

Prof. Dr. Philipp Schroeder
LiK Conference
Bishkek, 11-12 October 2023

Entrepreneurship across Central Asia

A Look Back & Some Early Insights from an
Ongoing Research in Applied Economic Anthropology



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Overview

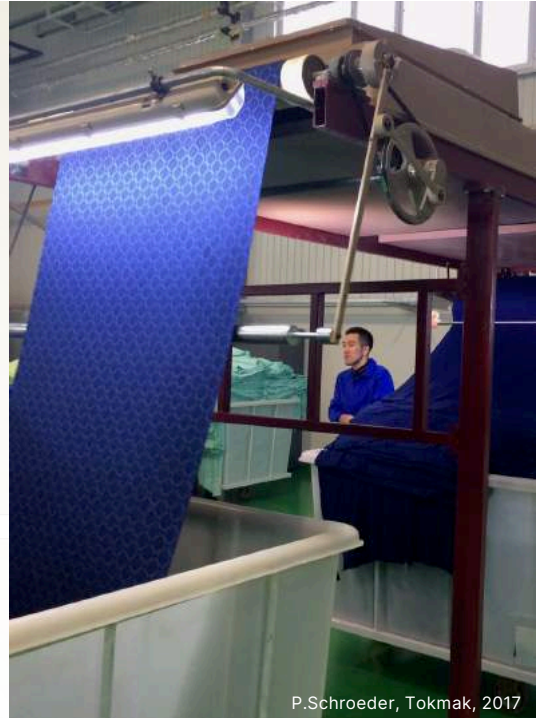
- 1) A Look Back: 5 Trends
- 2) Early Insights from 2023
- 3) Outlook



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A Look Back: 5 Trends

- 2012-2020 research:
Kyrgyz **bazaar** traders in **Novosibirsk**, business **middlemen** in **Guangzhou**, 'new **entrepreneurs**' in **Bishkek**
- Book: 'Kyrgyzstan's First Capitalists - **Translocality, Entrepreneurship and Middle Class** across Eurasia'.
(Routledge, forthcoming 2023)



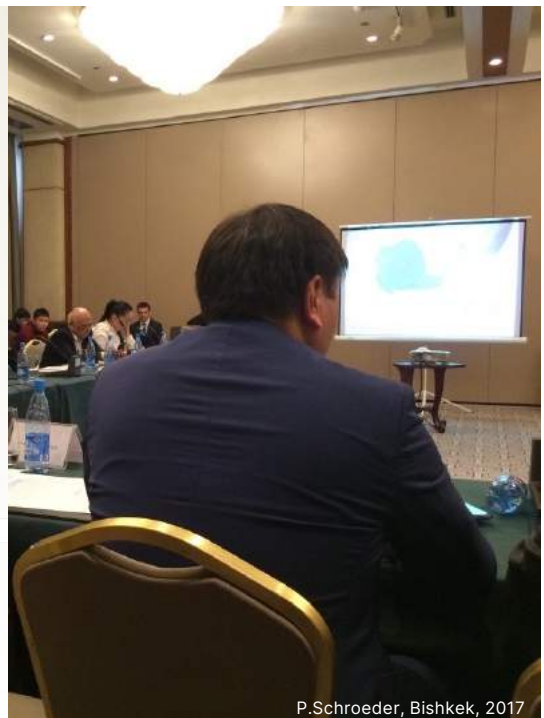
P.Schroeder, Tokmak, 2017

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A Look Back: 5 Trends

As compared to early post-Soviet era:

- **Formalization**
- **Diversification**
- **Professionalization**
- Entrepreneurial **middle class**
- **Public-private** rapprochement



P.Schroeder, Bishkek, 2017

Early Insights from 2023

- Ongoing project @NU:

'A **Comparative, Interdisciplinary Ethnography on Entrepreneurship** in Kazakhstan & Uzbekistan'

- **Methodology:**

interviews with various 'practitioners'; on-site observations; case studies

- **Processual Perspective:**

recurring visits & interviews; social media tracking & in-between check-ins



Early Insights from 2023

1) Entrepreneurial **Motivation**

- 'Be your own boss!': **risk vs. stasis** of government sector
- **Beyond profit**-seeking: merit, community, work & life

2) **Challenges**

- **Corporate vs. local culture?** Hierarchy & creativity?
- **Human capital; trust** in institutions; beyond **start-up?**

3) **Value Chains** beyond BRI & EEU

- **Translocal**, e.g. Tashkent, Delaware, Astana
- **Government support:** training, subsidies, Astana Hub



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Outlook

- **Sequentialized Mixed Methods**-Approach:
Quantitative survey based on qualitative insights
- **Emically inspired Theory-Building**:
Drawing on (culturally) shifting notions on entrepreneurship
- **Applied Research**:
'Anthropology for Entrepreneurs' & non-academic outputs



Thank you!



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