

## Charismatic Routinization and Problems of Post-Charisma Succession in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

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### Abstract

Using Weber's concept of charismatic routinisation, this article analyses the dilemmas related to political succession and post-charismatic order in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. While the presidents of these three countries have drawn their authority from a combination of charismatic, legal-rational and traditional authority, they have relied most heavily on charisma in particular to sustain their rule. With the presidents of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan aging and facing the question of political succession, the article provides an analysis of the problems associated with potential for post-charismatic succession in these states. It does so by drawing on three of Weber's mechanisms for charismatic routinisation: *designation*, *hereditary charisma*, and *charisma in office*. The analysis demonstrates that in these three cases, despite charisma only having two routes available to it, traditional and legal-rational, the mixture of legal-rational, traditional and charismatic domination undermines the process of charismatic routinisation. Consequently, the article argues that political succession in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan will most likely evolve into a reconstitution of charismatic leadership.

**Keywords:** charismatic routinisation; charisma; Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, political succession.

Nursultan Nazarbayev and Islam Karimov, the presidents of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan respectively, are the only two Soviet era leaders who remain as heads of one of the fifteen successor republics of the former USSR. These two presidents have dominated and shaped the political systems of their nations. Elite discourse in both countries consistently depicts independence and sovereignty as inextricably tied to their personalities. Along with both post-Soviet presidents of Turkmenistan (Saparmurat Niyazov and Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov), Nazarbayev and Karimov can be observed as having their authority underpinned by a combination of Weber's traditional, legal-rational and charismatic domination.<sup>1</sup> It is charisma, however, which is often the most prominent characteristic of their authority. They are leaders who possess a predisposition towards personality cults, glorifying titles and statues, and a deifying elite-led public discourse.

Nazarbayev and Karimov are approaching the twilight of their political careers, and the issue of succession is the defining question upon which the future trajectory of state development depends. Given the centrality of both leaders to their respective political systems, and given a generation of young people have never known anything but their leadership, what are the prospects for a stable transition to a post-charismatic order? And what are the mechanisms available to achieve such a transition in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan? While these are questions fundamental to the future of both countries, they are also questions that address broader issues connected to Weber's concept of charismatic routinisation.

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<sup>1</sup> Weber used the term *Herrschaft*, which directly translated from German means 'domination'. However, the term has also been translated in English as 'authority'. While both translations are more than adequate, this article prefers to use 'domination' as it captures better the idea of asymmetrical power relations (Guzzini, 2007).

The very nature of charisma is ephemeral and transitory. It lasts only as long as the charismatic leader and, consequently, is naturally an unstable form of political domination (Toth, 1972; Weber, 1978, p. 114). For charisma to survive and move beyond its transitory nature, it requires routinisation into either traditional or legal-rational forms or organisation (or both). Therefore, often in a modern political context the routinisation of charisma is associated with the problem of political succession (Ardley, 2003; Jarbawi & Pearlman, 2007). This article utilises three of Weber's original five categories of mechanisms for charismatic routinisation (*designation*, *hereditary charisma* and *charisma in office*) to analyse problems associated with charismatic routinisation in these three states and, in particular, to address the issue of political succession in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The article argues that all three forms of charismatic routinisation pose potential problems for any post-charismatic political order in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. There is a danger that *designation* can lead to the reconstitution of charismatic leadership (as the case of Turkmenistan illustrates), while *hereditary charisma* as a form of charismatic routinisation has proven vulnerable in the cases of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to inter-elite and regime instability. Finally, ostensible attempts at charismatic routinisation through *charisma in office* in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have led to an increased personalisation of power and a resistance from the charismatic leaders to give up power. These cases illustrate a paradox within the process of charismatic routinisation in a modern political context that features an amalgamation of the legal-rational, traditional and charismatic. Theoretically, charismatic routinisation only has two paths open to it (traditional and legal-rational), yet in a context whereby these forms of domination already exist, they serve to undermine the process of charismatic routinisation, and conversely end up strengthening charismatic leadership rather than ensuring its transition to more traditional or legal-rational forms of domination.

This article is not presenting a straightforward comparative analysis. While the three Central Asian states share many similarities in terms of their historical, cultural and economic development and their shared Soviet legacy, they have also taken divergent paths in terms of their post-Soviet transition (Collins, 2006). Moreover, they are at different places in terms of charismatic succession. Turkmenistan has already gone through one form of charismatic succession – but that case reveals something about the problems of routinising charisma in the other two states, notably how charisma can become reconstituted by a successor. Turkmenistan, therefore, operates as a near-approximate case for comparison with regards to potential pathways for charismatic routinisation in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

This article presents an interpretative analysis of potential problems and dilemmas related to political succession and charismatic routinisation in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. It uses Weber's concept of charismatic routinisation as an analytical frame for considering this prevalent issue. By using the cases of prospective charismatic successions in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the article contributes to informing the concept and mechanisms of charismatic routinisation. Simultaneously, however, charismatic routinisation provides an insightful frame through which to begin thinking about the developmental paths open to these states, given political succession is the most anticipated event.

Methodologically, the data collection is a little uneven as a consequence of the restricted nature of politics in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. For Kazakhstan, the article draws on analytical reports, some primary interviews with political elites (undertaken by the author during various fieldtrips from 2007 to 2014), local newspapers and government documentary sources. Not all of these types of sources are available in the cases of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Consequently, there is more reliance on secondary sources including newspapers, opposition websites and foreign-based NGO reports. This is why it is not entirely possible to offer a straightforward comparative analysis, as frequently the data is not always completely comparable.

The article is broken down into two main sections. The first sets up the analytical frame for unpacking charisma and charismatic routinisation. The second section then uses Weber's three mechanisms for charismatic routinisation (*designation*, *hereditary charisma* and *charisma in office*) to analyse the cases of political succession and post-charismatic order in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

## Charisma and Charismatic Routinisation

A charismatic leader is followed and obeyed 'by virtue of personal trust in his revelation, his exemplary qualities so far as they fall within the scope of the individual's belief in charisma' (Weber, 1978, p. 213). While originally observed as a form of domination that existed historically (and mostly related to religious movements without institutional structures), charisma is now widely understood to no longer be bound to any historical period and can exist within all kinds of complex institutional structures, hence the popularity of the concept in Organizational Studies (Lindholm, 1990; Dow, 1969, pp. 307-308; Conger, 1993). As Eatwell (2006, p. 144) notes, charisma

*offers more insights if the focus turns to charisma's implications for the workings of government, but even in this context it is important not to underestimate the role of legal-bureaucratic legitimacy, nor to ignore the way in which traditional forms of legitimation were also present in these regimes.*

Charisma is fleeting. If the followers of the charismatic leader are to maintain and ensure the survival of their movement in the long-term, then charisma must give up its charismatic qualities (Toth, 1972, p.1). This process of routinisation concerns the changing of group loyalty from one based on charismatic domination to a unity premised on rationally accepted rules or traditional precedent (Weber, 1978, p. 246; Ake, 1966, p. 2). According to Eisenstadt, the

*test of any great charismatic leader lies not only in his ability to create a single event or great movement, but also the ability to leave a continuous impact on institutional structure – to transform any given institution setting by infusing into it some of his charismatic vision, by investing the regular, orderly offices, or aspects of social organisation, with some of his charismatic qualities and aura* (Eisenstadt, 1968, p. 21).

In *Economy and Society*, Max Weber identifies 5 possible mechanisms for the routinisation of charismatic domination. Arguably, two of these mechanisms (*revelation* and *selection*) are not appropriate for analysing Central Asian states (Weber, 1978, pp. 246-47). Both mechanisms rely on an administrative or legal staff to make the decision regarding the charismatic successor. Given the matrix of traditional, legal-rational and charismatic domination in Central Asian states, these two kinds of routinisation are unlikely mechanisms for political succession in the region. Succession could not be decided solely by an administrative or legal staff as it would have to involve other actors – namely informal patrimonial elite groups (traditional), or the procedure of an election (legal-rational), despite how controlled that electoral process might be.

Of the three mechanisms which do complement the study of charismatic leadership succession in Central Asia, the first is the *designation* of a successor, either by the charismatic leader, if still alive, or by administrative staff or elite followers if the charismatic leader is dead. The *designation* of a candidate is a *question of arriving at the correct designation, the designation of the right person who is truly endowed with charisma* (Weber, 1978, p. 247). In contemporary political systems, however, the designated successor, more often than not, requires their position to be legitimized through rationalized standards and routines (i.e. elections). This process, the attempt to mesh the legal-rational with the charismatic,

creates a number of dilemmas for the charismatic followers (elites) or existing charismatic leader, which undermine the progression of charismatic routinisation. First, by going through the procedure of an election, whether that process is controlled or not, the charismatic successor is endowed with a *legitimacy* separate from the charismatic leader or followers whom designated their position in the first instance. Second, this gives the successor the opportunity to *reconstitute charismatic domination*, but this time in their image. Third, it creates an *elite coordination dilemma*. In possessing their own legitimacy and reconstituting a form of charismatic domination, the successor is then able to move against those followers who placed him/her in a position of power, thus consolidating their leadership and authority. Finally, in instances where the charismatic leader remains on the scene and designates a successor, such a process of routinisation risks a potential '*lame-duck*' syndrome, which can lead elite defection and the emergence of a consolidated elite opposition capable of mobilising society against either the existing charismatic leader and/or their designated successor (Hale, 2005, p. 135).

*Hereditary charisma* is the second of these three forms of routinisation applicable to the case of Central Asia. Here charisma is institutionalised through dynastic means (Eisenstadt, 1968, pp. 21-22). According to Weber, this form of routinisation could *lead in the direction either of traditionalization or of legalization* (Weber, 1978, p. 248). In the case of *hereditary charisma*, an obvious successor emerges because of their familial connection with the existing charismatic leader. However, while such a mechanism may seem obvious in the aftermath of the death of a charismatic leader, speculation around dynastic succession while a charismatic leader is still alive can lead to two problems. First, it can create potential *inter-elite rivalry and instability*. Jealousy can arise amongst the charismatic followers and administrative staff should a dynastic successor attempt to claim pole position for succession. Certain powerful sections of the elite will seek to weaken potential dynastic successors' power bases and destabilise their efforts to take power. Second, if still alive, the charismatic leader can also move against potential dynastic successors who are observed as moving too early in their endeavour to take power. In such instances, the existing charismatic leader may seek to marginalise potential dynastic successors and divorce them from the resources, interests and existing power bases.

The final mechanism involves the transmission of charisma by way of office. This involves a *dissociation of charisma from a particular individual, making it an objective transferable entity*, which can then be enshrined in ritual acts and rules pertaining to a form of public office (Weber, 1978, p. 276). Here charisma becomes embodied within an institutional reality, which attempts to reform the existing political and social order by divesting charismatic power into rational-legal offices of the bureaucratic state. In Central Asia, this can be most commonly observed in the way power is channelled *downwards* from the charismatic leader to the legislature and some of the political parties which constitute the legislature. Ostensibly the objective is to impersonalise power by rooting it firmly within a formal institutional framework. Theoretically, institutions such as parliaments or parties, divested with some of the charismatic leader's power, would then be able to provide a mechanism through which a post-charismatic leader would materialise. For instance, a parliament could be imbued with greater power and responsibilities vis-à-vis the charismatic leader in terms of policy-making and the creation of the government. The largest party in the parliament could then provide a role in terms of elite recruitment for important political offices from which a talent pool of potential successors to the charismatic leader would emerge. There are at least two distinct problems with such a process. First, to work effectively the formal institutions concerned require a genuine degree of agency separate from the charismatic leader, otherwise this form of routinisation can lead to a further *concentration of charismatic power*. If the legislature, and the largest party within that legislature, remains but an extension of the charismatic leader and is unable to influence decision-making, then faith (legitimacy) in its ability to play an important role in mediating the succession process to a post-charismatic political order is fatally undermined. Second, in a context where the charismatic leader is still alive, despite attempts to ensure a stable succession, the leader can often find it difficult to *give up the reins of power* and, therefore, will delay any succession process.

**Table 1:** Mechanisms for charismatic routinisation in the cases of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

Form of charismatic routinisation	Description	Dilemmas associated with the mechanism
Designation	The designation of a post-charismatic successor by either the followers (elites) of the charismatic leader or the charismatic leader (if still alive). In the modern context, the designation then has to be affirmed through a wider electoral process.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Electoral process provides charismatic successor with legitimacy separate from charismatic followers (or charismatic leader) who designated them.</li> <li>2. Separate base of legitimacy enables successor to reconstitute their version of a charismatic leadership.</li> <li>3. Separate base of legitimacy empowers successor to move against charismatic followers (elites) who designated them to the position of leader.</li> <li>4. In instances where the existing charismatic leader designates a successor, it can lead to a 'lame duck' syndrome, elite defection and a challenge to their rule.</li> </ol>
Hereditary	The attempt (or perceived attempt) to divest power dynastically, hence, the institutionalisation of charismatic leadership in the family.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hereditary charisma provokes elite instability. Rival elite groups may seek to destabilise potential dynastic successors' claim to the leadership.</li> <li>2. Alternatively, if still active, the charismatic leader may move against potential dynastic successors if they make their ambitions for succession too prominent.</li> </ol>
Charisma in office	Attempts to devolve personal power held by the charismatic leader to formal legal-rational political institutions. Examples of this include constitutional reform and the empowerment of legislatures and their constituent political parties, vis-à-vis the charismatic leader.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Constitutional reforms leads to an increasing personalisation of power because of the lack of independent agency of legislatures and parties</li> <li>2. If still alive, the charismatic leader has a resistance to leaving power – which is often driven by external events and insecurities because of the need to leave a stable legacy.</li> </ol>

Source: author's compilation, adapted from Weber, 1978

The three mechanisms for charismatic routinisation (see Table 1.) need to be understood in the specific context of Central Asian politics. All three presidents are perceived to legitimise their domination on the basis of a combination of personalised charismatic authority; a traditional authority premised upon real and fictive kinship based clan identities; and through rational-legal means (e.g. elections, constitutional order, and bureaucratic modes of governance). This article does not seek to retread this familiar ground. These three different aspects have been covered significantly elsewhere (Isaacs, 2013; Collins, 2006; Kazantsev, 2007; Kangas, 2002; Melvin, 2000; Georg Geiss, 2003). We can, therefore, make the assumption that all these forms of domination play a role, some larger than others and some more significant at different times than others; nonetheless, they all remain relevant for the political, social and economic order of these three Central Asian states. What is important, however, is that any form of charismatic routinisation that takes place has to do so in a context whereby the other two forms of domination exist. Given charismatic routinisation only has two paths available to it (either traditional or legal-rational), what is striking is that in the cases below existing forms of traditional or legal-rational domination have tended to undermine attempts at charismatic routinisation.

## Designation of Charisma in Central Asia

In Central Asia, *designation* as a form of charismatic political succession has already taken place in Turkmenistan with the death of Saparmurat Niyazov, the first post-Soviet president of the country. Therefore, Turkmenistan is a useful approximate case for exploring the problems of *designation* and what this can reveal in terms of potential processes of *designation* in Kazakhstan.<sup>2</sup>

*Designation* establishes a 'legitimation' problem for the charismatic followers. In the modern context, it is not simply the case that elite followers of the charismatic leader (or the charismatic leader, if still alive) can simply designate the successor, as elections still have an important role. Indeed, elections represent the key element of charismatic routinisation, as they pertain to the legal-rational element with which charismatic leadership is to be regularised. The designated successor, once elected through competitive, albeit controlled, elections is then endowed with their own legitimacy separate from the followers or charismatic leader, who designated them as a successor. This legal-rational legitimacy points to the ongoing importance of formal institutions (in this instance regularised elections and the office of the presidency); but also a dilemma for the followers. The successor now has space to establish their own political movement separate from the followers of the previous charismatic leader, which can then result in the followers losing access to the resources and interests they wished to maintain in the first instance.

It is this kind of legitimation problem which appeared in the Turkmen case. In the immediate aftermath of Saparmurat Niyazov's death, a close coterie of elites moved quickly to designate a successor who would be capable of maintaining elite stability. Elite powerbrokers such as Akmurat Redzhepov (Head of the Presidential Guard) and Akrammed Rakhmanov (Minister of Interior) moved rapidly in the hours after Niyazov's death to remove the Chairman of the *Mejlis* (Parliament) and the constitutionally designated successor Oraz Atayev, and instead place Berdymukhamedov in the presidency (Peyrouse, 2011, pp. 109-110; Horák, 2012). Berdymukhamedov emerged as the preferred choice as he was believed to meet the desirable criteria, which would ensure elite stability: he was from the Ahalteke tribe; he was young and potentially popular with the wider public; and, most importantly, he would be someone who would *not acquire substantial dominance over members of the inner core elite* (Horák, 2010, p. 38). Berdymukhamedov's appointment as acting president was confirmed by a competitive election in February 2007 against 5 nominal and non-threatening candidates.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, the legal-rational legitimacy obtained through the election empowered Berdymukhamedov as a leader in his own right. Any sense that he was a puppet figure of powerful 'grey cardinals' who operated the levers of power behind the scene in some form of oligarchy were soon dispelled when both Rakhmanov and Redzhepov were removed from their post by Berdymukhamedov (Zygar, 2007).

The legitimacy obtained from the presidential election provided Berdymukhamedov with the opportunity to establish a charismatic form of domination in his image. After side-lining and moving against those elites who placed him in power, he was able to slowly decommission the charismatic domination of Niyazov and replace it with his own. Portraits of Berdymukhamedov adorn public

2 The focus on Kazakhstan as a potential site for charismatic *designation* occurring as a form of post-charismatic political succession is not to rule out the possibility of such a form of routinisation in Uzbekistan. It is difficult to determine the likelihood regarding such a process taking place in Uzbekistan. This is largely to do with the paucity of resources available to scholars regarding the internal dynamics of the Karimov regime. This is a consequence of the restricted ability to undertake primary research on political matters in Uzbekistan and the lack of open and transparent media sources in the country. Therefore, for the purposes of this article it is better not to address the issue of *designation* in Uzbekistan as for the most part it would have been too speculative.

3 The five candidates were all from the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan (DPT) and shared similar programmes regarding continuing the international and domestic policies of Niyazov (OSCE/ODHIR, 2007). They were perceived as not being genuine contenders to Berdymukhamedov and were standing in order to create the impression of a contested election (Peyrouse, 2012, p. 109).

buildings, statues of his image have been erected in public places, his image hangs like a religious icon in aircraft cabins of the state carrier Turkmenistan Airlines, and books he has claimed to have authored are used in public education (Eurasianet, 2010; Sadykov, 2014). Berdymukhamdeov's is also glorified in a state discourse, which views him as the creator, founder and inspiration for the Great Renaissance of Turkmenistan, a new stage in the country's development (Polese & Horák, 2015). He is hailed as the *Milli Leader* (National Leader) and his special qualities are frequently emphasised in state media discourse. For example, his prowess as a horse rider is habitually highlighted, despite taking a spectacular public tumble from a horse at the Ashgabat Hippodrome in April 2013. Footage also regularly airs on Turkmen state TV of Berdymukhamedov performing as a guitarist, singer and even techno DJ in front of adoring audiences (Eurasianet, 2014).

*Designation* in this instance has only led to the reconstitution of charisma. Any hopes power brokers Redzhepov and Rakhmanov had that they would be able to keep a tight hold on Berdymukhamedov and limit the charismatic aspect of his leadership were undermined by the legitimacy Berdymukhamedov gained through elections. It bequeathed him with a separate legitimacy from that provided by those elites who designated him the successor. While elections can represent a routinised and rationalised development in terms of the process of succession, it also opens up space to allow charismatic domination to re-emerge. It is important to note that Berdymukhamedov's form of charismatic leadership is different from that of Niyazov's. Berdymukhamedov is presented as a reformer who is offering a type of Khrushchevian thaw, albeit an extremely limited thaw, through his willingness to open Turkmenistan up to the international sphere. Nevertheless, such a shift in policy is a consequence of the need to attract more foreign direct investment into the country (Peyrouse, 2012). Nonetheless, questions that dogged Niyazov's leadership now persist with Berdymukhamedov. How do you transition from another charismatic personality cult? How do you replace a form of domination characterised by such a heavy emphasis on charisma and the special place and qualities of the leader?

*Designation* is often seen as the most likely scenario for succession in Kazakhstan. As Roberts has suggested, *prior to 2005...most Kazakhstanis were not concerned about succession issues and assumed that Nazarbayev would be followed either by a "hand-picked" protégé, known locally as the 'Yeltsin model', or by a member of his own family, often referred to as the 'Aliyev model'* (Roberts, 2012, p. 2).<sup>4</sup> However, as discussed below, the prospect for such a form of *designation* has proven problematic in both instances. The problem with the dynastic 'Aliyev' model will be discussed later in the section on *hereditary charisma*. However, the 'hand-picked' successor model has also created a dilemma in the process of political succession in Kazakhstan. Instances of post-Soviet transition whereby a successor has been designated in advance have often led to regime instability and the so-called 'coloured revolutions' in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan (Roberts, 2012, pp. 2-3). With power observed as drifting away from the leader, because of their lame duck position, elites become disgruntled and uncertain of the extent to which their interests will be met under the newly designated leader. Dissatisfied elites can then draw on popular discontent with the existing leader to mobilise against the regime and take power (Hale, 2005).<sup>5</sup> Despite the persistent speculation over the last decade that Nazarbayev has been planning to hand power over to a designated successor, he has failed to do so. Instead he has concentrated power further into his personality (see below), which suggests a degree of fear over the consequences of a 'chosen successor' model, in light of the examples of Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. Naturally, these are different countries with different contexts, each with a unique set of political variables that could influence the outcome of such a form of *designation*. There is no guarantee a designated successor model in Kazakhstan would follow the pattern of events that unfolded in the 'coloured revolution' states. Nonetheless, the unfolding of those transitions of power must weigh heavily on the mind of Nazarbayev when considering options for succession.

4 Named after Ilham Aliyev who succeed his long-serving father Heydar Aliyev as president of Azerbaijan.

5 Of course there are all kinds of factors which can contribute to the success of such popular mobilisations such as a united opposition, relatively free and independent media, and a divided security service (McFaul, 2005).

The fact Nazarbayev has not provided, at least publicly, any indication for a preferred successor or a model or mechanism for a transfer of power from his charismatic leadership, has led political analysts in Kazakhstan to consider the options and scenarios for a post-Nazarbayev order. The first scenario depicts a model where the vacuum created by Nazarbayev's exit (either through death, incapacity or voluntary exit without a clear plan of succession) creates a collapse of the system where the elites (or charismatic followers) under Nazarbayev fight amongst themselves, leading to conflict and potential civil war (Satpayev, Umbetalieva, Chebotarev, Zhumaly, Kadyrzhanov, Karazhan, Sarym, & Zhusupova, 2013; Isabeva, 2012). Such a prospect highlights the unstable nature of Nazarbayev's charismatic domination. In fact, by seemingly rejecting a 'chosen one' designated succession model Nazarbayev has only consolidated the personalist and charismatic nature of his leadership (see below).

The second suggested scenario is that the elite groups under Nazarbayev will coalesce and attempt to rule collectively with a designated successor chosen as a figurehead of some kind of oligarchic power structure (Isabeva, 2012). However, the dangers of such a figurehead, or 'puppet', are eminently demonstrated in the case of Berdymukhamedov in Turkmenistan. The role of elections will gift any chosen successor a degree of legitimacy, and thus authority, separate from those that put the successor in power. Naturally, we should not read too much into a comparison between Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. There are significant differences between the two cases. Elite groups in Kazakhstan have far greater financial and political autonomy, and thus stronger foundations for a personal political base, than any powerful elites in Turkmenistan. This could stand them in good stead in terms of holding off any attempt by a designated successor to erode their power.

This section, using the examples of Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, has sought to highlight the dilemmas involved in attempting a form of charismatic routinisation through the mechanism of *designation*. As noted above, the complex interplay evident in Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan between legal-rational and charismatic domination serves to undermine the process of *designation* as a method of charismatic routinisation in that it is the legal-rational element of the process (elections) which provides a successor with legitimacy to re-constitute charismatic leadership.

## Hereditary Charisma in Central Asia

Weber's second mechanism for charismatic routinisation this article considers concerns the attempt to divest charismatic domination through dynastic succession. This is most evident in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Given the opaqueness of familial and intra-elite politics in Central Asia, it is not clear whether the potential of dynastic succession is a phenomenon driven by the incumbent presidents or is a consequence of the political ambition of their progeny. The extent to which the succession process in both countries remains publically unresolved, despite the aging of Karimov and Nazarbayev and frequent media speculations of ill health, suggests that the prospect of dynastic succession is driven by the political aspirations of the presidents' children (and relations) who hope to rise to power on the coattails of their fathers' charisma. In the last decade, there has been ceaseless speculation that Gulnara Karimova is being primed to succeed her father as president in Uzbekistan, and on various occasions Dariga Nazarbayeva, her husband Rakhat Aliev, and Nursultan Nazarbayev's second son-in-law, Timur Kulibayev, have been favoured to succeed the president (Andersen, 2005; Markus, 2005; Shermatova, 2006; Mukhamedzhan, 2011).

In all of the cases of potential dynastic succession, the candidates typically have significant assets and resources across multiple business sectors such as energy, banking, investment and the media (Podelco, 2009; Uznews, 2010; Isaacs, 2011, p. 67). Additionally, all have opted to use political parties to wield influence. Karimova is reportedly close to the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, while Nazarbayeva and Aliev set up Asar (Together), and Kulibayev is alleged to be behind the Atameken Business Union, whose former Chairman Azat Peruashev was elevated to leader of the political party



*Ak Zhol* (Bright Path) in July 2011. It is now suggested by some commentators that *Ak Zhol* has now emerged as a political party, which through Peruashev is promoting Kulibayev's interests (Ak Zhaiyk, 2012).

For these figures, it is perceivable that business interests, alongside the use of a political party, provide them with the economic and political means to succeed their fathers. Both Karimov and Nazarbayev have established strong authoritarian regimes which are held firm by the magnetism of their personal leadership. There is no guarantee that any potential successor would be able to achieve a similar hold over the public or elites. However, such attempts of hereditary charismatic routinisation have led to instability. First, *hereditary charisma* has led to bouts of internal elite instability in Uzbekistan as competing elite groups have moved against Karimova. Second, in the case of Kazakhstan, attempts at *hereditary charisma* have resulted in Nazarbayev moving against members of his own family. This is because Aliev and Nazarbayeva were seen as accruing too much power and influence and seeking to replace Nazarbayev too early.

### Inter-elite instability

Gulnara Karimova's attempts to succeed her father in Uzbekistan illustrate the extent to which hereditary succession can lead to inter-elite instability. Aside from one WikiLeaks cable, which described Gulnara as the 'most hated person in Uzbekistan', her political and economic empire building has attracted reprisal from competing sections of the Uzbek elite, most notably the National Security Service (SNB) (Fitzpatrick, 2010). Gulnara's anticipated dynastic succession created an informal battle to replace Karimov within sections of the Uzbek elite primarily between Karimova, long-serving Prime Minister Shavkat Mirzijaeva, the Finance Minister Rustam Azimov, and head of the SNB Rustam Inoyatov (Kilmenko, 2013). Some suggest that this inter-elite competition to replace Karimov is a symptom of informal clan-based conflict between the Samarkand, Tashkent and Ferghana clans (Regnum, 2010). Such an interpretation of events, however, overlooks the extent to which Karimov has sought to remove the 'clan politics' element from Uzbekistani politics (Karimov, 1997). Karimov, not too dissimilar to Nazarbayev in Kazakhstan, has constructed a neopatrimonial system where loyalty to him as the patron, and a balancing of elite groups, ensures the stability of the political order (Ilkhamov, 2007). Regional analysts believe that Karimov has sufficiently reduced the influence of clan politics to the extent that it will not play a large role in the succession process (Malashenko, 2014, p. 14).

This behind doors inter-elite tension became publicly evident in 2013, when a war of words broke out between Gulnara, her sister and mother, and the security services. Gulnara claimed her mother and sister had vowed to destroy her and that the security services, acting at the behest of Rustam Inoyatov, were harassing her entourage and had conspired to poison her (Sadykov, 2013). Karimova and her partner Rustam Madumarov also found themselves embroiled in international criminal cases related to their international businesses practices, especially the allegation that Karimova was paid \$300 million by a Finnish telecommunications company, Teliasonara, for the rights to enter the Uzbek market (Malashenko, 2014, pp. 7-8). The release of *Kompromat* (compromising information) implicating Karimova in corruption scandals (believed to emanate from the SNB), domestically and internationally, stalled her attempt to place herself in the prime position to succeed her father (Uznews.net, 2013).

The case of Uzbekistan is revealing for the way in which hereditary charismatic routinisation is especially problematic in political systems where authority is legitimised through a combination of all three forms of Weber's domination. Gulnara Karimova's unconcealed attempt to succeed her father reignited inter-elite tensions based on an informal, traditional and patrimonial form of authority. While there is some debate as to whether these 'traditional' clans are formed on kinship-based ties or formal regional divisions, what it highlights is the way in which *hereditary charisma* can be displaced

or marginalised by traditional politics.<sup>6</sup> Such inter-elite clan competition is evident in Kazakhstan, where Rakhat Aliev's fall from grace was precipitated by such inter-elite factionalism, as well as the stubbornness of the charismatic leader to remain in power. Nonetheless, *hereditary charisma* does not always face these problems. Ilham Aliev's succeeding of his father in Azerbaijan demonstrates the conditions in which it is possible for a genetic heir to succeed their charismatic parent. In this case, during the consolidating of his position in the Soviet period Heydar Aliev was able to build support across both the main competing clans in the country (Nakhchivan and Yerazi clans) because of his hereditary links to both groups (Cornell, 2011). This broad base of support across the main competing clan groups ensured a smooth and relatively conflict-free transition of power for Ilham Aliev (Guliyev, 2012, p. 117). The failure of a dynastic successor to take account of building a broad base of support among factional elite groups can contribute to explaining the failure of *hereditary charisma* as a form of charismatic rounisation in the cases of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

### Charismatic leader moves against potential dynastic successor

A second problem with *hereditary charisma*, as observed in the cases of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, is that if an obvious dynastic successor emerges while the charismatic leader is still alive and healthy, the leader may see it as a threat to their position. For instance, the point at which Rakhat Aliev accrued too much economic and political influence in Kazakhstan was the moment that his father-in-law moved against him and Dariga. In 2007 Aliev was charged with kidnapping two NurBank directors and after fleeing abroad was forcibly divorced from his business interests in Kazakhstan, as well as his wife Dariga (Zonakz, 2007a). Dariga, for her part, was isolated politically and was not returned on the party list for *Nur Otan*<sup>7</sup> in the 2007 parliamentary election.<sup>8</sup> In the aftermath of the Aliev affair, Kulibayev was also demoted from his position as deputy chairman of Samruk (the state holding company). For some commentators, while this may have seemed like a balancing of elite groupings with the ejection of Aliev, it evolved into a strengthening of Kulibayev's position and eventually he was appointed head of Samruk-Kazyna in 2011 (the refashioned Samruk) (Samigullina, 2007). However, Kulibayev again lost his position in the aftermath of violence in the oil town of Zhanozen in December 2011, and on the back of the constant drip-drip of speculation that he was being primed as the successor to Nazarbayev.

Similarly, the sidelining of Karimova during 2013-14 illustrates that when a charismatic leader is not ready to give up the reins of power they can move against potential dynastic successors. In 2014, it was widely reported that Karimova had been put under house arrest, allegedly at the behest of the president. There are two interpretations for why this occurred. The first is that Karimova had failed to conceal her desire to replace her father as president and thus represented a threat to Karimov's authority (Uznews, 2014). The other is that international criminal proceedings against Karimova undermined the international reputation of the president. Consequently, it is perceived she now represents a liability for her father and this is the reason for why the president moved against his daughter, as he is concerned with his reputation in the West (Economist, 2014). This also illuminates the influence of external actors on potential succession processes.

6 There is debate within the Central Asian politics literature as to whether clans in the region are based on kinship or fictive kinship-based ties or formal regional and Soviet institutionalised divisions (Jones Luong, 2002; Collins, 2006). However, others have argued that essentially this debate simply concerns factionalism in the region (Gulette, 2007); and that such factionalism structures the competition for political and economic resources and thus is the main forum for the contestation of politics (Isaacs, 2011).

7 Dariga Nazarbayeva's *Asar* party was forcibly merged with the president's party *Otan* in December 2006, forming the super-presidential party *Nur Otan* (Light of Fatherland)

8 For the 2012 parliamentary election, however, Dariga was back in the fold and back on the party list for *Nur Otan*. She currently serves as the leader of the *Nur Otan* faction in the *Mazhilis* and is deputy speaker of the parliament.

The cases of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, so far, illustrate the extent to which pre-empted attempts of dynastic charismatic succession are destabilising. As the two cases demonstrate, it can lead to a heightening of inter-elite tensions, usually premised upon a traditional form of political relations and behaviour, which displaces the carefully balanced nature of inter-elite relations upon which the charismatic leader's authority rests. It exemplifies again the way in which charismatic routinisation can be undermined by other types of domination, which hitherto were ostensibly the forms of authority the charisma was to be routinised into.

## Charisma in Office in Central Asia

The final mechanism of charismatic routinisation this article explores is charisma in office. Charisma in office can be understood as the transmission or attempted transmission of personal charismatic power into formal legal-rational political institutions. In the case of Central Asia, this type of attempted charismatic routinisation can be observed through the divesting of power to legislatures (and their constituent political parties) through constitutional reform.

### Divesting of power to legislatures through constitutional reform

Attempts of routinising charismatic power in Central Asia through formal office have typically taken the form of constitutional reform, which is solicited by a presidential administration ostensibly to introduce democratic change, instituting a shift from a presidential to a parliamentary form of government. The first observable attempt of this form of charismatic routinisation occurred in Kazakhstan in 2007 with a raft of constitutional changes. The constitutional amendments among others included: the Prime Minister to be appointed by the president only after consultation with parliamentary factions and with the *consent* of a majority of deputies; the presidential term of office reduced from seven to five years; and an increase in parliamentary deputies from 77 to 107. The perceived shifting of responsibility for the appointment of the Prime Minister to the largest party faction is emblematic of a shifting of domination rooted in Nazarbayev's perceived charisma to one legitimised by the routine of legal-rational norms. As such, the reforms were presented by the president as the political modernisation of Kazakhstan and the strengthening of democracy in the country (Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, 2007). Supporters of President Nazarbayev claimed that with the parliament *having more responsibilities, and powers being passed from the head of the state to the parliament, that it would create a balance of power and... represent great changes and a great step for the political system* [Altynhash Dzhaganova, 2007].<sup>9</sup>

Islam Karimov also sought an opportunity to routinise his personal authority and pave the way for a stable succession in Uzbekistan. For instance, similar to the constitutional changes that Nazarbayev brought about in 2007, Karimov introduced changes in 2010 to the constitution, which ostensibly transferred presidential powers to the prime minister and parliament (Tolipov, 2010). Rather than being appointed by the president, this power of patronage was removed and responsibility shifted to the largest party grouping in the parliament (RFE/RL, 2011). Changes to the Uzbek constitution were also interpreted as providing an institutional (and legal-rational) mechanism to manage the succession process (Malashenko, 2014, p. 1). Further reforms were also announced in a draft law presented to the *Oliy Majilis* in March 2014, which would see the constitution amended and a transfer of powers from the president to the prime minister, legislature and its constituent parties. While the

<sup>9</sup> Author's interview with Altynhash Dzhaganova, former leader of the party Rukhaniyat (Spirituality), 13 March 2007, Astana, Kazakhstan.

draft law was praised for furthering democratic reform in the country, detail about what powers precisely would be devolved where absent, and there has been no evident movement with regards to these changes since (Eurasia Daily Monitor, 2014).

Efforts at charismatic routinisation in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan through constitutional reform reveal two problems related to the process of political succession: first, it has actually led to a further concentration of personal power; and second it is further undermined by the resistance of the charismatic leader to giving up power.

### Concentration of personal power

Constitutional reform in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan has a habit of only cementing the personal power of the presidents because of the failure of formal institutions, primarily the legislature, to have any agency or autonomy from the leader. In the case of Nazarbayev, while he gave away the power to appoint the prime minister to the leader of the largest party faction in parliament, that largest party faction was *Nur Otan*, his political party, which in 2007 won all the seats in the parliament in the parliamentary election, and which continues to be the largest party in parliament.<sup>10</sup> The party acts mainly on the request of the president and possesses no autonomy from the president. Its election platforms are taken directly from the president's annual speech of any given year and it has no role in policy-making, only existing to push through the president's legislative agenda (Nur Otan, 2007; 2011). Scholars argue that unless it develops the agency to shape policy and political events separately from the president, the party will be as transitory as Nazarbayev's leadership (Isaacs & Whitmore, 2014). Therefore, the attempt to routinise charismatic power downwards to the legislature fails, if the legislature is dominated by the acolytes of the charismatic leader.

The failure of the 2007 reforms to genuinely disperse power from the charismatic leadership of Nazarbayev was further evident when the president presented Kazakhstan's long-term 2050 strategy in January 2014. While the document predominately outlines an economic strategy for Kazakhstan's further modernisation and intent to become one of the top 30 competitive nations in the world, it also features a commitment to the strengthening of democracy and parliamentary power in particular (Nazarbayev, 2014). If the constitutional reform of 2007 had really been successful in divesting power, then there would have been no need for further commitments to the exact same principle in 2014.

Similarly, in Uzbekistan the ability of the legislature or political party to take advantage of supposed 'new' powers is limited. For some local analysts, this is because of the gap between *de jure* and *de facto* application of the law (Tolipov, 2010). While there may be a commitment within constitutional law to the divesting of power to the legislature and parties, in practice this power is not utilised. Instead *the parliament is weak in terms of its independent parliamentary activities, so despite these rights, deputies are passive, non-independent and do not express alternative views* (Tolipov, 2010). Thus, the parliament is dominated by pro-Karimov parties, and they are likely to follow his suggestion for prime ministerial nominee. Perhaps more importantly, the fact that the largest party faction in the *Oliy Majilis* nominates the prime minister has little bearing on their ability to play a role in choosing the successor to the president should he die in office. Prior to the constitutional changes of 2010-11, the constitutional successor, should the president die in office, was the prime minister. As part of the constitutional reform, the designated constitutional successor was amended so it became the chairman of the Senate (the upper chamber of Uzbekistan's bicameral legislature). This is a post held

<sup>10</sup> In the aftermath of the 2007 election in which *Nur Otan* was the only party to surpass the 7 percent threshold and thus won all the seats in the *Mazhilis*, the presidential administration pushed forward legislation which sought to ensure that there would always be more than one party in the parliament. Thus, at the 2012 parliamentary election, two other parties were able to surpass the threshold and obtain a small share of seats in the legislature. Ak Zhol won 8 seats and the Communist Peoples Party of Kazakhstan won 7 seats. Both parties are not seen as offering a genuine challenge to and oversight of Nazarbayev and *Nur Otan*, rather they are seen as broadly pro-Nazarbayev.

since 2006 by the little-known Ilgizar Sobirov, who is not taken seriously as a long-term successor and, as in the case of the Turkmen succession process, could quite easily be removed from his post in any transfer of power if Karimov were to die in office (Ilkhamov & Fitzpatrick, 2010).

What this illustrates is that parliaments and parties are tightly controlled by the presidential administration in each country and, therefore, are short of any genuine institutional agency to take advantage of the legal-rational legitimacy they possess in constitutional terms. This has important consequences for their ability to shape political process and in particular the process of charismatic routinisation and political succession.

### Resistance to leaving power

Charismatic routinisation through *charisma in office* is further problematised if the charismatic leader is still alive and finds it difficult to lay down the reins of power. The lure of power is thus often difficult to resist. Despite attempts to arrange a succession, aware that making plans prior to dying improves the prospects of their legacy remaining intact, charismatic leaders find it difficult to pass on the mantle to a successor. Instead there is a further consolidation of their charismatic leadership. The case of Nazarbayev and Kazakhstan neatly exemplifies this key dilemma. This was perhaps most evident with the introduction of the 'leader of the nation' legislation in 2010, in which loyal deputies in the *Mazhilis* proposed legislation conferring the title '*Elbasi*' (leader of the Kazakh nation) on Nazarbayev. The legislation gave Nazarbayev the *final say in the country's domestic and foreign policy in the event that he leaves office, and also provides 'the first president of Kazakhstan' with lifetime immunity from investigation or prosecution* (Pannier, 2010). The legislation, therefore, ensures that should Nazarbayev transfer power to another leader, or downwards to the parliament, he will still possess informal, personal and charismatic oversight of the political system. If anything, the leader of the nation legislation only sought to entrench his charismatic authority, embodying his unique and special status in the political system and the principle that Nazarbayev was the fundamental basis of the nation-state. This was evident in those clauses which in effect, made any attempt on the president's life an act of terrorism and made a criminal act out of insulting the president (Yakubov, 2010).

From as far back as 2007, Nazarbayev has purportedly been planning a succession. He is a man concerned with his legacy, and initially the constitutional reform of 2007 was seen to be the beginning of this process.<sup>11</sup> 'Operation Successor' was also reportedly in full swing by 2012, and then in 2013 Nazarbayev himself mentioned for the first time the transfer of power (Guljan, 2012). In a documentary aired on the state channel KTK, Nazarbayev was seen in soft-focus as human for the first time, and he talked openly about *laying down a stable system for the change of power* (Nurmuhanbetov, 2013). He cited Singapore and Malaysia as role models for Kazakhstan, where long-serving leaders used formal political institutions for such a transition of power (Nurmuhanbetov, 2013). However, since the airing of the documentary any talk of succession has been halted and reports suggest the president will not countenance any further discussion on succession and that he plans to remain in power for at least another 10 years (Kalashnikova, 2014). One local observer suggested that events in Ukraine had seen the presidential administration withdraw plans for an orderly and planned transition, fearful of the potential power vacuum in Kazakhstan without his leadership and the extent to which instability could arise either internally or externally from the influence of Russia. Consequently, while the lure of power is strong for charismatic leaders, contingent events can also impact on the timing of any given transition process. Thus, the twin pressures of both the resistance of an existing charismatic leader to giving up their position, and the influence of external contingent events on any succession process, make the routinisation of charisma into institutional office a challenging and difficult process which has limited chances of success.

<sup>11</sup> Author's interview with local journalist, 4 November 2014, Almaty, Kazakhstan.

As in Kazakhstan, the alterations to the Uzbek constitution in 2010 have not led to the democratisation of the country, neither have they paved the way for institutions to play a genuine role in the succession process. This despite claims at the time they would play an important role in managing the process of succession to Karimov (Narodetsky, 2010). Instead, analysts suggest that Karimov is reluctant to give over power to such formal institutions and that he will hold power to the very end (Uznews, 2014). Like recent suggestions in Kazakhstan that Nazarbayev does not wish to countenance discussion of succession any longer, Karimov too wishes to *halt all conversations about a successor* (Uznews, 2014). Reports on Uzbekistan consistently speak of a failure to have a clear plan for succession, despite persistent rumours regarding Karimov's ill health (Lillis, 2013). This implies that Karimov has no intention or interest in handing power over to a successor, and there is no clear evidence to suggest that he intends to.

In regimes where there is a heavy emphasis on charisma, underpinned by patrimonial traditional relations of power, and legitimised for domestic and international audiences by elections, charismatic routinisation is difficult to achieve through *charisma in office*. This is especially the case when the charismatic leader remains alive. The examples of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan illustrate that it leads only to a furthering of the personalisation of charismatic domination and reluctance on the part of the charismatic leader to give up the reins of power. This means that when the leader dies, the only path realistically available for the routinising of charisma is *designation*. As highlighted above in the case of Turkmenistan, this can come with its own set of problems because of the legitimacy it endows the designated successor with and the potential opportunity it affords for the reconstitution of charismatic domination.

## Concluding Remarks

The above examination remains cautionary given it comprises of an analysis of events both which have occurred and those yet to transpire. Nevertheless, the article provides a useful conduit to begin considering the development of a post-charismatic order in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Indeed, this is the kind of move already undertaken by the political opposition and local analysts in Kazakhstan. Understanding that the likelihood of Nazarbayev ever voluntarily giving up power is improbable, they sought to begin addressing the possibilities of a post-Nazarbayev Kazakhstan (Satpayev et al, 2013). The above analysis, therefore, hopes to contribute to a discussion on the developmental paths open to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in terms of political succession. The analysis implies that options for potential pathways for political succession all feature considerable risks and problems, especially with regards to elite instability and the further personalisation of power. What the analysis infers is that given these issues the process of political succession in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan will potentially lead back to a form of reconstituted charisma.

*Hereditary charisma* remains an unlikely scenario in both states. On the basis of Rakhat Aliev and Gulnara Karimova's attempts to replace Nazarbayev and Karimov respectively, dynastic succession seems doubtful. Neither had sufficient support among competing elite groups, and in the case of Karimova her public designs on the presidency only led to inter-elite instability and her eventual downfall. Moreover, *hereditary charisma* as a pathway, while both Nazarbayev and Karimov are alive, is also questionable, given their evident reluctance to have power prised from their hands. *Charisma in office* also remains challenging as a potential pathway for post-charismatic succession. Despite proclamations that the process of constitutional reform in both states since 2007 (in Kazakhstan) and 2010 (in Uzbekistan) will lead or has led to the divesting of personal presidential power to political institutions such as the parliament and political parties, this has not occurred, primarily because formal institutions lack agency and autonomy. This is significant because it arguably means that

legislatures and parties cannot perform the kind of role imagined through routinisation, whereby they would be the mechanism for a smooth transition process to a new president. Besides, side-by-side with these types of reform in both countries, there has been an increasing personalisation of power and reluctance from Karimov and Nazarbayev to countenance giving up power. This means that it is *designation*, underpinned by the legal-rational element of elections, which remains the most likely scenario for political succession in both countries, despite the associated problems that come with that in terms of the potential reconstitution of charismatic leadership as is evident in the case of Turkmenistan.

How the process of *designation* unfolds in either case will depend on the political context of inter-elite competition, and it is here where perhaps Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan could depart from the Turkmen model. In Uzbekistan there is an absence of a strong business elite, and instead inter-elite competition is driven by a factional conflict between the Tashkent and Samarkand regional clans (Satpayev, 2014). Moreover, the strength of the security services in the country (they have been fundamental to Karimov's survival and in containing public discontent), and the prominent position of Rustam Inoyatov, indicate these actors will loom large as important agents in the post-charismatic succession process. The power of the security services could potentially contain any increasing personalisation of the political system under Karimov's successor. The security services are less pivotal to inter-elite dynamics in Kazakhstan – where there is a separate financial elite which possesses a degree of autonomy from the president and the state. This autonomous financial elite is less beholden to the divisive regional clan factionalism as in Uzbekistan and would ensure to install a figure who could maintain the economic interests of these different groups. While there is a danger that the legitimacy engendered by putting a designated candidate through an electoral process could lead to the reconstitution of charisma as in Turkmenistan, this is somewhat offset by financial autonomy of these elites, their ownership of media sources and their separate power bases.

What does any of the above teach us about charismatic routinisation in a broader sense? It is worth bearing in mind that Weber constructed concepts such as charismatic routinisation as ideal types. They are abstract concepts which empirical reality can be measured against. Therefore, there are limitations of the extent to which the cases of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan can inform us of the nature of charisma and charismatic routinisation in a wider sense. Nevertheless, the case of these Central Asian states does tell us something about the potentially paradoxical nature of charismatic routinisation. When charismatic routinisation is being attempted in a modern political context where charismatic domination co-exists with legal-rational and traditional domination, these two other forms of domination can act to subvert the process of charismatic routinisation. This is despite charismatic routinisation only having two routes available to it: traditional and legal-rational. Traditional domination (patrimonial informal elite relations) undermines efforts of *hereditary charisma* (itself an attempt to routinise charisma into traditional authority) because of how it contributes to inter-elite instability and competition for succession. The legal-rational weakens charismatic routinisation by the way in which it provides legitimacy separate from the charismatic staff and followers who designate the charismatic successor, thus allowing the successor the political space and legitimacy to re-constitute charismatic domination. Therefore, there is something oddly paradoxical about the process of charismatic routinisation occurring in these Central Asian states. This may be a consequence of the weak nature of legal-rational institutions in these states and their inability to defend themselves against the dominance and overbearing nature of personal leadership. Nevertheless, it would be thought provoking to observe how these Central Asian states compare to processes of charismatic routinisation in other parts of the world such as the post-Chavez order in Venezuela.

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