity and state sovereignty (Nazarbayev 2011d). Nazarbayev also stated that the Libyan model should not be applied to other states, such as Syria (Nazarbayev 2011d). An interviewee (Anonymous 1 2016) confirmed the presence of this discursive trend, stating "the Arab Spring actually strengthened this kind of attitude that an external force could be behind these negative processes happening in the Middle East. It strengthened the suspicion against Western powers."

Notably, although the regime discredited international society's response to the Arab Spring as an illegal interpretation of international law, it also framed

the Arab Spring as an international security threat, necessitating a regional and international response. Nazarbayev (2012h) stated, "There is a giant arc of instability from Northern Africa and the Middle East to North-East Asia. Given these changes that the role of the regional security mechanisms has increased. Organizations such as the UN, OSCE, NATO, CSTO, SCO, CICA and others gain greater importance." Nazarbayev also stressed multilateral action when he urged the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) to pre-empt politically motivated uprising. During a meeting between the Council of the Heads of the Member States of the SCO held from the 14 to 15 June 2011 in Astana, Nazarbayev called for the creation of an SCO council to resolve and pre-empt territorial and regional conflicts, and supported his proposal with the SCO's inability to intervene in Kyrgyzstan's 2005 and 2010 revolutions (Satayeva 2011). Nazarbayev reiterated a similar statement to the heads of the CSTO member states at the 12 August 2011 informal summit in Astana when he cautioned against future colour revolutions in the post-Soviet space (Kucera 2011a). Nazarbayev's framing of the Arab Spring as a security threat necessitating collective action, followed by a call to resolve future political uprising in SCO and CSTO member states, suggested that the regime was concerned about a future popular level demonstration effect in which the example of upheaval in the MENA would serve as precedent for the population of Central Asia. As a result of this unease, the Kazakh regime attempted to pre-emptively legitimize a response to potential domestic unrest. This suggested the occurrence of an elite-level demonstration effect.

At the time of Nazarbayev's 2012 call on regional security mechanisms, the Eurasian Economic Union, now the Eurasian Customs Union, was not yet active. However, according to an anonymous interviewee, the Arab Spring uprisings affected Kazakhstan's regional economic engagement. The interviewee (Anonymous 1 2016) stated, "I think the Arab Spring has affected the policy of the president. It has forced, let's say it pushed, Astana to establish even closer cooperation with Russia, with Moscow, not only in the security sphere but also even in the economic sphere." This interviewee's statement therefore substantiated Beissenger's (2007, 270) finding that authoritarian regimes established closer relations with Russia for support against future colour revolutions as part of the elite learning model.

A second way in which the regime's narrative of interference also appeared to demonstrate a different tone in relation to the Arab Spring uprisings was the transference of its earlier emphasis from NGOs as tools of "forced democratization" to ICT. This is evident in Nazarbayev's (2012b) statement that:

Information technologies and opportunities encourage almost all countries to move towards progress. However, one cannot fail to notice that the methods of 'encouraging modernization', especially when it is about 'external encouragement' of unprepared political changes in some societies, are not productive. History has provided numerous examples of this in recent years.

Although Nazarbayev did not name the Arab Spring in this statement, he established a relationship between ICT and political change, which is significant in light of the role attributed to ICT in the Arab Spring—that of overcoming the collective action problem. Indeed, at least one author credited a combination of satellite television and ICT with facilitating demonstration effects (Lynch 2014, 99). On another occasion Nazarbayev (Interfax Kazakhstan 2012) directly associated ICT with the disadvantages of the Arab Spring uprisings. Nazarbayev (Interfax Kazakhstan 2012) stated:

The process goes quickly of widening the range of global information society. Today it is necessary to see not only advantages for development, but also a serious challenge. As the Arab Spring showed, this concerns societies that are not ready for the reception of the values of Western mass-media culture.

Notably, the regime's portrayal of the media as a destabilizing factor was not new in 2012. Mentions began in official discourse as early as 2007 (Nazarbayev 2007d), followed by a warning a year later of the ability of global communications networks, satellite television and the internet to manipulate people and potentially incite conflict (Nazarbayev 2008a). This strand of Nazarbayev's (2012d) narrative continued with his assertion that ICT is often not used to fulfil its original purpose of uniting people but "for the separation of people, raising new barriers inside societies and between countries." In the regime's discourse there is thus a continuation of media's ability to influence conflict, but an added element of ICT contributing to forced democratization. The regime's narrative of ICT following the Arab Spring again exhibits a continuation and an evolution of its pre-Arab Spring framing process. This evolution in the regime's discourse therefore suggested the occurrence of an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring uprisings.

While the regime's narrative of political causes of unrest appear to demonstrate a different tone following the Arab Spring, the regime has not differentiated between economic causes of other conflicts and the economic causes of the Arab Spring uprisings. For the regime, economic and social causes were responsible for the Arab Spring uprisings, just as they were for the second Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan. Nazarbayev (2011c) stated, "The events in the Middle East and North Africa show that the main cause of upheavals were unsolved social and economic problems of these states." Nazarbayev (2010a)

had previously issued an almost identical statement regarding the second Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan, when he stated, "An unsolved pressing social and economic challenge poses the main reason of the present situation in Kyrgyzstan." Both statements were released in English, thus the similarity cannot be attributed to translation. The regime's understanding of the economic causes of the Arab Spring uprisings also reiterated established emphasis on the order of reform and social tensions brought about by horizontal inequalities. Regarding economic strength, presumably brought about by the order of reform, Nazarbayev (2011a) stated, "The unrest that has gripped North Africa and the Middle East has been driven by a potent mixture of economics and politics… Our focus on economic strength and increased prosperity for our citizens is well justified and easily explained. Without such strength, as we have seen repeatedly around the world, stability is put at risk and democratic reform can founder." Nazarbayev (2011d) alluded to horizontal inequalities as a driver of conflict in the MENA and elsewhere, when he acknowledged the effects of the global economic crisis, including a growing gap between the rich and poor, and worsening living standards. For the regime, other factors contributing to the Arab Spring uprisings included the financial crisis, the MENA's dependency on imported food, and youth unemployment (Nazarbayev 2011b). Thus, the Kazakh regime's perceived political and economic causes of the Arab Spring do not represent a radical departure from its established narrative. However, the evolution of the regime's narrative on the Arab Spring – including a call for multilateral action and a shift from NGOs to ICT as a tool of forced democratization – evidenced an elite-level demonstration effect in Kazakhstan brought about by the Arab Spring.

5.4.2 Perceived social and demographic causes of the Arab Spring uprisings

Prior to the Arab Spring the Kazakh regime named the choice of the people not to live in peace with each other, the choice of people not to work but to be paid to protest, and labour migration as destabilizing social and demographic factors. Following the Arab Spring, the Kazakh regime continued to emphasize the importance of the choice of the people. In a statement about the Arab Spring, Nazarbayev (Interfax Kazakhstan 2012) stated, "Democracy is a choice which the state itself and its people must make constitutionally, without tragic breakdowns and revolutions." Following the Arab Spring, however, it appears the Kazakh regime began to view youth as a cause of instability. This is significant

when considering that the countries which saw an Arab Spring were characterized by a youth bulge, and that seemingly apolitical youth in the MENA were able to mobilize wide sectors of society precisely because their grievances lacked political and ideological affiliation (Cavatorta 2012). As such the Kazakh regime's shift in discourse towards youth as a cause of conflict is suggestive of an elite-level demonstration effect following the role of youth as protestors in the Arab spring.

Following the Arab Spring three factors point towards the regime's perception of youth as a factor driving conflict. The first indication of a different tone in discourse towards youth after the Arab Spring is Tengri News' (2012a) headline that "Nazarbayev advised Kazakhstan young people to not get fascinated by the Arab Spring." The article gave details of Nazarbayev's speech in which he warned his audience of scholarship recipients that "there are people who envy us and want everything to go not so well in Kazakhstan," and that revolution sets a state's economy back between ten and fifteen years (Tengri News 2012a). Nazarbayev's emphasis on the consequences of revolutions to this particular audience suggest apprehension that unrest elsewhere could inspire potential domestic unrest. Secondly, further evidence of an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the role of youth in the Arab Spring exists in the government's reaction to the book, *Molotov Cocktail: Anatomy of Kazakh Youth* (Satpayev et al. 2014). In *Molotov Cocktail*, the editor Dosym Satpayev (2014, 5) wrote:

> *The Arab Spring, events in Ukraine and other regions of the world, showed that the new generation can become not as much as legacy, but rather a powerful destructive force of longstanding political systems. Giving this it is dangerous to think that extremism and terrorism are the most serious form of radicalism.*

In an interview, Satpayev (2016) commented that following the book's publication, "a lot of people in Astana among the different state structures tried to speak with us about young people. They tried to receive this book because this topic is very important for our officials too."

Lastly, following the Arab Spring officials turned to at least one research institute to investigate strategies of overthrowing governments. An interviewee shared an internal document produced in 2013 for officials, which examined the relationship between civil society, youth, and political processes and traced the steps which led to uprising in Tunisia, Libya, Syria, and Ukraine (Anonymous 3 2016). Kazakhstan was also included in the study to pinpoint if domestic conditions were near to those that have triggered protest elsewhere. This document showed that officially sponsored research assessed the similarities between the aforementioned countries which saw uprising and Kazakhstan. It is

therefore suggestive of Beissinger's (2007) "elite learning model." In Beissinger's (2007) "elite learning model" elites learn from the successes and shortcomings of models of modular collective action and implement institutional constraints and repression to prevent it from succeeding again (Beissinger 2007, 269). Under this model, elites attribute successful modular action to the failure of other elites to respond properly (Beissinger 2007, 269). Because the official response to this document remains unknown, it is not possible to determine what, if any, policies, were implemented and thus whether it fulfils the elite learning model. However, the interviewee who shared this document identified two main perceptions of the Arab Spring uprisings which prompted research into youth and political change. The interviewee (Anonymous 3 2016) stated, "The general perception was that it was like a new weapon, a new methodology to overthrow the government…the second dimension was looking into what went wrong, why is this happening, how can we fight this algorithm." Another interviewee (Anonymous 4 2016) echoed this statement and described the Arab Spring as "feedback for Kazakhstan."

Although Nazarbayev (2007g) did not directly link youth as factor affecting the onset of conflict prior to the Arab Spring, he did note that "youth need to be given clear life guidance and protection from the influence of dubious kinds of ideas." Nazarbayev (2008b) also acknowledged the existence of a youth bulge in Kazakhstan, and the "current state of youth problems." This, alongside the regime's creation of *Zhas Otan* following the colour revolutions (Polese and Ó Beacháin 2011, 124), suggested that youth concerned the Kazakh regime before the Arab Spring, but that the regime's perception of youth as political actors continued to evolve after the Arab Spring. Notably, Kazakh elite are not alone in viewing youth as a driving force of political processes. In addition to Satpayev, other interviewees highlighted the potential for rural Kazakh youth to be a force of change. One interviewee (Anonymous 1 2016) stated, "I think that the main potential driving force of change in Kazakhstan could not be the youth educated youth, but those guys who are coming from rural areas to big cities."

The fact the regime has not identified youth as a factor driving conflict, yet has reacted to publications on this topic, indicates the gap between the government's public and private reaction. For example, an anonymous interviewee (Anonymous 2 2016) noted:

> *Here it's more like East, not West, where everything is on websites. A lot of things are done under cover. This move, the reaction to some policy issues abroad, may not be on paper, but under cover. It can be done through a change in the person who is in charge of a field, or the launch of a new policy which is not published.*

Rasul Jumaly (2016), former ambassador of Kazakhstan to the Middle East, also highlighted the distance between the elites' public and private reaction. Jumaly (2016) stated:

> *There is a big difference between their reaction publicly, officially, and with their own understanding. Publicly, officially, they always said that there is not any possibility, there is not any similarity between their revolutions and our story. We don't care about problems because the situation in Kazakhstan in our country is stable, very predictable and etc... But in their thinking, in their minds, of course some of them were afraid, were uncertain about the situation.*

The gap between public and private reactions therefore validates the implemented methodology, which has substantiated document analysis with elite interviews. However, it is also important to acknowledge the level of understanding to which Jumaly (2016) referred can vary among individuals. For example, Yerlan Karin, the ruling party Nur Otan's former secretary for strategic development, acknowledged youth as a potential factor driving Arab Spring like unrest in Kazakhstan. Karin (BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit 2012) stated, "We are underestimating social protest sentiments and they are growing, mounting because the causes are not being removed. It's social stratification, growing social gap and the impossibility of self-realization for the youth, and the absence of social prospects."

5.4.3 Perceived consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings

Prior to the Arab Spring uprisings, official narrative addressed the developmental, social and demographic consequences facing a country which has seen conflict. The regime's framing of the consequences of the Arab Spring has reiterated this established narrative but has portrayed the effects of the Arab Spring as multilevel—affecting society, states and interstate relations. For example, Nazarbayev (2013a, 2013b) stressed that internal uprising in Middle Eastern and North African states has negatively impacted domestic economies, which has consequently dealt a blow to the world economy and global development. The regime has also continued to reverse the connotation of revolutions, but has introduced a new strand in its narrative: revolutions are a burden for both domestic and international society. This is seen in Nazarbayev's (2012c) statement at the 5th Astana Economic Forum when he stated:

> *As we see "Arabic spring", revolutions only hamper the progress and throw the society backwards, make interstate relations complicated*

and arise more problems. Revolutions can happen only in scientific and technological sphere. But in political and social spheres revolutions are crucial. Reforms are the only way for progress in XXI century [*sic*].

In other words, the negative effects of the Arab Spring transcend state borders. Notably, revolutions are acceptable in the context of scientific and technological progress—as long as progress follows a designated path.

Nazarbayev (2013c) has also continued to reverse the connotation of revolutions, describing the aftermath of the Arab Spring as an "anti-spring," highlighting the failure of Islamist policies in Egypt and Tunisia, the use of chemical weapons and civil war in Syria, which he anticipated would negatively influence on global development. The demographical and social consequences of the Arab Spring for the regime included the refugee crisis in the MENA which Nazarbayev (2011b) attributed not only to the "humanitarian catastrophe faced by Libya," but to the regime shifts in Tunisia and Egypt. Because the refugee crisis transcends states, regions and borders, in this statement the regime again highlighted the domestic and the international consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings. Notably for the regime, regime shifts and not domestic policy, bear responsibility for the refugee crisis in Tunisia and Egypt. Similar to the colour revolutions, state-produced documentaries also depicted the consequences of the Arab Spring. Local analyst Satpayev (2016) stated, "It was to try to work with public opinion here in Kazakhstan. You shouldn't use this experience because you'll face a lot of problems. In our state mass media they tried to use the Arab Spring as a fear tactic." The Kazakh regime's perceived consequences of the Arab Spring therefore demonstrate a continuation and an evolution of its pre-Arab Spring framing processes.

5.5 Does a demonstration effect indicate learning?

Prior discussion has established the regime's receptiveness to learning and awareness of cross-border influence, thereby establishing the underlying awareness necessary for an elite-level demonstration effect and opening the possibility that the Kazakh regime has learned from events elsewhere. Because changes in narrative, behaviour and policy evidence an elite-level demonstration effect, and hence an indication of the effect felt on a regime from uprising elsewhere, the presence of an elite-level demonstration effect in Kazakhstan suggested that it has learned from the Arab Spring uprisings. This is tested below

through the Kazakh regime's response to the Zhanaozen unrest. However, the difficulty with identifying learning, as Kubicek (2011, 120) put it, occurs when the expected "lessons" are already in place. Indeed, in the case of the Kazakh regime's response to Zhanaozen, lessons already in place could include those learned from the colour revolutions, or from its history of limiting civil and political liberties.

Kendzior (2012) has pointed out that domestic protest and resulting policy in Central Asia are often wrongly assumed to be a reaction to happenings abroad. From this perspective, it is possible to argue that the Kazakh regime's immediate material response to the Zhanaozen unrest was a continuation of Kazakhstan's restrictions on civil society rather than a response to the Arab Spring. In addition to its violent suppression of demonstrators, the regime attributed the unrest to Kazakh civil society activists, and held early parliamentary elections on 12 January 2012 while Zhanaozen was under a state of emergency (Human Rights Watch 2013, 3). The regime also closed independent media outlet "Stan.tv," which reported on the Zhanaozen events, on charges of "extremist propaganda"(Article 19 2012). Because crackdowns on civil society and media restrictions are not new in Kazakhstan, these measures are very much in line with established lessons. In order to overcome the challenge of identifying learning when the expected "lessons" are already in place, Kubicek (2011, 120) proposed identifying links between specific events and policies in order to identify a correlation between the direction of policy and anticipated learning. I build upon Kubicek's (2011, 120) method by identifying a correlation between a perceived cause of conflict, and a policy or behaviour that offsets the aforementioned cause to measure learning to determine whether measures taken after the unrest were a reaction to events abroad. In the case of the Kazakh regime's response to Zhanaozen, this correlation is evident in their framing of ICT as a driver of the Arab Spring unrest, and the Kazakh regime's treatment of ICT following the Zhanaozen unrest. The regime shutdown internet and phone services following the unrest in Zhanaozen, although it officially attributed the lack of services to electricity outages, cable damage from rioting, and an overloaded system (Lillis 2011).

The shutdown of internet and phone services in Zhanaozen 2011, in the aftermath of violence between police and demonstrators, supported learning from the role attributed to ICT in the Arab Spring uprisings, that of facilitating mobilization. This is because ICT did not play a mobilizing role in the Zhanaozen unrest, yet the regime reacted as though it did. Satpayev (2016) commented that "a social explosion can happen without social networks like in Zhanaozen." Moreover, although the Zhanaozen unrest was founded on local economic grievances, not on the precedent of the Arab Spring, the regime both recognized

and sought to counter associations between the Zhanaozen unrest and the Arab Spring uprisings, in particular, the assumption that the unrest would spread. Ermukhamet Ertysbayev (Tengri News 2011), Nazarbayev's political advisor, stated, "An Arab revolution in Kazakhstan in principle is not possible. This was a local conflict, characteristic of a small town or of a small city named Zhanaozen. I am deeply convinced that this mass disorder will not occur on a national scale."

Obviously, methodological limitations pose challenges in linking learning to subsequent policy change. It is not clear whether changes in internet policy were shaped by the Arab Spring, Zhanaozen, or other events. However, it is critical to note that changes in rhetoric on ICT have since been translated into policy changes. For example, Freedom House (2016) reported that the "Law on National Security" was amended in 2012 to allow the government to block telecommunications during terrorist operations and riots, and in 2014 laws were passed which allowed the state to block communication networks without a court order. At a minimum, the "Law on National Security" therefore suggests an increased awareness to opposition outside of its traditional channels following the Arab Spring uprisings, that has continued into 2014.

According to Jumaly (2016), the problem with learning in Kazakhstan is that the priority of the political elite is not to understand events, but to remain in power. Jumaly (2016), stated "that's why I think our political elites have not reacted property to what happened in Arabic world...It's a superficial understanding, but not understanding of deep factors, deep speculations." Another interviewee (Anonymous 1 2016) echoed a similar statement in that:

> *When our government received this news that the Arab Spring was happening, their first comparison was with the colour revolutions. And I think the colour revolutions are still playing a basic springboard from what kind of prism the government interprets the things happening even in the Middle East. They could have some different nature you know, Arab spring or colour revolutions, but I think the government is quite myopic in terms of understanding the real kind of origins and options after that.*

However, this viewpoint was not universal. In an interview with Satpayev (2016), he stressed that following Zhanaozen, but not the Arab Spring, the regime attempted to improve communication between state and society, amended legislation to support trade unions, and increased state control inside companies. Satpayev (2016) stated that following the Zhanaozen unrest, "if labour conflicts happened or conflicts inside companies, in most cases state structures have defended the interests of workers. This is because they are afraid these conflicts will create problems for everybody." Notably, provincial government intervened in an oil sector strike in 2016 in Zhanaozen to settle a dispute (Lillis 2017, 7). According to Lillis (2017, 7), the government's intervention "indicated that the

violence of 2011 has made the authorities more open to dialogue as a means of preventing escalations of industrial unrest." In other words, state intervention in the extractive industries suggested the regime has tried to learn to pre-empt conflict, but has done so in a manner which addresses workers' concerns. Marat (2016a, 540–41) offered another perspective as she found that after the Zhanaozen unrest, the Kazakh regime reinstated miners to their jobs, but also that it expanded its reach into rural areas of Kazakhstan via policing. In light of this Marat (2016a, 545) argued that following the Zhanaozen unrest, authoritarianism "deepened" in Kazakhstan.

5.6 Conclusion

An examination of the Kazakh regime's discourse between 2005 to 2015 and fieldwork interviews conducted from September to December 2016 uncovered an elite-level demonstration effect in Kazakhstan brought about by the Arab Spring uprisings in the absence of widespread unrest at home. The discussion opened by establishing the underlying awareness necessary for an elite-level demonstration effect, including the Kazakh regime's receptiveness to learning from various academic disciplines, its recent history, as well as from domestic, regional and international events. It also established the regime's awareness of cross-border influence and the mechanisms which can drive it. Taken together these established the necessary foundation for the Kazakh regime to experience an elite-level demonstration effect and learn from events elsewhere. The discussion then turned to how the Kazakh regime perceived political, economic, social and demographic causes and consequences of unrest in relation to national, regional and international events, including the Arab Spring uprisings. The purpose of this was to assess the impact of the Arab Spring uprisings, if any, on the Kazakh regime.

Three new elements appeared in the Kazakh regime's discourse and behaviour in relation to the Arab Spring which evidenced an elite-level demonstration effect. Firstly, the Kazakh regime's narrative of interference delegitimized international military intervention in the MENA but called for the creation of a regional council to resolve regional conflict. This appeared to demonstrate apprehension over potential regional unrest inspired by the Arab Spring uprisings. As such it is the first indication of an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring uprisings. A second indication of an elite-level demonstration effect was a shift in the regime's narrative of external interference in domestic affairs. The regime transferred its prior emphasis on

NGOs as tools "forced democratization" to ICT. This is visible in Nazarbayev's (2012b) statement that ICT can encourage change in societies that are not ready for it. Given the role attributed to ICT in the Arab Spring, that of facilitating mobilization, this shift is significant. A final indication that the Arab Spring uprisings brought about an elite-level demonstration effect in Kazakhstan is that after their occurrence it appeared that the regime began to view youth as a cause of conflict. Again, as a youth bulge has been credited as an objective factor contributing to the Arab Spring uprisings, the Kazakh regime's preoccupation with this age group is significant. Although not directly stated in rhetoric, an interviewee revealed that government officials commissioned researchers to examine strategies of overthrowing governments (Anonymous 3 2016). The internal document produced mapped Kazakhstan's point in the steps which led to unrest in Tunisia, Libya, Syria, and Ukraine. Because this shows that the regime was attempting to understand the causes of unrest elsewhere, and prevent their occurrence at home, it is indicative of an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring uprisings. Finally, the discussion tested the relationship between an elite-level demonstration effect and learning through the regime's perception of factors driving the Arab Spring unrest, and a behaviour or policy to offset the aforementioned cause. The regime's perception that ICT was a factor driving the Arab Spring uprisings, and their shutdown of Internet and phone services following the Zhanaozen unrest therefore evidenced learning, as well as confirming the relationship between learning and the elite-level demonstration effect.

These indications of an elite-level demonstration effect are significant for three reasons. Firstly, they demonstrate that it is necessary to account for political change through narrative and behaviour, in addition to policy. Secondly, both the Kazakh regime's turn to ICT and youth suggested an awareness of activism outside of its traditional channels following the Arab Spring uprisings. Thirdly, the presence of an elite-level demonstration effect in Kazakhstan has helped inform its development as a theoretical mechanism. It suggested that an elite-level demonstration effect is a mechanism which can account for elite response to happenings elsewhere. Moreover, because Kazakhstan is influenced to a greater extent by happenings in the post-Soviet space than those in the MENA, it suggested that close social and cultural ties are not necessary preconditions for the occurrence of an elite-level demonstration effect. It also suggested that uprisings elsewhere can shape a regime's rhetorical and behavioural response even in the absence of widespread unrest at home and a without a history of revolution. Investigation of whether the Arab Spring uprisings brought about an elite-level demonstration effect in Kyrgyzstan in the following chapter will further inform these findings.

Chapter 6 Kyrgyzstan's narrative of conflict and the Arab Spring uprisings: 2005 to 2015

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is the second of two Central Asian case studies. It seeks to gauge the Kyrgyz leaders' understanding and response to the Arab Spring uprisings as expressed through discourse, behaviour and policy. It investigates if and how uprisings elsewhere have impacted Kyrgyzstan, if an elite-level demonstration effect can account for any effects felt, and if so, whether it has given rise to learning. Examination of Kyrgyzstan allows for a loosely comparative approach. This is because for the purposes of this research, Kyrgyzstan differs in one critical aspect from Kazakhstan. Kyrgyzstan, unlike Kazakhstan, has experienced widespread unrest. Major instances include its March 2005 Tulip Revolution, its second Tulip Revolution in April 2010, and ethnic violence in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010. Examination of Kyrgyzstan therefore contributes to the development of the elite-level demonstration effect, and the conditions which inform its presence or absence. Namely, if unrest elsewhere affects a regime's approach to regime security if it has experienced domestic unrest. This chapter argues that Kyrgyzstan did not experience an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring uprisings, and therefore that the Arab Spring uprisings did not negatively impact Kyrgyzstan's perceptions of regime security. Rather, former Presidents' Roza Otunbayeva and Almazbek Atambayev utilized the Arab Spring to legitimize processes at home. This was accomplished by both Presidents asserting that the Arab Spring began in Kyrgyzstan, and that Kyrgyzstan, unlike the other countries which experienced an Arab Spring, overcame the negative consequences associated with revolution. Theoretically, the absence of an elite-level demonstration effect in Kyrgyzstan suggested that it is less likely to occur in the wake of revolution, and during the process of regime consolidation. Although this does not demonstrate a causal relationship, the case of Kyrgyzstan provides probable evidence that an elite-level demonstration effect is less likely to occur in after domestic revolution, and even less likely after two domestic revolutions. Although further research is needed to support this, this thesis has taken the first step to developing this strand of research by setting out

the initial conditions for the absence of an elite-level demonstration effect. Furthermore, because of the absence of an elite-level demonstration effect, in which concerns over the spread of anti-regime activities impact perceptions of regime security, any lessons learned necessarily stemmed from domestic rather than international events.

This chapter is divided into four principal sections corresponding to Kyrgyzstan's presidential leadership within the delimited time frame. These consist of Askar Akayev (January 2005 to 24 March 2005), Kurmanbek Bakiyev (24 March 2005 to 7 April 2010), Roza Otunbayeva (7 April 2010 to 1 December 2011) and Almazbek Atambayev (1 December 2011 to 31 December 2015). Each section opens by establishing the leadership's receptiveness to learning, and its awareness of the influence of external events on domestic processes. Taken together, these provide the foundation necessary to establish an elite-level demonstration effect. This is followed by the respective leadership's perception of the political, economic, social and demographic causes and consequences of revolution in general and in relation to selected domestic, regional and international events, including the Arab Spring uprisings. The purpose of this is to track the ruling authorities' longitudinal treatment of conflict, and to gauge the nature of the impact, if any, of the Arab Spring events on Kyrgyz leadership. The perceived political, economic, social and demographic causes and consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings are discussed in relation to former Presidents Otunbayeva and Atambayev, as the uprisings occurred under or immediately prior to their incumbency. Their sections therefore conclude with an evaluation of whether an elite-level demonstration effect occurred and whether it has given rise to learning via changes in behaviour, policy or rhetoric. Examination of Akayev and Bakiyev therefore acts as a point of comparison and opens the possibility of showing whether subsequent Kyrgyz leadership perceived the causes and consequences of uprising differently, and whether they learned from their predecessors or further afield.

6.2 Askar Akayev: 1 January 2005 to 24 March 2005

6.2.1 Receptiveness to learning and awareness of cross-border influence

The following discussion reflects the final three months of Akayev's presidency. In doing so it serves as a point of departure and opens the possibility of demonstrating whether subsequent Kyrgyz leadership learned from its predecessors or from further afield. The final three months of Akayev's presidency revealed limited evidence of his receptiveness to learning, but his strong awareness of cross-border influence. Only Akayev's (2005) use of the verb "show" in his statement "the development of democracy, as world experience shows, is a permanent process," suggested a receptiveness to learning from world experience. Evidence of Akayev's awareness of cross-border influence is much more pronounced despite the delimited time frame. For example in a speech given to parliament on 22 March 2005, just two days before he was ousted, Akayev associated Kyrgyzstan's parliamentary elections with the colour revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine. Akayev (2005) stated:

> *Let's analyse now the essence of these negative tendencies which developed after the elections in the republic. They cannot be considered isolated from the processes which in the last year and a half, under the slogans of "colour revolutions," occurred in other countries of the CIS.*

Akayev's statement is suggestive of a popular level demonstration effect, in which protestors who demonstrated against electoral fraud in Georgia and Ukraine, inspired similar post-election demonstrations in Kyrgyzstan. As such it demonstrates Akayev's awareness of cross-border influence, not to mention his acknowledgement of the similar onset of the Rose and Orange Revolutions. Notably, the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) election mission observation report on the parliamentary elections substantiated Akayev's observation. The report found "substantial shortcomings in both rounds" (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2005, 1).The report also noted that public protests against electoral fraud occurred prior to and immediately following election day (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2005, 4).

6.2.2 Perceived factors affecting uprising and their consequences

Within the final 3 months of his incumbency Akayev identified three factors that he perceived as affecting uprising.. Firstly, for Akayev (2005), transitioning

towards democracy influenced a country's prospects for instability. This is visible in Akayev's (2005) statement that "the development of democracy, as shown by world experience, is a permanent process in which there often occurs a collision of forces, concerned by a positive progressive movement, with forces leading the way to inhibit this movement." Akayev (2005) noted that this challenge could arise from extremists or marginalized forces. Secondly, Akayev (2005) emphasized that external interference, carried out domestically by Kyrgyzstan's opposition, affected domestic instability. The role of conspiracy features in Akayev's (2005) statement that "society should create a situation of intolerance towards the actions of those individuals who are led by foreign directives and on account of funds from foreign parts, bring detriment to the interests of their own people." Specifically, Akayev (2005) pointed out that the opposition in Kyrgyzstan was encouraged by forces abroad, and tried to destabilize Kyrgyzstan after the parliamentary elections. Akayev (2005) also noted that the opposition's failure to win the elections did not curb their desire for power. Akayev (2005) claimed that, "Failing in the elections…a number of our irresponsible opposition members arose on the path of power, imposing their interests on society." Finally, Akayev (2005) identified "misinformation" as a social driver of conflict, which was spread with the intent of provoking a violent response from the authorities.

Notably, although Akayev did not directly name youth as a demographic factor driving conflict he made three statements at the youth event "I am Kyrgyzstan" which suggested an awareness of the role youth played in Georgia and Ukraine's colour revolutions. Firstly, according to Radio Azattyq (2005), Akayev described the 27 February parliamentary elections to the youth audience as a " 'a test of the country's democratic development in which I hope for the support of young people.' " Secondly, Radio Azattyq (2005) also reported that Akayev pointed out the negative consequences of revolutions to his audience. This is in line with Akayev's (2005) portrayal of the revolutions as illegal coups in which the actions of "homegrown revolutionaries" challenge people, society and the state. Finally, Akayev (Radio Azattyq 2005) stated that Kyrgyzstan's youth " 'have already demonstrated their immunity to the sickly foreign rose, orange, and yellow viruses that some homegrown opposition figures are trying to implant in our soil.' " Taken together, these statements suggested not only Akayev's awareness that youth played a role in Georgia and Ukraine's colour revolutions, but that the colour revolutions could have a cross-border influence on Kyrgyzstan's youth by inspiring them to protest.

As a result of the delimited time frame from 2005 to 2015, the above analysis draws from the final three months of Akayev's presidency. However, a statement by opposition member Roza Otunbayeva, and research by Karagulova

and Megoran (2010) supported Akayev's perception that the opposition was directed from abroad to incite conflict at home. Roza Otunbayeva, at the time founder of the opposition election block *Ata Zhur*t (homeland), confirmed the above interpretation of an externally manipulated opposition using the parliamentary elections to destabilize Kyrgyzstan. Otunbayeva described the incumbent government's interpretation of election blocs at speech given at the Carnegie Center in Moscow. Otunbayeva (2005) stated:

> *The authorities were just hysteric. They believed that there should not be any election blocs, and they insisted that the fact that all political forces might form an association was something masterminded by the West. They said I was the West's agent having arrived from abroad.*

However, Otunbayeva (2005) added that the opposition did not intend to destabilize Kyrgyzstan. Otunbayeva (2005) stated, "We the opposition are not talking about a revolution either. We are only talking about changes and a constitutional and peaceful transfer of power." Additionally, Karagulova and Megoran's (2010, 9) analysis of Kyrgyz state-funded media from December 2004 to March 2005 identified a theme of danger to Kyrgyzstan from "shadowy 'outside forces' " plotting to overthrow the government.[4]

6.3 Kurmanbek Bakiyev: 24 March 2005 to 7 April 2010

6.3.1 Receptiveness to learning and awareness of cross-border influence

Between 2005 and 2010, Kurmanbek Bakiyev revealed a receptiveness to learning across a wide range of issues and an awareness of cross-border influence. Several statements which suggested a receptiveness to learning focused on parliament. For example, Bakiyev noted studying all proposals put forward regarding the amount of seats in parliament (Bakiyev 2005c, 2007c, 2009a). Other examples included learning from the experience of neighbouring post-Soviet states (Bakiyev 2009f), in particular from Kazakhstan's energy sector reforms (Khabar 2005), and citing world research that quick profits corrupt society (Bakiyev 2010a). Finally, Bakiyev (2009a) indicated awareness of learning on an elite and popular level, when he stated, "The authority needs to learn to hear the voice of society and build a reasonable balance of interests of different social

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[4] For additional research outside of the delimited timeframe see Horvath (2011) which analyses Akayev's reaction to the colour revolutions in 2004 in his book *Looking at the Future with Optimism.*

groups. But society must learn not just to criticize authority, but also to propose concrete paths of resolving problems." Bakiyev's (2010a) references to learning continued until shortly before his ousting, when he discussed learning how to conduct dialogue between the state and religious communities.

The majority of evidence indicative of Bakiyev's receptiveness to learning originated from instances of domestic and regional unrest. In particular, Bakiyev discussed the 2002 Aksy events, the 2005 Tulip Revolution, and the 2006 protests in support of constitutional reform. In these examples, Bakiyev associated the lessons of protest with positive and negative framing of the event at hand. Notably, the Aksy events preceded Bakiyev's presidency, while the Tulip revolution brought him into office. It follows that Bakiyev framed the Aksy events and the Tulip Revolution in positive light, as obstacles that the Kyrgyz people overcame, and as a difficult historical lesson for Kyrgyzstan. For example, regarding the 2002 Aksy events Bakiyev (Central Asia General Newswire 2007) stated, "The victims of the Aksy events died for the ideal of democracy, for the strengthening of its principles in this country. We honour their memory, and we should learn a lesson and prevent such events from happening in the future." Seven years after Aksy, Bakiyev (Kabar 2009) stated in a similar vein, "The Aksy tragedy graphically confirmed that it is impossible to break people's will by force. This bitter lesson will by rights remain in history [*sic*]." Regarding the Tulip Revolution Bakiyev (2006b) reminded the people of Kyrgyzstan that, "We now know well how much truth, honesty, justice, and dignity cost. This historical experience given to us was not easy. It is all the more important to remember its lessons." However, Bakiyev's rhetoric on receptiveness to learning changed when the protests were against his presidential leadership. In regards to popular demonstrations for constitutional change in April 2006, Bakiyev (2007c) stated, "The lessons of last year showed that political conflicts and civil confrontations, ideas only of civil protest do not lead to anything good." This suggests that a narrative of learning can be strategic, and change depending on who it benefits. Bakiyev's treatment of the colour revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia, is also notable, as he specified that he did not learn from their methods (Agence France Presse 2005a). This is visible in Bakiyev's (Litvinov 2007) statement that:

> *I would not compare us to Ukraine, our situation is different. The similarity is that their protests are already passing, and ours are beginning. The fact that people go out to the streets. The reasons and goals pursued, generally, many, are also similar, but, the path our opposition takes—it cannot be compared with Ukraine.*

Yet, Bakiyev's awareness of comparisons between Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine also offered evidence of being open to lessons from the outside.

Alongside receptiveness to learning, Bakiyev indicated awareness of cross-border influence by referencing the impact of regional and global processes on Kyrgyzstan's domestic security. Bakiyev's references to cross-border influence broadly fell into the categories of security and economic concerns. For example, Bakiyev (2005b) observed in a statement to the United Nations that a nuclear free zone in Central Asia would positively impact regional and global stability. Later on in his tenure as President, Bakiyev's (2009e) speech at the ninth Summit of the Heads of Turkish-Speaking States, provided a clear example of security threats associated with cross-border influence and their ability to impact neighbouring states and further afield. This is because Bakiyev (2009e) highlighted that the situation in Afghanistan concerned not only geographically proximate Turkish speaking countries, but international society at large. Bakiyev's remarks concerning the security issues associated with borders (Bakiyev 2007c), and the threat of religious extremism to all the states composing Central Asia (Bakiyev 2009b), also demonstrated his awareness of cross-border influence and the impact that external factors have on domestic security. On several occasions, Bakiyev also discerned the impact that global financial processes have on Kyrgyzstan. Bakiyev (2007c) noted, "Serious economic challenges are produced for us by ongoing processes in the world and in neighbouring countries." One year later Bakiyev (*AKIpress News Agency* 2008) noted that negative impact of the global market on Kyrgyzstan, highlighting rising energy prices and Kyrgyzstan's dependence on foreign energy. Bakiyev (*AKIpress News Agency* 2008) also referenced learning from cross-border threats and knowledge of their wider implications in his comments on water security. Bakiyev (*AKIpress News Agency* 2008) stated, "Using the current way of management, the importance of water problems will grow in the world and in the region. World research gives evidence about this." Taken together, Bakiyev's statements illustrated receptiveness to learning and awareness of cross-border influence.

6.3.2 Perceived causes and consequences of conflict

6.3.2.1 Perceived political and economic factors affecting uprising

Having established Bakiyev's receptiveness to learning and his awareness of the political and economic security threats stemming from cross-border influence, the

following section will examine Bakiyev's understanding of the political and economic factors which he perceived as affecting conflict. Although the Arab Spring occurred after Bakiyev's ousting, a comprehensive account of these factors acts as a point of comparison by illustrating whether subsequent leadership perceived the causes and consequences of uprising differently and learned from Bakiyev's incumbency. Similar to the Kazakh regime, Bakiyev stressed that strong leadership, establishing economic stability before implementing political reform, and a gradual pace of reform were a successful recipe for domestic stability. Thus, the inverse of these three factors, weak leadership, political reform before economic stability, and hasty reform, are drivers which Bakiyev perceived as affecting the onset of conflict. Other political and economic factors which Bakiyev perceived as affecting the onset of conflict between 2005 and 2010 included constitutional change, economic growth, poverty, deprivation, the economic situation, corruption, land, electoral fraud, and interference. Each are discussed in turn below.

Bakiyev's narrative illustrated how strong leadership affects stability. For example, in his inauguration speech following the 23 July 2009 presidential elections, Bakiyev (2009c) described his strategy of increasing stability through a strong presidency. Bakiyev (2009c) firstly set himself the goal, among others, of increasing stability when he stated "I intend to undertake the following during my second term: -to complete the process of strengthening stability" [*sic*]. Bakiyev (2009c) then pointed out that, "To attain those goals, I will realize the following ideals of arrangement of our society in practice, particularly:- strong president able to lead the country in accordance with the chosen course - multi-party Parliament [*sic*]." Bakiyev also utilized clan and regional division, alongside weak local governments, as justification for maintaining a strong presidency (Central Asia General Newswire 2008).

Bakiyev's framing of hasty reform as a driver of conflict is reflected in the issue of constitutional reform which he confronted during his presidency. In a speech to parliament in February, Bakiyev set the foundation for his framing of quick constitutional change as a cause of conflict by describing the consequences of carrying out the political changes that were suggested to him before Kyrgyzstan had established social and political stability. Specifically, the suggestions of rescheduled presidential elections and "rushed" changes to the form of government, would have resulted in a lack of authority, anarchy, and an absence of the *Zhogorku Kenesh* (parliament) (Bakiyev 2006a). Although not directly stated, changes to the form of government would ostensibly have been carried out through constitutional reform. As such, Bakiyev implied that he had prevented the instability associated with a quick pace of reform through his

refusal to accept precarious suggestions, one of which was constitutional reform. Bakiyev continued to stress the pace of reform throughout his presidency. For example, Bakiyev (2009d) claimed that he promoted "a reasonable balance between innovations and traditions" regarding the country's democratic trajectory. Even in the final months of his presidency, Bakiyev (2010a) continued to emphasize a steady pace of democratic reform, when he stated, "We will come to people's democracy not through noisy rattle, but by means of the carrying out of consistent reforms."

Notably, Bakiyev's use of the pace of reform, either through its negative framing as a cause of conflict, or in quickly passing his 2007 constitutional referendum, also supported his initiatives and thereby illustrates his progressive consolidation of power. Bakiyev only initiated constitutional reform after the November 2006 protests in Bishkek by the opposition bloc "For Reforms," and the new version, which briefly reduced his power, was quickly amended in December 2006 (Freedom House 2008). Bakiyev also used the pace of reform to invalidate the November 2006 constitution. Bakiyev (2007) noted that because protest forced deputies to write a version of the constitution in November 2006, "they hurried, got worked up, as they say, and in the heat of emotions admitted many contradictions in the basic law… In December, serious contradictions which were written in the November constitution, they eliminated." In other words, hasty constitutional reform led to contradictions that necessitated immediate correcting in the December version. The constitutional court subsequently annulled both versions, opening the door for Bakiyev's 2007 constitutional initiative (Freedom House 2008). Bakiyev's subsequent framing of his 2007 version of the constitution and the 21 October 2007 constitutional referendum as the foundation for democratic development, illustrated a shift in his established rhetoric. For example, Bakiyev (2007c) stated:

> *The main conclusion which follows all of this two year process of constitutional reforms – it is necessary to put end to all of this. I am sure, and I always spoke about that, is that the establishment of a democratic political regime is not possible without cardinal revision of the former constitution of the country, without its democratization.*

Later on Bakiyev (2008) designated constitutional reform as a precondition for political stability, which further illustrated a shift from his early rhetoric. Moreover, despite Bakiyev's assertion that repeated amendments to the constitution and "incomplete implementation of its clauses" were one of the factors that led to the first revolution (BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit 2006b), Bakiyev (2009d) continued to propose changes to the constitution into 2009 in order to implement reforms in the state administration.

Bakiyev's narrative also established a relationship between the order of reform and instability. Namely, that economic stability should precede political reform. For example, Bakiyev (ForUm 2006) described himself as, "a positive advocate of phased evolutionary development where intensive economic development determines the depth and stability of the democratization of the political system." In his speech marking the anniversary of the Tulip Revolution Bakiyev (2006b) again emphasized that other reforms followed economic growth, when he stated, "Now when the situation in our country became normal and calm, when economic growth appeared, ahead of us, lie a number of important steps to do along this path." Later on in his presidency, Bakiyev (2009d) continued to emphasize that political reform was dependent on economic development when he stated, "The actual conditions of the country, its own political and economic situation will determine the forms and measure of use of democratic procedures." Bakiyev (ForUm 2006) also presented the consequences associated with implementing constitutional reform in "an insufficiently competitive economy," which could result in "social destabilization and lead to the rejection of democratic values, dismantling democratic processes." It follows that Bakiyev also considered economic growth as an economic factor affecting the onset of conflict. Bakiyev (Khabar 2005) stated, "In the Central Asian region, in order to preserve stability, before everything, I think that every republic should ensure economic growth. The more people that will be occupied by manufacturing, the less that will be poor, deprived." In his address to the United Nations Bakiyev (2005b) also stressed that poverty and deprivation affect the onset of instability when he stated, "Poverty and deprivations often bring to escalation to the infringements of international peace and security. It is no accident that exactly in the poorest regions of the world, the most serious regional conflicts arise." It follows that for Bakiyev poverty (2006a), "difficult times" (Bakiyev 2006b), and "the difficult social and economic situation" (BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit 2006b) were causes of the 2005 revolution. Bakiyev also identified additional economic causes of conflict including corruption, which he perceived as a as a driver of Kyrgyzstan's revolution (Bakiyev 2006a), and "economic problems, land problems" (Litvinov 2007).

Bakiyev also identified electoral fraud as a driver of conflict. For example, Bakiyev (2006a) observed that the 2005 regime change in Kyrgyzstan was brought about by "grave violations that were allowed in the approach to the parliamentary elections." Bakiyev (2007c) also illustrated the risks associated with electoral fraud when he stated, "In 2005 the past parliamentary elections and the by-elections to parliament in 2006-2007, showed that in the conditions of Kyrgyzstan the holding of elections to representative bodies for single mandate territorial electoral districts - is a source of very serious problems."

Finally, Bakiyev's narrative of perceived causes of conflict emphasized the role played by three political actors. These included Akayev's ousted regime, parliament, and the opposition. Firstly, Bakiyev, attributed the 17 June 2005 protest, in support of Urmatbek Baryktabasov who was barred from running in the July presidential elections, to Akayev's supporters in Kazakhstan (Agence France Presse 2005b). Additionally, when asked in an interview about the involvement of neighbouring countries or someone else in recent events in Kyrgyzstan, Bakiyev (Litvinov 2007) replied, "Everything that happens here, happens because of our internal processes…It is possible that someone indirectly somehow attempts to interfere, there are those, maybe former politicians, former leaders who attempt to interfere in these processes which are happening here." Secondly, Bakiyev's (2006a) perception that parliament's actions affected the onset of instability is evident in his statement that, "the *Zhogorku Kenesh* transforms itself more and more into a place of political squabbles, it is becoming a source giving rise to an atmosphere of instability in the country." The theme of the parliament as preventing national development and as a cause of instability is also evident in Bakiyev's creation of his *Ak Zhol* party, and his rationalization for dissolving parliament. When Bakiyev (Mamaraimov 2007) revealed his new *Ak Zhol* party, he declared, "We must move away from the path of criticism and do constructive work. Often our deputies do not do their own work, for example, the country's budget was adopted with several months delay. In order for that not to happen, the parliament needs the party's and people's control."

The final group of actors affecting the onset of instability for Bakiyev was the opposition. This is visible in Bakiyev's portrayal of the opposition's protests for constitutional reform in 2006 and 2007 as a means to create instability and seize power. Bakiyev (2007b) stated, "In the spring and fall of last year, and again this present spring, a group of unsatisfied politicians attempted under the appearance of fights for the acceleration of reforms to impose a distribution of power that is profitable to them." In the same speech, Bakiyev (2007b) added, "we are ready for any negotiations in the interests of the stability of the country and the calm of citizens. But it seems, that this is not in the plans of the radical opposition." Bakiyev (2007b) also pointed out the consequences of the opposition's demonstrations which "sabotage not only the stable work of the economy, but the peaceful life of citizens, forcing them again and again to live in horror and the expectation of possible disorder." Notably, Bakiyev's (2007b) address to the people regarding the opposition, identified several methods for the opposition to achieve its goal of seizing power, including utilizing youth participants. Bakiyev's reference to youth did not imply that they are a

demographic factor affecting instability. Rather it illustrated his recognition that youth can play a role in affecting the outcome of instability and regime change.

Justice Minister Marat Kaiypov's (Pannier 2007) seconded Bakiyev's assertions when he said, "I believe that the current opposition members and the [United] Front leaders aim to remove the power representatives, especially the president, from their positions without any conditions, without any negotiations, by the principle of ultimatum, by forcing them toward the precipice. They don't want political stability in the country" [*sic*]. Kaiypov (Pannier 2007) added "Maybe my assessment can be considered to be an opinion by a representative of the authorities." Methodologically, Kaiypov's assessment shows that Bakiyev's statements were representative of the pro-presidential component of his administration.

6.3.2.2 Perceived social and demographic factors affecting uprising

Having established how Bakiyev perceived political and economic factors driving uprising, the discussion will turn to his perception of the social and demographic factors which can affect instability. Taken together, these factors act as a point of comparison with subsequent leadership's narrative of conflict prior to and following the Arab Spring uprisings. Between 2005 and 2009, Bakiyev identified seven social and demographic factors which he perceived as affecting the onset of conflict. Bakiyev's framing of these factors differed in relation to the benefits and costs it posed to him. These factors included the choice of the people, people's desire for immediate results, political passions, a difficult social situation, a negative attitude towards authority, the media, and religious extremism. Each factor is discussed in turn below.

Beginning in 2005, Bakiyev framed the people's choice to protest and the subsequent revolution which led to his presidency, in a positive light as a factor driving conflict. For example, In his statement to the United Nations Bakiyev (2005b) declared, "Our people, not remaining indifferent to its own destiny, in March of this year has chosen the way of development, progress and creativity. In the new history of Kyrgyzstan, one more page has been turned" [*sic*]. However, already in the following year, when Bakiyev faced demands for constitutional reform, he negatively represented two additional factors driving conflict: people's desire for immediate results and "political passions." Bakiyev's (2006b) perception that people's desire for immediate results drove protest is evidenced

in his statement that "People wanted, moreover quickly, the reconstruction of justice and that's why there were many protests and speeches." "Political passions" as a driver of protest is evident in a statement released by the Cabinet of Ministers (2006) before the 2006 protests in support of constitutional reform. The statement cautioned "The heat of political passions puts under threat further peace and creative development of the country" (Cabinet of Ministers 2006). Bakiyev also emphasized the consequences of acting "in the heat of the moment" which necessitated a constitution that needed to be changed. Bakiyev (2007a) stated, "The opposition and the *Zhogorku Kenesh* in November and December acted in the heat of the moment. And now it is necessary to correct the mistakes made." However, a statement from lawmaker Kamchybek Tashiev provided an alternative perspective of the people's desire for immediate results or "political passions" as a cause of conflict. Tashiev (Otorbaev and Tchoroev 2007) stated, "I think that a people's revolution happened, but the people's revolution did not provide the expected results." From this perspective, it is not desire for immediate results or passion which drive conflict. Rather, the fact that anticipated changes did not materialize following the first revolution, accounted for the onset of protest. From this perspective, expectation can also act as a driver of protest, although it is noticeably absent as a factor driving unrest in Bakiyev's narrative.

For Bakiyev, additional social and demographic causes affecting conflict included a difficult social situation, a negative attitude towards authority, the media, and extremism. Firstly, Bakiyev (BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit 2006b) identified the social situation in Kyrgyzstan as a cause of the Tulip Revolution, when he stated, "the difficult social and economic situation led to mass protest rallies, to acts of mass disobedience and as a result, to the change of power [on 24 March 2005]" [*sic*]. Secondly, Bakiyev (2007c) pointed out that "A critical civic mood towards authority" existed in Kyrgyzstan, but acknowledged, " that does not mean that we should become a country of endless revolutions and of political unrest." Thirdly, Bakiyev (2007a) perception of the media's impact on stability is visible in his description of information wars as cause of unrest. Bakiyev (2007a) stated, "civil confrontation is disastrous for the country. That's why I appeal to all political forces without exception with a call to a working dialogue. I am convinced it is possible to resolve any question, if we don't organize information wars." Finally, Bakiyev (2009b) identified religious extremism as a cross-national threat to regime security, "directed at violent change of the state structure, and the seizure of power, destruction of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state." Previously, Bakiyev's narrative of the social and demographic factors affecting conflict looked inward and identified domestic factors which challenged his authority as causes of conflict. Hence, Bakiyev's acknowledgement of religious

extremism as a transnational threat, potentially reflects his consolidation of power at that time and his subsequent attention to external issues.

6.3.2.3 Perceived consequences of uprising

Similar to Bakiyev's framing of the social and demographic factors affecting conflict, Bakiyev's positive or negative representation of the consequences of revolution was contingent upon the benefits and challenges each posed to his leadership. For example, as discussed in social and demographic factors affecting conflict, Bakiyev (2005a) positively described the people's choice to protest, and by extension it's consequences, which brought him to power. However, when faced with pressure for constitutional reform, which challenged his leadership, Bakiyev (2007a) highlighted the consequences of protest for Kyrgyzstan when he stated, "I believe that a return to civil confrontation is disastrous for the country." Similarly, on the eve of United Fronts' demonstrations for constitutional reform, Bakiyev (2007b) emphasized that the economy and citizens suffered as a result of protest organized by "unsatisfied politicians." Bakiyev's statements illustrate the similarity between his narrative and that of the Kazakh regime's. Both portrayed the consequences of civil unrest as multilevel, negatively impacting state development, the economy and the population at large. Two additional consequences featured in Bakiyev's narrative included a lack of progress and development, and threats to Kyrgyzstan's integrity.

The majority of Bakiyev's narrative of the consequences of civil conflict addressed its negative impact on progress and development in Kyrgyzstan. As previously discussed in receptiveness to learning, Bakiyev (2007c) stated that "the lessons of last year showed that political conflicts and civil confrontations, ideas only of civil protest do not lead to anything good." In the same speech Bakiyev (2007c) added, "if we do not translate the energy of protest to energy of creation, nothing good will be." On another occasion, Bakiyev (Litvinov 2007) stated, "people themselves are tired. People directly say, the opposition doesn't allow you to work." In particular, Bakiyev's portrayal of unrest as negatively affecting progress highlighted that that protest delayed constitutional reform and prolonged the issue. For example, Bakiyev (Litvinov 2007) observed:

> If they didn't disturb us in November, the opposition itself, then in November there would have been a referendum. In January, we would have already received a new version of the constitution, the one the people want. Then they themselves disturbed me, and this leapfrog on the adoption of the constitution since continued.

Bakiyev also emphasized that unrest led to a constitution that needed to be changed. For example, as previously discussed in relation to the pace of reform, when protest forced deputies to write a new constitution in November, the result was a version that necessitated correction in December (Litvinov 2007). On another occasion Bakiyev (2007b) stated that his intention to hold a referendum in December 2006 "was sabotaged by the November speeches, by street pressure. And as a result, we got a constitution which was necessary to change again and again." Bakiyev's example also illuminated that the consequences of unrest affected multiple levels of society. Specific demographics experienced protest fatigue and the ruling authorities were unable to work.

Bakiyev's narrative continued to emphasize the relationship between instability and progress in Kyrgyzstan until shortly before his ousting. Bakiyev (2010a) noted that, "half of the time passed since the day of the revolution we wasted on feuds and strife." In the same speech, Bakiyev (2010a) compared the state to a firemen, busy extinguishing protests as opposed to addressing national development, when he stated, "State bodies, in place of solving social problems and tasks of development, were engaged with "putting out" emerging protests and demonstrations everywhere. Figuratively speaking, the state evolved into a fireman, engaged only with the elimination of crisis hotbeds." Bakiyev has also emphasized the negative impact that civil unrest has on progress and development through its inverse: in times of political stability progress was achieved in Kyrgyzstan. Bakiyev (*AKIpress News Agency* 2008) stated that "Thanks to the fact that 2008 was the first calm political year, we had the possibility to concentrate efforts on the questions of socio-economic development," and pointed out that the business environment in particular had benefited from political stability. Bakiyev (*AKIpress News Agency* 2008) added that, "The year of work showed that under stability in society and a working mood, we are capable of moving forward," and that the government and parliament were able to accomplish in a single year, what they were not able to do over the past six to seven years.

Finally, Bakiyev highlighted the negative consequences of conflict for Kyrgyzstan's statehood. For example, on the eve of United Front's protests for constitutional reform, Bakiyev (2007b) highlighted that his government had conceded as much as possible to the "radical opposition" in order to prevent the negative consequences of protest on Kyrgyz statehood from materializing. In an address to the people Bakiyev (2007b) explained:

> *The government and I as president, did everything possible in order to force the radical opposition to abandon their plans. We have made every possible and impossible concession. Not because power is*

weak. But because we answer for the stability and calm for the integrity
of the country, for the preservation of the Kyrgyz state.

In other words, the consequences of the "radical opposition's" actions threated the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Kyrgyzstan. Bakiyev's narrative of the consequences of unrest highlighted therefore highlighted its negative impact on micro and macro levels: the people, the ruling authorities, and the state at large.

6.3.3 Lessons learned?

At times, Bakiyev's rhetoric showed promise of learning what factors drive unrest. Early on in his presidency, Bakiyev (2006b) announced that in Kyrgyzstan "there will never be a return to authoritarianism, to state corruption, and to injustice." Because Bakiyev (2006a) had named corruption as one of three principle causes of the Tulip Revolution, this suggested that Bakiyev had learned at least one lesson from what led to Akayev's downfall. Yet as early as 2008, Marat (2008, 239) pointed out that "Bakiev replicated Akayev's worst mistakes while discontinuing some of the more positive features of his predecessor," citing a continuation of corruption under Bakiyev's administration, the fact that he changed the constitution for personal gain, his establishment of a pro-presidential party, and threats to the stability of the hydro-energy sector. Although Bakiyev's discourse did not provide a definition of learning, it offered an understanding of the causes and consequences of revolution before and shortly after his ousting on 7 April 2010. From this perspective, continuity in the causes and consequences of revolution would indicate a lack lessons learned, while an evolution would suggest learning.

Bakiyev offered two perceived political causes of the second Tulip Revolution, which reiterated his previous rhetoric on political drivers of instability. These include the role that "external forces" (Al Jazeera 2010; Bakiyev 2010c) played in his ousting, and the opposition as political actors stirring up conflict (Bakiyev 2010b, 2010c). Emphasizing an external conspiracy, Bakiyev (Al Jazeera 2010) stated, "Everyone must know in depth the bandits who are trying to take power are the executors of an external force and have no legitimacy." In particular, Bakiyev highlighted the culpability of the opposition through the consequences of their actions, including the loss of life, chaos, violence, robbery and ethnic conflict (Bakiyev 2010b). Similar to his previous rhetoric, Bakiyev (2010b) emphasized that the population and the constitution suffered the consequences of unrest, in this case because the opposition's supporters

became violent and unruly. For example, Bakiyev (2010b) stated, "If at the beginning of their speeches the opposition already formed a temporary government, called their goal my overthrow and established their government, then now its supporters turned their aggression against the peaceful population.

Bakiyev's post-revolutionary discourse also added two new elements. Firstly, in Bakiyev's (2010b) described the events of the second Tulip Revolution as "an obvious attempt at a coup d'état." Bakiyev then specified the method used to overthrow the government as violence, and the consequences of violent regime change. In an interview, Bakiyev (2010c) described the events of the second Tulip Revolution as "an armed seizure" led by "armed invaders who strive to occupy the chair." Although Bakiyev (2006a) had previously described the events that removed Akayev from power "not as a result of a conspiracy or a coup," the actions that removed him from power were a coup, and a violent one at that. This is evident in Bakiyev's (2010c) statement that:

> *I really came to power by way of a people's revolution, without bloodshed, without a single human sacrifice… And then there were certain robberies in the capital, looting. But such that is happening now, was not close. Now murders are happing in the capital, now armed groups, large groups of people are walking around the capital.*

This framing enabled Bakiyev (2010b) to identify a loss of statehood as a consequence of a violent revolution. A second new element in Bakiyev's post-revolution discourse was his identification of the factors which he refuted as drivers of instability leading up to his ousting. These included tariff increases, domestic policy, and clannishness (Bakiyev 2010c). Although Bakiyev (*AKIpress News Agency* 2008) had previously addressed the impact of global price increases on Kyrgyzstan's economic security, the disassociation between prices and unrest first appeared following the second Tulip Revolution. Bakiyev (2010c) supported his assertions when he commented that public opinion could not have changed to such an extent since the 2009 presidential elections, and added that "This has no relation to the people of Kyrgyzstan. This is purely an armed seizure of power by means of weapons, getting people drunk, young people have drunk, their head intoxicated, and said 'forward.'" Bakiyev therefore portrayed his ousting not as a people's revolution, but as illegitimate because it was carried out by violent means. He also portrayed the instruments of his ousting, youth, as irrational actors.

Assessing Bakiyev's learning through the introduction of new elements following the second Tulip Revolution indicates an evolution in discourse, and thus an element of learning. Bakiyev's behaviour also provides an indication of learning throughout his incumbency. For example, Marat (2008, 232) observed Bakiyev's government had learned how to offset demonstrations, citing the

example of For Reform's November 2006 protests for constitutional reform in which the Kyrgyz government mobilized employees and law enforcement to goad the opposition into fighting. Two interviewees provided additional evidence that Bakiyev's government learned how to consolidate power, but not what factors drive popular unrest. Firstly, Emilbek Juraev (2016), Associate Professor of International and Comparative Politics at the American University of Central Asia, observed that if leaders are learning lessons from previous regimes, "they are learning the wrong sorts of messages, the wrong sorts of lessons." E. Juraev (2016) cited Bakiyev's running of government as an example, in particular his involvement of family in politics. E. Juraev (2016) commented that:

> For Akayev that took place over almost 15 years. It spread out over a much longer period. I guess the learning process for him was slower because he was the first. Whereas for Bakiyev, he acted very quickly. He only was there for less than five years. And the first two years, almost two and a half years, he was struggling to consolidate his power, so he was struggling just to stay in. So basically, effective within about two years he surpassed whatever Akayev may have done in terms of looting, in terms of corruption, in terms of bringing private interests into running the public institutions.

In other words, Bakiyev learned the same lessons of Akayev in terms of consolidating power, but more successfully, as he achieved similar results within a shorter time frame. Secondly, Alisher Khamidov (2016), visiting scholar at Newcastle University, commented that:

> In 2010, when the April Revolution erupted, it was just evident or obvious that the authorities at the time, they didn't learn the lessons of the 2005 revolution. They didn't learn several lessons, the first one being that you don't exclude political opponents in power, completely. You don't shut them out. And they didn't learn that raising utility prices is very unpopular with people…. So in sum, I think that leaders in 2010 learned some lessons, but wrong lessons. They didn't learn the good lessons.

Notably, both Juraev (2016) and Khamidov (2016) viewed learning from a normative perspective. Above all, Bakiyev's ousting shows that learning how to consolidate power differs from learning what factors drive unrest.

6.4 Roza Otunbayeva: 7 April 2010 to 1 December 2011

6.4.1.1 Receptiveness to learning and awareness of cross-border influence

The following section presents the narrative of Kyrgyzstan's interim President Roza Otunbayeva, who headed the provisional government following the second revolution. Throughout her limited tenure as interim president, Roza Otunbayeva demonstrated a receptiveness to learning and awareness of cross-border influence. Taken together, these establish the foundation for an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring and open the possibility that the Kyrgyz government has learned from international events.

The majority of Otunbayeva's narrative which demonstrated receptiveness to learning stemmed from Kyrgyzstan's own experience with civil unrest and its aftermath. In particular, Otunbayeva emphasized that it was essential for Kyrgyzstan to learn from its two revolutions in 2005 and 2010. For example, Otunbayeva stated that it was necessary to "draw serious conclusions" from the 2005 and 2010 revolutions (Otunbayeva 2010c). Otunbayeva also pointed out the consequences of not learning from Kyrgyzstan's revolutions. She (Otunbayeva 2011j) reminded parliament of the consequences of not learning in that, "the first revolution did not serve as a lesson, and we received even more of a strict, family-clan regime." On another occasion she reminded candidates contesting the 2011 presidential elections to "not forget the bitter historic lessons of 2005 [when ex-President Askar Akayev was overthrown] and 2010 [when former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev was overthrown] [*sic*]" (BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit 2011). It follows that Otunbayeva has expressed learning form Kyrgyzstan's experience with authoritarianism and constructing a democracy. Otunbayeva (2011j) noted that events in Kyrgyzstan and other countries illustrated the tendency of vertical power to become authoritarian. Similarly, in response to criticism regarding Kyrgyzstan's 2010 constitution, Otunbayeva (2011f) described learning "the hard way" against presidential consolidation of power without legal counter mechanisms in place. Notably, Otunbayeva also demonstrated an awareness of learning through her discussion of teaching. When asked in an interview whether protests constitute "a Kyrgyz style democracy," Otunbayeva (2011g) replied, "We are striving for respect of the law: a disciplined sense of order. We must gradually teach people to have the right customs, rules, and understanding of the order in their homes, districts, cities, and the country as a whole." Alongside references to learning from Kyrgyzstan's domestic unrest and experience constructing a democracy, Otunbayeva also acknowledged that Kyrgyzstan learned from the experience of other countries. Namely, Otunbayeva specified learning from Georgia's experience battling corruption (Transcript by Federal News Service 2010) and at large from other countries about management and the market (Otunbayeva 2011f). Otunbayeva's

references to learning at home and further afield introduce the possibility that during Kyrgyzstan learned from the Arab Spring uprisings.

Alongside receptiveness to learning, Otunbayeva also expressed awareness of cross-border influence through references to regional security, the interaction between external and internal political processes, and the repercussions of Kyrgyzstan's place in the international system. Three examples best illustrate this. Firstly, in regards to regional security Otunbayeva (2011g) highlighted that, "My country is located in a high-risk zone," based on Kyrgyzstan's proximity to Afghanistan. She (Otunbayeva 2011g) added that, "Serious challenges are coming from western China... It is obvious today that in future China may have serious influence on the consolidation of regional security" [*sic*]. Secondly, Otunbayeva (2011j) observed the interaction between external and internal political processes when she stated "The strengthening of external influence on internal political processes is explained precisely by this – world and regional partners had reservations on account of the state solvency of Kyrgyzstan." Finally, Otunbayeva (Transcript by Federal News Service 2010) expressed awareness of cross-border influence regarding states' political and economic position in the international system. She (Transcript by Federal News Service 2010) noted that countries such as Kyrgyzstan which lack natural resources or a self-reliant economy, endure negative fallout from global political and economic crises. Notably, the majority of Otunbayeva's awareness of cross regional influence is expressed through her narrative of Kyrgyzstan as the first country to experience an Arab Spring uprising. This is discussed in detail in the section "Perceived causes and consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings." Taken together, Otunbayeva's receptiveness to learning and awareness of cross-border influence, in particular her narrative of the Arab Spring uprisings, allow for the possibility that the Arab Spring uprisings brought about an elite-level demonstration effect in Kyrgyzstan which gave rise to learning.

6.4.2 Perceived causes and consequences of conflict

6.4.2.1 Perceived political and economic factors affecting uprising

Having established Otunbayeva's receptiveness to learning and awareness of transnationalism, the following section will set out Otunbayeva's perception of the political and economic factors which affect uprising in general and in relation to

domestic and regional events. The purpose of this structure is to enable a comparison with the Otunbayeva's perception of the perceived the causes and consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings. If she perceived the Arab Spring differently and as a threat, it would evidence an elite-level demonstration effect in which the Arab Spring uprisings have impacted Kyrgyzstan's perception of regime security. Otunbayeva's narrative of perceived political factors driving instability consisted of two main strands: growing authoritarianism and external interference in Kyrgyzstan's affairs. This is followed by a discussion of criminality as an economic driver of conflict. Each strand is elaborated upon below.

Otunbayeva's narrative identified five symptoms of authoritarianism which give rise to domestic instability in Kyrgyzstan. These included amending the constitution to consolidate power, repression of civil and political liberties, poor state-society relations, and family-clan rule. Firstly, Otunbayeva's (2011c) description of the popular response that eventually followed the implementation of Bakiyev's 2007 version of the constitution demonstrates her perception that amending the constitution to consolidate power influenced the onset of revolution. Otunbayeva's (2011c) observed that Bakiyev's 2007 version was similar to Akayev's 2003 super presidential version, and commented that "the answer to that lawlessness was the April 2010 people's revolution." Secondly, Otunbayeva emphasized that Akayev and Bakiyev's repression of civil and political liberties as factors drove protest. This is visible in Otunbayeva's (2011f) statement that:

> *The growing conflict of interests at the foreground of the sharp polarization of society, the attacks on fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens, persecution and violence against the opposition, and the increasing concentration of the presidential power resulted in massive civil protests.*

Otunbayeva (2011g, 2011j) also pointed out that because of limited civil and political liberties, Kyrgyzstan's people had no other choice than to take to the streets to protest.

Thirdly, it follows that Otunbayeva perceived poor state-society relations as factors which contributed to the onset of both revolutions. This is evidenced in Otunbayeva's (2011f) statement that:

> *The main cause of the two people's revolutions was a bitter conflict between the society and the government. The authorities placed themselves above their own people, making themselves unaccountable to the people. They ceased expressing the people's interests. It is the violation of the principles of freedom and justice that blew up the masses and pushed them to oppose the dictatorship of the president, the sole control of the country, and the transformation of the state power into one family business [*sic*].*

The authorities' deception, which Otunbayeva identified as a cause of revolution in 2005 and 2010 (BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit 2011) arguably contributed to poor state-society relations.

Fourthly, Otunbayeva's narrative emphasized the relationship between authoritarian leadership and clans as a leading cause of the 2005 and 2010 revolutions. She (Otunbayeva 2011f) stated:

> *The authoritarian, family-clan periods of the two presidential rules that accumulated enormous economic and social problems, and contradictions inevitably led to people's revolutions and fierce collisions. If we follow the inner logic and the relationship between the Soviet era's distortions and mismanagement and those of the Akayev-cum-Bakiyev regimes, the possible outcome becomes clear and predictable for this period in which we live, that is that the accumulated serious problems with the corrupt system of one-man family and clan and their non-transparent ruling inevitably led to a bloody conflict* [*sic*].

Indeed, Otunbayeva's statement suggested that conflict followed a specific formula in which corruption, super presidential and clan leadership, and a lack of transparency unavoidably result in bloodshed and conflict. Otunbayeva (Otunbayeva 2010b) reiterated this sentiment when she stated, "the presidential system has always led to authoritarian dominance by one clan. The people have driven their president out of the country twice for this very reason." Finally, Otunbayeva (2011f) identified "double standards in foreign and domestic policy" as a factor which led to the 2010 revolution. This statement suggested that inconsistent policy at home and abroad contributed to the 2010 unrest.

The second strand of Otunbayeva's narrative of political factors affecting instability addressed the role of external interference following the second revolution and with the intention of disrupting the formation of a provisional government. Former President Bakiyev and his allies' desire for power, and the consequences of their actions, featured prominently in Otunbayeva's narrative of manipulation in domestic affairs. For example, Otunbayeva accused Bakiyev of an attempt to ignite civil conflict between Northern and Southern Kyrgyzstan (Otunbayeva 2010a). However, Kyrgyzstan has been regionally divided between the North and South since Russian and Soviet rule (Jones Luong 2002, 74). As such, Otunbayeva's accusation of manipulation therefore illustrates how conspiracy theory in Central Asia makes "specific claims against the establishment," while "reproducing the prevailing political ideas" (Heathershaw 2012, 611). Above all, Otunbayeva and her administration emphasized the role that the ousted regime and other actors played in the onset of the 10 to 14 June 2010 ethnic violence in southern Kyrgyzstan. In particular, Otunbayeva and her administration framed the ethnic conflict as an attempt to thwart the 27 June 2010

constitutional referendum on the adoption of a parliamentary form of government. This understanding is reflected when Otunbayeva (2011e) stated:

We understand that the direct reason of the conflict were the single-minded actions of the leaders and supporters of the previous regime for the destabilization of the situation in the country and the kindling of a different kind of conflicts, including interethnic. They did everything in order to achieve the overthrow of the interim government and capture the power lost on 7 April 2010, and to sabotage the referendum for the transition to a parliamentary republic.

Otunbayeva did not limit accusations of interference to the ousted regime. She identified multiple actors responsible for the June violence including a collaboration between the previous administration and "international terrorist and religious extremist forces" (Otunbayeva 2011h), "revanchists and criminals," and drug dealers (Otunbayeva 2011d). Otunbayeva (2011a) also acknowledged the consequences of external interference when she stated, "Neither the former regime, nor their followers will manage to turn the wheel of history back. Obviously, any actions in this direction can only lead to destabilization of the situation in the country."

Although Otunbayeva's narrative accused the Bakiyev family of reversing democratic development in Kyrgyzstan, the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission which investigated the June events, did not find supporting evidence of this claim (Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission 2011, 21). This supports Galdini and Iakupbaeva's (2016, 8–9) observation that the Interim Government blamed instability on various colluders without evidence, and did so to insulate the interim government from criticism following the post-revolutionary events. Otunbayeva's narrative of conspiracies in Kyrgyzstan displays a degree of flexibility similar to Kazakhstan. For example, Otunbayeva has accused terrorists of trying to trigger social and ethnic conflicts with the end goal of destabilization (Kim 2011), However, Otunbayeva's narrative of external interference differed from Kazakhstan's as she specified that NGOs were not a cause of the ethnic violence in the south of Kyrgyzstan (AKIpress News Agency 2011a).

Otunbayeva's narrative of economic causes of protest centred around the role that criminality played in the Aksy events, and the 2005 and 2010 revolutions. For example, Otunbayeva (2011f) identified the Akayev regime's theft of state resources and assets, corruption by the "family-clan mafia" and crime, as causes of the Aksy protests. Otunbayeva (2011f) also alluded to criminality and corruption as economic drivers of protest in both revolutions when she stated:

This was confirmed during the reign of Bakiyev. That time around even more disastrous in more pernicious forms of criminality and corruption swept through the country, embedded in the supreme power, the waves of raiding and redistribution of property, the most ruthless

arbitrariness of the family and clan structure, the repression of the opposition, the rampant shadow economy, the drug trafficking… All this could not but lead to a bloody climax on April 7, 2010 [*sic*]*.*

Because Otunbayeva's (2011f) description highlighted that these factors were "even more" catastrophic and destructive the second time around, it corroborated her narrative that Bakiyev did not learn from Akayev's ousting. For Otunbayeva, other economic causes of the second revolution included a deterioration of the socio-economic situation (Otunbayeva 2010d).

6.4.2.2 Perceived social and demographic factors affecting uprising

During her tenure as interim president, Otunbayeva identified multiple social and demographic factors affecting uprising. These included a loss of patience, the choice of the people, and Kyrgyz national character. Other factors included immorality, rejection of the Soviet state-society relationship and of a multi-ethnic state, and the desire for self-identification.

Otunbayeva's narrative stressed that a loss of patience was a reaction to growing authoritarianism. For example, Otunbayeva (2011j) emphasized that a loss of patience contributed to the onset of the first and second revolution when she stated "The expropriation of all resources, political murders, and finally an attempt to establish a hereditary principle of power, again squeezed the spring of popular patience until the catch and she fired." Otunbayeva (Clinton et al. 2011) also emphasized that Kyrgyzstan's youth lost patience in the second revolution when she stated:

It was on April 7 last year that the youth of the country said enough to silently watch the very meagre national resources be stolen by the corrupt dictatorial family. We paid a very dear price to liberate our nation; more than 80 young people choose to die rather than to continue to live in fear [*sic*]*.*

This statement also shows that youth chose to protest in the second revolution. Otunbayeva (2010d) has also elaborated on the reasons why people chose to protest as evident in the following statement:

The authority which came after the March events of 2005 did not justify the hopes of the people. On the contrary, the socio-economic situation deteriorated, so that in the end, it led to the events of the 6 and 7 of April. The people were outraged by disregard of the demands of the

People's Kurultai[5] on the liquidation of the governmental decisions, taken against the interests of the people, by the arrest of opposition leaders, by an attempt to suppress the unrest of the people by force. Against the people, who came out to the central square of Bishkek to a peaceful demonstration, were organized provocations. As a result of that blood spilled. All of this led to a change of power. Our people, who at all times preferred freedom above all, chose it and a new path of democratic development.

Otunbayeva's statement triangulates her narrative that the authorities' consolidation of power, repression of civil and political liberties, and poor state-society relations contributed to Kyrgyzstan's second revolution. It also alluded to the role that hope and expectations play in influencing the onset of revolution. This strand of discourse reappeared later on in her presidency when Otunbayeva (2011c) acknowledged that if the people's demands had been fulfilled it might have prevented a second revolution.

Notably, Otunbayeva portrayed Kyrgyzstan's tendency toward unrest not as country perpetually on the verge of chaos, but as a mark of the Kyrgyz people's democratic character. When asked in an interview why Kyrgyzstan has been prone to unrest Otunbayeva (2011g) replied "I could mention for starters out national character, our history and even our traditions…I think democracy is in our blood, in our way of life, in the way we see the world." On another occasion she (BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit 2011) stated "Our national spirit has never knelt to authorities or bowed to them or flattered them." For Otunbayeva additional factors which affected the onset of instability in 2010 included "political immorality" (BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit 2011). Other factors included a rejection of the legacy of the Soviet state-society relationship which was characterized by "Soviet type of social organization," and rejection of a multi-ethnic state (Transcript by Federal News Service 2010). Of interest is Otunbayeva's (Transcript by Federal News Service 2010) interpretation of the causes of the colour revolutions. Otunbayeva's (Transcript by Federal News Service 2010) observed that model of the colour revolutions is conventionally understood as society's desire for democratization. However, Otunbayeva (Transcript by Federal News Service 2010) believed that the colour revolutions in the post-Soviet space were inspired by "a desire to achieve the self-identification [*sic*]." For Otunbayeva, therefore, achieving self-identification was a cause of the colour revolutions.

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[5] A *kurultai* is a council or assembly.

6.4.2.3 Perceived consequences of uprising

Previously discussed consequences of revolution in Otunbayeva's narrative included bloodshed and the loss of life. For example, Otunbayeva (2010c) noted that 86 people died on 7 April 2010. Indeed, because Bakiyev's administration marginalized the opposition, the 2010 protests were not elite led like the 2005 protests and consequently became violent (Khamidov 2016). However, Otunbayeva's discussion of the consequences of revolution went beyond violence and bloodshed to portray its other effects. For example, Otunbayeva (2011j) pointed out the risk of revolution for future generations who are unaccustomed to a peaceful transfer of power. She (2011j) stated:

> *At the expense of the blood of hundreds of our compatriots justice triumphed. But revolutions have the other side of the coin. The exception risks becoming a rule. An entire generation grows up which does not know other methods to change power, except violent overthrows.*

On the other hand, Otunbayeva (2011j) acknowledged that although the revolution was violent, it was necessary to establish a new social contract. She therefore alluded to what would have happened in Kyrgyzstan if revolution had not transpired. Atambayev (PR.kg 2011), Prime Minister at the time, stated this more directly when questioned, "What would have happened with us if there had not been the April Revolution?" Both statements are significant for two reasons. Firstly, both accounts are reversals of Bakiyev's narrative of the consequences of revolution which he portrayed as negatively affecting progress and development in Kyrgyzstan. Although, to some extent Otunbayeva (2011f) echoed Bakiyev's (2007) narrative that protests are exhausting and stability is necessary for progress. Secondly, Otunbayeva and Atambayev's statements reflect a common viewpoint in Kyrgyzstan. According to the author's interview with Khamidov (2016) it is commonly held in Kyrgyzstan that democracy begins with bloodshed. Khamidov (2016) stated, "there is this thinking in Bishkek that the path to political stability lies through bloodshed...There is a perception that democracies all have to go through violence to shape these democratic outcomes. This thinking is strong here."

Otunbayeva (2011b) also observed a universal consequence of revolution: in the aftermath of freedom from repression law enforcement agencies are weakened and unable to enforce security. She (Otunbayeva 2011b) stated, "For years our societies have been repressed. Newly found freedoms can be too intoxicating. Shortly after revolutions, law enforcement bodies are mostly discredited and too weakened to provide for the public order." She (Otunbayeva

2011b) applied this consequence to the June 2010 violence Southern Kyrgyzstan and acknowledged, "This is where we most tragically stumbled: Interethnic conflict between the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks took many lives last year and almost tore apart our country."

6.4.3 Perceived causes and consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings

Otunbayeva's discussion of the causes and consequences of the Arab Spring is minimal. Rather, Otunbayeva identified universal causes of revolutions, yet differentiated between the consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings and the second revolution in Kyrgyzstan. Otunbayeva's discussion of the Arab Spring drew attention to Kyrgyzstan's role as a precedent for the countries which saw unrest in the MENA. She expressed solidarity with their experience and the inevitable challenges they faced ahead. Each of these strands of Otunbayeva's discourse, and their implications for an elite-level demonstration effect, is discussed in turn below.

In an article Otunbayeva (2011b) authored which discussed the Arab Spring, she appeared to identify two social and demographic factors which influenced protest. These included a loss of patience, and the choice of the people to protest. The article also reiterated Otunbayeva's (2011b) observation that youth who had previously been regarded as "uninterested and apathetic," proved "heroic" and even lost their lives in affecting the outcome of protest. Although Otunbayeva did not name the Arab Spring in these statements, she suggested these causes are universal, and therefore by extension applied both to Kyrgyzstan and to the countries which saw an Arab Spring. Otunbayeva also appeared to allude to role of youth in the Arab Spring uprisings. This is because youth in the Arab Spring uprisings, who were previously regarded as uninterested in politics, were able to mobilize others precisely because of their apolitical stance (Cavatorta 2012, 78). Both factors also mirrored Otunbayeva's comments on social and demographic factors driving the second revolution in Kyrgyzstan including a loss of patience and the people's choice to protest. Otunbayeva's narrative also appeared to identify a final shared factor affecting uprising: popular desire to achieve self-identification. Otunbayeva (Transcript by Federal News Service 2010) described:

> *The attempts of communities to overcome the identity crisis which was generated by rapid globalization and the unification of the world, and which is a universal phenomenon today. We see that not only in the*

regions returning to the historical mainstream, such as Central Asia or the Middle East; but in Europe also, the desire for ethnic self-determination is increasingly making itself felt.

Beyond shared causes, Otunbayeva and her administration emphasized that the Arab Spring began in Kyrgyzstan, and that Kyrgyzstan set a precedent for the countries which saw an Arab Spring. For example, Otunbayeva (Avtor K-News 2011) stated:

The beginning of the events of the "Arab Spring" which set the foundation at the moment of the transformation of an entire political system in a region was to a greater or lesser degree laid down precisely in Kyrgyzstan. A year and a half before the referred to events in the Arab East, in April 2010 according to a similar scenario, the overthrow of the Bakiyev regime happened.

Similarly, on another occasion Otunbayeva (BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit 2011) stated, "Now we see that uprisings which started after a less year in the Middle East and North Africa against authoritarianism clearly define the role and importance of the event that occurred in Kyrgyzstan on 7 April 2010. The path we had gone through was an example to these countries" [*sic*]. In the author's interview with Asel Doolotkeldieva (2016), Otunbayeva's former interpreter and former Senior Lecturer at Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, she stressed that when Otunbayeva asserted that the Arab Spring began in Kyrgyzstan:

the main point she was making was that Kyrgyzstan's revolution was not elite driven. It was mass protest, like what it was in the Arab Spring, and then it turned into something else. Whereas other elites might see it as elite driven, elite paid, or elite manipulated protest.

In an interview after her presidency, Otunbayeva further substantiated her that the Arab Spring began in Kyrgyzstan when she specified the media as the mechanism which transmitted Kyrgyzstan's example to the MENA. Otunbayeva (Kilner 2012) stated, "Al Jazeera was active in Kyrgyzstan showing everything that was going on and showing it in the Arab world".

Notably, both Otunbayeva and her Prime Minister Atambayev remarked that the claim that the Arab Spring began in Kyrgyzstan originated from the Russian Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin.[6] In an interview after her presidency, Otunbayeva (Kilner 2012) stated, "Even (Russian President Vladimir) Putin said

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[6] Different sources have credited the statement that the Arab Spring began in Kyrgyzstan to Vladimir Putin, or to Omurbek Tekebaev, the leader of the political party *Ata Meken*. Herd and Yan (2011, 3) stated that Otunbayeva, reiterated Tekebaev's statement that the Arab Spring followed Kyrgyzstan's example. However, in the author's interview with Sheradil Baktygulov (2016), Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist at Search for Common Ground in Kyrgyzstan, he stated that Tekebaev reiterated Putin's statement from an SCO meeting in Saint Petersburg.

that the Arab spring started in Kyrgyzstan first" [*sic]*. Similarly, Atambayev (PR.kg 2011) stated, "Putin did not say in vain that the Arab Spring began with the April Revolution in the Kyrgyz Republic. This was the beginning of the end of dictatorship in the world." An article from AKIpress confirmed Otunbayeva and Atambayev's citation of Putin. The headline read, "Putin says Arab spring has started with Kyrgyzstan" (AKIpress News Agency 2011b). The article also reported that Putin, at a meeting with the heads of the SCO in Saint Petersburg, stated, "We all well know that everything has started with Kyrgyzstan" (AKIpress News Agency 2011b).

Despite claims that the Arab Spring began in Kyrgyzstan, which emphasized a degree of similarity between Kyrgyzstan and other countries which saw uprising, Otunbayeva differentiated between the consequences of the Arab Spring and the second revolution in Kyrgyzstan. Otunbayeva pointed out that unlike in some countries of the MENA which saw uprising, the revolution in Kyrgyzstan did not produce a refugee crisis (BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit 2011). On another occasion she noted that the Arab Spring had not yet resulted in a positive outcome in many countries – strife continued, people were killed, and interim governments were not able to deal with the challenges at hand and organize elections – but Kyrgyzstan overcame its crisis and achieved stability despite "provoked" ethnic conflict (Otunbayeva 2011j). Similarly, Otunbayeva (Avtor K-News 2011) reiterated, "we managed to show an example of the overthrow of an authoritarian regime and of subsequent stabilization of the situation against the background of tragic events." In her authored article in which she discussed the Arab Spring, Otunbayeva (2011b) also reiterated a formerly discussed consequence of revolution. Namely, that in the aftermath of revolution law enforcement agencies are unable to provide security to a society newly freed from repression (Otunbayeva 2011b). Because Otunbayeva (2011b) evidenced her statement with the fact that Kyrgyzstan also confronted this problem following the April 2010 revolution and during the June 2010 unrest, suggested that she attributed the police's failure to provide security after the revolution as a cause of the ethnic unrest, rather than Kyrgyzstan's existing ethnic policy and its influence on Kyrgyz-Uzbek relations.

In addition to claiming that Kyrgyzstan was the prototype of the Arab Spring, Otunbayeva (2011b, 2011i) expressed Kyrgyzstan's solidarity and empathy with the countries which saw Arab Spring uprisings, having experienced it a year prior. In this way Otunbayeva furthered the narrative that the Arab Spring began in Kyrgyzstan, and thus had already experienced what challenges awaited the people of the MENA following the ousting of nondemocratic leadership. In the article she authored which discussed the Arab Spring uprisings, Otunbayeva

(2011b) also expressed solidarity at large with countries that have undergone revolution. Otunbayeva (2011b) achieved this by refuting the consequences of revolution found in the discourse of illiberal regimes, in particular that they bring violence and instability, are installed by foreign governments media, and terrorist groups, and that their participants utilize mind altering substances. Rather, Otunbayeva (2011b) noted that the benefits of authoritarian stability do not outweigh its costs to civil and political liberties. Otunbayeva (Transcript by Federal News Service 2010) also expressed optimism about the ongoing processes in Kyrgyzstan and the Middle East and their "development potential."

Despite her identification of shared social and demographic causes of unrest in Kyrgyzstan and the Arab Spring uprisings, Otunbayeva's treatment of the Arab Spring as originating from Kyrgyzstan, and her expression of solidary with the countries which saw an Arab Spring, appeared to demonstrate a different tone in discourse when compared to her pre-Arab Spring discourse on the causes and consequences of revolution. As such, it poses the question, did the Arab Spring bring about an elite-level demonstration effect in Kyrgyzstan? In an elite-level demonstration effect, a regime is influenced by events elsewhere as they seek to prevent challenges to their leadership. Otunbayeva and Atambayev's association between the Arab Spring and the second revolution in Kyrgyzstan evidenced that the interim government was certainly aware and influenced to some extent by events in the MENA. However, Otunbayeva's claim that Kyrgyzstan inspired the Arab Spring and expression of solidarity on behalf of Kyrgyzstan, did not suggest that her administration viewed the events of the Arab Spring as a challenge to domestic leadership. Rather, when considered alongside her differentiation between the consequences of Kyrgyzstan's revolution and the consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings, they suggested that her interim government utilized the Arab Spring uprisings as a rhetorical strategy to legitimize post-revolutionary processes in Kyrgyzstan to domestic and international audiences. Indeed, two interviewees (Baktygulov 2016; Doolotkeldieva 2016) stressed that the Arab Spring contextualized domestic processes in Kyrgyzstan. For example, Doolotkeldieva (2016) highlighted that the Arab Spring normalized the occurrence of protest in Kyrgyzstan. Doolotkeldieva (2016) stated:

> *It normalizes our protest culture. Because until the Arab Spring, the post-Soviet mass media and even expert opinion was stigmatizing Kyrgyzstan for being backward wild people of the horses... Whereas others are normal because they are stable. Whether they are authoritarian or not doesn't matter because they are stable. And what happened in the Arab Spring in a way normalized us. That protests are happening, revolutions are happening elsewhere as well.*

It is possible to argue that because Kyrgyzstan's incumbent leadership took rhetorical steps to legitimize itself through the Arab Spring, it attempted to pre-empt challenges to its interim government, and as such evidenced an elite-level demonstration effect. However, the regime's narrative of the causes and consequences of the Arab Spring did not suggest that it perceived the Arab Spring as a threat or a challenge. Therefore, the Arab Spring did not bring about an elite-level demonstration effect in Kyrgyzstan. Interviewees suggested that the absence of an elite-level demonstration effect was the result of multiple factors. For example, Kyrgyzstan was dealing with the aftermath of the 2010 events at home, Kyrgyzstan had already seen its own protest and bloodshed (Khamidov 2016), a lack of economic and diplomatic ties between Kyrgyzstan and the MENA (Alymbaeva 2016; Baktygulov 2016), media interaction was limited to Russia and the Central Asian sphere, and because new regimes react less to revolution than long-standing regimes (S. Juraev 2016). According to the author's interview with E. Juraev (2016), Kyrgyzstan experienced "almost the reverse of the demonstration effect, which is to find affinity with the same sorts of events that are happening elsewhere." Alternatively, Kyrgyzstan, experienced a perceived demonstration effect in which it understood that its revolution set an example for civil resistance elsewhere. The case of Kyrgyzstan suggests that theoretically, the lack of an elite-level demonstration effect does not diminish awareness of the power of example. Additionally, it suggested that both illiberal (Kazakhstan) and transitioning incumbent regimes (Kyrgyzstan) use revolution to legitimize the incumbent government regardless of whether their perception of revolution varies. In other words, the purpose of illiberal and transitioning regimes narrative on revolutions is similar, even if their understanding of revolution as positive or negative differs.

6.4.4 Lessons learned?

The absence of an elite-level demonstration effect in Kyrgyzstan brought about by the Arab Spring also suggested that it did not give rise to lessons from the Arab Spring events. Of course, establishing learning is contingent upon how it is measured. According to Kubicek (2011, 120), "a shift in policy in the predicted direction might be persuasive evidence of learning." Thus, under Otunbayeva's leadership, a correlation between perceived causes of conflict, and a policy or behaviour to offset the aforementioned cause would evidence learning. For example, as discussed in relation to political causes of conflict, Otunbayeva's

administration attributed interethnic violence in Osh to interference by the former regime and its allies. Later on in her tenure as interim president, Otunbayeva (2011e) proposed the "Concept for Ethnic Policy and Consolidation of Society in Kyrgyzstan and the Plan of action until 2015" to prevent the repetition of similar conflicts in the future. In this example there is thus a connection between a perceived cause of conflict, and a policy initiative.

One potential lesson from the Arab Spring uprisings may have involved the role of ICT in overcoming the collective action problem. According to the author's interview with Khamidov (2016) the Kyrgyz government became more aware of social media following the Arab Spring because protests in one country spurred protest in another. A statement made by Otunbayeva (2011j) in a speech in which she discussed the Arab Spring uprisings corroborated this assertion. Otunbayeva (2011j) acknowledged that, "Totalitarian regimes in the world have faced hard times. Access of wide sections of the population to information, keeping track of events in real time, growing opportunities in the period of globalization for social mobilization through electronic means of connections are now challenges of modern times." However, social media also played a role in the 2010 revolution in Kyrgyzstan. During the 2010 revolution new media disseminated information sourced from traditional media (Melvin and Umaraliev 2011, 12). In doing so it furthered developments as opposed to acting as the main channel to organize and rally support (Melvin and Umaraliev 2011, 20). Therefore, the use of media in the Arab Spring uprisings likely furthered elite awareness following its domestic use in the 2010 revolution.

Because of the lack of an elite level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring, it also likely that any lessons learned would have originated from Kyrgyzstan's own experiences with revolution, rather than from further afield. Under Otunbayeva, three changes in policy and behaviour suggested learning. These included the holding of the 27 June 2010 constitutional referendum, the 10 December 2010 parliamentary elections, and a voluntary transfer of power on 1 December 2011. These changes suggested learning because Otunbayeva's narrative of the political causes of conflict identified growing authoritarianism as a principal driver of domestic instability.

Firstly, Otunbayeva's (Clinton et al. 2011) framing of the constitutional referendum and the parliamentary elections as democratic change in response to growing authoritarianism as a cause of conflict suggested learning. Indeed Otunbayeva (Transcript by Federal News Service 2010) stated "As a result of the constitutional referendum and the first truly democratic free elections, we managed to provide revolutionary changes in the political system of the state, opening up opportunities for the establishment of real democracy." In particular,

the second provision of Article 114 of the constitution also reflected learning. It specified that changes to sections three through eight of the constitution, of which sections three through five defined the president, legislative and executive roles, were prohibited until 1 September 2020 (Government of the Kyrgyz Republic 2010). This further suggested that Kyrgyzstan's interim government learned from a prior feature of growing authoritarianism which drove instability, amending the constitution to consolidate power, and took steps to prevent its reoccurrence.

However, evidence of learning in Kyrgyzstan does not mean the constitutional referendum was free from criticism. Collins (2011, 158) criticized the 2010 version of the constitution by pointing out that despite concern over presidentialism's tendency to result in "authoritarian backsliding," the 2010 constitution continued to enable the president to appoint and oversee the state prosecutor's office, defence, and national security. Collins (2011, 158) also drew attention to the unlikelihood of removing a president from office with the required 80 votes because no party was allowed to hold more than 65 seats. Otunbayeva's framing of the referendum, and its timing, approximately two weeks after ethnic violence in Southern Kyrgyzstan, also garnered criticism. For example, the OSCE/ODHIR's (2010a, 1) observation report found that the Kyrgyz government established "the necessary conditions for the conduct of a peaceful constitutional referendum despite challenging circumstances," and that "the reported high turnout of 72 per cent indicated citizens' resilience and desire to shape the future of their country." Although both of these findings suggested an increase in civil and political liberties, the report also noted some limitations. Namely, that the "campaign was increasingly framed around stability and the legitimacy of the provisional government," which thwarted discussion of the merits of the draft constitution (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2010a, 2). As a result, voters may have felt obligated to endorse the referendum to prevent further instability (Freedom House 2011).

Secondly, the 10 October 2010 parliamentary elections, presented a clearer indicator of learning. In addition to Otunbayeva's (Clinton et al. 2011) comment that the parliamentary elections were a step towards democracy, the OSCE/ODHIR gave them a favourable report. The OSCE/ODHIR's (2010b, 1) mission report found that the parliamentary elections were evidence of further democratic consolidation in Kyrgyzstan. This was also evidenced in the election results in which *Ata-Zhurt*, a party in opposition to the interim government, won the majority of seats in parliament (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2010b, 4, 28). The fact that an opposition party won the majority of seats in the parliamentary

elections suggested an increased political openness in Kyrgyzstan (Freedom House 2011), as did the ban on one party holding more than 65 of the 120 parliamentary seats (Government of the Kyrgyz Republic 2010). Because the interim government permitted opposition parties to win a majority in the parliamentary elections, also suggested that the interim government took steps to address political exclusion. The interim government did not outwardly identify exclusion as a driver of conflict but alluded to it through references to polarization and poor-state society relations. This is evidenced in Otunbayeva's (2011b) statement, "The new country we are building is inclusive and grounded in the rule of law. We choose to celebrate our differences and to resolve them not in the streets but in parliament, via democratic channels." Otunbayeva (Transcript by Federal News Service 2010) also stressed the importance of inclusion when she stated:

> *Powerful tools, rigid rules and procedures for the participation of civil society in the governance are needed. People, and its active part, remain largely alienated from governance of the country. I intend to make full use of the presidential status and my nationwide mandate to build an extensive and pervasive system of interaction between society and government* [*sic*]*.*

Otunbayeva's actions and narrative therefore suggested political and social inclusion as a pre-emptive solution to conflict.

Thirdly, Otunbayeva's voluntary resignation from the presidency on 1 December 2011 also suggested learning. Namely, because a peaceful and voluntary transfer of power marked a shift in behaviour compared to Akayev and Bakiyev. Otunbayeva's (2011g) statement, "It is very important to hand over power on one's own free will, peacefully, and with dignity. People must see this, have this experience, and demand that successors follow suit," alluded to her departure as lesson for the public. In other words, by setting a precedent for a voluntary and peaceful transition of power, she aimed to teach the public and future generations that this was possible. A peaceful transfer of power also mitigated the a consequence of revolution that Otunbayeva (2011j) identified: that people only know how to transfer power via revolutions. Otunbayeva's voluntary departure from the presidency also marked a potential departure from the established behaviour of revolutionary to evolutionary political change in Kyrgyzstan. As such, it reflected the principle of Otunbayeva's (2010c) statement that "We must create the conditions in which the revolutionary process changes into an evolutionary one." Notably, there is thus a similar emphasis on an evolutionary pace of reform in Otunbayeva's narrative, similar to Bakiyev's and the Kazakh regime's.

Otunbayeva's discourse also suggested learning based on her observations regarding authoritarian stability and people power. Methodologically, this suggested that measuring learning through changes in policy may overlook learning that is expressed primarily through narrative. Otunbayeva's narrative presented several observations which suggested learning. For example, Otunbayeva (Clinton et al. 2011) noted that democratic disorder is stronger than authoritarian stability. Otunbayeva (2011j) also observed that "the people in Kyrgyzstan—they are a real acting force" in addition to the media and civil society (Otunbayeva 2011j). On another occasion Otunbayeva (2011a) noted that the fact that Kyrgyzstan's people overthrew leadership twice should remind "all of us and the future leaders of the country that presidents and governments come and go, but the people remain forever." Taken together, these observations pointed to the fact that Otunbayeva has learned from her country's experience with conflict.

Although the holding of a constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections, a voluntary transfer of power, and Otunbayeva's observations on authoritarian stability and people power, suggested that the interim government learned from growing authoritarianism as a driver of conflict, Kyrgyzstan's movement towards liberalization was not unidirectional. Marat (2012, 299) reported that in 2011 the parliament adopted policies which restricted freedom of speech and minority rights, and were thus more in line with the past authoritarian leadership. Otunbayeva's (2011e) discourse also corroborated a negative perspective on the media in June 2011. Outside the media sphere, the Central Election Commission refused to accredit previously accredited news agencies in the run up to the 2011 October presidential elections; a ruling the parliament overturned in August (Marat 2012, 308). Theoretically, these developments suggested the nature of the lessons acquired can vary among different members and sectors of a government, and to acquire a representative picture of learning dynamics it is necessary to evaluate learning in the ruling authorities' narrative as undertaken in this thesis.

6.5 Almazbek Atambayev: 1 December 2011 to 24 November 2017

6.5.1 Receptiveness to learning and awareness of cross-border influence

The following discussion is restricted from Atambayev's inauguration on 1 December 2011 until 31 December 2015 as a result of the thesis' delimited time frame. As discussed in Chapter 2 "Methodology," because Atambayev was in effect the executive head of government, rather than the symbolic head of state, the following examination focuses on his narrative. From 2011 to 2015, Atambayev demonstrated a receptiveness to learning and awareness of cross-border influence, which established the underlying awareness necessary for an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring uprisings, as well as the possibility that the Kyrgyz government learned from international events.

Two strands of Atambayev's narrative best expressed his receptiveness to learning. These included learning from the experiences of other countries and learning from Kyrgyzstan's experiences with domestic unrest. In particular, Atambayev cited learning from Georgia's experience fighting corruption (Venediktov et al. 2012), as well as learning from the experience of Singapore and Sweden (Atambayev 2013e). Kyrgyzstan's learning from Georgia, Singapore and Sweden is significant because it showed that Atambayev's government learned from both regional actors and those further afield. This introduced the possibility that Atambayev learned from the Arab Spring events. However, the majority of Atambayev's references to learning stemmed from Kyrgyzstan's experiences with domestic unrest. In addition to supporting research on the Aksy events, Kyrgyzstan's two revolutions (Atambayev 2014c), and the June 2010 ethnic violence (Atambayev 2015e), Atambayev identified multiple lessons garnered from Kyrgyzstan's experience with domestic unrest. For example, Atambayev (2012d) stated, "History teaches us to derive lessons from the past. We must not forget it. The Aksy events, the events of March 2005 and April 2010 – are pages of the history of Kyrgyzstan." Atambayev also identified specific lessons from these events. For example, according to Atambayev (2015a), the 2002 Aksy events "clearly showed that the source of power is the people, and without establishing law, it is not possible to build a free and fair society." Additionally, Atambayev (2015h) pointed out that because Kyrgyzstan overcame two revolutions and ethnic conflict "we learned very well the value of peace and stability." Furthermore, when asked in an interview about the issue of the Kumtor gold mine, in which protestors demonstrated against its nationalization, Atambayev (2013a) replied that "in the future this for any government will be a lesson that if you do something bad, not in in the interests of the country, that all the same one day it will come out." Finally, Atambayev's (2015f) participation in the event "The People's Revolution in March 2005 and April 2010: causes and

lessons," and his statement that "the country needs scientific research and discussions on the reasons and consequences of these important social political events" evidenced that Atambayev's administration was not only receptive to learning in general, but was also receptive to learning from Kyrgyzstan's experiences with conflict. Because these examples illustrate that Atambayev's administration attempted to learn from prior and current domestic unrest, they also opened the possibility that Atambayev's administration learned from the Arab Spring which began approximately one year prior to his inauguration.

Alongside receptiveness to learning, Atambayev demonstrated awareness of cross-border influence in relation to regional and economic security, and the power of example. Regionally, Atambayev (2012f) noted that because of globalization, "events in one or another country exercise influence not only on a neighbouring country, but on regions as a whole." It follows that Atambayev (2015d) recognized that happenings in Afghanistan affect both regional security and international processes. On at least on occasion, Atambayev's (2014a) awareness of cross-border influence and regional security tied into his narrative of conspiracy theories when he noted that internal "forces" were interested in destabilizing Kyrgyzstan in order to drive "chaos" through Asia and into China. Above all, Atambayev expressed awareness of cross-border influence through reference to the power of example. When asked if Kyrgyzstan could act against the threat of the "Islamic State," Atambayev (2015c) responded, "It is only possible to stop by showing an example even if it is of one country, or a democratic, secular Muslim, country." Taken together, Atambayev's receptiveness to learning from prior and contemporary examples of domestic conflict, and his awareness of cross-border influence and the power of example, established the underlying foundation necessary for an elite-level demonstration effect in Kyrgyzstan brought about by the Arab Spring.

6.5.2 Perceived causes and consequences of conflict

6.5.2.1 Perceived political and economic factors affecting uprising

Having established Atambayev's receptiveness to learning and awareness of cross-border influence, the following section will present his narrative of the perceived political and economic factors which drove uprising in relation to national and regional events. The purpose of this is to set up a comparison from

which it is possible to determine whether the Arab Spring uprising brought about an elite-level demonstration effect and learning in Kyrgyzstan evidenced through changes in rhetoric, behaviour and policy. In many ways, Atambayev's narrative of the political and economic factors affecting the onset of conflict reiterated the factors identified by his predecessor Otunbayeva. In fact, both identified the constitution, limited civil and political liberties, and external interference as factors affecting the onset of conflict. However, Otunbayeva and Atambayev differed in their treatment of these factors, each of which is discussed in turn below.

Both Otunbayeva and Atambayev perceived the constitution as a factor affecting stability. This is evident in Atambayev's (2012g) statement that "stability of the constitution and of everything founded on its legal system, security of the social, political, economic, and ultimately, state stability and the prosperity of the country." However, while Otunbayeva's narrative identified the amending the constitution as a factor affecting the onset of conflict, Atambayev's (2012g) discourse highlighted the negative consequences associated with non-compliance with the constitution. However, despite the second provision of Article 114 in the constitution, which specified that changes were prohibited until 1 September 2020 (Government of the Kyrgyz Republic 2010), Atambayev (2014a) presented the possibility of amending it as early as 2014 by claiming that some of its articles could threaten Kyrgyzstan's development. Ultimately, Atambayev held a constitutional referendum in December 2016, four years ahead of the constitutionally stipulated date, the implications of which will be discussed in the conclusion of this thesis.

Both Otunbayeva and Atambayev emphasized that nondemocratic, family-clan leadership drove the 2005 and 2010 revolution. For example, Atambayev (2014a) observed that in Kyrgyzstan in 2005, 2010, as well as in Ukraine in 2014, family clan rule was one "catalyst of disorder." Atambayev (2013f) also alluded to the inevitable consequences of authoritarian leadership when he stated that Kyrgyzstan saw two presidents who strove to consolidate power, and "this ended badly." On the other hand, Atambayev also noted when the nature of the presidency did not lead to revolution. Atambayev (Radio Azattyq 2014) commented that "the presence of a true leader" like Nazarbayev in Kazakhstan, prevents revolutions. In the same interview, Atambayev (Radio Azattyq 2014) supported this statement with evidence from Kyrgyzstan; Kyrgyzstan was not "blessed" with its president and as a result, saw two revolutions. In addition to the executive, Atambayev's (2014a) narrative also highlighted that other branches of power, could influence the onset of conflict. For example, Atambayev (2014a) announced his intention to prevent other branches of power from giving the people a reason to protest.

Other evidence in Atambayev's narrative that nondemocratic leadership was a factor which affected the onset of conflict included his numerous references to the fact that injustice and lawlessness drove people to protest. Atambayev identified injustice and lawlessness as a cause of protest in the 2002 Aksy events (Atambayev 2012b), the 2005 revolution and the 2010 revolution (Atambayev 2013c). For example, Atambayev (2013c) noted that the Kyrgyz people, "could never be reconciled with injustice and lawlessness. That is precisely why the Aksy events in 2002 happened, and the people's uprising in March 2005." In relation to the 2010 revolution, Atambayev (2013c) noted that the Kyrgyz people "in a sign of protest against the arbitrary rule of the authorities and lawlessness went in the streets and squares of the country… They fought for the triumph of the law and justice." It follows that Atambayev (2015h) also identified unlawful elections in 2005 and 2010 as the cause of widespread popular uprising. Atambayev (Vecheriĭ Bishkek 2012) stated, "The people themselves must choose the authority, and then there will not be a revolution."

Similar to Otunbayeva, limited civil and political liberties also featured prominently in Atambayev's narrative of political factors affecting the onset of unrest. For example, Atambayev (2012) identified Bakiyev's jailing of the opposition, which suggested limited political liberties, as a factor which contributed to the second revolution because people rose up in response. Atambayev (2015b) also observed that the regime's killing of demonstrators on 7 April 2010, which suggested a lack of the right to assembly, as a factor which drove the second revolution. Atambayev (2014b) described the pre-revolutionary environment in Kyrgyzstan in 2010 as characterized by "terror and killing of political opponents and journalists, lawlessness and arbitrary rule became a familiar situation, by means of the state administration," as well as by human rights abuses and an absence of freedom of speech. Although he did not name these factors as drivers cause of conflict, the fact that they appeared in his anniversary address of the 2010 revolution, suggested that this civil and political environment was what Newman (2014, 33) termed a "relevant" if not "decisive" factor contributing to the onset of the 2010 revolution. It follows that limited civil and political liberties also created poor state-society relations, which influenced the onset of revolution in 2005 and 2010. For example, regarding the 2005 revolution, Atambayev (2012c) stated, "Indifference of one's own people, unwillingness to hear them, treachery by the then power regarding the interests of their citizens, led the country 7 years ago to the subsequent trial." Atambayev (2013c) issued a similar statement in regards to the 2010 revolution when he observed, "if there was not treachery of the interest of the people on the side of the then regime, there would not have been tragedy and human deaths in the April and June of 2010."

Similar to Otunbayeva, Atambayev's narrative of political factors affecting the onset of conflict included the role of interference in domestic affairs. Atambayev's narrative reiterated Otunbayeva's focus on the former regime and its associates as orchestrating attempts to compromise Kyrgyzstan's stability in order to return to power or profit financially. This is illustrated by Atambayev's (2013a) statement:

> It is very profitable to someone to show that under Bakiyev, under Zhanysh Bakiyev, under the former government it was better to live, that's why this is often shouted and often only with one goal, to knock out some chair. Or the second goal: behind today's many screams, by bawlers, by politicians I see the ears of the same power which fled.

Above all, Atambayev's allusions to the ousted regime's interference centred on its orchestration of the June 2010 ethnic violence. On one occasion, Atambayev (2015e) described the Osh violence as the product of a collaboration between external "forces," local separatists and "representatives of the former regime" who wanted to return to power. On another occasion, Atambayev (2014a) attributed the June 2010 violence to "grief-patriots, ultranationalists, and separatists." According to Galdini and Iakupbaeva (2016, 7), following the Osh unrest, "nationalist" and "separatist" categories referred either to pro-Bakiyev supporters, or to the Uzbek minority. Therefore, even accusations under a different name targeted the former regime. Alongside the former regime and its supporters, Atambayev identified other actors interfering in Kyrgyz politics. These included unspecified people (Atambayev 2015e), politicians (Atambayev 2015g), external forces operating through NGOs (Atambayev 2014a), and the United States when the State Department presented its Human Rights Defenders award to the activist Azimzhan Askarov (ITAR-TASS 2015). Although the provocateur varied, Atambayev's narrative remained constant in that the goal of interference was the destabilization of Kyrgyzstan.

It is important to acknowledge that these accusations of interference are strategic. For example, Atambayev (2015g) accused politicians of funding a purported terrorist attack by the Islamic State in Bishkek on 16 July 2015. Yet, according to Galdini and Iakupbaeva (2016, 24) the administration used the threat of the Islamic State to distract from debate on Kyrgyzstan's accession to the Eurasian Economic Union, and to advance Atambayev's party, the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK) as a "promoter of stability" prior to the 4 October 2015 parliamentary elections. This suggests that Atambayev's framing of interference served to consolidate his leadership.

Similar to Otunbayeva, Atambayev's narrative of economic factors driving emphasized that overarching corruption and criminality affect the onset of unrest. For example, Atambayev (2014a) observed that corruption drove the 2005 and

2010 revolutions in Kyrgyzstan, and the 2014 Euromaidan events in Ukraine. Atambayev also observed that both leaderships' prioritization of their own enrichment and interests, rather than fulfilling the people's interests, drove unrest (Kabarlar 2014). Additional economic causes which Atambayev perceived as driving conflict are evident in his description of the onset of the 2005 and 2010 revolutions. Atambayev (2015b) stated that Akayev's "immoral political" rule, characterized by destruction of the economy, his family's ransacking of national resources, and the general population's poverty led to the 2005 revolution. Atambayev (2012c) described a similar environment under Bakiyev which led to the 2010 revolution. This is visible in Atambayev's (2012c) statement that "family rule did not only survive, did not only continue plundering the people's wealth, but also acquired a distinct criminal character. All of this predictably led the country to another, April revolution." Atambayev (2012d) even described the 2010 revolution as a fight between the Kyrgyz people "and the criminal regime's death grip grabbing for power." Atambayev also appeared to identify additional economic factors relevant to the onset of uprising. In his fourth anniversary speech of the 2010 revolution, Atambayev (2014b) described a Kyrgyzstan engulfed in corruption, and the growing economic divided between the regime and the population, who experienced increasingly lower standards of living, and that the wealth of the Kyrgyz people was appropriated not only by the regime, but by international actors. However, Atambayev did not directly link economic inequality, the population's lower standard of living, and external actors' appropriation of Kyrgyz wealth as factors driving the onset of conflict. It is therefore possible to identify them as relevant rather than decisive factors in the onset of the second revolution (Newman 2014, 33).

6.5.2.2 Perceived social and demographic factors affecting uprising

Between 2012 and 2015, President Atambayev perceived four principal social and demographic factors affecting uprising. Two of these, the people's loss of patience and Kyrgyz character, are a reiteration of perceived social and demographic factors which Otunbayeva presented as affecting uprising. For example, Atambayev (2013c) observed that on the 7 April 2010, the date the second revolution began, "the cup of our people's patience overflowed" and people took to the streets "to protest against the arbitrary rule of the authorities and lawlessness." Atambayev (2014b) also associated the onset of the second

revolution with the Kyrgyz people's inability to tolerate "injustice, lies, violence and dishonour," and therefore as a mark of Kyrgyz national character.

In addition to the people's loss of patience and Kyrgyz national character, Atambayev identified the fact that the first revolution did not bring the desired results, and people's lack of trust in the government as drivers of revolution. Atambayev emphasized that Kyrgyzstan's second revolution occurred in 2010 because the first revolution did not achieve its intended results. This is illustrated in his statement that, "Expectations of positive changes after the March revolution of 2005 were not justified, that again led to the people's revolution in April 2010" (Atambayev 2012i), and in his portrayal of the "people's victory" as "stolen" (2012c, 2013b, 2013c). Atambayev (2014a) also attributed the people's lack of trust in authority, in free and fair elections, and in an honest transfer of power as a factor which drove revolution in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 and 2010, and Ukraine in 2014. Atambayev's focus on a lack of trust as a driver of conflict was echoed in a statement released by Kyrgyzstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2014) regarding the ousting of Viktor Yanukovych, the former president of Ukraine. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2014) statement reported that:

> "The only source of power in any country is the people. The president, who completely lost the confidence of his people, lost the presidential power de facto and, moreover, had escaped from his country cannot be legitimate [sic].

Methodologically, this statement also confirmed that Atambayev's perceptions of the causes of conflict were reflective of the government's official position. Atambayev also pointed out that the Kyrgyz people united behind their "belief in justice and freedom, love for the Motherland" and desire to create a better future for future generations (Atambayev 2013b), and "God's will" (Atambayev 2012c) affected the onset of the 2005 revolution.

6.5.2.3 Perceived consequences of uprising

Previously discussed consequences of revolution in Atambayev's discourse included the loss of life in April and June 2010 (Atambayev 2013b). For example, in relation to Kyrgyzstan's second revolution Atambayev (2012c) stated "on the 7 April under thick and fast bullets our citizens were killed again. They came to "Ala-too" square in order to defend the country from tyranny and were killed for the future of the people." Notably, Atambayev (2014a) observed that these consequences were not unique to Kyrgyzstan, and that following Ukraine's 2014 revolution it also saw fatalities, and faced nationalism and separatism.

Atambayev also identified additional social, economic, and developmental consequences of revolutions. Socially, Atambayev reiterated both Bakiyev (2007) and Otunbayeva (2011f) when he acknowledged that the Kyrgyz people suffered from protest fatigue. Atambayev (2011) observed that "People are tired of demonstrations and uncertainty. The time has come for action." Multiple interviewees also confirmed that fatigue, tiredness and exhaustion affected the population of Kyrgyzstan after two revolutions (S. Juraev 2016; Sarabekov 2016; E. Juraev 2016). Socially and economically, Atambayev pointed out that the protestors who demonstrated against the nationalization of the Kumtor gold mine violated the rights of Kyrgyz citizens and negatively affected Kyrgyzstan's economy (Interfax News Agency 2013), and national security (Luk͡ianova 2013). Atambayev (2013a) also noted that while demonstrations in Kyrgyzstan while they no longer frightened the leaders of other countries, they frightened investors. Developmentally, Atambayev (2013d) highlighted that as a result of "confrontations and internal feuds" Kyrgyzstan's transition period was extended. Finally, Atambayev (Kabarlar 2014) pointed out that revolution often begets a second another revolution.

6.5.3 Perceived causes and consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings

Similar to Otunbayeva, Atambayev's discussion of the causes and consequences of the Arab Spring was limited. Atambayev pointed out two causes of the Arab Spring revolution, which shared his perceived causes of revolution at home in Kyrgyzstan, and regionally in Ukraine. Similar to Otunbayeva, Atambayev also stressed that the Arab Spring began in Kyrgyzstan, but added a concluding element, that the Arab Spring also ended in Kyrgyzstan. These strands of Atambayev's discourse, and their implications for an elite-level demonstration effect, are discussed in turn below.

Atambayev's narrative of the factors which brought about the Arab Spring reiterated that the ruling authorities' personal enrichment, and people's lack of trust in the government drove unrest. This is evident in Atambayev's (Kabarlar 2014) statement:

> *If the power does not think about the people, and thinks only about itself, about its own pocket, then reasons appear for revolution. The reason of all these revolutions in Ukraine, in the Arab countries and in Kyrgyzstan, came from one power.*

On multiple occasions Atambayev (Atambayev 2012a; Kabarlar 2014) issued almost identical statements which utilized the example of the Arab Spring to show that without trust and leadership, even artillery will not save the ruling authorities. In one such statement Atambayev (Kabarlar 2014) said:

> *The source of the power is the people and the force of any power, is people's trust. You saw in the Arab and in other countries, neither automatic machines, or machine guns, or tanks save the power. Only trust of the people or the presence of a true leader.*

Atambayev also pointed out the limits of consolidating presidential power in the constitution in the absence of people's trust in the government. Atambayev (BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union 2012) stated:

> *The authorities are strong by virtue of the trust of the people. If people trust me, I will be a strong president. I can write any constitution, tailored to myself, but will it keep me in place? The "Arab Spring" and two revolutions in Kyrgyzstan prove that if the people do not trust you, no constitution that you may think up will save you.*

Taken together, these statement suggest that Atambayev understood the limitations of a consolidated presidency when confronted with people power.

Alongside trust, Atambayev's narrative stressed that the Arab Spring both began and ended in Kyrgyzstan. For example, Atambayev (Avtor K-News 2012) stated:

> *You remember, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin once said at a summit in St Petersburg, that the "Arab Spring" began in Kyrgyzstan But after this the President of Turkey said a good phrase 'Kyrgyzstan already passed its Arab Spring,' and is becoming attractive for investment.*

In emphasizing that Kyrgyzstan had passed its Arab Spring, Atambayev's narrative made two points. Firstly, similar to Otunbayeva, Atambayev's discourse reiterated that Kyrgyzstan overcame the consequences of the countries which had seen an Arab Spring. For Atambayev, these included war (Radio Azattyq 2013), state failure (AKIpress News Agency 2014; Kabarlar 2014) and bloodshed (Venediktov et al. 2012). The fact that Kyrgyzstan overcame the consequences of revolution is evident in Atambayev's (AKIpress News Agency 2014) statement that, "We have had two revolutions in Kyrgyzstan, but, luckily, were able to find the way out of the crisis. Look at Arab countries that had revolutions and some of them are collapsing." Additionally, Atambayev (Kabarlar 2014) stated:

> *Like the Arab Spring showed, they can end by the collapse of a country. For example, Libya can soon collapse in two parts. We see what is going on in Ukraine. Maybe God helped us and we could get out of this situation.*

Secondly, Atambayev pointed out that Kyrgyzstan was stronger and more democratic than before. For example, Atambayev (BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit 2014) observed, "We have already experienced our own Arab Spring. We are a different country now. One can no longer talk to us from a position of strength. Kyrgyzstan will never kneel down before anyone." This is also visible in Atambayev's (AKIpress News Agency 2015) statement that:

> *When we observe the consequences of the "Arab Spring" in many countries of the world, we, of course, remember that the "Arab Spring" began 9 months after the latest revolution in April 2010 in Kyrgyzstan. But thanks to the wisdom of our people we were able to pass these most difficult times. I am absolutely convinced that henceforth Kyrgyzstan found its correct path.*

In Atambayev's rhetoric, Kyrgyzstan therefore not only dealt with the consequences of its Arab Spring, but did so successfully.

From 2012 onward, Atambayev utilized the conclusion of the Arab Spring, yet the continued presence of demonstrations to counter assumptions of domestic instability in Kyrgyzstan. For example, Atambayev (Vecheriĭ Bishkek 2012) stated:

> *Many say that we have an unstable region, every day there are demonstrations. Usually in Arab countries if demonstrations begin, everyone waits for a revolution. But in Kyrgyzstan demonstrations became usual, ordinary events. Kyrgyzstan is like a rough hand, it flows and bubbles. Our "Arab Spring" is behind, we already passed it.*

On another occasion Atambayev (Belyĭ Parus 2013) added, "The absence of demonstrations and dead quiet is an indicator that in countries not everything is in order with democracy, that in the state an explosion is possible, like it happened in the Arab countries." Atambayev's statements support Khamidov's (2016) statement that the government of Kyrgyzstan uses protest differently in relation to different audiences. In an interview with the author, Khadimov (2016) cited the government's use of 2013 protest statistics to a domestic audience to highlight the negative economic consequences of uprising, but the government's use of those same statistics to an international audience to evidence that Kyrgyzstan was a liberal country.

Atambayev's narrative of the causes and consequences of the Arab Spring uprising, did not suggest the occurrence of an elite-level demonstration effect in which he perceived the Arab Spring as a threat to Kyrgyz regime security and attempted to forestall any challenges to his leadership. Rather, Atambayev pointed out that the Arab Spring began and ended in Kyrgyzstan, and that unlike the countries which saw Arab Spring uprisings, Kyrgyzstan overcame revolution's negative consequences. Atambayev's narrative therefore reiterated Otunbayeva's through its association with events elsewhere, and disassociation

with their negative effects, in order to legitimize political happenings at home. The absence of an elite-level demonstration effect in Kyrgyzstan brought by the Arab Spring uprisings is also useful for establishing the necessary preconditions for its occurrence. Theoretically, it suggested that an elite-level demonstration effect is less likely to occur when a domestic revolution has already taken place, and after a peaceful transition of power has occurred. Although further research is needed to establish a causal relationship between domestic revolution and the absence of an elite-level demonstration effect, this case study has established the first step necessary to advance this strand of research because it has established the initial conditions which may account for the absence of an elite-level demonstration effect.

Despite the lack of an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring in Kyrgyzstan, multiple signs of apprehension appeared in Kyrgyzstan regarding a Kyrgyz Euromaidan. For example, the video "Trojan Horses" (Trojan Horses 2014) aired on Kyrgyz television. The video blamed American NGOs of backing revolutions to implement regime change and of "threatening to destabilize Kyrgyzstan with a Ukraine-style, anti-Russian uprising" (Trilling 2014). Although, it was not clear who produced the video, Trilling (2014) pointed out that similar videos were aired on Russian state television. Another sign of apprehension over a Kyrgyz Euromaidan was a meeting held on 27 February 2014 with government representatives, activists, and opposition politicians which discussed the possibility of a Euromaidan scenario in Kyrgyzstan (Sabyrbekov 2014). Other signs included the parliamentarian Irina Karamushkina's request that Special Services check the youth event TechCamp; she suspected it of establishing the basis for a domestic "Maidan" and training activists (Akishev 2014a). Additionally, the leader of the *Ata-Zhurt* party, Kamchybek Tashiev, stated that Kyrgyzstan should be united against the threat of the "organization of Maidan" in Kyrgyzstan (Akishev 2014b). However, these signs did not stem from Atambayev (2015c) who pointed out that Kyrgyzstan was the only Central Asian country to congratulate Ukraine following its revolution. Theoretically this suggested that signs of apprehension towards domestic unrest, despite its normalization and legitimation, does not signify a lack of trepidation. Legitimation of protest and disquiet towards its future occurrence can transpire simultaneously and are not mutually exclusive.

6.5.4 Lessons learned?

The fact that Kyrgyzstan did not experience an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring informed the theoretical development of the demonstration effect because it suggested that an elite-level demonstration effect is more likely to occur under longstanding leadership and if domestic revolution has not occurred. However, as Khamidov (2016) pointed out, there are limits to theorizing from Kyrgyzstan's experience. In an interview with the author, Khamidov (2016) stated:

> *There is another claim that you can't extrapolate from the Kyrgyz experience onto other Central Asian republics. In other words, most Central Asian theories, they are based on Kyrgyz case studies and the criticism is that what works in Kyrgyzstan doesn't work for Uzbekistan or Turkmenistan because it's a completely different system now.*

For this reason the case of Kyrgyzstan has provided the initial conditions for the absence of an elite-level demonstration effect. In doing so it has laid the foundation for further research which tests the causal relationship between a state which has seen revolution and the absence of the elite-level demonstration effect.

Because of Kyrgyzstan's lack of an elite-level demonstration effect, it is likely that any lessons learned under Atambayev stemmed from Kyrgyzstan's experience with unrest at home. Indeed, according to the author's interview with Alexander Wolters (2016), Director of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, "In Kyrgyzstan the lessons are always made in comparison to what we had before. It means either Bakiyev or Akayev." Atambayev's rhetoric also evidenced Wolters' (2016) perspective. For example, as previously discussed, Atambayev's receptiveness to learning is evidenced through Kyrgyzstan's experience with domestic unrest under Akayev and Bakiyev, and to a lesser extent to the domestic unrest which occurred under his incumbency. To measure learning, I extend Kubicek's (2011, 120) method of identifying learning when the expected "lessons" are already in place. While Kubicek (2011, 120) identified learning through a correlation between the direction of policy and anticipated learning, I identify learning through an association between a perceived cause of conflict, and a behaviour, or policy to offset the aforementioned cause. Utilizing this method, Atambayev's framing of corruption, ethnic policy, Kyrgyzstan's development policy, and the 2015 parliamentary elections, suggested learning. The following discussion will address each of these elements in turn, followed by consideration of Kyrgyzstan a lesson for other Central Asian countries.

Policy-wise three lessons presented themselves when measuring Atambayev's learning according to a correlation between a perceived cause of conflict and a policy or behaviour to resolve the aforementioned cause. Firstly, Kyrgyzstan's adoption of an "Anti-Corruption Strategy" (Atambayev 2012e)

suggested learning because Atambayev had previously identified corruption as a factor which drove both domestic unrest and Ukraine's 2014 conflict. In practice, however, an interviewee disagreed that the government took any lessons from previous regimes in terms of reducing corruption (S. Juraev 2016). Moreover, Freedom House (Marat 2014, 354) reported that Atambayev's SDPK was the only party which was unaffected by his anti-corruption fight. These both suggested a limitation to Atambayev's learning from corruption as a cause of conflict, despite the introduction of a counter policy. Secondly, Atambayev's (2015e) statement that the causes of the 2010 ethnic conflict were studied by various commissions, and that the "Concept of Strengthening the Unity of the People and Interethnic Relations," was approved and in the process of being implemented, also suggested learning from Kyrgyzstan's experience with domestic conflict. Although Atambayev did not outwardly identify ethnic conflict as a cause of unrest per say, measures taken to understand its causes and improve ethnic relations suggested some degree of learning. Thirdly, Kyrgyzstan's "Strategy of Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic ('road map') for the period of 2013 to 2017" also suggested learning (Atambayev 2012i). This is because Atambayev (2014d) identified leadership thinking about itself and its wealth as causes of revolution, avowed that Kyrgyzstan's leadership would no longer give rise revolutions, and put forward Kyrgyzstan's development strategy as a solution. Additional evidence is found in the fact that Atambayev (2014d) highlighted that Kyrgyzstan's development strategy did not just address questions of economic development, but also the strengthening of a "people's government," and cited the provision of free and fair elections as an example. Moreover, Atambayev (Kabar 2012) presented Kyrgyzstan's development strategy as an initiative which evidenced the government's interaction with civil society, and a thus a confidence building measure for people's trust in the government. The fact that Atambayev previously identified unlawful elections (Atambayev 2015h), poor state-society relations (Atambayev 2012c, 2013c) and people's lack of trust in the government (Atambayev 2012a; BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union 2012; Atambayev 2014a; Kabarlar 2014) as factors contributing to the onset of both domestic revolutions and to Euromaidan, and put forward Kyrgyzstan's development strategy as a solution to these causes, supported evidence of learning.

Behaviourally, Kyrgyzstan's 4 October 2015 parliamentary elections also suggested a lesson learned. This was visible in both Atambayev's narrative, which featured free and fair elections as a remedy for conflict, and in the OSCE's assessment of the 2015 parliamentary elections. For example, Atambayev's identified unfair elections (Atambayev 2015h), and a lack of trust in fair elections and an honest transfer of power (Atambayev 2014a) as factors which drove

Kyrgyzstan's 2005 and 2010 revolutions, and Ukraine's 2014 conflict. Notably, Atambayev's (2012h) treatment of elections stressed the need for people to learn that in order to gain political power they should prepare for elections, as opposed to organizing conspiracies or coups. According to the OSCE's Observation Mission's preliminary findings, Kyrgyzstan succeeded. The OSCE's Observation mission found the October 2015 parliamentary elections "competitive," and favourably noted that state administrative resources were not abused in this election (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2015, 1–2).[7]

Domestic lessons aside, one interviewee pointed out that other Central Asian states perceived Kyrgyzstan itself as a lesson. Baktygulov (2016) commented that after the Arab Spring, Kazakh and Uzbek politicians came to Kyrgyzstan, as well as researchers from state think tanks, and visited Osh, and other areas in Kyrgyzstan to determine what had happened. Baktygulov (2016) stated:

> *And since 2011, I mean after the Arab Spring, more researchers from the pro-governmental think tanks like Kazakh Institute for Strategic Studies, or Uzbekistan the same one, they started to visit Kyrgyzstan. Especially to conduct field visits to Osh, to all particular areas in order to study what actually was there in Kyrgyzstan, what happened here. And Kazakhstani researchers they said Kazakhstan is like Kyrgyzstan. They said like a formula. Kazakhstan equals to Kyrgyzstan plus petrol/oil. Without oil Kazakhstan is like Kyrgyzstan. The same connection. So the Arabic spring in this case plays a positive role here, for us in this region as well. It was a really great teacher thanks to them, not to us.*

Baktygulov's (2016) comments confirmed Wolter's (2016) question regarding how "to understand the role of Kyrgyzstan within Central Asia." Wolter's (2016) suggested that "we look at Kazakhstan with a big focus, but Kyrgyzstan as a close example of protest from either which then to learn a lesson or not learn a lesson next to the Arab Spring." A study entitled "*State Revolution in Kyrgyzstan: the Role of Internal and External Factors*," about the second revolution in Kyrgyzstan, which was carried out by the Fund of the First President of Kazakhstan, also suggested that Kazakhstan attempted to learn from Kyrgyzstan (The Fund of the First President of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan 2011). However, it would appear that there were also limitations to Kazakhstan learning from Kyrgyzstan. In Kyrgyzstan in 2002, demonstrators protested against the arrest of the parliamentarian Azimbek Beknazarov, who called for Akayev's impeachment

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[7] As defined by Esengeldiev (2017, 2) "administrative resources" refers to "Officials' use of government structures, facilities, and personnel for campaign functions external to their official purposes."

after he transferred land to China (Olcott 2003, 10). Yet in 2016, the Kazakhstan government proposed changes to the land code, and in response Kazakhs protested widely against proposed widely against these changes and the fear that Chinese investors would buy Kazakh land.

6.6 Conclusion

An examination of the Kyrgyz leaders' narratives of the causes and consequences of unrest between 2005 and 2015 and fieldwork interviews conducted from September to December 2016 did not reveal an elite-level demonstration effect in Kyrgyzstan brought about by the Arab Spring uprisings. Rather, both Otunbayeva and Atambayev emphasized that the Arab Spring began in Kyrgyzstan and that the MENA followed Kyrgyzstan's example. However, they differentiated between the negative consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings and those of the second revolution in Kyrgyzstan. Atambayev's assurances that the Arab Spring ended in Kyrgyzstan, and not in the countries which actually saw an Arab Spring, again highlighted that the similarities between Kyrgyzstan and other countries which have seen revolution only held true to a certain extent. Otunbayeva and Atambayev's narrative was strategic as it served to legitimize the post-revolutionary processes occurring at home to a domestic and international audience.

The absence of an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring in Kyrgyzstan has informed its theoretical development. It suggested that an elite-level demonstration effect is more likely to occur in countries that have not seen recent revolution. In doing so, it has established the initial conditions for the absence of an elite-level demonstration effect and provided the first step necessary to advance research which investigates this causal relationship. Moreover, because of the absence of an elite-level demonstration effect, the majority of lessons learned in Kyrgyzstan stemmed from domestic processes. Only Otunbayeva's increased awareness to the role of ICT following the Arab Spring suggested a lesson learned from further afield. In addition to informing the theoretical mechanism of the elite-level demonstration effect, the case of Kyrgyzstan is also significant because it illustrates that regional countries, in particular Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, have attempted to learn from Kyrgyzstan's experience with civil unrest. It also has informed the limitations of

this learning. Indeed, Kazakhstan's government attempted to change its land code, despite unrest over a similar issue in 2002 in Aksy, Kyrgyzstan.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the findings of the previous two case study chapters on Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, specifically in relation to the themes of the elite-level demonstration effect and elite learning. The discussion is divided into three sections. The first section compares how elites in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan perceived the Arab Spring uprisings. It sets out whether the Arab Spring uprisings impacted Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan's perceptions of regime security, and the nature of any impact felt. In Kyrgyzstan, the following discussion is restricted to elite rhetoric under former Presidents Otunbayeva and Atambayev, whose incumbencies coincided with the Arab Spring uprisings and their immediate aftermath. It then evaluates whether a demonstration effect, or a lack of, gave rise to learning in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The second section explores major developments in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan since the end of the delimited time frame in 2015 to determine if the presence or absence of an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring has influenced learning in the medium term. In Kazakhstan, the regime's response to the 2011 unrest in Zhanaozen is compared with its response to the 2016 protests against changes in land code. These examples of unrest were selected for comparison because both followed the Arab Spring uprisings, and both are the widest incidents of unrest in Kazakhstan's recent history. In Kyrgyzstan, the 11th December 2016 constitutional referendum held under former President Atambayev is discussed.

The third and final section of this chapter evaluates the wider implications of the findings of the thesis as a whole. It compares the case studies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to draw conclusions about the theoretical mechanism of the elite-level demonstration effect and the conditions which give rise to its presence or absence. It also addresses how and why political change appears in some societies, and the resulting implications for the fields of authoritarianism, civil resistance, and learning. Finally, areas for future research are identified.

7.2 The elite-level demonstration effect: its presence in Kazakhstan, its absence in Kyrgyzstan, and its relationship to learning

In Kazakhstan, a longitudinal narrative analysis of presidential rhetoric from 2005 to 2015 and fieldwork interviews indicated that the Arab Spring uprisings brought about an elite-level demonstration effect despite the absence of unrest at home. That is, the regime perceived a heightened threat to its security as a result of instability and regime responses elsewhere, and it sought to shore-up its position and forestall the emergence of local challenges as a consequence of this, whether through discourse or policy. Narrative analysis of Kazakh elite rhetoric consisted of three phases. The first phase of narrative analysis revealed the regime's receptiveness to learning and awareness of cross-border influence. Taken together, these established the foundation necessary for an elite-level demonstration effect and the possibility that the Kazakh regime learned from the Arab Spring uprisings. The second phase of narrative analysis examined President Nazarbayev's framing of the causes and consequences of unrest in general, and in relation to domestic and regional conflicts. The third phase of narrative analysis examined President Nazarbayev's framing of the causes and consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings. This approach revealed three new elements in the regime's discourse and behaviour in relation to the Arab Spring uprisings that evidenced an elite-level demonstration effect and learning brought about by the Arab Spring uprisings.

Firstly, Nazarbayev framed the Arab Spring uprisings as a security threat which necessitated a multilateral regional response. For example, Nazarbayev (2012h) stressed that the instability caused by the Arab Spring increased the need for "regional security mechanisms." Moreover, in a June 2011 meeting with SCO member states, Nazarbayev called for the creation of an "SCO council" to prevent regional conflict (Satayeva 2011). To support his initiative, Nazarbayev pointed out that the SCO was unable to intervene in conflicts and two "coups" in Kyrgyzstan (Satayeva 2011). Two months later, Nazarbayev reiterated these concerns. In his August 2011 speech at in informal summit of the CSTO, Nazarbayev called for the prevention of the spread of colour revolutions in the post-Soviet space (Kucera 2011a). Taken together, Nazarbayev's framing of the Arab Spring as a security threat which necessitated multilateral collective action, and his call for the creation of an SCO council to deal with potential regional unrest, highlighted his concern that similar unrest could erupt at home. As such,

this is the first indication that the Arab Spring uprisings brought about an elite-level demonstration effect in Kazakhstan.

Secondly, following the Arab Spring uprisings, the Kazakh regime's narrative of external interference shifted its emphasis from NGOs to ICT as tools of forced democratization. This evolution in discourse is significant when considering the role in overcoming the collective action problem that was attributed to ICT in the Arab Spring uprisings. This shift is visible when comparing Nazarbayev's statements from 2005 and 2012. For example, in a statement which alluded to the colour revolutions, Nazarbayev (2005c) accused NGOs of funding "political associations" to achieve their end goal of destabilizing society. Nazarbayev reiterated a similar statement which replaced NGOs with ICT in a statement which alluded to the Arab Spring uprisings. Nazarbayev (2012b) stated "Information technologies and opportunities encourage almost all countries to move towards progress. However, one cannot fail to notice that the methods of 'encouraging modernization', especially when it is about 'external encouragement' of unprepared political changes in some societies." In this statement Nazarbayev described ICT, as opposed to NGOs, as a driver of forced political change. Because Nazarbayev (2007d) began referring to the media as a driver of instability as early as 2007, the addition of ICT as a tool of forced democratization following the Arab Spring evidences both a continuation and evolution of the media's ability to influence the onset of conflict in Kazakhstan's discourse following the colour revolutions. This evolution in presidential rhetoric suggested the occurrence of an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the role of ICT in the Arab Spring uprisings.

Finally, three indicators pointed towards the fact that the role of youth in the Arab Spring brought about an elite-level demonstration effect on Kazakhstan. Firstly, Tengri News (2012a) reported that "Nazarbayev advised Kazakhstan young people to not get fascinated by the Arab Spring" [*sic*]. The article gave details of Nazarbayev's speech in which he warned his audience of scholarship recipients that "there are people who envy us and want everything to go not so well in Kazakhstan," and that revolution sets a state's economy back between ten and fifteen years (Tengri News 2012a). Nazarbayev's emphasis on the consequences of revolutions to this particular audience suggested apprehension that unrest elsewhere could inspire Kazakh youth to protest. Secondly, elite reaction to the book *Molotov Cocktail: Anatomy of Kazakh Youth* (Satpayev et al. 2014) pointed to the occurrence of an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the role youth played in the Arab Spring uprisings. The editor of *Molotov Cocktail*, Dosym Satpayev (2014, 5) wrote that the Arab Spring demonstrated the ability of youth to drive political change. After its publication, Satpayev (2016)

disclosed that numerous government officials contacted him about this topic. Finally, following the Arab Spring, government officials turned to at least one research institute to investigate strategies of overthrowing governments. An interviewee shared a document produced for officials which examined the relationship between civil society, youth, and political processes, and the steps which led to uprising in Tunisia, Libya, Syria, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan (Anonymous 3 2016). The fact that this study compared the processes which led to uprising in these countries with domestic conditions in Kazakhstan, suggested the occurrence of Beissinger's (2007, 269) "elite learning model" in which elites learn from models of modular collective action, and implement institutional constraints and repressive measures to thwart the model's domestic success. This is further supported by an interviewee's assertion that the government viewed the Arab Spring as a tactic to oust the government, which led to their preoccupation with developing a counter-strategy (Anonymous 3 2016). Because seemingly apolitical youth were credited with facilitating mobilization in the Arab Spring (Cavatorta 2012), the Kazakh regime's preoccupation with this demographic exhibits the presence of an elite-level demonstration effect. It also suggests the government's awareness of opposition outside of the traditional channels of civil society following the Arab Spring uprisings.

Notably, Nazarbayev (2007g) did not directly identify youth as a cause of conflict prior to the Arab Spring, but noted that they needed protection from "dubious kinds of ideas." After the colour revolutions Kazakhstan followed in Russia's creation of *Nashi,* and created *Zhas Otan*, the youth branch of its ruling party, *Nur Otan* (Polese and Ó Beacháin 2011, 124). This revealed that the relationship between youth and regime change concerned the Kazakh regime prior to the Arab Spring. However, this concern deepened following the Arab Spring because the Kazakh regime became concerned about the effect of the example of youth outside of the region on its domestic population.

The presence of an elite-level demonstration effect in Kazakhstan brought about by the Arab Spring uprisings posed the question of whether it gave rise to learning. Indeed, President Nazarbayev (2011d) himself alluded to learning from the events of the Arab Spring when he acknowledged that it could lead post-Soviet governments to draw various "conclusions." Because Kazakhstan's December 2011 Zhanaozen unrest occurred approximately eleven months after the Arab Spring uprisings, the regime's response enables an evaluation of the relationship between the elite-level demonstration effect and learning. To measure learning I identified a correlation between a perceived cause of conflict, and a policy or behaviour that offsets the aforementioned cause. In the Kazakh regime's response to Zhanaozen, this correlation is visible in their framing of ICT

as a driver of the Arab Spring unrest and their shutdown of internet and phone services in the aftermath of violence between police and demonstrators. This reaction is notable because ICT did not play a mobilizing role in Zhanaozen, but the regime reacted like it did. The regime also countered associations between the Zhanaozen unrest and the Arab Spring uprisings. Taken together, the regime's shutdown of media and phone services and countering of associations between the Arab Spring and the Zhanaozen unrest suggested learning from the mobilizing role ICT played in the Arab Spring.

Further evidence of learning is found in the 2012 amendment to the "Law on National Security" which allowed the government to block telecommunications during terrorist operations and riots, and laws passed in 2014 which allowed the blocking of communications networks without a court order (Freedom House 2016). Although there are methodological limitations in attributing an event to policy change in an authoritarian setting (Ambrosio 2017, 185; Kubicek 2011, 115) these developments are still significant. They demonstrate that rhetorical changes regarding ICT have been translated into policy changes. Additionally, these changes suggest an increased awareness to opposition outside of its traditional channels following the Arab Spring uprisings and the Zhanaozen unrest that continued through 2014. The author's interview with Satpayev (2016) revealed that since Zhanaozen the regime has intervened on behalf of workers. After the Zhanaozen unrest, the Kazakh regime reinstated miners to their jobs, but also expanded its reach into rural areas of Kazakhstan via policing (Marat 2016a, 540–41). Taken together, what this suggests is that following the Arab Spring uprisings and Zhanaozen, the regime learned both how to contain unrest and to utilize unrest to its own benefit. Because the role of ICT in Zhanaozen showed evidence of learning, it confirmed that the presence of an elite-level demonstration effect is a mark of learning.

In Kyrgyzstan, narrative analysis of former President Otunbayeva's rhetoric from 7 April 2010 to 1 December 2011 and fieldwork interviews did not indicate that the Arab Spring uprisings brought about an elite-level demonstration effect in Kyrgyzstan. The narrative analysis which led to this finding consisted of three phases. The first phase of narrative analysis demonstrated the regime's receptiveness to learning and awareness of cross-border influence. Taken together, these established the underlying foundation necessary for the occurrence of an elite-level demonstration effect, and opened the possibility that the Kyrgyz regime learned from events elsewhere. The second phase of narrative analysis examined President Otunbayeva's official narrative of causes and consequences of unrest in general, and in relation to domestic and regional events. The third phase examined President Otunbayeva's official narrative of

the causes and consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings. While this approach revealed new elements in the regime's discourse and behaviour in relation to the Arab Spring uprisings, these new elements did not suggest that the ruling authorities perceived the uprisings as a threat to regime security and consequently attempted to pre-empt challenges to their leadership.

Otunbayeva's narrative of the onset of the Arab Spring uprisings was minimal. It offered three universal factors which she perceived as influencing the onset of uprising, and by extension the Arab Spring uprisings and unrest at home in Kyrgyzstan. These included people's loss of patience, people's choice to protest (Otunbayeva 2011b), and the desire for societies to achieve self-identification (Transcript by Federal News Service 2010). Rather, Otunbayeva's narrative of the Arab Spring uprisings focused on three claims. Firstly, she emphasized that the Arab Spring uprisings began in Kyrgyzstan and continued to the MENA. Otunbayeva pointed out that this assertion originated from Russia's President Vladimir Putin, rather than from herself. Secondly, Otunbayeva expressed solidarity with the countries which saw an Arab Spring, thereby furthering her narrative that the Arab Spring began in Kyrgyzstan. Finally, Otunbayeva highlighted that Kyrgyzstan avoided the negative consequences experienced in the other countries which saw an Arab Spring, even when confronted with its June 2010 ethnic conflict. Taken together, Otunbayeva's claim that the Arab Spring began in Kyrgyzstan, yet her differentiation between the trajectory which followed Kyrgyzstan's revolution and the negative consequences which followed revolution in the MENA, suggested that Kyrgyzstan's interim government utilized the Arab Spring uprisings to legitimize post-revolutionary processes in Kyrgyzstan to both domestic and international audiences.

Because Kyrgyzstan did not see an elite-level demonstration effect under Otunbayeva, any lessons learned likely stemmed from Kyrgyzstan's experience with domestic unrest. Indeed, apart from an increased awareness of the role that ICT can play in challenging authoritarian regimes (Otunbayeva 2011j), the majority of potential lessons appeared to originate from factors which drove revolution at home, although these were not without criticism. For example, the timing and content of the 27 June 2010 constitutional referendum faced criticism. Otunbayeva framed the referendum as necessary to prevent further instability (Solovyov 2010). This may have pressured voters to endorse it (Freedom House 2011), or thwarted discussion of its merits and limitations (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2010a, 2). There were also questions over the democratic nature of the constitution's content which gave the president the power to appoint and oversee the state prosecutor's office, defence, and national security (Collins

2011, 158). Moreover, the potential to remove a president from office did not appear feasible because it required 80 votes and no party could hold over 65 seats (Collins 2011, 158). Other potential lessons garnered less criticism. The OSCE/ODHIR (2010b, 1) found the 10 October 2010 parliamentary elections evidence of further democratic consolidation in Kyrgyzstan. The fact that the party *Ata-Zhurt*, which opposed the interim government yet won the majority of seats (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2010b, 4, 28), suggested increased political openness (Freedom House 2011). Additionally, Otunbayeva's voluntary transfer of power, which marked a shift in behaviour from her predecessors, presented a clear indication that the interim government learned from its experience that growing authoritarianism can drive conflict. Because establishing learning depends on how it is measured, Otunbayeva's observations on authoritarian stability, state-society relations, and people power also suggested that elite learning can occur that is not measurable through changes in policy or behaviour.

Similar to Otunbayeva, narrative analysis of former President Atambayev's rhetoric from 1 December 2011 to 31 December 2015 and fieldwork interviews did not indicate that the Arab Spring uprisings brought about an elite-level demonstration effect in Kyrgyzstan. Narrative analysis followed the previously outlined method. It first set out the regime's receptiveness to learning and awareness of cross-border influence. This provided the foundation necessary for an elite-demonstration effect, and introduced the possibility that the Kyrgyz regime learned from events elsewhere. This was followed by an examination of President Atambayev's official narrative of the causes and consequences of unrest in general, and in relation to domestic, regional, and international events, including the Arab Spring uprisings. While this approach revealed new elements in the regime's discourse and behaviour in relation to the Arab Spring uprisings, these additions did not suggest that Kyrgyzstan's ruling authorities perceived the Arab Spring uprisings as a threat to regime security, nor attempted to thwart challenges to their leadership.

Like, Otunbayeva, Atambayev's narrative of the causes of the onset of the Arab Spring uprisings was limited. Atambayev identified shared causes between the Arab Spring and other revolutions including the ruling authorities' personal enrichment, and people's lack of trust in the government (Kabarlar 2014). In addition to these shared causes, Atambayev's narrative made three claims in relation to the Arab Spring uprisings. Firstly, Atambayev reiterated that the Arab Spring began in Kyrgyzstan. However, he added that the Arab Spring also ended in Kyrgyzstan and emphasized that this observation stemmed from the former President of Turkey, Abdullah Gül (Avtor K-News 2012). Atambayev therefore

furthered and concluded Otunbayeva's established narrative of the Arab Spring uprisings in Kyrgyzstan. Secondly, Atambayev reiterated Otunbayeva's claim that Kyrgyzstan overcame the negative consequences of uprising which the other countries which saw an Arab Spring experienced. This enabled Atambayev to assert that Kyrgyzstan emerged stronger and more democratic following its own Arab Spring. Finally, Atambayev utilized the continued presence of demonstrations in Kyrgyzstan, despite the conclusion of its own Arab Spring, to illustrate Kyrgyzstan's democratic nature. Atambayev's narrative therefore reiterated and broadened Otunbayeva's in its legitimation of political happenings at home.

In the absence of an elite-level demonstration effect under Atambayev's leadership, any lessons learned in Kyrgyzstan likely stemmed from factors closer to home. Policy-related lessons, in which it is possible to trace a correlation between a perceived cause of conflict and a policy solution, included Kyrgyzstan's anti-corruption strategy (Atambayev 2012e), the "Concept of Strengthening the Unity of the People and Interethnic Relations" (2015e), and the "Strategy of Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic ('road map') for the period of 2013 to 2017" (Atambayev 2012i). However, despite apparent lessons regarding corruption, in practice Atambayev's SDPK was the only party that remained untouched by his anti-corruption campaign (Marat 2014, 354). The 4 October 2015 parliamentary elections, which the OCSE rated favourably based on their competitiveness and the lack of administrative resources used (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2015, 1–2), indicated that Atambayev's administration learned that from the first and second Tulip Revolution that dishonest elections can drive revolution. However, Atambayev's initiative to amend the constitution, in spite of its clause which specified that amendments could not be undertaken until 1 September 2020 (Government of the Kyrgyz Republic 2010), and which enabled a consolidation of vertical power suggested otherwise. Namely, it suggested that Atambayev, similar to his predecessors Akayev and Bakiyev, learned how to consolidate power.

7.3 Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan since 2015

Developments since 2015 in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan also point towards further regime consolidation and a mixed picture of learning in the medium term,

regardless of the occurrence or lack of an elite-level demonstration effect. In Kazakhstan, a comparison of the regime's response to the 2011 Zhanaozen unrest with the 2016 protests against changes in the land code sheds light on how lessons from the Arab Spring have since fared. Notably, the Kazakh regime's response to the land protest echoed its response to the Zhanaozen unrest, which occurred five years prior, in two ways. Firstly, the regime used the land protests to crack down on political activism. In doing so the regime showed what Lillis (2017, 6) described as "an indication of its entrenched reluctance to accept the existence of dissent or opposition of any form." In both the Zhanaozen unrest and the land protests this was accomplished by the government attributing instability to an attempted coup (Lillis 2017, 4). A spokesman for Kazakhstan's National Security Service, Ruslan Karasev, attributed the land protests to businessman Tokhtar Tuleshov. Karasev (Nurshayeva and Auyezov 2016) stated, "His plan included destabilising the situation in the country by creating flashpoints, organising protests and mass unrest." Additionally, numerous activists were arrested for their intention to protest in peaceful demonstrations on 21 May 2016, or for posting information on social media regarding the protest (Amnesty International 2016). Secondly, according to Freedom House (Freedom House 2016), the regime targeted Internet and phone services; between 19 May and 23 May 2016 the social networks, messaging services, and independent news outlets were blocked, including Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, VKontakte, Viber and Youtube, and Kazakh RFE/RFL and Uralsweek. However, an anonymous interviewee noted that participants in the land protests were not active users of social networks (Anonymous 1 2016). It is also interesting that the land protests were not reported on television with an emergency statement from President Nazarbayev (Pannier 2017). A lack of reporting is not new in Kazakhstan and suggests silence as an initial reaction to events elsewhere which the regime finds disconcerting. For example, officials did not allow documentary on the Euromaidan protest events in Ukraine to be aired on an independent television channel (Lillis 2015, 310), and did not report on the morning occurrence of Kyrgyzstan's 2005 Tulip Revolution, until the early evening broadcast (Nuritov 2005).

The Kazakh regime's response also differed in two ways from its response to Zhanaozen. Firstly, unlike in Zhanaozen, the regime did not use violence to curb unrest (Marat 2016b). Marat (2016b) argued that the regime did not use violence against demonstrators because it could generate widespread public disapproval and encourage greater opposition. These concerns stopped violence after the land protests and not the Zhanaozen unrest. This is because the land code protests took place in a capital city where there were more witnesses to record and disseminate videos showing police brutality, and that protests in

capital cities have more of a likelihood of spreading to other areas (Marat 2016b). Moreover, in capital cities the rule of law is stronger, and society is better able to organize; this can turn protests over everyday issues into a struggle between the government and society (Marat 2016b). Secondly, following the land protest, the Kazakh regime has taken steps to collaborate with civil society activists and analysts. The regime created a land reform commission composed of government officials and civil society activists (Kazinform 2016) and has invited local analysts to participate in discussions on legislation (Anonymous 1 2016; Jumaly 2016). In 2016 the regime also created the Ministry of Information and Communications, which President Nazarbayev encouraged to address problems and complaints from society (Nurmakov 2017, 75). Are these measures indicative of learning? For two interviewees, the establishment of a land reform commission showed that the regime is learning. One interviewee (Anonymous 4 2016) stated, "I think that Kazakhstan as a society is still a learning society, the land reform taught us a good lesson that the communication between state and local population should be closer." Additionally, for Jumaly (2016) the regime's invitation to activists shows that "authority is not so certain as before. It means that they are very slowly, gradually understanding something is wrong, something is not as stable as it seems." On the other hand, for another interviewee the involvement of local analysts is not necessarily a sign of learning. The interviewee (Anonymous 1 2016) stated that the regime "tried to be as flexible as possible but to keep the status quo." Potentially, all of these observations are accurate.

Because the regime's discursive and behavioural response to the land protest is both different and similar to the Zhanaozen unrest, it does not clearly suggest learning. It does however, show a potential evolution in the regime's understanding of stability. According to an anonymous interviewee (Anonymous 3 2016), "Any society is vulnerable to these kinds of situations if they don't provide a political system which is stable which creates opportunities…if you don't create a stable political system which can adequately respond to most of the requests by society." The regime's rhetorical and behavioural response to the Zhanaozen unrest indicated that for Kazakhstan, stability is equivalent to order, and order is synonymous with a lack of dissent. However, since the land protests, the regime has potentially recognized that in order to maintain stability, it must, at a minimum, appear to react to the changing demands of society through increased engagement with activists. Following the Zhanaozen unrest, the Kazakh regime also engaged with civil society, but did so to cement its authoritarian rule (Marat 2016b). While it is impossible to be certain of the authorities' motivation for engaging with civil society following the land protests, local media reported that "Political scientist advises authorities to react more efficiently to the mood of society" (Baimanov 2017).

At the same time, however, the regime's discursive reaction to a 2017 shooting in Aktobe did not show evidence of learning, as its rhetorical response echoed its outlook on the colour revolutions and the Arab Spring uprisings. Nazarbayev (2016) described the shooting in Aktobe on 5 June 2017 as "a terrorist attack" and stated that the attackers "received their instructions from abroad." Nazarbayev (2016) added:

> *We all know that the so called "colour revolutions" use a variety of different methods and begin with contrived rallies, murder and the desire to seize power. These methods have manifested themselves in our country. In countries where these revolutions succeeded, there is no longer a working state and stability, only rampant poverty and banditry that create conditions for the emergence of extremists and terrorists. The economies of these countries have gone backwards by many years.*

This statement has led at least one analyst to assert that Nazarbayev, "rhetorically–though not explicitly–linked the violence in Aktobe with the recent Land Code protests and warned the Kazakh people about the risks of a colour revolution" (Putz 2016). At the very least, the regime reiterated established conspiracy theories in which outside forces collude to destroy stability in Kazakhstan, and used the established rhetorical tactic of describing the causes and consequences of revolution to discourage potential unrest. The Kazakh Foreign Ministry's official statement on the coup in Turkey also echoed the regime's established narrative with its assertion that "Attempts to come to power by illegitimate, violent methods are unacceptable and will impede the stable development and prosperity of Turkey" (Tengri News 2016).

Developments in Kyrgyzstan since 2015 under Atambayev showed that similar to his predecessors Bakiyev and Akayev, he successfully learned how to consolidate power. This is most visible in Atambayev's call for amending the constitution, in spite of the second provision of Article 114, which specified that amendments could not be undertaken until 1 September 2020 (Government of the Kyrgyz Republic 2010). Between 2012 and 2015, a distinctive shift took place in Atambayev's narrative on amending the constitution. Atambayev (2012h) initially stated, "if I wanted to take the path of Akayev, or Bakiev, hang on to power, I don't need this. Then I would also say, let's change the constitution." Atambayev (2012i) also claimed that the constitution should not be changed because "the answers to many questions can be found within the framework of the acting constitution." However, Atambayev progressively advocated for amending the constitution. Within two years, Atambayev (2014a) put forward the idea of revising the constitution, but stipulated that the president would not gain any more power. Within four years Atambayev (2015h) framed the existing constitution as negatively affecting Kyrgyzstan's development and as grounds for

amending it. Atambayev (2015h) highlighted that Kyrgyzstan was not a full parliamentary system, and warned that that the 2010 version of Kyrgyzstan's constitution would not prevent "arbitrary rule" should the President in 2017 take after Bakiyev. Atambayev (2015h) supported his statement by claiming that the acting constitution was contradictory and open to interpretation as well as by presenting the consequences of not changing the constitution. For example, Atambayev (2015h) stated, "It is necessary to reduce the power of the President and to begin the transition to a real parliamentary government. Otherwise our people will suffer!"

Because Atambayev attempted to consolidate power via constitutional changes, it appeared that he learned from the example of his predecessors. According to the author's interview with Sarabekov (2016), Atambayev became more powerful than Bakiyev and Akayev, as evidenced by the constitutional referendum. Sarabekov (2016) observed that Atambayev was able to propose constitutional change because his SDPK party won the 2015 parliamentary elections and as a result the President's party became the ruling party. In practice, the constitutional amendments proposed in 2015, passed by referendum on 11 December 2016, did not reduce the power of the President, but reduced the independence of the judiciary (Esengeldiev 2017, 1). Furthermore, Atambayev retained control over his parliament through his party SDPK, law enforcement, and national security structures (Esengeldiev 2017, 1). Two sources also highlighted that Kyrgyzstan's shift towards a parliamentary system also helped the incumbent president. Firstly, in the author's interview with Doolotkeldieva (2016), she observed that "you can't tell Akayev or Bakiyev 'go away' anymore because this centre of power is not only with Atambayev. The grievances cannot be accumulated just against one person. The grievances are dissipated among different actors." Doolotkeldieva (2016) added, "There is no one place where could be targeted. So of course this is great for the president. He can just continue doing whatever he is doing without being directly criticized for that." Additionally, Schmitz and Wolters (2012, 12) observed that when Kyrgyzstan became a parliamentary system, it lost the president as a target for protest.

While interviewees agreed that Atambayev was consolidating his power, they disagreed on whether this was positive or negative turn of events, or if it indicated learning. On the one hand, one interviewee acknowledged Kyrgyzstan's increasing authoritarianism, but did not regard it as negative. Sarabekov (2016) observed, "the important thing is that Kyrgyzstan is becoming a little bit authoritarian. It's very interesting. I don't know. I'm not trying to say that it's bad or good, but maybe it will help them to stabilize the political situation."

Another interviewee, E. Juraev (2016) offered another perspective; Atambayev did not learn from his predecessors because like them he consolidated power utilizing the constitution. Yet, E. Juraev (2016) also highlighted the fact that Atambayev's consolidation of power, unlike that of his predecessors, was "more of a party-based dominance, instead of clans." It possible to look at Atambayev's partnership with his party SDPK from three additional other perspectives. Firstly, for E. Juraev (2016) Atambayev's reduced involvement of family in politics was a lesson learned. The fact that Atambayev (2014a) identified family clan rule as a factor leading to both domestic revolutions and to unrest in Ukraine, and did not involve his family in politics, also supported E. Juraev's assertion. Secondly, Way's (2010, 230) finding that a strong ruling party is a one of three "pillars of stable authoritarianism" also evidences a lesson learned. In particular, because Akayev's lack of a unified pro-government party which supported him contributed to his downfall (Way 2010, 244). From this perspective, Atambayev's turn towards a strong ruling party could suggest a shift towards a "stable authoritarianism." Finally, Atambayev's consolidation of power could be representative of the ongoing global trend moving away from the post-World War II liberal international order. Indeed the trend of growing authoritarianism has continued under Atambayev. For example, the British journalist Chris Rickleton was denied permission to re-enter the country in December 2017 (Sorbello 2017). The current tensions between former President Atambayev and current President Sooronbai Jeenbekov (RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service 2018), and their influence on Kyrgyzstan's political climate remains to be seen.

7.4 The elite-level demonstration effect and why it matters

Comparing the findings of case studies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the presence of an elite-level demonstration effect in Kazakhstan and its absence in Kyrgyzstan informs debate about the elite-level demonstration effect and the conditions under which it is more or less likely to occur. Its presence in Kazakhstan showed that the elite-level demonstration effect is a theoretical mechanism which can account for how ruling authorities respond to events elsewhere. Specifically, it illustrated that uprisings outside of a region can shape a regime's narrative, policy and behaviour. In today's globalized and interconnected international system, a theoretical explanation which can account for how authorities perceive and react to events elsewhere is critical. This is because a government's understanding of protest elsewhere shapes response

to domestic events and foreign policy. Because the elite-level demonstration effect acts as a measure of political change designed to ensure regime security, its presence can have implications for future civil resistance in illiberal contexts. Namely, by deepening regime security it could reduce opportunity and raise the cost of collective civil resistance. Therefore, in the same vein as Beissinger's (2007, 260–61) elite defection and elite learning model, the elite-level demonstration effect also influences outcomes.

The mechanism of the elite-level demonstration effect builds upon the work of scholars who have examined how authorities perceive and react to regional events. For example, Beissinger's (2007) elite defection and elite learning models were restricted to the former Soviet union, and Heathershaw (2009) and Tursunkulova's (2008) examinations focused on how domestic and regional protest influenced Kyrgyzstan's Tulip revolution. As Kazakhstan is influenced to a greater degree by events within the post-Soviet space than with the countries in the MENA which saw uprising (Kendzior 2012), and integrated more closely within the post-Soviet space than with MENA countries, the fact that the impact of the Arab Spring was still felt in Kazakhstan is significant. It suggests that close social and cultural ties are not essential preconditions for the occurrence of an elite-level demonstration effect. This therefore indicates that the prerequisites Beissinger (2007, 263) deemed necessary for modular phenomena, including, "common institutional characteristics, histories, cultural affinities, or modes of domination," are not necessary for an elite-level demonstration effect.

Furthermore, the occurrence of an elite-level demonstration effect in Kazakhstan brought about by the Arab Spring also shows that uprisings elsewhere, including those outside of a region, can affect authoritarian regimes through an elite-level demonstration effect, even in the absence of widespread unrest at home. This has important implications for understanding the nature of political change and its relationship to authoritarian stability. Indeed, the wider implications of Kazakhstan's rhetorical, and behavioural response to the Arab Spring uprisings challenge understanding of "stable" authoritarian regimes and necessitate examination of the internal dynamics of transformation even in the absence of widespread unrest at home. As Valbjørn and Bank's (2010) acknowledged in relation to their discussion of post-democratization in the Middle East, this entails a focus on what is actually happening, rather than searching for signs of democratization. In Kazakhstan, this amounts to looking beyond the external facade of stability and authoritarian resilience. And in Central Asia at large, it involves looking beyond continuous predictions of instability.

In comparison to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan did not see an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring. The case of Kyrgyzstan therefore opens the possibility that an elite-level demonstration effect is less likely to occur after a revolution, and even less likely after two revolutions. The case study of Kyrgyzstan has therefore set out the initial conditions necessary for further research. Comparison between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan suggested that despite the presence of an elite-level demonstration effect in the former, and its absence in the latter, ruling authorities utilize the example of revolution to legitimize happenings at home. Whether revolution is viewed negatively (Kazakhstan) or positively (Kyrgyzstan) its example is used to legitimize the actions and policy choices of the ruling authorities. It has therefore demonstrated that authoritarian and semi-consolidated authoritarian regimes are very much aware of unrest elsewhere, and that regardless of their political orientation, their perception of protest in the domestic sphere and further afield is used to legitimize processes at home.

The presence of an elite-level demonstration effect in Kazakhstan and its absence in Kyrgyzstan poses the question as to how the nature of the regime may have affected whether there was an elite-level demonstration effect. Because Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan differ in terms of regime longevity and stability suggests that both factors may influence the occurrence of an elite-level demonstration effect. Since independence and at the time of writing, Kazakhstan has had only one regime, yet saw an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring uprisings. Within the delimited timeframe Kyrgyzstan had two regime shifts and four presidents yet did not see an elite-level demonstration effect from the Arab Spring uprisings. The clear differences between regime longevity in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and the presence and absence of a demonstration effect, suggest that regime longevity is a factor which affects the occurrence of an elite-level demonstration effect. In other words, the longer a regime remains in power the more likely uprisings elsewhere affect regime security and result in an elite-level demonstration effect as in Kazakhstan. The absence of an elite-level demonstration in Kyrgyzstan suggests that the shorter duration of a regime decreases the likelihood of an elite-level demonstration effect. Indeed, as discussed in relation to why Kyrgyzstan did not see an elite-level demonstration effect, S. Juraev (2016) pointed out that new regimes are less reactive than long-standing regimes.

Because Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan differ in terms of regime stability suggests that it is also a factor that affects the occurrence of an elite-level demonstration effect. In Kyrgyzstan, following its second revolution and parallel to the Arab Spring uprisings, the incumbent regime was establishing its legitimacy

and stability. In Kazakhstan, on the other hand, it is possible to argue that the regime was more stable than Kyrgyzstan because it had consolidated power and had not seen widespread unrest at the time of the uprisings in the MENA. This poses the question as to why a seemingly unstable regime like Kyrgyzstan did not see an elite-level demonstration effect while a stable Kazakhstan did. Although clear differences between the cases in terms of regime longevity and the occurrence of a demonstration effect appear to suggest that longevity is a factor that influences perceptions of events elsewhere and their impact on regime security, the influence of regime stability is less straightforward.

The occurrence of an elite-level demonstration effect reveals that elites can and do learn from events elsewhere. Thus, in Kazakhstan the elite-level demonstration effect evidenced learning, whereas its absence in Kyrgyzstan indicated that learning most likely resulted from processes closer to home. The relationship between the elite-level demonstration effect and learning also has practical and methodological implications. Methodologically, it illustrated that political change and learning can be evaluated via changes in narrative and behaviour, changes which are not necessarily captured by conventional emphasis on policy or regime shifts. This approach necessitates going beyond conventional emphasis on structural conditions, and taking into consideration the agency of the regime. This study therefore builds upon the work of scholars such Kubicek (2011), Hall and Ambrosio (2017), and Ambrosio (2017) by offering another measure with which to evaluate learning and to overcome the methodological limitations associated with identifying learning in illiberal contexts.

This thesis has shown that the case of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in relation to the broader impact of the Arab Spring uprisings should no longer be overlooked, and furthermore, why such cases merit further examination. Indeed, further research could examine at what point the elite-level demonstration effect no longer influences regime security. Further research could also address if a regime which has experienced revolution is less likely to see an elite-level demonstration effect brought about by the Arab Spring. This could be accomplished utilizing the case study of Iran which saw revolution in 1979 and the overthrow of the Persian monarchy. From further research it would be possible to determine whether an elite-level demonstration effect is more likely to occur under conditions of regime maintenance, as in Kazakhstan, than under conditions of regime consolidation, as in Kyrgyzstan.

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Appendix A   List of Interviews

Anonymous 1	October 2016
Anonymous 2	November 2016
Anonymous 3	November 2016
Anonymous 4	November 2016
Anonymous 5	November 2016
Anonymous 6	November 2016

Abdibek Satymbaev   Formerly employed by Kyrgyz Government
4 December 2016, Bishkek

Aida Alymbaeva   Political analyst

28 November 2016 Bishkek

Aidos Sarym   Head of Altynbek Sarsenbaiuly Foundation

1 November 2016, Almaty

Alexander Wolters   Director OSCE Academy

30 December 2016, Bishkek

Alisher Khamidov   Visiting scholar, Newcastle University

23 November 2016, Bishkek

Asel Doolotkeldieva   Former Senior Lecturer at Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas
University

3 December 2016, Bishkek

Bermet Tursunkulova   Associate Professor, American University of Central
Asia

30 December 2016, Bishkek

Dosym Satpayev   Political Scientist

20 October 2016, Almaty

Elmira Nogoibaeva   Head of Polis Asia

23 November 2016, Bishkek

Emilbek Juraev   Associate Professor of International and
Comparative Politics at the American University of
Central Asia

	26 November 2016, Bishkek
Erkina Ubysheva	Executive Director, Civic Participation Fund
	2 December 2016, Bishkek
Nargis Kassenova	Associate Professor at the Department of International Relations and Regional Studies, Director of Central Asian Studies Center (CASC) and China and Central Asia Studies Center (CCASC) of KIMEP University, Kazakhstan
	18 October 2016, Almaty
Racul Jumaly	Political expert
	27 October 2016, Almaty
Shairbek Juraev	PhD Candidate/Maria Sklodowska-Curie Research Fellow, University of St Andrews 24 November 2016, Bishkek
Sheradil Baktygulov	Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist at Search for Common Ground, Kyrgyzstan 28 November 2016, Bishkek
Valentin Bogatyrev	Coordinator and Program Director of Analytical Consortium "Perspectiva"
	24 November 2016, Bishkek
Zhumabek Sarabekov	Political analyst
	17 November 2016, Almaty