

**Why Parties of Power? Elite Strategies and Institutional Choice  
in Post-Soviet Eurasia**

by

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**To my family**

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## **Abstract**

In this project, I pose the question, "why do authoritarian rulers create political parties?" Given the recent proliferation of authoritarian regimes that feature pluralistic, if skewed, elections, the incentives for dictators to have parties of their own have never been stronger. Yet only about half of authoritarian rulers in fact have their own parties. I argue that incumbent rulers create parties of power in order to change existing political elites' incentives for cooperation, but that many rulers do not to create parties of their own because they risk failing to attract political elites into their party. I theorize party creation by incumbent authoritarian rulers as a strategic and interdependent process, in which the act of establishing a party serves as a meaningful but imperfect signal of a leader's type. I present a formal model of authoritarian party creation in which I define parameters and state assumptions that generate five pure-strategy equilibria. I state two hypotheses relating to the role of elite beliefs in leading to different party creation outcomes, which I evaluate using paired historical case studies of four Post-Soviet leaders' institutional choices. This project offers a corrective to existing theories of authoritarian party creation by focusing on short-term incentives and immediate strategic conditions. It also demonstrates why many leaders choose not to create parties despite having incentives to do so.

## **Chapter 1: Authoritarian Leaders and Institutional Choices**

Had Tolstoy trained as political scientist, he might have quipped that "all democratic countries are democratic in the same way, while each authoritarian regime is authoritarian in its own way." In other words, while citizens in democracies elect their political representatives, and enjoy a wide range of other civil liberties, authoritarian regimes exhibit far greater institutional diversity. Some authoritarian rulers inherit their positions by descent or divine right while others hold their positions by virtue of being the military's top officer. Some dictators are appointed by their predecessor, while others win office through elections. Some rely on praetorian guards to remain in power, while others cultivate broad patronage networks, and others establish cults of personality to legitimize their power. Some authoritarian regimes feature regular, if skewed, elections while in others, legislatures and elections are banned for decades. Most authoritarian regimes feature some combination of the attributes listed above, and many rulers shift their strategies of rule over time. The diversity among authoritarian regimes is striking.

Why, then, do authoritarian rulers choose some strategies of rule over others? While existing scholarship has succeeded in illustrating the remarkable institutional diversity of authoritarian regimes (Huntington 1968, Geddes 1999, Bratton and Van De Walle 1997, Chehabi and Linz 1998, Slater 2003, Lust-Okar 2005, Magaloni 2006, Gandhi 2008, Svoboda 2012a), and while many of these works have elaborated on the many benefits that parties provide in authoritarian regimes, these works have reached little consensus on what explains this variation. Furthermore, they have barely begun to address the specific question of why dictators create political parties of their own.

I argue that authoritarian rulers create parties of their own in order to change elites' incentives for cooperation. Authoritarian rulers seek the cooperation of elites to reduce the transactional costs of running an authoritarian regime,<sup>1</sup> which frees resources that authoritarian rulers can use for any number of other purposes. Cooperative elites contribute more to economic growth are less likely to revolt (Wintrobe 1998). While parties of power perform a wide range of functions over time for leaders who create them, I argue that these long-term functions should not be conflated with the immediate concerns that lead to their creation. Furthermore, while many leaders in authoritarian regimes have strong incentives to create parties of their own, these rulers create parties *only* when they expect other elites to join.

I focus in particular on party creation by authoritarian rulers because of the puzzling variation in this institutional outcome; given the benefits that parties provide authoritarian rulers, why don't all authoritarian rulers have parties? I argue that while authoritarian rulers contemplate creating a party of their own,<sup>2</sup> they create parties only when they are certain that elites will join. Elites in turn will only join the leader's party when they believe that party affiliation will bring rewards greater than the benefits they would retain by remaining independent from the leader's party. I argue in this dissertation that elites above all wish to remain elites, which is to say that they wish to remain part of the "winning coalition" within their regime. This offers a more substantial guarantee of

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<sup>1</sup> While it is possible to win over regime supporters on an ad-hoc basis, recruiting a stable loyal set of elites to cooperate with the leader reduces the transaction costs associated with repeated searches for regime supporters.

<sup>2</sup> Leaders of authoritarian regimes where elections are not held are unlikely to contemplate creating parties. Similarly, leaders in regimes where legislatures function on a non-partisan basis have little incentive to create parties.

eligibility for the benefits of association with the ruler rather than ad-hoc handouts from the leader.

Building upon the substantial scholarship on parties outside of consolidated democracies, (LaPalombara and Weiner 1966, Huntington 1968, Voslensky 1984, Linz 2000, Smith 2007, Magaloni 2006, Brownlee 2007) this work contributes a novel theory of party creation by incumbent authoritarian leaders. Rather than conceptualizing the absence of a pro-regime party as the failure to create one, this work treats both the creation of parties and the decision not to do so as institutional equilibria in their own right. The theory focuses proposed in this work focuses on the strategic nature of party creation in authoritarian regimes and considers both the incentives of elites along with those of leaders to explain the variation in the emergence of parties of power in authoritarian regimes worldwide. This project offers a novel explanation for the puzzling variation of institutional configurations within authoritarian regimes and demonstrates the leverage of this new theory with historical case studies and a discussion of the theory's application to the entire set of parties of power created since 1946.

### **Confronting the Dictator's Dilemma: Institutional Diversity and Convergence**

Remaining in office is the fundamental goal and paramount challenge for politicians in democracies and autocracies alike (Downs 1957, Harmel and Janda 1994, Wintrobe 1998, Bueno de Mesquita et al 2003).<sup>3</sup> However, most authoritarian leaders lack routinized procedures for gaining and passing on power, and furthermore, they face a more or less constant threat of coup (Gandhi 2008, Svobik 2012a). Thus, to secure their

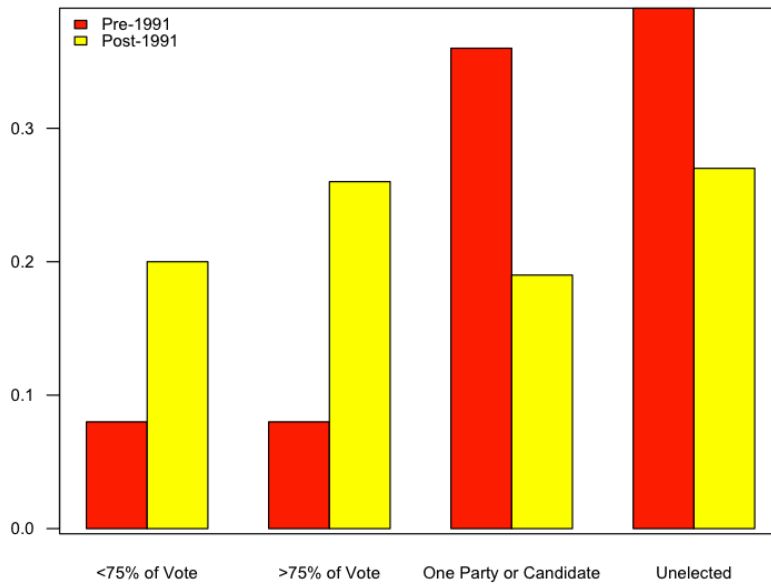
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<sup>3</sup> Other goals such as maximizing personal wealth or carrying out various ideological programs are contingent on the ruler remaining in power or their ability to install a successor who protects their interests.

tenure in power, they must maintain a coalition of supporters and repress others. Even with a clear base of support, their ability to hold on to power and then leave office peacefully is difficult to guarantee. To that end, authoritarian rulers have turned to a wide range of practices and institutions.

Cross-national datasets of authoritarian regimes reveal wide variation in authoritarian leaders' ability to stay in power and call into question the ability of parties to lengthen the tenure of authoritarian ruling coalitions. Between 1946-2008, the average tenure of ruling coalitions of successive allied leaders was 14.7 years with a standard deviation of 16.8 years. Breaking down this set into those coalitions that came to power already in control of a party with those that created a party after gaining power reveals an notable difference. Coalitions that created parties after gaining power remained in power on average for 17.4 years, while coalitions that already had parties remained in power for 22.4 years. Ruling coalitions that never created parties in regimes where executive and legislative elections were held regularly remained in power on average 14.2 years, only 20% less than coalitions that created parties (Svolik 2012b, Author's calculation). Given the costs and risks associated with creating parties, this seems to be a meager payoff.

**Figure 1: Authoritarian Paths to Power 1946-2008**

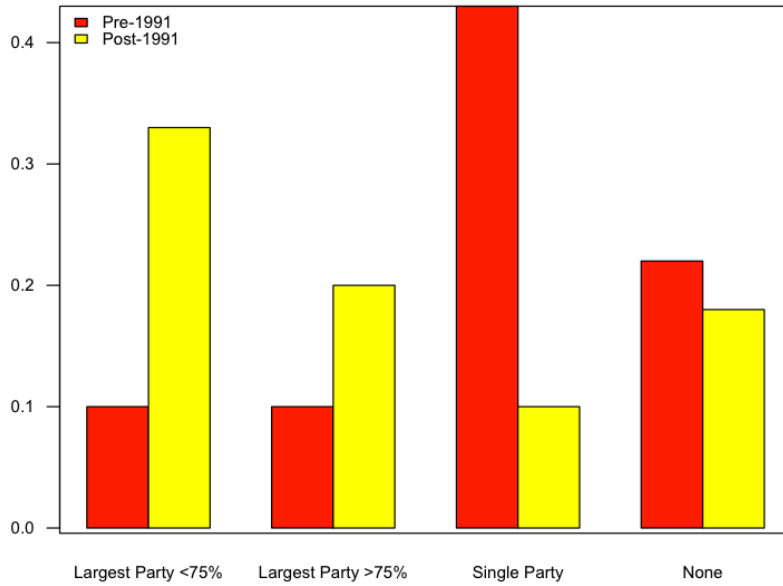


Source: Svoboda 2012b

While exhibiting remarkable diversity over time in terms of the existence and makeup of legislatures as well as executive paths to power, in recent years, authoritarian regimes are converging institutionally to the point that the majority holds multiparty legislative elections and multicandidate executive elections. Between 1946-2008, 42% of authoritarian country-years were spent under unelected rulers, who included but were not limited to military dictators and monarchs, while an additional 32% were spent under leaders who were the only candidate to compete in their "election." Many of these leaders, though not all, presided over Marxist-Leninist states. In the 139 countries that endured spells of authoritarian rule, legislatures were banned in 18% of country years; unelected legislatures were present in 10%, while 37% of country-years were spent under a single-party legislature. For 14% of country-years between 1946-2008, the executive was unelected and no legislature existed, meaning that leaders ruled either through some

combination of direct cooptation and coercion. Nearly 25% of country years occurred under single-party regimes which underscores the prevalence of political parties in authoritarian regimes (Svolik 2012b).

**Figure 2: Partisan Composition of Authoritarian Legislatures 1946-2008**



Source: Svolik 2012b

However, after 1991, approximately 46% of authoritarian country-years passed in regimes where rulers competed in multi-candidate elections whereas 16% of authoritarian country years before 1991 occurred under similar conditions. This figure has risen to 55% in the 2000s. Since 1991, 52% of authoritarian country-years passed in regimes where multiple parties held seats in legislatures, as opposed to 20% of legislatures before 1991. Since 2000, this figure has risen to 57%. These gains in multiparty legislatures and multicandidate executive elections has occurred largely at the expense of single party regimes, which accounted for 43% of country-years before 1991 and 11% of country

years since 2000, though approximately 24% of executives, largely monarchs, are still unelected (Svolik 2012b).

As of 2008, 70% of authoritarian regimes permitted multiparty representation in legislatures, while parties were banned in only 20% of authoritarian regimes. Over time, despite remarkable diversity in the origins of authoritarian regimes, most have converged to share these institutional features. Though the independent authority of legislatures in authoritarian regimes is lower than those in democracies, the existence of legislatures and the operation of multiple parties may pose a threat to dictators who must take steps to manage these independent institutions. As elected executives and legislatures become the norm in authoritarian regimes, the incentives for leaders to create parties of their own if they do not already have them are increasing. However, approximately half of those authoritarian rulers in office at present who did not come to power with parties of their own still have not created parties. Why is this the case?

### **Why Parties in Authoritarian Regimes: Competing Explanations**

As scholarship on political parties has expanded to non-democratic contexts, parties have come to be understood as highly beneficial if not essential to the function of some authoritarian regimes. They unify disparate groups within society (Zolberg 1966, Huntington 1968), strengthen the ability of authoritarian rulers to distribute patronage to allies (Magaloni 2006), establish protected forums for bargaining with rivals (Gandhi 2008), and buffer leaders from crises and internal challenges (Brownlee 2007, Levitsky and Way 2010), thereby prolonging the tenure of authoritarian rulers and their coalitions (Svolik 2012a). Given the widely recognized benefits provided by political parties, why



is it that so many leaders do not have parties of their own? Phrased differently, why do some authoritarian rulers rush to create their own parties once in office, and why do others refrain altogether from party politics? In this section, I review theories about the role of parties in authoritarian regimes. Given that these works are largely silent about the specific conditions that lead to party *creation*, I draw out the implications of these theories for the variation in authoritarian leaders' choices to create parties of their own.

Early theories about political parties outside of consolidated democracies focus on modernization as the driving force behind these parties' formation. Pointing to the proliferation of single party regimes in the newly independent states of Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia where parties had come into existence either on the eve of independence or shortly afterwards, LaPalombara and Weiner (1966) explain the formation of these parties as a "consequence of larger socio-economic changes, and in particular the appearance or expansion of entrepreneurial classes and the proliferation of specialized professional classes" (20). Additionally, single parties served to unify and mobilize ethnically fractious societies, and mitigate the perils of political and social change in modernizing countries (Zolberg 1966). In this case, the organic processes of interest aggregation and differentiation drive institutional formation. As economies developed and differentiated, modernization theorists expected multiple parties to emerge in single-party regimes as interests and demands diversified within society (Huntington 1968, Huntington and Moore 1970).

However, this turned out not to be the case. If followed to their logical extension, these works would predict that regimes featuring a single pro-regime party would transform into multiparty democracies as economies and societies modernized. The five

decades that have passed after the authoring of the major works of modernization theory have shown that multiparty regimes such as India and Bangladesh that rank approximately at the 30th percentile for per capita income as well as on the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI), while essentially single-party regimes endure in Russia and Singapore under middle and high levels of per capita GDP as well as high/very high scores on HDI (UNDP 2014). These works have difficulty explaining the trajectories of the many countries that alternate between periods of democracy and authoritarianism, and moreover do not account for the mechanisms that lead to the establishment of parties.

Another major explanation for the creation of parties in authoritarian institutions holds that rulers who lack resources for patronage or coercion create parties as a way to build loyalty among elites and the population. As resource-rich rulers face less pressure to tax their populations, they face less pressure to cultivate loyalty among subjects, and can simply resort to force or direct material cooptation to secure their rule (Wintrobe 1998). In a similar line of argument, leaders who gain power and immediately have access to resources have less need for organizational infrastructure such as parties and legislatures. According to this argument, leaders who lack the resources to coopt rivals invest in institutions such as parties in order to bolster their power. Ironically, this means that leaders who gained power with fewer resources fare better when crises hit because they have invested in institutions rather than winning support simply through material transactions with elites (Smith 2007).

While these resource-based accounts of authoritarian institutional creation may help explain individual cases, they fail to map more generally onto the creation of parties

of power worldwide. Leaders of a number of resource-rich regimes such as Zaire, Equatorial Guinea, and Kazakhstan have created and maintained parties of power, while dozens leaders of resource-poor countries including Afghanistan, Guatemala, Cambodia, and Haiti have not. Furthermore, resource-based theories of institutional creation are unable to account for variation within a single regime type (resource-rich or resource-poor). Though resource endowments are a crucial consideration in any explanation of politics, there does not seem to be as clear a relationship between resources and institutional strategies as the authors above suggest.

Another line of argument holds that authoritarian rulers create parties when they lack civilian bases of support or institutional capacity in legislatures. Dictators who originate as military officers use parties of power to establish a civilian power base and recruit cadres of politicians for legislative and bureaucratic support, thereby reducing their reliance on army officers to remain in office (Geddes 2006). According to a similar logic, rulers in presidential systems who do not already have parties of their own create them in order to exert greater influence over legislatures (Smyth 2002). This phenomenon is particularly prevalent in mixed parliamentary systems where seats are allocated both in single member districts as well as by party list, which creates strong incentives for leaders to have a party of their own. While the chief executive might find side payments sufficient to win the support of members of parliament from single member districts, partisan parliamentarians have loyalties that may be harder to sway and so must somehow be induced to support the president's agenda (Smyth 2002: 559).

The "institutional bridge" argument offered by Geddes (2006) and Smyth (2002) improves on existing literature by linking the creation of parties to institutional

challenges for which parties provide an immediate solution rather than explaining the creation of parties by pointing to the long-term benefits that parties may or may not eventually deliver. Empirically, their arguments do not adequately account for institutional outcomes within the post-Soviet space, let alone outside the region. Though Russia, Ukraine, and Moldova<sup>4</sup> all share the institutional configurations that Smyth (2002) indicates as creating incentives for parties of power, a party of power emerged only in Russia. Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan both have similarly structured legislatures,<sup>5</sup> though leaders in the two countries did not create parties until the mid-2000s. However, Smyth's (2002) argument is compelling, and should be applied to a wider set of cases. Executives in a variety of institutional contexts could benefit from establishing a "long coalition" (Aldrich 1995) with legislators. I believe that this pressure is quite common, especially at the inception of an authoritarian leader's tenure, and is the driving force behind their decisions to create parties.

I argue that creating one's own party is most appealing to authoritarian rulers who wish to change the incentives of existing elites for cooperating with the ruler. This particularly applies to leaders who have just assumed power as well as those who face newly competitive conditions, whether in a reconstituted legislature or upcoming elections.<sup>6</sup> As many previous works have argued, parties can be excellent tools for creating long-term incentives for cooperation and loyalty from within the ruling coalition. However, an authoritarian ruler may prefer not to create such a binding institution. The

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<sup>4</sup> Moldova switched to a parliamentary systems in 2009; the president is now indirectly elected, but seats in parliament are still filled by mixed party list and single-member districts.

<sup>5</sup> Kyrgyzstan switched to a semi-presidential system in 2010; there is still a directly elected president who shares power with a prime minister nominated by the majority bloc in parliament. The parliament is still elected by mixed voting.

<sup>6</sup> The majority of parties of power are created within the first two years of an authoritarian spell (Svolik 2012b).

costs of maintaining parties are manifold, a corrupt and unpopular party can significantly weaken a leader's reputation, while factional infighting can reduce the efficacy of the party and the regime as a whole. This is all to say that creating a party involves both the short-term risk of failing to establish the party as well as future risks related to the party's performance. Authoritarian rulers who face immediate and credible threats to their initiatives will seek to obtain control over the legislative agenda. For leaders, creating a party of power is *one*, though not the *only* way to do so.<sup>7</sup>

In line with recent actor and choice-oriented theories of institutional formation (Levi 1988, North 1990, Jones-Luong 2002, Magaloni 2006, Gandhi 2008, Svulik 2012a), I treat the creation of institutions as agential and strategic, both for leaders and elites. A satisfactory explanation of the creation of parties in authoritarian regimes must link the interests, expectations, and beliefs of relevant actors with the actions these actors take. Furthermore, focusing on the fact that leaders often initiate the creation of political parties sheds light on puzzle that is at odds with traditional assumptions about authoritarian institutions. Rather than conceptualizing institutions such as parties and legislatures as concessions to regime opponents (Gandhi 2008), leaders may envision creating a party as a way to build a durable base of support (Svulik 2012a). Rather than serving as a measure intended to ensure a long tenure for the ruler, a party may be intended to improve the leader's chances of surviving in the short-to-medium term. Additionally, creating a party is in itself an action that holds meaning as well as the power to change elite incentives for cooperation. Once created, the leader may wish to

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<sup>7</sup> Rather than engineering a dominant ruling party, leaders may seek to shape the meta-institutions of government by conferring "super-" and "hyper-presidential powers" on the executive branch (Ishiyama and Kennedy 2001, Fairbanks 2004), by engineering electoral codes that favor non-partisan and regime-nominated candidates (Jones-Luong 2002), or increase the power of business associations or unions at the expense of parties (Hale 2006).

use the party for different functions like coordinating the recruitment of candidates for election, distributing patronage, and more, but these functions may not be the tasks for which the party was initially created.

At the end of the day, the question of why should a leader create a party at all, when they have the options of repression and dyadic cooptation at their disposal. While each individual leader's calculus on this question likely differs, there are a number of arguments about what parties offer authoritarian rulers over the other options. Most of these explanations address the efficiencies that parties create, especially over time. Svoboda (2012a) likens the pro-regime party to a pyramid scheme in which leaders and elites buy in early on and then reap rewards from later on as more and more politicians and citizens are attracted to the party. This offers a clear sense of the selective incentives available to those who coordinate early on to establish a party. Early on and especially over time, parties reduce leaders' uncertainty about who constitutes the winning coalition within the electorate. Affiliation with a party of power is a visible signal of loyalty that conveys symbolically that the leader has support. Less visible forms of cooptation cannot change perceptions of the general population as easily, while repression alienates the general population and may stoke the desire to revolt.

### **Defining Party of Power**

Over the past several decades, a robust industry has developed for classifying parties and party systems. At least seven terms remain in current use, many of which are

used interchangeably to describe approximately the same kind of party.<sup>8</sup> I depart from much of the existing literature and primarily use the term "party of power," which I define as a *party established and led by an incumbent authoritarian ruler*.<sup>9</sup> This definition accounts for the key features that, in my analysis, set authoritarian parties apart from those in democracies, and also factors that distinguish authoritarian parties from others. First, parties in autocracies should be treated as analytically distinct from parties in democratic regimes. Second, parties initiated at the will of *rulers* serve primarily their own interests, while parties in authoritarian regimes formed by other political actors serve the interests of those other political actors as well as possibly the ruler's. Finally, some parties are created by *incumbent* rulers while other parties originate under previous rulers.

The most common descriptors currently in use in the literature on authoritarian parties, "dominant" and "hegemonic," have at times been used to distinguish institutions under authoritarian regimes from democratic ones, while at other times, these same terms have been used to compare similar institutions in different regime contexts. Given the imprecision that has developed around the terms "dominant" and "hegemonic party," I argue for discarding both and using the term "party of power" to describe the parties at the center of this study. Following Brownlee (2007), Gandhi (2008), and Svoboda (2012a), I also use the minimalist terms "regime party" and "pro-regime party" to describe parties that anchor authoritarian regimes, though not necessarily parties of power. I also use "pro-presidential party" to describe a party that exists primarily serve the interests of the

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<sup>8</sup> See "dominant party" (Duverger 1954, Almond and Coleman 1960, Pempel 1990, Greene 2007), "pre-dominant party" (Sartori 1976), "hegemonic party" (Sartori 1976, Magaloni 2006), "party of power, (Golosov and Likhtenshtein 2001), "ruling party" (Brownlee 2007), "regime" and "pro-regime party" (Smith 2005, Gandhi 2008, Svoboda 2012a).

<sup>9</sup> Russian social scientists have labeled United Russia as a "party of power" on these same grounds, namely that it was created "by the authorities, in fact based on the decision of President Putin and under the immediate direction of his administration" (Ivanov 2008: 8).

chief executive. For the purposes of this study, "party of power" is a subset of "(pro-) regime" and "pro-presidential" parties that meet the selection criteria outlined below.

Before Sartori's (1976) *Parties and Party Systems*, "dominant" party system served as the leading classification for party systems that featured imbalanced competition (Duverger 1954, Almond 1960, Zolberg 1966, Huntington 1968). However, in an effort to better capture the nature of competition in different party systems, Sartori developed terms that differentiated among parties based on their influence within a party system, and which distinguished between competitive (democratic) and non-competitive (authoritarian) party systems. For authoritarian regimes, Sartori used the term "hegemonic" to describe the leading party in a party systems where multiple parties exist but where alternation by election is unlikely if not impossible (230-1). Sartori further breaks hegemonic parties into "ideological" and "pragmatic" types where the former signifies something akin to totalitarianism, where political information is highly regulated by the party, and the latter which is freer and more pluralistic (231-2). I argue that at present, nearly all ruling parties in authoritarian regimes qualify as "pragmatic hegemonic," as they are oriented more towards sustaining the leaders' grip on power rather than establishing a complete monopoly on information and total control over political activity.<sup>10</sup> However, for the purposes of this study, the term "pragmatic hegemonic" does not distinguish between parties created before or after a leader gained power, and so I do not employ the term.

In the decades since Sartori introduced his classificatory scheme, "hegemonic" and "dominant" have become the most common descriptors for leading parties in party systems with skewed competition. While Magaloni (2006) preserves Sartori's proposed

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<sup>10</sup> Notable exceptions include Turkmenistan under Saparmurat Niyazov (1991-2006) and North Korea.



distinction between "(pre-)dominant" parties that exist in democracies and "hegemonic" parties that exist in autocracies, Reuter (2010a) uses the term "dominant party" to apply only to autocracies, while Pempel (1990), Friedman and Wong (2008), and Templeman (2012) and others use "dominant party" to refer to both democracies and autocracies. Reuter (2010a) bases a party's dominance on a 50% majority seat-share in parliament, while Templeman's (2012) primary criterion is the duration of a party's hegemony. Adding to the mix, Brownlee (2007) employs the minimalist term "ruling party" for the leading party in an authoritarian regime while Gandhi (2008) and Svoboda (2012a) tend to use "regime" or "pro-regime party." Neither Brownlee, Gandhi, nor Svoboda specify seat-share or temporal thresholds for classifying parties. Their terms simply denote a pro-ruler orientation.

While holding a majority of seats can be a meaningful indicator of a party's legislative influence, parties that hold a mere plurality of seats can often dominate the legislative agenda just as effectively. This criterion also creates the problem of a party such as the New Azerbaijan Party which held 43% of seats between 1995-2000, and 62% of seats in the following term, 49% between 2005-2010, and 57% in the current term of Azerbaijan's Milli Meclis (IPU Parline 1995a, 2000a, 2005, 2010). A strict measure of seat share would suggest that the party passed in and out of phases of dominance, when in reality the party's monopoly over Azerbaijan's political system only strengthened over the period 1995-2010 (OSCE 2006: 4,11). A temporal definition of dominance is also problematic because many parties function as dominant or hegemonic parties but do not endure for 20 years for exogenous reasons such as the death of their founder or the ruler of the country. Using the term "party of power" avoids both of these pitfalls.

This work employs the term, "party of power," which is used commonly in Russian-language scholarship on political parties but which has gained little traction in English-language social science.<sup>11</sup> Employing the term "party of power" allows this work to distinguish between the different institutional origins of parties in authoritarian regimes rather than operationalizing distinctions either in longevity or seat-share used by prevailing classification systems. In practice, the term "party of power" has been used to refer almost exclusively to pro-regime parties created in the former Soviet Union, that were created by incumbent leaders. No existing term in the literature on parties in authoritarian regimes that carries the connotations relating to the timing of party creation. I believe that this distinction justifies introducing yet another term into a field already well-populated with alternatives.

### **Defining the Set of Authoritarian Regimes**

Following Sartori (1976), I believe that the distinction between democratic and non-democratic regimes should be preserved when analyzing political parties, and in particular when developing a theory of executive-led party creation. Party dominance (or predominance) in democratic regimes is conceptualized primarily as the exceptional duration of a given party in power (Pempel 1990, Greene 2007, Friedman and Wong 2008), which is a remarkable phenomenon for institutional settings where the electoral defeat of the party in question is possible. Though electorally dominant parties are known to take measures to shape institutions favorably to maintain their position, (McElwain 2008, Templeman 2012), the potential for electoral defeat remains a consistent threat for

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<sup>11</sup> The Russian term, *partiiia vlasti*, has been in use since at least the late 1990s in English-language social science to describe pro-regime and pro-presidential parties in the post-Soviet space.

these parties who must compete on relatively equal terms with other parties. This is not the case in competitive and consolidated authoritarian regimes where unseating the incumbent leader or ruling party is nearly impossible by conventional electoral means.

Drawing on existing large-n studies of authoritarian regimes (Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2012; Svolik 2012b), I employ both a procedural and threshold approach to establishing the universe of cases relevant for this project. I define the category "authoritarian" residually to capture all states that do not qualify as democracies. Following Przeworski et al., I begin to define autocracies as those countries where the executive and legislatures are *not elected*, where only *one party* exists, and where incumbents *do not lose* elections (2000: 28-29; emphasis is my own). Yet under Przeworski et al.'s coding rules, dozens of autocratic regimes over the past decades such as Russia since 2000 and Azerbaijan since 1991 qualify as democracies.<sup>12</sup> In order to capture regimes where fraudulent electoral alternation takes place, I follow Svolik's (2012b) coding rules that take into account the nature of individual elections (22). To complete my inclusive set of autocratic regimes, I compile the set of countries for which Freedom House assigns "political freedom" as 4 or higher, which captures not only consolidated authoritarian regimes but semi-consolidated authoritarian as well as hybrid regimes (Freedom House 2015).

I construct a more inclusive set of authoritarian regimes because the incentives for leaders to create their own parties are present in nature in the most consolidated autocratic regimes and are arguably strongest in hybrid regimes. In this more competitive context, leaders face stronger pressure to represent their interests in parties and also may

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<sup>12</sup> The ostensibly electoral transfer of power from Heydar to Ilham Aliyev in 2003 and from Putin to Medvedev in 2008 count as democratic transfers of power by Przeworski et al.'s (2000) coding rules.

see a pro-regime party as a necessary tool for skewing competition in their own favor. Therefore, "hybrid" (Diamond 2002) and "electoral authoritarian" (Schedler 2006) regimes, both of which overlap conceptually with Levitsky and Way's (2010) "competitive authoritarian regimes," are included in the set of authoritarian regimes where leaders might plausibly consider creating a party of power. However, the incentives to create parties of power changes fundamentally once regimes are solidly democratic. While incumbent leaders have been known to create their own parties in democracies,<sup>13</sup> elites who refuse to join the leader's party can generally depend on fair elections to determine whether they win office in the future. Thus, they are excluded from the scope of this project.

### **Determining Executive Initiative and Affiliation**

This dissertation departs from existing literature on parties in authoritarian regimes by focusing on a given party's link with the chief executive. I do not place conditions of minimal seat share or duration in power as markers of a party's prominence within the party system. However, I do place the clear affiliation between the party and the authoritarian ruler as a condition.

I determine whether executive initiative led to the creation of a party on the following grounds. For the first round of coding, I take cases where the paramount leader<sup>14</sup> has publicly expressed support for the creation of a party, and whether the leader remained the party's official or ceremonial leader after its creation. The former condition

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<sup>13</sup> See Konstantinos Karamanlis's founding of New Democracy in 1974 and Ariel Sharon's establishment of Kadima in November 2005.

<sup>14</sup> I determine the effective head of government by consulting the "leader" variable in Svoboda's (2012) database, and "thead" in Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (2010).

is most easily determined by public statements, media appearances, or official speeches. However, in the absence of such explicit statements, consensus in secondary sources about the leaders' endorsement of the establishment of a party of power is sufficient to claim executive initiative.

For the second condition, I consider different indicators of executive affiliation with the party once already in power. Membership in the party is a sufficient indicator of affiliation, though party leaders who remain officially non-partisan also may be coded as "affiliated" with a specific party. For instance, Russia's President Vladimir Putin, while widely recognized as the leader of United Russia from its inception, has never officially become a member of the party, nor did he occupy a formal position of leadership in the party until he was voted party chairman in 2008 (Ivanov 2008, *Russia Today* 2012-04-25). Leaders who simultaneously serve as party chairman or in an equivalent leadership post are easily coded as affiliated with the party. At the next level, official membership in the party indicates affiliation. Leaders who hold neither an official leadership position in the party nor membership in one may still qualify as being affiliated with a ruling party. When a leader consistently supports one party and distributes an outsized share of positions in the state administration to that party, the continued collaboration between leader and party should be considered evidence of executive support. In these cases, affiliation can be determined using media accounts and secondary sources.

### **Defining Elites**

Following Dogan and Higley (1998), I define elites as “holders of strategic positions in powerful organizations and movements, including dissident ones, who are

able to affect national political outcomes regularly and significantly” (15). Primarily this means individuals who have held elected or appointed public office, or those who could potentially do so. This includes leading business and cultural figures, those who have competed in elections, formed parties, and led political demonstrations. It does not include rank and file citizens such as ordinary voters or occasional participants in political demonstrations.

Obtaining comprehensive and systematic data about elites within a country is extremely difficult. While directories such as *Who's Who in Azerbaijan* or *Who's Who in Georgia* provide an impression of who may or may not be a member of the country's elite, there is no way to compare these directories across countries as each directory is compiled according to different selection criteria. Thus, while I acknowledge that elites within a regime represent a wide range of social and professional profiles, for the purpose of this model, elites are those who run for political office. I draw a distinction between elected and appointed officials in this case, because elected officials hold a mandate to power that is distinct from those who can be replaced by a new executive appointment. Furthermore, while business elites, regional administrators, and state bureaucrats often join parties of power once created, they most commonly join during the secondary and tertiary phases of party development; party activists and current legislators join first (Reuter 2010a, Reuter 2010b). As would-be creators of parties of power recruit incumbent parliamentarians and candidates for legislative office first, I consider them first in my analysis.

For the purposes of the formal model presented in the following chapter, I conceptualize elites as a unitary actor, but recognize in the case studies that not all elites hold the same beliefs nor do they take the same actions.

### **Temporal Precedence in Authoritarian Party Formation**

The third factor that distinguishes parties of power from other ruling parties in authoritarian regimes is the timing of party creation with respect to the beginning of an authoritarian spell. If a given ruler comes to power already in charge of a party or movement, he faces a very different set of calculations from leaders who gain power without a party of their own and then later decide to create one. In the former situation, there is no uncertainty about the leader's ability to establish a party, while in the later, leaders must consider the benefits and costs of *creating a party* along with the likelihood that they will in fact succeed in establishing said party. Given the range of choices of institutions available to authoritarian leaders, those leaders who choose not to establish a party may seek other ways to strengthen their rule, whether through dyadic ad-hoc cooptation, coercion, or other strategies of rule.

Where institutional origins have entered classifications of parties in authoritarian regimes, distinctions have focused on the timing of rulers' access to resources (Smith 2007) and the revolutionary roots of certain parties (Levitsky and Way 2012). According to a recent argument by Levitsky and Way (2012), ruling parties that originated as victorious movements in liberation struggles are more cohesive in the face of crisis than parties that came into existence as patronage machines. The latter type of party lacks the strong partisan identity, legitimacy, and capacity to repress that parties with revolutionary

origins have. All of these factors merit some discussion, but I argue that they could be replaced with a measure which is simpler to operationalize ex-ante and captures many of the theoretical distinctions that these authors are attempting to draw.

I would argue that rather than focusing on resources or the nature and intensity of conflicts that produced certain parties, taking into account the timing of the creation of a party serves as an ex-ante identifiable proxy for some of the same factors that Smith (2007) and Levitsky and Way (2012) highlight. If a party was established under a previous regime before its leaders gained power, the party would likely have been formed on the basis of some kind of movement or ideology or on the initiative of motivated individuals. If founded by individuals who were not in power, such a party would have grown without the benefit of state resources and would have attracted members based on non-material appeal. On the other hand, parties formed by incumbent leaders often gain large memberships quickly as political elites, hoping to cash in on regime spoils, flock to the party opportunistically. If Levitsky and Way (2012) argue that patronage-based parties lack the ideological and personal cohesion of revolutionary parties, I would argue that all else being equal, parties formed by incumbent leaders are less cohesive than those parties formed by leaders before they gained power.

Drawing the distinction between parties that formed *before* the regime under which they became the ruling party and those created *after* helps to avoid becoming mired in the differences between violent and non-violent liberation struggles (Levitsky and Way 2012), "activist" versus "opportunistic" rebellions (Weinstein 2006), or variation in the resource endowments of nascent parties (Smith 2007). Instead, whether the party predated the tenure of the ruler may capture some of the differences that



manifest between parties established in the absence of executive power and those parties that formed specifically to serve executive interests after the leader has gained power. But more importantly, the calculations surrounding parties created after leaders gained power differ from those established before their rise to power. Therefore they should be treated as analytically distinct when explaining their creation.

### **Parties of Power Worldwide**

I have identified 30 parties of power created from 1946-present.<sup>15</sup> These parties were established on average 3.5 years into their founder's tenure, while two thirds were created within the leader's first five years in office. One of these parties was created in the 1950s, six emerged in the 1960s, three were created in the 1970s, and six were established in the 1980s. The remaining 14 parties of power were established after 1991, which further underscores the increasing pressures that authoritarian leaders have faced in recent decades to create parties of their own if they do not already have them at the time they gain power.

Of the 30 leaders who created parties of power, 12 held positions in the government but outside the legislature before gaining power, while four leaders originated in the legislature before creating parties of their own. Fourteen of the rulers who created parties of power were military officers before becoming the paramount leaders of their countries. This distribution lends partial support to Geddes's (2006) theory that military rulers particularly need parties of power as well as Smyth's (2002) that rulers who originate outside the legislature have incentives to create parties of power.

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<sup>15</sup> See Appendix A for a list of parties of power created worldwide 1946-present.

In general, however, it underscores the wide appeal that parties of power have to authoritarian rulers with different institutional backgrounds.

Parties of power emerged on five out of six inhabited continents as well as in Oceania.<sup>16</sup>

## **Chapter Outline of Dissertation**

This dissertation proposes a general theory of party creation by incumbent authoritarian leaders that applies to the entire set of authoritarian regimes that have existed from 1946-present. The main theoretical premise of the dissertation, that leaders establish parties only when elite beliefs about the leaders' types convince them to join, is expressed in a formal model and then illustrated with case studies from four post-Soviet states in the 1990s.

The second chapter presents the signaling model of authoritarian party creation, which is the main theoretical argument of the dissertation. In this chapter, the need for a game theoretic model is justified, the parameters of the model are defined, and all assumptions supporting the pure-strategy equilibria are identified. The main hypothesis tested in the dissertation is stated, and the choice to evaluate the hypothesis with two paired case studies is explained. The selection of Georgia and Azerbaijan as cases of party creation and Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan as cases of party non-creation is explained.

The third chapter demonstrates the existence of the first pooling equilibrium generated by the model in which authoritarian leaders of different types both create parties of power. The case studies of Presidents Eduard Shevardnadze of Georgia and

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<sup>16</sup> Laisenia Qarase created the United Fiji Party in 2006, which represents Oceania's only party of power.

Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan's creation of parties of power focuses on the initial conditions of each leader's presidency, the nature of elite mobilization in the two countries, and the development of elite beliefs about the leaders' types. The narratives address the founding of the Citizens' Union of Georgia and the New Azerbaijan Party, and follow the differing political trajectories of Georgia and Azerbaijan after the creation of parties of power.

The fourth chapter documents the second pooling equilibrium in which leaders of different types both choose *not to create* parties of power. The first years of Kazakhstan's Nursultan Nazarbayev and Kyrgyzstan's Askar Akayev's presidencies are compared to demonstrate the parallel challenges that each leader faced. Both Nazarbayev and Akayev struggled to win the cooperation of political elites during the early 1990s. Elites, however, considered Nazarbayev and Akayev to be conciliatory leaders and therefore intensified their opposition in hopes of limiting executive authority. Realizing that elites would likely not join a potential party of power, Nazarbayev and Akayev pursued other strategies of rule including creating bicameral parliaments and strengthening executive powers via referendum. The strategies that Nazarbayev and Akayev chose instead of parties of power are discussed as are the long-term implications of the leaders' types for the democracy and regime stability in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The fifth and final chapter of the dissertation summarizes the main questions, theoretical approaches, and key findings of this dissertation. It also proposes a number of extensions of the project for the future.

## **Chapter 2: A Theory of Authoritarian Party Creation**

In this chapter, I propose a formal model of party creation by incumbent authoritarian rulers that accounts for both the creation of parties of power by some authoritarian leaders and the decision of other leaders not to create parties. I justify the use of a game theoretic model for explaining this phenomenon and then present the model itself. I list the parameters of the model, explain how I derive values for the parameters, and then present the key assumptions that allow me to solve the game. I present five pure-strategy solutions to the game and justify focusing the analysis on two of these five equilibria. I discuss the main hypothesis generated by the model, namely that rulers' decisions to create parties ultimately depend on elite perceptions about rulers' types. Finally, I justify the selection of pairs of post-Soviet states as case studies to illustrate how the signaling model of authoritarian party creation manifests empirically.

### **Why a Model?**

The institutions that emerge from rulers' and elites' strategies are the product of choice. Though historical, cultural, and structural factors affect the forms that political institutions take as well as their efficacy, when political institutions are created, there are specific actions undertaken intentionally by actors in particular strategic contexts. As the previous chapter argued, historical legacies do not account for the variation in authoritarian leaders' decisions to create parties of power; neither do the resource endowments of given countries, nor the personal biographies of individual leaders.

I argue that a theory of authoritarian party creation must treat party creation as an *interdependent decision* for leaders and elites in the sense that leaders consider the future behavior of elites when deciding whether to create a party of their own.<sup>17</sup> Second, any theory of authoritarian party creation should also be able to account for *both observed equilibria*, the creation of parties of power by some leaders and other leaders' decisions not create a party.<sup>18</sup> In addition to satisfying these conditions, a theory of authoritarian party creation should be *dynamic*. Elites can join a nascent party of power only after it has been initiated by the leader. Though the specific timing of the creation of parties varies from case to case, the actions play out sequentially rather than simultaneously. First the party must be created, and then individuals must join the party in order for the party to emerge.<sup>19</sup> Finally, a theory of authoritarian party creation must account for the informational imbalance that exists between the leaders who initiate parties of power and the elites who join them. As I argue in this chapter and demonstrate in the case study chapters, elites are at an informational disadvantage when deciding whether to join parties of power because they do not know what type of leader they are choosing to support. Thus, *perceptions* about the ruler's type play a key role in determining elite's willingness to join parties of power. This imbalance in information is crucial for explaining the observed variation in authoritarian party creation as a theory based on the assumption full information fails to account for empirically observed equilibria.

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<sup>17</sup> While it is technically possible for incumbent authoritarian rulers to create parties of power with an entirely new set of elites should incumbent elites refuse to join, in practical terms this is highly costly.

<sup>18</sup> Belarus's Alyaksandr Lukashenka and Kyrgyzstan's Askar Akayev are among the leaders who have remained in power the longest without creating parties of their own despite the continuous operation of multiparty legislatures during their presidencies. Other authoritarian rulers with comparably lengthy tenures in office who also maintained legislatures either inherited their positions, such as Morocco's King Hassan II, or were appointed by their predecessor, such as Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

<sup>19</sup> I consider a party to have successfully "emerged" once it has registered and occupied at least one seat in a national legislature. This is usually a moot point because the party emerges when incumbent elites join. These incumbent elites usually already have seats in the legislature

Following Hug (2001), I argue that the decision to create a new party is a choice that depends on strategic interactions between entrant and preexisting political forces. For parties of power, this means that authoritarian leaders base their decision to create a party on their own incentives, conditional on their expectation of the behavior of elites whom they wish to attract to their party. Many leaders who have the resources to create a party as well as incentives to do so may not create parties when elites are unwilling to join the party. Similarly, elites base their decision on whether to join an authoritarian leader's party based on their expectation of the leader's future behavior.

I model authoritarian party creation sequentially because failing to do so reduces the theory's ability to predict both the creation and non-creation of a party as equilibria. Models structured around simultaneous choice, such as coordination games, depend on "focal points" to explain the emergence of any single equilibrium when multiple equilibria are possible. Given that shared knowledge among players serves as the source of potential focal points, historical legacies would be the strongest predictor of institutional outcomes if party creation is best modeled as a simultaneous choice between leaders and elites. As stated in the previous chapter, historical legacies are poor predictors of empirically observed variation in party creation by incumbent authoritarian rulers. A dynamic game of authoritarian party creation allows for party creation and no party creation to emerge as equilibria without depending on focal points. Rather, leaders and elites take action in turn and plan their strategies as best responses to their opponent's expected actions. The choice to model the leader as the first mover follows existing literature (Gandhi 2008, Svobik 2012a).

Finally, I argue that party creation by incumbent authoritarian leaders involves an imbalance of information between leaders and elites. While leaders know their true propensity to use coercion to achieve their political goals, elites can only make inferences about this aspect of the leader's character. For leaders whom elites have had little time to observe, there exists a great deal of uncertainty about the leader's type. As I demonstrate later, under conditions of full information, it would only be possible for repressive leaders to create parties. Conciliatory leaders could never establish parties of power because elites would know their type and refuse to join their party. However, when information is incomplete, actors in the game have the opportunity to misrepresent their type, which makes equilibria possible that would otherwise would not have been.

When a leader creates a party, he signals to elites that he commits to deliver long-term benefits in exchange for their cooperation.<sup>20</sup> By creating a party, leaders also communicate that they have the means to reward their supporters and to exclude and punish those outside the party. Thus the visible and costly act of creating a party has the power to alter elites' incentives for cooperating with authoritarian rulers, which in turn gives rulers the incentive to create parties even if they lack the resources or resolve to maintain them.

### **Formal Model of Authoritarian Party Creation**

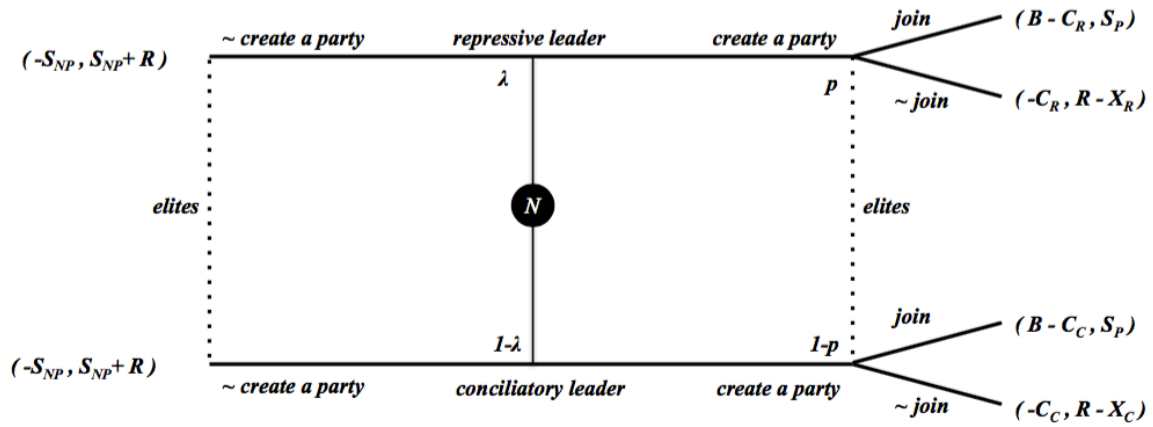
In this section I present an extensive form signaling game of authoritarian party creation which models the interdependent and dynamic nature of party creation and incorporates uncertainty among elites about leader type. The following section introduces

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<sup>20</sup> I use the male pronoun as every authoritarian leader who has created a party of power has been male.

the relevant actors, their ranked preferences for outcomes, the parameters that constitute the payoffs that actors receive, as well as the five pure-strategy solutions to the game.<sup>21</sup>

**Figure 3: Signaling Game of Authoritarian Party Creation**



**Table 1: Ranked Preferences of Actors**

Player	Outcomes (Leader, Elites)	Payoffs
Repressive Leader	$(P, J) > (P, \sim J) \geq (\sim P, J; \sim P, \sim J)$	$B - C_R > -C_R \geq -S_{NP}$
Conciliatory Leader	$(P, J) > (\sim P, J; \sim P, \sim J) > (P, \sim J)$	$B - C_C > -S_{NP} > -C_C$
Elites if Repressive Leader	$(P, J) > (\sim P, J; \sim P, \sim J) > (P, \sim J)$	$S_P > -S_{NP} + R > R - X_R$
Elites if Conciliatory Leader	$(\sim P, J; \sim P, \sim J) \geq (P, \sim J) > (P, J)$	$S_{NP} + R \geq R - X_C > S_P$

<sup>21</sup> A systematic justification for signaling model including a discussion of simpler alternative models can be found in Appendix B.



**Table 2: Parameters and Other Notation**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Term</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
$B$	<i>benefit of party creation</i>	$\theta$	<i>type of player</i>
$C_R$	<i>cost of party creation for repressive leader</i>	$P$	<i>create a party</i>
$C_C$	<i>cost of party creation for conciliatory leader</i>	$J$	<i>join the party</i>
$S_P$	<i>side payment through party</i>	$\sigma_L$	<i>strategy profile for leader</i>
$S_{NP}$	<i>side payment without party</i>	$\sigma_E$	<i>strategy profile for elite</i>
$X_R$	<i>punishment by a repressive leader</i>	$Z$	<i>beliefs about leader type</i>
$X_C$	<i>punishment by a conciliatory leader</i>	$\lambda$	<i>probability of type by nature</i>

Nature assigns the types of leaders ( $\theta$ ) with probabilities  $\lambda$  and  $1 - \lambda$  for each type. When  $\theta=R$ , the leader is repressive,<sup>22</sup> and when  $\theta=C$ , the leader is conciliatory. In this game, only leaders know their true type; elites only have beliefs about leaders' types. I define a repressive type leader as a leader who uses coercion to achieve his political goals. As relates to the creation of parties of power, repressive leaders punish elites who do not join the party of power by excluding them from office, by cutting them off from state patronage, by imprisoning them, forcing them into exile, or by murdering them. Repressive leaders maintain a smaller winning coalition within the selectorate and enforce its boundaries coercively (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003, Wintrobe 1998). Of course, they must have the means to repress and lack the internal and external constraints to do so. Absent the personal will to repress, a leader will not repress even when they have the means and lack the constraints. Consequently, this analysis is concerned with the revealed will to repress.

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<sup>22</sup> Whether a leader is a repressive type depends both on their capacity to repress as well as their willingness to do so. In this analysis, I define type based on the leader's willingness to repress. The true preference regarding repression is an internal characteristic known only to the leader, however elites can form opinions about this willingness, which is essentially their best guess about the leader's type.

Conversely, conciliatory leaders are those who seek to build support for their rule through cooptation, consensus, and compromise. Conciliatory rulers are authoritarian in that they restrict open and fair competition among parties, but tolerate opposition party activity. They impose some limitations on public speech and assembly, but do not imprison or massacre protesters. Conciliatory leaders generally are unwilling to engage in repression. This issue begs the question of whether a leader who represses visibly is in fact in a strong or a weak position. In theory, an authoritarian leader who is truly secure should not have to repress visibly or repress great numbers of subjects, while a weaker one must demonstrate their will to repress in order to intimidate their subjects. While this phenomenon is indeed puzzling and begs further study, it seems impossible for an authoritarian leader to rule from their outset by threats of coercion alone. Any authoritarian ruler who wants to maintain a high degree of control over the populace must follow through with repression in order to make their threats credible, and then periodically remind the public of their will to repress.<sup>23</sup>

Elites<sup>24</sup> form their beliefs about leader type by observing acts of repression, such as the violent disruption of public protests, the arrest, imprisonment, and murder of political rivals, and crackdowns on the independent media. Knowledge of a leader's past career informs prior beliefs about their type, particularly if the leader has served as a military officer or in the intelligence services. After gaining power, cultivating public ties with the security forces can also bolster the sense that a leader is repressive, or at least increase uncertainty about the leader's type if the prior assumption is that the leader is conciliatory. Instances when the leader publicly consults with members of the opposition,

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<sup>23</sup> In practice, leader type exists on a continuum. However, for the purpose of the model, type is binary.

<sup>24</sup> For the purpose of this model, elites are a unitary actor. In practice, elites form beliefs and act in groups as well as individually.

offers concessions to them, and accepts defeat in policy battles contribute to elites' belief that a leader is conciliatory. The continued existence of opposition parties and the ability of government critics to voice their opinions with impunity reinforce the belief that the leader is conciliatory.

Uncertainty about leader type is highest at the beginning of the leader's tenure, as elites have had little time to form their beliefs about the leader's type. Uncertainty increases when elites observe new information that conflicts with their prior assumptions about the leader. As an example, uncertainty about the leader's type increases when a leader who has a reputation for moderation and dialogue cracks down violently on protesters, whereas when a leader with a reputation for having a strong hand cracks down violently on protesters, uncertainty about his type decreases. This model is primarily concerned with uncertainty about the leader's type, because this information tends to be private while elite actions and preferences tend to be more easily observed.

### **Sequence of Actions in the Game**

In the first move, leaders decide whether or not to create their own party ( $P$ ,  $\sim P$ ) based on their expectations of elites' interest in joining the party. As stated in the list of ranked preferences, repressive leaders' top preference is to create a party that elites join, but that repressive leaders face a more complicated choice if they believe elites will not join the party. When repressive leaders know that elites perceive them as conciliatory, repressive leaders may choose not to initiate a party at all, or simply not to follow through with creating a party of their own if they already made some efforts towards establishing one. Such leaders know that they can employ measures other than creating a

pro-regime party in order to achieve their political objectives, and so failing to create a party does not entail the same risks for repressive leaders as it does for conciliatory ones.<sup>25</sup> Repressive leaders do not hesitate to repress uncooperative elites who choose not to join their parties, which in some cases makes elite cooperation easier to secure in the future.

In the first move of the game, conciliatory leaders initiate parties of power when they expect that elites will join. Conciliatory leaders stand to benefit greatly from institutions such as parties of power because their willingness to coerce in order to remain in power is limited; rather, they must cultivate loyalty and offer greater concessions to elites than repressive leaders. The expectation of elite cooperation defines the actions of conciliatory leaders who strongly prefer party creation to not creating one at all, but who also strongly prefer not to create a party if they believe that elites believe them to be conciliatory. The latter may find other ways to coopt key elites through ad-hoc side payments.

In the second move of the game, elites choose whether or not to join ( $J$ ,  $\sim J$ ) a pro-regime party once they see that a leader is establishing one.<sup>26</sup> When they believe that leader is repressive, they join the party, reasoning that they will face severe punishment and exclusion from future benefits should they refuse to join. However, when elites believe that the leader is conciliatory and therefore incapable of excluding them from the benefits of party affiliation, elites prefer not to join a party of power. Elites know that

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<sup>25</sup> Because of the weak preference for not creating a party, it is possible that repressive leaders will create a party even without elite cooperation. Even if they face no immediate threat, having such a party may provide rulers with an insurance policy against future opponents.

<sup>26</sup> Public statements calling for the creation of a party of power like Shevardnadze's from August 1993 are an unequivocal evidence of a leader's intent to create a party. Giving the keynote speech at an existing party conference or strong statements of support for an existing proto-party such as Nazarbayev's in early 1993 also signal interest in establishing a party of power.

leaders know their preferences, which also means that elites know that their beliefs have the power to alter leaders' strategies. Elite opposition always dissuades conciliatory leaders from initiating a party, and may also give repressive leaders pause. In the latter case, leaders may not create a party and instead punish uncooperative elites.

### **Solving the Signaling Game of Authoritarian Party Creation**

In this section, I present five pure strategy solutions to the signaling game of authoritarian party creation. I identify the necessary parameters from the model and state the assumptions necessary to support these equilibria.

#### **Assumption 1: The Benefits of Party Creation: $B > 0$**

Authoritarian rulers draw a wide range of benefits from maintaining a pro-regime party, some of which go into effect as soon as the parties are created and others that are realized over time. Because this paper focuses on authoritarian party *creation* as opposed to *maintenance*, I devote more attention to the benefits that leaders receive from parties early on. First and foremost, creating a party of power changes the incentives that elites have for cooperating with the leader. The act of creating a party serves as a stimulus to elites who must reveal their preferences for cooperation by either joining the leader's party or by remaining independent. In this way, the formation of parties clarifies the boundaries of the winning coalition within the selectorate (Buono de Mesquita et al 2003, Haber 2006) and immediately raises the cost of independent political activity (Greene 2007). In authoritarian regimes where legislatures operate, parties of power secure support for the ruler's agenda (Magaloni 2006, Greene 2007), and in many cases approve

constitutional changes that award greater power to the executive branch. In line with a common assumption in the literature on parties in authoritarian regimes, I assume that benefit of creating a party of power holds a positive value:  $B > 0$ .<sup>27</sup>

**Assumption 2: Costs of Creating a Party:  $0 < C_R < C_C$**

The costs of creating a party are made up of fixed costs, which are invested in party infrastructure, as well as variable costs that take the form of side payments to party-affiliated elites. While the fixed costs of party creation do not vary with leader type, because parties all need offices, staff, and other concrete amenities regardless of who is in charge. However, compared to conciliatory leaders, repressive leaders pay *lower* side payments to elites since the credible threat of coercion limits elites' demands for the benefits of party affiliation. Conciliatory leaders offer higher side payments in order to secure broader elite cooperation, effectively creating a larger selectorate within the regime because they cannot credibly threaten to exclude uncooperative elites. Repressive leaders credibly threaten punishments to limit the demands of elites whom they recruit into their parties. Therefore, regarding costs, I assume:  $0 < C_R < C_C$ .

**Assumption 3: Punishments:  $X_R > X_C \geq 0$**

Both repressive and conciliatory leaders seek to punish elites who refuse to join their party. However, the nature of this punishment varies by the type of leader.<sup>28</sup> Elites

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<sup>27</sup> I define the benefits of creating a party as a constant ( $B$ ) for all leaders, as the benefit term always appears in conjunction with the cost term ( $C_i$ ), which does vary based on leader type.

<sup>28</sup> This analysis operates under the assumption that the leader sets the tone of the entire regime, and has a hand in repression even if they do not explicitly order each act. I assume that opposition figures are not imprisoned, exiled, or murdered in authoritarian regimes without the knowledge of the leader nor without his tacit or explicit consent.

who do not join repressive leaders' parties face complete exclusion from the side payments that derive from party affiliation. Repressive leaders also punish uncooperative elites by threatening divestment, imprisonment, or death. However, elites who do not join parties established by conciliatory leaders face less severe punishments. Opposition and independent parties are permitted to compete, though often at a disadvantage to affiliates of the party of power. Donors face pressure not to contribute to opposition parties, while leaders affiliated with them may experience legal harassment. Conciliatory leaders rarely cross the line to imprisonment, exile, and murder of opposition candidates, and do not categorically ban opposition media or demonstrations. Since conciliatory leaders do not punish uncooperative elites as harshly as repressive ones, I assume regarding punishments:<sup>29</sup>  $X_R > X_C \geq 0$

**Assumption 4: Side Payments:  $S_{NP} \geq S_P \geq S_O \geq 0$**

After an authoritarian ruler creates a party, elites affiliated with the party receive side payments of various forms. These include appointments to positions in the state bureaucracy, clientelistic benefits for constituents, insider deals in state-run enterprises, and more. When a party of power exists, access to these side payments depends on continued cooperation with the leader (Svolik 2012a). Under various forms of coercive threats, repressive leaders are able to reserve party benefits exclusively for party-affiliates while conciliatory leaders cannot.

While I include  $S_P$  and  $S_{NP}$  as terms that represent the different levels of side payments that elites receive from within a party and when no party exists, there is also a

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<sup>29</sup> Because the level punishments that leaders mete out is a function of their type, they do not pay "costs" when punishing uncooperative elites. The differences between repressive and conciliatory leaders are palpable only to elites who receive their punishments.

third value,  $S_O$ , which represents the side payments to elites outside the newly created party of power.  $S_O = 0$  when the leader is repressive, as such leaders exclude uncooperative elites from side payments completely, but under conciliatory leaders, side payments for elites outside the party are greater than or equal to zero, but less than or equal to the side payments that elites receive when no party at all exists:<sup>30</sup>

$$S_{NP} \geq S_P \geq S_O \geq 0$$

**Assumption 5: Elite Reputation:  $R \geq 0$**

Elites have reputations ( $R$ ) that reflect the value that they derive from remaining politically independent. This term encapsulates both the recognition that individual politicians have cultivated among the electorate, their commitment to certain ideological positions, and the resources they command independently from state patronage or business connections. Reputation is a measure of elites' political prominence independent of their affiliation with the leader. Electoral victories, personal popularity, mobilizational potential, and patronage that elites control all contribute to the value of ( $R$ ) as do elites' attachments to their ideological convictions. When elites join a party of power, they forfeit the independent component of their reputations and tie their future political fortunes to those of the leader and the leader's party; in exchange, they receive the benefits of affiliating with the ruling party in the form of side-payments ( $S_P$ ), but lose their independent reputation ( $R$ ). When leaders do not create parties at all, elites retain their independent reputations and also bargain for side payments with leaders ( $S_{NP}$ ).

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<sup>30</sup>  $S_O$  collapses into the punishment term that comprises part of elites' payoffs when they do not join pro-regime parties. Thus out of the three levels of side payments that exist, only two appear as separate terms.



When elites refuse to join parties, they retain their independent reputations but face punishments, depending on the leader's type ( $X_R$  or  $X_C$ ).

Given that this value represents elites' estimation of themselves and not the general public's estimation of elites, this model operates on the assumption that elites' independent reputations are greater than or equal to zero:  $R \geq 0$ .

### **Discussion of Equilibria**

The following sections present five equilibria that emerge from this game: four pooling equilibria and one separating equilibrium. These equilibria represent the full set of pure-strategy equilibria generated by the signaling game of authoritarian party creation.

*Equilibrium 1 (EQ1): Suppose the following payoff inequalities hold:*

#### Conditions

$$- S_{NP} < B - C_R \quad (1a)$$

$$- S_{NP} < B - C_C \quad (1b)$$

$$S_P > R - X_C - p(X_R - X_C) \quad (2a)$$

*If these conditions are met, then both types of leaders create a party, and elites believe that all leaders who create a party are repressive. Formally, the strategy and belief profiles are as follows:*

$$\sigma_L = \begin{matrix} P \text{ if } \theta = R \\ P \text{ if } \theta = C \end{matrix}$$

$$\sigma_E = J$$

$$Z = p(R|P) = p$$

Conditions 1a and 1b state the uncontroversial assertion that both repressive and conciliatory leaders have clear incentives to *create a party of power*. These expressions state simply that leaders receive higher payoffs when they create a party that elites join ( $P, J$ ) than they do when they do not create a party at all ( $\sim P, J; \sim P, \sim J$ ). However, elites will only join the party when Condition 2 holds, which expresses the probability that elites assign for the leader being repressive.<sup>31</sup> Here, the payoffs that elites expect from joining a party created by a repressive leader ( $P, J, b = p$ ) and joining a party created by a conciliatory leader ( $P, J, b = (1 - p)$ ) are compared. This inequality establishes that elites value the side payments they would receive as part of a party ( $S_P$ ) *more* than they value their independent reputations ( $R$ ) minus the probability of receiving a punishment from a repressive leader ( $p(X_R)$ ).<sup>32</sup> Thus, elites prefer to *join* a party when they observe the leader creating one, despite knowing that there is still a possibility that the leader is in fact conciliatory. When conditions 1a, 1b, and hold, neither leaders nor elites have the incentive to defect from their initial strategy and so a pooling equilibrium emerges.

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<sup>31</sup> Despite the fact that the probability of the leader being repressive ( $Z$ ) is the central parameter of interest in this condition, it is more intuitive to express the condition without isolating the belief term ( $Z$ ) on the left side of the inequality. Punishments from conciliatory leaders ( $X_C$ ) are negligible and can be assigned a value of 0 in order to simplify this expression. See Appendix C for the derivation and alternate expressions of this condition.

<sup>32</sup> Similarly to Condition 2, see Appendix C for the derivation and alternate expressions of the various conditions

*Equilibrium 2 (EQ2): Suppose the following payoff inequalities hold:*

Conditions

$$S_P < R - X_C - p(X_R - X_C) \quad (3)$$

$$-C_R < -S_{NP} \quad (4a)$$

$$-C_C < -S_{NP} \quad (4b)$$

$$S_{NP} + R \geq S_P \quad (5)$$

*If these conditions are met, then both types of leaders do create a party, and elites believe that all leaders who do not create parties are conciliatory. Formally, the strategy and belief profiles are as follows:*

$$\sigma_L = \begin{array}{l} \sim P \text{ if } \theta = R \\ \sim P \text{ if } \theta = C \end{array}$$

$$\sigma_E = (\sim J)$$

Conditions 3, 4a, 4b, and 5 jointly establish the conditions under which *not creating a party* dominates *creating a party* for both types of leaders. Condition 3 compares the payoffs that elites expect from refusing to join a party created by a repressive leader ( $P, J, b = p$ ) and not joining a party created by a conciliatory leader ( $P, \sim J, b = (1 - p)$ ). This inequality establishes that elites value the side payments they would receive as part of a party ( $S_P$ ) *less* than they value their independent reputations ( $R$ ) minus the probability of receiving a punishment from a repressive leader ( $p(X_R)$ ). Thus elites prefer *not to join* a party even if they observe the leader creating one, in essence calling the leader's bluff. Conditions 4a and 4b establish that leaders strongly prefer not to establish a party that elites refuse to join. These conditions are derived from establishing inequalities between the payoffs of not creating a party ( $-S_{NP}$ ) and the payoffs of creating a party that elites do not join ( $-C_i$ ). Leaders' payoffs from *not creating a party* are

compared with the payoffs of a *failed party* ( $-C_i$ ) rather than a successful party ( $B - C_i$ ), because in this equilibrium elites believe leaders to be conciliatory and therefore have a dominant strategy *not to join* the party ( $\sim J$ ), even if they see that one has been initiated. Therefore, if both types of leaders expect to pay less in side payments in the absence of a party ( $-S_{NP}$ ) than they would by initiating a party that ultimately fails ( $-C_i$ ), both types *do not to create* a party of their own. Finally, Condition 5 must hold in order for elites not to have an incentive to defect from their choice not to join a party. Thus, the payoffs that elites receive when leaders do not create a party ( $S_{NP} + R$ ) must dominate the payoffs that they might receive from joining a party ( $S_P$ ). When all of the conditions listed above hold, a second pooling equilibrium emerges in which leaders, anticipating that elites will not cooperate in the future, have a clear incentive not to create a party, while elites have no incentive to defect from their uncooperative stance.

*Equilibrium 3 (EQ3): Suppose the following inequalities hold:*

Conditions

$$C_R < S_{NP} \quad (6a)$$

$$C_C < S_{NP} \quad (6b)$$

*If these conditions are met, then both types of leaders create parties of power because the costs of attempting but failing to create a party are less than non-party side-payments. Formally, the strategy and belief profiles are as follows:*

$$\sigma_L = \begin{array}{l} \sim P \text{ if } \theta = R \\ \sim P \text{ if } \theta = C \end{array}$$

$$\sigma_E = (\sim J \text{ or } J)$$

$$Z = N/A$$

Conditions 6a and 6b present a situation in which creating a party dominates non-party creation on the basis that the costs of creating a party, even one that elites do not join, are always less than the costs of paying non-party side payments. In this case, leaders *always* have an incentive to create a party and will *never* defect to not create a party based on their expectation of elite cooperation. Elite beliefs ( $Z$ ) in this case are irrelevant because leaders have a dominant strategy to *create a party* regardless of whether elites join or not. While I include this equilibrium because as a logical possibility, it is not sustained empirically as many authoritarian leaders choose *not to create parties*; this strategy is impossible in this equilibrium.

*Equilibrium 4 (EQ4): Suppose the following inequalities hold:*

Conditions

$$-S_{NP} > B - C_R \quad (7a)$$

$$-S_{NP} > B - C_C \quad (7b)$$

*If these conditions are met, neither type of leader creates a party of power because the value of the outlay of non-party side-payments is higher than the benefits minus the costs of creating a party. Formally, the strategy and belief profiles are as follows:*

$$\sigma_L = \begin{array}{l} \sim P \text{ if } \theta = R \\ \sim P \text{ if } \theta = C \end{array}$$

$$\sigma_E = (J \text{ or } \sim J)$$

$$Z = N/A$$

Under Conditions 7a and 7b, both types of leaders have a dominant strategy not to create a party. I derive these conditions by establishing an inequality where the value of side payments that leaders pay out if they do not create a party ( $-S_{NP}$ ) are less than the net benefits ( $B - C_R$ ) or ( $B - C_C$ ) that leaders receive from successfully creating a party. Elite

beliefs ( $Z$ ) do not play a role in this equilibrium because leaders have a dominant strategy *not to create a party* regardless of elites' actions. Similarly to Equilibrium 4, I include this equilibrium because it is a logical possibility, but it is not sustained empirically as it predicts that there are *never* circumstances under which parties of power are created. Furthermore, condition 7a is especially difficult to sustain because it implies that creating a party is extremely costly, while existing literature suggests that for certain leaders, creating a party need not be especially expensive given the lower costs that repressive leaders pay.

*Equilibrium 5 (EQ5): Suppose the following inequalities hold:*

Conditions

$$C_R < S_{NP} \quad (8)$$

$$C_C > S_{NP} \quad (9)$$

$$R + S_{NP} > S_P \quad (10)$$

*If these conditions are met, repressive leaders always create parties while conciliatory ones never do. Formally, the strategy and belief profiles are as follows:*

$$\sigma_L = \begin{array}{l} P \text{ if } \theta = R \\ \sim P \text{ if } \theta = C \end{array}$$

$$\sigma_E = J|P, \sim J|\sim P$$

$$b = p(R|P)=1$$

Under condition 8, repressive leaders have a dominant strategy to create a party even if elites refuse to join, as the cost term for party creation ( $C_R$ ) is less than the outlay of side payments that repressive leaders must pay if they don't create a party ( $S_{NP}$ ). If

condition 9 holds concurrently, conciliatory leaders have a dominant strategy not to create a party, as the costs of creating a party that elites do not join exceeds the amount that leaders would pay out as side payments should they not create a party. Additionally, when Condition 10 pertains, a separating equilibrium emerges. This condition establishes that elites value their independent reputation ( $R$ ) plus non-party side-payments ( $S_{NP}$ ) higher than the side payments that they expect to receive through party affiliation ( $S_P$ ). Satisfying this condition means that elites have no incentive to defect to joining a party created by a conciliatory ruler.

### **Hypotheses**

Of the five pure-strategy equilibria that this model generates, equilibria 1 and 2 are of greatest interest because they offer the greatest leverage for understanding the variation in party creation by incumbent authoritarian leaders. As a pair, they specify conditions under which empirically observed institutional outcomes (party creation, and no party creation) emerge as stable equilibria. However, unlike in equilibria 3 and 4 which predict different choices as dominant strategies for leaders regardless of elite beliefs, equilibria 1 and 2 take elite beliefs into account as playing a crucial causal factor in informing leaders' strategies.

Equilibria 3-5 hold far lesser theoretical and empirical interest. Equilibrium 3 represents conditions that lead both types of leaders *always to create parties of power*, while equilibrium 4 establishes the conditions under which *not creating a party of power* is the dominant strategy for all leaders. As variation in party creation by authoritarian leaders is an empirical fact, any equilibrium that categorically predicts a single outcome

for all rulers offers little leverage for understanding variation in party creation.

Equilibrium 5, a separating equilibrium in which repressive leaders create parties while conciliatory ones do not, coincides with a plausible explanation that leaders who have the means, whether coercive, material, ideological, or otherwise, create parties, while leaders who lack the means do not. This explanation, however, would struggle to account for the wide variation in durability and regime dynamics among leaders who choose the same institutional strategy. Given the difficulty recognizing empirical validity for equilibria 3-5, I do not use them to derive hypotheses, nor do I address them in the case studies.

However, I discuss the possibility of a semi-separating equilibrium involving equilibria 1,2, and 5 in the concluding chapter.

Equilibria 1 and 2 generate the following set of hypotheses, namely that **when elites believe leaders to be repressive, leaders succeed in creating parties (H1)** and **when elites believe leaders to be conciliatory, leaders do not create parties of power (H2)**. As existing literature on parties in authoritarian regimes indicates, and as the conditions specified above establish in formal terms, I operate under the assumption that authoritarian leaders of all types have a constant interest in creating parties of power in regimes where executive and legislative elections are held.<sup>33</sup> These hypotheses relate to the conditions under which elites will join a party that a leader creates.

### **Testing the Model of Authoritarian Party Creation**

I offer a preliminary test of the signaling model of authoritarian party creation in the form of "analytic narratives" that allow a thorough and nuanced exploration of actor-

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<sup>33</sup> Authoritarian leaders in other institutional contexts, such as where elections are not held regularly, where legislatures are appointed, or where they are non-partisan have weaker incentives to create parties.



centered and context-dependent processes that lead to party creation by incumbent authoritarian rulers. These narratives combine "'thick' accounts" of events "with 'thin forms of reasoning'," that "highlight and focus on the logical processes that generate the phenomena" of interest (Bates et al. 1998: 14). The narratives proceed according to the sequence of actions in the game and are structured around the parameters of the model.

The case studies trace the relationship between leaders' incentives, elite beliefs about leader type, and the emergence of parties of power, and demonstrate the existence of two pooling equilibria from the signaling game of authoritarian party creation. In equilibrium 1, elites believe that their leader is repressive and so they join parties of power initiated in their countries, despite the fact that the leader may not truly be repressive. In equilibrium 2, the inverse situation plays out. Believing the leader to be conciliatory and therefore subject to manipulation for greater concessions in the future, elites hold out against joining a possible party of power and instead increase their opposition to the leader.

In selecting cases for this study, I follow the three main recommendations in Collier (1993) for employing the comparative method, namely increasing the number of cases, matching cases in order to control for rival explanations, and decreasing the number of variables (111-112). This study employs aspects of Mill's most different systems design in that each empirical chapter pairs cases with the same party creation outcome in order to isolate the operative variable of elite beliefs about leader type.

The case studies in this work focus on party creation in the successor states of the Soviet Union. These countries make a natural set for comparative historical analysis as their shared political pasts, homogenous institutional endowments inherited from the

Soviet Union, and comparable levels of socio-economic development at the time of independence allow researchers to eliminate these factors as rival explanators for the outcome of interest. The successor states of the Soviet Union (re-)gained their independence in the same international context in which linkage with and leverage from established democracies<sup>34</sup> put pressure to hold regular elections for legislative and executive offices, to guarantee basic civil liberties, and to adopt neo-liberal economic reforms (Levistky and Way 2010: 38-45). A number of social scientists have recognized the value of post-Soviet Eurasia as "a laboratory" for studying institutional creation (Frye 1997, Jones-Luong 2003).<sup>35</sup>

**Table 3: Comparison of Four Case-Study Countries**

<b>Basis of Comparison</b>	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Azerbaijan</b>	<b>Kazakhstan</b>	<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>
<b>Population in 1989</b>	5.4M	7.0M	16.5M	4.2M
<b>Percentage Titular Nationality in 1989</b>	70%	82%	39%	51%
<b>Per Capita GDP in 1990</b>	\$1614	\$1237	\$1647	\$608
<b>Perestroika-Era Mobilization</b>	High	High	Low	Low
<b>Communist Party Influence</b>	Low	Low	High	High
<b>Armed Conflict 1990-1995</b>	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Leader's Path to Power</b>	Coup	Coup	Continuity	Continuity
<b>Political Rights Average 1991-1995</b>	5.0	5.5	5.5	4.5

Sources: Anderson and Silver 1990, World Bank 2015, Bessinger 2002b, Dawisha and Parrott 1997, Freedom House 2015

Among the post-Soviet states, I compare Georgia and Azerbaijan where incumbent leaders created parties of power in the 1990s, and Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan

<sup>34</sup> Though Levitsky and Way (2010) argue that linkage and leverage with the West, were generally low in the post-Soviet states, there was important variation among the post-Soviet states.

<sup>35</sup> See Appendix C for a full list of Post-Soviet leaders and their institutional choices, 1990-2010.

where incumbent leaders did not create parties of their own in the 1990s.<sup>36</sup> As the table below indicates, the countries are paired based on their institutional outcomes (party and no party) and matched on key social and economic indicators. Azerbaijan and Georgia are both roughly the same size; data from the final Soviet census also show that the titular nationality was a majority in both republics, but that there were also sizeable minority populations. Though Kazakhstan's population was more than three times larger than Kyrgyzstan's in 1990, the two share other important demographic features, namely the fact that the titular nation was not a majority in the republic (Anderson and Silver 1990), with large concentrations of Russians and other Slavs in the northern areas of each republic (Dawisha and Parrott 1997). Economically, Georgia and Azerbaijan had similar profiles; the republics were ranked 6th and 7<sup>th</sup> within the USSR for per capita GDP in 1990; both were largely agricultural republics. While Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan's income levels and economic endowments differed significantly in 1990, both republics experienced similar drops in economic output during the period, which created similar uncertainty about the future.

The pairs of countries share other historical commonalities. Levels of protest mobilization during perestroika in Georgia and Azerbaijan were among the highest in the entire Soviet Union, and popular front-led governments replaced the Communist leadership immediately after independence in both countries. In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the opposite was true. During perestroika, levels of popular mobilization were among the lowest in the Soviet Union, while during the first years of independence,

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<sup>36</sup> Other instances of party creation such as the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (1991), Democratic Party of Turkmenistan (1991), and the People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan (1994) were considered along with leaders' decisions not to create parties in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova in the 1990s. However, the pairs selected above matched best on the indicators of interest for this project.

the Communists remained the strongest and best organized political force in the two republics (Beissinger 2002b, Dawisha and Parrott 1997). Both Georgia and Azerbaijan were seized by separatist and interstate conflict during their first years of independence, while Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan remained at peace and territorially intact. The leaders who created parties in Georgia and Azerbaijan returned to power in 1992 and 1993 after coups deposed popularly elected leaders in, while Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan's first post-independence presidents came to power in 1989 and 1990, respectively (Dawisha and Parrott 1997). Finally, Freedom House political rights scores from all four countries hold roughly the same average for the years 1991-1995 when leaders were in the process of making the institutional choices that are at the center of this study. At the time, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan all qualified as "semi-consolidated authoritarian regimes" in which leaders had strong incentives to create parties of their own.

## **Conclusion**

The formal model in this chapter uses assumptions about a small set of variables and the preferences of actors to determine when certain institutional outcomes emerge. It has demonstrated that both party creation and not party creation can be stable equilibria. In some individual cases, it is impossible to determine at an abstract level which of the above equilibria a given leader is in, e.g. a conciliatory leader who does not create a party could be in a pooling equilibrium or a separating equilibrium that leads to the same outcome. However, by delving into the cases and evaluating the model parameter by parameter, it is possible to distinguish between the equilibria presented above. The

following two chapters do this in the form of historical case studies of two pooling equilibria: party creation in Georgia and Azerbaijan, and no party creation in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

### Chapter 3: Party Creation in Georgia and Azerbaijan

In this chapter, I demonstrate the existence of pooling equilibrium 1 (EQ1) from the signaling model of authoritarian party creation with case studies of party creation by Georgia and Azerbaijan's presidents in the early 1990s. In this equilibrium, repressive and conciliatory leaders both establish parties of power based on two crucial factors: the benefits they expect to receive by creating a party and their expectation that political elites will join their party. As the previous chapter makes clear, incentives to create a party of power for a given leader is a necessary but not sufficient condition for establishing a party.<sup>37</sup> Leaders commit to creating a party once they know that elites within the regime will join their party. Despite being different types of leaders, elites perceived Eduard Shevardnadze and Heydar Aliyev to be *repressive* for a period of time, which made it possible for both leaders to establish parties of power. However, the fact that Shevardnadze and Aliyev were different types of leaders had implications for regime dynamics that manifested in Georgia and Azerbaijan later in the 1990s and in the early 2000s.

In this chapter, I demonstrate that Georgia and Azerbaijan held comparable values for the parameters of interest in the signaling model of authoritarian party creation, namely the sizeable benefit ( $B$ ) that leaders foresaw from creating parties of their own, the high levels of side payments ( $S$ ) necessary for attracting elites into their party, as well as the relatively high value that elites in the two countries placed on their independent reputations ( $R$ ). I highlight the instrumental role that elite beliefs ( $Z$ ) about leader type

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<sup>37</sup> This condition is also generally assumed to be constant in authoritarian regimes where legislatures operate and elections are held regularly.

play in leading to the establishment of a party of power. Had elites in Georgia and Azerbaijan not feared exclusion from power in the future as a punishment for not joining the leader's party, I argue that they would have remained independent, thereby preventing the emergence of parties of power in those countries. As the narratives that follow demonstrate, the parties that Shevardnadze and Aliyev created were not simply rebranded versions of the Communist parties of their respective republics. Rather, they were new institutions that the leaders used to change incumbent legislators' incentives for supporting their agenda.

The story of Eduard Shevardnadze's creation of the Citizens Union of Georgia (CUG)<sup>38</sup> begins in March 1992 with his return to power. Invited back to Georgia from Moscow by the Military Council, a triumvirate of militia commanders who had overthrown Georgia's first elected president, Shevardnadze spent the next three years working to end the country's civil war and to bring order to the political system. He did so primarily by moving conflict among domestic factions from the streets into the parliament,<sup>39</sup> and by seeking a pragmatic solution to the country's separatist conflicts. Yet Shevardnadze faced existential threats to his rule, and indeed his life, from highly mobilized opposition groups, as well as criminal elements within his own government (Slider 1997, Wheatley 2005). Shevardnadze owed his early legislative victories to the CUG, which culminated in the ratification of a new constitution in August 1995. He and his party also had a strong showing in the presidential and parliamentary elections that

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<sup>38</sup> In Georgian, *Sak'art'velos Mok'alak'et'a Kavshiri (SMK)*. The Georgian name and abbreviation are rare in English-language scholarship.

<sup>39</sup> Until 1992, Georgia's legislative body was the Supreme Soviet (*Uzenaesi Sabcho*), the same name as the legislature of the Georgian SSR. I use the term "parliament" synonymously with Supreme Soviet until 1992 after which I refer to the Georgian legislature, *Sak'art'velos Parlamenti* as Parliament.

followed the passage of the constitution.<sup>40</sup> By capitalizing on an early show of strength and an increasing sense of his repressive capacity, Shevardnadze secured the commitment of diverse factions of elites to join his party, which created a stable base of support, at least for a few years, within Georgia's antagonistic, contentious, and fractionalized parliament.

Heydar Aliyev's formation of the New Azerbaijan Party (YAP)<sup>41</sup> between 1992-1995 provides a meaningful foil to Eduard Shevardnadze's creation of the Citizens' Union of Georgia. Like Shevardnadze, Aliyev left a semi-retired life in Moscow in the early 1990s to return to his home republic, Azerbaijan, where he had served as First Secretary of the Communist Party from 1969-1982. Like his Georgian counterpart, Aliyev took power in the midst of a war with Armenia over the separatist region, Nagorno-Karabagh, as well as under heightened tensions between different Azerbaijani political factions. At the time he regained power, he had long been considered by many inside the republic to be Azerbaijan's best hope for restoring order and rebuilding the economy. Creating YAP helped Aliyev consolidate power in the executive branch, which effectively, though brutally, brought an end to Azerbaijan's unruly domestic politics.

This chapter addresses each stage of the process of party creation comparatively and demonstrates how the parameters from the signaling model of authoritarian party creation manifested empirically. The narratives in this chapter emphasize the commonalities in Shevardnadze and Aliyev's backgrounds, their parallel returns to

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<sup>40</sup> CUG members won 40% seats in the 1995-1999 parliament from the proportional list and could count on an additional 15-20% of seats from sympathetic independent candidates and other supportive parties. CUG party list seats grew to 45% in the 1999-2003 parliament, but towards the end of the parliamentary term, defections from the party and a lack of support from other parties impacted the CUG's ability to pass legislation.

<sup>41</sup> In Azeri, *Yeni Azərbaycan Partiyası (YAP)*. The party is referred to commonly in English-language scholarship as YAP and so is used along with New Azerbaijan Party. I refrain from using the abbreviation YAP to avoid confusion.



power, and the similarly competitive conditions that existed within the legislatures of Georgia and Azerbaijan in the early 1990s. These narratives highlight the crucial role that elite beliefs in each country played in leading incumbent leaders to create parties of power. While elites' perception of Aliyev's type was correct in Azerbaijan, elites did not correctly perceive Shevardnadze's type. The closing sections of the chapter address the aftermath of the creation of parties of power in both countries and the implications of leader type for the functioning of the party of power after its creation.

### **Shevardnadze and Aliyev Return to Power**

In Georgia and Azerbaijan, former Communist Party First Secretaries returned to their respective republics and displaced popular front governments that had gained power immediately after independence. Both leaders had valuable “usable pasts” (Grzymala-Busse 2002), which they derived from their careers, however a great deal of uncertainty prevailed about how they would be able to use their Soviet pasts after independence. Both leaders returned to republics in the midst of social and economic chaos, and both replaced popularly elected anti-Communist governments, which intensified opposition to leaders who were expected to enjoy high levels of approval.

At the time of Shevardnadze's return to power, Georgia was engulfed in civil war. A triumvirate of warlords ousted President Zviad Gamsakhurdia in December 1991, triggering an open war between supporters of the deposed president and forces loyal to those who had led the coup.<sup>42</sup> This conflict manifested in Georgia's capital, Tbilisi, in the form of assassinations, gang activity, protests, and other forms of unrest while rival

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<sup>42</sup> Jaba Ioseliani, leader of the Mkhedrioni militia, Tengiz Kitovani, leader of the National Salvation Front militia, and Tengiz Sigua, the Prime Minister, led the 1991 coup against Zviad Gamsakhurdia.

militias did battle for control of Western Georgia (Wheatley 2005). After three months in power, Georgia's self-styled Military Council, consisting of three militia leaders who had deposed Gamsakhurdia, invited Eduard Shevardnadze to serve as the head of state. Given the international prestige and goodwill Shevardnadze had won as the reformist Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union (1985-1991) as well as the deep knowledge of the inner workings of Georgia he had gained as First Secretary of the Georgian Communist Party (1972-1985), he was one of very few individuals who could credibly begin the process of ending the country's simultaneous political and economic crises. However, it came as a surprise to many inside Georgia that Shevardnadze accepted the Military Council's offer. At the time, political observers believed that Shevardnadze had his sights set on becoming Secretary General of the United Nations (Rondeli, Alekandre. Interview. 2010-03-11), or at the very least, that he would continue his work in Moscow with the Movement for Democratic Reforms, which he had recently founded (*Kommersant* 1991-07-08).

Though Shevardnadze had served as First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Georgian SSR between 1972-1985, he was not remembered particularly fondly at the time he regained power. Leadership of the Georgian Communist Party passed initially to Jumber Patiashvili in 1985 and then to Givi Gumbaridze in 1989, which meant that Shevardnadze's patronage networks in the state administration had been largely disrupted prior to his return in 1992. Given that Patiashvili and Gumbaridze remained active in Georgian politics during the early 1990s, the support of the Communist elites was not guaranteed for Shevardnadze (Jones 2013). Shevardnadze was even less popular among the newly-elected elites who had won sizeable followings by leading anti-regime protests

during Perestroika. Though riven by their own internal divisions, the Zviadists,<sup>43</sup> supporters of Gia Chanturia's National Democratic Party, and Irakli Tsereteli's National Independence Party were united in their belief that Shevardnadze's return to power at the behest of the Military Council was illegitimate (Wheatley 2005). Nonetheless, Shevardnadze accepted the Military Council's invitation and took what he called the "riskiest step of [his] life" by returning to Tbilisi in March 1992 (*Literaturnaya Gazeta* 1992-03-11).

The tone of Heydar Aliyev's return to Azerbaijan in the summer of 1990 differed markedly from Eduard Shevardnadze's. General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, the First Secretary of Azerbaijan's Communist Party, Ayaz Mutalibov, as well as the leaders of the Azerbaijani National Front all considered Aliyev a persona non grata in the republic. Gorbachev prevented the former First Secretary from boarding a flight to Baku in July 1990, but in the end, Aliyev returned by direct flight to his home region, the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (NAR).<sup>44</sup> At the time, Aliyev had been living in Moscow and had kept a low profile after his dismissal from the Politburo in 1987. Despite having served as First Secretary of the Azerbaijani SSR's Communist Party from 1969-1982 and the Politburo from 1982-1987, he publicly resigned from the Communist Party in July 1991, and used his statement to criticize the Mutalibov for his mishandling of the escalating crisis in Karabagh as well as for suppressing the nationalist movements in Azerbaijan (*Interfax* 1991-07-19). With this formal link to the party now severed and without a

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<sup>43</sup> "Zviadist" is a general term for a supporter of deposed president Zviad Gamsakhurdia. Supporters were affiliated with a number of different political parties, including "Charter 91" and "Round Table."

<sup>44</sup> An exclave of Azerbaijan, the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic is bordered by Armenia, Turkey, and Iran and so was cut off by road and rail from Azerbaijan proper during the Karabagh conflict. The spelling "Nakhchivan" reflects the Azeri *Naxçıvan*, rather than the commonly used Russian *Nakhichevan*.

formally organized group of supporters, Aliyev found himself with a usable past, but without a concrete institution or formal position from which to use his past.

Soon after returning to Nakhchivan, Aliyev won a seat as a deputy in the Autonomous Republic's Supreme Soviet<sup>45</sup>, and then was chosen by internal vote as chairman of the body in September 1991 (*Komosmolskaya Pravda* 1991-09-06). Once back in office, Aliyev behaved for all intents and purposes as the head of an independent state, refusing on numerous occasions to take orders from Baku (Cornell 2011). Aliyev sanctioned the opening of Nakhchivan's borders with Iran and Turkey without the permission of the republic-level officials in Baku or of Union-level officials in July 1991. In September 1991, the Nakhchivan Supreme Soviet under Aliyev's control resolved not to participate in the Azerbaijani presidential elections scheduled for that month (*Baku Radio* 1991-09-04).

As the Karabagh conflict escalated and trade with the rest of Azerbaijan became impossible, Heydar Aliyev negotiated trade agreements with Turkey and Iran independently of Baku and in May 1993 reached a cease fire agreement with Armenia while the government in Baku was still at war with the country. This brought greater stability and security to his home region, Nakhchivan, but seriously angered the Poplar Front-led government in Baku (*Assa Irada*, 1993-05-19). At the time, Aliyev assumed the role of a full-fledged statesman from his provincial position of Chairman of the Nakhchivan Republic Supreme Soviet. In an interview with *Krasnaya Zvezda* newspaper, the interviewer remarked to Aliyev, "you are behaving in your fiefdom as though you

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<sup>45</sup> Until 1992, both the Azerbaijani and Nakhchivani legislatures were called Supreme Soviet (*Ali Soveti*), the same names as the pre-independence legislatures. In 1992, the Popular Front-led government changed the name of Azerbaijan's legislature to *Milli Meclis* (National Assembly). Accordingly, I refer to the body as Milli Meclis, parliament, or the National Assembly.

were the head of an independent state," to which he responded, "...this is what it is. I really am the head of a small state" (1992-04-09). Such statements reflect the recognition of Aliyev as one of the republic's paramount leaders despite his isolation in Nakhchivan.

Heydar Aliyev's return to political office sparked speculation about his intentions for the future; in numerous interviews from the period, journalists posed pointed questions about his plans for future office (*Krasnaya Zvezda* 1992-04-09, *Izvestiya* 1992-06-29). But Aliyev remained cagey about his ambitions in public statements. In April 1992, he swore on the Quran on live television that he would not return to Baku to a "republic-level leadership post" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 1992-04-04), but a few months later offered an ambiguous response of "whatever happens, happens" when asked about his political future (*Izvestiya* 1992-06-29). Aliyev made frequent mention of the wide support he had in Baku, and the many telegrams he received from all over Azerbaijan demanding that he head the republic (*Krasnaya Zvezda* 1992-04-09). Over time, he changed his tone to admit that he would serve the people in whatever way they demanded and that he would not "turn a deaf ear to [the nation's] call" (*Moscow News* 1993-04-30) should they demand his return to power.

Whether this shift represents the evolution of Aliyev's sincere plans or the dissembling of a savvy political operator is impossible to determine. If one takes Aliyev's statements about his ambitions at face value, one would have to accept that he did not return to Nakhchivan from Moscow in 1990 with the clear intention of becoming president of Azerbaijan. Rather, his path to the presidency in 1993 presented itself as time passed, due to a number of historically contingent events. By all accounts an ambitious hard-knuckled politico, it is hard to believe that the prospect of returning to power was

entirely absent from Aliyev's mind when he returned to the republic in 1990. But the twists and turns of high politics in Azerbaijan during that era make it difficult to accept that Aliyev had a master plan for his path to the presidency. Rather, he seems to have navigated the complicated cross-currents of the Azerbaijani political scene with the skills he had honed over a lengthy career as a Communist party insider. Though the complexities of the time may have hindered Aliyev's ability to plan his political future, it is still likely that the major steps on his path to power were calculated, strategic ones.

Both Eduard Shevardnadze and Heydar Aliyev returned to power by unconventional means. While both leaders had extensive experience as the chief executives of their respective republics from the Brezhnev era, their returns to power took place under the conditions of armed domestic conflict, plummeting economies, and as the next section shows, highly mobilized populations. These new circumstances posed serious challenges to the leaders who faced the immediate problem of securing their hold on power and establishing a measure of political order in order to begin to solve their republics' twin crises. Despite similar institutional choices, these leaders differed in at least one crucial way. As I demonstrate later in this chapter, Eduard Shevardnadze was a conciliatory leader while Aliyev was at his core repressive. However, because of prevailing uncertainty about the leaders' types, elites in Azerbaijan and Georgia believed Aliyev and Shevardnadze both to be repressive and therefore joined both leaders' parties of power.

## **Elite Mobilization in Georgia and Azerbaijan**

An examination of the contentious politics of Georgia and Azerbaijan in the early 1990s provides estimates of the value that elites at the time placed on their independent reputations ( $R$ ) and relatedly, the value of side payments ( $S$ ) that leaders would have to offer elites in order to attract them into a potential party of power. The high levels of popular mobilization in Georgia at the time meant that incumbent political elites had real claims to popular appeal and could expect to win votes independent of their affiliation with the president. This meant that many incumbent elites placed high values on their independent reputations ( $R$ ) at the time Shevardnadze and Aliyev came to power. The fractionalized nature of Georgian politics in particular raised the value of side payments ( $S$ ) that Shevardnadze would have to offer elites because of the sheer number of different groups he would have to coopt into a party of power. In Azerbaijan, elites in the early 1990s were highly mobilized in the Azerbaijani Popular Front, which replaced the republic's Communist holdover leadership in June 1992. Similarly to Georgia, this turn of events raised the value that Azerbaijani elites placed on their independence, as the primary anti-Communist force in Azerbaijani politics achieved its paramount goal of taking control of the republic's government (Todua 2001: 20). Despite the elevated values on parameters that would make party creation less likely, both Aliyev and Shevardnadze managed to establish parties of power.

By the time that Eduard Shevardnadze returned to Georgia, Georgian political elites had extensive experience mobilizing public demonstrations and also had developed nascent but distinct party allegiances. These conditions raised the costs of creating a party for Shevardnadze in two important ways. First, the number of different groups

Shevardnadze would need to coopt in order to form a sizeable parliamentary faction was great because of the fractionalized nature of Georgian political elites. Second, the side payments ( $S$ ) that Shevardnadze would have to offer potential recruits to his own party would have to exceed the relatively high value ( $R$ ) that Georgian elites placed on their independent reputations. For many elites at the time, supporting a former Communist leader meant alienating constituents who supported nationalist-democratic politicians during Perestroika and during the first years of independence.

In terms of popular mobilization, from 1987-1992, at least 689 protests with more than 100 participants took place in Georgia, which represents the largest absolute number of protests as well as the largest number of protests per capita that occurred in any Soviet republic during Perestroika. The aggregate number of protest participants for this time period divided by the total population of Georgia in 1989 is 1.14, which would imply that every Georgian man, woman, and child protested at least once during that time period, under the unlikely assumption that each protest drew an entirely new crowd of participants. It is far likelier that an active mobilized core group of protesters went out onto the streets repeatedly between 1987-1992. This suggests that if the same individual protested multiple times that affinities for particular movements and individual leaders were developing in Georgia. Additionally, two protests in the republic drew over 500,000 participants, or 10% of Georgia's population, indicating the extent to which protest mobilization extended beyond activists to include ordinary citizens on a number of occasions. Unlike in other former republics of the Soviet Union, the wave of protests did not subside in Georgia after it gained independence, or even after the collapse of the



Soviet Union; in the two months leading up to Shevardnadze's return, 23 protests took place in Tbilisi, drawing an average of over 4000 demonstrators (Beissinger 2002b).

Protest activity in Georgia was fractionalized among many different organizations. Though public opinion data from the era is scant, a rough comparison of the organizations responsible for staging protests in Georgia at the time offers a sense of the relative levels of activity and support that different groups enjoyed. In Georgia, between 1987-1991, 11% of demonstrations were organized by the Round Table, the leading political group of the late 1980s, 11% by the National Democratic Party of Georgia, 7% by the National Independence Party of Georgia, and 4% by the Ilia Chavchavadze Society. 25% of the protests listed in Beissinger's (2002b) dataset were organized by an assortment of smaller groups, while 36% have no organizer indicated. These groups, along with many others, competed for seats in the 1990 Supreme Soviet elections in Georgia, which were held on a true multiparty, and not merely multi-candidate basis. Five parties won seats through proportional and single-member district votes, with 50% of all seats won by the Round Table, which itself was a coalition of smaller Perestroika-era protest groups.<sup>46</sup> By October 1990, the Round Table had incorporated the Ilia Chavchavadze Society, the Georgian Helsinki Union, the Merab Kostava Society, the Georgian Monarchist Party, and the Georgian Traditionalist Union (Central Election Commission of Georgia 2010).

Besides the fractionalized nature of Georgia's nascent party politics, the breakdown of the republic's legislature posed further impediments for restoring order in government. After the December 1991 coup, the Supreme Soviet elected in 1990 was

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<sup>46</sup> The two other largest Perestroika-era protest organizations, Giorgi Chanturia's National Democratic Party and Irakli Tsereteli's National Independence Party, boycotted the October 1990 Supreme Soviet elections, which inflated the seat share for their rival group, Zviad Gamsakhurdia's Round Table.

paralyzed. One contingent of pro-Gamsakhurdia deputies followed the deposed president into exile in Grozny, while those who remained were unable to meet the quorum required to hold a session, and were further stymied when the Supreme Soviet Chairman Akaki Asatiani resigned (*ITAR-TASS* 1992-01-13).<sup>47</sup> Parliamentary opponents of Gamsakhurdia's Round Table revived a legislature they had formed in 1990 to rival the official Supreme Soviet (*Programma Radio Odin* 1992-01-14), but this body had few supporters and no legal standing.

Despite this institutional disarray, a consensus existed among party elites as well as the Military Council that reconvening the parliament was a necessary step for normalizing the political crisis unfolding in Georgia. Thus, the Council agreed to call new elections for October 1992 and decided to make the chairmanship of the body a directly elected position, rather than a position won by the internal vote of deputies (*ITAR-TASS* 1992-08-31). As the only candidate registered for the position, Shevardnadze won handily (*Interfax* 1992-10-12). The electoral threshold for the interim body was set at 1%, which meant that 24 parties won representation in the 1992 parliament (Wheatley 2005). Among this fractionalized parliament, only 35 out of 234 deputies elected in 1992 had served in the previous legislature, and only one deputy out of these 234 had held a seat in the 1985-1990 Supreme Soviet (*Zaria Vostoka* 1985-02-28, *Komunisti* 1990-11-07, *Sakartvelos Respublika* 1992-10-28, Author's calculation). This suggests that the modal parliamentary deputy in 1992 lacked legislative experience, and also that Shevardnadze likely had few if any allies left in the legislature from his tenure as First Secretary.

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<sup>47</sup> By December 1991, the number of deputies with mandates in Georgia's Supreme Soviet was reduced to 137 out of an original 280 because of purges instigated by Zviad Gamsakhurdia (*Radio Rossii* 1992-07-31).

The Azerbaijani populace was also among the most highly mobilized in any Soviet republic during Perestroika. At least 234 protests larger than 100 participants took place in Azerbaijan between Jan 1, 1987 and December 31, 1992,<sup>48</sup> but of these, 50 protests numbered over 100,000 participants, meaning that on as many occasions, 1.4% of Azerbaijan's total population participated in a single protest. The median size of the Perestroika-era protests in Azerbaijan was 5000 which almost four times larger than the median protest in neighboring Georgia as a percentage of each republic's total population. Geographically, protest activity in Azerbaijan was confined almost entirely to the capital, Baku, and to the Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Oblast where the local Armenian and Azerbaijani population staged mass protests over the region's secession from the Azerbaijani SSR. Of the 134 protests with an indicated organizer, 75%, were led by the Azerbaijani Popular Front. This indicates that a single organization dominated the field of "neformaly"<sup>49</sup> in the republic at the time (Beissinger 2002b).

This unified national front was the only alternative political force that entered Azerbaijan's Supreme Soviet during the 1990 elections. Unlike in Georgia where multiple parties competed in the 1990 Supreme Soviet elections and reformists won a plurality of seats, the 1990 elections in Azerbaijan permitted only the registration of Communist and "non-partisan" candidates. Though the Azerbaijani Popular Front registered a number of its members as "non-partisan," only 25 Popular Front-affiliated candidates won office out of 350 deputies. Thus, the Communists retained their dominant position both in

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<sup>48</sup> This figure excludes the 90 protests staged by Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast. For all intents and purposes, during this period, this population functioned separately from the rest of Azerbaijan.

<sup>49</sup> In the parlance of the time, protest-oriented groups were termed "neformaly" or "informal" organizations, as opposed to the formally registered Communist Party.

Azerbaijan's legislature as well as the state administration well into 1992 (*Bakinskii Rabochii* 1990-10-09, Cornell 2011: 57).

The Communists, however, did not have unified allegiances or preferences for the future. A 1990 article published in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* laid out the issue this way, stating that "... there are Communists and there are Communists," and that despite the deteriorating reputation of Communists in Azerbaijan, "quite a few" middle managers in the republic still owed their jobs to Aliyev, which could lead to a split within the Communist party between supporters of the last Communist-era First Secretary, Ayaz Mutalibov, and Aliyev's supporters (1990-10-07). This suggests that while some Communists were loyal to Aliyev, this was not uniformly the case in the republic at the beginning of the 1990s.

In terms of the signaling model of authoritarian party creation, the high levels of mobilization in Georgia and Azerbaijan raised both the costs of creating a party ( $C$ ) as well as the value of independent reputation for elites ( $R$ ). The costs for Shevardnadze were high because he would need to secure the allegiance of several factions within the parliament if he wanted to form a majority, but the largest contingent of deputies in 1992 only held about 10% of the seats (Central Election Commission 2010: 37). For Aliyev, the costs of creating a party were high as well, because the coup that brought him to power unseated a National Front government that had significant popular support. The fact that the isolated Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic served as Aliyev's power base meant that he faced an uphill battle building support elsewhere in the republic. Furthermore, the independent political capital that elites in Georgia and Azerbaijan held meant they did not necessarily depend on an alliance with Shevardnadze or Aliyev to

hold office in the future. Facing elites who placed a high value on their independent reputations, Aliyev and Shevardnadze needed to convince them to abandon their previous political identities and join a new party of power.

### **The Need for Parties of Power in Georgia and Azerbaijan**

As the signaling model of authoritarian party creation from the previous chapter indicates, creating a party of power yields benefits (*B*) to leaders. Though parties of power serve a number of important functions over time, I conceptualize the payoff that leaders receive from establishing a party of power as the ones that they derive soon after creating the party, such as changing elites' incentives to cooperate with the leader, creating a reliable base of support within legislatures, and establishing a formal institution to define the winning coalition within the selectorate (Bueno de Mesquita et al 2003). As this section illustrates, both Shevardnadze and Aliyev lacked stable coalitions of supporters within the legislatures of Georgia and Azerbaijan, and so both leaders faced difficulties in forming majorities to pass legislation. Though both leaders assumed power by extraconstitutional means, they portrayed themselves as democrats domestically and internationally. In this way, they committed themselves to working through institutions that took democratic forms, despite not always operating according to democratic principles.

Soon after gaining power, Eduard Shevardnadze made clear that he intended to hold elections during the fall of 1992. 36 parties and blocs registered for the October parliamentary elections, out of which 24 won at least one seat (Central Election Commission 2010: 37). After the elections, political analysts forecast a relatively

cooperative legislature for Shevardnadze despite its fractionalization. Among MPs elected on the proportional list, 88 out of 150 were expected to be either "obedient" or "pragmatic," supporters, while the remaining 62 were expected to be either "potential," "realistic," or "radical" opponents of Shevardnadze's agenda. Out of 84 SMD mandates, analysts identified about 10 clear opponents, which left Shevardnadze approximately 2/3 of MPs whose support he might capture. (*Iveria Ekspresi* 1992-10-22). In the absence of roll-call data from the period, this breakdown of parliamentarians' leanings gives a sense of the competitive environment that Shevardnadze faced after his first parliamentary elections.

Shevardnadze's need for a party of power grew over the next several months as a large contingent of legislators opposed Shevardnadze's legislative agenda and his attempts to secure greater executive authority. The new parliament soon divided palpably between supporters of Gamsakhurdia and their opponents, the National Democratic Party under the leadership of Giorgi Chanturia; additionally, both of these factions considered Shevardnadze's return to power an unconstitutional affront to Georgian democracy and mobilized both inside the Supreme Soviet and on the street to block his initiatives. Shevardnadze's parliamentary opponents called for his and his government's resignation repeatedly, while rumors of another armed takeover of the government filled the streets in early 1993 (*Interfax* 1993-01-13, *Radio Tbilisi* 1993-04-22, *ITAR-TASS* 1993-06-03). Critics blamed Shevardnadze for failing to consolidate a parliamentary majority, despite initial expectations that he could (*Iveria Ekspresi* 1992-10-22, *7 Dghe* 1993-06-18). Members of Georgia's 1992-1995 parliament acknowledged the many difficulties that Eduard Shevardnadze faced in passing his own legislative projects. Each vote required

forming a new coalition of support, and required ceaseless politicking as well as the distribution of many favors to deputies (Sakvarelidze, Ramaz. Interview. 2015-03-24; Asatiani, Akaki. Interview. 2015-03-27).

Tensions in government rose in the summer of 1993 as security and the economy deteriorated. Parliament refused to vote on the state's budget, while Prime Minister Tengiz Kitovani threatened to publish proof of parties' embezzlement of state funds (*ITAR-TASS* 1993-07-23). Shevardnadze defused the crisis by agreeing to form a new cabinet, but parliament continued to put pressure on Shevardnadze by rejecting an initial list of nominees for cabinet positions (*Radio Tbilisi* 1993-08-17). Later, the National Democratic faction led by Giorgi Chanturia threatened to leave Parliament in protest (*Radio Tbilisi* 1993-09-02). Throughout the summer, Shevardnadze repeatedly reproached the parliament for their intransigence while holding fast to his demand to broaden his powers to impose a state of emergency (*Radio Tbilisi* 1993-06-21, *Ostankino Television First Channel* 1993-06-30, *Tbilisi First Program Television* 1993-08-05).

As pressure and criticism escalated, Shevardnadze began speaking publicly about his intention to create a party of his own. In an interview on Radio Tbilisi, Shevardnadze said that while he initially had not planned to head any party "in order to avoid a split in society and Parliament," he now believed that Georgia needed a unified political force that could "act to prevent the onset of chaos or totalitarianism in Georgia" (*ITAR-TASS* 1993-08-30). Tensions came to a head two weeks later when Shevardnadze took the dramatic step of offering the Supreme Soviet his resignation as Chairman, and effectively as head of state, on 14 September 1993 (*ITAR-TASS* 1993-09-14). Likely realizing the utter chaos that would result from Shevardnadze's resignation, a chorus of voices from

across Georgian society called on Shevardnadze to stay in power, from Jaba Ioseliani, the leader of the Mkhedrioni militia, to Ilia II, the patriarch of the Georgian Orthodox Church (*Tbilisi Radio* 1993-09-14a, *Tbilisi Radio* 1993-09-14b, *Snark* 1993-09-14). At the September 13 rally where Ilia II spoke, Shevardnadze agreed to return to power on the conditions that Parliament declare a state of emergency and suspend its work for three months. The following day, Georgia's Parliament rejected Shevardnadze's resignation with a near unanimous vote of the 150 deputies who attended the session, and granted him the right to declare a State of Emergency in the country, which suspended the parliament as well as the freedom of assembly for two months (*ITAR-TASS* 1993-09-14).

This showdown paved the way for Shevardnadze to begin the process of consolidating his support among incumbent legislators. His maneuver forced members of Parliament to confirm their support for his leadership publicly. If one is to take Shevardnadze's public statements about not initially intending to create a party at face value, it appears that Shevardnadze saw the parliamentary crisis in September 1993 as a turning point. Forcing members of parliament to reveal their preference for his continued rule in a public manner served as a symbolic victory, which Shevardnadze then tried to translate into a more enduring form of support.

Heydar Aliyev, similarly, founded the New Azerbaijan Party (YAP) in 1992 while still in Nakhchivan in order to solidify support for his leadership in his home region. In an environment in which several prominent political elites had already created their own parties, Aliyev's formation of YAP can be understood as a measure for strengthening his own position as a competitor in Azerbaijan's new political order. With the Azerbaijan Popular Front (APF) loyal to Abulfaz Elchibey, the president of



Azerbaijan since 1992, Musavat loyal to Isa Qambar, the Speaker of Parliament, and the remnants of Communist Party loyal to Mutalibov, Azerbaijan's party-space was crowded with parties loyal to the most powerful politicians in the country.

In this sense, Aliyev's need for a party of power can be understood to be less immediate than that of Shevardadze who faced significant pressure to hold new elections. However, the necessity of building a reliable base of legislative support in Nakhchivan in 1992 was clear; additionally, the benefit of creating a formal institution to reinforce his informal influence in the face of potential threats from rival parties was high. Later, the pressure to replace Milli Meclis members loyal to previous presidents and to crowd out alternative political parties provided the final impetus for instituting the New Azerbaijan Party as a party of power in the entire country (Todua 2001: 46-28). For both leaders who rose up through the ranks of the respective Communist parties of their home republics, in a sense, it seems natural that Shevardnadze and Aliyev would seek to create parties of power. While creating a party of power was evident as an institutional choice to leaders across the post-Soviet space, not all leaders succeeded in establishing such parties. Moreover, for leaders like Aliyev and Shevardnadze who returned to power after periods of significant elite turnover, the parties of power that they created were not institutional successors to the Communist Parties of their respective Soviet Socialist Republics.<sup>50</sup> Establishing the CUG and YAP demanded savvy politicking and improvisation in contentious political contexts.

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<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan and the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, both created by incumbent leaders in 1991, were in fact direct institutional successors of the Communist Parties of these two republics.

## **Elite Perceptions of Leader Type in Georgia and Azerbaijan**

As the theory presented in Chapter 2 proposes, the mere intention of creating a party is a necessary but not sufficient condition for creating a party of power. Elites must also join the party that a leader initiates in order for a party to emerge. This condition is most simply satisfied when the value of side-payments ( $S$ ) that the leader offers exceeds the value that elites place on their independent reputations. However, as the case studies of Georgia and Azerbaijan indicate, leaders did not have great resources at their disposal to offer side payments, while elites at the time placed a high value on their independent reputations ( $R$ ). Thus, a second condition must be considered in order to explain elite behavior here. As the discussion of assumptions in the model argues, elites strongly prefer to join parties established by repressive leaders because failing to do so jeopardizes their own future status as elites, while elites strongly prefer to remain independent if the leader creating a party of power is conciliatory. I argue that Heydar Aliyev and Eduard Shevardnadze's creation of parties of power depended on the prevailing perception in Azerbaijan and Georgia that these leaders were repressive. For elites, the threat of punishment and exclusion for those who would not join parties of power was credible, and so significant numbers of incumbent elites from the Supreme Soviet pledged their support to Shevardnadze and Aliyev's despite having prior partisan identities. This section illustrates how these beliefs about leader type formed in Georgia and Azerbaijan during the first years of Shevardnadze and Aliyev's presidencies and addresses how uncertainty about leader type can lead to misperceptions on the part of elites.

Eduard Shevardnadze had a reputation as a liberal and a reformer from his tenure as First Secretary of the Communist Party of Georgia and Foreign Minister of the Soviet

Union. After his return to Georgia in 1992, there was increasing uncertainty about his type as a leader. Shevardnadze's collaboration with the Military Council, a triumvirate of warlords who had recently deposed Georgia's elected president and showed the leader in a new light (Jones 2013: 76-77). Though the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia remained outside of the authority of the central government for the entirety of Shevardnadze's presidency, in 1992-3, Shevardnadze and the Military Council leaders showed both the willingness and capacity to use coercion in order to regain control over Western Georgia (*Sakartvelos Respublika* 1992-06-06; *Mayak Radio* 1992-06-17). Meanwhile, Shevardnadze ordered police action against the criminal gangs that had seized control of large parts of Tbilisi and also began the process of deescalating street protests by cracking down on pro-Gamsakhurdia demonstrations (*Mayak Radio* 1992-05-11, *Sakartvelos Respublika* 1992-06-06, *Izvestiya* 1992-07-03). Though the road to stability extended well into the 1990s, Shevardnadze made eminently clear statements that reestablishing security in the country was his paramount goal. To this end, Shevardnadze began paying salaries regularly to the police and began a process of incorporating the numerous private militias present in the country into the national armed forces (*Moscow News* 1992-03-29, *Sakartvelos Respublika* 1992-06-06).

While stressing the primacy of a political solution through new elections and the passage of a constitution, Shevardnadze secured the support of militias such as Tengiz Kitovani's National Guard and Jaba Ioseliani's Mkhedrioni (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 1992-06-18). Crucially, the Mkhedrioni and National Guard began to lend a hand in Shevardnadze's suppression of pro-Gamsakhurdia protests in Tbilisi in 1992 and 1993, signaling a consolidation of repressive capacity in his camp (*Agence France Presse* 1992-

08-12, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 1992-09-04, *Radio Tbilisi* 1993-05-28, *Contact* 1993-05-31). Finally, in September 1993, Shevardnadze reshuffled the cabinet and took the bold step of assuming control of the Ministry of the Interior himself (*Radio Tbilisi* 1993-09-12). This move meant that Georgia's police force would answer to Shevardnadze directly so long as he held this position. Though the state of emergency that began in September 1993 did not lead to a wholesale crackdown on of the regime's opponents, Shevardnadze's control of coercive resources increased the sense of his ability to do so (Wheatley 2005). Members of parliament at the time also noted the symbolic meaning that Shevardnadze's assumption of control of the Interior Ministry held at the time (Sakvarelidze, Ramaz. Interview. 2015-03-24, Asatiani, Akaki. Interview. 2015-03-27). The situation that unfolded in Georgia in 1992-1993 illustrates how a discrepancy can arise between elite perceptions of leader type and the leader's true type.

Finally, during the fall of 1993, Eduard Shevardnadze secured Russia's commitment to deploy its Black Sea Fleet to support pro-government forces in Western Georgia in exchange for Georgia joining the Commonwealth of Independent States. According to Shevardnadze's spokesman from the time, Ramaz Sakvarelidze, the Zviadists in Western Georgia were mere days from taking Georgia's second largest city, Kutaisi (Interview. 2015-03-24). Thus, while Russian forces informally supported the Abkhaz separatists against the Georgian government forces, they also intervened on behalf of Shevardnadze's government in its conflict with the Zviadists. Russian Admiral Baltin's fleet reinforced Poti, the only Georgian under government control at the time in early November 1993, and moved quickly to free the main railway line in Western Georgia from the central government's opponents (*ITAR-TASS* 1993-11-10). Soon after,

the Russian Black Sea Fleet assisted the Georgian government's forces in battle against the Zviadists, thereby ending the open hostilities of the Georgian civil war. These actions represent a marked shift in Shevardnadze's regime's revealed coercive capacity. By forging alliances with domestic militia leaders as well as the Russian military, Shevardnadze shored up his own government's position. These moves increased uncertainty about Shevardnadze's type, as visible changes in his coercive capacity conflicted with prior beliefs about his inclination for reform. As Shevardnadze's actions helped to end Georgia's civil war, perceptions about his leadership changed.

Unlike Shevardnadze, who had developed a reputation during Soviet times as a reformer and somewhat of a liberal, Heydar Aliyev's reputation as a strongman remained prevalent from the time he returned to Azerbaijan in the summer of 1990 until he became president three years later. Media accounts from the time covered Aliyev's return to Azerbaijan and his political activities in Nakhchivan with frequent speculation about Aliyev's political future. Some wondered "whether the only 'yesterday's man'" capable of staging a return to politics "will be satisfied with provincial politics or will decide to climb higher" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 1991-09-06), while another analyst just after the Azerbaijani Popular Front took power, identified Aliyev as a "strong" political opponent whose fortunes would rise as Elchibey's fell (*Izvestiya* 1992-06-29). In retrospect, the fact that these sentiments surfaced in numerous interviews with Aliyev during his first years back in Azerbaijan contributes a sense of inevitability to his rise to power.

The perception of Aliyev as a repressive leader had roots in his long tenure as a Soviet statesman. Appointed as First Secretary of the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic by Leonid Brezhnev in 1969, Aliyev was promoted by to the Politburo in 1982

but then dismissed by Gorbachev in 1987 on suspicions of corruption and opposition to Perestroika (Graham 2015: 122). Aliyev remained in Moscow through the end of the 1980s, as First Secretaries loyal to Gorbachev remained in power in Azerbaijan. Aliyev's tenure as the Chief of Azerbaijan's KGB contributed his image as a figure capable of wielding coercive power. However, the overall image of Aliyev was one of an elite Soviet statesman cut from Brezhnevite rather than reformist cloth. Therefore, when Aliyev returned to Azerbaijan in 1990, the media responded immediately with speculation about his intentions for returning to power. This undoubtedly reflected the genuine interest of many who believed that he had the capacity restore order in the republic, whether by force or by other means.

The belief that Aliyev would repress opponents grew increasingly clear during his tenure as Chairman of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic Supreme Soviet, and crystallized after Aliyev's return to Baku in June 1993. As Aliyev staked out Nakhchivan's independent course from the rest of the republic during the last days of the Soviet Union, he threatened that Interior Ministry troops in Baku who were planning to occupy Nakhchivan would be met with force like those who attacked the Russian Parliament during the August 1991 putsch (*Moscow Central Network* 1991-09-25). Aliyev had his chance to reveal more of his coercive capacity.

Though Heydar Aliyev's activities as Chairman of Nakhchivan's Supreme Soviet reestablished him as a prominent statesman, it was his participation in the June 1993 coup against President Abufez Elchibey that solidified his reputation as a repressive leader. Though the details of the coup are still hotly debated in Azerbaijan, the continuing economic decline of the republic and the army's poor performance on the Karabagh front

intensified calls for the Popular Front-led government to resign in mid-1993. In an effort to consolidate power, the government convinced the National Assembly to impose a two-month state of emergency in in early April 1993 (*Turan* 1993-05-27). In June, in a move aimed at preempting government action against the Ganja troop garrison, General Suret Huseynov led an attack against the Popular Front leadership in Baku, demanding both the resignation of Prime Minister Panah Huseynov and the appointment of Aliyev as Speaker of the Milli Meclis on June 17, 1993 (*TRT Television* 1993-06-11, *Baku Radio* 1993-06-20). The following week, the Milli Meclis quickly stripped Elcibey of his powers as president, installed Aliyev as acting president, and approved the formation of a new government. While Elcibey never formally resigned, a referendum in August 1993 confirmed the people's support for Aliyev's presidency (Altstadt 1997).<sup>51</sup>

Almost immediately after Aliyev became the Chairman of the Milli Meclis, the atmosphere changed. Deputies claimed at the time that he sought to impose his version of the coup events into an official parliamentary report and threatened the parliamentarians who did not support his position (*Turan* 1993-07-17). By August, opposition parties cited attacks on their offices, restrictions on their publications, and arrests of opposition politicians without warrants (*Russian Television* 1993-08-11). As repression intensified in Azerbaijan, the message became clear to political elites that they should either cooperate with Aliyev or face punishment themselves.

That elites guessed Aliyev's type correctly but were wrong about Shevardnadze derives from a few factors. In Azerbaijan, Aliyev's actions, especially after 1993, confirmed prevailing perceptions about his type that persisted in the country from his

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<sup>51</sup> Expert opinions differ on whether the June 1993 was intended to bring Aliyev or Mutalibov to power. However, these sources agree that Aliyev maneuvered skillfully once back in power to consolidate it in his own hands (Altstadt 1997, Cornell 2011, Todua 2001).

tenure as First Secretary. In Shevardnadze's case, his increasingly repressive image during 1992-1995 was at odds with previous notions about his leadership style, and thereby created more uncertainty about his type. Furthermore, elites in Georgia misperceived Shevardnadze's type, beliefs about which derived primarily from individuals and groups allied with the president rather than acts of repression that he directed. The period during which Shevardnadze created the CUG coincided with the period when he was most closely allied with these other figures. In later years, relations soured between Shevardnadze and these figures and subsequently his image as a leader reverted towards his true conciliatory type. In Heydar Aliyev's case, public denouncements coupled with the swift and harsh repression the individuals and political parties who lost power during the 1993 coup made Aliyev's position and his type as a leader clear to elites in Azerbaijan.

### **Forming Parties of Power in Georgia and Azerbaijan**

In Georgia and Azerbaijan, the period of interest for explaining the creation of the CUG and YAP began when Shevardnadze and Aliyev assumed power and lasted until the first parliamentary elections in which the new parties competed. The earlier portions of these periods is covered in section IV of this chapter, which addresses the need that Shevardnadze and Aliyev had for parties of their own. The active process of party creation began in Georgia and Azerbaijan during states of emergency, which leaders used to suspend the activities of standing legislatures. It was during these periods of no legislative activity that leaders secured the membership of different factions of elites in order to ensure compliant legislatures once they reopened. In Georgia, this process took



place relatively quickly, while it was more drawn out in Azerbaijan. In both countries, the period of party creation ended with the electoral victories of Georgia and Azerbaijan's new parties of power in each country's 1995 parliamentary elections.

After voting to reject Shevardnadze's resignation in September 1993, Georgia's Parliament agreed to grant Shevardnadze's request of a two-month state of emergency. Shevardnadze, who had already worked for a year with the current Parliament, had developed a sense of whom he might wish to invite into a party, and formalized these ties with elites from three preexisting groups: the Green Party of Georgia, the Unity and Prosperity Bloc, as well as from a number of independent members of parliament affiliated with the Tbiliseli society. Though at other times, Shevardnadze had relied on the support of the National Democratic Party and the Party of Georgian Traditionalists, these groups were not incorporated into the CUG because elites in those parties held out against incorporation into the party of power. Here, the perspectives of different elites who represent the primary factions within Georgia and Azerbaijan's parties of power demonstrate how individually held values and beliefs led different actors to join the party.

The official founding of the Citizens Union of Georgia took place in November 1993 at a conference organized by several civic organizations in Tbilisi. Key figures among these organizations were Zurab Zhvania, leader of Georgia's Green Party, Vazha Lortkipanidze, a former First Secretary of the Komsomol and former Deputy First Secretary of the Georgian Communist Party who was a leading representative of the country's administrative elite, and Gia Zhorzholiani, a charismatic historian who had led a number of nationalist-intellectual organizations. Interviews with some of these prominent members of the Citizens' Union of Georgia shed light on the strategic

calculations that political elites in Georgia made when deciding whether or not to commit to Shevardnadze's project.

According to Vazha Lortkipanidze, the Chief of the Presidential Administration of Georgia (1992-1995), Prime Minister (1998-2000), and a leader of the Tbiliseli Society,<sup>52</sup> Shevardnadze created the Citizens' Union because "parliament was isolated from the people." Lortkipanidze agreed that there was a need for a "big party" that represented the majority of Georgians, and not just the party activists who had won mandates and dominated the parliament at the time. Mr. Lortkipanidze referred to vague goals like restoring peace and order and promoting Christian-Democratic values when asked what drew him in particular into the CUG, though the latter had little to do with the party's ideology (Author's note). He also spoke of how the extended networks of Tbiliseli members would be able to represent the interests of the restive provinces better than members of the parties in parliament, who were influential only in Tbilisi (Lortkipanidze, Vazha. Interview. 2010-04-08). Unlike the nascent parties that existed inside and outside of Georgia's parliament which at the time were actively seeking to attract voters and win office through popular support, the Tbiliseli Society was not formally registered as a party or a parliamentary fraction. Rather, it was an informal association of members of the former nomenklatura with "usable pasts" but no formal structure in which to use them.

For elites like Lortkipanidze, joining the Citizens Union of Georgia offered the promise of a constant flow of side payments (*S*) and other benefits of membership in government but did not involve a major sacrifice of their independent partisan reputations

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<sup>52</sup> Wheatley (2005) refers to this group as the "Tbiliseli Society;" Vazha Lortkipanidze in interviews referred to the group as *Kalakelebi*, meaning "city dwellers."

(*R*) since Tbiliseli affiliates lacked partisan identities. To preserve their status as elites, members of the former nomenklatura would either need to develop mass constituencies or be coopted from above. Therefore, when the opportunity for the latter presented itself, the Tbiliseli affiliates accepted cooptation and incorporation into the CUG. In order to rule Georgia outside of Tbilisi and outside of Parliament, Shevardnadze needed the cooperation of the old nomenklatura who retained influence at the local level outside the capital. Joining the Citizens' Union, therefore, was a dominant strategy for Shevardnadze who needed to secure the support of incumbent legislators in order to pursue his policy goals and also to neutralize the Parliament as a site of opposition to his rule. For these elites, joining the party was their best response at the time, given their expectation of the consequences of remaining independent.

For Khatuna Gogorishvili, a member of Georgia's Green Party, participating in politics depended largely on her personal association with Green Party Chairman and future Speaker of Parliament, Zurab Zhvania.<sup>53</sup> Ms. Gogorishvili and Mr. Zhvania were both biologists working at the same lab in Tbilisi in the late 1980s when protesters began to mobilize around different issues. The Green Party organized a few public protests during Perestroika that drew up to 1000 participants (Beissinger 2002b), but was more focused on winning office through alliances with more influential parties in electoral blocs and by obtaining financial support from Green parties in Europe (Gogorishvili, Khatuna. Interview. 2010-04-30). By 1992, the party's organizing efforts paid off as the party won 11 seats in Parliament - almost as many as the National Democratic Party, one

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<sup>53</sup> Zurab Zhvania died under mysterious circumstances in February 2005. In order to understand why he and his associates joined the CUG, I spoke with Khatuna Gogorishvili and Revaz Adamia both of whom were close to Zhvania and were founding members of his faction, the Green Party of Georgia.

of the most influential Perestroika-era protest groups (Central Election Commission 2010).

Between 1992-1993, Shevardnadze came to appreciate Zurab Zhvania's skill as a political operator and backroom dealmaker and invited his Green Party into the Citizen's Union. By coopting the Greens, Shevardnadze incorporated a group of young ambitious politicians who saw association with the President as their best bet for advancing their careers and feared exclusion from future benefits should they retain their separate partisan identity. For this faction, the increasing sense that Shevardnadze would remain in power and be able to exclude them from future benefits convinced them to join the Citizens' Union and dissolve as an independent party. This was a choice that other similarly positioned groups in Georgia at the time did not make, which led to a very different fortunes for the leaders of those parties. Zhvania's meteoric rise to Speaker of Parliament from what had been only a faction of 10 deputies, as well as the high offices enjoyed by many of his closest associates, demonstrate the rewards reaped by elites who joined Shevardnadze's party early on.

Conversations with Gia Zhorzholiani and Giga Lortkipanidze, who were both affiliated with the Unity and Prosperity Bloc in 1992, revealed some of the motivations of prominent intellectuals who joined the Citizens' Union. In his own words, Mr. Zhorzholiani, a respected historian and Perestroika-era activist, the Citizens' Union offered a chance to be a "constructive force" for reform (Zhorzholiani, Gia. Interview. 2010-05-16). Dismayed by the dogged opposition of the more radical National Democratic Party, the National Independence Party, and the Zviadists, Zhorzholiani was attracted to the CUG's centrism and pragmatism. Elected to the 1992 Supreme Soviet

under the "Unity Bloc," Zhorzholiani did not have a particularly strong partisan identity and therefore placed less value on his independent political reputation (*R*), though he did risk his popularity as a public intellectual by pledging his political capital to a party project with an uncertain future. Similarly, for Giga Lortkipanidze, supporting Shevardnadze seemed like the best way to contribute to the restoration of political order in Georgia and at the same time to represent the interests of artists (Lortkipanidze, Giga. Interview. 2010-05-19). Though he claimed to have a "dissident's disposition" towards politics, Giga Lortkipanidze supported Eduard Shevardnadze's return to power as well as Shevardnadze's party building project.<sup>54</sup>

As prominent members of Georgia's intellectual elite, Lortkipanidze and Zhorzholiani were valuable assets for the nascent CUG. In an era when political campaigns were a novelty, when dozens of new parties with vexingly similar names filled ballot papers, and when party platforms had scarcely been formed let alone communicated to the public, the personal celebrity of candidates was a strong guide for electoral choice. Thus, on its 1995 party list, the Citizens' Union's first 10 spots included the renowned Georgian filmmaker Eldar Shengelaia, Lana Ghoghoberidze, a well-known film actress, as well as Giga Lortkipanidze (*Svobodnaia Gruzii* 1995-11-21).<sup>55</sup> Crucially for Shevardnadze, these figures brought personal popularity to the Citizens' Union without having to accommodate strong partisan identities into the new party of power. They also lent legitimacy to the party, which risked alienating some of the nationalist intellectuals now active in Georgian politics by incorporating members of the old

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<sup>54</sup> Mr. Lortkipanidze's distinguished career as an actor and a theater director as well as his numerous state-awarded prizes suggest he remained in the good graces of the Soviet authorities.

<sup>55</sup> By the 1995 Parliamentary election, Gia Zhorzholiani grew disaffected with Zurab Zhvania's leadership and left the Citizens' Union.

nomenklatura. Finally, the party served the ambitions of the artists and academics who developed their careers under the patronage of the state and wished to continue to do so (Lortkipanidze, Giga. Interview. 2010-05-19).

Absent in Shevardnadze's coalition were the hardliner remnants of Georgian Communist Party led by Vakhtang Rcheulishvili, Zviadists, and members of a number of parties that occupied a more hardline pro-Georgian/anti-Russian position. These included the National Democratic Party, the Nation Independence Party, the Party of Georgian Traditionalists, and other parties that formed out of Perestroika-era protest movements. Though these groups kept their seats in the 1992-1995 Parliament, the representation of these parties decreased significantly in the 1995 and 1999 parliamentary elections because of the high barrier for mandates on the proportional list as well as pressure exerted on potential donors to these parties. These parties receded in importance as the CUG achieved a dominant, though not monopolistic, position in Georgian party politics.

Members of Parliament from the 1992-1995 term who did not join the Citizens' Union pointed to ideological differences when explaining their decisions not to join the CUG.<sup>56</sup> For Akaki Asatiani, leader of the Party of Georgian Traditionalists who served as Chairman of Georgia's Supreme Soviet from 1990-1991, Shevardnadze's increasingly friendly relations with Russia made it impossible for his party to pledge its support to the Citizens' Union. While Shevardnadze coopted a few members of the Traditionalists' leadership by offering them attractive posts in the state administration, the party's top leadership remained independent (Asatiani, Akaki. Interview. 2015-03-27). Similarly, the

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<sup>56</sup> It is likely that not *all* parties in Georgia had invitations to join the CUG. However, given that the Republicans and Traditionalists were among the larger and better coordinated parties at the time suggests that they would have been considered for incorporation into the CUG. The fact that individual members of the leadership of these two parties joined the CUG and were rewarded handsomely lends credence to the notion that these parties were candidates for joining Shevardnadze's party.

Republican party's members and their leaders prioritized the party's independence above all else and rejected partnership with Shevardnadze because of the compromises they presented to the party's ideals. Party leader Dato Berdzenishvili noted that the Republicans lost a significant contingent of support after voting for Georgia's 1995 Constitution, because of the perception that the party was caving to Shevardnadze's agenda. Ironically, Berdzenishvili claimed, it was by mistakenly alienating many of their dedicated supporters that the Republicans failed to clear the 5% threshold instituted in the 1995 Constitution (Berdzenishvili, Dato. Interview. 2015-03-25). Despite losing parliamentary representation in Georgia's parliament, both the Traditionalists and the Republicans survived Shevardnadze and the CUG's rule, and returned to participate in Parliamentary politics both after the Rose Revolution in 2003 as well as after Mikheil Saakashvili's electoral defeat in 2012.

After gaining power, Heydar Aliyev developed the New Azerbaijan Party into a monopolistic party of power over the course of several years. Though he had established the party in his home region of Nakhchivan in 1992, the party remained dormant for a period of time after Aliyev gained power in 1993. He used the first years of his presidency to sideline his main rivals by extra-parliamentary means before consolidating final control over the party sphere. From 1993-1995, similarly to Eduard Shevardnadze's first years in power, Aliyev passed legislation by forging ad-hoc coalitions from the provisional Milli Meclis that was in session between 1992-1994. From October 1994-June 1995, the Milli Meclis was suspended due to a series of states of emergency that Aliyev initiated. The last one was lifted in time for the beginning of the campaign for the

1995 parliamentary elections. Yet immediately, YAP was recognized as the dominant political force in Azerbaijani party politics (NDI 1995).

According to official accounts of the New Azerbaijan Party history, the initiative to establish the party came externally in the form of a letter signed by 91 prominent Azerbaijanis addressed to Aliyev, then the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic.<sup>57</sup> However, the first stage of party creation saw the establishment of an institution that united a group of regional elites behind Aliyev, but that did little else as a party. At the time, YAP's activities were confined to the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic Supreme Soviet, a legislative body that had no jurisdiction over the rest of the country. However, after Aliyev's return to Baku in June 1993, YAP became increasingly visible as key elites joined its ranks and as Aliyev began to curtail the activities of Azerbaijan's largest parties at the time, the Azerbaijani Popular Front and Musavat.

The New Azerbaijan Party's development into a party of power took place from 1993-1995 once Heydar Aliyev gained power. In this period, Aliyev forged alliances with existing elites in Baku whose affiliation with the governing party broadened his support beyond Nakhchivan (Cornell 2011). While most of the other parties that had formed to date in Azerbaijan coalesced around specific personalities, many of those individuals were convinced to leave the nascent parties with which they had become affiliated to join the leader whom they perceived to be repressive.

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<sup>57</sup> Whether the idea to create the New Azerbaijani Party originated with Heydar Aliyev himself or with the 91 elites who asked him to form the party is impossible to know, and ultimately of secondary theoretical import. However, Heydar Aliyev's clear initiative to go forward with creating a party is the crucial action that indicates which direction he moves in the model presented in the previous chapter.



Eldar Namazov, a former Chief of Staff to Heydar Aliyev, explained that recruitment of prominent figures into the New Azerbaijan Party leadership took place through the wide personal connections that Heydar Aliyev developed over his long career. Namazov himself was recruited as an early leader of YAP along with Lala Shovket-Hajieva, who returned from Moscow in 1994 to serve as State Minister of Azerbaijan under Aliyev (Namazov, Eldar. Interview. 2011-04-11). However, according to Elgun Taghiev, an Azerbaijani political analyst, it was during this early period between the formation in Nakhchivan and the 1995 parliamentary election that the mass recruitment into YAP of state employees, residents of Nakhichevan, and the Yeraz population began (Taghiyev, Elgun. Interview. 2011-04-15).

Despite the cooperation that Aliyev was able to secure in the Milli Meclis, all parties expected the 1995 elections to the Milli Meclis to be competitive. The Communists, heirs to Mutalibov, claimed they would win 70% of seats; the Popular Front and Musavat expected to win in every region of the country, including Aliyev's home region of Nakhchivan, while a spokesman for the New Azerbaijan party predicted a strong victory for all pro-Presidential forces (*Zerkalo* 1995-05-13).

The first official New Azerbaijan party congress took place in December 1999, more than seven years after the establishment of the party. Among the many boilerplate accolades that Heydar Aliyev showered on the party during his lengthy speech, he spent time discussing why the party had not yet held a congress. He claimed that the party didn't want to show arrogance by drawing too much attention to itself. He reiterated points from his speech on the fifth anniversary of YAP's founding in stressing that he had no intentions to form a party of his own at the time, but that the higher duty of saving

Azerbaijan from political crisis forced his hand (*Bakinskii Rabochii* 1999-12-24). Aliyev acknowledged that YAP grew slowly during its first few years, but explained this by saying that as the party chairman, his goal was to solve Azerbaijan's problems, not to build the party, and so he mobilized "all of his efforts, abilities, time, knowledge, and will" for those goals instead of focusing on building his own party. Although it is unclear why YAP lagged in holding party congresses, its membership and infrastructure grew exponentially beginning in 1994, and by 1995 already fulfilled its main goal, the "organization of mass support and defending the course of Heydar Aliyev" (Todua 1995: 41). He writes that despite the party's "amorphous organization" in its early years, it grew by attracting ambitious careerists (2001: 171).

The multi-stage formation of YAP reveals its leader's ability to play the political field to his advantage. Incapable of pulling off a complete conquest of Azerbaijan's party space immediately after his return to Baku from Nakhchivan, he set about gradually coopting key elites while at the same time exerting pressure on representatives of other parties in government office. By 1995 parliamentary elections, Aliyev had punished and excluded those who remained outside of YAP to the extent that opposition parties were unable to compete on equal footing with the New Azerbaijan Party. While these other parties continued to stand in elections and mobilize intermittent protests for the next ten years, the creation of YAP marked the steep decline in their formal representation as well as broader influence (US Department of State 1996a).

The formation of the Citizens' Union of Georgia and the New Azerbaijan Party demonstrate how incumbent leaders patched together parties out of disparate groups of elites. In both cases, party founders incorporated elites who were willing to trade their

independent political identities for increased and continuing access to state resources available through affiliation with the leaders. In both Georgia and Azerbaijan, groups of elites who might have been considered joining the party of power remained independent, while other elites were likely never considered as suitable members of the party because of their strong opposition to the leaders. Though neither the CUG nor YAP occupied an outright majority of seats after the 1995 parliamentary elections, each party won a plurality of seats that far eclipsed the seat shares of opposition parties (Nohlen et al. 2001). Joined for votes by large contingents of independents, both the CUG and YAP easily dominated the legislatures of Georgia and Azerbaijan's parliaments. These parties' preeminent positions neutralized opposition to the leaders' agendas and facilitated the passage of super-presidential constitutions that strengthened the executive branch at the expense of the legislative for the duration of Heydar Aliyev and Eduard Shevardnadze's presidencies and beyond.

### **Revelation of Types**

As time passed, uncertainty about the leaders' types diminished. Based on actions that they observed leaders taking, elites came to understand whether they had guessed their leader's type correctly. In Georgia, the first years under the Citizens' Union was a period of institutional stabilization through concessions and cooptation. Though the CUG remained the preeminent party in Georgia, the party coexisted in parliament with a number of other parties that varied in their level of cooperation and opposition. At the same time, factions within the CUG fought openly over appointments and other resources, which undermined its internal cohesion (Wheatley 2005, Jones 2013).

Shevardnadze himself largely delegated control over the CUG to Party Chairman Zurab Zhvania, which further reflected Shevardnadze's tendency to rule by concession rather than direct intervention. For elites in Azerbaijan, the period after the creation of the New Azerbaijan Party was one of increasing restrictions on opposition media, protests, and other party activity. Though only suggestive of the implications of leader type for the functioning of a party of power, this case comparison suggests that there are meaningful differences in how parties of power run when lead by conciliatory rather than repressive leaders. This is a distinction that could be tested on a broader set of cases, but is treated preliminarily in this chapter.

Shevardnadze's creation of the Citizens' Union marked a turning point from the institutional chaos that had gripped Georgia since 1991, though it did not fully resolve the political and economic difficulties in the country. After establishing a measure of control over the party system, and the passage of the 1995 constitution which granted the executive branch significant powers, his party's deep internal divisions undermined its ability to develop a clear hierarchy and other institutional infrastructure, while Shevardnadze's inattention to internal controls enabled rampant corruption by party representatives at all levels. As a strategy of rule, Shevardnadze granted significant concessions to party and regional elites in exchange for keeping the peace. In a kind of division-of-labor arrangement, party-elites assured the nominal loyalty of the parliament, though they enjoyed broad powers to engage in corruption as they saw fit (Sakvarelidze, Ramaz. Interview. 2010-03-01). According to Gia Arsenishvili, who served as the governor of Kakheti from 1995-2000, regime-affiliated regional power brokers ensured the nominal integrity of the Georgian state while enjoying a great deal of autonomy in

their home region (Interview. 2010-06-04). Throughout his presidency, Shevardnadze seemed more concentrated on strengthening Georgia's external ties than building its domestic institutions (Wheatley 2005).

Despite attempts on Shevardnadze's life just before the 1995 parliamentary elections and in 1998, Shevardnadze did not crack down on his political rivals nor did he carry out purges within the CUG to enforce party discipline.<sup>58</sup> During the 1990s, political parties across the political spectrum were able to register and compete in elections. While electoral fraud was widespread in the 1995 elections, international observers did not determine that they were directed against any parties in particular (OSCE/PA 1995). Leaders of parties that did not join the CUG reported informal pressure on their party activists at the local level, especially outside Tbilisi, but according to them, this pressure was not directed at party leaders (Asatiani, Akaki. Interview. 2015-03-27; Khmaladze, Vakhtang. Interview. 2015-03-24). Restrictions on printed media remained minimal in Georgia under Shevardnadze; broadcast media, however, reflected a pro-government bias despite the fact that opposition-owned channels operated through the 1990s. The viewership of government and opposition-owned television channels alike suffered from a severe shortage of electricity during the 1990s. Where human rights abuses were reported in Georgia, they pertained mostly to excesses committed by local police, corruption in the courts, and the poor conditions inside prisons. By 1994, there were no officially recognized political prisoners in Georgia (US Department of State 1995a).

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<sup>58</sup> Whether Shevardnadze was unwilling or simply unable to punish rivals is difficult to determine. I argue that he was likely unwilling to use coercive force against rival parties because at the same time period, he was engaged in a systematic campaign using the courts and the police to rein in Georgia's civil war-era militias (Wheatley 2005).

During the 1990s, Shevardnadze excluded parties outside of the CUG from the main spoils of office through informal pressure on opposition activists, potential donors to opposition parties, and by the institutional barriers he devised for keeping smaller parties out of the Parliament. However, he refrained from harsher forms of repression. The continued existence of a regional party of power in the autonomous Black Sea region of Ajara gave small rivals to the CUG in Georgia proper a bloc partner in parliamentary elections in 1999 and 2003. According to Republican Party leader Dato Berdzenishvili, Shevardnadze was himself not truly "bloodthirsty," and was committed to maintaining his reputation as a democrat among allies in Europe and the United States. Rather, as time showed, the repressive capacity that Shevardnadze amassed in 1992-1995 was never fully deployed.

On the other hand, under the control of Heydar Aliyev, the Azerbaijani state made liberal use of coercion to crack down on protesters, shut down opposition parties, and restrict the media. Political imprisonments and exile became the norm in Azerbaijan soon after Aliyev's rise to power as did violent dispersal of public demonstrations, and the harsh persecution of supporters and leaders of Azerbaijan's opposition parties.

A single opposition newspaper was subjected to 105 censorship reviews in 1996 while an entire edition was banned for printing a satirical article about the president. Journalists themselves came under physical attack by the authorities for covering unsanctioned protests and while pursuing stories in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic in 1996; physical attacks on journalists in 1997 were not investigated by the Azerbaijani government (US Department of State 1997a, 1998a). In 1997, the majority of newspapers continued to be printed in a central printing house in which they were

subjected to regular censorship on approximately 80 of their editions (US Department of State 1998a). In 1998, 34 journalists were attacked by the police while covering an opposition rally, while four were injured while themselves protesting an ongoing trial against the Yeni Musavat newspaper (US Department of State 1999a). In 1999, journalists affiliated with a publication supported by Rasul Guliyev were subjected to violence, while a journalist and editor with the Yeni Musavat opposition newspaper were kidnapped and beaten, purportedly for writing an article about President Aliyev's health (US Department of State 2000).

As time passed, Aliyev's regime increasingly repressed public political demonstrations. In response to perceived ballot fraud during the November 1998 presidential elections, the opposition staged an unsanctioned but peaceful protest that police forcibly dispersed. The next day, unknown attackers targeted the leaders of a sanctioned protest that gathered in the same spot. Following these events, Azerbaijan's parliament authorized a new law that gave broader powers to the government to deny protest permits on the vague grounds that they might "threaten public order." Fourteen participants in this rally were convicted the following year for their participation in the sanctioned protest on November 8, 1998 (US Department of State 1999a).

According to the US Department of State Bureau of Human Rights, Democracy, and Labor reports on Azerbaijan, 20-40 members of the Azerbaijan Popular Front Party were arrested annually by the government between 1996-2000, including a number of figures from the previous Azerbaijan Popular Front-led government. While most of these figures were released, the government kept an estimated 100-150 political prisoners over the same time period (US Department of State 1997a, 1998a, 1999a, 2000, 2001a). Police

invaded the local headquarters of the Azerbaijan Popular Front Party in Nakhchivan in 1996 and disrupted events lead by APF leaders. The government maintained travel bans on travel outside of Baku for "some prominent political leaders" who were under various forms of criminal investigation, however Isa Gambar and Ali Kerimli were permitted to travel outside of Baku despite being under investigation for various crimes against the state (US Department of State 1997a).

In 1998, after former Speaker of Parliament, Rasul Guliyev, fled Azerbaijan, one of Guliyev's close professional associates and one of his nephews were taken into custody but by the end of 1998 had still not been charged with a crime. This episode reflects the consequences not only for politicians who opposed the regime but for their families and colleagues as well. Musavat Party leader and former Prime Minister, Isa Qambar, was taken into custody but not charged in 1998, while a close relative of his was convicted of failing to notify the government of a crime and then sentenced to three years' imprisonment. Persecution of opposition activists extended in 1998 to the imprisonment of Popular Front-affiliated students who authored an unpublished guide to resisting the government as well as supporters of Rasul Guliyev whom the government accused of plotting against the president (US Department of State, 1999a). In 1999, another nephew of Rasul Guliyev was arrested on charges of smuggling upon his return to Azerbaijan from abroad (US Department of State 2000).

Though he was initially popular, local experts argue that as early as 1995 Aliyev relied on differential treatment by the Central Election Commission of opposition parties as well as outright electoral fraud to secure a majority of seats in the Milli Meclis (Namazov, Eldar. Interview. 2011-04-11). A pre-election report authored in 1995 by NDI



notes the "atmosphere of fear that pervades society," that already inhibited citizens from participating in campaign activities, signing petitions to register candidates, or to note infractions during the electoral campaign. The rejection of over 60% of candidates who sought to register has led some Azerbaijanis to consider boycotting the election (NDI 1995). A joint UN/OSCE election observation mission noted a few major shortcomings in the 1995 parliamentary election and constitutional referendum in Azerbaijan. Their report claims that 60% of candidates were denied registration and 1/3 of political parties were barred from competing due to arbitrary procedures used to validate signatures collected by the candidates and parties. The report also found "widespread interference by representatives of executive authority, including the police" in the voting process. The Communist Party of Azerbaijan and Musavat, two of the most popular opposition parties, were among those prevented from appearing on the proportional ballot; the report details how despite blatant mishandling of Musavat's signatures, the Azerbaijani Supreme Court confirmed the Central Election Commission's decision to bar the party from the election. A similar pattern of suppressing opposition participation in the election applied to single member districts. Only one out of four Popular Front candidates and less than 15% of Musavat's candidates made it onto the ballot, while 65% of YAP's candidates were registered (OSCE/UN 1996).

In statements from Azerbaijan's political parties compiled by NDI after the 1995 parliamentary elections, the resounding message from the Azerbaijan Popular Front Party, Musavat Party, claimed the elections had been seriously skewed in the president's party's favor. The Azerbaijan National Independence Party noted how the executive bodies controlled the process of registering candidates for the elections and not the

election commissions. The National Statehood Party, led by Nemat Panahli, declined to publish its statement because of its leader's fear of even greater persecution by the Aliyev regime.

This fear was well-founded because of the harsh repression that the party deployed, even against insiders. In 1998, the Political Council of YAP published a scathing denouncement of Rasul Guliyev and a justification of banishing him from the party (*Bakinskii Rabochii* 1998-01-28). Accused of protecting the mafia, stealing state resources, appointing relatives and friends to high government office, the Political Council stated that Guliyev had joined forces with the enemies of Azerbaijan and had become a traitor to society. At the end of its statement the YAP Political Council called on all party organizations at the regional and city level to discuss Rasul Guliyev's crimes and to develop measures to prevent similar violations of the party principles, and urged all socio-political forces to denounce Guliyev's actions. (*Bakinskii Rabochii* 1998-01-28).

These are just a few illustrative examples of the practices that Heydar Aliyev deployed during the first years of his rule in order to reinforce his party's monopoly on Azerbaijan's party space. Aliyev's frequent use of repression silenced alternative viewpoints, excluded broad categories of politicians from participating in government in favor of his own party stand in contrast to Shevardnadze's more conciliatory rule. Though both leaders convinced key elites to join their respective parties initially by building images as capacious leaders, the long-term trajectories of the Citizens' Union of Georgia and the New Azerbaijan reveal that following through with repression played a significant role in maintaining discipline within YAP. Heydar Aliyev's strong hand over the ten years of his presidency yielded a consolidated authoritarian regime and a party

that ostensibly accepted the dynastic transfer of power in the country to his son, Ilham, in 2003. Shevardnadze's conciliatory leadership style and distance from the daily affairs of running his own party ultimately left space for younger more ambitious politicians to rebel against his rule and ultimately depose him.

## **Conclusion**

The paired case studies in this chapter demonstrate how two leaders, one conciliatory and one repressive, both succeeded in creating parties of power. Though both Eduard Shevardnadze and Heydar Aliyev had clear incentives for creating parties, elites who had already mobilized under existing parties posed a serious obstacle to the new presidents' establishment of parties of power. However, through a series of conflicts and crises between presidents and standing legislatures, large contingents of incumbent elites traded their previous political affiliations for membership in parties of power.

This chapter illustrates how elite beliefs about leader type played the crucial role in the emergence of parties of power in Georgia and Azerbaijan. Had Shevardnadze not known with a high level of certainty that elites believed him to be a capacious repressive leader, he would not have risked creating a party of his own lest elites choose to remain independent. In Azerbaijan, elite beliefs about Aliyev's type developed after the 1993 matched prior impressions of his type, which hastened the New Azerbaijan's rise.

A comparison of Georgia under the Citizens' Union and Azerbaijan under YAP strengthens the idea that the mere existence of a party of power in a regime says little about the regime's underlying dynamics. While Aliyev enforced strict party discipline by periodic purges of his party, Shevardnadze did quite the opposite. He tolerated the regular

departure of dissatisfied CUG factions and did little to prevent their continued competition in Georgia's party space. While the CUG remained a lively, if dysfunctional party, YAP developed into a hollow shell with hundreds of thousands of members on paper but little visibility or activity outside of party congresses and elections. This suggests that the mere creation of a party of power does not necessarily guarantee a longer tenure for the authoritarian ruler who created it nor does it necessarily facilitate succession. However, as this case study has shown, parties of power can serve the short-term needs of authoritarian rulers for defining the boundaries of their winning coalition and neutralizing opposition activity within a standing legislature.

## Chapter 4: No Party Creation in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan

In this chapter, I demonstrate the existence of the second pooling equilibrium generated in the signaling game of authoritarian party creation with comparative case studies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in the 1990s. In this equilibrium, a conciliatory and a repressive leader *do not create parties of power* despite having strong incentives to do so. The underlying theoretical argument of this dissertation as stated in Chapter 2 holds that incumbent leaders do not create parties of their own unless they also expect elite actors to join the party. If elites are not expected to join, leaders do not follow through with creating a party and turn to other institutional strategies to pursue their goals. As elites strongly prefer *not to join* a party of power when they believe the leader to be conciliatory, this belief is sufficient to prevent the emergence of a party of power. As the case studies in this chapter demonstrate, neither a repressive leader, Kazakhstan's Nursultan Nazarbayev, nor a conciliatory leader, Kyrgyzstan's Askar Akayev, created parties of power in the 1990s because elites in the two countries believed them to be conciliatory.

In the following sections, I show that the parameters of interest in the signaling model of authoritarian party creation held similar values in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan between 1990-1995. The potential benefit of party creation ( $B$ ) was high for both leaders, and Nazarbayev and Akayev had to offer low levels of side payments ( $S$ ) to convince existing elites to sacrifice their independent reputations ( $R$ ) in exchange for affiliation with the party of power given the low levels of political mobilization in the republics. Uncertainty about leader type ( $Z$ ) was higher in Kazakhstan, which led elites to

misperceive Nursultan Nazarbayev's type, while they perceived Askar Akayev's type correctly.

Nursultan Nazarbayev was appointed First Secretary of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic (KazSSR) in June 1989. As the ethnic Kazakh leader of a republic with a Russophone majority, Nazarbayev cultivated the image of a conciliatory ruler by declaring his highest priority to be maintaining interethnic harmony in the republic. Before the breakup of the Soviet Union, Nazarbayev charted a middle ground between the Kazakh nationalists who called for secession from the Soviet Union and hardline Communists who demanded the end to Perestroika and renewed ties with the rest of the Soviet Union (Beissinger 2002b). After Kazakhstan's Supreme Soviet<sup>59</sup> declared the republic's independence in December 1991, Nazarbayev took a firmly centrist position on the salient political issues of the day, balancing the interests of Russian and Kazakh-speakers, in the interest of maintaining stability in the country. The process by which Nazarbayev decided not to create a party is particularly interesting because initially, Nazarbayev gave some signals that he might establish one as had other incumbent leaders in Central Asia. However, a protracted conflict that developed with parliamentarians over both executive powers and the electoral code soured Nazarbayev to the idea of committing to a party of power at the beginning of the 1990s, and led him instead to dismiss parliament, rule by decree, and impose a new constitution on terms much that strongly favored the executive over the legislative branch.

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<sup>59</sup> Similarly to the other Soviet Socialist Republics, Kazakhstan's Communist-era legislature was called the Supreme Soviet (*Zhogorku Kengesh*). It retained this name until the 1995 when the Republic's Parliament replaced Supreme Soviet. Pre-1995, I refer to the body as the Supreme Soviet or parliament, while after 1995 I refer to the legislature either the Parliament or the Mezhilis, the lower house of Parliament.

Askar Akayev was elected President of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic (KyrSSR) in October 1990 by an internal vote of the republic's Supreme Soviet.<sup>60</sup> A relative newcomer to politics, he positioned himself as a moderate reformer and stressed the importance of building consensus during his early years in power. This rhetoric coupled with the visible inclusion of a diverse set of political elites as advisers strengthened Akayev's reputation as a conciliatory leader. Akayev's first years in power were marked by several struggles to define the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of government and to balance power among the regions of the country. After the passage of Kyrgyzstan's constitution in May 1993, Akayev urged the Supreme Soviet to disband in a move that resembled the self-dissolution of Kazakhstan's Supreme Soviet during the same year. Members of parliaments, however, staged a boycott of the legislature which paralyzed legislative activity in the country. Increasingly frustrated by the difficulty of marshaling legislators whose opposition only strengthened over time, Akayev steered away from creating a party of his own and instead relied on a series of referenda and other measures over the following decade to secure his powers as president and work around Kyrgyzstan's intransigent legislature.

The following sections of this chapter examine the each stage of the signaling game of authoritarian party creation and present narratives of the various actions and events that demonstrate the values of the game's key parameters. The closing sections of the chapter address the revelation of Nursultan Nazarbayev and Askar Akayev's types as leaders and as well as the institutional divergence of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in the 2000s. This case comparison demonstrates how different types of leaders, one repressive

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<sup>60</sup> Kyrgyzstan's legislature, the Supreme Soviet (*Zhogorku Kenesh*), has shifted in size and structure numerous times over the republic's 24 years of independence. However, its name has remained the same.

and the other conciliatory, both chose not to create parties of power despite having strong incentives to do so.

### **Nazarbayev and Akayev's Rise to Power**

Nursultan Nazarbayev was appointed First Secretary of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic (KazSSR) in June 1989 just as the wave of Perestroika-era nationalist protests arrived in the Kazakh SSR.<sup>61</sup> As the leader of the republic, Nazarbayev publicly committed to strengthening ties to the rest of the Soviet Union, announcing at a 1991 party congress that 'the only way [the Soviet Union] can leave this dead end is together.' (Olcott 1997). However, he also took measures to promote the interests and sovereignty of Kazakhstan. This balancing act extended to the realm of nationality policy in the republic where Kazakhs and Russians each represented about 40% of the population, but where the majority of residents spoke Russian as their first language. Born in Southern Kazakhstan into a pastoralist Kazakh-speaking family, Nazarbayev studied metallurgy in Ukraine and launched his career in Temirtau, a Russian-speaking mining town in Northern Kazakhstan. While Nazarbayev's biography neatly reflected Kazakhstan's split ethnic and linguistic identities, his leadership also raised concerns among large portions of the population. To many Slavs in the republic, the First Secretary represented a threat to their continued economic and cultural ties to Russia, while many Kazakh nationalists derided Nazarbayev as a "cossack" for his failure to promote the use of the Kazakh language more forcefully (Olcott 1997: 206).

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<sup>61</sup> The appointment as First Secretary of Gennadi Kolbin, an ethnic Russian with no previous work experience in Kazakhstan, sparked massive demonstrations in Almaty in December 1986, which foreshadowed the widespread nationalist mobilization that swept the Soviet Union during Perestroika. Nursultan Nazarbayev was only the second ethnic Kazakh appointed as First Secretary of Kazakhstan's Communist Party.



During his first years in power, Nazarbayev developed a reputation as a pragmatist. While he remained dedicated to preserving the Soviet Union in some form, he framed this position in economic rather than ideological terms. While acknowledging the need for greater self-determination at the republic level, speaking publicly in favor of "strong republics and a strong center," as late as 1991 it was unimaginable to him that the 15 Soviet republics would be better off going their separate ways than working together (Nazarbayev 1991: 233-239, 215). By the time Kazakhstan declared independence in December 1991, Nazarbayev had been serving as the republic's manager-in-chief for two-and-a-half years. However, he was fundamentally untested as a leader, as the political crises that seized other parts of the Soviet Union had scarcely touched Kazakhstan. Given the few opportunities to see Nazarbayev truly in action, uncertainty about his leadership style under the new political order remained high.

Rather than adopting the role of manager in chief, Askar Akayev cast himself as Kyrgyzstan's reformer-in-chief. A physicist by training and a distinguished researcher, Akayev entered the Communist Party in 1981. His prominence in public affairs began after his election to the KyrSSR Supreme Soviet in 1986 and continued after his subsequent appointment as Chairman of the Academy of Sciences of the KyrSSR in 1988. In October 1990, Kyrgyzstan's Supreme Soviet held elections for the newly created position of President, in which KyrSSR First Secretary and Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Absamat Masaliev competed against Apas Jumagulov, President of the KyrSSR Council of Ministers. Neither candidate received a majority of the votes in the first round and so both candidates were disqualified from standing for another vote. A third candidate, Jungal Amanbayev, the final First Secretary of the KyrSSR, also failed to win

a majority of votes, which testifies to the general unpopularity of Kyrgyzstan's top Communist leadership at the time as well as the stark intra-elite divisions present at the time (Koichuyev and Ploskikh 1996: 16). In the final round of voting, the relatively unknown Askar Akayev was nominated and ultimately elected president of the Kyrgyz SSR. The powers associated with the office were still poorly defined, but by virtue of his election, Akayev joined the ranks of Kyrgyzstan's top leadership (Anderson 1999: 20).

At the time Akayev became President of Kyrgyzstan, tensions in Kyrgyzstan were high. Intercommunal violence in June 1990 between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek populations of Osh in Southern Kyrgyzstan killed hundreds of local residents, while protests over the discriminatory representation of ethnic Kyrgyz in the state administration seized Bishkek (Beissinger 2002b). This unrest undermined the legitimacy of Kyrgyzstan's First Secretary, Absamat Masaliyev, and his hardliner associates (Anderson 1999: 20), leading members of the nomenklatura who disapproved of Masaliyev to voice their opposition more openly. Meanwhile, investigations of the Osh events by officials from Moscow put further pressure on the republic's leadership (Huskey 1997: 252-3). These tensions exacerbated long-standing intra-elite cleavages that divided the republic along linguistic lines, by region, and by clan (Jones-Luong 2002: 81-83).

During 1991, a kind of dual power existed in the Kyrgyz SSR with Akayev as President and Masaliyev in the office of First Secretary. Masaliyev had deep connections to the party-state apparatus, while Akayev at the time enjoyed support from parliamentarians and the newly forming parties in the republic (Huskey 1997: 253). Akayev gained the upper hand in the republic during the August 1991 putsch when Masaliyev publicly backed the coup leaders, while Akayev voiced his support for

Gorbachev and Yeltsin (*Izvestiya* 1991-08-22). Kyrgyzstan declared independence on August 31, 1991, mere days after the coup's reversal, and gained full recognition after the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991.

Both Nazarbayev and Akayev became leaders of their respective republics during the waning years of Soviet rule. Despite winning nationwide presidential elections in the final months of 1991, the powers associated with Akayev and Nazarbayev's positions were poorly defined. As holdovers from the Communist-era, their political futures were highly uncertain. Without constitutions, incumbent legislators and incumbent presidents did not know which powers lay where. Furthermore, as the Soviet Union broke apart, no one knew what economic measures would be needed to solve the ongoing economic crisis. Given the short periods of time that Akayev and Nazarbayev were in power before their republics gained independence, few had a sense what type of leaders they would turn out to be.

### **Elites in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, 1989-1993**

A comparison of political elites in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan provides a sense of how elites at the time valued their independent reputations ( $R$ ). This relates directly to the level of side payments ( $S$ ) that leaders would need to offer in order to ensure elite cooperation in a party of power. Should elites place high values on their independence, leaders would have to offer even higher side payments in order to convince elites to join the party. However, should elites place low values on their independent reputations, leaders would not need to offer as large amounts of side payments to attract elites into a party of their own. Similarly to the previous chapter, I examine levels of popular

mobilization and returns from the legislative elections of the early 1990s to estimate the extent to which elites valued their independent reputations. Given that elites in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were among the least mobilized in the Soviet Union during Perestroika, the parties that they created after independence had weak claims to popular support, nor did their parties have experience competing in elections as independent organizations. This suggests that incumbent elites held relatively low values for their independent reputations, especially when contrasted with the highly mobilized and independent party elites in the South Caucasus. In this section, I also assess how Communist party networks and clan affiliation affected elites' willingness to join parties of power in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In both cases, I find that party networks and clan identities did not pose serious obstacles to recruiting elites into a potential party of power.

The wave of protests that swept across the Soviet Union beginning in the late 1980s passed over Central Asia without mobilizing large numbers of Kazakhstanis and Kyrgyzstanis. In Kazakhstan, a total of 78 protests took place between the beginning of Perestroika and the declaration of the republic's independence on December 16, 1991. The median protest in Kazakhstan drew 1000 participants out of a total population of 16.5 million; by comparison, the median protest size in Georgia was also 1000 participants, but out of a total population of 5 million. In Kazakhstan, the largest protests in Kazakhstan drew 50,000 participants, or 0.3% of the population, on two occasions. In Georgia, the largest protests drew up to 10% of the population as participants twice. Of these protests, approximately half in Kazakhstan had no specified organizer, while one third of the protests were organized by nascent nationalist movements such as Alash,

Zheltoksan, and Azat. The remainder of the protests were organized by generic groups within society such as "students," "taxi drivers," "miners," and the like (Beissinger 2002b). This indicates that there was no equivalent in Kazakhstan of the popularly supported protest movements and proto-parties that led Georgia's first post-independence government. While a handful of representatives of these movements won seats in Kazakhstan's 1990 legislative elections, the movements themselves had few followers among the general population. Rather, former members of the Communist Party who adopted a number of different new party affiliations or simply declared themselves independents dominated Kazakhstan's first post-independence legislature (Isaacs 2011: 57).

In Kyrgyzstan, a total of 42 protests took place in the republic before the break-up of the Soviet Union, though of these only five were organized by nationalist or pro-democracy groups in the republic.<sup>62</sup> Given this small number of protests, the aggregate level of protest participation in Kyrgyzstan was the second-lowest in the Soviet Union.<sup>63</sup> Similarly to Kazakhstan, a few representatives of Kyrgyzstan's nationalist and pro-democracy organizations won seats in the 1990 Supreme Soviet. The fact that the groups mobilized low numbers of protesters on a handful of occasions suggests that their appeal and recognition was limited. According to Zaslavskaiia (1994), the most popular proto-parties at the time were Nevada-Semipalatinsk, which focused on environmental issues, as well as Zheltoksan and Alash which promoted Kazakh nationalism. In Kyrgyzstan, similarly ideologically positioned parties such as Erkin Kyrgyzstan and Asaba claimed

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<sup>62</sup> In Georgia over the same time period, protesters staged nearly 600 demonstrations; approximately 2/3 of these events were organized by specific groups.

<sup>63</sup> Only Turkmenistan, where one single protest was held between 1987-1991, had a lower aggregate level of protest activity than Kyrgyzstan.

less than 10,000 members each, while in reality the number was much smaller (Anarbekov 1999). With few constituents and little organizational infrastructure, it would seem that elites affiliated with these nascent parties would sacrifice little but gain much by joining a party of power.

The Communist Party of Kazakhstan (CPKaz) and Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan (CPKyr) had the largest memberships and broadest recognition of any parties in their respective countries in the early years of independence. On paper, they held the largest seat shares in the legislatures elected in 1990, as only Communists and independents were permitted to register for the 1990 elections. Kazakhstan's Communist Party was officially disbanded in August 1991, but reregistered as the Socialist Party of Kazakhstan and continued to operate unhindered. The party, however, included members from across the ideological spectrum, including both supporters and opponents of the president (Svoik, Petr. Interview. 2015-03-18). Thus, affiliation with Kazakhstan's most direct Communist successor party neither precluded cooperation nor predetermined support for the formerly Communist president. In Kyrgyzstan, however, the continued membership in the Supreme Soviet of two former First Secretaries of the CPKyr who lost the presidential election to Akayev positioned the party in clear opposition to the president (Anderson 1999: 34). While the CPKyr retained had the largest seat share of any party in the republic, (Huskey 1995: 827), the number of independents seated in Kyrgyzstan's Supreme Soviet outnumbered all other party-affiliated MPs by 1995 (Nohlen et al. 2001). In both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, leaders appointed prominent members of the Communist Parties as ministers and advisers, which demonstrates that

affiliation with the Communists did not preclude meaningful political cooperation with the presidents of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Despite the fact that clan politics<sup>64</sup> often enters scholarly analysis of Central Asian politics (Schatz 2004, Collins 2006) and expert accounts of local politics (Sabitov, Zhaksylyk. Interview. 2015-03-11; Svoik, Petr. Interview. 2015-03-18; Zhotabayev, Nigmat. Interview. 2015-03-19), it is difficult to identify ways in which clan identity directly affected the creation of parties of power in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. While most ethnic Kyrgyz and Kazakh have a clan identity, these identities may be leveraged rationally, instrumentally, and contextually (Schatz 2004, Collins 2006). According to Radnitz (2010), clan identity exists in the form of “mythology and memory,” and neither “enables nor inhibits” political mobilization in Kyrgyzstan (128). While Kyrgyzstan's Ata Zhurt and Ata Zhurt draw their membership primarily from Southern Kyrgyzstan and Adilet attracts primarily northerners, other parties such as the Social Democratic Party and Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan draw members from the entire country (Kniازهv 2005: 51). Furthermore, migration patterns and the predominance of the ethnically-mixed cities in driving politics further complicate the political expression of coterminous clan and regional identities (Schatz 2004). For the purposes of this study, clan politics are salient insofar as they clearly lead to one party outcome over another. Given that clans have not determined parliamentary alliances or party formation in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan at the expense of other political concerns, I argue that clan politics did not prevented or somehow removed the need for parties of power these countries in the 1990s. Furthermore, Nursultan Nazarbayev’s consolidation of Nur Otan in Kazakhstan in

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<sup>64</sup> Existing scholarship employs a broad definition of clan politics that describes people connected by “kin and fictive kin identities,” which extend to relatives by blood and marriage, and can include individuals connected by school, neighborhood and regional ties (Collins 2006: 17).

2006 and Kurmanbek Bakiyev's creation of Ak Zhol Kyrgyzstan in 2007 demonstrates that clan and regional identities did not prevent the creation of parties of power in the country during later periods.

In terms of the signaling model of authoritarian party creation, elites in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in the early 1990s had little reason to place high values on their independent reputations (*R*), because most elites lacked substantive partisan identities or independent political ideologies. Most elites in the two countries were elected as Communists but over time drifted from the reconstituted Communist parties of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Heydar Aliyev and Eduard Shevardnadze targeted similarly unaffiliated elites for cooptation into parties of power precisely because they lacked the ties to society and popular support that nationalist-democrat elites had developed. However, in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, these independent elites by and large resisted efforts by incumbent leaders to coopt them. As the following sections show, elite opposition to the leaders of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan persisted not necessarily because of the elites placed on their independent reputations but because of their belief that they could extract even greater concessions from their leaders in the future. The low values they placed on their independent partisan reputations (*R*) should have made them amenable to cooptation, but their beliefs that Nazarbayev and Akayev were conciliatory leaders made them ill-disposed to joining parties of power.

### **Nazarbayev and Akayev's Need for a Party**

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991 a great deal of ambiguity persisted in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan regarding the division of power



between newly elected presidents and the preexisting Supreme Soviets. Though both the executive and legislative branches had been popularly elected, the presidents of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were both elected in hastily arranged single-candidate elections in the fall of 1991 that simply confirmed their tenure in positions that they already held. The Supreme Soviets of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, while somewhat inclusive of the democratic-nationalist movements that had emerged during Perestroika were dominated by formerly-Communist independents. More importantly, the presidents of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were engaged in struggles with legislatures to delineate each branch's powers. Both sides had a clear interest in negotiating for the greatest possible powers in the future constitutions in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, which often pitted presidents against their legislatures.

Drafting Kazakhstan's first post-independence constitution dominated the Supreme Soviet and Nazarbayev's agendas for the year following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. While the legislature and the president's apparatus discussed various proposals for defining Kazakhstan's state languages as well as the size and structure of its future legislature, a deeper struggle took place at the same time over defining the balance of power between the legislative and executive branches. Each branch of government sought to tip the balance of institutional power in their favor through the process of drafting the constitution, understanding the long-term consequences of this early battle. At the time, Serikbolsyn Abdildin, Speaker of the Supreme Soviet 1991-1993, saw the legislative branch's fundamental duty as providing a counterweight to the executive branch (Interview. 2015-03-19) while President Nazarbayev saw himself as personally responsible for executing reforms in the republic and viewed the intervention of the

Supreme Soviet in the reform process as obstruction. Accusing MPs for being mired in the past, he claimed that:

"today, some parliamentarians harbor the opinion that they should represent in the parliament as in the old Supreme Soviets the specific interests of their voters, regions, enterprises, or fields. Most deputies do not understand that in these new conditions, parliament must fulfill a different function, a role that has developed under the circumstances of the establishment of the state and the transition period."

In Nazarbayev's mind, the proper role for the Supreme Soviet was to consolidate support for *his* agenda for state reform, rather than propose alternative agenda (Vidova 2014: 251-252).

From 1990-1993, Kazakhstan's Supreme Soviet consisted of 350 deputies. By far, the most numerous contingent of deputies originated in the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, which was renamed the Socialist Party of Kazakhstan in September 1991 and remained under the leadership of Communist hardliners (Isaacs 2001). Unfortunately for Nazarbayev who left the Communist Party and refused to join the Socialists, the left wing of the Supreme Soviet was dominated by unreformed members of the old CPKaz. According to Svoik, approximately 25% of the Supreme Soviet deputies elected in 1990 supported reform, while the remaining 75% of deputies were unreformed members of the old Communist party apparatus who had little interest in change. He added that only 30 of the 350 members of the chamber were active in debates within the Supreme Soviet of whom only 10-15 deputies were affiliated with the republic's nascent nationalist movements (Svoik, Petr. Interview. 2015-03-18). A contingent of 30 or so deputies organized by Supreme Soviet deputy Sergey Dyachenko called the Union for National

Unity of Kazakhstan (SNEK)<sup>65</sup> whose stated goal was to support the Nazarbayev's reform agenda. SNEK. However, in a legislature with 350 seats, the bloc of SNEK affiliates lacked the requisite seat share to influence the legislative process in any meaningful way (Olcott 1997).

During negotiations about the constitution, representatives of the executive and legislative branches denounced each other for increasing the risk of destabilization in the country through their continued intransigence. For Serikbolsyn Abdildin, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, the president's encouragement of the self-dissolution of the standing Supreme Soviet threatened the country's fragile political order, while for Nazarbayev, the failure of legislators to cooperate during this crucial period of reform presented existential risks to the fledgling Kazakhstani state (Vidova 2014). Indeed, at the time, the Supreme Soviet's leadership achieved significant policy victories, especially as related to the structure of the legislature under the new constitution. Speaker Abdildin succeeded in lobbying against a bicameral parliament because he felt that this arrangement unnecessarily complicated the legislative process (Abdildin 1993). In his own words, Kazakhstan's first constitution was "*abdildinovskaia*," reflecting his and his allies' influence over its drafting (Abdildin, Serikbolsyn. Interview. 2015-03-19).

Later the same year, the Russian Constitutional Crisis of October 1993 demonstrated the extent to which struggles between post-Soviet presidents and the legislatures could escalate. Though Nazarbayev did not resort to tanks to force his will on Kazakhstan's parliament, the parallels of the situation were clear to political actors in the republic. This convinced Nazarbayev of the necessity of seeking alternate solutions to the

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<sup>65</sup> In Russian, *Soiuz Natsional'nogo Edinstva Kazakhstana (SNEK)*. This party is commonly referred to in Russian and English-language scholarship as *SNEK* and so I follow suit.

executive-legislative conflict underway in Kazakhstan, which he alleviated by urging the "self-dissolution" of local councils as well as the Supreme Soviet. Nazarbayev secured the agreement of the Supreme Soviet in December 1993 to suspended itself for three months and set March 7, 1994 as the date for new elections after which Nazarbayev hoped to convene a compliant Supreme Soviet (*ITAR-TASS* 1993-12-15).

For Nazarbayev, the need to have a party of his own derived from the fact that Kazakhstan's Supreme Soviet was dominated by personalities and parties that opposed him and posed a threat to his hegemony over the political system. As one of the most influential political actors in the country, Supreme Soviet Chairman Serikbolsyn Abdildin leveraged his position and the institutional powers of the body he controlled to counter Nazarbayev's initiatives and position himself "actively ... for the coming struggle for presidential office" (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 1993-01-27). As Nazarbayev's public statements confirmed that he valued "social stability" above else, this meant he strived to "avoid open confrontation with the speaker," which led Nazarbayev to offer meaningful policy concessions (*ibid*). In the short term, this strengthened elites' sense that Nazarbayev could be pressed for even greater concessions in the future and at the same time intensified Nazarbayev's need for a cooperative legislature.

Askar Akayev's need for a party grew out of his isolation as a moderate in an increasingly polarized legislature. When Akayev was elected president in October 1990, he was a Supreme Soviet backbencher. Unlike the leaders of the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan, he lacked a patronage networks inside and outside the legislature, and unlike the nationalist leaders recently elected, he lacked recognition among the republic's nascent protest movements and proto-parties. Rather, he occupied the lonely middle

ground within a polarized political sphere. For the time being, he lacked connections among the regional elites represented in the Supreme Soviet, who in other republics served as a core of cooperative MPs. Many of these independent deputies preferred other moderate Communist leaders of the republic whom they knew better than the newly elected president (Anderson 1999: 20-21). Thus, from day one, Akayev faced the challenge of defining his winning coalition from among Kyrgyzstan's amorphous selectorate.

The membership of the Supreme Soviet elected in 1990 in Kyrgyzstan drew heavily from the republic's nomenklatura. The nomination of large numbers of factory directors meant that conservative economic elites were well represented in among candidates for the 1990 Supreme Soviet. Election rules also permitted party elites to run from remote rural constituencies where they faced little competition, rather than register in the urban districts where they resided where popular opposition figures' candidacies were registered. In the final tally, 81 out of 350 seats (23%) in the Supreme Soviet went to party officials including all 40 rayon first secretaries as well as high ranking republic-level officials. In the first months of its term, hardliner Communists dominated the agenda of the Supreme Soviet, easily voting First Secretary of the Communist Party Absamat Masaliyev to the chairmanship of the body (Huskey 1997 823-826).

During Kyrgyzstan's first year of independence, the conflict between Akayev and Kyrgyzstan's Supreme Soviet intensified. According to observers at the time, "the opposition among the nomenklatura and bureaucracy is gathering forces to wage a determined battle against the president and his view of Kyrgyzstan's future state system," and that "the conflict between the executive and the legislature is at a peak height"

(*Moskovskie Novosti* 1992-11-15). This battle dealt primarily with the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches as enshrined by the constitution. Claiming that the Supreme Soviet wished to reduce the presidency to a figurehead akin to the Queen of England, Akayev blamed the conflict on Supreme Soviet's domination by the old nomenklatura (*Moskovskie Novosti* 1992-11-15). This and other conflicts turned his attention to ways to reduce the Supreme Soviet's control over policymaking in Kyrgyzstan.

Both Nazarbayev and Akayev found themselves pitted against entrenched regional elites, ex-Communists independents and members of newly-formed nationalist parties during negotiations over Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan's first constitutions and in discussions about land reform, language laws, and other policies. Each of these battles required significant outlays of political and material capital from Nazarbayev and Akayev, which ultimately weakened their positions. It remains a puzzle, therefore, that neither leader took clear steps to establish parties of their own during this period. This suggests that the emergence of a party of power depends on more than simply having the incentives to create them.<sup>66</sup> As the following section argues, while Akayev and Nazarbayev had strong incentives to create parties of their own, prevailing beliefs among political elites in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan reduced their incentives to join a potential party of power. Believing Nazarbayev and Akayev to be *conciliatory* leaders, elites in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan doubled down on their opposition to their presidents after the

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<sup>66</sup> Creating a party of power also depends on having resources to do so. However, the wide range of resource endowments of leaders who succeeded in creating parties of power suggests that there is no absolute threshold for the resources needed. Thus, this analysis focuses on leaders' *willingness* to create parties of power.

passage of each country's constitution, which forced executive-legislative conflict to a breaking point in both countries over the following years.

### **Perceptions about Leader Type**

Nursultan Nazarbayev was appointed First Secretary of Kazakhstan's Communist Party in June 1990, a mere 18 months before the republic declared its independence, while Askar Akayev was elected president of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic only 11 months before Kyrgyzstan broke off from the Soviet Union. Both leaders positioned themselves as moderate reformers, which represented a break for Nazarbayev from his long career in the Communist nomenklatura. Because elites in Kazakhstan and especially Kyrgyzstan had little prior knowledge of their leaders before they gained power, I argue that a great deal of uncertainty prevailed about what kind of leaders Nazarbayev and Akayev would be in the future. In this section, I argue that elites in both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, after hearing public statements and witnessing public actions by the leaders formed the belief that their leaders were conciliatory, which meant that they would pursue compromise, offer concessions, and include political elites in policymaking. Here, I present evidence from speeches and concrete actions taken by these leaders that reinforce the claim that the leaders could both be perceived as conciliatory. I also demonstrate that the leaders refrained from repression during their first years in power, which reinforced elites' assumptions of the leaders' types. I argue that the low levels of political repression prevalent in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan as compared to neighboring Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan reinforced the perception that Akayev and Nazarbayev

were in fact conciliatory. In the case of Kazakhstan, however, this belief was incorrect, which became evident as time passed.

As president, Nursultan Nazarbayev stressed the importance of ruling through consensus and maintaining interethnic harmony in the republic. In describing the “Nazarbayev phenomenon” in Kazakhstan, the leader’s “pragmatic approach” and “ability to put himself in other people’s place [sic]” were cited as some of the qualities that made him stand out among the new leaders of the successor states of the Soviet Union. According to analysis from the early 1990s, Nazarbayev chose an “evolutionary path of reform,” and that this moderate path and “more or less calm development of events” in Kazakhstan will keep Nazarbayev in power (*Izvestiya* 1991-12-04). He was said to “avoid confrontational stances,” and give “reasoned and calm” speeches (ibid).

During debates in the country over the language policy, Nazarbayev called on groups on both sides of the debate to “build a national state... in which everyone can live happily,” urged both sides to recognize the positive contributions of Russians and Kazakhs to society, and pledged to monitor the respect of both groups’ rights on this issue personally (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 1992-06-04). Later in 1992, Nazarbayev proposed the establishment of “an assembly of accord and unification of the peoples of Kazakhstan” that would act in a “non-political” way to strengthen interethnic unity (*ITAR-TASS* 1992-12-14). These statements and actions underscored Nazarbayev's commitment to interethnic harmony, and reinforced the sense that he would act in a conciliatory way towards political elites in the country.

Regarding many of his policy decisions, Nazarbayev stated that he “could not enter a sharp confrontation with the Supreme Soviet,” because of the danger of upsetting



the fragile order and stability in the country (Vidova 2014: 247). For Nazarbayev, however, the Supreme Soviet represented the retrograde interests of Communist party functionaries, and not the “progressive” elements in society (Vidova 2014: 248). Thus, Nazarbayev needed either to find a way to transform the Supreme Soviet into an institution that supported his agenda, or he needed to find a way to sideline it completely.

Askar Akayev too developed a reputation for compromise and inclusion during the early years of his presidency. In a statement in the first days after being elected president, Akayev stressed the importance of the “consolidation of all the social and political forces in the republic,” and “achieving civilian harmony” (*Moscow Television* 1990-10-30). He added that he would “start with consultations” since his election to the post of President came as a “complete surprise” (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 1990-10-30). He called for the creation of a presidential council in which there would be “representatives of all political parties and various nationalities, regions, and social strata of the population” (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 1990-10-30) and stated that despite these groups’ different views of “current realities, it is this diversity of approaches that will facilitate the correct action strategy and tactics” (*Pravda* 1990-11-02). Journalists in the early 1990s confirmed this, writing that Akayev’s “speeches and manners have exuded democratism” (*Literaturnaya Gazeta* 1992-05-20), and in his own memoirs, Akayev described himself as being “predisposed to accord and consensus” (Akayev 2001: 160). These public statements and external assessments of Akayev’s character build the sense that he was a conciliatory ruler and a consensus-builder.

The fact that neither Nazarbayev nor Akayev engaged in widespread repression in their first years in office further distinguished their conciliatory approaches from their

more harshly repressive neighbors in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Russia. According to the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor annual country reports, in 1992, 1993, 1994, and 1995 there were no reports of extrajudicial killings or torture in Kyrgyzstan attributed to the central government (US Department of State 1993b, 1994b, 1995c, 1996b). While the judicial system is in need of reform, analysts at the time did not identify ways in which the court system was used to suppress opponents of the government. Regarding free speech, a law was proposed in the Supreme Soviet that would have prohibited insulting the president. However under opposition from the president, the law did not pass. Similarly, Akayev opposed restrictions proposed in the Justice Ministry to submit print media for “screening” for classified information before publication, thereby underscoring the wide freedoms that Kyrgyzstani journalists had to discuss and criticize government policy (US Department of State 1994b).

Actions that Nursultan Nazarbayev took early in his presidency reflect a more repressive leadership style than Askar Akayev's but less so than Islam Karimov's in Uzbekistan and Saparmurat Niyazov's in Turkmenistan. The 1992 Bureau of Democracy Human Rights and Labor country report for Kazakhstan described the human rights situation in the country as “mixed,” citing the detention of members of the Alash and Zheltoksan nationalist movements for participating in an unauthorized demonstration and for insulting the president (1993a: 814-5). However, enforcement of laws requiring permits for public demonstrations was sporadic as were regulations requiring the official registration of parties and other public organizations. In nearly all cases, unauthorized protesters and unregistered groups were permitted to operate unhindered the first years of

Nazarbayev's presidency (US Department of State 1994a, 1995b). As he appeared to be a conciliatory ruler, he gave elites little reason to update their beliefs about his type.

### **Nazarbayev and Akayev Do Not Create Parties**

Despite the strong incentives that Nursultan Narbayev and Askar Akayev had to create parties, both leaders chose not to do so. For Nazarbayev, as opposition intensified in the Supreme Soviet, the potential cost of coopting incumbent elites into a pro-presidential party outgrew the benefits of creating one. Moreover, elites' beliefs that he was a conciliatory leader strengthened their willingness to remain independent even when a small but overtly pro-presidential bloc formed in the Supreme Soviet. For Askar Akayev, increasing intransigence from members of Kyrgyzstan's Supreme Soviet, stymied the president's efforts to call for early elections. Realizing that existing elites would hardly be willing to join a party of power, Akayev decided not to create one. As a result, both Nazarbayev and Akayev took actions that reduced the influence and independent power of the legislature of government by external means rather than by coopting the existing legislatures. As elites increasingly valued their independent reputations (*R*), Akayev and Nazarbayev found ways to avoid working with these elites altogether rather than coopting them on unfavorable terms.

The 13 months between the election of Kazakhstan's 13<sup>th</sup> Supreme Soviet in March 1994 and its dissolution by order of the Constitutional Court in April 1995 reveal the strategic conditions that led Nursultan Nazarbayev not to create a party of power. The March 1994 elections brought into office a smaller-than-expected contingent of pro-Nazarbayev deputies, which complicated Nazarbayev's hopes to dominate the 177-

member legislature from within. SNEK, a pro-presidential proto-party that had formed in 1992 and for which Nazarbayev voiced support, won only 30 seats. Despite the fact that Nazarbayev had great influence over the nominating of deputies who were elected on the “state list,” this did not translate into a stable contingent of support for Nazarbayev in the new Supreme Soviet. Journalists at the time noted this phenomenon with surprise, writing that Nazarbayev had intended this smaller professional parliament to work in a unified manner to support his reforms. While 90% of the deputies were reportedly from the former nomenklatura, many in the body acted as a “hidden opposition, if not to the president himself then at least to the reforms he [was] pursuing.” (*Izvestiya* 1994-05-12). Furthermore, a large contingent of deputies who simultaneously held regional administrative positions frequently missed votes, thus tipping the balance more favorably for the vocal deputies. Many of these individuals united into the 15-party Republic Bloc under the leadership of the former Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Serikbolsyn Abdildin (*Izvestiya*, 1994-05-12), who coordinated the initiatives of Nazarbayev's opponents.

Soon after its formation, the Republic Bloc passed a statement expressing a lack of confidence in the president's economic and legal reforms and calling him to increase dialogue with the legislature, its parties, and other social associations (*Kazakh Radio* 1994-05-30). Later that year, deputies called for the resignation of Nazarbayev's cabinet (*Kaztag* 1994-06-24), denied the president's efforts to prosecute a former Supreme Soviet deputy who fell out of favor (*Interfax* 1994-09-22), refused to discuss constitutional amendments about land ownership and language policy proposed by Nazarbayev (*Interfax*, 1994-12-15), and used whatever powers they could muster to assert control over the budget (*Sovety Kazakhstana* 1994-12-28). Despite the uncooperative parliament,

the president's spokesman in the Supreme Soviet, Murat Rabayev, expressed in unequivocal terms in an interview early in 1995 that Nazarbayev had no intention of dispersing the new parliament (Karavan 1995-01-13). As 1994 progressed, it is clear that emboldened elites believed that they could press Nazarbayev for increased concessions, especially as they perceived their power to be growing relative to the executive's (Jones-Luong 2002).

This situation may have come as a surprise to Nazarbayev, especially as signs in 1993 suggested he may transform a loose pro-presidential bloc of deputies into a full-fledged party of power. The Union of National Unity of Kazakhstan was registered officially as a party in March 1993, but had formed earlier from a group of pro-Nazarbayev Supreme Soviet deputies under the leadership of Sergei Dyachenko. Urging the population of Kazakhstan to support Nazarbayev's agenda, SNEK positioned itself as an inclusive, centrist group to counter the efforts of Russian and Kazakh mononational groups (*Ekspress-K* 1993-10-30). Nazarbayev gave the keynote address during a SNEK congress in 1993 in which he invited other existing parties to merge with SNEK (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 1993-02-09). Unfortunately for SNEK, this did not occur. Though the party assisted Nazarbayev in bringing about the self-dissolution of the Supreme Soviet at the end of 1993, SNEK won only 30 out of 177 seats in the new legislature. In 1994, the People's Congress of Kazakhstan, led by the leader of a prominent centrist movement, defied expectations that it might merge with SNEK and joined the opposition Respublika bloc instead (*Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* 1994-11-10). Later, a SNEK official claimed that the party only envisioned appealing to 10-15% of Kazakhstan's population (*Panorama* 1995-03-04). Though party members won 11 seats in the new parliament

elected at the end of 1995, the party ceased to draw attention as a potential party of power.

Given Nazarbayev's spokesman's statement about Nazarbayev's resolve to continue working with the current Supreme Soviet, it came as a shock when Kazakhstan's Constitutional Court invalidated all of the results of the 1994 Supreme Soviet elections based on an obscure case regarding district malapportionment. This turn of events incensed the parliamentarians whose mandates were curtailed, precipitating large scale protests (*Interfax* 1995-03-14). While Nazarbayev filed an official complaint with the Constitutional Court, writing that the dissolution of parliament would "complicate" the task of providing legislative support for ongoing reports (*Kazakhstan Television* 1995-03-08); the court overruled the president's objection. Soon afterward, in an address to the Supreme Soviet, Nazarbayev claimed that the decision came as a surprise to him too, and called upon Kazakhstani citizens to accept court's decision as a sign of respect for democracy (*Kazakhstan Television* 1995-03-11), though some believed that this turn of events was ordered by Nazarbayev himself (Kadyrzhanov, Rustem. Interview. 2015-03-17).

Nazarbayev scheduled elections for the new bicameral Mazhilis for December 1995. In the new parliament, non-partisan independents filled 44 of the 67 seats of the lower house, while SNEK won only 11. Of the 47 seats in the upper house, 7 were directly appointed by Nazarbayev while 28 of the remaining seats were uncontested, thereby delivering the president a far more compliant set of parliamentarians (IPU Parline, 1995b). Of the 47 seats in the upper house, 40 were nominated by oblast officials whom Nazarbayev had appointed, which assured the loyalty of the body. By ruling by

decree for most of 1995 and replacing the 13th Supreme Soviet with a compliant Mazhilis, Nazarbayev achieved impressive policy victories that had eluded him in his dealings with previous parliaments. These changes definitively subordinated the legislature to the executive branch, which eliminated the need, at least in the medium term, to create a party of power. With the Mazhilis's formal powers securely under control of the president and his nominees, the legislature became a toothless appendage to the executive branch, and has remained so ever since.

For Askar Akayev, the passage of Kyrgyzstan's constitution in May 1993 did not resolve his difficulties working with the Supreme Soviet. While he remained popular at the time among the general public, he was much less so inside the legislature. Over the course of 1994 and 1995, Akayev took a number of steps aimed at strengthening his powers. It was during these years that Akayev shifted the balance of institutional power in Kyrgyzstan via referendum to secure greater power for the executive branch. Rather than creating a party of power to assure a compliant Supreme Soviet, he changed the structure of Kyrgyzstan's legislature in order to increase the influence of regional administrators who tended to support Akayev at the expense of party-based MPs who opposed Akayev. These measures gave the president a way to work *around* rather than *with* the Supreme Soviet. This pattern persisted in Kyrgyzstan for the following decade until opposition protesters drove Akayev from power in the 2005 Tulip Revolution.

After the passage of Kyrgyzstan's constitution in May 1993, Supreme Soviet sessions became “plenums with showdowns,” which paralyzed the work of the legislature (*Rossiyskaia Gazeta* 1993-07-30). Representatives of eight parties that opposed Akayev convened a conference to organize their opposition to the president as if they were

waging "their last decisive battle" (ibid). On the agenda of this round table were motions to hold an extraordinary session of the Supreme Soviet to express their lack of confidence in the government. Members of these parties called for the expulsion of businessmen and regional administrators from the legislature and the convening of a professional Supreme Soviet composed entirely of full-time lawmakers from Kyrgyzstan's political parties, which jeopardized Akayev's main power base (ibid).

Later in 1993, Akayev's opponents targeted Prime Minister Tursunbek Chingyshev with charges of corruption in the disappearance of millions of dollars' worth of Kyrgyzstan's gold reserves. Media accounts note the "combative and decisive" mood of Supreme Soviet legislators and their determination to hold the Prime Minister and National Bank director accountable for the loss (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 1993-12-07). Chingyshev lost a vote of confidence in December 1993, and was replaced by Apas Jumangulov, a Communist hardliner, and an entirely new cabinet (*Slovo Kyrgyzstana* 1993-12-18). In response to the turn of events, Akayev spun this defeat as a step to "balance out the government" by including representatives of both the reformist wing and "those who have experience of organizational work," i.e. the Communists. Analysts at the time assessed this turn of events as a victory for "revanchists" in Kyrgyzstan which had the potential to stop and even reverse the economic reforms that Akayev had implemented to date (*Segodnya* 1993-12-18).

Sensing his support in the Supreme Soviet weakening as the Chingyshev scandal dragged on, Akayev scheduled a referendum in which voters were asked whether they approved of his policies and whether they wished that he remain in office until the end of his term. Akayev began to call for the "self-dissolution" of the legislature, mirroring



events occurring at the same time in neighboring Kazakhstan (*Interfax* 1993-12-11). Despite these statements, analysts expected the Communists, who had been the greatest thorn in Akayev's side, to do well in snap elections just as they had in the previous elections. At the same time, according to polls at the time, Askar Akayev was the most popular individual politician nationwide as well as the top ranked politician in each of Kyrgyzstan's six oblasts. He was also the only leading figure whose popularity increased in polls over the course of 1993 (*Slovo Kyrgyzstana* 1993-12-18). This popularity among the citizenry coupled with his unpopularity in the legislature may have given Akayev his inspiration for his main institutional strategy for the coming years: to change Kyrgyzstan's political institutions via referendum rather than through parliamentary deliberation.

According to Huskey (1997), efforts to win support within the Supreme Soviet led Akayev to strike an "informal pact" with Supreme Soviet speaker Medetkan Sherimkulov that substituted for establishing a formal parliamentary bloc sometime after the passage of Kyrgyzstan's constitution in 1993 (257). According to this pact, Sherimkulov was to use the personal connections he built with incumbent legislators during his long career as a high-ranking Communist Party functionary to keep overt conflict in the Supreme Soviet to a minimum. In exchange, Sherimkulov himself received various side-payments. This set-up exemplifies the kinds of ad-hoc alliances that Akayev forged in the absence of a stable group of supporters. Rather than trying to marshal uncooperative legislatures into a party of power, he pursued an indirect path for securing legislative support. However, this pact came to an end as economic conditions worsened and was not sufficient to maintain support for Akayev.

After receiving a clear show of support during the January 1994 referendum, Akayev restated his dedication to maintaining interethnic harmony in the republic, and that “unity, friendship, and accord between the people of Kyrgyzstan” would be the key to overcoming present challenges (*ITAR-TASS* 1994-02-10). However, as time passed, Akayev's “politics of inclusion” in which he made concessions and compromises to “all but the most radical” contingents of the Supreme Soviet (Huskey 1997: 256) had the unintended consequence of raising the cost of cooperation from legislators in the future. Continued steps towards reconciliation with parliamentary opponents cast Akayev as a leader who could be squeezed for more concessions. Along with concessions to members of parliament, Akayev did little “to halt the ‘spontaneous’ devolution of power” to regional leaders (Jones-Luong 2002: 108), which strengthened the influence of regional elites in policymaking. According to observers of Kyrgyzstani politics at the time “it [was] not Akayev who [was] determining the pace of reform in Kyrgyzstan but the [regional] akims” (Jones-Luong 2002: 109). Thus by 1994, Akayev lacked control over the Supreme Soviet as well as regional elites, and so his strongest claim to legitimacy as a leader was his popularity among average citizens.<sup>67</sup>

At the end of September 1994, the president scheduled a referendum on amendments to the constitution, one of which called for the establishment of a bicameral parliament with a total of 105 members, and another which established the possibility of amending the constitution via referendum rather than via the parliament (*Kyrgyz Radio* 1994-09-23). Both of these were institutional changes that Akayev pursued in order to both exert more personal control over the legislative branch while simultaneously

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<sup>67</sup> Akayev remained popular among Western donors for his liberal economic reforms and tolerance of opposition groups (Anderson 1999).

reducing its powers. Though unable to stop the referendum, a majority of deputies, refused to attend the rest of the scheduled parliamentary sessions, thereby denying the Supreme Soviet a quorum. As a consequence, the legislature entered a period of stalemate until the February 1995 parliamentary elections.

Whereas Heydar Aliyev and Eduard Shevardnadze created parties that passed which secured legislative cooperation of for the executive agenda, Akayev and Nazarbayev resorted to measures that allowed them to work around their legislatures once they realized that they would not be able to establish parties of power of power. Claiming that referenda were becoming “one of the most real and effective forms of democracy in the country” (*Slovo Kyrgyzstana* 1994-09-27), Akayev stated that in the future that authorities would seek the input of the population on a range of issues including the economy, the use of natural resources in the country and social welfare. Similarly, Nazarbayev used referenda and presidential decree for a nine-month period in 1995 to drastically alter Kazakhstan's laws on his own terms.

After 1994, Akayev staged referenda in 1996, 1998, and 2003 that altered the size and structure of the Supreme Soviet, took powers away from the judicial branch, and that finally confirmed the Kyrgyzstani people's desire for him to serve out his final term until its end in 2005. Akayev managed to isolate the Supreme Soviet, though he never expelled the opposition from the body. He adopted a laissez-faire, conciliatory attitude towards regional political elites whom he stacked in the upper house of parliament, while he gave members of the regional administration free rein to siphon off state resources and as long as they did not openly organize against Akayev. As long as he could steal elections,

Akayev could maintain the status quo in the parliament and stage referenda for public displays of support.

On the other hand, Nursultan Nazarbayev succeeded in charting a non-party strategy of rule that provided him with greater personal control over Kazakhstan's parliament. By redesigning the legislature such that he could directly nominate seven members of the upper house and indirectly nominate the rest, he retained the formal levers needed to control Kazakhstan's legislature, which unlike Kyrgyzstan's ceased to be a locus of opposition despite the absence of a party of power.

### **Revelation of Types in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan**

By 1996, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan settled into distinct non-party institutional equilibria after their tumultuous first years of independence. While the two countries' institutional trajectories shared a number of similarities until 1995, they diverged afterwards as leaders revealed their type. In Kazakhstan, a wave of repression of opposition figures and brazen manipulation of the constitution by President Nazarbayev definitively disempowered the legislative branch and dealt a number of serious blows to the Kazakhstani opposition. The original Kazakhstani elites who dominated Kazakhstan's Supreme Soviets in the early 1990s were definitively excluded from politics by the mid-1990s and suffered serious repression, though the opposition was periodically replenished by defections from the ruling clique (Junisbai and Junisbai 2005).

On the other hand, the dynamics of Kyrgyzstani politics after 1995 largely resembled those of the previous years. Efforts on Akayev's part to minimize the institutional strength of the legislature via referendum succeeded, but support within the

legislature depended on ad-hoc deals with influential regional elites who ultimately overthrew him in 2005. Legal harassment of political elites took place intermittently during the 1990s and early 2000s, but the original elites who opposed Akayev in the early 1990s remained in office throughout his presidency and replaced him in 2005 (*Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty* 2015-06-24).

After the 1995 dissolution of the Supreme Soviet, Nazarbayev's displayed a clear willingness to his critics in the opposition. While Nazarbayev transformed his rhetorical appeals for maintaining interethnic harmony and domestic stability into a national ideology over the 1990s, as time passed, his actions demonstrated the harsh means he would use to achieve his goals. According to Olcott (1997), for Nazarbayev, direct presidential rule between April and December 1995 followed by "all but direct presidential rule" definitively established the presidency as the primary locus of political power in Kazakhstan. The subservient Mazhilis that formed in 1996 provided a thin veneer of checks and balances in Kazakhstan's government without threatening meaningful opposition of Nazarbayev's initiatives.

After this shift, Nazarbayev brazenly repressed his political opponents. While between 1993-1995, freedoms of expression and assembly for opponents of the president were mostly respected,<sup>68</sup> the tendency during the late 1990s and beyond has been towards increasing restrictions on public demonstrations, greater persecution of the media, and more intense physical repression of the government's opponents. In late 1996, Petr Svoik, a prominent member of Kazakhstan's 12th and 13th Supreme Soviets was summoned to the State Committee for Investigations to discuss "alleged wrongdoing" during his tenure

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<sup>68</sup> Before 1995, unauthorized protests were mostly tolerated, though each year one or two unauthorized protests resulted in the arrests of the protest's organizers.

as head of the State Antimonopoly Committee (US Department of State 1996b). In January of the following year, Nazarbayev called for “a year of political accord,” effectively a moratorium on public political demonstrations. While state-supported organizations complied, independent movements did not. In March 1997, the Prosecutor General warned that “all necessary actions” would be taken to stop unsanctioned protests after an unauthorized demonstration took place which criticized top government officials. Later that year, Petr Svoik was attacked in a hotel room in Bishkek and allegedly “received a warning from the government” following his staging of an unsanctioned opposition rally in Almaty in November 1997 (US Department of State 1998b). While enforcement of the moratorium on protest was unevenly applied, this policy marked a clear change of tack from previous years.<sup>69</sup>

After resigning from his position in October 1997, Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin and his close associates came under violent attack, likely on political grounds; many of these attacks targeted the campaign staff supporting Kazhegeldin’s candidacy in the 1999 presidential elections. Other attacks in 1998 singled out high profile Kazakhs as well as foreign embassy officials engaged in reporting on the worsening human rights conditions in the country. The following year, soon after announcing early presidential elections, five opposition leaders, including Kazhegeldin, were arrested and convicted of staging an unauthorized rally, which disqualified them from the presidential race (US Department of State 1999b). Intra-elite conflict sent groups of former regime insiders into the opposition, yet each wave of regime defectors

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<sup>69</sup> Human rights reports published by the Department of State’s Bureau of Democracy Human Rights and Labor on Kazakhstan list two organizations who experienced administrative difficulties after staging unauthorized rallies in 1996. In 1997, unauthorized protests led to the arrest of the events’ organizers on at least six occasions.

led to an intensification of repression rather than concessions to the new opposition. (Sabitov, Zhaksylyk. Interview. 2015-03-11). As long as revenues from hydrocarbon sales poured into the country, and as long the flow of foreign capital continued, Nazarbayev and his associates had ample resources to repress dissenters and coopt new supporters. Though economic growth in Kazakhstan fueled intra-elite conflict, this conflict did not result in any significant liberalization of the regime during the 2000s (Junisbai and Junisbai 2005).

By the end of the 1990s, a number of new pro-presidential blocs of legislators formed in what was an already completely compliant Mazhilis. Fatherland (Otan) Party won 23 out of 77 seats in the lower house, while the Civic Party in a coalition with the Agrarian Party won of 16 seats. The Communists under the leadership of Serikbolsyn Abdildin won three out of 77 seats and represented the only opposition force in the Mazhilis (IPU Parline 1999). The 2004 Mazhilis's membership represented an even more uniformly pro-presidential group of parties and included four seats for Asar, a party created by President Nazarbayev's elder daughter Dariga (IPU Parline 2004). Analysts have explained rise of this constellation of pro-presidential parties as a response to newly formed opposition parties such as DVK, which were created by former regime insiders who went into the opposition (Junisbai and Junisbai 2005).

A call in 2006 by Dariga Nazarbayeva for all pro-presidential parties to unite so catalyzed the establishment of the Nur Otan, Kazakhstan's first party of power.<sup>70</sup>

Constitutional amendments passed in May 2007 increased the size of the Mazhilis from 77 to 107 deputies, and shifted the balance from 67 SMD seats and 10 party list seats to

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<sup>70</sup> This comment lends support to the notion that parties of power can be created as a defensive move to occupy the party sphere, which would stymie the growth of new parties.

98 party list seats and 9 appointed members (IPU Parline 2007). Now under the leadership of President Nazarbayev, Nur Otan won every seat directly elected seat in Kazakhstan's 2007 parliamentary elections (OSCE-ODIHR 2007). Akin to the creation of the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan or the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan in 1991, the establishment of Nur Otan involved little uncertainty, and merely formalized pre-existing dynamics between the executive and legislative branches.

As stated above, for Akayev, little changed in the Zhogorku Kenesh after the 1995 elections. The political forces that posed problems for Akayev's legislative agenda in the early 1990s continued to do so for entire 15 years of his presidency. The Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan retained the largest seat share and remained the best organized party in the 35-member lower house, though it lost some of its cohesion due to targeted cooptation of members by President Akayev (Ishiyama 2008: 158-160). For the 2000 parliamentary elections, 15 seats in the legislature's lower house were assigned based on party list. Remarkably five out of the eleven parties that competed passed the 5% threshold in 2000, which awarded seats to the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan (27% of the vote), and the Union of Democratic Forces (18% of the vote) as well as three smaller parties (IPU Parline 2000b). Though the 1996 and 1998 constitutional amendments weakened the formal powers of the legislative branch, parliamentarians in Kyrgyzstan continued to show remarkable independence. In 1997, the Zhogorku Kenesh overturned 15 presidential vetoes including one on a bill to allow no-confidence votes on any government minister. The following year, Kyrgyzstan's parliament overturned 28 vetoes and delayed passage of the 1998 budget in order to extract more concessions from



Akayev.<sup>71</sup> Such consistent opposition to the presidential agenda was unprecedented in Central Asia.

During Akayev's second term, 1995-2000, there were no extrajudicial or politically-motivated killings in Kyrgyzstan, and minimal censorship. Rather, Akayev's opponents were targeted for legal and administrative harassment rather than imprisonment, beatings, and imprisonment. The leader of Kyrgyzstan's most influential opposition party Erkin Kyrgyzstan, Topchubek Turgunaliyev, was arrested in April 1996 for allegedly distributing anti-Akayev leaflets. Kyrgyzstan's Supreme Court upheld the verdict against him, but then released him in mid-1997 in a general amnesty. Turgunaliyev spent the next year in and out of prison for participation in a series of illegal demonstrations. As of the end of 1998, Turgunaliyev has remained out of prison however he was placed under probation, which disqualified him from running in the 2000 parliamentary elections.

Rather than outright repression, Akayev's government used electoral fraud to ensure victory in the country's competitive elections. The OSCE and other human rights monitors consistently assessed elections in Kyrgyzstan negatively. The 1996 referendum was regarded as "marred by irregularities," particularly related to voter turnout, which was officially reported at 98% but which was in fact far lower (US Department of State 1997c). Similarly, the 96% turnout reported by the government in the 1998 referendum "was not in accord with participation rates witnessed by local and international observers" (US Department of State 1999c).

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<sup>71</sup> Eduard Shevardnadze, another conciliatory leader, but one whose party of power maintained a leading position in Georgia's parliament only vetoed one bill during his presidency (*Eurasianet* 2003-03-19).

Nonetheless, choice remained high in elections under Akayev. An average of 8.9 candidates registered in single member district races in the 1995 elections, 4.7 candidates per district in 2000, and 5.2 in 2005, and on average, there were approximately three “effective candidates” in districts across the country in each of the three elections. More importantly, the winning candidates won on average only 37.8% of their districts vote in 1995, 43.6% in 2000, and 47.2% in 2005 (Sjoberg 2011: 152). A second round of elections was necessary in 87 of the 90 SMD districts as candidates in these districts failed to win an outright majority (IPU Parline 2000b). Though spurious claims against the leader of the People’s Party leader, Daniyar Usenov, and Ar-Namys Party leader, Omurbek Suvanaliyev put pressure on these candidates during their races, both were ultimately permitted to compete in the 2000 parliamentary elections (US Department of State 2001b).

The Akayev regime met its end in March 2005 after post-election protests paralyzed the center of Bishkek and forced the president and his family to flee Kyrgyzstan. Though Askar Akayev appeared committed to leaving office at the end of his constitutionally-mandated second term in 2005, he raised suspicions by supporting his daughter Bermet's efforts to organize a party of power, *Alga, Kyrgyzstan!* According to Bunce and Wolchik (2011), the final straw for the Akayev regime was not the fact that he stole the 2005 elections, but that he stole them in a way that upset the status quo power-sharing with regional elites. The courts were used to disqualify popular politicians from running for parliament on arbitrary grounds<sup>72</sup> brought back reminders of the 2000 parliamentary elections. This compounded tensions from 2003 changes to the constitution

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<sup>72</sup> Roza Otunbayeva, a former ambassador and widely respected opposition politician, was disqualified from running for office in the Bishkek district where she resided; this happened to be the same district where Bermet Akayeva was registered (*Eurasianet* 2005-03-17).

that made it more difficult for opposition members to compete for power (Bunce and Wolchik 2011:173-174). The electoral defeat of popular Southern Kyrgyzstani politicians set off protests in early March 2005 which soon spread to Bishkek and toppled Akayev's government by the end of the month.

By the mid-2000s, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan's political trajectories diverged remarkably. While Kazakhstan crossed the threshold to a "consolidated authoritarian regime" in the mid-1990s and has remained in that category ever since, Kyrgyzstan under Akayev remained a "hybrid regime," where civil society organizations and the media outlets have continued to operate relatively unhindered, especially when compared to Kyrgyzstan's neighbors in the region. Akayev's conciliatory nature meant that persecution of his opponents remained low, while repressive measures against certain figures were coupled with concessions to others. As a contrast, in Kazakhstan under Nazarbayev's repressive rule, whole categories of rivals were excluded from power and prevented from returning to power either being exiled or by meeting their untimely deaths. In both Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, the leader's type shaped politics far beyond the macro-institutional choices that the leaders made in the 1990s. While both leaders pursued a similar strategy to work around their legislatures rather than coopt their members through parties of power, the repressive leader still presides over a consolidated authoritarian regime while the conciliatory one lost power following popular protests.

## **Conclusion**

This paired comparison of Nursultan Nazarbayev and Askar Akayev's strategies of rule in the 1990s demonstrates the conditions under which *not creating* a party of

power dominates *creating* one, despite the incentives that each leader had to create a party. In the Kazakhstani case, the consolidation of parliamentary opposition in 1993-1994 made clear to Nursultan Nazarbayev that elites would not join a potential party of power. Subsequently, he disbanded the Supreme Soviet and amended Kazakhstan's constitution to disempower the legislative branch permanently. In Kyrgyzstan, a contentious Supreme Soviet obstructed President Akayev's agenda, launched corruption investigations against high-placed officials and stymied attempts to dissolve the parliament. Realizing that existing elites would not join a party of power, Akayev secured the powers of the presidency via referendum and direct appeals to the population rather than through parliamentary legislation. Yet his conciliatory rule included significant compromises to regional politicians and economic elites, which over time empowered elites to the degree that they no longer depended on the president's patronage.

By comparing two leaders of neighboring post-Soviet states whose paths to power and challenges in office parallel each other allows the analysis to focus on the crucial variables of leader type and elite beliefs about their types. During the period when Nazarbayev and Akayev were deciding whether to create parties of their own or not, the fact that elites in both countries believed both leaders to be conciliatory led both leaders *not to create* parties of their own. However, in the aftermath, Nursultan Nazarbayev, a repressive leader, used coercion to exclude and punish uncooperative political elites while Askar Akayev, a conciliatory ruler, employed cooptation and consensus-building as strategies of rule.

In addition to demonstrating how leaders of different types make the same institutional choice, this chapter also shows how leader type affects the internal dynamics

of a given regime. Neither Nazarbayev nor Akayev established parties of power in order to control the legislative branch, and both relied on a combination of referenda and ad-hoc cooptation to secure their rule. However, in Kazakhstan, visible repression by Nazarbayev kept discipline among his allies despite periodic defections of regime insiders. In Akayev's case, his continued inclusion of a wide range of regional elites and the concessions he granted them put his rule on much weaker footing. The development of a consolidated authoritarian regime in Kazakhstan and a less stable version of authoritarianism in Kyrgyzstan likely has more to do with leaders' types than their institutional choices.

## Chapter 5: Why Parties of Power? A Reprise

In this dissertation, I posed the question, "why parties of power" in order to understand why some incumbent authoritarian leaders create political parties of their own. As I began to dig deeper into the topic, a number of variations of the "why parties" question emerged. What purpose do these parties serve? What benefits do they provide? Given the uncertainty about the survival of parties of power, can their creation be justified by the long-term functions that they perform? What short-term benefits do these parties provide? Given the widely recognized incentives that authoritarian rulers have to maintain parties of their own, why don't all leaders create them?

By delving into the literature on party creation in authoritarian regimes, I found a lack of attention to the *creation* of parties of power and few attempts to explain the variation in the distribution of these parties across authoritarian regimes worldwide. However, by evaluating the entire set of parties of power in light of existing theories, I found that whether a leader creates a party appears not to be a simple function of the benefits they expect to receive minus the costs they expect to pay. The decision also appears not to depend on specific resource endowments, historical legacies, career trajectories of individual leaders, nor any particular institutional configurations. It is evident that authoritarian leaders *do not* create parties where legislatures are shuttered, where elections are not held, and where parties themselves are banned. However, these patterns offer little positive insight into why some authoritarian leaders create parties.

The lack of satisfactory structural, historical, and institutional explanations for the variation in authoritarian party creation turned my attention to agent-centered

explanations. After considering decision-theoretic accounts of leaders' choices, it became clear that it is impossible to develop an adequate theory considering only rulers. Creating a party of power depends both on leaders' incentives as well as the willingness of elites to join the party, and so is a strategic and interdependent process. Though both sides stand to benefit from creating or joining a party of power under some circumstances, different institutional outcomes emerge based on actors' expectations of their opponents' actions in the game. By understanding actors' preferences, the order of their play, and their beliefs, one can identify the conditions under which leaders create parties and when they do not.

In this dissertation, I propose a formal model in which party creation as well as the decision not to create a party both emerge as stable institutional equilibria. I model authoritarian party creation as a signaling game in which creating a party is a costly and meaningful signal of leader type, either conciliatory or repressive. Repressive leaders punish and exclude uncooperative elites while conciliatory ones rule through consensus and cooptation. Though elites know that both types of leaders exist, they are uncertain about their own leader's type, especially for the first few years of the ruler's tenure. Thus, when elites observe that leaders are creating a party of power, elites must base their decision about whether to join on their best guess about the leader's type.

I make explicit the assumptions that support two pure-strategy pooling equilibria (EQ1 and EQ2) and demonstrate their existence empirically with two paired case studies. I also identify two other pooling equilibria and one separating equilibrium, which I link to existing literature but do not demonstrate in narrative form. Assumptions that support the solutions to EQ1 and EQ2 generate the hypotheses that *when elites believe leaders to be repressive, leaders succeed in creating parties* and *when elites believe leaders to be*

*conciliatory, leaders do not create parties of power.* These hypotheses test the interdependent nature of party creation as well as the critical role of elite beliefs in shaping the process of authoritarian party creation.

I present pairs of historical case studies from four post-Soviet regimes in the 1990s to demonstrate the existence of EQ1 and EQ2. I based this study in post-Soviet Eurasia because the shared institutional pasts, similar political cultures, and comparable dynamics of political mobilization across the region serve as controls for competing explanations of institutional choices in these regimes. I study the emergence of parties of power in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan specifically because these cases exemplify the puzzling variation in party creation by incumbent authoritarian leaders. While leaders in all four countries had strong incentives to create parties of their own, only leaders whom elites considered to be repressive succeeded in establishing parties of power. These case studies serve as a test of the plausibility and validity of the signaling model of authoritarian party creation, add empirical nuance to the formal model, and serve to open the phenomenon up to broader comparative-historical and statistical study.

### **Summary of Main Findings**

This dissertation has generated a number of novel insights into party creation in authoritarian regimes. The first findings engage with the notion that parties lengthen the tenure of authoritarian rulers. When the subset of authoritarian regimes that feature pro-regime parties is compared with those regimes that lack them, it is clear that on average, rulers and ruling coalitions that maintain pro-regime parties remain in power longer.



However, when parties which rulers presided over before gaining power are removed from the set, the added time in power for rulers diminishes significantly. Leaders who create parties of power remain in power on average for two years longer than rulers who do not create parties at all.

This study departs from existing scholarship by justifying party creation by the short-term benefits that parties provide to rulers rather than long-term functions that some parties perform. This intervention in the literature allows the analysis to focus on the immediate concerns that lead rulers to make their institutional choices without having to grapple with the many intervening factors that lead a nascent party of power to develop into a consolidated one. Focusing on the short-term incentives allows this project to address the symbolic significance of creating a party of power, which in its own right is sufficient to shift elites' incentives for cooperation with the leader. By creating parties of power, I argue that leaders signal their commitment to share some measure of regime spoils with a select group of insiders, and at the same time communicate that they will exclude others. Thus, creating a party serves as an ultimatum to elites to reveal their preferences for cooperation and face the consequences.

This dissertation presents historically detailed narratives of the creation of parties of power in Georgia and Azerbaijan. Existing scholarship on Georgian and Azerbaijani politics of the early 1990s gloss over the creation of the Citizens Union and the New Azerbaijan Party and present the process as a *fait accompli* in which former First Secretaries simply corralled their former supporters into a new party. I offer a corrective to these accounts. For Eduard Shevardnadze and Heydar Aliyev, creating parties of power in the early 1990s involved deft navigation of contentious political environments

where failure could have meant losing power and plunging their countries back into civil war. Similarities in the initial conditions surrounding party creation in Georgia and Azerbaijan allow me to focus on the role that perceptions of leader type play in making party creation a dominant strategy for both repressive and conciliatory leaders. The case comparison of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan by similar logic focuses on lesser known, but fertile cases to demonstrate why two authoritarian leaders chose not to create parties of power despite having strong incentives to do so. As the narratives in Chapter 4 demonstrate, both Nursultan Nazarbayev and Askar Akayev eschewed party creation in the 1990s because existing elites considered them both conciliatory leaders.

### **Extensions of the Project**

As I develop this project further, I envision a number ways to explore the theory of party creation more deeply, extend the case studies, and test the effects of parties of power on a number of other institutional and regime outcomes.

While so far I have focused on pooling equilibria 1 and 2, in the future I would like to explore the theoretical implications of the separating equilibrium (EQ5) generated by the model. As stated in Chapter 2, the entire set of party creation by incumbent authoritarian rulers is explained by a semi-separating equilibrium in which different types of leaders pool under certain conditions and separate under others. I chose to focus on the pooling equilibria for the case studies in this dissertation because they give insight into the sometimes surprising institutional choices of authoritarian rulers, and offer a twist on existing theories. However, in order to understand the full picture of party of power creation, I wish to delve deeper into case studies that illustrate a separating equilibrium

(EQ5). Vladimir Putin's creation of United Russia could serve as an example of an equilibrium in which a repressive leader creates a party, while Ukraine's Leonid Kuchma was a conciliatory leader who did not. Furthermore, a case study of the iconic party of power currently in existence in the post-Soviet space would broaden the appeal of this project.

I envision extending the model to explore other aspects of the informational imbalance between elites and leaders. To date, I have modeled information such that leaders have information about elite beliefs but elites lack information about leaders' types. I justified this choice in Chapter 2 by explaining that leaders can observe elites' political preferences in the present while elites can only observe a leader's true type at some point in the future. However, as I develop this project further, I will address how leaders gain information about elite beliefs so that by the time they initiate the signaling game of authoritarian party creation, they already know elites' beliefs. Instances like Shevardnadze's 1993 parliamentary showdown and Nursultan Nazarbayev's flirtation with SNEK suggest ways in which leaders gather information before deciding whether or not to create parties of power. This phenomenon deserves further investigation.

So far, I have focused only on party creation by incumbent rulers during the first years of their tenure. However, the historical record shows that a number of leaders create parties much later. Anecdotally, it appears that these cases take place when leaders foresee a major shift from the institutional status quo. For Panama's Omar Torrijos and Bangladesh's Hussein Ershad, the resumption of elections after a long hiatus appears to have prompted the creation of their parties of power. For other leaders, such as Kyrgyzstan's Askar Akayev and Ukraine's Leonid Kuchma, attempts to create parties of

power near the end of their constitutionally-mandated terms may have been aimed at managing succession. It stands to reason that the stimuli for creating parties at later periods of a ruler's tenure are different than ones at earlier rounds. As such, they should be theorized differently and modeled separately.

As I develop this project, I would like to take up the question of what happens to parties of power after they are created. It is evident that a great deal of variation exists among parties of power in how they develop over time. Some parties feature robust internal competition, actively mobilize citizens, continue to recruit ambitious politicians, and carry out any number of other beneficial functions that bolster authoritarian regimes. Others ossify and cease to do much other than occupy seats (on paper) in rubber stamp parliaments. As I develop this work, I wish to understand what conditions lead parties in authoritarian regimes to remain vital to the maintenance of the regime and when they evolve into hollow appendages of the executive branch. As Gandhi (2008) argues, it is clear that legislatures and parties in some authoritarian regimes are more than window dressing. But some parties and legislatures in many are indeed little more than window dressing.

In this dissertation, I have focused almost entirely on parties of power as a dependent variable. Only occasionally has the analysis hinted at the effects that parties of power have on the political systems in which they are created, both within a given period of authoritarian rule and beyond. I have demonstrated how the creation of a party of power immediately changes incentives for elite cooperation with the leader, and have touched on instances when legislatures dominated by newly created parties of power transfer institutional power from the legislative to the executive branch. In the future, I

would like to test this phenomenon more broadly. I hypothesize that *ceteris paribus*, formal executive powers are stronger in regimes where parties of power exist. I expect this because leaders who create parties of their own use them to pass legislation and constitutional amendments that institutionalize the dominance of the executive branch over all others. Using a battery of control variables such as presidential versus parliamentary system and the institutional origin of the leader, I would still expect to see increased executive powers where rulers have created and maintained parties of power.

I would like to test the effects that parties of power have on the structure of party systems in which they have been created. Following Magaloni (2006) and Greene (2007), I concur that parties of power exert centripetal force in party systems which draws a portion of ambitious politicians who otherwise would have remained independent or formed their own. Thus, I expect that all else equal, the effective number of parties with seats in parliament will be *smaller* in regimes that feature parties of power. I also hypothesize that the percentage of seats held by independents will be *larger* in regimes where parties of power do not exist. I hold that this is the case because ambitious politicians who lack deep partisan convictions are likely to join parties of power where they exist, but otherwise would pursue political careers as independents. Additionally, I hypothesize that legislatures in countries where parties of power exist will be larger than countries where there is no party of power. Larger legislatures provide more patronage positions to party loyalists, while in the absence of parties, smaller legislatures mean a smaller group of legislators that rulers must coopt.

Finally, I plan to compare the effects of parties of power on a number of outcomes relating to the termination of authoritarian spells and what happens afterwards.

Preliminary evidence I have gathered indicates that leaders who create parties of power are equally likely to lose power in coups as leaders who do not create parties. This calls into question Geddes's (2006) assertion that parties protect authoritarian leaders against coups. Though in line with the findings that parties of power do not lengthen the tenure of authoritarian leaders when compared to leaders who do not create parties at all, the coup-related finding needs to be tested against a variety of control variables to ensure its robustness. Whether the existence of parties of power affects the nature of political competition in future periods of authoritarian rule under new leaders or under democratic rule has not yet been systematically explored. Arguably, formerly authoritarian regimes that feature some kind of party activity are better able to support multiparty democracy once an authoritarian spell ends, but it is unclear whether there is any difference between parties created before rulers gained power and those created afterward.

### **Final Thoughts**

When I first proposed this project, my goal was to explain variation in the durability of parties of power with the intent of explaining the role that parties of power play in either strengthening authoritarian regimes or undermining them. Like much of the literature on competitive authoritarianism, I believed that parties of power played an integral role in consolidating power for authoritarian rulers, but at the same time recognized that many parties of power failed to live up to this ideal. The focus of this project shifted over time to the creation of parties of power rather than their long-term survival. The research that has emerged as a result of these changes is undoubtedly more theoretically rigorous, more broadly testable, and more generative of novel insights about

parties in authoritarian regimes. As regards parties of power, my view of their role in anchoring or undermining authoritarian regimes has shifted almost 180° to the point that I am more comfortable arguing that most parties *do not contribute* to the long-term durability of authoritarian regimes. My appreciation of the importance of other factors, including the propensity of *leaders* to repress or to engage in conciliatory behavior, has emerged as a rival explanation for political outcomes to which I will devote greater attention in the future.

By proposing a novel theory and testing it with historical case studies from an understudied region of the world, this dissertation reduces some of the *uncertainty* about why authoritarian rulers create parties and promises to deliver a wide range of *benefits* to researchers of any *type*.

## Appendix A: Parties of Power Worldwide

**Table 4: Parties of Power Worldwide**

<b>Name of Party</b>	<b>Founder</b>	<b>Year</b>
New Azerbaijan Party	Aliyev, H	1992
People's Revolutionary Party of Benin	Kerekou	1975
Congress for Democracy and Progress (Burkina Faso)	Campaore	1996
Bangladesh Nationalist Party	Rahman	1977
Jatiya Party (Bangladesh)	Ershad	1986
ARENA and MBD (Brazil)	Branco	1965
Central African Democratic Party	Kolingba	1986
Comoran Union for Progress	Abdallah	1982
Congolese Workers' Party	Ngouabi	1969
People's Rally for Progress (Djibouti)	Aptidon	1981
Dominican Party (Dominican Republic)	Trujillo	1931
Popular Movement of the Revolution (Zaire)	Mobutu	1967
People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy (DR Congo)	Kabila	2006
United National Workers' Party (Equatorial Guinea)	Nguema	1986
United Fiji Party	Qarase	2006
Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (Gambia)	Jammeh	1996
Citizens' Union of Georgia	Shevardnadze	1993
Institutional Democratic Party (Guatemala)	Azurdia	1967
Party of Unity and Progress (Guinea)	Conte	1993
National Unity Party (Haiti)	Duvalier	1958
Nur Otan (Kazakhstan)	Nazarbayev	2006
Ak Zhol (Kyrgyzstan)	Bakiev	2007
Mauritanian People's Party	Daddah	1961
Democratic and Social Republican Party (Mauritania)	Taya	1991
National Movement for the Society of Development (Niger)	Saibou	1989
United Russia	Putin	1991
Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party	Barre	1976
People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan	Rahmonov	1994
Democratic Party of Turkmenistan	Niyazov	1991
Togolais People's Rally	Eyadema	1969
People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan	Karimov	1991
General People's Congress (Yemen)	al-Hashimi	1982



## Appendix B: Alternate Models of Authoritarian Party Creation

### Decision Theoretic Model

The simplest possible theoretical model of authoritarian party creation is one where the benefits of creating a party ( $B$ ) exceed the costs of creation ( $C$ ) for a given leader:  $B - C > 0$ . This suggests that rulers who have sufficient resources to pay the costs of party creation, or those who expect to benefit the most from a party of their own will create one. Considering party creation in authoritarian regimes from this vantage point is helpful for underscoring the necessity of executive initiative in creating a pro-regime party, but the simple cost-benefit decision of an individual leader is not sufficient to explain the empirically observed variation in authoritarian party creation, as many leaders who seem to face low costs to party creation or who could benefit significantly from creating one do not in fact create parties of their own.

### Coordination Game

Any sufficient game-theoretic account of authoritarian party creation must account for the two empirically observed equilibria: one in which leaders create parties that elites join, and one in which leaders do not create parties that elites do not join. If modeled as a single-shot game of complete information, this takes the form of a coordination<sup>73</sup> in which the pure strategy equilibria for leaders and elites would be (*party*, *party*) and (*~party*, *~party*).

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<sup>73</sup> "Battle of the Sexes," "Chicken," "Stag Hunt" and "Commitment" are all coordination games with different payoff structures. Though I offer an example with the simplest possible payoff structure, the same intuition about the explanatory power of coordination games holds for other payoff structures.

**Figure 4: Single-Shot Coordination Game**

	<b>party</b>	<b>~ party</b>
<b>party</b>	( a, a )	( 0, 0 )
<b>~ party</b>	( 0, 0 )	( a, a )

**Assumption:**

$$a > 0$$

Coordination games depend on repeated play or some other external information about player's preferences in order to provide a rationale for the emergence of one equilibrium over another. This information often takes the form of focal points (Gauthier 1975, Colman 1997) that identify factors specific to individual leaders or polities that would make one equilibrium more likely than the other. For authoritarian leaders, past activity in political parties might lead a given leader to create a party of his own while leaders who originated in the military might be expected to eschew parties. Alternately, a history of single or multiparty government during periods before a given leader's rise to power might lead players to converge on party-creation as an institutional focal point, whereas little or no party activity in the past may dissuade leaders from creating parties of their own.

Data gathered on the institutional origins of authoritarian leaders indicate that past experience with parties or other forms of rule do not provide focal points for coordination of future institutional choices. Of the 22 authoritarian leaders who had professional

backgrounds in legislatures, 11 already controlled parties at the time they gained power and so they did not face the question of creating a new party of their own. Of the 11 leaders who did not gain power with a party of their own, four created new ones while seven did not. Of 198 authoritarian leaders with military backgrounds, 45 gained power with a pro-regime party which they maintained while in power. Of the remaining 145, 125 did not create parties while 28 did create parties of their own (Svolik 2012b, Author's data).<sup>74</sup> While rulers with legislative backgrounds were more likely to govern with parties once in power and military leaders were more likely to govern without them, sizeable proportions of each type of leader coordinated with elites to reach equilibria other than what would be expected given the leader's past.

Furthermore, neither the existence or absence of a legislature in past periods of rule in a given polity nor various partisan compositions of the legislature in the past provide focal points for institutional creation. Authoritarian leaders commonly created parties of their own after periods when legislatures were unelected or non-functional, while other leaders did not create parties after periods when single or multiple parties dominated existing legislatures. This suggests that past institutional configurations of legislatures do not determine the strategies that authoritarian leaders employ to dominate them in the future.<sup>75</sup>

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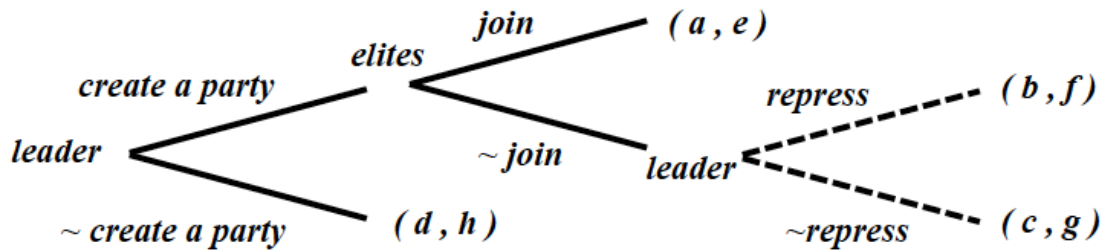
<sup>74</sup> Monarchs remain the least likely group to create parties. Of the 39 leaders with royal backgrounds, three created parties of their own while two inherited parties from previous rulers. However 13 of these 39 rulers presided over appointed and non-partisan legislatures while four ruled without legislatures altogether, which provides a compelling rationale for most monarchs not to create a party (Svolik 2012b).

<sup>75</sup> The clearest underlying determinants of authoritarian leaders' decision to create a party or not are whether the legislature is operating, whether legislative seats are elected, and whether the legislature is partisan or not. In cases where none of the above hold, leaders have no incentive to create a party.

## Dynamic Games of Complete Information

Modeling authoritarian party creation as a dynamic game of complete information succeeds in capturing some essential aspects of party creation, namely that the party creation process occurs in sequence when players can observe other players' actions in the past. However, these games of complete information fail to yield important empirically-observed equilibria, namely that many authoritarian leaders choose not to create parties despite the clear institutional incentives to do so.

**Figure 5: Dynamic Game of Complete Information with Single Type of Leader**



### Assumptions:

**For leaders:**  $a > b > d > c$

**For elites:**  $h > g > e > f$

In a dynamic model of party creation, authoritarian leaders move first, choosing whether or not to create a party of their own. Given the assumptions of leaders' and elites' preference as stated above, a leader creates a party when they expect that elites will join the party. Elites are always expected to join the party because they prefer to join a party once it has been created despite the fact that their top preference is for a party not to be created at all.<sup>76</sup> I derive the assumption that elites prefer to join a party once it has been

<sup>76</sup> Elites' preference to join a party if created is based on a third stage of the game that can be added in which the leader punishes elites who do not join the party. Assuming that authoritarian leaders prefer to

created based on the view that in authoritarian regimes, "violence is ever-present and the ultimate arbiter of political conflicts" (Svolik 2012a: 14), and that when it comes down to a question of survival in power, at least a significant subset of authoritarian rulers prefer to repress uncooperative elites rather than tolerate their independence.

Given the payoff structure in Figure 2, the unique Subgame Perfect Nash Equilibrium ( *create a party, join* ) emerges by backward induction. In the final stage of the game, rulers prefer to repress uncooperative elites ( $b > c$ ), and so when facing the decision to join or not to join a pro-regime party, elites prefer the payoff of joining to the cost of certain repression for failing to join ( $e > f$ ). Knowing that elites prefer to join parties,<sup>77</sup> authoritarian rulers should always create parties given that the payoff of establishing a party is greater than the payoff associated with coopting elites through ad-hoc side-payments ( $a > d$ ). This model shows that despite the fact that remaining independent from an authoritarian leader's party offers elites the greatest possibility to extract benefits the ruler, elites will join parties when they expect to be repressed for remaining independent. However, this unique equilibrium provides no explanation for the many cases when authoritarian leaders do not create parties at all. Given the order of the payoffs in this model, leaders will always create parties. If payoffs are ordered differently, this same model could be used to predict that no leaders would create parties. However, both outcomes are impossible as pure strategy equilibria.

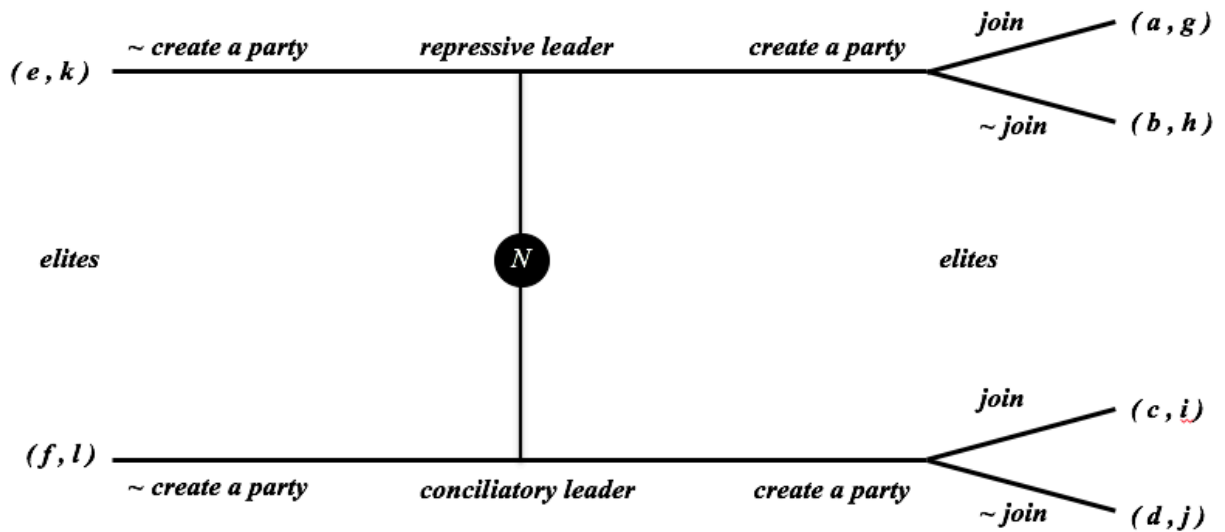
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punish rather than tolerate uncooperative elites, elites are expected to join the party in the game's second stage.

<sup>77</sup> The form of this game requires that elites prefer either to join a party, not to join, or to be indifferent between the two outcomes. The logic of the model works the same way with either preference for elites. I rule out the possibility of indifference between the two in this example because of the infinitesimal probability of complete indifference.

## Dynamic Game of Complete Information with Two Types of Leaders

Figure 6: Dynamic Game of Complete Information with Two Types of Leaders



### Assumptions:

For repressive leaders:  $a > e > b$

For conciliatory leaders:  $c > f > d$

For elites:  $k > g > h$  if repressive leader;  $l > j > i$  if conciliatory leader

The dynamic game of complete information described above does not account for the sizeable portion of authoritarian leaders who do not create parties of their own though they have clear incentives to do so. However, one way to account for this variation would be to include two types of leaders in a dynamic game of complete information.

Repressive leaders, following the archetypal authoritarian ruler described in the previous section, prefer to punish elites who refuse to join parties while conciliatory leaders tolerate uncooperative elites. When combined in a dynamic game of complete

information, two types of leaders generate two distinct subgame perfect nash equilibria: for repressive leaders, ( *create a party, join* ) remains an equilibrium, while ( *~create a party, ~join* ) emerges as an equilibrium for conciliatory leaders. In the latter case,<sup>78</sup> under conciliatory leaders, elites prefer not to join parties (  $d > c$  ), and so leaders choose not to create a party at all as their payoff from no party at all is greater than the one they receive from a failed party of power (  $f > d$  ).

Thus, in a dynamic game of complete information, a separating equilibrium emerges in which the two types of leaders behave differently according to their type. When leaders are repressive, they create parties and where leaders are conciliatory, they do not for fear of publicly exposing the fact that they cannot attract elites into a party of their own.

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<sup>78</sup> The third move of the game in which leaders choose to repress or not repress uncooperative elites is omitted here. It can easily be added as an extension, however for the purposes of brevity I do not discuss it.

## Appendix C: Post-Soviet Leaders and Party Creation, 1990-2010

**Table 5: Post-Soviet Leaders and Party Creation, 1990-2010**

Leader	Country	Action	Party Name	Year
Levon Ter Petrosian	Armenia	Inherited	Armenian Pan-National Movement	
Robert Kocharyan	Armenia	No Party		
Serzh Sargsyan	Armenia	Inherited	Republican Party of Armenia	
Ayaz Mutalibov	Azerbaijan	Inherited	Communist Party of Azerbaijan	
Abulfaz Elchibey	Azerbaijan	Inherited	National Front Party of Azerbaijan	
Heydar Aliyev	Azerbaijan	Created	New Azerbaijan Party	1992
Ilham Aliyev	Azerbaijan	Inherited	New Azerbaijan party	
Stanislau Shushkevich	Belarus	No Party		
Alyaksandr Lukashenka	Belarus	No Party		
Zviad Gamsakhurdia	Georgia	Inherited	Round Table	
Eduard Shevardnadze	Georgia	Created	Citizens' Union of Georgia	1993
Mikheil Saakashvili	Georgia	Inherited	United National Movement	
Nursultan Nazarbayev	Kazakhstan	Created	Nur Otan	2006
Askar Akayev	Kyrgyzstan	No Party		
Kurmanbek Bakiev	Kyrgyzstan	Created	Ak Zhol	2007
Mircea Snegur	Moldova	No Party		
Petru Luchinschi	Moldova	Inherited	Democratic Agrarian Party	
Vladimir Voronin	Moldova	Inherited	Communist Party of Moldova	
Boris Yeltsin	Russia	No Party		
Vladimir Putin	Russia	Created	United Russia	2001
Dmitrii Medvedev	Russia	Inherited		
Kahor Mahkamov	Tajikistan	Inherited	Communist Party of Tajikistan	
Rahmon Nabiev	Tajikistan	Inherited	Communist Party of Tajikistan	
Emomali Rahmonov	Tajikistan	Created	People's Democratic Party	1994
Saparmurat Niyazov	Turkmenistan	Created	Democratic Party of Turkmenistan	1991
Gurbanguly Berdymuhammedow	Turkmenistan	Inherited	Democratic Party of Turkmenistan	
Leonid Kravchuk	Ukraine	No Party		
Leonid Kuchma	Ukraine	No Party		
Viktor Yushchenko	Ukraine	No Party		
Islom Karimov	Uzbekistan	Created	People's Democratic Party	1991



**Figure 5: Post-Soviet Party Creation by True Type and Elite Beliefs**

	<b>Repressive Leader (True Type)</b>	<b>Conciliatory Leader (True Type)</b>
<b>Repressive Leader (Elite Beliefs)</b>	<p><b>Saparmurat Niyazov, 1985-2006</b> <i>Democratic Party of Turkmenistan</i> 1991-Present</p> <p><b>Islam Karimov, 1989-Present</b> <i>People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan</i> 1991-Present</p> <p><b>Heydar Aliyev, 1993-2003</b> <i>New Azerbaijan Party</i> 1992-Present</p> <p><b>Emomali Rahmonov, 1992-Present</b> <i>People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan</i> 1994-Present</p> <p><b>Vladimir Putin</b> <i>United Russia</i> 2001-Present</p>	<p><b>Eduard Shevardnadze, 1992-2003</b> <i>Citizens' Union of Georgia</i> 1993-2003</p>
<b>Conciliatory Leader (Elite Beliefs)</b>	<p><b>Nursultan Nazarbayev, 1989-Present</b> <i>No Party in 1990s</i></p> <p><b>Alyaksandr Lukashenka, 1994-Present</b> <i>No Party</i></p> <p><b>Boris Yeltsin, 1990-1999</b> <i>No Party</i></p>	<p><b>Askar Akayev, 1990-2005</b> <i>No Party in 1990s</i></p> <p><b>Leonid Kravchuk, 1990-1994</b> <i>No Party</i></p> <p><b>Leonid Kuchma, 1994-2004</b> <i>No Party</i></p> <p><b>Stanislau Shushkevich, 1991-1994</b> <i>No Party</i></p> <p><b>Mircea Snegur, 1990-1997</b> <i>No Party</i></p>

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