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Abstract

This study investigates the causes and diversity of Islamic revivalism in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan. The Soviet collapse in 1991 allowed Kyrgyz, for the first time in seven decades, to explore differing religious identities, including differing Muslim identities. Islam, as both survey data and field interviews confirm, is now central to Kyrgyz identity. Notably though, the degree to which Kyrgyz gravitate to Muslim institutions in their daily lives varies. The source of this variation, I find, lies at the local level, in communities with differing degrees of coherence in coping with an increasingly ineffective central state. This finding departs from other studies that attribute Islamic revivalism to anti-secular, anti-colonial, or anti-Western orientations thought to typify Muslim societies.