Practices of traditionalization in Central Asia

Judith Beyer & Peter Finke

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

INTRODUCTION

Check for updates

Practices of traditionalization in Central Asia

Judith Beyer[a] and Peter Finke[b]

[a]Department of History and Sociology, University of Konstanz, Germany; [b]Department of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Over the last two centuries, 'tradition'[1] has been invoked in Central Asia by Russian and Soviet regimes, as well as by local Central Asian elites, largely in two ways: either as a deficiency to be overcome (often in juxtaposition to an aspirational 'modernity') or as a quality to be embraced (often in alignment with nationalism). The two are not mutually exclusive or even strictly separate, but the distinction serves well to outline general themes and dynamics in the work of tradition. It is likewise difficult to make clear distinctions between academic analyses and everyday invocations of the term, as they play off one another, and entirely new genres of writing and practice are still emerging. The centrality of tradition in today's Central Asia cannot, however, be denied.

In the first modality – juxtaposition to 'modernity' – large-scale social reforms were introduced and justified by Soviet authorities, who understood themselves to be modern, and set in opposition to 'tradition', which was to be eradicated. Central Asian families were regarded as carriers of 'feudal-patriarchal' ideology (Massell 1975), traditional legal institutions were portrayed as 'backward' (Martin 2001), and 'bride abduction', which still occurs in the region, became an emblem of the 'primitive' (Werner 2009). In all these cases, tradition was framed as the conceptual enemy that needed to be fought and ultimately overcome.

However, alignment with nationalism was never far away even during Soviet times, when various modernization projects were conducted throughout Central Asia in the context of socialist statehood. While socialist statehood was in itself a modern project that had to be constantly negotiated (Kassymbekova 2017), tradition acquired multiple new meanings, just as the concept of 'modernity', as its polar opposite (Eisenstadt 2000), did. Tradition, therefore, became less easy to dismiss by way of (often transparent) juxtaposition to modernity; instead, state officials began aligning tradition with their nation-building initiatives, especially after independence in 1991. In this second modality of alignment, practices of traditionalization allowed new forms of instrumental meaning-making to emerge, thereby providing a foundation upon which the elite could promote tradition as a marker of identity and political reconstruction.

But tradition has never been the exclusive domain of those in power; it has always also been a demotic vehicle for challenge and criticism.[2] The last decade has seen a diversification of what can 'get done' and what is being framed in the name of tradition. Taking into account the scholarly literature that criticizes the very concept of 'invented traditions', the

aim of this special issue is to shift attention to understanding traditionalization as a bottom-up process in which elites do not necessarily dictate the course of events, let alone the outcomes.

The concept of tradition in Central Asia

In contemporary Central Asia, the development of tradition as an analytical concept has gone hand in hand with the concept of capitalist modernity, just as it served a socialist cause in the preceding decades. Tradition was introduced and promoted from 'above' by authorities in the newly independent nation-states, who drew on allegedly 'authentic' traditions to claim continuity with a distant past, which allowed them to establish national (ist) narratives that helped legitimize their claims over a certain territory. As 'invented traditions' (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), these often newly installed practices, institutions and discourses drew on the concept of tradition to unite a heterogeneous population under one flag. In studying these developments of the last 30 years, scholars have devoted particular attention to elites and intellectuals whose role it had been to codify the kind of tradition that should from now on represent and embody the nation.

By now, we have not only numerous academic publications on these dynamics (e.g. Roy 2000; Tabyshalieva 2000; Hirsch 2005; Morozova 2005; Bergne 2006; Munkh-Erdene 2008; Adams 2010), but also a large number of books and articles written by Central Asian elites themselves. Intellectuals have engaged in what Hutchinson (1987, 1999) has called 'cultural nationalism' in order to increase social legitimacy. 'Writing tradition' is by now an established literary genre that the presidents of all five post-Soviet Central Asian republics have engaged in: Turkmenistan's *Rukhnama* (Nyazov 2005) and *Adamnama* (Berdymukhammedov 2013); Kazakhstan's *Epicenter of Peace* and *The Kazakhstan Way* (Nazarbaev 2001, 2008); Kyrgyzstan's *Kyrgyz Statehood and the Popular Epic 'Manas'* (Akaev 2003);[3] Uzbekistan's *High Morality: An Invincible Force* (Karimov 2008; see also Kendzior 2014); and Tajikistan's *The Tajiks in the Mirror of History: From the Aryans to the Samanids* (Rahmon 2009).

Although newly independent nation-states might 'set out to purify traditions of foreign influences' (Noyes 2009, 242), the propagation of nationalist tradition continues to be significantly supported from the 'outside' as well. International organizations and foreign experts align their new programmes and projects with the countries' 'rich historical pasts', and local NGOs often go along with these notions and the quickly established idiom of tradition to secure financial support or attract foreign supporters. Examples include tourist initiatives that advertise 'nomadic ways of life' and 'community-based' approaches to issues ranging from disaster management to volunteerism, development in the more general sense, and alternative dispute resolution that encourages working with local organizations. The globally recognized rhetoric of 'cultural heritage' and 'indigenous rights' is also being increasingly invoked in Central Asian discourses, where it organizes the heterogeneity (Eriksen 2007, 10) of different ethnic groups or corporate interests.[4]

Although Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983), who first coined the term 'invented tradition' in the context of postcolonial deconstruction, do not essentialize tradition, they have been criticized for 'draw[ing] a distinction between unself-conscious custom perpetuated by natural communities, such as villages, and self-conscious

traditions invented by unnatural ones, namely nations and states' (Jolly 1992, 51). And while Marshall Sahlins (1999, 399) rejects the concept as an 'easy functionalist dismissal of the people's claims of cultural distinction', Michael Herzfeld reminds us that '*all* culture is in this sense invented' (2014, 214, emphasis in the original) and urges us to look at how and in what contexts concepts are put to use. This is what, according to Ranger (1993, 63), the two authors had in mind when they were investigating 'a specific historical period, in which … traditions were peculiarly frequently invented rather than customs continuing to evolve'.

Briggs (1996, 463) has further criticized literature on the 'invention of tradition' for 'extend[ing] and legitimat[ing] scholarly control over the discourses of Others'. He emphasizes the need not only to understand the context in which discursive authority – that is, authority over the interpretation of tradition – is constructed, but also to acknowledge that what has often been characterized as fictitious has become part of the lived experience of the people with whom we work. How do actors make claims to represent cultural constructions, and which of these claims become successful and which do not? John and Jean Comaroff demonstrated in *Ethnicity, Inc.* (2009) that there is no reason to believe that the business of 'inventing tradition' would come to a halt in the post-colonial era. On the contrary, in the post-colonial era,

> The recuperation of 'tradition' under the impact of Ethnicity, Inc. may have the effect of reifying 'culture' as a thing in and of itself. And, in the upshot, its products and practices, rendered as intellectual property, may be more or less directed at the market. But, invariably, the process also has an impact on everyday conduct: on those less-objectified, unremarked upon ways of doing things. (75)

It is on this latter aspect, that is, the impact of tradition on everyday life, that our attention lies in this special issue. We want to move beyond probing the 'authenticity' of particular 'traditional practices'. Rather than deconstructing tradition in order to do away with it, we see here a site of necessary engagement. Tradition does matter in Central Asia, as it does in Africa and in Europe: it aggregates people, motivates individual and collective action, informs policy, public debates, law, and representation, and is – despite its often enough strategic inception – affectively powerful. Thus, to investigate the processes of traditionalization is not just an act of 'Othering', as Briggs claims, but also an effort to investigate and understand phenomena that are very real in the lives of the people we observe. And like any other aspect of society, these processes entail elements of invention that – once brought into existence – take on a life of their own and become highly relevant. Hence, putting aside possible structural differences between the inventions of demotic actors and those of elites, we focus instead on the practical ways in which tradition is put to use, by whom and to what ends. Often, the elites' projects of traditionalization and those of ordinary actors speak to and rely on each other in a rather dialectical way. While a great deal of discussion has centred on what tradition entails and what it does not, including the question of invention and ownership, less attention has been devoted to investigating how tradition is enacted, enforced or motivated – in short, how it is 'done'. When does tradition emerge as a line of argumentation, and how is it (materially) manifested? We also ask where and around what issues invocations of and discussions about tradition arise. Continuing to highlight the importance of tradition in ongoing nation-building processes, this special issue therefore focuses attention on the

'everydayification' (to translate quite literally Weber's *Veralltäglichung*) of tradition in arenas ranging from political demonstrations (Beyer and Kojobekova) and industrial workers' gatherings (Trevisani) to institutions of religious education (Müller), minority communities (Ptackova), wedding celebrations (Cleuziou) and the Internet (Kudaibergenova).

The empirical data provided in all of the contributions suggest that there is in each site at the very least a stable working definition of what tradition is, and – as stated above – the debates over its extent and its qualities are an inevitable part of the phenomenon. In this set of texts, we work with context-sensitive translations only and question our own assumptions about the characteristics the concept of tradition might entail, remembering that while 'traditional practices' might be presented as age-old, long-established and often uncodified principles, they are also deeply embodied, gendered, age-specific and all-encompassing ways of conduct. According to Mould (2005, 268), we can speak of traditionalization when a practice is communally recognized as traditional. Cleuziou (this issue) shows how, in the name of *an'ana*, wedding festivities in Tajikistan constitute events where participants construct 'the traditional'. In doing so, new practices and goods can become integrated into this domain as they are debated over and receive approval or, in some cases, are simply accepted without being questioned or challenged.

Tradition, in the words of Glassie (1995, 395), 'spreads into association with adjacent, related, equally indispensable terms'. This finding is in line with how, for example, the entry for the Kyrgyz term *salt* in the Kyrgyz ethnographic dictionary is composed: it specifies the term by referring to other terms with similar meanings. In this case *ürp-adat*, *nark*, *yrym-zhyrym*, and *kaada-salt* are given as explanations or definitions (Karataev and Eraliev 2005, 402–403). Beyer (2016, 6) has argued that in Kyrgyzstan, the word *salt* itself can be used interchangeably with *adat* (usually translated as customary law), as well as with all of the aforementioned terms, even though references to *salt* are much more common.[5] As the concept of *salt*, like the other concepts that the authors of this special issue explore, is intentionally ambiguous in both scholarly and emic discourses, efforts to delineate and translate these notions fail when taken out of context.

Tradition as practice and as institution

In this special issue, we are taking a praxeological approach to tradition that emphasizes how actors strategically demonstrate, imitate, claim and negotiate tradition. Understood in such a way, tradition remains always fragmentary, 'a fluid and transforming agent with no real end' (Hunn 1993, 13). Of course, tradition is not an agent, though it may be presented as such by its practitioners or other stakeholders. Methodologically, it is important to focus on and differentiate between what actors do, what they say they do, and what they say they should do in the name of tradition. Actors are not 'cultural dupes' (Garfinkel 1967); they are reflective and aware of their own and others' behaviour. They reason about their everyday lives just as anthropologists reason about them carrying out their everyday lives. Coming from this angle, practices of traditionalization can be fruitfully understood as exercises in sense-making by the actors themselves – to themselves and to one another (see also Mould 2005). From an analytical perspective, we treat traditionalization as the institutionalization of social practice, informed by – and, in turn, informing – cultural models.[6]

The early socialist regime explicitly aimed to destroy traditions that were believed to legitimize inequalities in Central Asia and were, therefore, considered harmful to societal development. Today, in contrast, international organizations and NGOs often tend to rely on so-called traditional leaders and hierarchies to implement development projects, thus sometimes reinforcing local inequalities in the name of stability and general well-being (Heathershaw 2009). The degree to which these endeavours were successful can be studied by examining comparatively how a 'traditional' nomadic way of life is perceived today in such places as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia. In all three, picturesque images of yurts and mounted shepherds abound, but in Kazakhstan at least it continues to be seen as a backwards and, by and large, embarrassing lifestyle, no matter how traditional it may be, while in Mongolia it is still a vibrant part of the public imagination and an important point of reference and pride (Finke 2004; Vuillemenot 2009).

We should regard tradition not as an object of fixed history but as part of a process of identity formation. The concept is thus analytically freed from being treated as a paradoxical object of iron-clad history that endures or – in a movement of revitalization – is reintroduced into our present time.[7] As a particular type of practice that always needs to be explored in its concrete institutional and interactional context at a particular time, tradition can only be judged from the present. It is an interpretative concept, not a descriptive one. Tradition therefore reflects the tensions between continuity and change, or predictability and flexibility. In rapidly transforming societies, however, it can be expected that there will be more variation in the interpretation and acceptance (or disavowal) of tradition. This gives ample opportunities for cultural entrepreneurs to come up with their own readings. New wedding ceremonies, the role of lineage or village elders, the necessity of religious piety or female purity are all cases in point that serve – or are intended to serve – the interests of those actors pursuing them. On a discursive level, this is portrayed as a dichotomy between modernizers and conservatives, but in everyday life there are many more facets to be found between the two ends of the spectrum. On a political level, many cases of retraditionalization can be interpreted as paths by which powerful local and national actors try to redefine social order in their own interests and impose a corresponding set of rules of the game on everyone around. We thus need to pay attention to those actors who have the means to define a situation (Bailey 1969).

Being the result of ongoing negotiation processes among different groups of actors, tradition is fluid and always prone to change. At the same time, to be meaningful, practices of traditionalization need a certain degree of durability and predictability. Otherwise, as institutional arrangements, they would lose credibility both in ideological terms and as guidelines for mutually expected patterns of acting (Ensminger 1992). Empirically speaking, there is, moreover, a wide range of rule adherence. Some traditions exist merely 'on paper' and have very little relevance in daily life (such as national dances or outfits worn only on specific occasions that may or may not have been more widespread in the past). Others seem more deeply ingrained – such as strong sanctions on inappropriate behaviour towards women or elderly people – and disregarding them may lead to serious contestations and eventually coercive acts of rectification. Even if the sanctions imposed are informal, they may cause severe stress and social exclusion.[8]

When and how does tradition change? One simple yet insightful economic answer to this is when relative prices and the corresponding bargaining power of different actors change (Ensminger 1992; Knight 1992). There is some merit to this idea. In the early

1990s, when most of Central Asia went through deep crises and people saw their liveli-hoods deteriorating overnight, wedding expenses posed a great challenge to household budgets. Different strategies to cope with this have been identified, and all reflect back on understandings of tradition. Among Kazakhs in Mongolia, as well as in other parts of the region, one way to restrict the size and expense of wedding ceremonies was to switch to a ritualized form of bride abduction: everyone knew in advance what would happen, but still the family of the girl would not participate in the event itself, cutting attendance (and costs) in half (Finke 2004). With the economic recovery in more recent years, weddings have become – as they have in all parts of Central Asia – an important tool to demonstrate a family's social standing and are celebrated as lavishly as possible. Today, the ceremony is announced months in advance, and the preparations for horse races and wrestling com-petitions leave no space for abductions. In Kyrgyzstan, we have a different situation: even though bride abduction has been punishable since pre-Soviet times, with the maximum prison sentence being increased in the Criminal Code in 2013, and despite intensive lob-bying against the practice by local and international NGOs, bride abduction persists.[9] In Tajikistan, in contrast, ceremonies are rarely announced far in advance because they greatly depend on men returning from their labour migration to Russia, which is often difficult to foresee, and on the remittances they bring along (see Cleuziou, this issue).

Appeals to tradition can serve to disguise the unequal distributional effects of specific rules within a population. The marriage patterns just described are a case in point: the trend towards ever more ostentatious ceremonies and displays of wealth, as in parts of Kazakstan, apparently began as a competition among the leading families within the com-munities. In their efforts to outperform one another, new arenas and opportunities emerged to demonstrate wealth and status. These conspicuous displays of tradition even-tually encouraged others – including the less well-off – to try to keep up with the elites, which for many intensified debt and financial precarity.[10] Another illustrative case of power asymmetries disguised by contemporary practices of traditionalization is the re-emergence of patronage networks, camouflaged as extended kin relations that serve all sides and, like bride abduction, are described as an inextricable part of traditional culture (Ismailbekova 2017). This camouflage of factual hierarchies as performances of egalitarian ideals indicates that tradition in Central Asia can cover up or legitimize existing inequalities. Powerful actors may use traditional concepts, or sometimes invent them, to serve their own purposes or to justify how institutional rules distribute costs and benefits, as in the case of patronage networks. That is to say, recourse to tradition in support networks might secure or even increase one's (superior) position in society.

Tradition as cultural model

We hold that there is no single authoritative point of view from which to decide what should be considered tradition in any particular setting. In consequence, there is no monopoly on tradition, despite the strong naturalistic and unitary conception of the term that many actors employ. At the same time, there are limits to the range of interpretations and instrumentalizations of tradition that have to do with prevailing local cultural models of how things are supposed to be done as well as power hierarchies that determine which actors can – with authority – determine what should count as tra-ditional. This is not to say that people do not act habitually, but to identify such

enactment of cultural models as 'tradition' is an active intervention, a purposeful framing, that has real consequences.

To refer to cultural models or schemes acknowledges that it is possible and productive to abstract certain shared understandings about how things in the world are connected to observed behaviour. But such cultural models are always unevenly distributed in a population, and we can never quite prove that any such a model guided a decision (whether consciously or unconsciously). Going back to the early criticism of Hobsbawm and Ranger (see above), we do not espouse a strict distinction between 'unself-conscious custom … and self-conscious traditions'. Rather, we proceed empirically: some models are more easily articulated, others less so; in any case, we assume that actors are in principle capable of the reflexivity needed to both identify and proclaim such models. Cultural models with not only a practical but also a moral component, such as respect for elders, are especially conducive to effective public articulation. When invoking cultural models, people make statements about how things ought to be done properly, and how broad the range of acceptable behaviour is in a given context. They also find their expressions in proverbs, morality tales and the wisdom of the elders, central elements of what counts as tradition. Some cultural models may leave little room for flexibility and alternatives, such as those related to religion or gender relations; others may be less strict. Such ideas about 'traditional' and 'proper' ways of life (often used interchangeably) are ideological in that they explain the world in terms of rightful hierarchies – or challenge them.

Cultural models of tradition are transmitted from generation to generation by way of domestic socialization and public policies. They can also, however, lose currency. Insights from cognitive anthropology show that those ideas transmitted in early childhood have an especially strong and lasting impact on people's understanding of the world. Cultural models, then, enable people to more easily share understandings of tradition, which still can be shaped by individual experience; they are both durable and fluid in the course of one's lifetime, as Strauss and Quinn (1997) put it. Many of these models are only partially conscious and are thus hard to access. While there is debate on how to define the respective units of reference and the number of adherents necessary to call any model a cultural one, many of those schemas that make up tradition are internalized to such a degree that they seem to be the obvious and often the only possible way of doing things. This is enhanced by the terminology that declares something to be a tradition, endowing it with an aura of authenticity, eternalness and even sacredness. One example of this is the celebrations for Nowruz all across Central Asia.[11] Other practices are obviously new, but may nevertheless quickly gain recognition, such as the independence day in each of the new Central Asian states.

Cultural models that concern social relations have a tendency to develop into stereotypes (Brubaker, Loveman, and Stamatov 2004). For the case of tradition, this means that people may well understand the biases and asymmetries in unequal treatment that they promote (for example, gender- or age-based differences) but be less aware of the underlying cultural basis. Cognition studies offer the related insight that different schemes or models are connected with one another in ways that are likewise difficult to penetrate consciously. For example, the perceived lack of 'modernity' among minorities in China, as described by Ptackova in this issue, is part of an emically ordered ethnic (or even 'racial') hierarchy that is particularly difficult to overcome, in part because it is shared to a certain degree even by the people negatively affected by this very taxonomy.

Its basis in shared knowledge (which we are calling 'models' here) also puts certain limits on the flexibility of tradition and, hence, its susceptibility to manipulation. A new model has to make sense to actors: the further away from established ideas it is, the more effort has to be spent to implement it (and the greater the risk of failure; see Wagner 1975). This is to say that the invention or transformation of tradition is often more gradual than abrupt, incremental rather than radical. A radical shift in existing models, such as if someone suddenly tried to proclaim that Kyrgyz had from time immemorial been sedentary agriculturalists rather than free-ranging herders, would demand the investment of significant resources, financial as well as rhetorical. Even not entirely implausible claims, such as that promoted by some intellectuals in the early 1990s, that shamanism had been the original religion of Kazaks and should be restored as such, have been largely futile because they could not be reconciled with the way people conceive of themselves (and possibly for other reasons as well).[12] It may, therefore, not always be possible to predict how tradition will change or which efforts towards its invention or reinstallation will succeed.

Nevertheless, when it comes to practice, tradition occasions a permanent struggle over meaning and requires constant renegotiation, as is amply demonstrated by the contributions in this special issue. This is partly because tradition is inherently ambivalent and fuzzy – more so than its promoters would like it to be. Some purportedly well-established Central Asian practices, such as child betrothal and the levirate, are in fact rejected by a significant portion of the population; others are disliked but still accepted as a matter of fact. An interesting case is the attitude towards alcohol in most of Muslim Central Asia. Pretty much everyone is aware that drinking alcohol violates religious prescriptions, yet consumption patterns have remained consistently high and are linked to the performance of traditional events such as weddings, circumcision ceremonies and national holidays. Many such ambivalent practices are now often labelled as a type of tradition – as 'our way of doing things' – even if they understand them as relatively recent innovations (Zanca 2003; Finke 2014).[13]

Beyer (2016) has demonstrated that designating practices as traditional is one way people can react to social change; tradition is thus never in the past, but always in the present (see also Eisenstadt 1973). Jolly (1992, 63), in a similar vein, suggests that scholars ought to 'look more carefully and comparatively at the encoding of past–present relations in the variety of symbolic constitutions of tradition' instead of trying to identify 'real pasts' in contrast to lay people's inventions of it. Towards a more granular analysis, Mould (2005, 257) reminds us that we can differentiate 'conscious and explicit efforts of traditionalization from inherent or implicit factors that feed or reinforce a tradition'. 'The past' is, moreover, no longer the key resource, as Hobsbawm and Ranger had it, but only one option among many for how to tell stories about oneself and about others.

To summarize, practices of traditionalization can thus be both inclusive and exclusive, integrative as well as divisive (Cocq 2014). While elites might impose their views and interests and try to force others to accept them as the (new) rules of the game, demotic actors can always reinterpret and challenge top-down models to a certain degree. Investigating tradition as practice allows one to study not only how tradition comes into being in the first place and is legitimized, but also how it is challenged and refuted. Though it draws its rhetorical appeal from its seemingly stable and non-negotiable character, tradition should be understood as always contestable and fragmentary. Actors can only ever achieve common ground on what the notion should entail in concrete situations.

Approaching tradition from these theoretical angles, we concentrate on exploring three dominant themes in the contributions to this special issue that allow productive cross-referencing: gender, authority and religion.

Fields of traditionalization

Doing gender

While tradition has been encouraged and put to use by the various governmental elites in Central Asia for the purpose of nation-building, it has regularly been discouraged by those same actors once women's rights and their representation come into play.[14] Women's issues have always been linked to tradition, as it is very often through discourses on and practices related to gender that tradition can manifest itself visibly and publicly. This is particularly the case when the matter concerns religion and family (Akiner 1997; Werner 2009; Kocaoglu 2009). After the forced unveiling campaign (*hujum*) in 1927 (Northrop 2004), which took place mostly in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan but is well known throughout Central Asia, women were forced to participate in the Soviet workforce while still fulfilling all of the expectations of their roles as wives, mothers and daughters (-in-law) (Tett 1994; Dragadze 1994).

State nationalisms and movements of national liberation are very often intrinsically linked to conceptions of gender hierarchy (Yuval-Davis 1997), and this observation holds throughout Central Asia as well: 'In the context of post-Soviet Central Asian nationalisms, the elaboration of national unity, authenticity, and identity inscribes itself in the idea of "returning to tradition", in order to mark – to varying degrees in each state – distance or rupture with the Soviet promotion of the "women's question"' (Cleuziou and Direnberger 2016, 196). State measures as much as nationalist groups tend to restrict women's mobility, their control over their own bodies, and their political participation through various policies and actions (regarding, for example, social provisioning, clothing, marriage, etc.), and try to circumscribe their sphere of activity to the frame of the household. In this context, gender activism and equality may be dismissed as incompatible with traditional gender norms (Cleuziou and Direnberger 2016, 198).

Tabyshalieva (2000, 55) has argued that, after independence, Central Asian women were 'caught up in three rings of discrimination, influenced by traditions of patriarchy, Soviet ideals, and images from the West'. Patriarchal traditions, for her, include the demands to marry early, give birth to many children (particularly sons) and still bear sole responsibility for the household. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the latter burden has become even heavier, as social security provisions are no longer in place. Bride abduction has become more frequent in Kyrgyzstan in the last two decades. As for polygamy, it is illegal according to state laws, but nevertheless continues to be practised in Kyrgyzstan. In the context of changing gender ideologies, new publications have stressed 'gender neotraditionalism' (Megoran 1999; Johnson and Robinson 2006, 2009). Commercio (2015, 529–30) argues that 'retraditionalization resonates with young, urban, educated women', thus, those who are 'least likely … to embrace traditional values'. She has addressed the concept of retraditionalization in regard to her topic of interest – women approaching adulthood – from a perspective that is similar to ours in this special issue, namely, as an empirically oriented inquiry. She found that university-

educated women in both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan sympathize with traditional gender roles.

In Kyrgyzstan, in the context of another constitutional reform (for background, see Beyer 2015), so-called 'higher values' (Russ.: *norma o vysshikh tsennostiakh*) such as 'respect for the elderly' and 'love of the Motherland' have been added to the preamble of the constitution. Along with these suggestions comes a respecification of the term 'family' from 'a union of two people' to the gender-specific 'a union between a man and a woman'.[15] Thus while in practical everyday life this union is increasingly frequently fractured due to labour migration, polygamy and high divorce rates, the law emphasizes a traditional image of the family, as if wanting to counter *de facto* developments on the ground. In this special issue, we investigate how women deal with this predicament and how they try to bend practices of traditionalization to their own advantage.

The power of authority

In this special issue, we understand authority not as the exercise of individual will or as an office (cf. Weber 1922; for Central Asia, see Jones Luong 2002, 68), but as the effect of a co-emergent practice of legitimization: we speak of authority when respect is accorded to the holders of particular types of skills or knowledge (or direct access to the divine), who in turn display what others regard as appropriate behaviour (Beyer 2016). Since authority is relational and derives from how people interact with others (Blumer 1969, 7), it should be seen as a basic aspect of human interactional behaviour rather than an individual capacity in itself (Peabody 1968). Authority is always dependent on the acknowledgement others are willing to show (Abu-Lughod 1986, 103; Arendt 1986); nevertheless, authority and power have commonalities, such as a hierarchical component and their relationality (Arendt 1993, 93; Wolf 1999).

Since the advent of poststructuralism and Foucault's work on power, however, authority seems to have received less attention. Foucault's (1979, 93) famous statement that we can find power 'everywhere' might have influenced researchers to explore hierarchical relationships predominantly in terms of power rather than authority. But Foucault was less interested in concrete interactions, and more in discursive formations. Those espousing interactionist approaches are predominantly concerned with situated struggles, which makes them reluctant to offer their analyses in terms of power.[16] Building on a contemporary social science literature that has increasingly emphasized the consensual or collusive aspects of power in addition to its coercive nature (Lukes 1986, 2005), the case studies presented here suggest that while tradition can be realized through institutionalized power, new organizations need to be staffed with people who are respected and can express their opinion in the name of tradition. These actors can then frame new practices and behaviour as traditional. In general terms, focusing on the interplay of power and authority offers us a more sophisticated understanding of how stratified relationships between actors are emerging in the context of traditionalization. The invocation of tradition can then be understood as an authenticating strategy: the traditional becomes a resource actively manipulated for specific and often personal ends (Appadurai 1995). Thus, it is to tradition that people attribute the power to render a practice, an idea, a place or an object authentic.

In addition to this analytical consideration, throughout Central Asia there is also an emic distinction between the concepts of power and authority. Power is attributed primarily to the (Soviet) state and to those individuals who are seen to be connected to it, which is why the Russian word *vlast'* (power) is often used even in Central Asian languages. Authority, on the other hand, refers to a culturally established pattern of behaviour entailing clearly demarcated roles that need to be performed and acted out in front of others if one's behaviour and actions are to be recognized as worthy of authority. This has consequences particularly for women who, in the context of having lost their husbands to wars in Soviet times, high divorce rates, labour migration of men to Russia, and the emerging debates on legalizing polygamy (as are currently taking place in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan[17]), have had to and continue to fulfil roles traditionally attributed to men only, for example that of being the head of a household (Ismailbekova 2016; Cleuziou, this issue).

The intertwining of religion and tradition

The third field of tradition we want to examine in greater detail is the manifestations of and local negotiations regarding religion. In one of his decrees, then president of Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Atambaev observed 'the weakening of traditional Islam', noting that 'contradictions in the Muslim community led to a loosening of the traditional Hanafi Sunni Islam'.[18] In the name of 'the defence of national culture and national identity', a 'fundamental revision of the principles and methods of the interaction between state and religion' have been put in place since then. While Atambaev's proclamations contradict the academic discourse of the 1990s, which asserted that an 'Islamic revival' was taking place in the region (Collins 2007; McGlinchey 2009), they are in line with Pelkmans's (2017) more recent argument that traditional versions of Islam (and Christianity) held rather limited appeal for those who developed an interest in practising religion in Kyrgyzstan. Some turned to new religious movements instead, such as Christian Pentecostalism and the Muslim Tablighi Jamaat. Nowadays, however, according to Commercio (2015), traditional religious and family values are accepted throughout both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In the latter context, reformist movements of Islam have been active since the late 1960s (Dudoignon and Noack 2014).

Beyer (2006, 2016) suggests that the contradictory findings among scholars mirror local debates over the interpretation of practices and institutions as either traditional, religious, or both, and that it was precisely the overlap between cultural and religious repertoires that allowed actors to act more freely (see also Rasanayagam 2011, 2014). When Jones (2017), in her recent edited volume on Islam in Central Asia, advocates discarding the term 'revival' and speaks of 'transformation' instead, she acknowledges these 'competing discourses', which are by no means limited to Central Asia.[19] Such a change of wording, however, would hardly meet the approval of many people in the region, who – for better or for worse – do experience the recent changes as a form of re-emergence and a regaining of importance on the part of religion in general.

Introducing the case studies

This set of articles offers new insights into the shared theme of traditionalization. Their theoretical reflections and ethnographic case studies promise relevance beyond the

field of Central Asian studies. The articles are based on papers given at the 2015 conference of the European Society for Central Asian Studies, titled 'Central Asia in the XXI Century: Historical Trajectories, Contemporary Challenges and Everyday Encounters', and held at the University of Zurich. The authors represented in this special issue met for a second time at the University of Konstanz in November 2017 to discuss draft versions of their articles and work on the common theme. We have thus accumulated a rich and well-matched palette of ethnographic case studies that approach traditionalization from different angles while retaining a common focus on the various practical realizations of tradition.

In 'Women of Protest, Men of Applause', Judith Beyer and Aijarkyn Kojobekova explore two unexpected kinds of strongly gendered activists and the ways they tap into practices of traditionalization in the context of Kyrgyzstan's recent turbulent political past. The different degrees of acceptance these actors have found is grounded in the respective standing and traditional stereotypes of men and women.

In 'Traditionalization, or the Making of Reputation', Juliette Cleuziou explores the performances of widows during their daughters' weddings, as they shoulder the double burden of performing as both mother and father to comply with expected traditional behaviour. Even if success – measured by the duration of marriages – is uncertain, given the high rates of divorce in the country, these widows strive to protect their daughters from the bad reputation of being fatherless.

Further exploring the theme of gender, Diana Kudaibergenova addresses the impact social media in Kazakhstan and Russia can have on local actors. Her article, 'The Body Globalized and Retraditionalized', shows how people using platforms such as Instagram for their own personal liberation expose themselves to global discourses on gender, body and sex, while others tap into public discussions and personal online profiles to circulate and strengthen discourses of traditionalization beyond the private, local and national spheres. All three articles focus on the complex emotion of shame (*uiat*; also 'shame-anxiety') that actors invoke to justify, rationalize or stigmatize their own or others' behaviour.

Probing the question of what happens to tradition once it is dislocated from its seemingly proper domain, Tommaso Trevisani's article 'The Veterans' Gala' investigates how, in a steel company in Karaganda, in southern Kazakhstan, a council of elders is being created by the company's manager to keep the growing dissatisfaction among employees at bay. Here, traditionalization recurs as a practice that both affirms and challenges industrial leadership in labour conflicts.

Dominik Müller writes on negotiating 'traditional Islam' among Central Asian students at the Russian Islamic University in Kazan, Tatarstan. He argues that for these youths, studying Islam as it is currently promoted by the Russian government is often a coping mechanism to deal with economic uncertainty while their parents hope to secure their children's moral upbringing. Besides being an expression of religious piety, it is thus also a way of increasing one's future job opportunities by combining Islamic topics with secular programmes such as law or economics.

Jarmila Ptackova, in 'Traditionalization as a Response to State-induced Development in Rural Tibetan Areas of Qinghai, PRC', investigates the impact of Chinese modernization schemes in minority areas. For several decades, the expansion of infrastructure and economic restructuring to the western provinces has been a dominant theme in the literature

and has often been interpreted as an attempt to assimilate the minority populations to the Han Chinese way of life. Questioning the allegedly solely negative impacts of these developments on the lives of Tibetans (who in fact often welcome modernization efforts), Ptackova goes on to explore responses that include a retreat from and a reappraisal of indigenous tradition. Examples of this are language use, food, handicrafts and rituals, as well as their adaptations in movies and the tourism sector.

The future of tradition

Practices of traditionalization can be understood as efforts to link the present to the past, thereby emphasizing a continuity of practices, material culture, and institutions that in turn furthers claims to authenticity and historical or even mythical continuity. These claims have been appropriated by Central Asian states in their efforts to develop particular national identity projects – but they have also always been part and parcel of ordinary people's cultural strategies. As tradition continues to matter in contemporary times, this special issue explores new arenas of its application, with a focus on the general population more than on elite actors. Without a doubt, tradition provides political actors and local elites with a source of legitimacy for an existing social order or for an intended direction of change. As such, tradition is commonly a 'weapon of the strong', to invert Scott's (1987) famous phrase. It is of particular importance – if the respective recourse is to be accepted and successful – to create an aura of seemingly indisputable facts, such as the right of elderly men, but not of women, to engage in local power games. However, comparatively few traditions and discourses are beyond contestation, and in the post-socialist period many regions, especially Central Asia but elsewhere as well, have seen the rise and fall of efforts to (re-)establish allegedly age-old habits and customs.

In this special issue we therefore set out to answer the following questions: Who needs tradition, and what is it being put to use for? How can authority emerge from referencing tradition? And who can control, police and oversee its associated practices? The various case studies illustrate not only its strategic use in diverse settings across Central Asia, but also its unintended side effects. Moreover, we analyse current developments in the region from an interactional angle that has thus far been little tested on material from Central Asia; this offers insights that allow comparison to processes of traditionalization reported throughout the world.

We argue that inequality and power asymmetries are constant features of traditionalization processes. Central Asia is no exception. After decades of socialist rule, with its own traditional practices and ideologies, the search for new fields of meaning and for the resurrection of earlier hierarchies has been successful in some realms and less so in others, as the articles in this special issue demonstrate. As time goes by, new and old traditions become institutionalized yet again, allowing their own dynamics of a seemingly self-explanatory and authoritative nature to unfold. Being enmeshed in broader cultural models of proper attitudes and the structuring of society, those with less power face an uphill battle to promote their own concepts and demands.

In Central Asia, practices of traditionalization are thus closely related to the transformation of the formerly socialist order and the emergence of often highly stratified societies. It would therefore be misleading to simply attribute them to the power of conservative segments of society. Rather, traditionalization is part of a dialectical way of ordering

that is negotiated between demotic actors and the various power holders on both the domestic and the national level. It lends actors at the national level an aura of legitimacy, even if the misuses and manipulations seem quite obvious, while allowing those at the local level to manoeuvre, stake alternative claims and display acts of resistance on the ground.

Notes

1. For better readability, we will put the term 'tradition' in quotation marks only when referencing the opinion of others.
2. See Dubuisson (2011, 2017) for the case of *aitys* poetry in Kazakhstan, and Beyer (2016) for the invocation of tradition in the Kyrgyz context.
3. Almazbek Atambaev, the former president of Kyrgyzstan, has not written books any yet, but has already announced that he will do so during his retirement.
4. In recent years there has been increasing reference to (cultural) heritage in the literature on Central Asia (see e.g. McGuire 2017 and, from the perspective of critical heritage studies, Paskaleva 2016, which is an entire special issue bearing the title 'Memory and Commemoration in Central Asia').
5. Likewise, in his definition of *adat*, a concept that is also known throughout Central Asia, Clifford Geertz (2000) draws on German legal anthropologist Franz von Benda-Beckmann's (1979) discussion of the term: 'In his [Benda-Beckmann's] glossary, the word is "defined" as "tradition, custom, law, morality, political system, legal system" which, except for the omission of "etiquette" and "ritual", is about the size of it' (Geertz 2000, 210).
6. We use 'institutions' here according to Douglas North's (1990, 3) definition as 'rules of the game'. This includes a broad spectrum of social regulations, from everyday practices of greeting to multilevel arrangements of property rights and law. Most importantly, institutions entail mutual expectations about how things are supposed to be done, as well as formal or informal sanctions for disregarding such expectations. However, due to the restrictions they impose on possible ways of acting, institutions may always be disputed and are prone to continual change. In fact, according to North, one can only speak of an institution if people follow the rule to the extent necessary to maintain mutual expectations (see also Ensminger 1992; Finke 2004).
7. A. L. Kroeber's (1948) classic anthropological definition of tradition – the 'internal handing on through time' (411) – is still very much in line with the commonsensical understanding.
8. For lack of a better term, we label both of these – the more superficial ones as well as the internalized patterns of behaviour – 'tradition'; together they constitute a continuum along which one and the same act can fall at different points depending on the individual, the situation or the temporal context.
9. In their 2015 report, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women described bride abduction in Kyrgyzstan as the result of 'discriminatory stereotypes, negative traditional attitudes and harmful practices' (4), and urged authorities 'to address the traditional cultural attitudes and underlying causes of bride kidnapping' (6). This approach demonstrates a clear failure to differentiate between explanans and explanandum.
10. Personal correspondence with Dinara Abildenova.
11. Nowruz, also known as the Persian (or Iranian) New Year, is celebrated on the vernal equinox and marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring.
12. When it comes to traditional medicine, however, Penkala-Gawecka (2013) argues that we are currently witnessing a revival in 'shamanic illness' – the life-altering 'illness' a person must go through to become a shaman – in Kazakhstan, which she attributes to a governmental reappraisal that has established 'folk medicine' as national heritage as well as to newly emerging biomedical discourses.
13. In recent years there have been efforts to prohibit alcohol. Among the Islamist groups, obviously, total abstinence is unconditional, but many more Kazaks and Kyrgyz have replaced

vodka with *qimiz*, or fermented mare's milk, as the national (mildly) alcoholic beverage. It is now increasingly common not to serve vodka during life-cycle ceremonies, or to do so only in secret. People justify this less on religious grounds and more with reference to the traditional role and medicinal values of *qimiz* – which allows even local imams to consume it.

14. Explicitly gender-focused publications have predominantly looked at women's issues. Studies that address manhood, fatherhood, male youth or the construction of male personhood (Reeves 2010; Roche 2014; Schröder 2017; Thibault 2017) often do not approach their topic from a gender perspective, and despite our awareness that migration shapes the construction of manhood in profound ways, we still lack in-depth studies on this topic. However, Kandiyoti (1988, 2007) and Harris (2004) have opened up the debate, and Kamp (2009), Billaud (2015), Cleuziou and Direnberger (2016), as well as Cleuziou, Beyer and Kojobekova, and Kudaibergenova in this special issue are recent examples that address gender as an analytical category rather than a descriptive one.

15. See *Vykhrest* (27 January 2017). "The victims of Russia's ultra-conservatism are the Russian people themselves." Arykbaev (29 August 2016). "Initsiatory dorabotali popravi v konstitutsiyu - chto izmenilos'?" https://kloop.kg/blog/2016/08/29/initsiatory-dorabotali-popravki-v-konstitutsiyu-chto-izmenilos/, accessed 3 June 2019. We can observe similar developments in Russia, where the loosening of laws against domestic violence was justified in the name of 'traditional values' (https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/antonina-vikhrest/victims-of-russia-s-ultra-conservativism-are-russian-people-themselves, accessed 3 June 2019; see also Kudaibergenova, this issue).

16. See Girke (2015) for an example of the negotiation of authority among situated actors that complicates any straightforward understanding of power. In contrast, anthropologists working in a new institutionalist framework tend to focus on issues of power rather than authority (Ensminger 1992; Finke 2004).

17. See the interview with Commercio and Cleuziou at CAAN (Central Asian Analytical Network), 11 May 2016 (http://caa-network.org/archives/7076, accessed 3 June 2019).

18. Presidential Decree 'O realizatsii resheniia Soveta oborony Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki o gosudarstvennoi politike v religioznoi sfere', 7 February 2014.

19. Talal Asad (1983) suggested studying Islam in general as a 'discursive tradition'.

Acknowledgment

Disclosure statement

References

Abu-Lughod, L. 1986. *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Beduin Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Adams, L. 2010. *The Spectacular Culture and National Identity in Uzbekistan*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Akaev, A. 2003. *Kyrgyz Statehood and the Popular Epic 'Manas'*. Original in English.

Akiner, S. 1997. "Between Tradition and Modernity: The Dilemma Facing Contemporary Central Asian Women." In *Post-Soviet Women: From the Baltic to Central Asia*, edited by M. Buckley, 261–304. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Appadurai, A. 1995. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Arendt, H. 1986. "Communicative Power." In *Power*, edited by S. Lukes, 59–74. New York: New York University Press.

Arendt, H. 1993 [1961]. *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*. London: Penguin Books.

Asad, T. 1983. *"The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam."* Occasional Papers. Washington DC: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University.

Bailey, F. G. 1969. *Sratagems and Spoils: A Social Anthropology of Politics*. New York: Schocken.

Benda-Beckmann, F. von. 1979. *Property in Social Continuity. Continuity and Change in the Maintenance of Property Relationships Through Time in Minangkabau, West Sumatra*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Berdymukhammedov, G. 2013. *Adamnama*.

Bergne, P. 2006. *The Birth of Tajikistan: National Identity and the Origins of the Republic*. London: I. B. Tauris.

Beyer, J. 2006. "Revitalisation, Invention and Continued Existence of the Kyrgyz Aksakal Courts: Listening to Pluralistic Accounts of History." *Dynamics of Plural Legal Orders. Special Double Issue, Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law* 53–54 (2006), edited by F. von Benda-Beckmann and K. von Benda-Beckmann. , 141–76 Berlin: Lit.

Beyer, J. 2015. "Constitutional Faith: Law and Hope in Revolutionary Kyrgyzstan." *Ethnos. Journal of Anthropology* 80 (3): 320–345.

Beyer, J. 2016. *The Force of Custom: Law and the Ordering of Everyday Life in Kyrgyzstan*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Billaud, J. 2015. *Kabul Carnival: Gender Politics in Postwar Afghanistan*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Blumer, H. 1969. *Symbolic Interaction: Perspective and Method*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Briggs, C. 1996. "The Politics of Discursive Authority in Research on the 'Invention of Tradition'." *Cultural Anthropology* 11 (4): 435–469.

Brubaker, R., M. Loveman, and P. Stamatov. 2004. "Ethnicity as Cognition." *Theory and Society* 33/1: 31–64.

Cleuziou, J., and L. Direnberger. (eds) 2016. "Gender and Nation in Post-Soviet Central Asia. From National Narratives to Women's Practices." *Nationalities Papers* 44 (2): 195–206.

Cocq, C. 2014. "Traditionalisation for Revitalisation: Tradition as a Concept and Practice in Contemporary Sámi Contexts." *Folklore* 57: 79–100.

Collins, K. 2007. "Ideas, Networks, and Islamist Movements. Evidence From Central Asia and the Caucasus." *World Politics* 60 (1): 64–96.

Comaroff, J., and J. Comaroff. 2009. *Ethnicity, Inc*. Chicaco: University of Chicago Press.

Commercio, M. 2015. "The Politics and Economics of 'Retraditionalization' in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31 (6): 529–556.

Dragadze, T. 1994. *'Islam in Azerbaijan and the Position of Women.' In Muslim Women's Choices. Religious Belief and Social Reality, Edited by C. Fawzi El-Solh and J. Mabro, 152–163*. Oxford: Berg.

Dubuisson, E. M. 2011. "Dialogic Authority: Kazakh Aitys Poets and Their Patrons." *Ethnographies of the State in Central Asia: Performing Politics*, edited by Madeleine Reeves, M. J. Rasanayagam and J. Beyer, 55—77. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Dubuisson, E.M. 2017. *Living Language. The Dialogic Emergence of an Ancestral Worldview*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Dudoignon, S., and C. Noack, eds. 2014. *Allah's Kolkhozes: Migration, De-Stalinisation, Privatisation and the New Muslim Congregations in the Soviet Realm (1950s-2000s)*. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz.

Eisenstadt, S. N. 1973. "Post-Traditional Societies and the Continuity and Reconstruction of Tradition." *Daedalus* 102 (1): 1–28.

Eisenstadt, S.N. 2000. *Multiple Modernities. Daedalus* 129 (1): 1–29.

Ensminger, J. 1992. *Making a Market: The Institutional Transformation of an African Society. The Political Economy of Institutions and Decisions*. Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Eriksen, T. 2007. *Globalization: The Key Concepts*. Berg: Oxford and New York.

Finke, P. 2004. *Nomaden im Transformationsprozess: Kasachen in der Post-Sozialistischen Mongolei*. Münster: Lit-Verlag.

Finke, P. 2014. *Variations on Uzbek Identity: Strategic Choices, Cognitive Schemas and Political Constraints in Identification Processes*. Oxford, NY: Berghahn Books.

Foucault, M. 1979. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books.

Garfinkel, H. 1967. *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Geertz, C. 2000 [1983]. "Local Knowledge: Fact and Law in Comparative Perspective." In *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, edited by C. Geertz, 167–234. New York: Basic Books.

Girke, F. 2015. "The Uncertainty of Power and the Certainty of Irony: Encountering the State in Kara, Southern Ethiopia." In *Culture, Catastrophe, and Rhetoric: the Texture of Political Action*, edited by R. Hariman, and R. Cintron, 168–193. New York: Berghahn.

Glassie, H. 1995. "Tradition." *The Journal of American Folklore* 108 (430): 395–412.

Harris, C. 2004. *Control and Subversion: Gender Relations in Tajikistan*. London: Pluto.

Heathershaw, J. 2009. *Post-Conflict Tajikistan: The Politics of Peacebuilding and the Emergence of Legitimate Order*. London: Routledge.

Herzfeld, M. 2014 [2005]. *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State*. London: Routledge.

Hirsch, F. 2005. *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.

Hobsbawm, E., and T. Ranger. 1983. *The Invention of Tradition. Morgan Lectures Series*. Chicago: Aldine.

Hunn, E. 1993. "What is Traditional Ecological Knowledge?" In *Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Wisdom for Sustainable Development*, edited by N. Williams and G. Baines, 13-15. Canberra: Center for Resource and Environmental Studies, Australian National University.

Hutchinson, J. 1987. *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State*. Boston: Allen & Unwin.

Hutchinson, J. 1999. "Re-Interpreting Cultural Nationalism." *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 45 (3): 392–407.

Ismailbekova, A. 2016. "Constructing the Authority of Women Through Custom: Bulak Village, Kyrgyzstan." *Nationalities Papers* 44 (2): 266–280.

Ismailbekova, A. 2017. *Blood Ties and the Native Son Poetics of Patronage in Kyrgyzstan*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Johnson, J., and J. Robinson, eds. 2006. *Living Gender After Communism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Jolly, M. 1992. "Specters of Inauthenticity." *The Contemporary Pacific* 4 (1): 49–72.

Jones Luong, P. 2002. *Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Power, Perceptions, and Pacts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jones, P., ed. 2017. *Islam, Society and Politics in Central Asia*. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press.

Kamp, M. 2009. "Women's Studies and Gender Studies in Central Asia. Are We Talking to Each Other?" *Central Eurasian Studies Review* 8 (1): 2–12.

Kandiyoti, D. 1988. "Bargaining with Patriarchy." *Gender and Society* 2 (3): 274–290.

Kandiyoti, D. 2007. "Old Dilemmas, New Challenges: The Politics of Gender and Reconstruction in Afghanistan." *Development and Change* 28 (2): 169–199.

Karataev, O and S. Eraliev. 2005. *Kyrgyz Ethnografiiasy Boiuncha Sözdük*. Bishkek: Biiktik.

Karimov, I. 2008. *High Morality. An Invincible Force. [i.O. Yuksak Ma'naviyat - Yengilmas Kuch]*. Tashkent: Ma'naviyat.

Kassymbekova, B. 2017. "Understanding Stalinism in, from and of Central Asia." *Central Asian Survey* 36, 1: 1–18.

Kendzior, S. 2014. "Reclaiming Ma'naviyat. Morality, Criminalityand Dissident Politics in Uzbekistan." In *Ethnographies of the State in Central Asia. Performing Politics*, edited by M. Reeves, J. Rasanayagam and J. Beyer, 223-242. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Knight, J. 1992. *Institutions and Social Conflict. The Political Economy of Institutions and Decisions*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kocaoglu, T. 2009. "The Past as Prologue? Challenging the Myth of the Subordinate, Docile Woman in Muslim Central Eurasia." In *Gender Politics in Post-Communist Eurasia*, edited by L. Racioppi, and K. O'Sullivan, 169–208. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.

Kroeber, A. 1948. *Anthropology: Race, Language, Culture*. New York: Hartcourt Brace.

Lukes, S. 2005 [1974]. *Power: A Radical View*. 2nd edition. Palgrave: Macmillan.

Lukes, S., ed. 1986. *Power*. New York: New York University Press.

Martin, V. 2001. *Law and Custom in the Steppe. The Kazakhs of the Middle Horde and Russian Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century*. Surrey, England: Curzon Press.

Massell, G. 1975. "Family Law and Social Mobilization in Soviet Central Asia. Some Comparisons with Socialist China." *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 17: 374–403.

McGlinchey, E. 2009. *Chaos, Violence, Dynasty: Politics and Islam in Central Asia*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

McGuire, G. 2017. "Cultural Histories of Kumiss: Tuberculosis, Heritage and National Health in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan." *Central Asian Survey* 36/4: 493–510.

Megoran, N. 1999. "Theorizing Gender, Ethnicity and the Nation-State in Central Asia." *Central Asian Survey* 18 (1): 99–110.

Morozova, I. 2005. "Nation-Building in Central Asia: Creating New State Mythologies." In *Towards Social Stability and Democratic Governance in Central Eurasia*, edited by I. Morozova. *NATO Science Series, V: Science and Technology Policy* 49: 67–81. Oxford: IOS Press.

Mould, T. 2005. "The Paradox of Traditionalization: Negotiating the Past in Choctaw Prophetic Discourse." *Journal of Folklore Research* 42 (3): 255–294.

Munkh-Erdene, E. 2008. "Selling of Good Father's Name: Legitimacy, Pride and Commodity. Commemoration of Chinggis Khan in Modern Mongolia." *Bulletin* 24: 35–36.

Nazarbaev, N. 2001. *Epicenter of Peace*. Hollis, NH: Puritan Press.

Nazarbaev, N. 2008. *The Kazakhstan Way*. London: Stacey International.

North, D. 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance: The Political Economy of Institutions and Decisions*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Northrop, D. 2004. *Veiled Empire. Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Noyes, D. 2009. "Tradition: Three Traditions." *Journal of Folklore Research* 46 (3): 233–268.

Nyazov, S. 2005 [2001]. *Rukhnama: Reflections on the Spiritual Values of the Turkmen*. Ashgabat: State Publishing Service Turkmenistan.

Paskaleva, E. 2016. *Memory and Commemoration in Central Asia*. IIAS Newsletter 74. Online: http://www.iias.asia/sites/default/files/IIAS_NL74_FULL.pdf (accessed 20 August 2017).

Peabody, R. L. 1968. "Authority." In *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences 1*, edited by D. L. Sills, and R. K. Merton, 473–474. New York: Macmillan/Free Press.

Pelkmans, M. 2017. *Fragile Conviction: Changing Ideological Landscapes in Urban Kyrgyzstan*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Penkala-Gawecka, D. 2013. "Mentally Ill Or Chosen By Spirits? 'Shamanic Illness' and the Revival Of Kazakh Traditional Medicine in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan." *Central Asian Survey* 32 (1): 37–51.

Rahmon, E. 2009 [2001]. *Tochikon dar Oinai Tar'ikh. Kitobi Iakum, Az Orien to Somonien*. Dushanbe: Irfon.

Ranger, T. 1993. 'The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa' Legitimacy and the State in the Twentieth-Century Africa, edited by Terence Ranger and Olufemi Vaughan, 62–111: Springer.

Rasanayagam, J. 2011. *Islam in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan: The Morality of Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rasanayagam, J. 2014. "The Politics of Culture and the Space for Islam: Soviet and Post-Soviet Imaginaries in Uzbekistan." *Central Asian Survey* 33 (1): 1–14.

Reeves, M. 2010. "Migrations, Masculinité et Transformations de L'espace Social Dans la Vallée de Sokh." In *Dynamiques Migratoires et Changements Sociétaux en Asie Centrale*, edited by M. Laruelle, 131–147. Paris: Editions Petra.

Roche, S. 2014. *Domesticating Youth: Youth Bulges and Their Socio-Political Implications in Tajikistan*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn.

Roy, O. 2000. *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*. London: I. B. Tauris.

Sahlins, M. 1999. "'Two or Three Things That I Know About Culture.' Huxley Lecture 1998." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 5: 399–421.

Schröder, P. 2017. *Bishkek Boys: Neighbourhood Youth and Urban Change in Kyrgyzstan's Capital*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn.

Scott, J. 1987. *Weapons of the Weak. Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Strauss, C., and N. Quinn. 1997. *A Cognitive Theory of Cultural Meaning*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Tabyshalieva, A. 2000. "Revival of Traditions in Post-Soviet Central Asia." *Making the transition work for women in Europe and Central* Asia, edited by Marina Lazreg, 51–57. World Bank Discussion Paper No 411. Washington, DC.

Tett, G. 1994. "Guardians of the Faith? Gender and Religion in an (ex) Soviet Tajik Village." In *Muslim Women's Choices. Religious Belief and Social Reality*, edited by C. Fawzi El-Solh, and J. Mabro, 128–151. Oxford: Berg.

Thibault, H. 2017. "Labour Migration, Sex, And Polygyny: Negotiating Patriarchy in Tajikistan." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. Published online first: https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1400086.

Vuillemenot, A.-M. 2009. *La Yourte et la Mesure du Monde: Avec les Nomades au Kazakhstan*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Academia.

Wagner, R. 1975. *The Invention of Culture*. Englewoods Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Weber, M. 1922. "Die Drei Reinen Typen der Legitimen Herrschaft." *Preussische Jahrbücher* 187 (1): 1–12.

Werner, C. 2009. "Bride Abduction in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Marking a Shift Towards Patriarchy Through Local Discourses of Shame and Tradition." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15 (2): 314–331.

Wolf, E. 1999. *Envisioning Power: Ideologies of Dominance and Crisis*. Berkeley, CA et al.: University of California Press.

Yuval-Davis, N. 1997. *Gender and Nation*. London: Sage.

Zanca, R. 2003. "Take! Take! Take! Host-Guest Relations and All That Food: Uzbek Hospitality Past and Present." *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 21 (1): 8–16.