

Democracy in Kyrgyzstan: Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract

This research paper scrutinizes the political transformations that occurred in Kyrgyzstan following the post-Soviet era, while positing that systemic factors impede the nation-building process and contribute to political turbulence. The study incorporates an examination of the legal and political developments during the post-Soviet period, employing historical and dialectical methodologies to evaluate the state of democracy in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan. Furthermore, the paper delves into the underlying causes of political unrest, the subsequent transition to a parliamentary democracy, and the potential avenues for representative democracy. The research concludes by highlighting a discernible tension between the existing political culture and traditional structures, which influence the direction of democratic progress in Kyrgyzstan. To assess the democratic transition and significant institutional changes in Kyrgyzstan, this article utilizes a qualitative evaluation. The analysis is based on a comprehensive examination of relevant literature pertaining to the democratization process in Central Asia, with a specific focus on Kyrgyzstan. Employing an analytical approach, the research addresses the challenges posed by structural reforms within the country. A logical framework is employed, leveraging speeches and official declarations to glean insights into the broader political transition and institutional transformations encompassing the entire republic. Primary sources, such as the Kyrgyz Constitution, election code, official records, reports, studies compiled by Kyrgyz officials, decisions, declarations, agreements, rules, and speeches, constitute the foundation of this analysis. Furthermore, secondary sources, including books, articles, online posts, magazines, newspapers, and publicly accessible online resources, supplement the research.

Keywords: Democracy, Kyrgyz Republic, Institutional Changes, Authoritarianism, Central Asia.

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Introduction

The Kyrgyz Republic, situated in Central Asia, is widely acknowledged as the most democratic and least autocratic nation among its Central Asian counterparts. The country's firm opposition to tyranny was vividly demonstrated through the significant political unrest it experienced in 2005 and 2010. Since gaining independence in 1991, Kyrgyzstan has been frequently hailed as a bastion of democracy. However, despite enduring several coups in the past three decades, the legitimacy and effectiveness of its democratic system remain subjects of ongoing debate. Consequently, an examination of the origins of these political upheavals reveals a common theme observed in the "Colour revolutions" that swept through various countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Balkans. These revolutions primarily served as a public expression of national will, as individuals voiced their discontent with the government or specific policies in place (Urmanbetova, 2018). However, these events raise important questions about the democratic nature of any revolution. While demonstrations often took the shape of broad social movements, they were frequently ignited by smaller civil society organizations or political entities (Lipset and Lakin, 2004).

Amidst a backdrop of widespread financial difficulties and the resulting poverty and misery, the resistance movement emerged in Kyrgyzstan. In comparison to the affluent democracies of the Western world and even the burgeoning democracies of Eastern Europe, impoverished nations like Kyrgyzstan face a heightened risk of political turmoil. Geopolitically positioned between Russia and China, two influential global powers, this small country with a population of 6.5 million cannot be overlooked in the context of democratic processes in the region. It is important to note that despite 25.3% of its population living below the poverty line, Kyrgyzstan's democratic development remains a significant focus of this research. This study seeks to comprehensively evaluate the trajectory of democracy in Kyrgyzstan, particularly considering the complex challenges posed by its economic struggles and geopolitical positioning.

A state of constant change

In its 1993 Constitution, the Kyrgyz Republic formally proclaimed itself to be a democratic and secular state. As a result, like other post-

Soviet nations, it was classified as a transitional state. This analysis, however, is the result of trying to interpret recent events in Kyrgyzstan in the context of Western aspirations for creating a democratic nation. Given these facts, it's fair to question whether or not it would be possible to construct a liberal democracy in Kyrgyzstan. To be clear, this concern is relevant to all nations that formerly belonged to the erstwhile Soviet Union. There is a paradox at play in Central Asia, as many regimes claim to uphold liberal democratic norms while moving in the direction of authoritarianism. In the initial stages of independence, intellectuals throughout Central Asia, especially in Kyrgyzstan, enthusiastically embraced the notion of transitology. The concept of the transitional state has become a handy excuse for the economic, political, and social shortcomings of emerging governments. There has been a complete lack of accountability on everyone's part, including the government.

In order to evaluate the efficacy of recent democratic reforms in Kyrgyzstan, this article adapts the idea of transition as a lens through which to observe these reforms. Therefore, the conclusion of the transition era as is argued is not yet in reach, considering the present events in the nation. The fact is that Kyrgyzstan has not created the prerequisites for a stable democratic administration. Western civilization has developed over the ages to become a bastion of democracy, and it is from there that transition theory was predominantly exported. When it comes to Central Asia, the Western perspective on democratic changes overlooks the region's unique mindset. Democracies in Kyrgyzstan undergo substantial transformations as a result of differences in regional identity and perspectives. In this light, Pogosyan's theory sheds light on the notion that Soviet society had an inclination towards democratic ideals. However, due to its closed and undemocratic nature, the actualization of a democratic process was impeded. This can be exemplified by the government's systematic oppression of civil society, as well as the lack of civic initiative and self-organization (Pogosyan, 2011). In a similar vein, Schmitter and Karl (1991) argue that the current period in Kyrgyzstan is characterized by a sense of uncertainty. This pervasive uncertainty has not only brought about a transformation in social norms but has also influenced how Kyrgyzstan is perceived by the international community. It has

become a defining factor in understanding the country's aspirations and challenges in the realm of democracy. By considering these perspectives, we gain insight into the intricate dynamics that have shaped Kyrgyzstan's democratic trajectory. While Soviet society displayed a yearning for democratic ideals, the oppressive governmental regime prevented the complete realization of these aspirations. Moreover, the present period's uncertainties have added a layer of complexity to the country's democratic development. The Kyrgyz nation certainly has many unresolved questions, such as why the early democratic improvements failed to consolidate and yield positive results.

Kyrgyzstanis' Conceptions of Democracy

Kyrgyzstan, upon achieving independence, immediately embarked on the democratic path despite lacking any relevant experience. Although Kyrgyzstan's elites are keen to show their support for democracy, this fact reveals very little about the country's political structure (Urmanbetova, 2018). It's interesting to note that since the 1990s, Kyrgyzstan's previous and current presidents have expressed admiration for the country's commitment to democracy and its achievements. According to Akar Akayev, the first President of the republic, Kyrgyzstan has consistently been a leader among the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in terms of democracy and reforms (Akayev, 1994). However, there have been instances where internal mechanisms promoting democracy have fallen short. Bakiyev (2010) introduced the concept of "counsel democracy," which aimed to involve diverse socio-economic groups in the creation and implementation of public policies (Nikolai, 2010). Despite these attempts, both Akayev and Bakiyev eventually faced criticism for their authoritarian tendencies, which led to their fleeing from the nation.

Implementing democratic values in a society that only pays lip service to them can be challenging (Lipset and Lakin, 2004). In Kyrgyzstan, the term "democracy" must be understood in both political and social contexts. While there are elections and multiple political parties, it doesn't necessarily mean that the country's people live in a truly democratic society. Kyrgyzstan falls short of the ideals of political theory, despite implementing some universal democratic norms. As a

result, democratic principles have not deeply permeated the minds of the population beyond mere rhetoric. Kyrgyzstan has yet to develop a distinct national character for democracy, failing to establish itself as a stable and recognized democratic state in the world. The country has often been associated with the erosion of its statehood.

Initially, the Kyrgyz republic had a skewed understanding of democracy, equating it with total freedom, which resulted in a breakdown of law and order. Lipset and Lakin's argument about the distinction between democracy and equality holds true (Lipset and Lakin, 2004). Many people in Kyrgyzstan embraced democracy more on an emotional level rather than a logical one, which proved to be their worst mistake. They elected presidents who often lacked an understanding of democracy and merely echoed liberal democratic rhetoric, while setting the direction for economic and social progress. These sentiments persisted throughout the 2005 Tulip Revolution and the 2010 political upheaval. For almost three decades, Kyrgyzstan has operated as an emotional democracy relying on loans, foreign support, and a patchwork of aid initiatives to stay afloat. Such thinking is prevalent among the majority of Kyrgyz people and contributes to the country's reputation for constant turmoil (Yasar, 2012).

Democracies that arise out of revolutions

There are two ways to look at the political turmoil in Kyrgyzstan's recent history and their impact on the growth of democracy in the nation. First, it serves as unmistakable proof that the majority of people are dedicated to democracy and strongly opposed to tyranny. Second, it shows that people can't agree on how the country is doing and that the central government isn't doing a good job.

The eagerness of the people to execute and demand the fulfilment of their democratic principles and freedoms is shown in the first component, which represents the degree of democratic progress. According to these criteria, part of the upheaval that occurred may be classified as revolutionary. According to Karl Marx and Lenin, the traditional characteristics of a revolution are the rulers' incapacity to sustain the status quo, the poor's unwillingness to abide by old norms, and the motivation of masses (Lenin, 1969). People must therefore be convinced that the current administration must be overthrown because

it does not adhere to democratic ideals, which are centred on the power of the people. The bravery and inspiration shown in standing up to the authoritarianism of the first and second Kyrgyz presidents are remarkable. It is an indication of the vast potential of the people. According to one historian, the suppression of civil and political rights was a major factor in the 2010 unrest that led to Bakiyev's removal as president (Urmanbetova, 2018). However, for these revolutions to garner widespread support from the populace, they must begin with grassroots demonstrations. But in the end, it was the opposition that played a key role in rallying the people and coordinating protests around the country. The opposition successfully galvanised the populace and urged a coup. This summarises the main events of the numerous revolutions that took place in Kyrgyzstan.

The perception of international community about the uprisings in Kyrgyzstan was shaped by preconceived notions about the country's past, present, and future. Many Westerners saw this as a positive step for the spread of democracy across the world. Russia and the Central Asian area grew more cautious in reaction to the uprisings, fearing the export of colour revolutions. Thus, they condemned Kyrgyz authorities for failing to preserve calm. Both the 2005 Tulip Revolution and the 2010 upheaval demonstrated the democratic potential of the nation as well as the requirement for reform in the direction of improving the quality of administration. Notwithstanding the catastrophic nature of these uprisings, they have shown that people in Central Asia, and the Kyrgyz Republic, in particular, want to embrace democratic norms. Kyrgyzstan's democratic growth is now cyclical. It starts with a statement of democratic values that becomes less true over time. This is followed by a stop to reforms and a move toward dictatorship. Eventually, the government is overthrown violently.

The Kyrgyz revolutions ultimately fell short of bringing about a significant change in the country's political system due to fragility of the state and the government. It should come as no surprise that this assertion is correct in light of the circumstances that have prevailed since the revolution in 2005. As soon as Bakiyev took office, he swiftly surpassed the accomplishments of his immediate predecessor, Askar Akayev. Bakiyev moved swiftly to put members of his family and connections in crucial positions throughout the political and economic

systems of the country, and he also instituted a far more stringent authoritarian regime. Karl and Schmitter (1991) claim that society gladly cedes its hard-won authority to actual or imagined community leaders when it seems to be entering a new age and making significant strides (Zhyldyz, 2017). The rebels were the ones who were prone to falling prey to such delusions. They hoped for a better life, but they ceded power to the same political elites who had vowed to finish what they started. As a consequence of this, the outcome of the revolution was disheartening. There was not much development, and the nation even went backwards in certain ways. As a direct consequence of this, democracy has taken a step backwards in the age that followed the rule of Akayev. As a result, people all around the nation, the region, and the world were angry and disappointed.

As a consequence, the Kyrgyzstan that emerged in the period in between the uprisings can only be described as a so-called “fake democracy.” At this point, most of the concerns regarding the current state of development are academic. After thirty years of independence, the nation is no nearer to addressing these concerns than it was before. Every president campaigned on the pledge of democratisation. The reality was an extremely odd blending of democratic ideals and conventional social attitudes. It doesn’t make sense to act like they are building a liberal democracy when the facts show something very different.

The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy

Following the events of the 2010 uprising, Kyrgyzstan established itself as Central Asia’s only parliamentary government. According to numerous texts examining the nature of democracy, parliamentary systems perform better in the long run than presidential ones (Lipset & Lakin, 2004). Perhaps this is true, and the existence of modern democracies lends credence to these claims. However, it is important to remember that this is typically associated with long-standing democracies. Kyrgyzstan meanwhile embraced the parliamentary form of government during a period of profound political upheaval. The parliamentary system is still a contentious topic, with both proponents and detractors having strong opinions. Proponents of democracy see the overthrow of autocratic regimes and the transition from presidential to

parliamentary governments as a major victory. The parliamentary system will assist Kyrgyzstan in ending the vicious cycle that has existed in the past because it is founded on principles of equal justice, freedom, and accountability in the political sphere. The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, which was approved in 2010, forbids the centralization of a government authority. The president's authority has been severely curtailed in favour of parliament.

The government is then established by the parliament (Juraev, 2008). The counterargument is reflective of popular notion that Kyrgyzstan acted very quickly in choosing its new parliamentary form of government. Eventually, a parliamentary government in Kyrgyzstan could prove effective, but only if the country's political institutions fully and accurately reflect the interests of the people (Zhyldyz, 2017). Kyrgyzstan doesn't have established parties, a strong civil society, political compromise, or communication between the people because of the difficult geopolitical situation of the country.

Building formidable political parties with well-defined programmes are indeed crucial to the success of a parliamentary system. Amid political chaos, Kyrgyzstan decided to switch to a parliamentary system. Kyrgyz political parties are notorious for winging it, and their programmes seldom promote steady growth in the nation. There is a lack of clarity on the underlying ideologies of each political faction. While the political parties in the United States have a special awareness of their function as channels between the government and the people. They often act in their self-interest or for the benefit of the leaders. It is difficult to debate any precise policy recommendations for resolving the nation's present political problem given the histories of these parties. Several issues contribute to this, including party formation challenges, a lack of interparty interaction, a reliance on compromising materials as a political weapon, and occasional emotional outbursts. It's hard to see a level playing field happening under these circumstances. To some extent, the political events in Kyrgyzstan may be explained by the fact that the nation operates under a parliamentary system, which some experts say is the product of an informal agreement between powerful political leaders (Marat, 2012). An observer would notice that financial support plays a larger role in the formation of new political parties than does a reflection of the populace. The events that followed in April 2010

demonstrated that even long-standing parties with widespread support face challenges in winning elections. For instance, the venerable Ata Meken party struggled to win seats in parliament, while the recently formed Ak Shumkar party was a total failure. Only the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK) came out on top, and they did so by heavily relying on administrative support. It says a lot that two new parties, Ata Jurt and Respublica, both of which were founded the day before the election, were able to win enough votes to join parliament.

The role of the elite in the politics of Kyrgyzstan

The issue of elites in Kyrgyzstan is linked to the problem of political parties. As cliché as it may sound, the nation's elite will be judged on their willingness to address the problems facing the nation and the interests of society, not on their personal goals. The elite of Kyrgyzstan have a unique and historic obligation to the country's next generation to ensure the success of the country's ongoing social transformation. The country's elite are the ones who should be steering the ship of social, political, and cultural change. They have failed due to election changes, self-interest, and intractable political disagreements. Many members of the elite have a disastrously superficial and slogan-driven political culture.

Kyrgyzstan's progress is complicated, contentious, and volatile due to its colloquial political atmosphere. According to Lipset and Lakin (2004), only philosophy or principles should split groups, not interests and this is the cause of the political turmoil in. Contrary to popular belief, the elite of Kyrgyzstan are driven only by their self-interest. These problems threaten the long-term success of democratic system of Kyrgyzstan. A number of international observers, however, worry that rivalry among the political elite could emerge between party leaders and among the various parliamentary groups. The nation is also demonstrating an ideological debate for the first time in modern history. The culture of political agreement is, however, still in its early stages of development. Perhaps it is too soon to declare that Kyrgyzstan has national elite that can effectively represent the people's interests. If Kyrgyzstan is to escape its current predicament, its leaders must initiate new dialogues.

Research Methodology

The article uses a qualitative evaluation of Kyrgyzstan's democratic transition and significant institutional developments. It is based on an analysis of the text concerning the process of democratisation in Central Asia, with special emphasis on Kyrgyzstan. The research takes an analytical approach to the challenges presented by structural reforms in Kyrgyzstan.

This study adopts a logical approach by analysing speeches and official declarations to gain insights into the political transition and institutional changes in the entire republic. Primary and secondary sources were used to compile this research. Primary and main sources include the Kyrgyz Constitution, election code, as well as various official records, reports, and studies compiled by Kyrgyz officials; decisions; declarations; agreements; rules; speeches; etc. Books, articles, posts, magazines, newspapers, and other online resources that are freely available to the public are examples of secondary sources used in the research. To fill in the gap, it also incorporated interviews published in periodicals and newspapers.

Result and Discussion

The state of Kyrgyzstan has faced significant challenges. In just five years (2005 and 2010), the country witnessed two revolutions, which have hindered its economic development and led to ongoing political instability. Despite being initially established as a secular democracy under its first constitution, the system has proven to have flaws. As a result, some experts are advocating for a return to this earlier constitution, viewing it as a pivotal moment in Kyrgyzstan's history. According to one analyst, the Constitution enacted on May 5, 1993, contains numerous clauses that reflect the worldview of Kyrgyzstan. Afterwards, this Constitution was amended six times, showing how the country's views on democracy developed through time. The country's governing body was split into the Legislative and People's Representative houses in 1996, resulting in a new election system. In 1998, new provisions on media independence and private ownership were introduced.

A new Constitution was drafted in 2002 and approved in 2003. It brought together all the previous reforms into a single document and

provided solutions to a wide range of economic and political problems. After further revisions, the post-revolutionary Constitution was finally ratified in 2006. In response to the judgement by the Constitutional Court of the Republic, drastic actions were taken, culminating in the election of a new legislature. The Republic's legal system underwent some adjustments, reducing the number of courts from three to two: the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court. In addition to the Supreme Court, the Arbitration Court now hears cases involving the economy. After the country's second revolution in 2010 resulted in a change in government, a new constitution was ratified that year that established a parliamentary system of government. Thus, the country's long-term problems can be traced to the systematic change of its laws. It shows how Kyrgyz people view democracy.

The Kyrgyz culture is indeed deeply rooted in the concept of patrimony. Civil, cultural, political, religious, ethnic, linguistic, and other aspects of Kyrgyzstan's identity remain unsettled. The republic is home to over eighty different ethnic communities, which poses serious challenges to the development of a shared sense of civic identity. The uprisings and demonstrations of 2010 have resulted in interethnic clashes. One cannot separate the identity problem from the national development crisis. Problems occur when a state tries to retain ethnic variety and promote national unity.

A national concept that can unite Kyrgyzstan must therefore originate from the people. It is customary to assume that the state will promote a certain ideology. The government has often proposed many variations of a national concept meant to bring the country's citizens together, but thus far, none of them has been successful. Slogans like "Kyrgyzstan is the nation of human rights" and "The Seven Testaments of Manas" are often used. None of these ideas resonated with the Kyrgyz, who are still working on developing a mature civil society. According to one expert, surveys reveal that just 55% of Kyrgyz people consider themselves citizens of the country. This means that over half of the population belongs to a distinct group and has no ties to the Kyrgyz state. This is very concerning evidence that the state's nation-building initiatives have been unsuccessful. If political and ideological goals were tailored to each of the country's diverse population groups, it would be impossible and would not help to promote the growth of national identity. Despite

claiming to be committed to democratic changes, this shows the state's lack of readiness and myopia. This is more evidence that the nation is in a state of perpetual change. Its current political system has a certain history, but its future course is less certain. The dire economic conditions in Kyrgyzstan are just making matters worse. Following its independence, Kyrgyzstan experienced a precipitous collapse in its manufacturing sector, which has persisted to the present day. Due to economic hardship, many people go to work overseas. Additionally, there are the perennial issues that come with privatisation. Since FDI is not a transparent process and corruption is pervasive in the economy, it begs the age-old issue of where and how the money ends up. The energy situation remains unsolved, which brings to the end of the list.

Political unrest also appears to be ongoing in Kyrgyzstan. Many inconsistencies arose as a result of flaws in the parliamentary system. There are also a lot of issues in how local and international policies interact with one another. According to the country's former minister of foreign affairs, Kyrgyzstan is the best illustration of how huge global entities may affect the internal power connections of a tiny state. This proves that N. Omarov, a political scientist, was correct in his assessment that the Republic's international policy is illogical and senseless since it just replicates the policies of other countries. There is no order at home; instead, everything seems like anarchy. The current economic situation in Kyrgyzstan may shed light on the country's future; the World Bank estimates that 25.3% of the population, or 1.6 million people, are living in extreme poverty. Even after 30 years, people in Kyrgyzstan continue to use protest to air their frustrations, which often leads to military takeovers. There seems to be a thawing of the social unrest at the moment, although occasional outbursts of social strife still occur. There's also the possibility of tension between social conservatives and modernizers. The first developed shortly after independence and sought to revitalise native Kyrgyz ideals and cultural symbols; the latter sought to incorporate and amplify the liberal ideals that had begun to flood into the nation.

Continuity of Transition and Its Causes

Unfortunately, Central Asia was not the right place for a liberal democracy to be imported from the West. The complexity of the

Kyrgyz mind and the uniqueness of Kyrgyz culture ultimately doomed efforts to establish democracy in the country. To understand the situation and highlight the problems with the current model of democracy, opposing views must be considered. It can continue Westernization, which hasn't worked so far.

According to one argument, people in Central Asia misinterpret and mistrust democratic institutions. Authorities and some Western scholars opposing democracy believe Central Asia's historical evolution is unique and cannot be adapted to Western norms. Though the specifics of governance may vary from one culture to another, all democracies share a commitment to free and fair elections, open administration, parliamentary oversight, and a flourishing civil society (Boonstra, 2012). According to the aforementioned theory, it would seem that the Kyrgyz people have a poor understanding of democracy and are opposed to its creation in the nation. It is illogical, however, to claim democracy without making any effort toward it.

Any nation, regardless of size, is capable of adopting a democracy. According to Przeworski et al. (1998), culture shouldn't be seen as a barrier to democracy. Instead, people should be educated to value democratic principles. He concludes that there is no civilization wholly incompatible with democracy. He agreed that democracy is suitable for almost every culture, including Kyrgyz culture. However, critics like Lipset and Laski point to diverse cultures as a major roadblock to the widespread adoption of democratic ideals. This may be summed up by an extract from Samuel Huntington, which states that "under the impact of modernity, world politics is being formed afresh, in line with the direction of cultural development... state action is influenced by cultural choices" (Lipset and Lakin, 2004). Gibson (1998) proposes that effective democracy cannot be ensured simply by institutional reforms (changing the constitution, laws, political power structures, etc.), but also by the establishment of a certain set of cultural values (Gibson, 1998). It is not coincidental that a nation's defining characteristics are rooted in the values that have emerged over its history. Kyrgyz culture was first shaped by the nomadic archetype, whose lifestyle shaped the people's distinctive worldview. The shift to a more sedentary lifestyle caused a cultural crisis from within. But the core archetypes of the nomad mind stayed with people and became a part of their culture.

Tribalism is an aspect of the Kyrgyz mentality that arguably stands in the way of democracy. For the Kyrgyz nomads, tribalism was strength in the past, and this is worth noting. As a result, the clans developed a spiritual kinship that helped them work together to overcome natural disasters and economic hardships. However, as time progressed, the concept of the clan and the objective requirement of its role faded away. Both the tribal way of life and the ability to exercise cultural autonomy were annihilated during the Soviet era. But after this trait came back in the wake of independence, the political elite once again gave it a bad name.

The current political conditions in Kyrgyzstan may be traced back to the use of tribalism to win elections to the Republic Parliament (Jogorku Kenesh), a practise that dates back to the country's independence. The bonds of blood and kinship strengthen when people work together to win political office. There are many traditionally Kyrgyz festivals, and the adoption of ethnic emblems has become a political trend. In 2010, both Akayev and Bakiyev attended a family celebration because they wanted to show their support for and celebrate with their relatives. It is best to have strong tribal ties if you want to rise to power. Tribalism in the country has been the subject of many studies, and this is not by chance.

However, the same trait underlies the crippling levels of corruption that have affected the whole political system. The country's weak economy contributes to widespread corruption in Kyrgyzstan. Attempting to limit corruption would need an enormous amount of time and resources that are now unimaginable. Another political effect of tradition is that nomads, in contrast to sedentary people, believe that any individual or family may ascend to power, not through hereditary succession but by force. Legitimacy was characterised primarily by vigour and authority. Different from historical sedentary civilizations, nomad societies did not elevate their leaders to godlike status or use religious dogma to legitimise and strengthen their hold on power.

The presence of the northern and southern clans reveal regionalism in Kyrgyzstan's political system. The growing influence of People's Kurultays (congresses) as a form of civic involvement led to the adoption of the statute on Public Kurultay. Kurultays have been increasing in value ever since they started asserting themselves in the

political process under the presidency of Kyrgyzstan's first leader, Askar Akayev. Kurultays' unfavourable image also contributed to Bakiyev's (2010) deliberative democracy movement. It's worth noting that both the administration and the opposition employ Kurultay's to influence the outcome of political processes at the regional and national levels. K. Isaev, a well-known sociologist, has argued that the government should make Kurultay an official body with the power to hold other government agencies accountable. A historian, however, has suggested that the National Kurultay Institute in Kyrgyzstan is an effort to construct a parallel administration. Kurultays may be used to execute opposition groups' limited goals by playing political games and manipulating public opinion (Baktykan, 2010).

It's clear that tribalism and regionalism make it harder to apply democratic norms and establish the rule of law. Since the new elite have more to gain from maintaining the status quo, it is instead a deliberate refusal to change. This virus has also spread far and wide, creating a complex web that can only be eradicated by taking a completely different tack. Since the same people who were raised in the Soviet system have been in charge of the country for more than 30 years, this is categorically impossible for the current political elite.

After discussing Kyrgyzstan's political consciousness and cultural values, Lipset adds that cultural resistance makes the transition from one social logic to another more challenging (Lipset & Lakin, 2004). The systemic cultural crisis is a direct result of the fundamental shifts in values. This crisis hit Kyrgyz culture twice: the first time during the shift from nomadism to settled life, and again when the country was annexed by Russia and ultimately the Soviet Union. There were certain positives to this move, but there were also some drawbacks that needed to be considered. The similarities between European colonialism in Africa and Asia and Soviet colonialism, as discussed in K. Collins' monograph Collins (2006), are less than at first glance. The socialist style of life had obvious drawbacks, such as economic subjugation to the centre. However, the positive effects of the massive economic initiatives in the Central Asian republics cannot be denied. One of the worst parts, however, was the forced incorporation of several minority cultures into the dominant Soviet one. As a result, the rules of Kyrgyz culture have been ingrained in people's minds in a way.

As a result, the time of independence also marked the beginning of the third cultural crisis. It's proven hard to reconcile freedom of self-determination with democratic principles. Lipset and Lakin are right when they suggest that if culture must evolve with democracy, then certain cultures must be more democratic. That's why it's important to recognise the role of culture which may play in stifling democratic progress. This played a part in the dissolution of cultural solidarity that took place during that time. The culture of Kyrgyzstan has gone in two main directions since independence: toward a renaissance of national identity and toward Westernization. It must acknowledge that it is pointless to demand democracy at this time if it is serious about moving closer to becoming a more democratic society. Better results might be achieved by investigating the reasons why liberal democracy is not more widely adopted. The peculiarity of Kyrgyz culture is not a reason for the inability to develop democracy, but it is a component that must be acknowledged. Studies showing the impact of cultural factor on enacting democratic changes have grown in importance over the last three decades. By gaining insight into the history and culture of Kyrgyzstan, it may better comprehend the reasons for and nature of its current transitional phase.

Conclusion

The concept of a hybrid regime is gaining popularity in explaining Kyrgyzstan's current transitional situation. It refers to a combination of autocratic and democratic elements within the government. Particularly before transitioning to a parliamentary system, it could be appropriate to use this term when referring to Kyrgyzstan. Research on Russia's status as a hybrid regime could be relevant in understanding the situation in Kyrgyzstan. By using a comparative framework, one can identify the presence of both authoritarian tendencies (as evidenced by the two violent transitions in administration) and democratic traits and institutions in Kyrgyzstan. The existence of elections, a multi-party system, and similar institutions in the country is not in doubt. In this context, the hybrid model helps to comprehend the governance structure. Kyrgyzstan's system is better understood as one of electoral patronage, where ties at various levels of local government reflect a patronage system (Collins, 2006). In particular, the fragility of hybrid

regimes should be highlighted. Kyrgyzstan has spent the last decade precariously poised on the brink of economic disaster. Politicians at home and abroad have spoken out against this tense climate in the press. The low degree of trust in the state is another component of this situation. It appears that Kyrgyzstan aligns well with the criteria of the hybrid model. Pervasive pessimism and low public confidence in the government are prevalent in the country. Hybrid governments indeed face a precarious issue when it comes to succession. Kyrgyzstan can indeed serve as a useful case study in this regard. Once Roza Otunbayeva voluntarily stepped down, she put an end to the pattern of revolutionary power transfers that had been a source of instability in the country. As a result, prior to the switch to a parliamentary administration in Kyrgyzstan, it could be prudent to do more research into the presence of the hybrid system. It seems that despite the shift to a parliamentary system, the underlying patronage system hasn't undergone significant changes, even though authoritarianism is no longer utilized. This suggests that the transitional era in Kyrgyzstan is still in its early phases and hasn't fully matured. The effectiveness of the hybrid approach within a parliamentary system and entrenched patronage practices remains uncertain. Predicting the duration of Kyrgyzstan's transitional period or the onset of sustained democratic progress is challenging.

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