

idea or the publisher's. While some readers may find it as useful for framing their understanding as they read each chapter, the statements often are so abstract that it may have been best to leave these mini-theses for the end of the respective chapters as a summing up exercise. At over 300 pages, many readers will find parts of the narrative redundant, overly detailed (concerning the minutiae of informants' lives), and exploratory in terms of theory that do not necessarily enhance the flow of the story. On this latter point, where the author takes time to work out matters of personhood and the performative aspects of social being and social relations, the reader may feel helplessly adrift amid the musings of an advanced grad student in consultation with her advisors. Compelling prose it is not. On the other hand, it may appeal to readers interested in notions of the self, women, and Islam vis-à-vis social worlds as political states.

No parts of the book are more fascinating and harrowing than Peshkova's personal encounters with organs and agents of the dictatorial Uzbek state. Although verging on the obsessive and solipsistic, these encounters are woven rather brilliantly into the author's larger research project and its perils—in the eyes of state security agents, the dreaded Uzbek SNB (contemporary KGB). Simply, Peshkova is able to show how her detentions and hair-raising interrogations put the lives and well-being of her informants at risk. She uses these encounters skillfully to question her sanity, her purpose, and the very enterprise of anthropology where it concerns learning about the reality of others that may be perceived only as a direct threat or confrontation with the authorities themselves. In the Uzbekistan fieldwork context, this means popular Islamic practices and ideas not approved or regulated by authorities. Naturally, because so much of women's Islamic practice in Uzbekistan takes place in private realms—people's homes—the paranoid state's actors become extremely agitated by an American academic whose birthplace is the Russian Caucasus and whose citizenship is Russian. How could Peshkova be anything other than a spy or rabble-rouser!

In the end, Peshkova's fieldwork makes her existence in Uzbekistan so unpleasant that she is literally escorted on to a plane and out of the country by the SNB. In retrospect, she is forced to confront what reality, what religiosity, and what survival all mean to the women and men she has befriended and gotten to know. As much as any anthropologist working on Uzbekistan, it is not so much a matter of Peshkova figuring out what makes Uzbekistan tick, but rather of her understanding how her informants attempt to grapple with, survive within, and, to a real degree, succeed in making meaningful and enjoyable lives for themselves in a system that even some of the SNB agents admit is dysfunctional, disgusting, and unhinged. Far from a perfect book, it is remarkable and a necessary read for advanced social scientific thinking on Uzbekistan and the nature of post-Soviet legacies in Central Eurasia.

RUSSELL ZANCA

Northeastern Illinois University

Civil Society and Politics in Central Asia. Ed. Charles E. Ziegler. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015. ii, 356 pp. Notes. Index. Tables. \$50.00, hard bound.

Studies of civic activism, participation, organizations, and community-based interaction that take place below, with, or apart from the "government" are how social scientists analyze the broad range of phenomena labeled "civil society." The challenges for those studying non-democratic states (or states that are called "transitional") range from the conceptual to the practical. Perhaps most glaring is the inability to collect

data or even conduct credible field work. In short, presenting an in-depth study of “civil society and politics” in a region that does not have a track record parallel or recognizable to western liberal democracies remains a vexing one for scholars, and thus is often avoided. Charles Ziegler attempts to tackle this issue in this edited volume which presents a range of case studies and theoretical analyses that focus specifically, on the region of Central Asia—defined as the five states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

The volume is divided into five sections. Following a cogent introduction by Ziegler, the first section is a single chapter entitled “Civil Society in Context,” in which Andrey Kazantsev addresses the definitional and structural challenges of evaluating “civil society” in Central Asia. Kazantsev presents a rich analysis of a “path dependency” approach to civil society (21), creating a framework that is useful in reading the subsequent case studies. Both Ziegler and Kazantsev acknowledge the fact that non-governmental organizations, as defined by the west, are simply too limiting in this context—governmentally-initiated efforts and communal structures, among others, ought to be considered. By looking at purpose and effect, is it possible to broaden the definition of civil society? Ziegler says yes, allowing one to perhaps “discover the forces for political change, and for continuity, in this critical region of the world” (15) by examining the roles of non-governmental organizations and other forms of community association.

Part two looks at categories based on religion and ethnicity, with contributions by Reuel Hanks, Dilshod Achilov, and Marlene Laruelle. Hanks’ examination of how religion plays both a positive and negative (from the government’s perspective) role in social and community support efforts is particularly insightful. Part three considers “Policy and Administration,” with both Erica Johnson and co-authors Ken Charman and Rakhymshan Assangazyev looking at state-structured efforts at health care reform and state-managed NGO oversight as case studies in how “civil society” can be addressed from above. Erica Johnson’s conclusion that health care organizations are “not likely to become politicized and that international donor support has actually created ‘civic’ non-state health care providers that want to meet societal needs even if it means cooperating with authoritarian regimes” (138–39) is an important lesson.

In Part four, “State Power and Social Turmoil,” four different case studies are presented. Kazakhstan (Ruslan Kazkenov and Charles Ziegler), Kyrgyzstan (Charles Buxton), Turkmenistan (Charles Sullivan), and Tajikistan (Sabine Freizer). Freizer’s comparison of NGOs and community-based groups is useful in that it shows the strengths and weaknesses of each approach in this poorest of the Central Asian states. Likewise, Buxton’s review comes from the perspective of a practitioner, offering insights from “on the ground” that are enlightening to academic readers. The volume concludes with a fifth part on “the International Context,” in which Graeme Herd and Maxim Ryabkov take a closer look at the impact of outside actors on civil society in Kyrgyzstan, going more in-depth into a topic that has been touched on by some of the other contributors. A conclusion by Ziegler completes the sequence, tying “lessons learned” from the previous contributions.

This is a clear and thoughtful study of civil society in countries where such studies are rare and references superficial. The scholars know the region and the specific case studies they present, often drawing from their own professional research agendas and fieldwork in Central Asia. Two problems arise in the work that are perhaps partially the result of the realities of academic publishing. First, the chapters themselves appear to focus largely on the period up to 2010, with rare references to the past half-decade. Some of the fieldwork was conducted prior to that point. An updating of some of the data would be helpful, particularly given the changing dynamics of the region in the current decade. A number of the authors, however, have made excellent

efforts to address broader macro-level concerns that are less time-sensitive and afford the book a longer “shelf-life.”

Second, there is a relatively strong emphasis on Kazakhstan over the other four countries. Four chapters are devoted almost exclusively to Kazakhstan, two to Kyrgyzstan, one each to Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, and one a comparison of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The first two chapters focus on the region as a whole. One should note that this does reflect an overall imbalance of academic scholarship in the region—partly a product of access, researcher interest, and the ability to conduct interviews and studies in certain countries. Still, it would have been of value to see more on the lesser-studied countries in the region.

Overall, Charles Ziegler succeeds in his task to raise and answer the very challenging question of how can civil societies develop, survive, and carry out their missions in non-democratic regimes. As he rightfully states, sometimes it is a case where non-governmental organizations cooperate with governments out of necessity—and the challenge is more about finding “space” for independent action or the ability to carry out the goals of that organization (333–34). How these goals can expand and have greater meaning in Central Asia is not only a topic for future research, but a practical concern for the region.

ROGER D. KANGAS

*Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies
Washington, D.C.*

Corruption as a Last Resort: Adapting to the Market in Central Asia. By Kelly M. McMann. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014. xviii, 182 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Tables. Map. \$47.95, hard bound.

The task Kelly McMann sets for herself in this insightful book is to explain why, even in highly corrupt societies, some citizens who have unmet basic needs nevertheless do not engage in corruption (bribe-paying to, or using contacts among, state officials) to obtain these while others do. Her answer is that most people find corruption abhorrent, and will avoid it if they can meet their needs through alternative sources—notably the market, groups, or the extended family; where such opportunities do not exist, citizens will typically engage in corruption of state officials. A second component of her argument is that inadequate market reforms can actually limit access to alternatives, and hence *increase* corruption—so that she rightly challenges the naïve argument of some that merely downsizing the state will in itself reduce corruption. McMann calls her two-pronged argument the “absence of alternatives” framework.

The methodology is what many scholars call a tri-angulated one, although multi-angulated might be a better term, since triangulation implies consideration from only three perspectives. McMann presents detailed case studies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Uzbekistan is also considered, albeit in less detail, as a contrasting case, since it has not introduced market reforms. She either conducted interviews with or observed 266 individuals, conducted surveys of 4500 Central Asians, and in addition used others’ economic and corruption-related data sets, news reports, and secondary literature. Finally, McMann tests and confirms her principal hypotheses by engaging in a large-N (ninety-two countries) analysis.

A real strength of this book is its practical applicability; the three broad policy recommendations in the final chapter are sensible, realistic and move us forward. First, there needs to be more focus on citizens’ motivations for engaging in corruption; these should be researched in tandem with analyses of corrupt officials’