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**THE DYNAMICS OF POLITICAL STABILITY IN CENTRAL
ASIAN REPUBLICS – THE CASE OF KAZAKHSTAN**

MASTER'S THESIS

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Abstract

This master thesis tried to find the unique dynamics of the region in order to ensure and maintain political stability in Central Asia. In this regard, the conditions necessary for the clans and the political authority to maintain balance in the region have been examined. The change of the clans in Kazakhstan over the years and how they kept up with the Soviet system are explained. The political life and clans' relations in Kazakhstan have been examined. The political methods followed by Nazarbayev, who served for a long time, to establish the balance between the clans are listed. The protests of Zhanaozen, one of the events that shook the authority of Nazarbayev the most, were chosen as a case study. The "Socio-political corporatism" argument of Vadim Volovoj was tested by the 2011 Zhanaozen uprising in Kazakhstan. In this event, the conflict of interest between the clans and the political authority was proved and the socio-economic level was controlled. No deterioration in the socio-economic level was detected within five years before the events. It is emphasized by a case study that the socio-economic level is an important dynamic during the conflict between clans and political authority. As a result of the study, it was concluded that the Zhanaozen protests were supportive of Volovoj's argument.

Keywords: clans, political stability, Central Asia, Zhanaozen, Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev

Özet

Bu yüksek lisans tezi Orta Asya'daki siyasi istikrarın sağlanması ve korunması için bölgenin kendine özgü dinamiklerini bulmaya çalışmıştır. Bu konuda bölgede boyların ve siyasi otoritenin dengeyi koruması için gerekli olan şartlar irdelenmiştir. Kazakistan'daki boyların yıllar içindeki değişimi ve nasıl Sovyet sistemine ayak uydurdukları anlatılmıştır. Günümüz Kazakistan'ındaki politik hayat ile aşiret ilişkileri incelenmiştir. Uzun zaman görev yapan Nazarbayev'in aşiretler arasındaki dengeyi kurmak için izlediği siyasi metotlar sıralanmıştır. Nazarbayev'in otoritesini en çok sarsan olaylardan biri olan Zhanaozen protestoları örnek olay olarak seçilmiştir. Vadim Volovoj'un "Sosyo-politik Ortaklık Yönetimi" argümanı Kazakistan'daki 2011 yılındaki Zhanaozen ayaklanması ile denenmiştir. Bu olayda boylar ve politik otorite arasındaki çıkar çatışması kanıtlanıp, sosyo-ekonomik düzey kontrol edilmiştir. Olaylar öncesi beş yıl içinde sosyo-ekonomik düzeyde herhangi bir kötüleşme tespit edilememiştir. Sosyo-ekonomik düzeyin aşiret boyları ve politik otorite arasındaki çatışma sırasında önemli bir dinamik olduğu örnek olay incelemesi ile vurgulanmıştır. Çalışmanın sonucunda Zhanaozen olayının Volovoj'un argümanını destekler nitelikte olduğunu sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: boy, aşiret, siyasi istikrar, Orta Asya, Zhanaozen, Kazakistan, Nazarbayev

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BTA: Bank of Turan Alem

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency

CP: Communist Party

EU: European Union

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GNI: Gross National Income

GNP: Gross National Product

KEGOC: Kazakhstan Electricity Grid Operating Company

KMG: KazMunaiGas

Kolkhoz: Collective farms in the Soviet Union (“collective farm”)

LAP: Last Years’ Annual Change Average Point

OMG: Ozen Munai Gaz

RP: All Years Annual Changes Average Point

Sovkhoz: State farm in the Soviet Union (“soviet farm”)

SSR: Soviet Socialist Republic

USA: United States of America

USD: American Dollars

USSR: The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Central Asia conventionally comprises the region between the Caspian Sea, Russia, China, Iran, and Afghanistan in political literature. This unstable region includes Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. All five countries had legitimately belonged to the USSR. Additionally, a considerable majority of their local populations are Muslim. As well, their populations are mostly Turkic origin except for only Tajikistan, which is ethnically Iranian. Common social dynamics have encouraged similar political patterns and unique experiences in these isolated countries.

Central Asia had undergone predominantly under Russian influence due to Soviet history. As a social consequence regarding more than a hundred years of Soviet ruling, the Russian language has possessed an official status within some ex-Soviet countries and intellectual life had inevitably exposed to Russian influence (Ge, 2018, p. 8). Another unique characteristic of Central Asia is that the region from Xinjiang to Istanbul is predominantly Muslim (Ge, 2018, p. 8). Moreover, local populations on this historic route are mainly Turkic. Shortly, Central Asian culture admittedly has in common overriding Soviet, Muslim, and Turkic characteristics.

Soviet collapse accurately represented a new beginning for Central Asia. However, the independency of Central Asian states did not promote an effective government suddenly as an essential result of the following political reasons (Rakhimov, 2018, p. 120). Firstly, local officials in Central Asian countries, unfortunately, possessed no practical experience in international politics because of their political dependency on USSR for a century. Second, a sudden collapse had naturally offered no proper time for the necessary preparation of independency. Independent countries struggled with their governments weakened by Soviet policies. Thirdly, the diplomatic world had shaken by sudden collapse and had not known how to react properly to these unique countries. These prime reasons triggered dysfunctional governments in Central Asia.

Firstly, Central Asia instantly formed its unique characteristics in world politics after the Soviet collapse. This region is the middle of a highly disputed area. The diplomatic disputes between leading states seem never-ending; the land disputes of

Pakistan and India; China and India, China and Pakistan, Tibet, Xinjiang so on (Rakhimov, 2018, p. 120).

Second, Central Asia's abundant energy resources and highly consuming neighbors like India, Pakistan, China naturally formed its own economic dynamics. Kazakhstan has 30 billion tons of oil reserves with 1,5 trillion m³ natural gas; Turkmenistan's gas reserve amount to 17,5 trillion m³; and Uzbekistan is 1.1 trillion m³ (Rakhimov, 2018, p. 120). In notable addition, Central Asia is midmost between China and abundant oil reserves like Russia, the Caspian Sea, Iran. For a land route to these affluent regions from China, Central Asia is crucial.

Thirdly, Central Asia naturally formed its political stability under authoritarian regimes. It did not experience a social and political formation as Europe had historically performed. A major expert on Central Asia, Kathleen Collins, claims real power is owned by local clans in this arid region (Collins, 2006, p. 3). Put differently, modern states are still under the economic hegemony of clan interests according to her.

Today, some countries in Central Asia are politically stable, while others are not, despite common history, common political development, and common values. The World Bank index of political stability evaluated countries between the interval of -2.5 and 2.5 points. While Kazakhstan (0.13 point) and Turkmenistan (0.13) appeared as stable, Uzbekistan (-0,87) Kyrgyzstan (-0.77) and Tajikistan (-1.13) unstable according to political stability index of World Bank between the year 1998 and 2018 (World Bank, n.d.). Starting from to these results, this thesis will question the political stability formula in Central Asia.

Academic work examining the political stability in Central Asia is very insufficient. Kathleen Collins, as one of the most renowned researchers who has written important books on the subject, places special emphasis on the clan factor. As a continuation, Vadim Volovoj put forward an argument for this factor with a detailed analysis on this issue. Vadim Volovoj's argument. His "socioeconomic cooperation" argument states that political stability in Central Asia depends on agreement of clans and political authority. He argues that if these two factors cannot agree, political stability is shaped according to the general socio-economic situation of the country. Volovoj says that in the event of a conflict of interest, if the society is satisfied with the socio-economic

situation, the political authority will continue; in case of dissatisfaction, the political authority will change.

In this thesis, Volovoj's argument will be tested. First, a conflict of interest will be found, and it will be checked whether this situation is suitable for the argument. As a case study, it will be too long for a dissertation topic to evaluate a successful and unsuccessful case. Therefore, only one successful case will be checked to whether it fits this argument or not. As a stable country, we found it appropriate to examine the Zhanaozen events in Kazakhstan. Although these events caused serious problems in the country, they ended up Nazarbayev's preservation of his power.

As a case study, we will first analyse the conflict of interest between political authority and clans. We will try to present this with objective evidence such as the statements of the two parties and court proceedings. We will talk about what may have happened in the background in order to better understand the subject, but we will definitely not make a judgment on this issue.

Socio-economic status, which is the determining factor of Volovoj, will be determined with numerical data. We will use data from the World Bank. According to Volovoj's argument, the socio-economic situation should not deteriorate as Nazarbayev remains in power. If the result we find is consistent with Volovoj's argument, we will interpret that we have found results that support the argument, otherwise contradicts our conclusion.

In the theoretical framework, it will first be examined why human nature perceives clans as an authority. Later, clans will be defined academically, and their characteristics will be specified. Then political stability will be defined. It will be explained why the West-centered interpretations of stability in the political literature cannot be valid for Central Asia. Volovoj's argument will be explained after listing alternative arguments to western-oriented arguments. Later, it will be emphasized that Central Asian countries generally have authoritarian, corrupt and patrimonial characteristics. The political methods used by regimes with these characteristics to come to power will be listed and these methods will be evaluated in the analysis section to show the characteristics of the regimes. Later, Volovoj's argument will be presented in her own words and the methodology part will be discussed.

After the case selection is explained in the methodology section, brief information will be given about the case. Then, the time period of the thesis and how it will be presented historically will be specified. After mentioning the division of the issues, it will be specified how to prove the conflict of interest in the analysis section. After briefly explaining how to calculate the socio-economic situation, the characteristics of the data will be mentioned. Then, how to interpret socio-economic data will be explained clearly. Later, it will be explained how to structure the conclusion part.

Then, firstly, the historical position of the clans in Kazakhstan will be mentioned and information about them will be presented. The practices in Soviet's time will be mentioned in historical order and their results will be presented. Kolkhoz and Sovkhoz applications will be explained in detail, especially as they were aimed at eliminating clans. After explaining how clans survived in the Soviet era, today's relations in Kazakhstan will be discussed.

After mentioning the policies of the former leader Kunaev, how Nazarbayev came to power will be mentioned. Later, the policies of the Nazarbayev administration and the problems experienced after independence will be mentioned. Changing economic policies with the discovery of oil deposits will be explained. It will be stated what the economic elites have opposed. Criticisms directed to Nazarbayev will be listed and explained with a few examples. Later, information about the elite during the Zhanaozen events will be presented. Thus, the background of the events can be better understood. At the end of the episode, detailed information about our lead actor Ablyazov will be presented.

In the next part, the events of Zhanaozen will be explained. After explaining the socio-economic structure of the region, the problems of the workers will be discussed. Next, we will talk about how the uprising started and grew and how the government tried to manage it. Finally, it will be told that the government blamed Ablyazov and took repressive measures.

In the fifth chapter, the conflict of interest between Ablyazov and Nazarbayev will be shed light on by examining the court decisions and the evidence presented in the court. Then the socio-economic situation will be calculated, and the indicators will be illustrated. Finally, this section will examine the possible reasons why the public did not react strongly to the events in the region.

In the conclusion part, we will first evaluate the relationship of events with the arguments we have presented. We will then examine and evaluate the consistency of the Zhanaozen case with Volovoj's argument. Finally, we will address the shortcomings of our work.

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the theoretical framework, we will start with how the nature of human can explain clan structuring. Aristotle's memorable quotation in *“Politics and the Nicomachean Ethics”*: *“Human beings are creatures not only of reason but also of habit and norms formed by their social environment,”* sufficiently emphasizes a pragmatic ground of the clan structure within societies in the history (Collins, 2006, p. 335). People are keen to willingly obey social norms in order to overly simplify their personal survival. This savage instinct often is perceived as non-civic. For example, James Gibson reasonably argues that even this historical mode stands a key role of a substantial base in modern societies; it nevertheless represents a non-civic mode (Collins, 2006, p. 33).

Central Asian clan culture dates back to ancient times. As Collins defined, *“a clan is an informal organization comprising a network of individuals linked by kin and fictive kin identities”* (Collins, 2006, p. 17). Max Weber falsely assumed a clan stands naturally a historical form of social organization only in nomadic societies (Collins, 2006, p. 16). In contrary to Weber, clan structure, however, exists in modern Central Asia.

Clans can be described as a social organization traditionally based on kinship. A standard mode of socioeconomic transactions based on kinship is justifiable in organized society throughout history thanks to the savage instincts of human beings. Further, kin-based identities efficiently generate prevailing norms and values over time. Accordingly, kin stabilizes the local subdivision of organized society across time and space. Binding individuals with kinship intentionally avoids a conflict inside society.

By modern times, clan structure inevitably lost its pure kinship due to the increasing interaction of modern people by urbanization. However, elective affinity evolved organically to fictive links like school, friendship, neighborhood. Therefore, fictive ties are common in urban areas; while essential kinship, nevertheless, traditionally exists in rural regions. Accordingly, local elders sustain more adequately recognized personal authority in rural areas, but; in urban areas, economic elites do. While Kyrgyzs, Kazakhs, and Turkmens naturally have kinship affinity predominantly as a direct result of a relatively extended nomadic history; Uzbeks and Tajiks bind by fictive bonds by social reason of their earlier urbanization thanks to the trade roads.

Vadim Volovoj properly classified the local clans of Central Asia according to Frederick Starr's political definition as “*based on blood kinship (in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan); regional clans formed based on compact settlements (in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan); finally, economic (oligarchic) clans found in all countries of the region*” (Volovoj, 2009, p. 112). He correctly argues that all oligarchs associated with essential kinship or fictive identity; moreover, oligarchy promptly grants them a transnational power. A typical instance; a local clan in Kazakhstan and another in Uzbekistan can voluntarily cooperate in favor of a specific issue or clash for a particular benefit.

Mutual loyalty undoubtedly remains the most effective norm of local clans. A local man should be loyal to his clan accordingly to social norms and cultural habits. The norm of mutual exclusion of outsiders was functional to adequately maintain reciprocal loyalty throughout history. If a member exit from a local clan, he cannot promptly enter into another. One’s kin does never change. Even fictive affinities retain a lifetime. This social rule mutually reinforces the unconditional loyalty and the political sense of personal affiliation to a clan. Accordingly, the constructed divisions of historical societies in clans scarcely endured hundreds of years.

Additionally, a clan leader should adequately provide his community absolute reciprocity of economic exchange to appropriately obtain sustainable loyalty. As long as local elites carefully manage their community’s living standards, local people are unkeen to oppose local leaders. Consequently, privileged elites should enthusiastically support their clan in every economic aspect to properly maintain resource control.

Another significant norm is that a man should seek his group interest, not his private. Put differently; communal thinking is the moral backbone of local clans. Accordingly, economic individualism is an unpleasant attitude because it progressively weakens clans' economic power. Therefore, every member should act according to clan interests. Otherwise, he exhausts its credibility, and local people intentionally exclude him from the other organizational advantages. The internal mechanisms contributing to clan stability are presented briefly. However, inter-clan stability is more significant in Central Asian politics.

Central Asia’s political stability inevitably raises a dispute on academic works. There are many intellectual arguments on a political definition. However, in this scholarly

study, political stability will be accepted “*the regularity of the flow of political exchanges*” (Ake, 1975, p. 273). The “regularity” can be formal or natural. While formal ones exist in mainly modern state structures like civil laws and democratic rules; natural ones become social patterns like social norms, organizational culture, and cultural habits.

Measuring political stability stays more crucial than a scholarly definition; since it is undoubtedly a complex term to calculate accurately. World Bank Governance indicators remain a comprehensive guide, the most prevalent to precisely measure political stability for now. Many reasonably presume Central Asia does not represent a credible region for capital investments sufficiently indicating the comprehensive index of the World Bank. However, there exist several persuasive counter-arguments as this index is inapplicable in this specific region.

Foremost, these developed indicators initiated for political conditionality to the World Bank’s or other international organizations’ economic programs. These programs aim accurately to “*promote and strengthen participation by civil society in governing, considering that society generally requires better and more efficient government*” (Katsamunskaya, 2016, p. 134). A potential problem exists in that ideal features gain inspiration from western-style (mainly modern European) governance. Inappropriately, the democratic processes and historical conditions of western state formations were recklessly disregarded. Hence, in many specific instances, the “ideal” for a European country is not indeed “possible” for a Central Asian one or vice versa. In essence, indicators universality is subject to considerable criticisms.

Next, these objective indicators were inevitably developed to accurately measure the democratic states in global economies. There is a universally accepted presumption that functioning democracy and free-market economy work better; as a consistent result, the World Bank intentionally designed these indicators based on democratic policies and free-market features. However, our academic study investigates principally patrimonial-authoritarian regimes having few democratic features. Correspondingly, free-market mechanisms are not Central Asian states’ economic concerns. Moreover, whereas the World Bank reasonably demands political pre-conditionality for capital investments; others, like China, do not demand any conditionality at all. Indeed, China clearly states

she does not interfere with receiver countries' domestic relations. Accordingly, the indicators' objective realistically is out of economic context in Central Asia.

Thirdly, there is no prevailing theory that explains how indicators function (Andrews, 2008, p. 397). For example, the necessary prerequisites of the political indicators are not well-specified. Consequently, many contradictory cases occurred in political practice. For an excellent example, policy-makers can unanimously agree on unpopular arguments in a diplomatic secret on behalf of a common and more proper position for the complex society in the Netherlands (Peters, 2012, p. 10).

Furthermore, economic decentralization and participation principles behind the government effectiveness indicator also did not work in Armenia. World Bank's specific recommendation to decentralize the local school system unintentionally caused more administrative inefficiency, stimulating non-transparency (Andrews, 2008, p. 395). Other principles behind the effective government are "limited government, pro-business policies, and limited red tape." These guiding principles malfunctioned in the economic success of South Korea (Andrews, 2008, p. 393). Functionally, specific indicators do not promote desirable outcomes in certain cases. As demonstrated, anticipated outcomes of good governance indicators undoubtedly require accurate descriptions, possible limitations, and ideologic justifications in detail.

Moreover, good governance indicators do not reveal administrative quality; indeed "really reflect a nation's level of development" (Andrews, 2013, p. 5). Equally, Fukuyama reasonably argued governance indicators show up the outcomes of administration; not the quality of management (Rotberg, 2014, p. 514). For example, good governance ranking shows the wealthiest countries as topmost. As an example, a league champion in football does not represent automatically the most proper governed team. Many comparative advantages like talented football players, modern facilities, capital investments are equally important. On this account, not only governance quality; other advantages undoubtedly contribute to the success of the champion team. The same logic is valid with the indicators. Not only the quality of management but also other factors affects the political stability index.

In conclusion, the literature needs more study on political stability for non-western-style countries. Starting from this point, the thesis aims to discover more

functional and well-explained factors of political stability in Central Asia. We will firstly present alternative views and theories on Central Asia in the literature to indicate the distinctive features of these states from its western counterparts. Later, the common points in these arguments will evaluate to understand the possible stability factors in these countries.

Authoritarianism traditionally stands a prevalent regime in Central Asia. Karl Wittfogel convincingly argues semi-arid societies naturally require central management because of resource scarcity, and this economic condition irresistibly compelled a more authoritarian leadership (Warkotsch, 2008 Autumn, p. 244). His persuasive argument is consistent with Central Asian tolerance to authoritarian regimes. Moreover, Henry Hale claims interactions of executive authorities and economic elites represent precisely the key predictors of political changes in authoritarian regimes (Hoffmann, 2010, p. 89). He assumes when legitimate authorities hopelessly lose its local popularity, elites look for renewed alliances.

The patrimonial relations in Central Asia is another feature the states in Central Asia. Moreover, many correctly argue that Central Asian countries are performing patrimonial authoritarian democracy with limited access to global markets. Central Asia had not passed through the industrialization process but; directly accepted democracy after a communist regime of eighty years. In that fashion, administrative authorities subtly manipulated democratic systems as inheriting from the political past. According to this view, the patrimonial relation in the country is significant in governance. The democratic features are manipulated by politicians to sustain authoritarianism. The isolation from the global economy enhances the duration of these regimes.

Another regime suggestion is neopatrimonialism, which is “*personal or patrimonial use of authority to procure loyalty and compliance with an emphasis on an efficient, Western-style system of administration*” (Dave, 2007, p. 141). Adding to the previous view, neopatrimonialism points out the personalization of regime and democratic arguments of the regimes. Inured corruptions, clan structures, authoritarian regimes, and personalization of executive power typically represent the fundamental characteristics of neopatrimonialism (Schiek & Hensell, 2012, p. 203). Usually, political authority finds a democratic excuse for every action. As neo-patrimonial managerial

techniques, manipulating offices and re-shuffling staff frequently serve personalization of executive power; distributing state resources between family members and close friends causes corruption.

Schiek and Hensell argued Nazarbayev experienced “the dilemma of inclusion” in neopatrimonial regimes. They properly explained the dilemma of inclusion as:

“On the one hand, Nazarbayev is a part of the neo-patrimonial system he promoted. In order to stabilize his position and broaden his power base during the transition from Soviet rule to independence, he has had to include and co-opt various power circles and networks. These groups, however, are involved in corrupt behavior and acquisition practices. Nazarbayev has had to balance these groups and distribute resources and favors to them. The effect has been the patrimonialization of the state. On the other hand, Nazarbayev sees himself as a committed reformer, who tries to bolster his legitimacy and symbolic prestige by modernizing the economy and the state, thus forging a political legacy. Therefore, he also has to combat the corrupt practices of the political elites and his subordinates, because the patrimonialization contradicts his attempts at modernizing Kazakhstan” (Schiek & Hensell, 2012, p. 204)

Another outspoken criticism of Central Asia is that Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have been experiencing “resource curse” (Satpayev & Umbetaliyeva, 2015, p. 123). The visible signs are growth without economic development, excessive level of organizational corruption, and persistent poverty. For the apparent reasons, abundant resources severely impede industrial development, and political authorities unfairly distribute high revenues of natural reserves. Consequently, independent states do not generate sustainable development with resource income, and industrialization targets are never achieved.

In addition, some correctly argue Central Asia, except Kyrgyzstan, is “electoral authoritarian regimes” (Shishkin, January 2012, p. 8). It claims that the authoritarian attitude is justified by the high rates of votes. Legitimate presidents, receiving over 80% of electoral votes in Central Asian countries, overwhelmingly supported electoral

authoritarianism claims. Another notable example is that the repressed opposition constitutes a practical obstacle for a mature democracy. That is why Nazarbayev sustained the puppet opposition parties to apparently obtain a democrat image. Because western countries do not work with cruel despots, but; imperfect democrats are somehow acceptable.

"Rentier state" is another satisfactory explanation for Central Asia. Alexander Cooley wisely says that Central Asian regimes typically enjoy three essential characteristics; *"the promotion of regime survival; the use of state resources for private gain; and the brokering between external actors and local constituencies."* (Cooley, 2012, p. 16). These represent the leading features of rentier states. Besides, Anja Franke, Andrea Gawrich & Gurban Alakbarov studied Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan to properly capture the rentier states' distinctive features in detail (2009, p. 133). According to them:

- 1. Elite power in oil and gas contract conclusions*
- 2. Permanent, corrupt and rent-seeking elites*
- 3. Support purchased through rent allocation*
- 4. Deficits in the regulation of economic structures*
- 5. Missing concepts in relation to the distribution*
- 6. Lack of transparency*
- 7. Medium legitimacy in relation to resource policy"*

(2009, p. 133)

Concluding Central Asian regimes are perceived as authoritarian and patrimonial. They do not enjoy democratic features but in the rhetoric, democracy exists. These features cause nepotism, corruption, unequal distribution of resources and silenced opposition. These are distinctive features for Central Asian countries from Western-style ones. After indicating the distinctive features, the possible different factors of political stability in these countries can be discussed.

In political literature, there are few arguments on political stability in Central Asia for now. However, Kathleen Collins and Vadim Volovoj studied Central Asian political stability deeply. The views of them in Central Asia basically focus on clan relations. The common features of the theories on Central Asia we found actually point out the clan

structure also. Authoritarianism and patrimonialism are the basic norms in clan relations. In a political framework, these norms evolve nepotism, corruption, unequal distribution of resources and silenced opposition. Because in clan understanding, resources should be governed by the leaders as long as society is satisfied with their living standards. Society tolerates authoritarian practices because authoritarianism begins in the smallest component of the society "family". The elder always has the right for leading. Furthermore, "Hurmat," indicating unconditional obedience of the local elders, comfortably remains a cultural norm in Central Asia; and the norm accurately reflects authoritative social perspectives. This understanding is present as one of the basic features of Central Asian culture. In short, clan structure as a political stability factor is worth to evaluate.

Vadim Volovoj notes the key elements of political stability in modern states of Central Asia as "ethnic, Islamic, socioeconomic, local clan, executive authority, and finally, external factors" (Volovoj, 2009, p. 99). He states these identified factors are "inextricably entwined"; in key detail; he carefully puts particular emphasis on the mutual relations of local clans and executive authorities as to a critical factor (Volovoj, 2009, p. 99). As parallel to Volovoj, Collins argues political authorities in Central Asia should have a social pact with the local elites to sustain their authoritarian rule. Collins says, "*Clan based pacts are not a mode of transition to democracy but an informal agreement that fosters the durability of the state, irrespective of the regime type.*" (Collins, 2004, p. 228). She assumes three conditions for clan pacts: "*a shared external threat induces cooperation among clans who otherwise would have insular interests; a balance of power exists among the major clan factions, such that none can dominate; and a legitimate broker, a leader trusted by all factions, assumes the role of maintaining the pact and the distribution of resources that it sets in place.*" (Collins, 2004, p. 237). Gorbachev's continuous rotation of the clan leaders in Central Asia is an example of Collin's external threat. It should be noted that there is an unclear point. Political stability and regime durability are similar terms and the distinction between them is not clear in the works of Volovoj and Collins.

The external factors in Central Asia are objectively Russia and China because the USA or EU do not have a profound presence however they do business in the energy sector. Since the EU puts the principles and values in the foreground, it does not act

effectively in Central Asia, but follows an attitude in line with its policies (Erdoğan, 2011). As it is difficult for Central Asian states to adapt to EU principles and values in the short term, the development of relations is hampered. On the other hand, the USA has not followed an active policy in the region after Afghanistan. However, Volovoj reasonably assumes that China and Russia represent the external stability guarantors due to their critical energy imports (Volovoj, 2009, p. 104). He argues that neither China nor Russia let any international conflict and the presence of western power due to their critical energy imports from the region. As we can see in reality, while Western powers presented as hard power in Afghanistan, they did not involve in any upheaval in this region. Even the closest country to the West, Kyrgyzstan, closed the Manas military base to the USA. The western powers are deliberately inhibited by Russia and China. Additionally, the extraordinary energy resources of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan provide them a flexible position between Russia and China.

Also, Islam remains an external factor. Sufism, which traditionally has no ideological extremism, is prevalent in Central Asia except for Tajikistan. Therefore, Volovoj argues persuasively that extremist Islam traditionally occupies no fundamental base in Central Asia; moreover, it is exogenous and just a political device for the destructive interference of other aggressive countries (Volovoj, 2009, p. 110). He does not evaluate Islam as a decisive factor in political stability.

Furthermore, the ethnic factor does not constitute a possible conflict alone. Central Asia naturally possesses familiar essential elements in culture, such as Turkic origin, Islam, Soviet history. Even the delineated borders by Stalin had not considered distinct ethnicity; no severe conflict sprang from any ethnic problems for a century. Socioeconomic factors are the satisfaction level of society concerning their economic and social conditions. Since Central Asian society had not evolved as in the West, it is immobile and does not demand any political rights even the poverty rates are high: “Tajikistan constitutes 56,6%, in Kyrgyzstan – 47,6%, in Turkmenistan – 29,9%, in Kazakhstan – 27,9%, in Uzbekistan – 27,5%,” There is no widespread reaction on poverty rates (Volovoj, 2009, p. 109).

As we conclude from the arguments of Volovoj and Collins in modern states experiencing tribal organizations, legitimate authorities should willingly have a social

pact with clan leaders for their political sustainability. The contributing factors of external, ethnicity, Islam, and socioeconomic are not the core elements of Central Asian political stability. However, they can be undoubtedly a catalyzer for a possible instability instantly springing from the mutual relations between local clans and executive authorities (Volovoj, 2009, p. 121).

Elite powers compete professionally for two ultimate aims: to be closer to elected presidents and to gain more from resource distribution. Concurrently, elected presidents' key priority is unconditional loyalty; but also, they carefully keep his potential enemies closer as a Machiavellian. As an example, in 2006, ex-Minister of Information and Culture said awkwardly: *“Business and power constitute a single monolith in Kazakhstan, whose unconditional leader is Nursultan Nazarbayev: a de jure and de facto symbol and guarantor of the unity of the people and state power, the inviolability of the Constitution, rights, and freedoms of the citizens.”* (Dave, 2007, p. 148). As in the quotation, Yermukhamet Yertysbaev unintentionally describes a legitimate broker argument of Collin.

Volovoj credibly argues that political authority undoubtedly possesses legitimate power, however, in social practice, informal rules are more prevalent. Formal and informal regularities can contradict in the case of a possible conflicting interest between specific clans and administrative authorities. He described the social devices of local clans as “from beneath” and the political devices of legitimate authorities “from above.” Political stability is hard to realistically achieve in a potential clash. According to him, the secondary factors are the determiners in a continuous struggle between influential clans and political authorities.

There are several legitimate means of official authorities in order to dominate local clans, to have a social pact, and to acquire enhanced stability. The first means of official authorities, the economic redistribution of resources, remains a critical subject of political stability. In Central Asia, exploitable institutions can strikingly illustrate the established relations between prominent clans and authoritarian presidents. If a group gains power, heads of state generously provide him a more exploitable office like a state-owned oil company management. Alternatively, elected leaders can award exclusiveness in any private business as a political favor to a specific clan. Nonetheless, legitimate presidents

should properly distribute economic resources according to the authoritative powers of clans.

Secondly, political officials rooting in Soviet times politicians, cannot bear to lose power. In this manner, elected leaders usually personalize presidential regimes, reject economic reforms, and bear hostility to international criticisms on Central Asian authoritarian leaderships. For a classic example, the first Turkmenistan President had allegedly become almost a modern prophet. Indeed, he authored the book “Ruhnama,” claiming that Turkmen roots originate from Noah. However, the country is full of poverty because natural-gas revenues are entirely distributed between the economic elites. “George Orwell” type of political regimes under the egoistic leader had lived without any social struggle in Turkmenistan. Many expected upheavals in authoritarian society after the first president. Amazingly, the presidential transition was quiet and peaceful; and there was no active opposition, despite deteriorative life standards.

Thirdly, cadre politics comfortably remain a necessary instrument of legitimate authorities to balance power. The proper distribution of official positions embodies prevalent instruments to sufficiently satisfy noble clans in Central Asia. As mutual reciprocity of their ultimate loyalty, elites demand official powers like local police departments, judicial courts, intelligence services. Some prestigious offices apparently provide critical power, especially security services' leading cadres are essential. Accordingly, political authorities must be cautious about properly distributing official offices. They must reasonably satisfy influential clans but do not grant a legitimate power, which facilitates a possible exit from pacts. That is why small opportunities are important for clan leaders to sustain loyalty.

Cadre politicians exploit not only critical positions. Indeed, minor offices traditionally seek any economic opportunities for their personal connections. For a typical example, a new local manager grants factory management to his son providing employments for his friends allocating jobs to their families. Ultimately, all workers in the local factory depend on new regional authority. This economic dependency sufficiently develops ultimate loyalty to the new local manager. That is why small opportunities are important for clan leaders to sustain loyalty.

Plus, cadre politics intimately affect the organizational form of clans. For an excellent example, in Kyrgyzstan, regional authorities directly or indirectly are elected by local people. Consequently, a specific clan can sustainably manage regional resources. On the contrary, in Kazakhstan, the centralized government assigns a regional authority from Nursultan (Astana); accordingly, an influential clan does not enjoy direct power on local people. As an ultimate consequence, influential clans possess increased oligarchic elements and fewer kinship values in Kazakhstan, they keep more family ties and local authority in Kyrgyzstan.

Another effective instrument of legitimate authorities in Central Asia remains pseudo-legal despotism. It is simply misusing legitimate power to harshly suppress the political opposition. In central Asia, it is unexceptional to receive terrible news about some died, arrested, exiled, or bankrupted opposition leaders. When administrative authority perceives an active opponent as a significant competitor, pseudo-legal despotism inevitably ensues. For a tragic example, Kazakhstan's ex-leader, Nazarbayev, enjoys an extensive record of pseudo-legal despotism. The possible fate of the opposing leaders is dreadful: *“Akezhan Kazhegeldin is exiled; Zamanbek Nurkadirov is mysteriously killed; Galymzhan Zhakiyanov is jailed and exiled; Viktor Khrapunov is exiled; Bergei Ryskaliyev is missing; Erlan Aryn was arrested”*; Mukhtar Ablyazov is exiled; Rakhat Aliyev died (Siegel, 2016, p. 229).

Furthermore, as pseudo-legal despotism, Central Asian regimes shamelessly exploit constitutional changes often to repress the disobedience. For a specific instance, Nazarbayev nationalized some disloyal elites' private wealth by a constitutional change. Even absolute reality is complex to discover precisely, the political instruments like weakened constitutions, arrestments, court judgments can sufficiently demonstrate the relations between clans and presidents.

The discussion until now points out the clan structure and authoritarian patrimonial regimes. Following Volovoj's stability factors, our academic study will concentrate on mutual relations between influential clans and political authorities in Central Asia to figure out the possible alternative stability dynamics. The most appropriate argument on these points belongs to Volovoj.

Volovoj appropriately named the social consensus between local clans and legitimate authorities on socioeconomic conditions as “*sociopolitical corporatism*” (Volovoj, 2009, p. 129). He properly claims “*Even the authorities and the clans can be seen as parasites over the socio-economic development, the redistribution of the resources between the clans and the authority should maintain the quality of the living standards of the people; otherwise, the sudden regime change is inevitable when there is a conflict appears between the clans and the authority*” (Volovoj, 2009, p. 124). The rest of the thesis, this argument will be elaborated to find any possible political stability factors alternative to Western political literature.

CHAPTER 3. **METHODOLOGY**

In this section, it is elaborated on how we formulate and apply the argument. The methodology of the case will be described. The reasons of the selection of the case will be explained as a short introduction to the case. Later, the content of the body and analysis section will be presented. Socio-economic conditions will be formulated in detail. In the end, how to analysis is handled will be described.

We will properly employ a case study to see the argument in practice. Selecting an appropriate case stands significant in obtaining qualified results. Kazakhstan suits properly for our academic study because it undoubtedly stood the most stable country in Central Asia after independency according to the World Bank. However, dreadful events severely shook the political power of executive authority occasionally. Zhanaozen worker uprising in West Kazakhstan remains noteworthy unrest for political stability. However, Nazarbayev sustained its political power, and civil society did not support the violent uprising. We will demonstrate if Kazakhstan's living-standards had been deteriorating or not as the “socio-political corporatism” argument claims.

Zhanaozen oil-worker-strikes occurred as a violent uprising in West Kazakhstan, resulting in dozens of death and hundreds of injuries. In early 2011, protestors had initially demanded improving life-standards; by contrast, they got improperly fired. Subsequently, they demanded anxiously to reinstate their previous job but could not achieve it. One-year-strikes came to an end in December 2011. After a dreadful uprising had terribly shocked the whole country, the Kazakh government accused for the protest V. Kozlov as a leader of the group organized by Mukhtar Ablyazov, an ex-Kazakh oligarch. Many claimed a secret dispute of opposing interest had existed on economic inter-elites. To concisely state it, Zhanaozen sufficiently represents a proper case for our qualitative analysis as a result of the unpleasant socioeconomic conditions and the possible conflicts between specific interest groups.

Our political analysis will focus on a specific time interval between independency in 1991 and the violent uprising in 2011. However, it will sufficiently explain how clans survived in Soviet years. Our theme will firstly address how local clans sustain itself in the USSR. Additionally, clan features and Soviet policies in Central Asia will be detailly elaborated. Next, our concentration will be on independency years and the establishment of modern clan politics. Later, our content will include how Nazarbayev to gain legitimate authority, proper distribution

of resources; modern usages of political instruments, leading actors of corrupt politics and the negative criticisms on Nazarbayev. To a proper degree, we can sufficiently illustrate a backstage of the local uprising. Followingly, the political clash of Nazarbayev and Ablyazov will demonstrate some substantial reasons related to this uprising. After, Zhanaozen uprising will be revealed precisely in necessary details and argued striking workers' demands, local events in Zhanaozen and political consequences of the violent protests. In the analysis section, the possible justification of clan interests in the Zhanaozen case will be presented by available proofs like court decisions, published statements, political arrests, official appointments. When the possible conflict is sufficiently justified, we will scientifically verify socioeconomic conditions.

Volovoj argues that the general socio-economic conditions decisive factors while local socio-economic situation can be disregarded according to him. However, he has not specified socioeconomic conditions exactly. However, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita and Gross National Product (GNP) per capita can sufficiently illustrate socioeconomic development to a significant extent. (Craigwell-Walkes, 2018). In addition, protestors' economic demands had pointed out several specific problems in local employment. Accordingly, the political analysis will utilize official unemployment rates as a social development indicator for more accurate results.

The specific time interval will properly include five years before 2011 in order to sufficiently recognize marked deterioration in socioeconomic conditions because social discontent naturally requires several years to evolve a social reaction. The political study will utilize qualified and objective World Bank data in order to reveal precisely socioeconomic conditions. Significantly, accurately marking an average point for Kazakhstan, the objective assessment will utilize reliable data from 1993-2011, because there was no qualified source in 1991 and 1992 because of the state formation period.

However, socioeconomic data stands hard to accurately evaluate because certain evaluation standards are insufficient in political or economic literature for now. While many social and economic indicators exist, there is no available used method to accurately measure a socioeconomic deterioration yet. However, our to-the-purpose formula calculates as following:

For each indicator, the formula will calculate two-point:

The first, the average point of last years (LAP) represents the average score of annual changes in 2007-2011.

The second is a point of reference (RP) which represents the average annual changes of 1993-2006.

Finally, we will accept socioeconomic deterioration as:

- Condition 1: $LAP > RP$ ¹
- Condition 2: $LAP < RP$

We will analyze the three indicators as follows:

1. All these indicators result in Condition 1; there is no significant deterioration in socio-economic conditions.

2. All these indicators result in Condition 2; there is a significant socio-economic deterioration.

3. Some indicators result in Condition 1; some result in Condition 2; there is a recession. We will observe as a deterioration in socio-economic conditions. However, the uncertainty on socio-economic conditions will be noted for further studies.

Subsequently, the civil society will be stated briefly. The reaction of the society for the Zhanaozen protests was not widespread. The possible reasons behind this reality will be discussed. In the conclusion part, we will carefully analyze Kazakhstan according to the presented arguments and finalize Volovoj's argument. Firstly, we will present the possible scenario of the interest clash based on the specific outcome of the protests. Exiles, official appointments, resigns, official actions and statements of political actors will be our detectors. Later, we will properly evaluate the theories of political stability and reliably detected how Nazarbayev typically uses political mechanisms. Then we will see the point of social pacts in Nazarbayev political life. In the end, we will conclude if Volovoj argument is valid for our cases or not. As a necessary addition, we will notify the academic shortcomings of our work and suggestions for further studies.

¹ In unemployment rates: low changes means better conditions. Thus, it will be observed oppositely.

CHAPTER 4. CLAN STRUCTURE IN KAZAKHSTAN

4.1 CLANS IN KAZAKHSTAN HISTORY BEFORE INDEPENDENCE

In this section, the survival and evolution of clan structure in Central Asia from pre-history of the modern times will be put in historical order. The Kolkhoz and Sovkhoz structure will be mentioned and how-to clan structure survived in USSR years will be elaborated.

The pre-Soviet history in Central Asia had influenced by Arabian and Persian culture due to Islam and several trade roads. Before the Bolsheviks, Central Asian societies had traditionally lived nomadic; clan leaders had properly administered local resources; and in addition, trade had been representing the heart of the economy thanks to many trade roads. As a Turkic characteristic, the majority of Turkmens, Kyrgyz, and Kazakh had been nomads until the Soviet Union establishment. Meanwhile, Uzbeks and Tajiks had become active traders or local farmers on the silk road route and in Fergana Valley.

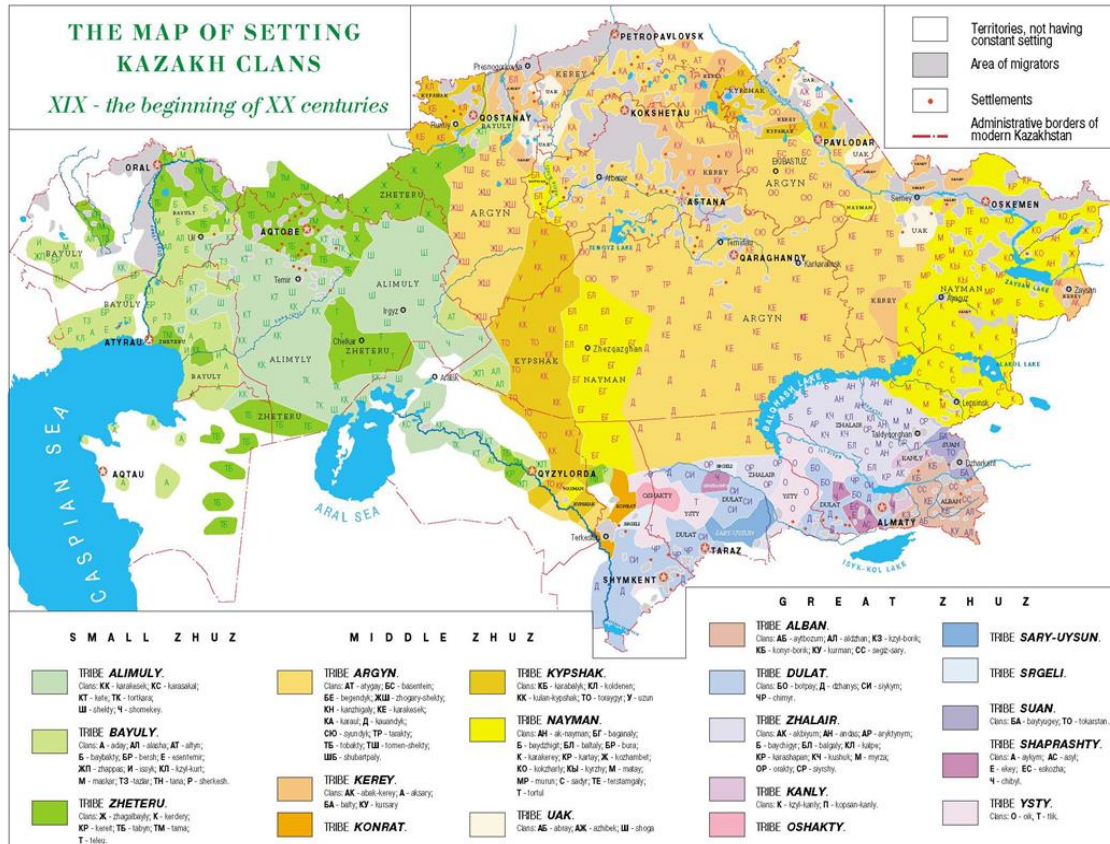
The distribution of Kazakh lands among three sons of Kasym Khan in early 1500 is the origin of the tribal system in Kazakhstan. The three hordes, “zhuz,” are named as; Senior zhuz, Middle zhuz, and Junior zhuz. The used stamp of Senior zhuz is a sheep (abundance); Middle's, a pen (intellectuals); and Junior's, a weapon (resistance) (Cummings, 2005, p. 21). Cynthia Werner's data on the population quantile in modern Kazakhstan are: “*Middle zhuz, 41.24 %, Junior zhuz, 33.96 % and Senior zhuz, 24.63 %.*” (Werner, 1997).

Russians had naturally affected Junior and Middle zhuz severely than Senior zhuz attributable to their proximity to Russia. Accordingly, Uzbeks had powerfully affected Senior zhuz. Lawrence Krader explains: “*A Middle Horde (zhuz) Kazakh could adopt a ‘Russian’ point of view and have the public opinion of his community support him in it a full generation anterior to even a remote envisagement of such a situation in the Senior Horde*” (Cummings, 2005) (Krader, 1963).

Senior zhuz traditionally consists of eleven local tribes; it is influential in active politics accordingly to its proximity to the capital city (Almaty); Nazarbayev and Kunaev remain the most notable representatives. They had suffered from sedentarization rarely owing to its earlier urbanization. (Cummings, 2005, p. 138). Middle zhuz comprises seven distinct tribes and dominates Kazakh intellectual life. Lesser zhuz contains three chief tribes in Western Kazakhstan. They had steadfastly resisted the Russians seriously between the late 18th and

early 19th centuries. Also, they suffered most by the aggressive USSR policies because of their dominant nomad culture.

Figure 4.1 The map of setting Kazakh Clans
 For manufacturing the map, the works of M.S. MUKANOV and other authors are used. - ©1999 Copyright Agency BRIF Central Asia, Author A.I.SOBAKIN (BRIF Central Asia)
https://www.nps.edu/documents/105988371/107571254/Kazakh_tribal_map.pdf/a57205a5-ea88-4bb8-93b1-5b04d059da07



Tribal connections have been a daily life dynamic in Kazakhstan. A standard conversation can instantly begin by sincerely asking each other about their local origins. While traditional clan relations have nevertheless existed in Kazakhstan's daily life, oligarchic elements typically acquire key roles in private business more (Kubicek, 2011, p. 121). Oligarchs do not receive significant grassroots support, although they subtly manipulate economic instruments of the valuable resources like raw materials, state-owned banks, state-owned factories, communal lands. However, factual allegations of personal patronage for years caused pressure on modern media and modern literature to curtain it. All the more, Hayrolla Gabjalilov remarked approvingly it lasted problematic to find help when he was preparing an atlas about Kazakh tribes (Dügen, 2019, p. 297).

Central Asia was ruled by the Russian Empire between 1865-1918 (Cooley, 2012, p. 17). After a short time as an autonomous state, modern Kazakhstan was under Soviet control in 1920.

Soviet policies on clan structure in Central Asia had changed significantly over time. Moscow persistently denied clan structure until the 1930s; later accepted the social existence but desperately attempted to repress it; finally, it fed the prominent clans satisfactorily with decentralization policies.

The first Soviet leader, Lenin, had perceived clan formation in Central Asia as a class struggle (Collins, 2006, p. 31). He reasonably claimed clan leaders belong to aristocratic class, the chief enemy of communism. In this manner, Lenin had not assessed the modern existence of tribal forms during Central Asian governance plans; because he had presumed communist policies would have directly eliminated clan structures. (Collins, 2006, p. 100). Ultimately, in 1922, he progressively introduced an economic plan offering a gradual transition into a socialist economy and an institutional transformation in Central Asia (Collins, 2006, p. 85). Nevertheless, the economic plan could not actualize efficiently. Consequently, the economic transition was more gradual during the 1920s.

USSR attempted to central management from Moscow in Central Asia (Collins, 2006, p. 80). Soviet idealization on modern state structure during the 1920s aimed to dissolve tribal forms by russification, modern education, extensive modernization, and secularization. However, Soviet analyst Massell reported that ten-year-central management with executive officers from Moscow had not altered Central Asian perception of authority (Collins, 2006, p. 84). Local leaders had remained still more authoritative than local party officials and informal rules were respected more than formal ones.

After Lenin, Stalin came to power in 1924. He aimed to disperse the clan structure by excessive force and to achieve the social modernization of Central Asia. Consequently, he inevitably affected the political perception on Central Asia, accordingly ordered rapid sedentarization and collective farms with Five-Year-Plan in 1929. However, sedentarization policies unintentionally caused severe famine in Kazakh nomads during the 1920-30s. This forced settlement cost the loss of the half of the Kazakh nomad population (Collins, 2006, p. 85).

Stalin invariably sent various ethnical groups into Kazakhstan promoting counter-power in the local population, and he reconstructed the demographic picture. Chechens, Crimean Tatars, Koreans, and Volga Germans had been involuntarily sent into Kazakhstan. The percentage of Kazakh had fallen severely to % 30 by 1959 (Burkhanov & Collins, 2019, p. 15). In addition, many unwilling Kazakhs had been addressed to proper places in the USSR as a

standard state policy. Correspondingly, Kazakhs lived through a cultural identity lost under Stalin.

Soviet regimes typically attempted to neighborhood standardization by collective farms. It is conveniently arranged to eradicate tribal values and increase communal values. Kolkhoz has literally used abbreviations of “Collective farm” and sovkhoz “State farm.” In kolkhoz, a local farmer rents a communal land: while in sovkhoz, a farmer works as a worker in the communal land.

The USSR established kolkhoz or sovkhoz to achieve a modern society with sedentarization and collectivization in Central Asia. These modern establishments had turned into the communist forms of the local settlements like aul, mahalla, avlod, and the chief aim to forcibly disperse clan structure had failed. In the published report of Kolkhoz Center in October 1932 founded three fundamental problems of kolkhozes (Collins, 2006, pp. 94-95). First, collective farms were just a political reflection of the clan structure. Even legitimate authorities desperately attempted legitimizing clan structures, as can be seen in Soviet archival records (Collins, 2006, p. 86).

Kathleen Collins explained the survival of the clan structure in kolkhozes and sovkhozes:

First, most local villages and settlements remained largely in place.... Small subgroups of tribes, or more traditional “clans,” were settled in villages that became the base for a kolkhoz. Although variation in the size and composition of villages and kolkhozes certainly existed across the Central Asian republics, villages and kolkhozes were primarily kin-based units with a clan and more extended tribal history... These settlements officially recognized Soviet authority, but initially only minimally reorganized their agricultural production and social structure. They did so without significantly altering their village structure, living patterns, or kin-based network. (Collins, 2006, pp. 85-86)

The second specific problem of these local entities, local people were still loyal to their clans. Community people still had been identified themselves as their local neighborhood or essential kinship. Clan leaders benefited from this social perception primarily. Even Soviet politicians called community directors of Central Asia as “nominal communists.” A personal

statement of one regional leader revealed an ordinary perception of an elected kolkhoz representative: *“Everyone here is related; we are family. We cooperated in deceiving the party officials whenever they came. It was quite easy since they did not come often.”* (Collins, 2006, p. 96) The local community directors had been properly allocating the social aid of the regional state. Consequently, local people still had been perceiving community leaders as the first executive authority.

Thirdly, nepotism was unavoidable in the local distribution of state resources. Besides communist ideas; local people were interested in political parties to improperly obtain an economic benefit from the state, like official jobs, state aids. Occasionally, kolkhoz or sovkhoz had taken down non-Kazakh candidates who were appointed from Moscow because they did not tolerate an outsider spying their clientele network (Collins, 2006, p. 92). Moscow should wisely decide according to the determined will of kolkhoz or sovkhoz. This political attitude became nationwide with upcoming years; Kazakh people also wanted a Kazakh national leader. In 1986, they bitterly protested an appointed Russian leader to the First Secretariat of the Communist Party and obtained the official appointment of a Kazakh, Nazarbayev.

Moscow presumed a low level of literacy naturally caused the fundamental problems in the official report. Communist party members in common were clan leaders who were educated well. While communist party propaganda intentionally targeted the suffering poor, it could merely influence the local elites because of the language barriers. They anxiously expected to disperse clan structures by modern education. They aimed to demolish the language barrier and to have direct interaction with desperate citizens. However, the social mobilization of modern education did not result in Moscow's confident expectations. Well-educated people in Central Asia mostly preferred to work in their neglected regions and to voluntarily adopt to clan structure; because they had remained merely an ultimate outsider in Moscow. A Kazakh in a critical role in Moscow was even difficult to consider.

Clan survival after the authoritarian Stalin regime inevitably includes a more comprehensive reason than kolkhoz problems. To begin with, the sedentarization process massacred nearly half of the Kazakh population. A vast famine broke out in the nomads, many Kazakh clans clashed with Russian authorities, and many struggling people died miserably in violent resistance. More than 1.5 million Kazakh died until 1940 (Britannica, 2020). Also, near to one-fourth of the historical tribes promptly fled to China or other nearest destinations. The social process turned into an unspeakable tragedy for Kazakhs.

Besides, russification led to fear of Kazakh identity loss. Russification spread to local education and local culture; properly speaking Russian language remained the essential requirement to obtain an official job; Kazakh surnames were Russified; “Ahmet” reluctantly became “Ahmetov” for males and “Ahmetova” for females; names of places like streets, cities, rivers, lakes changed with Russian names. Moscow became an outsider after these harsh policies.

Furthermore, it had been forbidden to travel inside the communist country without a necessary passport. And Moscow had deliberately made obtaining a passport difficult. Mass sedentarization and collectivization supported with the passport system constrained clan members to willingly stay in social unity. Increasing solidarity inside of the local clans represents equally a passive resistance to the authoritarian policies of Moscow. Additionally, kolkhoz or sovkhos reluctantly produced wholly new factors to the kin bonds such as friendship, school alumni, neighboring instead of eliminating kinship. Put differently, the social perception of local people did not change, however, they appropriately included new factors for their personal affinities, and fictive ties also became vital.

Moreover, nomad tribes in Central Asia had lived through excessively hard conditions in the destructive process of local establishments of kolkhoz and sovkhos. The bureaucratic state gently forced them to reluctantly leave their thousand years-old life-styles in a short time with limited support. Many desperate people died because of the terrible famine. The hostile conditions during the transition process caused the communal solidarity of clan members more and more. Social solidarity naturally produced a political pact between influential clans against Moscow. For a practical example, spying for Moscow was dreadful disobedience.

Additionally, communist party members were overwhelmingly local elites. Sedentarization caused severe famine outbreak, and clan leaders, as communist party regional heads, instantly accessed the state resources and distributed inside of their disadvantaged community. Local management of limited resources granted clan leaders more evident popularity and loyalty inside their clans. As follows, local people perceived clan leaders as absolute authority. For the apparent reasons presented, Kazakh people perceived Moscow as an ultimate outsider. As it happens, they did not resist the political system openly, the social system could not combine with daily life in Central Asia. However, irregularly they considered enhancing the central power, these short-lived attempts inevitably caused political instability.

In the late 1930s, Moscow announced that modernization of Central Asia was completed. Consequently, the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic was established in 1936. In fact, it was just an official call for an end repression period for local clans. Instead, Moscow focused on de-Islamization. Clans became stronger after Kazakh SSR. Stalin voluntarily left Central Asia to clan leaders and did not interfere in domestic relations. Until the death of Stalin, Central Asia was not on the key focus of central politics due to the Second World War.

Moreover, Stalin progressively weakened the communist party's direct influence aiming at the personalization of executive power (Huntington, 1973, p. 27). In wartime, it was naturally a political obligation. However, when the communist party dissipated its political power in Moscow, it also lost in Central Asia. Because of the personalization of executive power, Stalin had been called a communist dictator; and meanwhile, in Central Asia, clan leaders intensified the control of political authorities.

Khrushchev came into executive power in 1953. He attempted strengthening the communist party and re-shuffled the local cadre in Central Asian countries after the death of Stalin. The cadre rotation remained a key feature of local offices to hamper “excessive” corruption, not the entire corruption. His controversial policies are often called de-Stalinization (Hiro, 2009, p. 125). However, Khrushchev announced it as “mature socialism.”

In the 1960s, Khrushchev reunited small kolkhozes into a more enormous one. He aimed to increased productivity in local agriculture and targeted endless virgin lands in Central Asia to cultivate in late 1953. He had properly managed a similar project in Ukraine and had succeeded brilliantly in it. However, Khrushchev’s ambitious Virgin Lands project in Kazakhstan inevitably caused millions of newcomers from Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and other Slavic regions. The demography, once again, had radically changed. The percentage of Slavic people became nearly 45%. Kazakhs were a minority in their historical homeland. Regrettably, the challenging project had not calculated the harsh arid climate of Central Asia. After several successful years on intensive agriculture in virgin lands, the arid soil became infertile. The extensive project ended disastrously with catastrophic environmental problems.

In 1964, Brezhnev came to political power. He was a unique leader for Kazakhstan because he had governed Kazakh SSR between 1955-56; he maintained intimate bonds with Kazakhs. De-Stalinization was intentionally slowed during Brezhnev's presidential tenure because the arms race with the USA left little resources for the economic reforms of Brezhnev. The failed attempts to centralize in Central Asia naturally forced Moscow to tolerate the local

patrimonialism during the Brezhnev era (Cooley, 2012, p. 18). As long as local leaders managed political stability, Moscow did not interfere in the domestic relations of Central Asia. Collins summarized, “*The Brezhnev era represented an informal social contract between the Soviet regime and Central Asian clan elites.*” (Collins, 2006, p. 337).

Local leaders, as responsible for political stability, used public goods to reasonably achieve social pacts with local clans. Brezhnev merely decided which prominent clan would obtain legitimate authority. The political favoritism of Brezhnev frequently was seen as the primary reason for organizational corruption. When a specific clan excessively corrupted, Brezhnev just gave the local control to another. This political cycle did not end until the official dissolution of the USSR.

*Table 4.1 Ethnic origins of the first secretaries of the CP of Kazakh SSR, 1925–91
(Cumplings, 2005, p. 75)*

<i>First Secretary</i>	<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Period</i>
Filipp I. Goloshchekin*	Jewish	1925–33
Levon I. Mirzoian*	Armenian	1933–37
V. I. Naneishvili	Georgian	1938 (interim)
Nikolai A. Skvortsov	Belarusian	1938–45
Zhumabai Shaiakhmetov	Kazakh	1945–54
Panteleimon K. Ponomarenko	Ukrainian	1954–55
Leonid Brezhnev	Russian	1955–56
Ivan D. Iakovlev	Russian	1956–57
Nikolai I. Beliaev	Russian	1957–60
Dinmukhamed A. Kunaev	Kazakh	1960–62
Ismail Y. Yusupov	Uighur	1962–64
Dinmukhamed A. Kunaev	Kazakh	1964–86
Gennadii V. Kolbin	Russian	1986–89
Nursultan A. Nazarbaev	Kazakh	1989–91

In contrary to Khrushchev’s rotation policy, Brezhnev promoted stable positions with stable tenure. The stable official cadres resulted in organizational corruption, not only horizontal but also vertical organizations. “Uzbek Cotton Affair” scandal is an example of it. In 1986 Moscow allegedly discovered a complex network of organizational corruption, which caused them nearly \$1 billion. The interesting point is that the complex network included thousands of local workers who do not gain anything, local leaders and many leading politicians in Moscow, including Brezhnev’s son-in-law (Cooley, 2012, p. 18). Remarkably, the local people typically had perceived the corruption process as accumulating Moscow money in their disadvantaged neighborhood.

Localization in local cadres represents an essential feature of the Brezhnev era. For apparent example, the Kazakh leader Kunaev, a close friend of Brezhnev, facilitated Kazakhification of official offices. Kunaev generously provided local offices to ethnic Kazakhs, especially from Senior zhuz. Moreover, at the local level, executive directors of kolkhozes distributed communal lands and official positions to their personal affinities. The political power of Kazakhs in the local economy was rising, and the lengthy tenure of Brezhnev promoted the embedded clientelist networks. The private exploitation of state resources granted huge patronage of influential clans in Central Asia.

Because of the enormous land of Central Asia, infrastructure investments were costly. (Cooley, 2012, p. 17). Despite the economic disadvantages of vast lands, Kazakhstan was modernized to a certain extent. “The Soviets brought education, and electricity” was a typical phrase of those Soviet times. A personal statement of a local elder from Central Asia sufficiently indicates the social perception of ordinary citizens: “*We lived very well under the Soviet system, even though few believed in it.*” (Collins, 2006, p. 97). Alec Nove and J. A. Newth acknowledged that in 1960s Central Asia much more modern than its counterparts (Nove & Newth, 1966, pp. 110-111). However, direct contributions of local households into the Soviet economy did not compensate for the infrastructure costs.

As planned by Brezhnev, Gorbachev actualized the gradual process of radical liberal reforms between 1985-91 popularly called “Perestroika.” It was an economic reason for the Soviet collapse. Gorbachev aggressively fought with extensive corruption using the liberal economy and local cadre rotation. Even political and economic reforms did not achieve to end corruption, they radically reshaped the power balance in Central Asia. Accordingly, the clan leaders inevitably began losing control of state resources. The liberal reforms of “Perestroika” brought the oligarchic elements to the political life in Kazakhstan.

4.2 THE CURRENT INTER-CLAN RELATIONS IN KAZAKHSTAN

This section will begin with the last secretary of Kazakh SSR and come to Nazarbayev and the independency years. It will elaborate on the policies of the first years and the radical changes in policies after these years. Later, the political experiences of Nazarbayev will be summarized with the criticism on him. Lastly, the elite circle of Kazakhstan in those years will be presented and the starting point of the interest clash will be indicated.

The historical narration of independent Kazakhstan should inevitably begin with Kunaev because he carefully organized a Kazakh cadre in Kazakh SSR. After Janin Shaiakhmetov, Kunaev respectively became the First Secretary of the Communist Party. Kunaev served from 1964 to 1986. He was ethnically Kazakh from Senior zhuz, also, a close friend of Brezhnev during his short-lived tenure in Kazakhstan.

Kunaev had experienced an apparent fear of overthrowing by Middle zhuz. To progressively eliminate any organic solidarity between Junior and Middle zhuzes, he stimulated an apparent conflict of economic interest between influential clans. While noble clans disputed to each other, his organized tribe in Senior zhuz obtained most of the offices (Cummings, 2005, p. 19). In other words, he generally appointed Senior zhuz, the “Ysti” tribe, to critical offices. His cadre policies powerfully reinforced his tribe’s executive power. He also started “Kazakhification” in official positions. However, Kunaev willingly gave some modest offices to Junior zhuz because they were naturally away from the official ex-capital Almaty and it was challenging for them to seize the presidential power (Düġen, 2019, p. 296).

The first grand stage of the patrimonialization transpired in Kunaev’s presidential tenure. Furthermore, mafia-like organizations, unrecorded economy, and organizational corruption had become endemic in modern society during his long term. Extensive corruption and nepotism had embedded in local society. For a minor example, his private network personally used the state-owned “*247 hotels, 414 guest flats, 84 cottages, 22 hunting lodges, and 350 hospital beds*”, and this widely known fact did not issue any investigation (Svanberg, 1990).

While Brezhnev remained blind to the domestic affairs of Kazak SSR, Gorbachev was willing to alter the balance. In 1986, Kunaev inevitably lost his official position as the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan because of extensive corruption and nepotism. Gorbachev promptly appointed Kolbin, a Russian, to the local office. However, a Kazakh officer was waiting passively for his presidential tenure after Kunaev; Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Kunaev and Nazarbayev traditionally represent the same zhuz but different tribes. According to Gorbachev, they unknowingly longtime enemies. Indeed, Kunaev gently advised him to promptly sending Nazarbayev to Moscow several critical times. Gorbachev wrote in his historical memories that Kunaev said to him, *“This is a dangerous man. He must be stopped.”* (Gorbachev, 1995, p. 330). After the violent protests of the Kazakh people, Gorbachev modestly admitted that to appoint a Russian was typically an apparent mistake and wisely said, *“We should have realized that it would be difficult for the Kazakhs to accept a Russian in this position”* (Gorbachev, 1995, p. 330).

Nazarbayev is from a peasant family in Southern Kazakhstan. His local clan is the “Shaprashty” tribe from Senior zhuz, a small tribe relative to his presidential predecessor Kunaev’s leading tribe. His wife, Sara Nazarbayeva, was from politically influential tribe Kauandyk from Middle zhuz (Meyer, 2008). Nazarbayev is a metallurgist, and he eagerly pursued a lengthy career in the communist party since he was youthful. He published scholarly books to reveal precisely his political opinions, such as: “The Strategy of Independence” and “In the Heart of Eurasia.” In 2010, the elected parliament granted him an honorary title of “Leader of the nation.” Also, a specific law which granted life-long immunity to Nazarbayev and his affluent family passed through in parliament. He voluntarily resigned in 2019, but he is still influential in politics and occupies the topmost floor in the presidential palace.

In 1989, a political protest broke out in Almaty because local people were naturally opposed to a Russian local leader. Later, the violent riots are named Zheltoksan and inevitably turned into a brutal massacre of innocent civilians. Plus, it is claimed that Nazarbayev incited the protests handling his possible relation with KGB. Simultaneously, Nazarbayev instantly began to criticize the Kazakh economy and its economic dependence on Moscow. Nazarbayev correctly pointed out the clientele network and the patrimonial leadership of Kunaev in the Kazak USSR. He reasonably argued there was desperately an extreme elite dependency on local politics.

Having a lengthy career in the local party and some economic pacts with other clans, especially Middle zhuz, Nazarbayev replaced with instead of Kolbin in 1989 . (Schiek & Hensell, 2012, p. 206). He carefully constructed beneficial relations with economic elites and prompted modern actors in politics. The power balance had changed unexpectedly by a sudden collapse of the USSR. As the last state, Kazakhstan unanimously declared its independence from the USSR on 16 December 1991.

Nazarbayev was perceived as a reformist, loyalist, and technocrat in the first years of his secretariat. While his reformist image gave hope to the successful democratization of Kazakhstan, he turned in to an authoritarian ruler. In 1995, Martha Brill Olcott, one of the chief specialists in the political transition in Central Asia, wrote enthusiastically: “*What makes the process so engrossing to observe is that Nazarbayev is the man who may be able to work the necessary magic.*” On the contrary, she authored a book to express her apparent disappointment with Nazarbayev in 2002 (Schiek & Hensell, 2012, p. 203) (Olcott, 1995, p. 169).

In the early 1990s, Nazarbayev presented an image of a modernity seeker. When Nazarbayev reached the party secretariat, he reorganized the economic system according to his explicit criticisms. Until 1994, economic liberalization comfortably remained an underlying theme of political life. As follows, he carefully composed a modern cadre including creative reformists (Schiek & Hensell, 2012, p. 207). For clear examples, the first two prime ministers were reformists.

However, Nazarbayev also introduced contemporary actors in politics purposely. When he met a potential future rival to his authoritarian regime, he generously offered them a respectable office role and irresistibly compelled them to remain comfortably his loyal follower. For notable examples; Olzhas Suleimenov was a skillful opposition leader in the National Congress Party. His political party unanimously supported Nazarbayev in the first presidential campaign, and Olzhas Suleimenov instantly behooved an official ambassador in Italy (Schiek & Hensell, 2012, p. 207). Ermukhamet Ertysbaev, another opposition party leader, he willingly became a presidential advisor in 1993.

New Kazakhstan had not taken place in a tabula rasa. Instantly abandoning a soviet-style economy caused severe chaos in the first challenging years (Cooley, 2012, p. 19). The ruble-addicted economic system was radically transforming into a national economy. However, the senior cadre of the Communist Party proportionally represented a necessary majority in the parliament and did not support more privatization. The prime minister could not deal with the united parliament. As an ultimate solution to state formation, Nazarbayev forcibly dissolved the presidential cabinet in 1993 and instantly replaced the prime minister with Akezhan Kazhegeldin.

Kazakhstan had consisted of a multiethnic population in the first years. A Russian as prime minister was significant to reasonably satisfying non-Kazak origin citizens (Kazakh remained under the % 50 percent of the local population in 1991.); thus, Sergei Tereshchenko,

ethnically Russian, was the first prime minister until 1994. Moreover, there were several Russian members in the executive cabinet of prime minister Kazhegeldin (Dave, 2007, p. 146). However, the Slavic population had started to willingly abandon the country.

As an addition, effective Kazakhification policies constituted Kazakhs as the majority in a short time. Many Kazakhs in abroad came back to Kazakhstan with the economic incentives of government. To enjoy grassroots support, Nazarbayev correctly applied “Kazakhification” in local offices by promptly appointing Kazakhs instead of Slavs (Kubicek, 2011, p. 121). Akezhan Kazhegeldin, coming after Tereshchenko, was typically presenting the gradual alteration in the local population. The “Kazakh” theme spread to every aspect of life like Russification in the USSR’s initial years. Cummings demonstrates it:

“A less costly and more effective means of altering perceptions was the elite’s decision to rename streets, towns, and regions to emphasize their Kazakh essence. The Caspian port of “Shevchenko,” for example, became “Aktau”; the Slavic-named cities of “Guryev” and “Panfilov,” “Atyrau” and “Zharkent” respectively. By 1995, over twenty streets had been renamed in the capital alone: “Karl Marx” was transformed into “Kunaev;” “Kommunistichesky” into “Ablai Khan;” and “Kirov” into “Bogenbai batyr,” both of the latter paying homage to the medieval and modern heroes of the Kazakh ethnos.”
(Cummings, 2005, p. 90).

Clan roles of brokering and gatekeeping of economic resources were rooted to their historical experiences with Moscow in Soviet times. The local economy was not promising for significant revenues in the beginning. However, prominent clans naturally obtained a unique opportunity for a corrupt bargain confidently with the opportune arrival of big powers in Central Asia precisely corresponding to the extensive discovery of enormous resources. Europe, the USA, China, and Russia were eagerly seeking to do business in the energy sector in Kazakhstan.

After an economic boom with discovered oil and gas export, Nazarbayev obtained enough resources to properly distribute between clan leaders and influential clans skipped into the international scale. Consequently, the economic perspective changed fundamentally. The state formation crisis in 1994 and the remarkable discovery of new natural resources naturally provoked more authoritarian rules in Kazakhstan. The recent strategy focused on national unity,

social justice, and state-led economic developments. Accordingly, the privatization policies were not on the economic agenda.

As a modernity seeker, Nazarbayev properly established an active committee with national and international experts and published an economic strategy in 1997. Later, he revisited the previous strategy, and enthusiastically adopted a new economic reform inspired by Asian Tigers. This alternative model made the state more active in the recovering economy. Decentralization and privatization strategies were not stressed as in the former model. On the direct contrary, the primary goal promptly became state-financed industrialization. The income of the newly-discovered natural resources could finance the state-led industrialization.

Nazarbayev boasted a political program and long-term objectives. As economic reforms and the ultimate goals of 2030, Astana, in northern Kazakhstan and mostly the Russian area, became the contemporary capital city in 1997. Many enormous projects instantly began, and the modern city displayed an iconic symbol of modernization attempts. After his official resignation from the presidency, the capital city renamed as Nursultan.

For a centralized economy, Kazakhstan set up a national fund for resource revenues in 2000. Nazarbayev spent wisely the state funds to adequately support the low and middle class by social projects like academic opportunities, affordable houses because he dealt with social justice significantly. Later, the economic savings involved a gigantic fund of Samruk Kazyna.

As a sizeable joint-stock state company with 260.000 employees and 400 state companies, “Samruk Kazyna” is founded in 2006 as an ultimate result of the economic strategy of economic centralization (Schiek & Hensell, 2012, p. 210). It has contained \$46.9 billion, 45% percent of the GDP of Kazakhstan (Schiek & Hensell, 2012, p. 213). Kazakhstan has reserved the natural resource income for the next generations in this fund.

Nazarbayev’s instinctive fear of the active opposition is well-known in Kazakhstan. For a specific example, a local expert speaking to Cumming says:

Currently, there is much talk about the ambitions of the Prime Minister [Akezhan Kazhegeldin] who has his eyes on the presidential position; One further important point: Olzhas Suleimenov, representative of the Middle zhuz, had been prepared to stand as a competitor to Nazarbayev for the Presidency. Nazarbayev was afraid of a possible union between Suleimenov and [Gaziz] Aldamzharov

(Middle and Junior zhuz), and for this reason, he held a referendum to prolong his rule.” (Cummings, 2005, p. 109).

Equally, the cruel fate of political opposition in the authoritarian country is horrifying. For a typical example, as a personal strategy of cadre politics, Nazarbayev does not delegate local political authority to local clans. He appoints the local rulers from the capital. In economic exchange for local power, he properly distributes the resource earnings to the prominent clans. The political system is centralized mostly. In 2002, Galymzhan Zhakiyanov justly criticized it and reasonably demanded a direct election for regional offices. Subsequently, he served in jail for four years.

Another example: The privatization strategy of Akezhan Kazhegeldin constituted the primary source of clientele networks (Dave, 2007, p. 147). This economic resource conferred to him the exclusive power to reorganize a clientele network, consequently, the ended privatization severely restricted his considerable influence. He insisted on more privatization and, as a direct result, instantly lost his official position. In 1999, he announced triumphantly for the presidential candidacy. Unluckily, Kazhegeldin was sentenced ten years in 2000; as usual for every possible rival of Nazarbayev. He reluctantly obliged to promptly flee to out of the country.

The Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan in 2010, as an addition to Nazarbayev's opposition fear, terribly frightened him. He promptly addressed all tragic events as banditry and claimed the democratic state itself could democratize. He promptly presented several political reforms to prevent the authoritarian country from color revolutions. As a beginning, Nazarbayev properly set the National Commission for Democratization and Civil Society in 2004 to progressively improve the practical democracy. He served as the honorary chairman of the democratic reforms and gained the political entitlement to serve without specific limit thanks to a specific amendment in the civil constitution in 2006 (Kubicek, 2011, p. 120). All the more, these reforms are appropriately entitled ‘Turkmenbashization’ in Kazakhstan (Kubicek, 2011, p. 121). Moreover, many international organizations bitterly criticized the controversial amendments, and rightfully claimed that Nazarbayev designed a political system to merely serve “one person” (Najibullah, 2009). The democratic reforms were absolutely in favor of Nazarbayev, and alarming for functioning democracy.

There were further criticisms of Nazarbayev; nepotism. The elite cadre did not change from Soviet to modern Kazakhstan mostly. The party offices also occupied by the same people

before independence. In 2002, the elite personals sustained almost the same cadre in 1989 (Schiek & Hensell, 2012, p. 207). While Kunaev did not provide any key offices to Middle zhuz because he was afraid of power loss, Nazarbayev did because of the reasonable fear of a civil uprising in Middle zhuz in the first years. As follows, Nazarbayev promptly appointed Kazhegeldin (from the Middle zhuz) as a prime minister.

An interesting point is that Nazarbayev is justly criticized for the matters he blamed Kunaev. Endemic nepotism was placed the first topic. In 1995, the principal offices traditionally belonged to Senior zhuz (in percentile Senior; 54, Middle; 37, and Junior; 9) while in 2000, the quantile did not change significantly; respectively 51%; %39; %10 (Cummings, 2005, p. 74). According to quantile in the local population, it was evident that Senior zhuz occupied the official offices overly, while Junior zhuz was severely underrepresented. Though the office jobs were predominantly in the local area of Senior zhuz, the apparent correlation does not refer to specific discrimination in the recruitment process.

In 2011, the legitimate president appointed approximately 3.000 official offices directly in Kazakhstan (Schiek & Hensell, 2012, p. 212). Additionally, as a party leader, he could alone decide instead of the members of the parliament. Nazarbayev generally appointed key officials from Chemolgan, his village, even it is called “Chemolganization” of official offices (Cummings, 2005, p. 66). In 2010, when Nazarbayev justly criticized the excessive control of some prominent clans, he indirectly admitted that young boys in strategic positions were unjustified (Schiek & Hensell, 2012, p. 2015). Even he criticized the unfair appointment of the official offices, he did not attempt any solution for nepotism.

However, civil society naturally possesses a social perception that specific clans are essential in the recruitment process. Erlan Karin and Andrei Chebotarev adequately explain the accurate perception: “*The republic’s political system today is defined by paternal-clientelist relationships and the division of Kazakhs into three tribal groupings and that zhuz membership is ‘used as a mechanism for lobbying its interests in the organs of power’*” (Karin & Chebotarev, 2002, p. 80). However, Cummings carefully explains the hardships of correctly identifying a direct correlation between local tribes and official offices:

“Correlations between patterns of recruitment and zhuz membership are difficult to uncover, not least because the place of birth does not necessarily equate with zhuz membership. For example, the forefathers of urban Kazakhs will almost certainly not have come from

an urban setting, not least because of Soviet-era migration. The equation between birthplace and zhuz background is more reliable for rural-based Kazakhs, but even here, we cannot exclude the possibility of migration or the fact that some regions belong to two zhuzes, and those boundaries are not always clear from a bibliographical entry of birthplace.”

Mukhtar Shakhonov, an active member of the national parliament and notable poet, passionately declared an open letter to the responsible government for the widespread nepotism and 143 leading intellectuals promptly signed it in 2013 (Düğen, 2019, p. 297). In the passionate declaration, he prominently mentioned about a personal memory in Moscow, Soviet times. He had gone to Moscow to visit Cultural Affairs of the Communist Party. A responsible officer politely asked him his local tribe. Then he instantly realized a list in the officer's hand. In that list, it had been recorded all tribal origins of all Kazak principal officials. Consequently, he credibly claimed USSR was undoubtedly exercising the tribal potentialities to form power balance as Nazarbayev does.

Moreover, Nazarbayev is aware of a national discontent on the procurement process. To possess a democrat image, he advised a new career program for office jobs to properly restrain nepotism. The new career system could carefully regulate arbitrary procurements and official employments. Surprisingly, the presidential administration promptly vetoed the alternative program. Everybody popularly knows Nazarbayev, who offered the program, implicitly approved apparent rejection. However, the democratic performances of Nazarbayev were well-known.

Bullying the reformers became another structural impediment in modern Kazakh politics. Complaining about the political system in Kazakhstan as a civil officer is inadmissible. A prime example is Alikhan Baimenov. He justly criticized the low intelligent level of state officers and merely offered a nationwide test for the recruitment process. As usual, he promptly dismissed from the executive office at a tragic end. (Schiek & Hensell, 2012, p. 216).

Another intense topic of criticisms remains corruption. Kazakhstan shook by several gigantic corruption scandals that pushed Nazarbayev. The embarrassing “Kazakhgate” scandal is one of the most significant corruption in Kazakhstan. James Giffen was an influential American with a deep network in the USSR and post-soviet countries. In the 1990s, he became a presidential advisor to Nazarbayev, and the key person to improperly access Kazakh energy

resources even he obtained a Kazak Diplomatic passport. Giffen assisted clan leaders to acquire their personal share from international deals. After a criminal investigation by US and Swiss authorities, he instantly arrested in 2003, being accused several financial crimes like money laundering using 30 offshore banks and bribing millions of dollars. Even Nazarbayev, himself, was on the report of appalling allegations. Personal accounts of Kazakh officials in Switzerland, including Nazarbayev, costed a dangerous reputation loss.

The high-profile scandal also revealed a complex network of modern USA politics. Giffen rightfully claimed he was enthusiastically supported by leading politicians, even by the CIA. Giffen's right to access classified documents was unexplained in the judicial court. In 2010, Giffen received no punitive fine or sentence. He was a corrupt businessman, or an innocent American who serves his democratic country with his well-brokering skills. This is never answered because the judge decision referred to some confidential documents.

The bureaucratic system in Kazakhstan somehow produces pervasive corruption. For a striking example; desperate citizens were paying \$200 bribes to improperly obtain a necessary passport in a short time. The government launched a political project of "one-stop-shop," which aims to severely cut small bribes in governmental services in 2005. With the restructured system, citizens did not directly contact anymore with executive officers of the Ministry of Justice. In this effective way, bureaucratic corruption lessened to a minimum level in a short time. Later, the "one-stop-shop" transferred to regional bodies with the intended amendment in the specific legislation. Next, the Ministry of Justice claimed that a necessary passport could not be issued by another executive body of political authority referring to security concerns. Ultimately, now, passports are once more under the Ministry of Justice, and the bribe organization began to function again.

Nazarbayev's campaigns of fighting corruption became a regular procedure. He promptly launches a governmental campaign whenever he notices a social discontent. For a classic example, a frequent arrest in official offices happened to aggressively fight with organizational corruption in 2009 and 2010. According to the diplomatic USA sources, Nazarbayev fought desperately with a corrupted clan network because he was nervous about losing local support (Schiek & Hensell, 2012, p. 217). Nevertheless, radical transformations have never occurred.

Nazarbayev succeeded in the power balance in the authoritarian country for thirty years. Inter-elites' pacts are not formal but acquiring information about inter-clans' relations is easy

due to visible political instruments of legitimate authorities. The academic research of the Institute of Research on Contemporary Political Issues revealed the clientelist relations in Kazakhstan in 1999. The research precisely indicated the country was governed by seven noble families who most of them are exiled now (Dave, 2007, p. 148). These families naturally possess oligarchic features, and kinship is mostly fictive. It is listed with the addition of rising actors in the 2000s.

Rakhat Aliyev and Dariga Nazarbayeva

Rakhat Aliyev (Nazarbayev's former son-in-law) is from Middle zhuz, the Konrat tribe. He and his ex-wife Dariga Nazarbayeva were responsible for the mass media, taxation, security, and entertainment. They had held on many top positions in offices like security service, tax departments in the country for a long time. Their political party Asar, which Nazarbayev ordered to establish, participated in the presidential election of 2004. After the election, the opposing party dissolved and united with Nazarbayev's leading party in 2006.

Rakhat Aliyev was promptly arrested in 2007 for alleged corruption. A short time later, his private business with Nurbank became a financial scandal. After a full criminal record such as kidnapping, murder; Nazarbayev appointed him as an official ambassador in Austria as a diplomatic way to voluntarily dismiss in 2007. In Austria, he began harshly criticizing Nazarbayev and announced for the presidential candidacy for the following elections. Nazarbayeva divorced him in the same years.

Later he was imposed a sentence on allegedly attempting to a failed coup in 2008, in Kazakhstan. His diplomatic passport promptly canceled. Furthermore, there were harsh accusations in several countries, such as money laundering, murder, kidnapping. He published "Godfather-in-law" to bitterly accuse Nazarbayev of the political murders of opposition leaders in 2013; he was arrested and sent to Austrian jail in 2014, committed suicide 2015.

After excessive damage to a prestigious reputation, Dariga Nazarbayeva instantly lost her apparent influence to a significant extent. However, she is still in a critical position in active politics and influences business.

Timur Kulibayev

Timur Kulibayev, the second son-in-law of Nazarbayev, is married to Dinara Nazarbayeva. He is one of the wealthiest men in the country and one of the key figures in the oil sector. He acquired more leading roles in legitimate government after the apparent betrayal of Aliyev. Energy sector deals are always under his hands. Wikileaks documents revealed that

% 90 percent of the Kazakh economy directed by him (Orange, 2010). After the violent protest in Zhanaozen, Nazarbayev forcibly disbanded him from official roles. Karim Massimov inevitably became the political hands of Kulibayev in the executive government. Kulibayev was accused that he received more than \$100 million bribes from the official deals of Chinese energy companies in 2003. (Tian, 2018, p. 31). Ablyazov (an ex-Kazak oligarch) also published a private letter to justly accuse him of organizational corruption.

Kazkommertsbank Group

Nurzhan Subkhanberdin remained a significant member of the private Kazkommertsbank group. They dominated in banking, transport, and telecommunication. His extraordinary wealth estimated 1.5 billion USD in 2007 (Junisbai, 2010, p. 246). He has been a technocrat with a liberal image but also loyal to the authoritarian regime of Nazarbayev in the 2000s.

However, he achieved his fortune thanks to privatization. In 1994, he was one of the successful businessmen who signed an open-letter that enthusiastically encouraged the oppressive government for more privatization. He had close relations with the opposing Ak Zhol party that approved by Nazarbayev. Accordingly, he was one of the key founders of the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan, remained another leading opposition party in 2001. Later, he rescinded his active support from the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan.

The 'Eurasia' Group

The 'Eurasia' Group is non-Kazak ethnically, including Aleksandr Mashkevich, Patokh Chodiev, Azat Peruashev, Alijan Ibragimov, and Aleksandr Kim and Aleksandr Ni. They had power over the chromium, alumina, and gas in Kazakhstan. In 2003, they included 60.000 labor approximately and 1.3 million USD income (Dave, 2007, p. 149). They founded the Civic Party of Kazakhstan in 1998 by the direction of Nazarbayev. They began losing their power in 2002 (Cummings, 2005, p. 124). Aleksandr Mashkevich was a Jewish living in Kyrgyzstan. He became the head of Eurasian Jewish Diaspora and obtained an Israeli passport, he usually lived out of Kazakhstan. Nazarbayev did not clash with them severely because non-Kazakh groups preserved no substantial political incentives.

The Korean Group

Koreans forcibly settled in Kazakhstan constitute the elite group. Vladimir Kim represents the vital man in the Korean group, one of the wealthiest men in the world. Eduard Ogai, Yury Tshai comprise the other members. They enjoyed a particular business with South

Korea. Oil refineries and technology businesses traditionally are on their hands. They do not possess political initiatives as a non-Kazakh group. This social nature contributed them to be more stable in Kazakhstan.

Zamanbek Nurkadilov

Nurkadilov stood in the narrow circle of Nazarbayev in the 1990s. He was from Senior zhuz, Alban tribe near to Almaty; and a leading politician with a regional base. In his published autobiography, he wrote that “*the sacred duty of relatives to look after their close ones who had come into misfortune*” (Nurkadilov, 1996, p. 11). This statement points out his leader role in his tribe. He obtained many critical positions in the government and powerfully influenced the construction and agriculture sectors. He openly criticized the changed economic perspective of Nazarbayev in 2004 and collaborated with Akezhan Kazhegeldin in the presidential election of 2005. In 2005, three weeks to the election, he committed suicide by shooting himself three times, two in the upper body and one in the head. Many justly claimed it occurred as a political murder.

The Southerners

The Southerners are the representative of the southern region of Kazakhstan according to the document sent to Lauren Goodrich in 2011 (Comments to questions, 2013) Important members are Sarybai Kalmurzayev, Umirzak Shukeyev; Musabek Alimbekov; Sat Tokpakbaev; Kairat Mami; Kozy-Korpesh Karbuzov; Kairat Kojamjarov; Bakytzhan Sagintayev. They seriously opposed the excessive power of Timur Kulibayev and Karim Massimov. Some claimed that 2011 Zhanaozen Uprising was a minor coup of this group (SG Analysis Limited, 9th August 2017). It is hard to verify such allegations academically. However, after the events, Umirzak Shukeyev appointed to the head of Samruk Kazyna after Timur Kulibayev. This appointment made clear that Nazarbayev had to deal with this group in the times of protests. It is easy to conclude that the winner of the Zhanaozen events was “Southerners”.

The ‘Astana-Holding’

Mukhtar Ablyazov was the leader of the Astana Group, right now is a wealthy ex-oligarch of Kazakhstan. Ablyazov is born in Southern Kazakhstan (Senior zhuz), Vannovka, in

1963. He graduated from Moscow Engineering and Physics Institute and became a young entrepreneur on computers and modern technologies during “Perestroika” in the USSR.

Perestroika, which means the reconstruction of the economy according to free-market capitalism, had a substantial impact on his life. The privatization effort of Gorbachev and Akezhan Kazhegeldin assigned Ablyazov one of the modern actors in business life. He gained enormous wealth with his private company and it is allowed him to open a private bank “Astana Holding Bank” (one of the first private banks in Kazakhstan).

Ablyazov instantly became a wealthy oligarch in a short time with the generous help of Kazhegeldin. In 1998, he purchased the Bank Turan Alem, which known as BTA. He carefully fostered beneficial relations with the legitimate government, and accordingly, he was appointed as the head of Kazakhstan Electricity Grid Operating Company (KEGOC). Later, he became Minister for Energy, Industry, and Trade, a position significant in Kazakhstan.

The ultimate abandonment of privatization policies and the economic liberalization of private markets radically reshaped the economic position of Ablyazov. In November 2001, he founded “the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan” as a leading opposition party. While misusing an official office traditionally represents an everyday reality in Kazakhstan, willingly becoming a passionate political opposition does not.

As a consequence of oppressive policies, all party leaders jailed for various reasons in July 2002. Ablyazov was sentenced to six years of prison for “misusing the office as a minister.” Many reasonably argued that Nazarbayev’s evident intention keeping a controlled opposition party turned into a dangerous rival. In May 2003, Ablyazov was released and went to Russia and behooved an executive chairman of BTA Moscow. After a while, he was, again, in the narrow circle of Kazakh oligarchs by the personal assistance of Bolat Utemuratov (Wikileaks, 2009).

Kazakh authorities promptly accused him of having embezzled \$6 billion from BTA Bank in 2009. While BTA had possessed successful records under the executive chairman of Ablyazov, however, it nationalized in 2009 with the controversial assertion of his economic dominance in the Kazakhstan banking sector. Later, it is sufficiently proven that Ablyazov had laundered billions of dollars operating the private bank.

At that moment, Ablyazov promptly fled to London. However, the court of London sentenced him to 22 months for “act in contempt of court” in 2012. Subsequently, he fled to France and accepted financing the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan at the French court. His

argumentation was based on that his economic support for democratic figures disturbed authoritarian leaders and ex-soviet countries typically went for a witch hunt. However, Lyon courts decided to the extradition of him from France to Russia for \$4.5 billion fraud after three years in jail in 2015. Nevertheless, the Conseil d'Etat withdrew the judicial decision in December 2016 due to the apparent absence of basic fair trial requirements in Russia. Presently, he lives in France with luxury conditions in a villa.

Up to the present time, many judicial cases are acting on an international scale organically related to him. He was also wanted from Kazakhstan and Ukraine in the criminal accusations of money laundering along with document forgery. Several high-profile lawsuits are proceeding against him in London, Lyon, Astana, Los Angeles, plus New York (Bland, 2018). For an excellent example, a documentary film by ZEMBLA, chasing the possible clues for Trump Soho Project and wealthy Russians, revealed that while Trump was questioned about Russian affiliates, Ablyazov and his corrupt money were on the specific agenda (ZEMBLA, 2017).

Nazarbayev secured the personal possession of the presidential power until today. However, the clash of personal interest between Nazarbayev and business elites was on the scene in the 2000s. Ablyazov survived alone from the clash as an opposing leader alongside with Akezhan Kazhegeldin.

The political clash began by shifting economic perspectives in the 2000s. Many business elites harshly criticized Nazarbayev for non-liberal attitudes, however, a few launched a political war on him. Ablyazov founded the "Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan Party" in 2001 and Galymzhan Zhakiyanov, Rakhat Aliyev, Kairat Kelimbetov, Nurzhan Subkhanberdin, Bulat Abilov were some of the chief founders. These leading names were the backbone of ex-privatization policies. The political party mostly criticized organizational corruption and nepotism. However, primary motivation arose as private property rights. They were naturally concerned about the future state intervention to their personal wealth because they overwhelmingly dominated the private business in Kazakhstan. The future of their personal wealth was in the hands of Nazarbayev.

In 2004, Nazarbayev threatened the elite powers for their economic dominance in private business, but he did not pronounce any specific name (Dorobantu, 2010, p. 231). After the continual annoyance of Nazarbayev, party members instantly lost their official positions in an authoritarian government, and some sent to jail; some sent abroad; and some killed (Junisbai

& Junisbai, Summer 2005). Following the forced dissolution of the political party, some active members divided into other opposing parties as a continuum of the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan, like “Ak Zhol Party,” “Naghyz Ak Zhol,” “Alga! Kazakhstan.” Ablyazov recreated the opposing party from abroad in 2017.

Many reasonably claimed that Ablyazov wasn't sincere in his democratic purposes because he improperly obtained all his billions with Nazarbayev and was just another kleptocrat. Wikileaks documents sufficiently supported this convincing argument. Ambassador Richard E. Hoagland presented an official report about him (Wikileaks, 2009). He succinctly summarized the ultimate goals of Ablyazov as “1) to rebrand himself as the persecuted leader of Kazakhstan's democratic forces, and 2) to attempt to harm Kazakhstan's image in the final months before it assumes the 2010 OSCE chairmanship” (Wikileaks, 2009). Correspondingly, the sensitive document adequately supports the prevalent assumption that the underlying reason for the persecution of Ablyazov was the financial support of the leading opposition party. Plus, it claims that as an abundant sign of personal trust, after his official release, Ablyazov transferred the 60% share of private BTA bank to Nazarbayev.

According to the critical report in Wikileaks, Akezhan Kazhegeldin, who is exiled in London, enthusiastically supported Ablyazov for his rebranding campaign. They have enough money to finance international campaigns. Local journalist Sergey Duvanov claimed that Ablyazov was not a severe opposition leader, however, he carefully holds vital secrets of wealthy elites. Duvanov's replied the question if Ablyazov is guilty as “*Sure. Kazhegeldin is, too. They all are. Nevertheless, that is the system Nazarbayev created. From time to time, it bites him.*” (Wikileaks, 2009).

Pro-Ablyazovs argue passionately that Ablyazov just wanted to progressively develop Kazakhstan as a modern country, but he should reluctantly accept the playing rules until reforming the rules. Human rights organizations pictured Ablyazov as a democrat figure and accused the Kazakh government of attempting to marginalize him. The only inevitable reality is that after the years of cooperation, Nazarbayev refuse him in Kazakhstan.

The balance of the elite powers is dynamic, and the clashes between influential clans are typical. The absolute fact is unquestioned here by ethical virtue of an academic expectation. The fact we can admit is that there was a potential clash of interest between Nazarbayev and Ablyazov. While the details of the interests were out of our academic context, the possible

existence of the clash of interest is verifiable. The ample justification is easy owing to the available records of Ablyazov in the jurisdiction process, and the official documents presented.

In conclusion the clash of interest began with the abandonment of the liberal politics in Kazakhstan due to the newly discovered resources. The income from the resources was extreme and Nazarbayev should write the rule of the game again. Nazarbayev declared the new rules as state-led industrialization and centralization. The new rules were risky for the elites because everything was depending on Nazarbayev. Naturally, elites got worried about their personal wealth. First, they demanded for more liberal policies. Later, they politically tried to fight with Nazarbayev and established an active opposition party. But Nazarbayev dealt with all of them and became extremely authoritarian. In the end, some elite accepted Nazarbayev, some left the country, some died, some continued to fight from abroad. The Zhanaozen protest was an opportunity for the ex-oligarchs continuing to fight.

4.3 ZHANAOKEN UPRISING

Zhanaozen is a small city in Mangystau, a distinct region with the official capital of Aktau in western Kazakhstan. After the oil boom in Kazakhstan in the late 1990s, the specific region instantly became the most critical oil production area. This arid region, “treasure of Kazakhstan,” produces approximately 70% of total production, however, local workers in the western oil areas have not lived the advantages of economic prosperity comparing certain urban in Almaty or Astana (Satpayev & Umbetaliyeva, 2015, p. 125).

*Figure 4.2 Map of Kazakhstan and Mangystau Region
Human Rights Watch. (2012). Striking Oil, Striking Workers: Violations of Labor Rights in Kazakhstan's Oil Sector. USA.*



Oil workers’ organized protest in Zhanaozen in December 2011 represents not the first, but the most shaking one. The local town owns only the oil industry, which does not promote a diversified economy. In that fashion, the local workers do not possess economic confidence to

bargain for their necessary conditions with responsible employers. However, the ethnically Kazakh local population of Zhanaozen was doubled between the years 2000-2010 (Satpayev & Umbetaliyeva, 2015, p. 125). The newcomers, “oralman,” (Returnee in Kazakh language) were Kazakh people living abroad and returned to Kazakhstan. “Oralman” were having better condition thanks to the government support for Kazakh newcomers. Additionally, non-Kazakh foreign workers were improperly receiving a more generous salary than longtime locals. Nevertheless, the unjust remuneration between the local and foreign staff naturally caused a worrying discussion in the town. Local laborers rightfully claimed that foreign workers and oralman were earning more.

The excessive cost of living stood as another specific problem. The undeveloped region does not sustain the manufacturing industry, and almost every necessary good is imported. As a direct consequence of an isolated location, commodity prices are high comparing to principal cities. Furthermore, social inequality in the region was more than the national average (Satpayev & Umbetaliyeva, 2015, p. 125). Getting-difficult socioeconomic situations of the inhabitants elevated a social tension between the concerned locals and foreigners.

On the other side, oralman equally were unsatisfied with the living conditions claiming that they had not received what the government promised them for willingly returning Kazakhstan. Unsurprisingly, the quarter of the local protesters in Zhanaozen comprised those dissatisfied oralman (Satpayev & Umbetaliyeva, 2015, p. 125). As a consequence, labor unions called for a general strike in the Mangistau region including three oil-producing companies (OMG, KarazhanbasMunai, and Ersai Caspian Contractor) on 26 May 2011. They demanded passionately better labor unions' rights and equal pay and rights with foreign workers.

The oil companies stood reluctant compromising on an increase in salaries. They claimed their conditions were above the national standards and had implemented regular rises in salaries. However, the complicated wage calculation system was hard to realize that if a rise in salaries did exist or not (Satpayev & Umbetaliyeva, 2015, p. 126). Nevertheless, the local workers were persistent in their economic demands. In June, between 12.000-18.000 laborers willingly joined the strike. (Salmon, 2011, p. 507).

The coordinated strike had undoubtedly affected the volume of oil production. As a solution, the oil companies argued local labor unions, conducting the strike, were not legal. It was a fact. However, legal organizations were inactive because of their no-credibility among the workers; instead, unofficial unions were active. For a specific example, unofficial workers'

local association called for an official resignation from the ruling political party, Nur-Otan. Koshbai Qyzanbaev, Nur-Otan's regional leader, admitted 1089 regional resignations from during the strikes (Salmon, 2011, p. 509). These official resignations were a sign of the credibility of the unofficial unions. However, oil companies appealed to the local court, merely asserting the strike was illegitimate.

The judicial process became an achievement for the oil companies. The regional court unanimously decided the local laborers did not respect the Kazakh Labor Code. Natalya Sokolova, the advisor lawyer of local laborers, was instantly arrested and she sentenced for "inciting social enmity" for six years. Subsequently, two of the oil companies, KarazhanbasMunai and OMG, dismissed 2000 workers due to their illegal actions related to the nonviolent protests.

The laid-off workers litigated their employers for their dismissal. The local court promptly decided the companies had a right to dismiss striking workers for their illegal protests. The court verdict was silent coercion not to willingly join the strike again for the other laborers. The judicial coercion served to the intended purpose. The organized strike was over. In the end, many dismissed workers set up a tent city in Zhanaozen square to continue demanding their jobs back.

The government had not given attention to the local strikes until the % 7 percent decline in the last quarter according to the first three quarters in the same year of KazMunaiGas (KMG) (Satpayev & Umbetaliyeva, 2015, p. 126). Timur Kulibayev was the head of the "Samruk Kazyna", containing KMG and other state oil companies. He properly claimed Kazakhstan would resolutely face a \$365 million loss because of the prolonged strikes and said, "*They are our people, and we should work with them. We are not giving up on helping them find employment.*" (Lillis, 2011). Nevertheless, alternative job offers in railroads turned down by local laid-off laborers. Nurlibek Nurgaliyev explained that dismissed laborers wanted their job, not another (Lillis, 2011). However, an apparent rejection of alternative jobs powerfully reinforced the argument that the organized protests were politically motivated.

On 16 December, the police tried cleaning the square from tents of laid-off workers for the Independence Day. Unluckily, a violent struggle broke out between the dismissed laborers and the armed police. Sixteen local people died, and more than 100 injured. Protestors ruined local city hall and oil companies' neighboring buildings. Nazarbayev promptly declared a state of emergency for 20 days and attempted to carefully suppress the extraordinary events.

However, on 17 December, a railway going to Zhanaozen was intentionally blocked to support the dismissed workers. The tragic events became bloody, more and more. On 18 December, the protests spread over the capital of Mangistau, Aktau.

On 21st December, the horrified protests were over as a desired result of the state pressure, but it had been appropriately entitled as the “Zhanaozen Massacre” in Western media. Nazarbayev visited Mangystau for Independence Day, as usual, to signify his innocence. The Arab Spring and the tragic events in Kyrgyzstan in the backstage, Nazarbayev attempted to solve the problem with radical adjustments. He overly focused on foreign worker strategies mostly because, in the Mangystau region, there were oralman in a significant percentile. He promptly cut the economic incentives to oralman to voluntarily return the country and even published an informative article for the possible reasons. To revise his negative image in Western media, Tony Blair, receiving £5 million a year for consulting, arranged a speech for Nazarbayev in Cambridge after the Zhanaozen oil workers uprising.

While the success of the social adjustments is a matter of political debate, as a scapegoat, Timur Kulibayev voluntarily resigned from the head of the Samruk Kazyna. Additionally, the local governor of Mangystau Krymbek Kusherbayev, and the executive director of the KazManaiGas Bolat Akshulov lost their key positions.

The oligarchical features of the protests remained a much-debated matter. Firstly, Gennadi Benditskiy allegedly claimed that Atyrau Region Mayor Bergei Ryskaliyev used the pre-existed conflict between laborers in KMG for an economic reason that he lost control over the Atyrau Oil Refinery because of KMG. He incited the dissatisfied workers in KMG to discredit the company (Benditskiy, 2013). Ryskaliyev was the local governor of Aktau, the region of Zhanaozen, and a regionally active figure. After the events, he fled the country.

Another claim is that the southerner groups and Timur Kulibayev were clashing on the distribution of the several positions after the exit of Aliyev. The official appointment of Umirzak Shukekeyev to Samruk Kazyna supported these claims because Umirzak Shukekeyev was a leading member of Southerners.

In such a forceful uprising, the possible existence of several clashes is highly possible. The leave of Bergei Ryskaliyev from the country and the subsequent appointments of Southerners in critical positions reinforces the claims. Some claimed that Nazarbayev also was disturbed by the excessive domination of Kulibayev in business. When he found a convenient excuse, Kulibayev promptly lost critical power and abandoned politics. Additional clashes

behind the screen are possible for the reason that interest groups reveal their conflict in the social crises because political authority becomes weaker, and obtaining interest becomes easier.

The official accusation was towards to Mukhtar Ablyazov, the ex-banker of Kazakhstan (Satpayev & Umbetaliyeva, 2015, p. 128). According to judicial officials, he financed the local protests and let Vladimir Kozlov organize. Vladimir Kozlov was the leader of the unregistered opposition "Alga Party" (Satpayev & Umbetaliyeva, 2015, p. 127). Several opposing parties, eight newspapers and 23 websites closed. Practically no active opposition survived. When the judicial court decided Kozlov was the organizer of the tragic events, Mukhtar Ablyazov was the financier (Satpayev & Umbetaliyeva, 2015, p. 127). A complex oligarchic network behind the scene is not well-explained, however, Mukhtar Ablyazov remained the specific focus of the government.

The official accusations show the will of Nazarbayev as we discussed in theoretical framework. The pseudo-legal despotism uses the judiciary process as an instrument for the personal interests of the presidents. As we indicated in methodology, the thesis will perceive the legitimate actions of the government as the demonstration of the command of the president. In short, it is clear that Nazarbayev had problems with Ablyazov and punished him using the judiciary process and accused him for the protests.

CHAPTER 5. THEORY AND REALITY OF THE CLANS IN KAZAKHSTAN

5.1 THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE INTEREST CLASH

The courts in Kazakhstan are under the influence of political authorities, as we have stated in the theory section. Therefore, we will take account the court decisions to verify Nazarbayev's purpose. To indicate the purpose of Ablyazov, we will check the evidence of the courts.

The judicial court in Aktau promptly accused three arrested men: Vladimir Kozlov, Akzhanat Aminov, and Serik Sapargali. Vladimir Kozlov was the leader of the unregistered party "Alga." Akzhanat Aminov was the key organizer of the violent protests in Ozen Munai Gaz and accepted criminal accusations. Serik Sapargali was an opposition activist, and he also partly accepted his guilt. Kozlov, Aminov, and Sapargali sentenced to jail seven a half, five, and four years, respectively (Shormanbaev, December 2012, p. 5). International organizations carefully followed judicial trials closely. Freedom House harshly criticized that the jurisdiction process was unobjective (Shormanbaev, December 2012, p. 4). However, Kazakhstan did not pay attention to international criticisms.

Ablyazov had not become an official witness or suspected in the judicial process, while the general prosecutor directly assumed him as the financier of the violent events (Shormanbaev, December 2012, p. 4). This official judgment without a judicial trial accurately represents a noteworthy detail to reflect the governmental recognition of oligarchic networks. In addition, the local court unanimously rejected the official request of Ablyazov and few others for entering the forthcoming trials via Skype (Shormanbaev, December 2012, p. 6).

To begin with, it will be adequately explained and justly criticized the official verdicts of the court. Later, the specific details of available evidence in the court will be elaborated to properly capture a clash of interest.

One of the judicial verdicts in the Kazakh court in Aktau was:

“The accused V. Kozlov, in March of 2010, to subvert and destroy the socio-political foundations of the constitutional order of the Republic of Kazakhstan, willingly joined an extremist organized criminal group created and financed from abroad by Mukhtar Ablyazov, who is currently sought by investigative organs for the crime of embezzling \$7 billion from BTA Bank in 2005, the board of which bank he chaired. The criminal group was founded on the principles of hierarchy and strict division of roles, and V. Kozlov acted as leader of this group in Kazakhstan” (Shormanbaev, December 2012, p. 9).

While the criminal accusation is controversial, the eagerness to the accused to Ablyazov is apparent. Ablyazov had never judged for financing the violent protests but the verdict directly acknowledged that he was guilty. In other words, the judicial court, as a political instrument of the presidency, was dealing with Ablyazov. It is clear that Nazarbayev was sure that Ablyazov was the behind of the screen in the protests.

In the official verdict of the local court, it is noted as:

“On April 30, 2010, the accused Kozlov, continuing his criminal activity, spoke by Skype with the leader of the organized criminal group M. Ablyazov, who is in hiding abroad, and the leaders of the regional branches of the unregistered party Alga. In the course of this event, he received from Ablyazov the task of finding the weak link in the government, that is to say, to put special effort towards uniting by the end of 2011 oil workers, miners, and debtors through public incitement of social hatred and discord to undermine the security of the state and at all costs topple the government of the Republic of Kazakhstan...” (Shormanbaev, December 2012, p. 11).

The verdict of court evaluated the skype conversation between Nazarbayev and Kozlov and concluded that Ablyazov intend to topple the government and organize the protest. This verdict is significant to see the clear intention of the political authorities and Ablyazov. It is clearly stated that Ablyazov’s intention was topple the government. In other words, Ablyazov did not want Nazarbayev. It shows explicitly a clash of interest between two.

The court accepted a skype conversation as an evidence. The conversation was between Ablyazov, Kozlov and with other members of “Alga” party. The following statements in the

critical skype conversations are evidence of a existed conflict between Ablyazov and Nazarbayev. The statements in the Skype talked pointing the clash of interest is presented below:

1) Ablyazov: *“Yes, there is a risk. If tomorrow, the regime in Kazakhstan will be changed, Nazarbayev steps down, and there will be a period, possibly, let’s say, there will be a soft shutdown, yes....”* (Shormanbaev, December 2012, p. 38)

2) Ablyazov: *“What we need, is to account for mistakes in all countries, like Ukraine, for instance, or in Georgia, or in Kyrgyzstan. And to try, based on them, not to make such mistakes. As they made. I mean, although in general, I think that these countries are going to develop quickly now.”* (Shormanbaev, December 2012, p. 38)

The statements of Ablyazov is clear that he did not satisfied with Nazarbayev regime. Even we cannot clearly understand the actual reason behind the clash of interest between Ablyazov and Nazarbayev, Ablyazov explicitly expressed his plans for Kazakhstan-without-Nazarbayev. He anxiously desired to depose the authoritarian Nazarbayev regime. While the verdicts of the courts explicitly show that Nazarbayev perceives Ablyazov as an enemy and a threat for country, the statements of Ablyazov in the Skype conversation acknowledged that Ablyazov intention is toppling the government and Nazarbayev regime. The clash of interest is clear in the verdicts of the courts and the statements in Skype conversations.

3) Ablyazov: *“I would say the following, now the authorities try to discredit me. They are trying to initiate [criminal cases] in Russia, Ukraine....”* (Shormanbaev, December 2012, p. 41)

The fourth statements in the Skype conversations show that the clash of interest between Ablyazov and Nazarbayev was a topic of foreign affairs of Kazakhstan. The clash has an international dimension. Also considering that Ablyazov lives in luxury conditions in France, we can easily conclude that international actors can attempt to benefit from this clash.

5) Ablyazov: *“I’ll add one interesting thing, that almost every day Rakhat Aliev calls me and his appraisal is that Alga is the strongest party in Kazakhstan.”* (Shormanbaev, December 2012, p. 43)9)

Ablyazov: *“They’re using the Minsk Convention to initiate criminal cases in Kazakhstan, and then they start up elsewhere, in*

Russia, in other countries. Then Nazarbayev personally travels, he goes to Russia. The past year he was doing this, but he didn't succeed in receiving any kind of support. This year in March he personally went there, he met with Medvedev, with Putin, and more than once. Karim Massimov came with a big delegation. They requested that the Central Bank revoked the license from my Russian bank. There is a massive assault underway, not just political. They bring suitcases full of cash and buy witnesses. In general, they're conducting a lot of work like this. That's why of course I'm constantly battling with giants of the state, and not only with one, but with many." (Shormanbaev, December 2012, p. 45)

In the fifth statement, the personal network among the wealthy oligarchs is apparent, and they can enthusiastically support each other from time to time. As it happens organically it is widely known that Aliyev and Ablyazov disagreed formerly; but they can be supportive of joint interest. Considering Aliyev position, he and Ablyazov had a common interest as toppling the government.

6) Ablyazov: "In general, I mean, here I've been fighting constantly against the authorities for ten years. But within myself, I am convinced that no earlier and no later than by the end of the next year, the government must fall. ... And that's why I'm sure that by the end of the next year if we continue, we will be able to break the government. That's why just yesterday I said, from here I can see that the regime will fall. I'm also convinced that by the end of next year we can topple this government. That's why I think that we have to find the weak spots in the government: oil workers, miners, debtors and everyone in order to merge them all into one, into one place, and that will have enormous force. ..." (Shormanbaev, December 2012, p. 44)

In the sixth statement, it is clear that the intention of Ablyazov to topple the government is not begin with the Zhanaozen protest. It was willing to topple the government and used the opportunity in the Zhanaozen. He explicitly states that for ten years, he had problems with political authority which correspond to Nazarbayev. It is explicit that their clash begun many years before.

7) Ablyazov: **“That’s why our task is to overthrow the government.** *Of course, I work a lot, I do political work, I meet with the heads of the services of different countries. I argue that they should reexamine their politics. Of course, there’s a lot of work with Western journalists. We work, I mean I finance these programs, that tell about what is happening in the country. Right. So, in general, we do a lot of work in the West. Maybe the work isn’t as visible, but there’s a lot of work there. Then we are preparing a lot of lawsuits against Timur Kulibayev, against the Prime Minister. Unfortunately, it can’t be done against the President, because he has state immunity. But I’ve got a lot on him. But I’ll say in this my ally is Rakhat [Aliyev]. I fought hard with him yesterday, today he’s an ally, he brings materials, gives witness testimony. And since he’s an enemy of the regime... I don’t see any point in pushing him away. Of course, I don’t do any public announcements that we’re together, but it seems to me that his energy against the regime should be used. Bulat Abilov is always saying that we-”* (Shormanbaev, December 2012, p. 46)

In the tenth quote, Ablyazov firstly tells his re-branding campaign in the Western media, which Wikileaks documents mentioned. Second, he adequately expresses an oligarchic component again. Ablyazov had been fighting with not only Nazarbayev, but also Nazarbayev’s son-in-law Timur Kulibayev. Even, human rights organizations reasonably argue that “toppling the government” does not refer to a direct call for the possible violence, the term verifies the clash between Nazarbayev and Ablyazov.

The direct quotes from the Skype conversation adequately represent the explicit evidence of the clash of interest between Ablyazov and Nazarbayev. Nazarbayev accused and found guilty Ablyazov for toppling the government, organizing and financing the protest in Zhanaozen. There was no fair and adequate judicial process for Ablyazov. However, as it is presented in theoretical framework, judicial process in such patrimonial regimes directly reflects of the will of the political authority. As conclusion it is clear that Nazarbayev had serious problem with Ablyazov and their interest was clashing for the years.

In the other side, the statements of Ablyazov is debatable if it is enough for conviction of Ablyazov. However, it is clear that Ablyazov definitely aimed to topple Nazarbayev. The

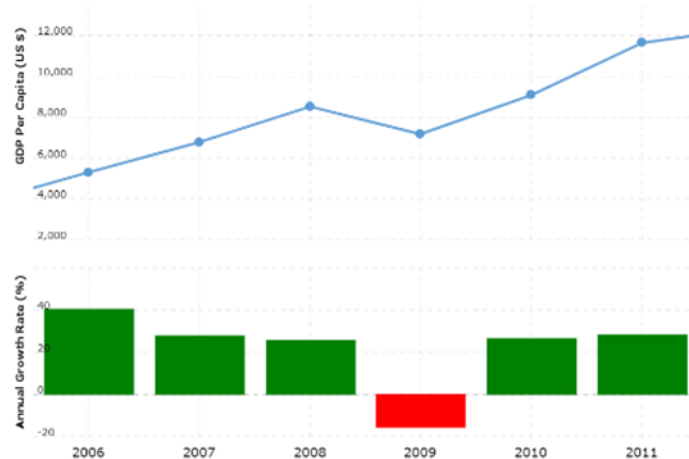
actual reason of the clash of interest is not easy to explore due to the complex relations of oligarch. However, the statements explicitly present that there was a clash of interest between Ablyazov and Nazarbayev.

5.2 THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION OF SOCIETY

Volovoj’s argument of socioeconomic corporation claims that deteriorating nationwide living conditions in society trigger massive support for the uprisings. In Zhanaozen, the protesters were claiming deteriorating living standards in their town. However, a successful power transition needs grassroots support from the whole country. This section scientifically evaluates the socioeconomic circumstances of Kazakhstan with macroeconomic indicators as the formulation described in the methodology section. The socio-economic situation can be examined with a more detailed and comprehensive study. We could not do this due to the limit of the study. Therefore, we will evaluate the socio-economic situation briefly.

World Bank precisely defines GDP per capita as “*Gross domestic product divided by midyear population.*” (World Bank, 2020). It properly represents living standards mostly. The data of GDP per capita in Kazakhstan illustrated below. The illustration sufficiently reveals that a sudden decline in 2009 as a possible consequence of the global economic crisis in the same year. However, other years' economic performance is satisfactory.

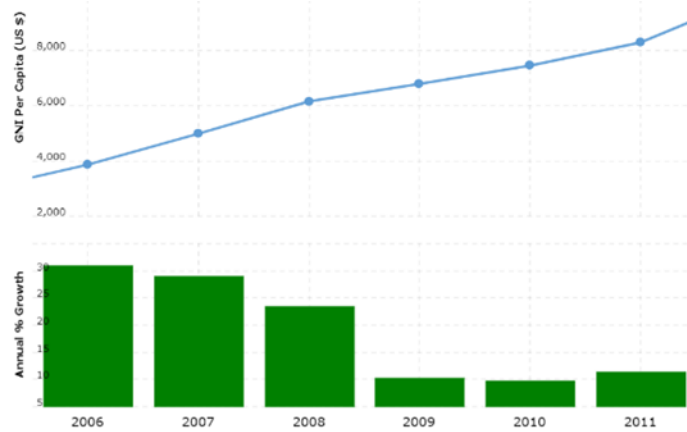
Table 5.1 Kazakhstan GDP Per Capita 1993-2020
(Macrotrends, 2020) Retrieved from <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/KAZ/kazakhstan/gni-per-capita>



GNI per capita is “(formerly GNP per capita) is the gross national income, converted to U.S. dollars using the World Bank Atlas method, divided by the midyear population.” (World Bank, 2020). The illustration of the six years in Kazakhstan as below shows a successful performance in the first years and an apparent decline in economic performance in the last years. However, GNI per capita never decreased between 2007-2011.

Table 5.2 Kazakhstan GNI Per Capita 1993-2020

(Macrotrends, 2020) Retrieved from <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/KAZ/kazakhstan/gni-per-capita>



Unemployment refers to “the share of the labor force that is without work but available for and seeking employment.” (World Bank, 2020). The typical illustration of the unemployment rates for the last years before the local uprising as below. The drawing indicates all five years of unemployment rates in gradual decline. However, in 2009 the marked decline was slight due to the global economic crisis. However, there is no significantly deteriorated situation.

Table 5.3 Kazakhstan Unemployment Rate 1991-2020

(Macrotrends, 2020) Retrieved from <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/KAZ/kazakhstan/unemployment-rate>

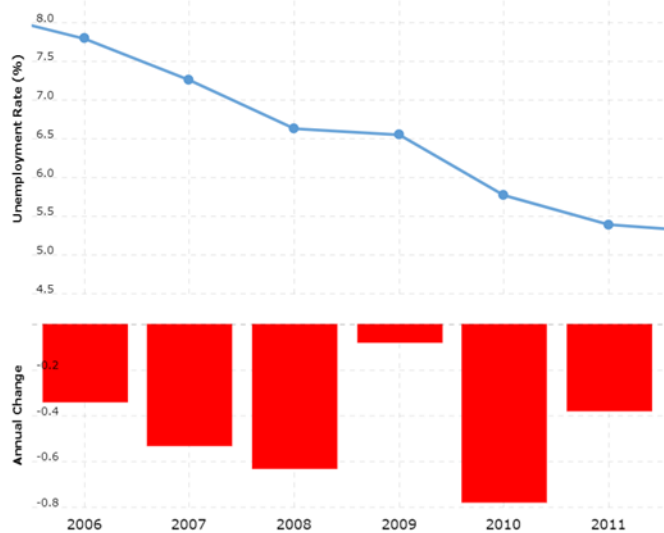


Table 5.4 Calculation of LAP and RP points
It is constituted using the data of the World Bank by the author. (Macrotrends, 2020)

Year	GDP Per Capita (US \$)	Annual Growth Rate (%)	GNI Per Capita (US \$)	Annual % Growth	Unemployment Rate (%)	Annual Change ¹
2011	\$11,634	28.26%	\$8,280	11.29%	5.39%	-0,38%
2010	\$9,070	26.59%	\$7,440	9.73%	5.77%	-0,78%
2009	\$7,165	-15.84%	\$6,780	10.24%	6.55%	-0,08%
2008	\$8,514	25.73%	\$6,150	23.49%	6.63%	-0,63%
2007	\$6,771	27.97%	\$4,980	29.02%	7.26%	-0,53%
2006	\$5,292	40.31%	\$3,860	30.85%	7.79%	-0,34%
2005	\$3,771	31.21%	\$2,950	28.26%	8.13%	-0,27%
2004	\$2,874	38.98%	\$2,300	27.78%	8.40%	-0,38%
2003	\$2,068	24.73%	\$1,800	18.42%	8.78%	-0,55%
2002	\$1,658	11.21%	\$1,520	12.59%	9.33%	-1,10%
2001	\$1,491	21.31%	\$1,350	7.14%	10.43%	-2,32%
2000	\$1,229	8.75%	\$1,260	-2.33%	12.75%	-0,71%
1999	\$1,130	-23.05%	\$1,290	-7.19%	13.46%	0,33%
1998	\$1,469	1.60%	\$1,390	0.00%	13.13%	0,12%
1997	\$1,446	7.05%	\$1,390	3.73%	13.01%	0,05%
1996	\$1,350	4.82%	\$1,340	4.69%	12.96%	1,98%
1995	\$1,288	-2.43%	\$1,280	-2.29%	10.98%	3,44%
1994	\$1,320	-7.89%	\$1,310	-8.39%	7.54%	6,43%
1993	\$1,433	-5.39%	\$1,430	-8.39%	1.11%	0,11%
	LAP ² : 18,54		LAP: 16,75		LAP: -0,48	
	RP ³ : 10,80		RP: 7,49		RP: -0,07	

The reliable data of all three indicators between the years 1993-2011 is in Table 5. The specific points carefully calculated with a standard average formula. As we accepted a socioeconomic deterioration calculation:

Improvement: Condition 1: $LAP > RP$ Deterioration: Condition 2: $LAP < RP$
GDP Per Capita Annual Growth Rate: $LAP 18,54 > RP 10,80$ Corresponding to Condition 1
GNI Per Capita Annual Growth Rate: $LAP 16,75 > RP 7,49$ Corresponding to Condition 1
Unemployment Annual Change: $LAP -0,48 < RP -0,07$ Corresponding to Condition 1⁴

All indicators resulted in Condition 1.

Even there are detectable declines in the year of 2009 due to the Global Economic Crisis, when compare to the overall performance of Kazakhstan during the years 1993-2007, the performance of 2007-2011 is better than the previous years. We conclude that there was no marked economic deterioration in socioeconomic conditions in Kazakhstan during 2007-2011.

¹In unemployment rates lower changes means better conditions. Thus, it will be observed vice versa.

²Last years' (2007-2011) annual change average point

³The years between 1993-2006 annual changes average point

⁴Unemployment annual change rate is better if it is less. Thus $LAP < RP$ means an improvement.

As Volovoj argues, there is no significant socio-economic deterioration to obtain the grassroots supports for the protests.

5.3 THE REACTION OF THE SOCIETY

Zhanaozen riots severely shook Kazakhstan. However, grassroots support did not appear. The local government kept under the control of the violent protests in a short time. Though the security force intervention was unproportioned and around 15 unarmed protestors are killed by armed police. Nazarbayev promptly declared 20 days of State Emergency, and he visited the capital city of Aktau on 22 December to calm down the concerned locals. Eventually, Nazarbayev sustained his legitimate power, despite the violent uprisings; there are several possible reasons for the absent grassroots support on the riots besides Volovoj argument of socioeconomic conditions.

To begin with, a long distance of Zhanaozen to the leading cities in Kazakhstan, Almaty, and Nursultan (Astana), blocked a direct interaction of the local protesters. The Western oil-producing cities isolated from the rest of Kazakhstan due to the enormous landscape. The local saying “*Sinners of Zhanaozen do not go to hell after they die, but instead, they return Zhanaozen.*” reflect the isolation better (Novaya Gazeta, 2011). Despite the active help from neighboring towns, the protesters could not get into the social agenda of big cities.

Secondly, the opposing media were blocked or hard to comfortably reach, as we see in the case of Kozlov and Ablyazov. On the other side, foreign media accurately reported the uprising. However, civil society in Kazakhstan is inactive, and the news did not reach ordinary people. The majority in Kazakhstan accessed the tragic news via state-controlled media. Unsurprisingly, mass media marginalized the protesters.

Thirdly, the locals in Zhanaozen belong to the local Aday tribe of Junior zhuz. The heroic courage of Aday people well-known because they fought magnificently with Russian most and admitted the USSR lastly. The unique stamp of Junior zhuz as a weapon is not a coincidence. However, the rebellious image of the inhabitants supported the government to claim that protesters were just some greedy workers. Directly, disparagement of the local protesters was relatively easy for the state-controlled media due to the negative image of the Aday people.

Fourthly, Aday people’s rebellious feature constructed a social bias that they are politically unreliable. As follows, they do not receive any top-position in Soviet times. Also, the inhabitants claimed there are no Aday people on the management of the oil companies in their land. Even some leading intellectuals expressed support; the local people could not have an influential politician to lift up their political voice because of the underrepresentation of

Aday people in the political sphere. The government overlooked the local people and merely focused on the protestors.

The local protestors received active support from laborers in other ex-Soviet countries; for example, Russian workers gathered money for them (Salmon, 2012, p. 4). Additionally, there were many supportive protests for Zhanaozen in other countries like the USA, England. However, the foreign leaders continued sending Nazarbayev their congratulations for independency. However, worldwide and Kazakh-state perceptions differed remarkably. The uprisings largely named as the massacre in the world. While the actual opinion of civil society is naturally difficult to obtain, the absence of grassroots support is apparent.

In conclusion, as a non-deteriorated socio-economic situation can be a reason for the absence of grassroots support, the possible reasons can be also. For further studies, these reasons can be checked to evaluate the argument of Volovoj more accurately.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

In this section we will evaluate the theories in the theoretical framework. The political stability of Central Asia is a broad issue to perceive completely. However, our comprehensive analysis enlightens the political assumptions about Central Asia to a certain extent. Then it is focused on “socio-economic cooperation” and our findings.

In our study, the results supported Volovoj's "socio-economic corporatism". The conflict of interest between the political authority and clan leaders has been proven by providing official evidence. Court records showed that Ablyazov had a serious interest in the overthrow of Nazarbayev and Ablyazov worked very hard to organize events. The fact that the government directly sued Ablyazov after the events is proof that Nazarbayev also saw him as an enemy. After the conflict of interest has been proven, socio-economic situation was evaluated.

There was a clash of interest between Nazarbayev, Timur Kulibayev, the Southerners, Ablyazov, Atyrau Region Mayor Bergey Ryskaliyev, Aliyev, and so on. The Southerners were worried about the excessive power of Timur Kulibayev. Ablyazov and Aliyev were in the stress of their exile, and they planned to come back to Kazakhstan after Nazarbayev's fall. Ryskaliyev concerned for his diminishing power. Nazarbayev, as a broker and a balancer, held his power by strengthening the Southerners and suspended Timur Kulibayev, his son-in-law.

We can conclude who are the winners and the losers evaluating the official outcome of the protests. These leading actors powerfully affected by the local uprising; some had to left the country; some gained more official power; some lost their economic power, etc. The ultimate winners are the Southerners. They received the head of the Samruk Kazyna which is the most exploitable position in the country. The ultimate losers are Timur Kulibayev who lost the Samruk Kazyna Management; Ryskaliyev who left the country; Ablyazov who was officially accused of the events. The details of the pact between economic interest groups are uncertain to some extent but it is obvious that Nazarbayev survived agreeing with the Southerners. The accusation of the Southerners against Kulibayev was about his excessive power. That's why Timur Kulibayev's executive power was taken away from him and he abandoned from politics. Karim Massimov became his hands.

The theories about the regime in Central Asia presented in the theoretical framework can be seen in our case. Firstly, the authoritarian and patrimonial assumptions of Central Asian countries are noticeable in Kazakhstan. These two assumptions are extremely intertwined and

almost always exist together. Central appointment of local offices, state-led industrialization, Chemolganization of the offices, and embedded nepotism are typical for authoritarian and patrimonial regimes. Nazarbayev's wealthy family represents the leading oligarchs in the country, and other clans were seeking to restrict the excessive power of his son-in-law. His daughter until now occupies principal positions, despite severe corruption allegations about her. It is clear that the regime in Kazakhstan has authoritarian and patrimonial features.

Additionally, neopatrimonialism is evident in the extensive establishment of the National Commission for Democratization and Civil Society to the purpose of democratization. Nazarbayev merely insisted that successful democratization could actualize by the democratic state itself. He intentionally disregarded empowering civil society. The pointless democratization movement of Nazarbayev reached the top with the official title "Leader of the nation" as personalization of the presidency. The lifelong immunity for his family is an extraordinary precaution even for a neopatrimonial system. Schiek and Hensell's persuasive argument of "the dilemma of inclusion" in neopatrimonial regimes can adequately explain this irrationality. Even Nazarbayev anxiously desires to be a modern reformer, the necessary reforms will decrease his patrimonial power so the reforms are never achieved.

The resource cursed argument is apparent in the Zhanaozen case. The oil-rich region does not retain a diversified industry and locals import almost every good. For this apparent reason, local labors do not have job alternatives, and average prices are higher in Zhanaozen than leading cities. The substantial social injustice in the town also enhances resource cursed arguments. The production of % 70 percent of Kazakh oil did not bring economic prosperity in Western Kazakhstan. Another sign of resource curse, organizational corruption, is endemic in Kazakhstan. Resource cursed argument is absolutely valid for local economy. National economy is not presented enough in our work to see the assumption.

Moreover, electoral authoritarian regimes and Nazarbayev precisely match. His voting rate above 80%, the deaths and exiles of opposing leaders, the title of "Leader of the Nation," political opposition parties directing by his families are adequate to prove it. It is argued that this democratic image is constituted especially for the EU. The EU always put democratic values on the table. An authoritarian attitude can cause the damage of relations. But an unsuccessful democrat image is enough for certain relations. An imperfect democrat image of Nazarbayev for Western support can be seen 5 million dollars payment for the Cambridge speak after Zhanaozen protest. He tried to justify himself in the eyes of the West. It is obvious that electoral authoritarianism is arguable for Kazakhstan.

The rentier state analysis of Anja Franke, Andrea Gawrich & Gurban Alakbarov perfectly corresponds to our academic study. “Elite power in oil and gas contract conclusions” adequately describes Timur Kulibayev. Even in the Wikileaks document, he is referred to as the key to oil contracts. However, other interest groups were annoyed with this extraordinary power and they obtained the executive management of Samruk Kazyna after the violent events. Following, “Permanent, corrupt and rent-seeking elites” represent a widely known reality in Kazakhstan. Even Nazarbayev stands against extensive corruption from time to time, however, there is no significant change in ultimate reality for 30 years of his presidency. For this apparent reason, civil society lost its social trust in corruption campaigns.

“Support purchased through rent allocation” is another distinctive feature of rentier states in order to naturally receive the loyalty of the society. Nazarbayev pays attention to this manner significantly. He properly allocates the funds of Samruk Kazyna, firstly on social support like cheap housing, free education. Powerfully reinforcing the low and middle-income class is significant for Nazarbayev. The stress of social justice on the economic program in 1997 represents another sign. Likewise, he typically operates his political party as a mediator for social support to increase the political satisfaction rate.

Subsequently, “Deficits in the regulation of economic structures” was the key reason for the apparent conflict between economic elites in the 2000s. On one hand, some privileged elites ideologically were opposed to privatization because of the deteriorating living standards in the 1990s. They presumed that it was early to privatize critical state assessments. On the other hand, the new generation of privatization demanded more privatization and economic liberalization to complete the economic transformation immediately. Otherwise, the new economic actors naturally concerned that their private wealth was in possible danger under this authoritarian regime. They attempted constituting a political power several times but they could not deal with Nazarbayev.

“Missing concepts in relation to the distribution” means that the distribution of the oil revenues only targets present-day interest, the long-term interest is always neglected because there is no possible motivation for political authority. In Kazakhstan, the economic strategy in 1997 targeted social justice and state-led industrialization. However, social justice is directly related to society support, and industrialization targets entrepreneurs and small business groups. In other words, while industrialization naturally requires enormous investments, the economic return of considerable investments will appear in the long term. However, rentier states do not

possess any political mechanisms for long-term interests. Thus, Kazakhstan could not achieve industrialization for 20 years in spite of enormous income.

“Lack of transparency” presents a severe problem in Kazakhstan. Even KazMunaiGas provides no needed transparency in wage calculation. The gigantic funds of Samruk Kazyna are also non-transparent. Thus, Ablyazov could carry out the embezzlement of billions of dollars easily. Regrettably, this severe experience did not improve the transparency of the state funds because non-transparent structures simplify the misusing of the official offices for personal gains.

“Medium legitimacy in relation to resource policy” intimately related the legitimization of the organizational corruption. According to Anja Franke, Andrea Gawrich & Gurban Alakbarov, the legitimization of the instruments of corruption became undesirable results of premature failure in state formation in the 1990s. The official dissolution of the elected parliament and the formation crisis in 1993 in Kazakhstan triggered more conservative policies precisely corresponding to Soviet-style structure. The authoritarian policies for the distribution of resources also legitimize the instruments of corruption. For example, Nazarbayev deliberately designed the fund of Samruk Kazyna as non-traceable. However, non-transparency of the funds causes serious corruption.

The theory of rentier states has more detailed features. In our case, every feature can be detected easily. All theories presented in this study have many common features. The common arguments are: it is authoritarian and patrimonial regime; democracy is not a concern for political authority; corruption and nepotism are endemic; resources income is in the hand of the elites. After the features, the instruments of political authority will be argued.

Nazarbayev implemented several mechanisms to genuinely have a pact with the influential clans. As Volovoj argued, Nazarbayev pays attention to national welfare and social peace because a pleasing society is less willing to presidential transition. “Support purchased through rent allocation” feature of the rentier states is also consistent with this effective mechanism. In other words, a content society is unwilling to support unrest. As a direct result, economic interest groups become unable to efficiently utilize the political devices from beneath and to bargain for their economic interests. As in Wikileaks documents, Nazarbayev corruption campaigns are for social discontent in society. As well, Ablyazov aimed to topple the government with grassroots support.

Second, the personalization of executive power causes Nazarbayev more authoritative ruling. The personalized political authority, like Stalin's, retains absolute power. Accordingly, wealthy elites undergo more sound political pressure to have a pact because the absolute power can strictly deal with organized interest groups. The authoritarian Nazarbayev regime is perfectly personalized as a neopatrimonial feature. The official title of "Leader of the Nation" presents the top point.

Moreover, the cadre politics of Nazarbayev draws a shifting inter-clan balance. Middle zhuz appointments in the first years represent a typical example. Later, Middle Zhuz lost his privileged due to the shifting economic perspective. Also, central appointment of local governors creates enough office to distribute. Nazarbayev uses these offices as a distribution of legal power between elites. Thus, nepotism and corruption are unavoidable.

As rentier state arguments, the already referenced Wikileaks and some media resources revealed that a rising group of the Southerners were annoyed with Kulibayev's excessive power after the exit of Aliyev. The official appointment to Samruk Kazyna is critical to accurately determine the power balance. Thus, the official appointment of Umirzak Shukeyev in Samruk Kazyna removing Timur Kulibayev is significant. He is an active member of the Southerners group and the appointment means that Nazarbayev satisfied the Southerners in an economic manner. Timur Kulibayev stepped down from modern politics because of his excessive power. Alexey Malashenko reasonably claimed that Umirzak Shukeyev was a rising elite group (Malashenko, 2013, p. 116).

Fourthly, Nazarbayev uses pseudo-legal despotism frequently. The life-long immunity for his wealthy family was a democracy amendment according to him. The puppet labor unions are also pseudo-legal despotism. State forces workers for the membership of their puppet unions. Plus, the oppressive government deliberately does not register the unofficial unions. Otherwise, official registration is simple and useful for these unions. Additionally, pseudo-legal despotism reluctantly compels the opposition parties to remain illicit as the political parties in the Kozlov case. The political device of oppressive government from above has appeared as state emergency, police violence, and unjust judicial process in our political study.

Finally, Nazarbayev utilizes western-style institutions for his personal interests. He nationalized the personal assets with the excuse of economic domination in the private market. The excuse is a typical Western-style liberal market protection measure. However, Kazakhstan

is not a Western-style liberal market, and Nazarbayev merely manipulated this punitive measure in political order to severely weaken some elites.

As Volovoj argues, there is typically no significant influence of ethnic, Islamic, socioeconomic, and external factors in our case. Even legitimate authorities pointed out the oralman as a social problem; in objective reality, oralman protested with longtime locals. While the socioeconomic factor seems to be a possible reason for the local protests, it did not affect the reaction of the whole society seriously. The external factor is slightly noticeable in the personal campaigns of discrediting. Nazarbayev sought support for the criminal allegations of Ablyazov and Ablyazov aimed for international pressure on Kazakhstan. However, both of the attempts did not change end-result. The Islamic factors did not find in our specific case.

We found many instances to support the arguments in the theoretical framework and additionally, discovered that Nazarbayev used the mechanisms presented in the theoretical framework for all his political life. In the next, we will conclude our basic argument of socio-economic cooperation.

The socio-economic situation was a difficult matter to prove objectively. There are not enough calculation and theories in the literature. This study tried to overcome this difficulty by finding its own formula. GDP per capita, GNI per capita, unemployment rates are chosen as indicators. A special formula has been developed for this study for the socio-economic level. As a result of our calculations, no deterioration was found in the socio-economic level of the society.

Our argument claims that in case of disagreement between the clans and the authority, the people choose a side according to their economic situation. Our case supported the argument that since the socio-economic situation did not deteriorate, grassroots did not support the clans. As a result, Nazarbayev kept his power and redistributed the resources between clans.

This study tested Volovoj's argument and showed that the argument is appropriate to the results in the Kazakhstan case. As Volovoj said, when there is a conflict between the president and the clans, the clash results according to the socio-economic situation. In line with the argument, the public did not overthrow the president because their socio-economic situation was satisfactory. This work should be the beginning for this argument. The strength of the argument should be tested with other case studies.

Our study has several shortcomings. Since there is no advanced calculation system that determines the socio-economic situation, a system specific to this study was developed. More detailed calculations are needed for the socio-economic situation.

Secondly, political stability is not a determined term understood by everyone in the same manner. Volovoj does not explain the political stability in details and how to perceive it. It can be argued that the political stability can be understood as the durability of the regimes time to time. Literature needs more work to have an absolute distinction between political stability and similar terms.

This thesis tested the argument within its scope. A more comprehensive study can focus on more the measurement of political stability and socio-economic situation. And other possible reasons presented in the section “the Reaction of Society” can be checked if they are decisive or not. Also, a case received grassroots support can be studied and the local economies can be added as another dimension to the studies.

In conclusion, we conclude that Nazarbayev and Ablyazov had a clash of interest and the protest in Zhanaozen became their battlefield. The society did not give grassroots support for protests and there was no socio-economic deterioration as a whole country. Thus, our case study found the results supporting the Volovoj argument of socio-economic cooperation.

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