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0521857619 - Economic Autonomy and Democracy: Hybrid Regimes in Russia and Kyrgyzstan

Kelly M. McMann

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Economic Autonomy and Democracy

Hybrid Regimes in Russia and Kyrgyzstan

How do individuals decide to exercise their democratic rights? This book argues that they first assess their economic autonomy, meaning their ability to make a living independent of government authorities. Before individuals consider whether their resources and organizational abilities enable them to act on their interests, they calculate the risk of political activism to their livelihood. This is particularly evident in regions of the world where states monopolize the economy and thus can readily harass activists at their workplaces. Economic autonomy links capitalism and democracy through individuals' calculations about activism. Accounts of activists' decisions about establishing independent media, leading political organizations, and running for office, and descriptions of government harassment in Russia and Kyrgyzstan, along with examples from most regions of the world, illustrate these arguments. A lack of economic autonomy and the interaction among democratic rights help explain the global proliferation of hybrid regimes, governments that display both democratic and authoritarian characteristics.

Kelly M. McMann is an assistant professor of political science at Case Western Reserve University. Her work appears in the edited volumes *The Transformation of Central Asia: States and Societies from Soviet Rule to Independence* (2003) and *Everyday Life in Central Asia: Past and Present* (forthcoming). She has conducted field research in the capital cities and outlying regions of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan and survey research in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. Grants from the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, the International Research & Exchanges Board, and the Institute for the Study of World Politics have funded her research.

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To Ellen and John McMann

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Notes on Transliteration

Throughout this book, I have used the Library of Congress system of Russian transliteration. However, for well-known names and words, I use the more common spelling (for example, Yeltsin instead of El'tsin and oblast instead of oblast'). I transliterated Kyrgyz and Uzbek names and words from their Russified forms unless another version was standard.

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