



Authoritarian legitimization: assessing discourses of legitimacy in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan

Mariya Y. Omelicheva

To cite this article: Mariya Y. Omelicheva (2016) Authoritarian legitimization: assessing discourses of legitimacy in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, *Central Asian Survey*, 35:4, 481-500, DOI: [10.1080/02634937.2016.1245181](https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2016.1245181)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2016.1245181>



Published online: 25 Oct 2016.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 3004



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 16 View citing articles [↗](#)

Authoritarian legitimation: assessing discourses of legitimacy in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan

Mariya Y. Omelicheva

Department of Political Science, University of Kansas, Lawrence, USA

ABSTRACT

What are the sources of authoritarian persistence in Central Asia? This study explores the argument that authoritarian regimes persist through effective authoritarian legitimation. Drawing on the theory and analysis of discourse, it develops an approach to authoritarian legitimation and examines discursive appeals to legitimacy by the Kazakh and Uzbek presidents. The study also assesses the effectiveness of the presidential discourses of legitimacy for public perception of the governing regimes in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. This research shows that by defining what constitutes legitimate power and presenting political rule as consistent with this definition, authoritarian governments can foster certain modes of reasoning and evaluation among citizens, and create possibilities for their acceptance of the regime as 'right' or 'proper'.

KEYWORDS

authoritarianism; legitimacy; discourse; Kazakhstan; Uzbekistan

The two and a half decades since the breakup of the Soviet Union have seen the emergence of stable authoritarian regimes that adopted the formal trappings of democracy, yet made no progress in democratic transformation. The post-Soviet republics of Central Asia clearly exemplify this trend. The leadership of these states have been determined to maintain their power under the guise of democracy without exposing themselves to the political risks of competition.

The persistence of authoritarian regimes poses a significant analytical challenge. Since these regimes are examples of authoritarianism 'by design' rather than 'by default' (Mayer 2001), democratization theories focusing on the obstacles to, and preconditions for, successful democratization are ill positioned to explain this trend. The fact that these regimes enjoy a degree of popular support suggests that their governments do not stay in power exclusively through repression. What are the sources of persistence of authoritarian regimes in Central Asian states? An argument explored in this study is that authoritarian regimes persist through effective authoritarian legitimation, measured by the degree of congruence of the presentations of their rule as legitimate and the broader spectrum of beliefs, values and expectations held by the people.

Legitimacy is not a foreign concept for authoritarian regimes. Every political system must attain a certain degree of legitimacy to ensure its persistence in the long run (von Soest and Grauvogel 2015). While studies examining the determinants of political

support focus on democracies, I argue that legitimization discourses are carefully employed by regimes characterized by democratic deficit. This study employs the theory and methods of discourse to conceptualize legitimacy in the authoritarian context, to explore how autocrats justify their rule, and to examine how these discursive representations contribute to authoritarian persistence. Using discourse analysis of the rhetoric of the Kazakh and Uzbek presidents, I show how by defining what constitutes legitimate power and presenting political rule as consistent with this definition, the governments of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have been able to foster certain modes of reasoning in the citizens, and create possibilities for their compliance with the policies of ruling administrations.

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are the two most important states in the region, economically and politically. The authoritarian regimes of President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan and the late President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan developed structurally similar discourses of legitimacy and demonstrated a high degree of stability over time. Relative economic success, political stability, improved social welfare and effective nation-building have been used to buttress the legitimacy claims by the leadership of both states. Confining the analysis of discourses of legitimacy to these states provides a rough control along important dimensions, including the legacies of shared political history and religious composition.

I begin by synthesizing the main arguments that have been brought forward in studies of authoritarian legitimization, followed by the presentation of a theoretical framework and methodology. The two sections that follow examine the discourses of legitimacy and assess their effectiveness in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The overview of findings concludes the study.

Legitimacy of authoritarian regimes: review of the scholarship and theoretical framework

The field of authoritarianism studies has seen growing scholarly interest since the 2000s, motivated by the democratic backsliding and the puzzling persistence of authoritarian regimes in different parts of the world (Brancati 2014; Brusić 2016; see Gerschewski 2013 for a succinct historical overview). Despite the diversity of views on the sources of authoritarian persistence, most scholars concur that neither repression nor economic stability alone can offer a full explanation for the durability of non-democratic regimes. The high costs of compliance based on naked coercion make repression an ineffective method of authoritarian rule. The risks associated with economic downturns threaten its socio-economic foundations. In his sweeping historical survey of governments, Finer (1997) concludes that democratic and authoritarian governments alike must have popular support to continue their rule. The concept of legitimacy popularized in sociological and political science analyses following Weber's (1978) famous formulation of the three bases for legitimate rule has been widely used to describe the acceptance of a given political order as 'right' by a people. Until recently, however, legitimacy has been treated as a secondary factor in explaining the persistence of non-democracies. The critics of 'legitimate autocracy' maintain that it is inconsistent with the normative foundations of legitimate rule and that this concept overstates the extent to which authoritarian regimes rely on public support. Furthermore, it has been argued that the challenges of measuring

legitimacy in authoritarian contexts make this idea impervious to systematic research (Hechter 2009).

Undeterred by these challenges and criticisms, the scholarship on authoritarian persistence has seen heightened attention to questions of the legitimacy of authoritarian regimes (Gerschewski 2013; Mayer 2001; Zhao 2009). Many studies on the topic construct legitimacy from public opinion. Regardless of the type of regime, if citizens believe that the government rightly holds power to demand compliance, it should be considered legitimate. In this definition, 'rightly' is a relational concept between citizens and political institutions, and cannot therefore be restricted to democratic ideas and norms (Gilley 2006, 48; Hurd 1999). Mindful of the challenges to establishing the legitimacy of an authoritarian government from the observed compliance with its orders, many studies focus on the strategies of legitimation employed by the authoritarian leadership, rather than on empirical verification of their legitimacy.

Conceptual variation, however, has inhibited progress in theory development and empirical assessments of the role of legitimacy in authoritarian contexts. Such studies rarely differentiate between legitimacy, sources of legitimacy (Brady 2009; Burnell 2006, 548), claims to legitimacy (Schatz 2006), and strategies of legitimation (Brusis 2016; Holmes 2010; March 2003; von Soest and Grauvogel 2015). Some mixture of government performance, ideology, history, and external legitimation is commonly mentioned as either the basis of legitimacy or the mode of legitimation. While studies of authoritarian persistence recognize that democratic legitimacy is different from authoritarian legitimacy, they tend to downplay the fact that many modern autocrats increasingly rely on the language of democracy to justify their rule. Many analyses fail to distinguish the legitimacy of political institutions from the legitimacy of the ruling elite that is associated with an important distinction between 'diffuse' and 'specific' public support (Easton 1979). The scholarship on legitimacy as a source of authoritarian persistence has shown that legitimacy matters in authoritarian contexts. Still, it has not adequately addressed the causal claim implied in this line of research that legitimacy helps explain authoritarian persistence. Conscious of such weaknesses, this research seeks to add conceptual clarity, theory, and empirical verification of the links between legitimacy and authoritarian persistence.

Theory and method of discourse

The preceding discussion pointed to several possible conceptions of legitimacy, suggesting that the notion of legitimacy can assume various connotations. While not subscribing to the semantically circular logic wherein 'legitimacy' becomes whatever local historical, cultural, or social conditions define it to be, this study is premised on the assumption that 'legitimacy' is a construct that can be imbued with different contents. Language plays a fundamental role in constructing social reality. It has been argued that social and political activity does not exist without the use of language, and 'doing politics is inevitably rooted in language' (Chilton and Schaffner 2002, 3).

The use and functions of spoken and written language in a social context is captured by the notion of 'discourse', which refers to the predominantly linguistic 'structures of signification, which construct social realities' (Milliken 1999, 229). In international relations and comparative politics, discourse as an approach has been closely associated with critical

theory and post-structuralist perspectives concerned, *inter alia*, with the ways that social power is reproduced and resisted by text and talk (van Dijk 2008). From the standpoint of these perspectives, discourses are structures of signification that constitute and reproduce specific power relations as well as hierarchies among the discourses (Milliken 1999). It is in this sense that this study employs the concept of discourse, noting that the social functions of discourse extend beyond conferring meanings on social and political practices and reproducing specific power relations. Discourse has a concealed social power that stems from its ability to institutionalize the promoted ideas, to shape citizens' knowledge, and ultimately to regulate their behaviour. This latter function of discourse allows it to fill a gap in the causal chain connecting legitimacy and authoritarian persistence.

Approached through the lens of discourse, legitimacy amounts to a discursive presentation of a given political system and its ruling administration as the most appropriate or proper ones for the society. This definition presupposes a plurality of sources and modes of legitimation from which political actors can draw when either claiming or contesting the legitimacy of a regime or government in power. There are no inherent bases of legitimation, but there are discursive representations of the sources of rule, and these sources, in turn, determine the ability of a government to create its legitimating strategies.

The literature on legitimacy has identified several discursive representations of the bases of legitimacy. Democratic legitimacy has typically been associated with various procedural mechanisms, such as those of free and fair elections. A handful of studies of authoritarian legitimacy have recently highlighted the legitimating functions of elections as a defining feature of the new authoritarianism (Schedler 2006, 3). Such scholarship has not, on the whole, taken autocrats' claims to democracy seriously, since authoritarian regimes embrace democracy rhetorically, but subvert its principle in practice (see Mayer 2001 for an exception). However, the control over discourse enables the autocratic government to shape societal understandings of just and fair rule, to define the criteria for gauging its performance, and ultimately, to elicit compliance with its rule. Therefore, authoritarian claims to democracy, as well as the discursive strategies that autocrats use to reconcile the marked differences between their democratic rhetoric and non-democratic praxis, call for closer examination.

Easton's (1979) notion of 'specific' support has been used to describe a regime's 'performance' legitimacy, which arises from its success in meeting citizens' needs. Although both democratic and authoritarian regimes use discourse to communicate their ability to deliver on socio-economic and political promises to their people, it is more common to see authoritarian governments using the claims of achievement to shore up the legitimacy of authoritarian rule (Dimitrov 2008). The types of benefits that the authoritarian regimes have claimed to produce are numerous, although public order, security and development are among those commonly referenced (Mayer 2001). The discourses of performance and democracy as the bases of authoritarian legitimacy have typically been intertwined with the autocrats' appeals to 'external' recognition of their domestic accomplishments. Authoritarian states' engagements in international affairs have been discursively framed as an important legitimacy marker of authoritarian rule (Schatz 2006).

The legitimacy of authoritarian administration has also been discursively tied to the qualities of the person of the president as well as the aptitudes of the political elite. These discourses link the government's authority to make decisions on behalf of the political community to the superior decision-making and moral qualities of the relevant

administration (Mayer 2001). Lastly, discursive formulations using appeals to ideology in a broad sense, including nationalism, religion and models of development, have also been common in authoritarian contexts (Burnell 2006; Holmes 2010; March 2003).

An authoritarian regime cannot secure its survival by relying only upon one justification for its legitimacy. The government needs to simultaneously invoke various discursive representations of its rule as legitimate. Nevertheless, at any particular time, one or several discursive representations of legitimacy may prevail.

How do discourses of legitimacy serve to sustain authoritarian power and assist in authoritarian persistence? As discussed above, at the very elementary level, social power relationships are manifested in discursive interaction. With the exception of the application of direct force, power of A (government) over B (citizens) presupposes that A has control over the cognitive processes of B, such as knowledge, beliefs and intentions that condition B's actions (or inaction). To put it differently, social power is usually indirect and operates through people's minds by shaping the information that people use to plan and execute their actions. This type of mental control can be based on the fear of sanctions, but it is more commonly exercised through various forms of discursive communication (van Dijk 2006). This is where discourse plays an important role in the exercise of social power.

By defining what constitutes legitimate power and presenting the governing rule and policies as consistent with this definition, the government can foster certain modes of reasoning and evaluation in the citizens, and create possibilities for their compliance, short of direct coercion, with its decisions.¹ This is not to suggest that there is a causal relationship between discourse and individuals' attitudes and behaviour. The point is that an effective discursive presentation of the government as legitimate may incite temporary or enduring shifts in considerations of the targets of communication.² Over time, when a political issue is consistently portrayed via the language of the same discursive presentation, while alternative issue presentations are effectively discredited or excluded from the informational context (a situation that characterizes the informational medium of an authoritarian state), it may result in changes in the individuals' core convictions, namely, accepting authoritarian claims to legitimacy at their face value or accepting the regime and its policies as legitimate. In this way, discourse can serve as an additional instrument of social influence and regulation (Omelicheva 2015).

Not all discursive presentations of legitimacy are effective, that is, capable of eliciting citizens' consent to the authoritarian rule. To be a pillar of stability of an authoritarian regime, the discourses of legitimacy must resonate with citizens' beliefs. In other words, the effectiveness of discursive justifications lies in the degree of congruence, or lack thereof, between the presentations of what constitutes legitimate rule and the broader spectrum of beliefs, values and expectations held by the population.

From the methodological standpoint, discourses are commonly identified and analyzed from the actual language of verbal and written communications, which are in turn converted into texts and stored as texts (Fairclough 1995). For the purpose of this study, I chose to focus on what has been known as 'political discourse from above' carried out in real time by leading power-holders in a state (Fetzer 2013, 9). In both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan the head of state wields exceptional power in domestic and foreign affairs. The leaders of both states – Nursultan Nazarbayev in Kazakhstan and (until August 2016) Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan – have been prolific writers, authoring multiple books and

collections of speeches and articles. In addition to examining these treatises, I content-analysed all annual addresses and speeches delivered by the Kazakh and Uzbek presidents between 1997 and 2015 using the identified 'bases' of legitimacy as coding 'themes'. The speeches were downloaded from the official websites of the presidents. When the primary audience of statements was international – such as in speeches delivered at international forums, conferences, and meetings with foreign representatives – an English and Russian version of the text appeared on the presidential portal. In these situations, I chose to read the English version of the speech to preserve the meanings conveyed in the official translation of the speech and to aid in tracking the quotes for their use in the future studies and replication. The majority of coded texts, however, appeared in Russian.

As a step towards evaluating the effectiveness of authoritarian discourses of legitimacy, I used data from the 2011 World Values Survey (WVS) undertaken in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.³ Political opinion surveys have been used in a variety of repressive settings. This methodological choice has also been criticized for the low trustworthiness of responses produced in a highly controlled political and social environment. In response to these criticisms, survey analysts developed a set of recommendations for assessing the accuracy of polls conducted in authoritarian contexts (Horne 2011). These include a proper and transparent survey design, demographic reliability and intra-survey reliability. The WVS is a highly reputable global research project that meets these criteria. The surveys are based on nationally representative random samples of the population and carried out by national teams following an established protocol. I scanned the survey questionnaire for questions pertaining to people's views on political regime, authority and political processes. Some of these responses were used to evaluate the extent to which the Kazakh and Uzbek leaders have been able to frame their presentations of their rule as legitimate in terms of the people's beliefs. Other responses to questions about people's trust in the government and views on national priorities were used to measure people's consent to the governing regime.

This 'subjective' evidence was supplemented with observations of public disapproval of the regime through various forms of dissent. Recalling an important criticism of this type of evidence, especially in the authoritarian context (Hechter 2009), I maintain that these actions or inaction have a symbolic or declaratory significance. They constitute and express the acknowledgement on the part of the people of the position of the powerful, which the latter can use as confirmation of their legitimacy. I also recognize that survey data collected in the authoritarian context carry the risk of being unreliable due to the problem of preference falsification, in which survey participants offer responses consistent with the government-supported views out of fear of political persecution. The WVS questionnaires have been devised taking this issue into consideration. The WVS combines various types of questions (sensitive and non-sensitive) with a 'no response' option for survey participants. Examples of non-sensitive questions include those asking respondents' about family values (such as 'hard work' or 'responsibility') or tapping their understanding of democratic rule. Certainly, the extent of political and social sensitivity is both subjective and culturally contingent, and will invariably affect the substantive validity of survey results. It is possible, however, to make tentative conclusions about the actual opinions and preferences of the citizens in authoritarian contexts by comparing the attributes of several 'sensitive' and 'non-sensitive' but relevant questions. If responses to these

questions reveal similar patterns of variances and frequencies of non-responses, this will add confidence to the substantive validity of survey results.

Kazakhstan

The rhetoric of Kazakhstan's president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, weaves together various discursive presentations of his administration's rule as legitimate. However, the topic of 'performance' legitimacy of the governing regime and references to the government's ability to satisfy citizens' needs with regard to socio-economic and political indicators form the leitmotif of his speeches. Owing to the large deposits of natural resources and the competent policies of the Nazarbayev cabinet, Kazakhstan has seen the highest economic growth among the Central Asian countries. Until recently, Kazakhstan's positive performance on various measures of economic development lent credibility to Nazarbayev's appeals to the country's accomplishments in the areas of technological, financial and industrial development, modernization and welfare. Still, the president has employed several discursive strategies to back up his 'performance' legitimacy claims.

First, Nazarbayev frequently draws stark comparisons between the Kazakhstan of the early 1990s and the Kazakhstan of today. In 1991 'we were in shambles of the fallen super-power and had to ask ourselves the following questions, "How are we going to feed our people, halt inflation and industrial downfall?" ... We did not have our national currency, strategic reserves or the army', recalled the President in 2011 (Nazarbayev 2011). According to the president, GDP growth in Kazakhstan averaged 10% per year from 1999 to 2007. Since the mid-1990s, the earnings of Kazakh citizens increased 16-fold, unemployment fell by half, and the number of people living below the poverty line decreased by six-sevenths (Nazarbayev 2012).

Second, Nazarbayev has used external recognition of Kazakhstan's economic progress, derived from the republic's world rankings and its membership in international organizations, to shore up his government's 'performance' claims. In his 2013 presidential address, for example, Nazarbayev (2011, 2013) reminded listeners how at the dawn of Kazakhstan's independence its 'international ranking was equal to zero'. He then asserted:

Then, in 2006, I set the goal of making Kazakhstan one of the top 50 most economically competitive countries of the world. Many in our republic and abroad were highly sceptical of this goal. The fact is that we reached this goal in seven years!

Third, each of the presidential speeches has a programmatic tone: it represents a plan of action replete with the new economic benchmarks formulated in future-oriented slogans, such as 'Kazakhstan 2030' and 'Kazakhstan, one of the world's 50 most competitive nations' (Omeličeva 2013). The president never fails to point out the steady progress his cabinet has made towards the accomplishment of these ambitious socio-economic targets. Implicit in these statements is an effort to portray the leader and his government as competent and forward-looking. The Plan of the Nation: 100 Concrete Steps to Implement Five Institutional Reforms is the most recent and most ambitious such programme, unveiled by Nursultan Nazarbayev in 2015. One of the goals of the programme is to make Kazakhstan one of top 30 most-developed countries 'in the new historic conditions', that is, regardless of the economic downturn (Nazarbayev 2016a).

The global financial crisis that began in 2007 has impacted the emerging economies. Due to Kazakhstan's close economic relationship with Russia and its dependence on exports of oil, the country's economic growth has slowed to 1.2% per year. Its national currency, the tenge, depreciated; national revenues dropped after world oil prices collapsed; and inflation climbed to 14% in 2015. Kazakhstan's economic downturn has not resulted in major changes in the discourse of 'performance' legitimacy, but the accent of legitimization strategies has changed. President Nazarbayev has framed the crisis as an inevitable consequence of Kazakhstan's integration into the global economy and linked, discursively, the country's economic challenges to the global economic recession rather than the policies of his cabinet. The Kazakh president has also assured the citizens that his government is fully capable of addressing the current economic crisis (Nazarbayev 2016b). The accounts of economic success have not disappeared entirely from the presidential speeches but have rather been overshadowed by reports of anti-crisis measures and directives to the government to prepare emergency plans.

Nazarbayev's discourse contains few references to the topic of democracy. When mentioned, democracy is presented as a feature of all 'modern' and 'civilized' nations and discursively linked to the level of economic prosperity in Kazakhstan. As explained by Nazarbayev, if Kazakhstan is to be among the most modern and civilized states, it has to be democratic and economically advanced. This chain of reasoning has also been reversed. Nazarbayev maintains, for instance, that Kazakhstan's economic advances place the country in the ranks of 'modern' and 'civilized' states, and that the country's democratic credentials follow from its status as a 'modern' and 'economically advanced' nation. As the president once explained, 'Democracy is not limited to the freedoms of political opposition ... it also involves a certain level of socio-economic development' (Nazarbayev 2015a).

Every time the course of economic development threatened the Nazarbayev government's 'performance' legitimacy, the president resorted to elections to reassert the legitimacy of his rule.⁴ Analysts concur that decisions to hold the early presidential election in April 2015 and the early parliamentary election in March 2016 were pragmatic. Their purpose was to secure public support for the Nazarbayev government in advance of a deeper economic recession. The resounding victories of the president and the ruling Nur Otan party have been represented as unquestionable manifestations of the citizenry's backing of the Nazarbayev cabinet. In his 2011 and 2015 inauguration speeches, Nazarbayev referred to the record level of civic participation in the elections and the consistently high – over 95% – vote in support of the president as a demonstration of peoples' 'confidence' in his management of the country, as well as a clear mandate from the people to pursue new reforms (Nazarbayev 2011; Nur Otan 2015).

The president of Kazakhstan has actively publicized the idea of national unity as the greatest value and a prerequisite for both economic development and democratization. Nazarbayev's (Nazarbayev 2015a) famous quote reads, 'Only that state that shares strength in unity, finds joy in hard work, and enjoys friendship among peoples will live happily and prosperously.' Nazarbayev has often expressed pride in the fact that Kazakhstan, a multi-ethnic and poly-confessional state, has been able to maintain unity, consensus and inter-ethnic harmony and weather the political turmoil experienced by other post-Soviet states. By valorizing the idea of unity, including through the creation and propagation of the Assembly of the People, the president has discursively created an additional source of

legitimacy for his government, credited for intelligent policies responsible for maintaining inter-ethnic accord.⁵

President Nazarbayev has also discursively validated his policies by claiming a strong and improving international reputation for Kazakhstan (Schatz 2006). 'External' legitimization became his main discursive currency from the 2000s on. References to the country's leadership in international and regional affairs, such as its chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, have been widely cited to demonstrate the increasing importance of Kazakhstan on the world stage. Nazarbayev's speeches, delivered at various economic forums and the international Expo, have been used both to increase Kazakhstan's international visibility and to discursively frame this visibility as the world's recognition of Kazakhstan.

Until recently, however, ideological justifications played a limited role as sources of legitimacy for the Nazarbayev regime. The president's discourse of nationalism has been rather ambiguous and, at times, contradictory. President Nazarbayev has discursively presented several national identities, including an ethnic one portraying the state as the political entity of the Kazakh nation, a civil or hybrid one presenting Kazakhstan as a multi-national state, and a transnational one depicting the republic as an integral part of global development (Laruelle 2014). The identity discourses have largely been deployed to provide an ideological basis for selected public policies, which in turn have been coupled with the rhetoric of 'performance' legitimacy and the discourse of 'external' legitimation.

In recent years, urged by the 'demand of time', that is, the exigency of the national economic crisis, President Nazarbayev (2014b) introduced the idea of *Mangilik Yel* (Eternal Nation) as the national ideology of 'Kazakhstan's statehood in the 21st century'. Tied to Nazarbayev's discourse of economic development, and therefore the rhetoric of 'performance' legitimacy, the new ideological construct resembles Uzbekistan's Ideology of National Independence in its appeals to Kazakhstan's glamorous past, its citizens' pride in 'today's fortunes' and its 'faith in the blossoming future'. It is nonetheless far less developed than the state ideology of Uzbekistan.

Assessing the effectiveness of Nazarbayev's discourses

The effectiveness of the discursive representations of rule as legitimate has been linked to the extent to which these representations invoke beliefs held by the targets of communication. According to the WVS data, 87% of the people living in Kazakhstan believe that having a democratic political system is a very good or fairly good way of governing their country; 80% said that it was very important to them to live in a country that is governed democratically; and 70.4% reported that choosing leaders in free elections was an essential characteristic of democracy.⁶ At the same time, 65.5% of Kazakh citizens believe that, in democracy, people receive aid for unemployment, and 56.5% are convinced that a democratic state makes people's incomes equal. Forty percent of respondents also agreed that the government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for (Table 1). What these responses suggest is that although the majority of Kazakhstanis embrace democracy as a desirable form of rule, many share a

Table 1. Public Beliefs and Opinions on Governance in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan (percentage agreeing).

Survey question		Kazakhstan (n = 1502)	Uzbekistan (n = 1500)
Views on democracy	Democratic political system is a very good or fairly good way of governing this country	87 no answer = 0	86.1 no answer = 11.7
	It is very important to live in a country that is governed democratically (1–10 scale with 8 and above = absolutely important)	80 mean = 8.61 s.d. = 1.81 no answer = 0	81.1 mean = 8.79 s.d. = 1.77 no answer = 0.3
	Choosing leaders in free elections is an essential characteristic of democracy (1–10 scale with 8 and above = an essential characteristic of democracy)	70.4 mean = 8.08 s.d. = 2.43 no answer = 0	80.3 mean = 8.53 s.d. = 2.18 no answer = 0.1
	In democracy, people receive aid for unemployment (1–10 scale; with 8 and above = an essential characteristic of democracy)	65.5 mean = 7.81 s.d. = 2.52 no answer = 0	64.9 mean = 7.55 s.d. = 2.89 no answer = 0.3
	A democratic state makes people's incomes equal (1–10 scale with 8 and above = an essential characteristic of democracy)	56.5 mean = 7.36 s.d. = 2.59 no answer = 0	66.7 mean = 7.94 s.d. = 2.44 no answer = 0.5
	The government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for (1–10 scale with 1 = government should take more responsibility; 10 = people should take more responsibility)	40 mean = 4.02 s.d. = 2.94 no answer = 0	47.2 mean = 4.35 s.d. = 3.22 no answer = 5.3
		84.7 no answer = 0	92.7 no answer = 0
Beliefs in personal qualities	'Hard work' is an important quality that children should be encouraged to learn at home (percentage who mentioned)	75 no answer = 0	75 no answer = 0
	'Feeling of responsibility' is an important quality that children should be encouraged to learn at home (percentage who mentioned)	71.6 no answer = 0	67.7 no answer = 0
Number-one national priorities for the next 10 years	A high level of economic growth	53.6 no answer = 0	62.2 no answer = 7.6
	Maintaining order in the nation	11.4 no answer = 0	9.9 no answer = 3.3
	Giving people more say in important government decisions	3.6 no answer = 0	0.5 no answer = 3.3
	Protecting freedom of speech	74.8 no answer = 0	95.2 no answer = 2
	Percentage of those who expressed trust in political parties	55.2 no answer = 0	74.2 no answer = 11.9
Support for regime	Percentage of those who expressed confidence in the parliament	67.1 no answer = 0	85.4 no answer = 10.1

strong conviction that the government should guarantee a strong degree of social protection for the people.

President Nazarbayev (2011) has tailored his discourse to this expectation by presenting people's welfare and happiness as the 'telos' of his rule. In his last inaugural address, in 2015, Nazarbayev pledged to serve the people by protecting the welfare of the citizens (Nur Otan 2015). To assuage people's concerns regarding the country's economic situation, Nazarbayev promised that his government would take care of socially vulnerable groups in the society using resources from the special National Fund created from the oil and gas revenues before the economic crisis.

Nazarbayev has been careful to avoid the language of socio-economic equality reminiscent of Soviet times. Instead, his rhetoric has invoked equality of economic opportunity and opportunities for employment (Nazarbayev 1997, 2012). The presidential address delivered in March 2015 reconceptualizes equality further as the equal participation of all citizens in shaping the future of Kazakhstan (Nazarbayev 2015b). This conception broadens the meaning of equality to include equality of responsibility by conferring on all citizens the same set of duties to contribute to the economic development and well-being of Kazakhstan. This emphasis on people's responsibilities as opposed to individual rights is consistent with the beliefs of many Central Asian people. In Kazakhstan's WVS, 84.7% of respondents chose 'hard work' as an important quality that children should be encouraged to learn at home, while 75% chose the 'feeling of responsibility.'

The president's discourse also resonates with people's beliefs in the pre-eminence of economics over other aspects of public policy, and the importance of public order. When presented with the list of national priorities for the next 10 years, 71.6% of respondents chose 'a high level of economic growth' as the number-one priority, over developing 'strong defence forces' or giving people more say at their jobs and in their communities. In a different list, 53.6% of respondents selected 'maintaining order in the nation' as more important than 'giving people more say in important government decisions' or 'protecting freedom of speech'.

Until the Zhanaozen protests that resulted in deadly clashes between striking oil workers and police in 2011, Kazakhstan had seen no major public contention. The official discourse has presented the republic as an oasis of stability in the ocean of political turmoil (Lewis 2016). The catalyst for the Zhanaozen unrest was economic: high rates of unemployment, scores of recent migrants living in poverty, and rapidly growing wealth inequality. The speed with which the Zhanaozen protests were defused, and the fact that unrest did not spread to other parts of the country and that opposition groups, especially those challenging the Nazarbayev government from abroad,⁷ failed to rally public support, suggest the robustness of Nazarbayev's rule, not least because of its ability to effectively use state propaganda to construct and disseminate a convincing discourse internalized by the people and key social groups in Kazakhstan (Lewis 2016). However, at the time of the protests both government and analysts warned that the regime's legitimacy might falter if the country continued to experience an economic downturn.

Indeed, new protests took place in 2016, sparked by the government's announcement of land reforms, although some analysts claim that many Kazakhs attended the demonstrations to express general discontent. In an effort to calm the public unrest, the president evoked the image of war-torn Ukraine. In a series of public speeches, Nazarbayev recalled the outcomes of the street protests in Kiev that toppled the

government of Viktor Yanukovich as an example of what could happen to Kazakhstan in the absence of national unity (Zhumatov 2016). Further erosion of support for the Nazarbayev government is unlikely given the public's apprehension of uncertainty associated with the transition to a post-Nazarbayev political system and the high levels of trust in the person of the president. In the pre-crisis environment, 74.8% of people in Kazakhstan had a great deal or a lot of confidence in the Nazarbayev government, 55.2% expressed trust in political parties, and 67.1% expressed confidence in the Kazakh parliament. The majority of respondents from Kazakhstan seemed not to be bothered by the deficit of democracy in the country: 64.4% believe that it is very good or fairly good to have a strong leader who does not have to bother with the parliament and elections. And, when asked how democratically Kazakhstan is governed today, on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 means 'complete democracy', 76.6% chose 6 or above.

Uzbekistan

The late president of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, who had spent 27 years at the helm of the republic's power, engaged in a deliberate and conscientious effort to develop and popularize a state ideology as a basis of legitimacy for his rule. Articulated over the entire period of Uzbekistan's independence in a series of books, programmatic documents, articles and speeches authored by the president, Karimov's Ideology of National Independence replaced Marxism-Leninism in its status of official state ideology (March 2003). According to Islam Karimov (2000a, 2001, 3), the chief purpose of the state ideology is to 'unite the people in the name of the grand future' of Uzbekistan, defined in the broadest terms, including building a 'flourishing state' with 'great possibilities', capable of 'guaranteeing peace and welfare of the people' and occupying the place it deserves in the world. The uniquely 'Uzbek path' to independence, development and democracy has been proffered as the only way to accomplish these goals (Karimov 1993, 1997a, 2007). The late president characterized Uzbekistan's path in ethnic terms and credited this 'authentic' model with Uzbekistan's socio-economic and political progress (Karimov 1997b, 2000a, 2000b). Thoroughly examined in the literature, the Uzbek path has been defined by five principles: ideology-free economic development; the rule of law; the state as the key reformer; an emphasis on social policy; and a gradualist approach to political and economic reforms (Karimov 1993, 1995, 1997b, 2013).

Studies of the 'Uzbek path' have focused on the economic aspects of Uzbekistan's model of development, particularly the narratives justifying state intervention in economy and society and the heightened role of ethnic heritage (see e.g. Kandiyoti 2007; March 2003; Omelicheva 2013; Perlman and Gleason 2007). The rhetoric of Uzbekistan's own variant of democracy, democratization and civil society has been minimized on the assumption that since the new ideology determines political and economic goals, the government's appeals to democratic principles and procedures are extraneous and inconsequential. Upon closer inspection, however, the new ideology has been framed not only in ethnic terms but also in terms of universal values, including democratic ideals of individual freedoms and political pluralism (Karimov 2005). Islam Karimov (2013) referred to the process of building an 'independent democratic nation with a socially oriented market economy' and 'the rule of law' as his government's strategy for increasing the

well-being of the people. In fact, appeals to various institutions and practices appearing under the rubric of ‘democracy’ were a close second to the theme of economic development in the rhetoric of Uzbekistan’s president.

Defining democratic progress in terms of quantitative and formal measures and ‘authenticating’ these measures through references to ethnic heritage were the two discursive strategies used by the late president to vindicate his democratic legitimacy claims. Islam Karimov touted a series of constitutional reforms implemented in the 2000s, which formalized the establishment of a parliamentary republican system in Uzbekistan. The changes led to the creation of a bicameral national parliament and the post of prime minister, nominated by the party holding the majority of seats in the lower chamber of the parliament. De jure, the prime minister was given a leadership role in economic and social affairs, while the president, whose term was reduced from seven to five years, continues serving as the head of state. According to Islam Karimov (2011), these measures allowed the ruling administration to implement ‘the constitutional principle of separation of powers, creating an effective system of checks and balances’ in Uzbekistan.

Karimov maintained that thousands of nongovernment organizations became ‘an important factor in the protection of democratic values, rights, liberties and legitimate interests of people’. Statistics of the ‘flourishing’ civil society and mass media sectors frequently appeared side by side with numerical accounts of the government’s economic success (Karimov 2012a). Uzbekistan’s multi-party system was praised as a manifestation of ‘true’ political pluralism, while a system of local self-government known as *mahalla* was characterized as epitomizing indigenous forms of self-governance and civil society in this Central Asian country (Karimov 2012b).

Like other aspects of the ‘Uzbek path’ to development, Uzbekistan’s model of democratization was couched in ethnic terms, as proceeding from ‘the national-historical way of life of the people’ and their ‘folk traditions’, such as collectivism, respect for elders and reverence for the family (Karimov 1992, 10, 1993, 13). According to the late president, the *mahalla* embodies Uzbek collectivism and represents a microcosm of the Uzbek family. Islam Karimov also discursively linked the moderate character of political reform in Uzbekistan to the principle of equiponderance of rights and responsibilities in the Eastern conception of democratic culture.⁸ Karimov’s treatises contain discussions of the various traditional ways of expressing people’s consent to power, including their beliefs in a strong and wise ruler, and in the state as a guardian of social stability. According to the late president, Uzbekistan’s modern democratic reforms weave together these people’s beliefs and traditions with modern political practices.

By linking the process of democratization to the principles of Uzbekistan’s development, Islam Karimov was able to embrace democracy rhetorically but defer its full institutionalization to an indeterminate future. Development is both a goal and a process. There is always more development to attain, and more prosperity to build. Similarly to development, Karimov (2005) wrote that democratization is ‘not a task that can be carried out in one or two years but is a long and continuous process that is not limited to a certain period of time. ... The most important thing is to further develop democracy.’ In this way, the promise and aspiration of becoming a democratic state at some point in the future replaced the outcome – the institutionalization of democracy – in Karimov’s rhetoric.

Like the leader of Kazakhstan, the later leader of Uzbekistan argued persuasively that his government delivered effectively on the development agenda. Certainly, in practice,

Uzbekistan fared worse in improving the quality of life and providing public welfare, compared to its northern neighbour. Islam Karimov (2011) nonetheless tried to concoct economic success by pointing to drastic increases in state expenditures on social security and claiming considerable improvements in people's living standards. The fact that Uzbekistan's economy continued expanding during the time of the international crisis, growing on average by 8.5% during 2008–2010 (measured by GDP), was widely cited as a testament to the success of the 'Uzbek path'.

Islam Karimov also tried to confer a veneer of legitimacy to his policies by ascertaining external validation of his government's actions. In contrast to Kazakhstan, which has played an active role in various regional and international institutions, Uzbekistan distanced itself from all the major global players in an effort to protect its national sovereignty. The late president, therefore, relied on a different rhetorical strategy to defend his claims to international recognition. Rarely did the Uzbek media circulate international news critical of the Karimov administration. Instead, publicized reports were typically filled with hand-picked quotes from foreign representatives that echoed the president's acclamations.

Assessing the effectiveness of Karimov's legitimacy discourse

As discussed above, the strategy of 'authentication' of the new state ideology and path to development in the people's beliefs was central to Islam Karimov's discourse of legitimacy. In particular, the late president frequently invoked respect for elders, the pre-eminence of family, people's aspirations for peace and prosperity, and such qualities as hard work and love of the motherland as traits characterizing the Uzbek people (Permanent Mission of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United Nations 2016).

The overwhelming majority of those living in the country hold the family in high regard. Only 0.3% of Uzbekistan's WVS respondents said that family was not important to them, while 97.5% identified family as 'very important'. Traditions and customs transferred through the family play a significant role for 93% of the people.⁹ Ninety-three percent of respondents indicated that doing something good for the society was important to them. When asked which qualities should be cultivated in children by families, 92.7% of respondents mentioned 'hard work', and 75% chose 'responsibility'.

Consistently high numbers of people expressed belief in authority. For example, 93.9% of respondents agreed that increasing respect for authority is a 'good thing'. Responding to a different question, 69.2% of respondents selected people's respect for, or compliance with, rulers as a characteristic of democracy.

Notably, a slightly greater number of people embrace beliefs in democracy in Uzbekistan than in Kazakhstan: 86.1% of respondents indicated that a democratic political system was a 'very good' or 'fairly good' thing; 81.1% indicated that it was important to them to live in a democratic state; and 80.3% associated democratic systems with free elections of political leaders. However, many respondents also expressed preferences for the guardianship role of the state: 47.2% held a strong conviction that the government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for; 64.9% considered unemployment benefits paid by the state to be an essential characteristic of democracy; and 66.7%

agreed with the statement that the state should ensure income equality in the society (Table 1).

The WVS results also suggest that concerns with security and economic development are at the top of people's priorities in Uzbekistan: 69.9% of respondents said that living in a secure environment was important to them; 67.7% chose 'a high level of economic growth' as a number-one priority, compared to 12.3% who identified giving people more say at their jobs and in their communities as the most important. In a separate list of national priorities, 62.2% chose 'maintaining order in the nation' as the highest priority. In contrast, giving people more say in important government decisions and protecting freedom of speech were selected as the top priorities by only 9.9% and 0.5% of respondents, respectively.

The Karimov government tolerated no dissent. The lack of protests and demonstrations therefore represented a measure of the government's coercive ability rather than public compliance with Karimov's rule for reasons of legitimacy. Some of the responses to the WVS allow us to make tentative conclusions about the effectiveness of Karimov's discursive presentations of his regime as legitimate. Asked about their trust in various social and political institutions, 95.2% of the respondents from Uzbekistan said that they had 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' of trust in the government; 74.2% said they had trust in political parties, and 85.4%, in the parliament.

According to late President Karimov, one of the purposes of the new state ideology was to foster patriotism, engender people's love for the motherland and elevate the feeling of responsibility for building the grand future of Uzbekistan. When asked whether they would fight for Uzbekistan in case of an inter-state war involving their country, 80.1% of the Uzbek respondents said yes. Furthermore, asked how proud they were to be part of the Uzbek nation, 98.1% said they were 'very proud' or 'quite proud'.

Islam Karimov died 2 September 2016, after a stroke. Tens of thousands of people lined the streets of Tashkent to see his funeral procession, and thousands amassed in Samarkand, where the former leader was laid to rest. Since his funeral, hundreds of thousands of ordinary citizens have visited Karimov's grave to pay their final respects to the former president. The social networks have seen an outpouring of sentiment following Karimov's death, conveying both people's high regard for the accomplishments of the long-standing president and the fear of uncertainty concerning Uzbekistan's future. Karimov's immediate successor, the former Prime Minister Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who was appointed as Uzbekistan's acting president and who is the likely winner of the presidential elections scheduled for 4 December 2016, has already announced the continuation of Karimov's policies. All the evidence appears to suggest that the foundations of discursive legitimacy erected by the former president will continue guiding the policy and ideology of the new administration.

Conclusion

This study has theorized authoritarian legitimation, examined discursive appeals to legitimacy in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and assessed the effectiveness of the presidential discourses of legitimacy for the public perception of the regimes. Like other post-Soviet countries, the governments of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan use combinations of legitimating claims in order to stay in power. In both states, performance-based claims are a

centrepiece of the regimes' legitimization discourses, though the precise accomplishments emphasized in presidential speeches differ. The governments of both states have used colourful comparisons between their countries' economies at the dawn of independence and the present economic situation to lend credibility to their models of development and impute competence to the ruling administrations. The programmatic and managerial tone of Nazarbayev's speeches, however, has been noticeably different from the highly ideological character of Karimov's addresses.

Authoritarian governments in other parts of the world have always argued that they provided order, stability and socio-economic benefits to the people, and used these achievements to prop up the legitimacy of the regime. In fact, the democratization literature has contended that the economic recession of the 1970s undercut this strategy of authoritarian justification. The studies of legitimacy in authoritarian contexts concur with this observation: 'performance' legitimacy is intrinsically unstable because it carries concrete promises and threatens destabilization when the promises are not fulfilled (Brady 2009). Kazakhstan's strategy of placing its economic performance at the heart of its discourse on legitimacy backfired once the economic crisis handicapped the government's ability to fulfil the citizens' socio-economic expectations. Uzbekistan's government, which has used the new 'national ideology' premised on a teleological political logic embracing the movement of the state towards a series of broadly defined goals, fared better in its ability to weather the storm of economic downturn.

When the deepening economic crisis threatened to undermine the discourse of 'performance' legitimacy in Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev began resorting to the rhetoric of democratic procedures as a basis of legitimacy for his rule. The references to the 'free and fair' elections as manifestations of the overwhelming public support for the regime have become the focus of a broader discourse on the Kazakhstani model of democratization. In similar fashion, the references to institutions and electoral procedures have been cast as constituting part of the 'Uzbek model' of development and democratization. The late president of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, maintained that his regime was rule-based and embodied the will of the people, as he had been given a popular electoral mandate. The Uzbek leader rhetorically embraced a multi-party system, elections, parliamentarism, and checks and balances as the foundations of a democratic regime. However, political pluralism as a marker of democracy has been crowded out by numerical and formal indicators. Uzbekistan's ideology of national independence has been discursively elevated to the primary basis of regime legitimacy.

There are several reasons for studying and paying close attention to the discursive representations of legitimacy by authoritarian regimes. First, what follows from the evidence amassed for this study is that the arguments of the state leadership often enjoy broad popular support, not least because of the near-monopoly of the government in the informational medium and effective utilization of the techniques of persuasion. There is a high degree of consistency in Kazakh and Uzbek citizens' answers across several politically relevant questions, and a low no-answer rate for a few politically sensitive questions in the survey conducted in Uzbekistan. The popularity of the Kazakh president and deference to the Uzbek leader demonstrate that discourse can be used as an effective method of authoritarian rule. Second, at the international level, discursive legitimization by the authoritarian governments constitutes a significant barrier to international democratization,

which needs to be taken into account if one hopes to enhance the effectiveness of democracy assistance abroad.

From the theoretical standpoint, if most forms of power in our societies are discursively constituted, the decisive influence on the 'minds' and 'hearts' of the people is discursively rather than economically or coercively controlled. To put it differently, a major component in the exercise and maintenance of power is discursive, and is based on various types of presentation or framing, as well as the acceptance, negotiation and challenge of arguments. It is therefore important to analyze the strategic role of discourse and its interlocutors in the production and reproduction of this form of socio-political hegemony. Given that the political elites have major control over this mode of influence through the genres, topics, rhetoric and presentation of public text and talk, their discursive power is considerable.

Notes

1. Discourse theory views 'meaning-making' as one of the chief functions or 'powers' of discourse. This theoretical insight, however, has been challenging to verify empirically. This study follows a conventional strategy of identifying the discursive presentations of legitimacy and comparing it to the beliefs and understandings held by the subjects of discursive communication. The data at hand do not allow direct attributions of the sources of these beliefs to the government. Indirectly, however, the linkages between the government-supported communications and citizens' beliefs can be inferred from the fact that the majority of respondents to the World Values Survey list conventional media – TV – as their primary source of news. In the context of Central Asia, information broadcasted on the TV channels, in particular, is strongly biased towards official representations.
2. These targets of communication are citizens of the state, but these discourses may also target external audiences.
3. World Values Survey Wave 6 2010–2014 Official Aggregate v.20150418. World Values Survey Association (www.worldvaluessurvey.org). Aggregate File Producer: Asep/JDS, Madrid, Spain. Although the survey data come from 2011, an argument can be made that the types of values and beliefs examined in the WVS take time to change, especially against the backdrop of slowly changing structural and institutional conditions. With caveats, the findings of the survey can be interpreted as representing the distribution of current beliefs and opinions in the Kazakh and Uzbek populations.
4. Kazakhstan has set the record for early elections among the post-Soviet countries. Of the eight presidential and parliament elections held in the republic since its independence in 1991, five were pre-term.
5. Nazarbayev (2014a) endorsed the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan, created in 1995, as an 'innovative model of nation-wide representation of interest of all citizens and the effective instrument of our young democracy'.
6. The WVS questions about democratic governance of the country and elections provided respondents with a scale ranging from 0 to 10, with higher scores indicating a higher level of agreement with the statements. The figures reported here are for all those who chose 8 or higher.
7. Among Nazarbayev's most vocal opponents in exile are the president's former son-in-law Rakhat Aliyev and a wealthy businessman Mukhtar Ablyazov. Both have used their resources to fund PR campaigns aimed at toppling the president Nazarbayev (Olcott 2012).
8. The *mer[a]* root of the Russian adjective *umerennyi*, commonly translated as 'gradual', has been interpreted as 'having an equal measure', 'balance', and 'equiponderance'.
9. The WVS respondents were read descriptions of some people, e.g. 'tradition is important to this person'. Then they were asked to indicate whether this description resembled them or

not. The results reported here are for all those who chose 'very much like me', 'like me', or 'somewhat like me'.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

References

- Brady, A.-M. 2009. "Mass Persuasion as a Means of Legitimation and China's Popular Authoritarianism." *American Behavioral Scientist* 53 (3): 434–457. doi:10.1177/0002764209338802
- Brancati, D. 2014. "Democratic Authoritarianism: Origins and Effects." *Annual Review of Political Science* 17: 313–326. doi:10.1146/annurev-polisci-052013-115248
- Brusis, M. 2016. "The Politics of Legitimation in Post-Soviet Eurasia." In *Politics and Legitimacy in post-Soviet Eurasia*, edited by J. Ahrens, M. Brusis, and M.S. Wessel, 1–17. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Burnell, P. 2006. "Autocratic Opening to Democracy: Why Legitimacy Matters." *Third World Quarterly* 27 (4): 545–562. doi:10.1080/01436590600720710
- Chilton, P. and C. Schaffner. 2002. "Introduction: Themes and Principles in the Analysis of Political Discourse." In *Politics as Text and Talk: Analytic Approaches to Political Discourse*, edited by P. Chilton and C. Schaffner, 1–41. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- van Dijk, T. A. 2006. "Ideology and Discourse Analysis." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 11 (2): 115–140. doi:10.1080/13569310600687908
- van Dijk, T. A. 2008. "Critical Discourse Analysis." In *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, edited by D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, and H. E. Hamilton, 352–371. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Dimitrov, M. K. 2008. "Popular Autocrats." *Journal of Democracy* 20 (1): 78–81. doi:10.1353/jod.0.0057
- Easton, D. 1979. *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Fairclough, N. L. 1995. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Harlow, UK: Longman.
- Fetzer, A. 2013. "The Multilayered and Multifaceted Nature of Political Discourse." In *The Pragmatics of Political Discourse: Explorations across Cultures*, edited by A. Fetzer, 1–18. Amsterdam: John Benjamin Publishing Company.
- Finer, S. E. 1997. *The History of Government from the Earliest Times*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Gerschewski, J. 2013. "The Three Pillars of Stability: Legitimation, Repression, and Co-Optation in Autocratic Regimes." *Democratization* 20 (1): 13–38. doi:10.1080/13510347.2013.738860
- Gilley, B. 2006. "The Determinants of State Legitimacy: Results for 72 Countries." *International Political Science Review* 27 (1): 47–71. doi:10.1177/0192512106058634
- Hechter, M. 2009. "Introduction: Legitimacy in the Modern World." *American Behavioral Scientist* 53 (3): 279–288. doi:10.1177/0002764209338793
- Holmes, L. 2010. "Legitimation and Legitimacy in Russia Revisited." In *Russian Politics. From Lenin to Putin*, edited by S. Fortescue, 101–126. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Horne, C. 2011. "Measuring Public Opinion under Political Repression." *American Diplomacy*, 18 April, pp. 1–23. http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/item/2011/0104/comm/horne_measuring.html.
- Hurd, I. 1999. "Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics." *International Organization* 53 (2): 379–408. doi:10.1162/002081899550913
- Kandiyoti, D. 2007. "Post-Soviet Institutional Design and the Paradoxes of the 'Uzbek Path'." *Central Asian Survey* 26 (1): 31–48. doi:10.1080/02634930701423426
- Karimov, I. 1992. *Uzbekistan – Svoi Put' Obnovleniia i Progressa*. Tashkent, Uzbekiston.
- Karimov, I. 1993. *Building the Future: Uzbekistan—Its Own Model for Transition to a Market Economy*. Tashkent: Uzbekiston.
- Karimov, I. 1995. *Uzbekistan, Along the Road of Deepening Economic Reform*. Lahor, Pakistan: Gora Publishers.
- Karimov, I. 1997a. *Svoe Budushee my stroim svoimi rukami*. Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- Karimov, I. 1997b. *Uzbekistan na poroge XXI veka: ugrozy, usloviya i garantii progressa*. Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

- Karimov, I. 2000a. *Ideologiya Natsional'noi Nezavisimosti – Ubezhdeniye Naroda i Vera v Velikoe Budushee*. Otvety na Voprosy Korrespondenta Gazety 'Fidokor'. Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- Karimov, I. 2000b. *Nasha Vysshaia Tsel' – Nezavisimost' i Prosvetaniye Rodiny, Svoboda i Blagopoluchie Naroda*. Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- Karimov, I. 2001. *Ideia Natsional'noi Nezavisimosti*. Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- Karimov, I. 2005. *Nasha Glavnaia Tsel' – Demokratizatsiya Obschestva, Reformirovaniye i Modernizatsiya Strany*. Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- Karimov, I. 2007. 16 Let Nezavisimogo Razvitiya. Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- Karimov, I. 2011. "Independence Day Address." September 1, 2011. <http://uza.uz/en/politics/2117/>.
- Karimov, I. 2012a. Address by President Islam Karimov at the Opening Ceremony of International Conference. February 18, 2012. Uzbekistan National News Agency. <http://uza.uz/en/politics/2470/>.
- Karimov, I. 2012b. "Uzbekistan's Karimov Says Democratization 'A Long' and 'Gradual' Process." Eurasianet.org. December 9, 2012. <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/66275>
- Karimov, I. 2013. "Securing Uzbekistan's Prosperity through Intensification of Democratic Reforms and Formation of Civil Society." Keynote address delivered at the official meeting dedicated to the 21st anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Press Service of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, December 6, 2013. <http://www.press-service.uz/en/news/4533/>.
- Laruelle, M. 2014. "The Three Discursive Paradigms of State Identity in Kazakhstan. Kazakhness, Kazakhstanness and Transnationalism." In *Nationalism and Identity Construction in Central Asia. Dimensions, Dynamics, and Directions*, edited by M. Omelicheva, 1–20. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Lewis, D. 2016. "Blogging Zhanaozen: Hegemonic Discourse and Authoritarian Resilience in Kazakhstan." *Central Asian Survey* 35 (3): 421–438. doi:10.1080/02634937.2016.1161902
- March, A. F. 2003. "State Ideology and the Legitimation of Authoritarianism: The Case of Post-Soviet Uzbekistan." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 8 (2): 209–232. doi:10.1080/13569310306088
- Mayer, R. 2001. "Strategies of Justification in Authoritarian Ideology." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 6 (2): 147–168. doi:10.1080/13569310120053830
- Milliken, J. 1999. "The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods." *European Journal of International Relations* 5 (2): 225–254. doi:10.1177/1354066199005002003
- Nazarbayev, N. 1997. "Kazakhstan-2030: Prosperity, Security, and the Improvement of Living Conditions for All Kazakhstanis." Message of the President of the Country to the People of Kazakhstan. http://www.akorda.kz/en/kazakhstan/kazakhstan2030/strategy_2030.
- Nazarbayev, N. 2011. Inauguration Speech of the Leader of Nation, Nursultan Nazarbayev, the President of Kazakhstan. April 8, 2011. <http://akorda.kz/ru/page/vystuplenie-lidera-natsii-n-a-nazarbaeva-na-tseremonii-vstupleniya-v-dolzhnost-prezidenta-respubliki-kazakhsta>.
- Nazarbayev, N. 2012. The Address to the People of Kazakhstan by the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan N. December 14, 2012. http://akorda.kz/ru/page/page_poslanie-prezidenta-respubliki-kazakhstan-n-nazarbaeva-narodu-kazakhstana-14-dekabrya-2012-g_1357813742.
- Nazarbayev, N. 2013. Speech of Nursultan Nazarbayev in Commemoration of the Independence Day of the Republic of Kazakhstan. December 14, 2013. http://akorda.kz/ru/page/page_215545_vystuplenie-na-torzhestvennom-sobranii-posvyashchennom-dnyu-nezavisimosti-respubliki-kazakhstanv.
- Nazarbayev, N. 2014a. Speech of the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, at the XXI Session of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan. April 18, 2014. http://akorda.kz/ru/page/page_216501_vystuplenie-glavy-gosudarstva-predsdatelya-assamblei-naroda-kazakhstana-n-a-nazarbaeva-na-xxi-sessii.
- Nazarbayev, N. 2014b. The Address of the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, to the People of Kazakhstan. November 11, 2014. http://akorda.kz/ru/page/page_218341_poslanie-prezidenta-respubliki-kazakhstan-n-nazarbaeva-narodu-kazakhstana-11-noyabrya-2014-g.
- Nazarbayev, N. 2015a. Tsitaty. <http://personal.akorda.kz/ru/category/citaty/demokratiya-ne-ustanavlivaetsya-dekretom#list7>.

- Nazarbayev, N. 2015b. Speech of the President of Kazakhstan and the Chairman of Nur Otan party, Nursultan Nazarbayev, at the XVI session of the Party. March 11, 2015. http://akorda.kz/ru/page/page_219337_vystuplenie-prezidenta-respubliki-kazakhstan-predsedatelya-partii.
- Nazarbayev, N. 2016a. "Plan Natsii – Put' k Kazakhstanskoi Mechte." January 6. http://www.akorda.kz/ru/events/akorda_news/press_conferences/statya-glavy-gosudarstva-plan-nacii-put-k-kazakhstanskoi-mechte
- Nazarbayev, N. 2016b. Speech of the President of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev at IX Economic Forum in Astana [in Russian]. May 26. http://www.akorda.kz/ru/speeches/internal_political_affairs/vystuplenie-prezidenta-kazakhstana-nnazarbaeva-na-ix-astaninskom-ekonomicheskom-forume
- Nur Otan. 2015. "Inauguration of Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev Held in Astana." <http://nurotan.kz/en/news/9046>
- Olcott, M. 2012. "Kazakhstan's Political (R)Evolution." January 27. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/01/27/kazakhstan-s-political-r-evolution>.
- Omelicheva, M. 2013. "Central Asian Conceptions of 'Democracy': Ideological Resistance to International Democratization." In *The International Dimensions of Authoritarian Persistence in the Former Soviet Union*, edited by R. Vanderhill and M. E. Aleprete Jr., 81–104. Lanham, MD: Lexington Press.
- Omelicheva, M. 2015. *Democracy in Central Asia: Competing Perspectives and Alternative Strategies*. Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky.
- Perlman, B. J. and G. Gleason. 2007. "Cultural Determinism versus Administrative Logic: Asian Values and Administrative Reform in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan." *International Journal of Public Administration* 30 (12–14): 1327–1342. doi:10.1080/01900690701229475
- Permanent Mission of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United Nations. 2016. Glorification of Peace, Wellbeing, and Prosperity. March 22. <https://www.un.int/uzbekistan/news/glorification-peace-well-being-and-prosperity>
- Schatz, E. 2006. "Access by Accident: Legitimacy Claims and Democracy Promotion in Authoritarian Central Asia." *International Political Science Review* 27 (3): 263–284. doi:10.1177/0192512106064463
- Schedler, A. 2006. "The Logic of Electoral Authoritarianism." In *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition*, edited by A. Schedler, 1–23. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- von Soest, C. and J. Grauvogel. 2015. How Do Non-Democratic Regimes Claim Legitimacy? Comparative Insights from Post-Soviet Countries, *GIGA Working Paper*, No. 277, August 2015, Hamburg: GIGA.
- Weber, M. 1978. *Economy and Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Zhao, D. 2009. "The Mandate of Heaven and Performance Legitimation in Historical and Contemporary China." *American Behavioral Scientist* 53 (3): 416–433. doi:10.1177/0002764209338800
- Zhumatov, S. 2016. "Kazakh Leader Invokes Ukraine as Land Protests Spread." *Reuters*, May 1. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-kazakhstan-protests-president-idUSKCN0XS1E1>.