

# Kyrgyzstan: In Search for Stability

Y. EMRE GÜRBÜZ\*

**ABSTRACT** *In the last two decades, Kyrgyzstan has searched for stability while swinging on a pendulum between democratic reforms and suppression of democracy. Political changes in Kyrgyzstan started with the liberal democratic promises of President Akayev in 1990 and President Bakiyev in 2005, but they both ended with disillusionment. The state's capacity had to be reestablished in the post-Soviet period, which was sought to be institutionalized by authoritarian measures. The failure of the authoritarian path proves that the people of Kyrgyzstan are more open to a parliamentary democracy, where the multiplicity of interests in society can be represented. Stability, however, does not only rest upon the representation of different groups' interests but also on increasing economic resources to redistribute wealth across society.*

**K**yrgyzstan achieved its independence in 1991 and entered a new phase of state-building. Over the years, it struggled to adjust to a liberal economic and political system, both of which were considered indispensable for stability. Kyrgyzstan borrowed an established state apparatus from the Soviet system but it had to be restructured to meet the needs of a pluralistic democratic system in accordance with the market economy. The heavy burden on Kyrgyz authorities was not only a shift in the economic and political structure but also the centralization of state functions in the Kyrgyz capital, Bishkek. The adjustment had to be achieved successfully in order to improve the state's capacity for its survival in the post-Soviet world. In the last two decades following independence, failure to improve state capacity resulted in a permanent search for stability.

In the last two decades, Kyrgyzstan sought to expand state capacity and establish stability by both authoritarian and non-authoritarian measures. Kyrgyzstan also tried soft and hard authoritarianism under different presidents. Recently, Kyrgyzstan is one of the rare examples of a post-Soviet republic trying

\* Department of History, Kyrgyzstan-Turkey Manas University

**Insight Turkey**  
Vol. 15 / No. 4 /  
2013, pp. 191-205

## In the last two decades, Kyrgyzstan sought to expand state capacity and establish stability by both authoritarian and non-authoritarian measures

to solve the problem of stability by non-authoritarian measures. The first years of independence also started with non-authoritarian hopes for a pluralistic democracy under President Askar Akayev, which was later transformed into soft authoritarian rule. Increasing authoritarianism led to his overthrow by a popular revolt. Despite expectations, his successor President Kurmanbek Bakiyev moved from soft to hard authoritarianism, which was terminated by another popular revolt.

During the authoritarian regimes, state capacity was sought to be achieved through “despotic power.”<sup>1</sup>

Two popular revolts, however, proved the failure of authoritarianism for Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan can employ “infrastructural power,” which refers to the “capacity of the state to actually penetrate to the society.”<sup>2</sup> The recent Kyrgyz government aimed to establish a pluralistic, democratic and parliamentary system, which required an increase in economic resources and their redistribution. Authoritarian measures can be replaced by negotiation with different groups, which can be achieved by an increase in resources and their fair allocation.

A UN report underlines that “[a]uthoritarian approaches to building political capacity are ... unsustainable.”<sup>3</sup> The report also argues that “poverty has been reduced the most in states where effective government power rests on a broad political base. In such cases, rulers have minimized the hold of upper classes on the state, successfully organized the middle and lower strata into an effective power bloc, and then used this power to channel resources to the poor,”<sup>4</sup> which is a key factor for state capacity. For Kyrgyzstan, where public protests are a daily routine and ousted the president on two occasions, the allocation of resources through these channels is of utmost importance.

The two uprisings in Central Asia are generally explained within the context of the “Great Game” between Russia and the USA, denying the role of domestic conflicts and networks. Some other works examine the role of interest groups, coined as “elites,” “clans,” “tribes” or “interest groups,” as the main mobilizers of society. The state then becomes just an arena for the struggle between different groups in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>5</sup> Both factors have some explanatory use in understanding the reasons beyond the “revolutions”<sup>6</sup> in Kyrgyzstan.

In this paper, however, the aim is to understand the recent process in Kyrgyzstan, which focuses on the shaky position of the state. The failed attempts at authoritarian rule have proved that Kyrgyzstan has to be an open, democratic society that shares resources within a wider society. However, a loose politi-

cal structure with a minimal role for the state also has its deficiencies. Ethnic clashes between the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in June 2010 and the cleavage between the North and South of Kyrgyzstan demonstrated the need to form an effective state apparatus. Thus, stability will be achieved not only by an increase in resources and their allocation, but also by improving state capacity, which necessitates the establishment of a certain level of state autonomy as mentioned by Michael Mann.<sup>7</sup>

Autonomy of the state refers to its “ability to formulate interests of its own, independent of or against the will of divergent societal interests.”<sup>8</sup> According to Theda Skocpol, the state can act against the needs of classes, interest groups and other groups in society. It has an autonomous power because it is the only institution which can control the society within its boundaries, keep an army and enact taxes. Only the state can know where the dangers are because only the state possesses information about international affairs and internal conditions. No other social group can compete with the state in these spheres, which the state can use or abuse for its own benefit.<sup>9</sup>

According to Mann, the power sources of the state are economic, ideological and military but the state’s autonomy does not just rely upon these monopolized functions. The autonomy of the state is the outcome of the state’s ability to maneuver in a multifunctional environment and between cross-cutting social groups, who are in need of a state and regulations regarding the “protection of life and property.” The state functions of “the maintenance of internal order,” “military defense/aggression,” “maintenance of communications infrastructure” and “economic redistribution” renders the state indispensable, and its monopoly on these functions creates the source of its autonomy.<sup>10</sup>

In Kyrgyzstan, however, these functions are not fully carried out by the state yet, which will be discussed and exemplified in this article. This paper will argue that one of the main reasons of this failure is the scarcity of the state’s economic resources, which is also a reason behind the application of despotic power that led to authoritarianism. The multi-vectored<sup>11</sup> policy in Kyrgyzstan’s international relations could give the state some autonomy above interest groups in society. These agreements are also the basis of new financial resources, which Kyrgyzstan needs for investment. Thus, international agreements are not only for the benefit of the state but also for interest groups and the general public.

This paper will first summarize the tenures of President Akayev and Bakiyev to illustrate the transition from democracy to soft and hard-authoritarianism. Then, the multitude of differences in Kyrgyzstan will be explained. Although these factors weaken state capacity, some of them could also force Kyrgyzstan to establish a pluralistic, democratic government. Additionally, this article will

describe the state's attempts to increase resources with foreign assistance and create a stable government, noting the expectation that the search process for stability will increase the state's capacity in the end.

## Akayev Years: From Democratic Promises to Soft-Authoritarianism

The authoritarian understanding aims to construct the state as an autonomous body of administration, which is an unquestionable employer of physical force and the prime mover in society separated from interest groups.<sup>12</sup> The deposed presidents of Kyrgyzstan also sought to use the state as a physical force. Although the first years of independence started with great hopes for democracy in Kyrgyzstan, it shifted to authoritarianism as a result of the failure to enlarge and allocate resources.

Kyrgyzstan's first attempt to restructure its dysfunctional economic system was through a "shock therapy" of privatization and other market reforms. While Kyrgyzstan is not rich in natural resources, it has neighbors like Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan with abundant hydrocarbon deposits. Market reforms and the formation of a trustworthy and stable banking system were expected to turn Kyrgyzstan into the "Switzerland of Asia."<sup>13</sup> During the Soviet period, Kyrgyzstan was dependent on the financial support of Moscow.<sup>14</sup> Although industry was developed in Kyrgyzstan, resources came from neighboring republics.<sup>15</sup> The collapse of the USSR meant the end of the transfer of resources. The Kyrgyz state could not even pay the subsidies for *kolkhozes* (collective farms), *sovkhoses* (state farms) and factories.<sup>16</sup> It was clear for President Akayev that the farms had to be privatized and foreign investment needed to be attracted to rebuild production.<sup>17</sup>

The swift reforms created an economic crisis in Kyrgyzstan, leading to the collapse of the economy. GDP growth rate between 1991 and 1995 was -55.7%.<sup>18</sup> Industrial production was especially effected by the collapse and the share of the industry decreased annually by 20%.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the inflation rate was 920% in 1992 and 1,211.5% in 1993.<sup>20</sup> In 1994, President Akayev suspended the parliament on the justification that Kyrgyzstan needed protecting and continuing reforms under the authority of a resolute president, and an immediate transition to democracy was not feasible.<sup>21</sup> With the 1995 Parliamentary and Presidential elections and amendments to the constitution in 1996, President Akayev consolidated his power.

The next ten years under President Akayev were known for widespread corruption and nepotism. Privatization created new sources for potential magnates of Kyrgyzstan and the interest groups around Akayev were the most advantageous in the process. The decision to protect the beneficiaries of the

reforms escalated the authoritarian rule of Akayev and the withering of democracy until 2005.

The opposition and the media, however, were not totally suppressed, enabling them to criticize the government for corruption, which invited more authoritarian measures. Still, the regime under Akayev was not totally tyrannizing the opposition and Kyrgyzstan was evaluated as a “soft authoritarian” regime.<sup>22</sup> In 2005, the elite in opposition<sup>23</sup> were able to organize a mass revolt with the assistance of NGO’s and trainers supported by American NGO’s. Without the tension within the elite and the masses, this foreign initiative would not have been able to trigger a successful uprising.

### **Bakiyev Years: Renewed Promises for Democracy and Hard-Authoritarian Attempt**

Between 2005 and 2010, Kyrgyzstan was governed by President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, under whose rule Kyrgyzstan quickly returned to a corrupt country with growing authoritarian measures against the media and the opposition. The increase in authoritarianism can be understood as an outcome of the distribution of scarce resources among new potential elites from southern Kyrgyzstan. Most of the political elite and public were excluded from the close circle of beneficiaries. President Bakiyev may have considered the reason for Akayev’s failure to be the insufficiency of his soft-authoritarianism, which led Bakiyev to move to hard-authoritarianism.

During the Bakiyev period, the President’s position as the head of state was at the very center of the political system. Practically, there was no separation of powers. The Prime Minister was appointed by the President and the Prime Minister had to leave his/her party to become a “neutral” apparatchik of the state, which was also the case for ministers. The government was not following a party program and members were not supported by their party. This “neutrality” limited the power of the parliament and the government, which should function as balancing powers against the President. Another leg of the separation of powers, the court, was also under the control of the President. As the head of the state, the President had the duty to appoint the judges. Indeed, all members of state institutions including governors, university rectors and chief physicians in hospitals were approved or appointed by the President. Although the system was actually in continuity with Akayev’s period, Bakiyev was less limited by balancing powers.



**Market reforms and the formation of a trustworthy and stable banking system were expected to turn Kyrgyzstan into the “Switzerland of Asia”**



People on Ala-Too Square in Bishkek on Kyrgyzstan's Independence Day.

RIA Novosti

The revolt of 2010 once again confirmed that Kyrgyzstan is different than other Central Asian republics.<sup>24</sup> Neither “hard” nor “soft” authoritarian regimes seem to be durable in Kyrgyzstan. The solution most likely lies in finding a political structure fashioned for the representation of the multiplicity of interests in society, which could be a parliamentary democracy with separation of powers. Furthermore, an important trigger factor for those revolts was the economic situation in Kyrgyzstan. Economic resources are too small to be shared among the elite and the people. In both revolts widespread corruption and seizure of economic resources by the President and his close circle incited public anger. In order to establish stability, the economic structure should also be improved together with political restructuring.

### **Multiplicity in the Kyrgyzstan: Clans, Regionalism, Ethnic Groups**

The multifaceted social structure of Kyrgyzstan is the main reason behind the democratic demands. The economic situation and corruption, which led to popular revolts, is not unique to Kyrgyzstan, but what differentiates Kyrgyzstan from other Central Asian republics is related to its long historical back-

ground and geographical features. Geographically, Kyrgyzstan is a mountainous region with 25 peaks over 4,000 meters and more than 2,000 rivers cutting through valleys,<sup>25</sup> where the clans were living untouched by authoritarian rulers in the past.

Kyrgyz are historically known as people without *khans* but with *biys* or *manaps*,<sup>26</sup> whose family background was less determining than khans and a leader's authority was limited to the support of the clan that chose to follow them. The mountainous terrain helped them to live without the protection or coercion of khans.

Thus, social networks always had a crucial role in Kyrgyzstan. Most studies on Kyrgyzstan stress the core role of clans or tribes in shaping the recent political structure and the misnomer "tribalism" is often used in analyzing the nation's politics. Tribalism explains the Kyrgyz society as functioning according to tribal networks, which is a hindrance for the formation of an institutionalized, formal political structure. John Anderson argues that "one of the key problems facing the development of a civil society, and the evolution of a 'modern' polity throughout Central Asia, has been the continued strength of informal politics rooted in what some have described as 'tribalism.'" <sup>27</sup> In spite of the fact that "tribe" connotes a kinship-based organization, the term is used in its modern application for a group "partially extended beyond a narrow sense of related people with shared genealogies to include members of other clans and ethnic groups who have been effectively coopted."<sup>28</sup>

These interest groups were created in Akayev's period in order to build "an alliance with regional bosses." They in turn "utilised their position to aid Akayev in the dissolution of parliament and in ensuring satisfactory results during referenda, and in return enjoyed considerable leeway in the governance of their own territories. Yet this policy only reinforced regionalism, allowing local patronage networks to consolidate and to manipulate political life."<sup>29</sup>

Regionalism was also reinforced by the political structure. The election system was based on small precincts, where only one candidate with the most votes was elected. In precincts, local networks were a greater determinant than political programs, which undermined the institutionalization of parties with nation-wide programs.

The political system was revised by the Constitution of 2010. Currently, the President appoints the leader of the electorally successful political party to form the government and the members of the government are not expected to resign from their parties. However, local leaders are still important and there is great fragmentation in the political arena, as noticed during the parliamentary elections in 2010. The forerunner of the election, which was known as a party

of the South, received only 8.9% of votes. The second party's stronghold was in the North and it had 8.4% of the vote.<sup>30</sup> These poor election results reflect the power of regionalism in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>31</sup>

The main cleavage in society is related to regionalism. North and South Kyrgyzstan are divided by mountains, which were surpassed by motorways less than a decade ago. The geographical division and lack of cultural contact with different societies separated the Kyrgyz in the South and North. In daily conversations,

**In order to establish stability in Kyrgyzstan, the economic structure should also be improved together with political restructuring**

comparisons based on “the other’s” general features are very frequently heard. The overthrow of President Bakiyev, who was from the South, and his replacement by Presidents Otunbayeva and Atambayev – both from the north – intensified the differentiation. The failure to prevent ethnic clashes in the South demon-

strated the limits of the state's capacity governed by politicians predominately from the North. After the clashes, the President sought to remove the nationalist Mayor of the southern city Osh, Melis Myrzakmatov, from office. However, the President was unsuccessful in stripping the Mayor of his duties due to the strong reaction of his supporters in Osh, which is the second largest city in the nation. The failure further demonstrated the incapacity of the government in Bishkek, as the mayor is still on duty and the influence of the capital is weak.

The lack of a common state ideology is one of the main hindrances of the Kyrgyz state's power, as mentioned by Mann. In 2011, President Otunbayeva declared that producing a Kyrgyz national ideology was unsuccessful. She presented the epic hero Manas as “one of components of the Kyrgyz ideology as it reflects the history of the nation” and as the main source of the Kyrgyz national ideology.<sup>32</sup> Only two months later, the “Freedom Monument” in the main square of Bishkek was removed with a rushed Parliamentary decision and replaced by a statue of Manas as the highlight of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence.<sup>33</sup> In January 2012, a big statue of Manas was opened in the city of Osh. With a height of 24 meters, it is one of the biggest monuments in the world. It is probably no coincidence that it was built in the South.<sup>34</sup>

Another potential source of democratic conflict is the multiethnic demography of Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan has a very diverse population with 71.2% Kyrgyz, 14.3% Uzbeks, 6.9% Russians and 1.1% Dungans. The percentage of Uighurs, Tajiks, Akhyska Turks, Kazakhs, Tatars, Ukrainians, Koreans, Azerbaijanis, Germans and Turkmens is between 1% and .1%.<sup>35</sup> There are over 90 ethnicities in Kyrgyzstan and the right to preserve, learn and develop their native language is protected by law (article 10/3). Most ethnic groups have cul-

tural associations that work with the Kyrgyz parliament through the Assembly of Peoples of Kyrgyzstan. They also have schools educating in their native language in continuity with the Soviet period. The textbooks of these schools are sent from the related republic. Thus, students are taught courses like geography and history with books that have the geographical features and history of other republics. The protection of cultural rights, including education in native language, can consolidate loyalty to the state. Yet the employment of books from different countries can also damage loyalty to Kyrgyzstan.

The significance of state capacity was realized once again when the ethnic clashes of 2010 between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek in southern Kyrgyzstan erupted. Although similar clashes were seen in 1990, it was thought that the 1990 confrontations were unique and the two groups could live side by side. However, the clashes in 2010 showed it was not a bygone problem. The main problem arose when the USSR entered a controlled market economy during the Gorbachev period, which led to the enrichment of the Uzbeks in southern cities through trade. The Kyrgyz on the other hand were living in kolkhoz or sovkhozes, which collapsed due to the restructuring of the economy and pushed the Kyrgyz to migrate to cities. The clashes of 1990 were sparked by a fight for land between the Uzbeks and the Kyrgyz. The problem only intensified in the last two decades. The number of both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks increased in cities due to high birth rates and migration. The cause of the conflict between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek can be compared to a scissor between political rights and economic opportunities: The Uzbeks enjoyed the benefits of the market economy but after the Soviet period they lost their political position to the Kyrgyz and demanded more cultural and political rights; whereas the Kyrgyz gained more political and administrative posts in the South but the economy based on collective farms was in ruins and they wanted to profit from the market economy. This imbalance between the economy and politics triggered bloody clashes between the two groups in 2010. While there are conflicting speculations about the trigger factor, the undesirable “division of labor” could be considered the main factor.

In 2011, President Otunbayeva denounced the policy of “Kyrgyzstan – our common home” and declared that it is false to hope “for another Soviet internationalism.” She also stated the “Kyrgyz language ... must be the language of interethnic communication [instead of Russian]... the Kyrgyz history and culture are important educational components.” For Otunbayeva, the failure of unification triggered ethnic clashes and unification was expected to be achieved around the culture of the titular nation, as it was the case in European countries.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, a solution was to consolidate the state ideology.

In 2011 and 2012, some Uzbek schools shifted their education to the Kyrgyz language. Only courses of Uzbek language and literature are taught in Uzbek.

Uzbek school directors declared the move was in response to the demand from parents, who do not consider any future for their children through education in Uzbek.<sup>37</sup>

Another hindrance of state capacity is that the media is under the influence of different countries. Mann considers media to be a source of a state's infrastructural power. In Kyrgyzstan, we cannot talk about a unified territory for media. Broadcasts watched in the North are generally from Russian or Kazakh channels, while Uzbek channels have broad coverage in the South. Because of the mountainous terrain of Kyrgyzstan, northern channels cannot be watched in the South and vice versa. Thus, the cleavage between the North and South is also reproduced through broadcasts.<sup>38</sup>

## In Search for Solutions

Economic resources are too small to be distributed fairly among the public and are shared by limited members of interest groups, which led to repeated popular revolts. The Constitution of 2010 was a response to repeated attempts of authoritarianism, nepotism and corruption. Now the power is divided between the President, Prime Minister and Parliament. The other significant leg of the separation of powers, the judiciary, is not well-established yet. The current President is still stronger than the Prime Minister but his power is limited by parliament. Nonetheless, he has to find new ways to consolidate his power by consent and improve the state's capacity to achieve stability. Due to the aforementioned fragmented structure of Kyrgyzstan, this is a very difficult task and chronic economic problems make the solution even harder.

An effective tool would be increasing the economic resources to be shared. The need for capital for new investment and restructuring is expected to be provided through foreign investors. Kyrgyz government authorities frequently visit other countries or welcome representatives from different nations. As a result, Kyrgyzstan has signed agreements on various issues with many countries. In only February 2013, the Kyrgyz President or Minister of Foreign Affairs met officials from Japan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Italy, Germany, Turkey, the European Union, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Malaysia.

The results of this multi-vectored foreign policy are manifested in the "National Sustainable Development Strategy for the Kyrgyz Republic for the Period of 2013-2017."<sup>39</sup> Most of the investment needed for the realization of the plan's projects will come from international financial sources. This plan might help Kyrgyzstan find resources to be allocated, to strengthen the infrastructure of the country and improve state capacity.

The plan is divided to four sections which reflect the priorities for Kyrgyzstan: agriculture, energy, transportation and communication, and production and logistics. The state will attempt to revive the collapsed agricultural system with a total budget of \$412.5 million for projects to construct plants for fertilizer production, seed and breed farms, build laboratories for certification in international standards, create banks for agricultural credits, finance machinery and construct irrigation canals. The financial support for these projects will come from agreements made with USAID, the World Bank, Turkey and the PRC.

The largest investment will be made in the energy sector. The high mountains of Kyrgyzstan provide abundant water sources for hydroelectric power plants. Kyrgyzstan is the most important provider of electricity in Central Asia thanks to a hydroelectric power plant constructed during the Soviet period. Between 2013 and 2017, \$5.055 billion will be invested in the energy sector. The main supporters are the PRC, Russian Federation (RF), USA, Turkey, Asian Development Bank, Islamic Bank and World Bank. However, it should be mentioned that construction of the new massive hydroelectric power plant, Kambar-Ata, which is financed by the RF, alone has a budget of \$3.4 billion.

The projects planned for transportation and communication have a budget of \$897.5 million. The main idea is to turn Kyrgyzstan into the transit corridor between the PRC and the West. Kyrgyzstan shares borders with the PRC, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. The projects will improve roads between the PRC and Uzbekistan, as well as Kazakhstan. The PRC and Asian Bank are financiers of these road projects but the big project of constructing a Chinese-Kyrgyz-Uzbek highway is yet to come. In the strategic plan of 2013-2017, the PRC plans only to realize the feasibility study on the construction. One of the projects Turkey will implement is the rehabilitation and construction of roads in Bishkek (\$30 million). The roads in Bishkek are a matter of serious criticism among city dwellers and the project has great public relations value. Other investors of transportation and communication projects are the Islamic Bank, Saudi Arabia, Asian Development Bank, World Bank, PRC, USA and RF. Nearly half of the transportation and communication projects budget, or \$450 million, will pay for a railway construction between the North and South of Kyrgyzstan implemented by the RF. The fiber-optic backbone in Kyrgyzstan will also be improved. The railroad construction between the North and South and provision of the fiber-optic network will strengthen the infrastructural power of the state and also develop stronger bonds against the North-South cleavage.



## **The geographical division and lack of cultural contact with different societies separated the Kyrgyz in the South and North**

## **The largest investment will be made in the energy sector. The high mountains of Kyrgyzstan provide abundant water sources for hydroelectric power plants**

The fourth section of investment projects is in production and logistics and there are only three projects with a small budget of \$90 million. They are supplementary to other sections of the strategic plan and are expected to be financed by private investors.

To summarize, the first section of the strategic plan, on agriculture, aims to increase agricultural and animal products; the second section on energy aims to turn the country into a stronger supplier of electricity and provide financial sources to the state; the third section on transportation and communication will help Kyrgyzstan to transport its products, gain more from the growing exportation capacity of the

PRC and strengthen the infrastructural power in Kyrgyzstan; and finally, the fourth section on production and logistics will support the logistic demands of increasing commercial relations.

The main threat for the realization of this strategic plan would be corruption, which can lead to the misuse of foreign financial sources. The repayment of exploited credits will escalate the economic burden on the people. Another danger is created by the inefficiency of contact groups in allocating resources. The allocation process requires civil actors to make contact with the state and ensure accountability for fair redistribution, which are systems not yet formalized.

### **Conclusion**

The realization of the strategic plan - as a result of a successful multi-vectored foreign policy - will increase the economic power and state capacity similar to Mann's model. The weakness in "the maintenance of internal order" was demonstrated during the ethnic clashes in the South and subsequently by ability of the mayor of Osh to neglect the capital. The cleavage between the North and South is the weakest side of the state's maintenance of internal order, which has yet to be solved.

The state function of "maintenance of communications infrastructure" is poorly developed but as mentioned above it is being improved. The division between the North and South is related to the limited communication infrastructure. The highway was finished ten years ago and the completion of new roads is in the strategic plan. In terms of infrastructure, Kyrgyzstan's mountainous terrain with hard winters has limited the nation from becoming

a tight-knit economic unit. This is also confirmed by the media because the coverage of broadcasts is limited in Kyrgyzstan and the nation is further fragmented by other countries' broadcasts. The strategic plan can again diminish this hindrance to state capacity.

The next state function of "economic redistribution" cannot be fulfilled because of the limitations of the state's financial sources. There are very limited resources to be redistributed, which used to be one of the reasons behind the state's employment of despotic power under previous presidents. The state has to first increase resources through the strategic plan. The hydroelectric power plants are of utmost importance in improving the financial sources of the state.

The function of the state's "military defense and aggression" is not mentioned in this paper because this category hardly exists as a determinant function in Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan is not founded by wars, where the military plays a determining role and takes a position for future political developments. The absence of war in the recent past minimizes the significance of the military role of the state. The monopoly on international agreements is sustained by diplomatic relations conducted by politicians, which is crucial for the Kyrgyz state in improving state capacity. Additionally, the indispensable role of the state in preparing and implementing the strategic plan further consolidates the state's position. However, this process is open to discussion in the parliament with different parties and through the media with other interest groups. If the state can improve its capacity as the arbiter between different groups, which act as the supplier and allocator of resources, Kyrgyzstan can achieve stability based on democracy and consent. But still the state will improve its capacity as the arbiter between different groups as supplier and allocator of resources, can achieve stability based on democracy and consent.

## Endnotes

1. "Despotic power" is used by Michael Mann to define the authoritarian type of state, where the state elite who possess despotic power do not need to "routine, institutionalized" negotiations with other groups in society. The state elite can undertake any desired action. Most historical states possessed unlimited despotic power and the former Soviet party elites possessed some despotic power (Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," *Archives Europeennes de Sociologie*, 25 (1984), p. 189). Thus, this is the political structure borrowed from the Soviet period but could not be maintained in face of two popular revolts.

2. Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," p. 189.

3. UNRISD (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development), *Combating Poverty and Inequality: Structural Change, Social Policy and Politics* (Geneva: UNRISD Publication, 2010) p.261, retrieved July 01, 2013, from [http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/httpNetITFramePDF?ReadForm&parentunid=92B1D5057F43149CC125779600434441&parentdoctype=documentauxiliarypage&netitpath=80256B3C005BCCF9/\(httpAuxPages\)/92B1D5057F43149CC125779600434441/\\$file/PovRep%20\(smaller\).pdf](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/httpNetITFramePDF?ReadForm&parentunid=92B1D5057F43149CC125779600434441&parentdoctype=documentauxiliarypage&netitpath=80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpAuxPages)/92B1D5057F43149CC125779600434441/$file/PovRep%20(smaller).pdf).

4. UNRISD, p. 263
5. See for a recent work on the role of the elite in Kyrgyzstan's mass protests: Scott Radnitz, *Weapons of the Wealthy: Predatory Regimes and Elite-Led Protests in Central Asia* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2010).
6. The change of president by popular revolts in Kyrgyzstan is often called a "revolution." This alteration, however, should be followed by radical transformations in the political and economic spheres, even affecting social life. In Kyrgyzstan, changes were limited to the President and some adjustments in the political system. Although the political shifts were important, they were not aimed at radical modifications to the economic structure nor a restructuring of society. Therefore, the term "revolution" is an exaggeration of the situation.
7. Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results."
8. Karen Barkey, Sunita Parikh, "Comparative Perspectives on the State," *Annual Review of Sociology*, No. 17 (1991), pp. 525-549.
9. Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis of Current Research," P. Evans (ed.), *Bringing the State Back In* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
10. Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," pp. 187-188, 196-197.
11. The term "multi-vectored" was first applied by Kazakh President Nazarbayev (Pınar Akçalı, "Nation-State Building in Central Asia: A Lost Case?" *Perspectives in Global Development and Technology*, Vol. 2, No. 2-3, (2003), pp. 409-429.
12. Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," pp. 186.
13. *Central Asia Monitor*, No 5, (1992), p. 14.
14. O. Söylemez, K. Göz (eds.), *Salıcan Cigitov ve Dünyası* (Bishkek: Kırgızistan-Türkiye Manas Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2006), p. 229.
15. Hamdi Alkan, *Orta Asya Türk Cumhuriyetlerinde Siyasal Hayat ve Kurumlar* (Ankara: Usak Yayınları, 2011), pp. 216-217.
16. Söylemez, *Salıcan Cigitov ve Dünyası*, p. 229.
17. Alkan, *Orta Asya Türk Cumhuriyetlerinde Siyasal Hayat ve Kurumlar*, pp. 216-217.
18. Paul Kubicek, "Authoritarianism in Central Asia: Curse or Cure?," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1998), p. 33.
19. Abazov, *Historical Dictionary of Kyrgyzstan*, pp. 7-8.
20. Alkan, *Orta Asya Türk Cumhuriyetlerinde Siyasal Hayat ve Kurumlar*, p. 219.
21. Kubicek, "Authoritarianism in Central Asia: Curse or Cure?," p. 37.
22. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were evaluated by Treacher as "hard authoritarian." Adrian Treacher, "Political Evolution in Post-Soviet Central Asia," *Democratization*, Vol. 3, No. 3, (October 1996) pp. 306-327.
23. See for the role of the elite in Kyrgyzstan's mass protests: Scott Radnitz, *Weapons of the Wealthy: Predatory Regimes and Elite-Led Protests in Central Asia* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2010).
24. See for an analysis: Pınar Akçalı, "Kyrgyzstan: Back to the 'Island of Democracy,'" Anita Sengupta, Suchandana Chatterjee (eds.), *The State in Eurasia: Local and Global Arenas* (forthcoming).
25. A.O. Osmonov, *Kırgız Respublikasynyn Fizikalık Geografıyası 8*, (Bishkek: Bilim Kutu, 2006), p. 20.
26. The Kazakhs always had khans from the Chinggisid genealogy, which is one of the main differences between the Kyrgyz and the Kazakh.
27. John Anderson, *Kyrgyzstan: Central Asia's Island of Democracy* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999), p. 39.

28. Anderson, *Kyrgyzstan: Central Asia's Island of Democracy*, p. 39. The term "clan" is also used as "networks based on the rational calculations of individuals made within a collectivist cultural and institutional context, [where]... actual blood ties do not always exist." (Kathleen Collins, *Clan Politics and Regime Transition in Central Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 17) However, the use of the terms "tribe" or "clan" is misleading because these social networks are now being reproduced within clientelist relations.

29. Anderson, *Kyrgyzstan: Central Asia's Island of Democracy*, p. 41.

30. *Tsentral'naya Komissiya po Vyboram i Provedeniyu Referendumov Kyrgyzskoy Respubliki*, "Predvaritel'nye Rezul'taty," retrieved January 16, 2012, from <http://cec.shailoo.gov.kg/i-election.asp?ElectionID=100&DistrictID=1380>.

31. As of 2013, the institutionalization of the political sphere is far from being established. The political position and ideology of parties are vague, although preliminary changes have been made. Thus, it is highly possible that in time national programs of parties will consolidate and they will attain nationwide supporters.

32. Tolgonai Osmangazieva, "You Shouldn't Think Manas Epic as Some Tale," *24.kg News Agency* (June 28, 2011), retrieved April 6, 2013, from <http://eng.24.kg/community/2011/06/28/18933.html>.

33. See for an analysis about the reasons for removing the "Freedom Monument" on the very day of independence: Y. Emre Gürbüz, "Manas as a Saviour in Times of Crisis," Anita Sengupta, Suchandana Chatterjee (eds.), *The State in Eurasia: Local and Global Arenas* (Delhi: KW Publishers, 2013).

34. Actually, this was not the first time Manas was employed for the purpose of national unity. During Akayev's presidency in 1995, celebrations for the 1000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Manas were organized and the "Seven Commandments of Manas" were produced as the new principles of a unifying ideology for the peoples of Kyrgyzstan. The first principle is called "Unity and Cohesion of a Nation" and the second is "International Concord, Friendship and Cooperation." When reciting the epic, the close friendship of Manas with a person from the nation in enmity is told and also it is underlined that "he created a home for different peoples".

35. *Natsionalniy Statisticheskiy Komitet Kyrgyzskoy Respubliki*, "Kalktyn Uluttuk Kuramy: Natsionalniy Sostav Naseleniya," retrieved April 17, 2012, from <http://www.stat.kg/stat.files/tematika/демограф/Кыргызстан%20в%20цифрах/демо7.pdf>.

36. *AkiPress*, "Otunbayeva: Children of all nationalities after the primary school should have the Kyrgyz language," (June 18, 2011); *Centrasia*, "Otunbayeva: "Nikakikh drugikhgrazhdanskikh osobykh prav i kyrgyzov net" (Kyrgyz have no Other Civil Rights), (Speech at the Congress), (June 18, 2011), retrieved May 7, 2013, from <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1308388620>.

37. *RFE/RL*, "Newline Ethnic Uzbeks Push for Switch to Kyrgyz Language Schools," (July 1, 2011), retrieved May 7, 2013, from [http://www.rferl.org/content/ethnic\\_uzbeks\\_push\\_switch\\_to\\_kyrgyz\\_language\\_in\\_schools/24252883.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/ethnic_uzbeks_push_switch_to_kyrgyz_language_in_schools/24252883.html).

38. For an analysis of this problem see Y. Emre Gürbüz, "The Weakness of National Broadcasting as a Factor against Nation-Formation in Kyrgyzstan," *1<sup>st</sup> International Symposium on Media Studies*, Akdeniz University, Antalya, Turkey, 21-23 November, 2013 (forthcoming).

39. *Strategiya Ustoichibogo razvitiya Kyrgyzkoi Respubliki na period 2013-2017 gody*, (January 21, 2013).