
Specific Features And Imitation In Social Development Of Kyrgyzstan

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Abstract: In this article analyzes the socio-philosophical analysis of the social and economic development of the Kyrgyz Republic following independence and the contradictions and achievements of the national development model.

Key words: social-economic events, instability, national models, tribalism, traditions, injustice, national interests, democratic process, democratic movement, social disappointment

Collapse of the Soviet Union urged the republics in the Central Asian region to search for their own ways of development. M.B. Olcott thinks that collapse of the Soviet Union was an “unexpected event” for Central Asian republics, therefore, they were not prepared to live in conditions of independence [1; C.4.]. She also adds that the Central Asian republics “developed a unique solution of decision making with its own form”[1; C.38.]. Although the author’s opinion is based on criticism and sarcasm, it does not ignore the fact that each country is in search of its own development, and such search is facing difficult obstacles, but urges to betterrealise their causes.

In Kyrgyzstan, rise of social-democratic movement fell on late 1980’s. Lately, this movement served a basis for calling Kyrgyzstan “the isle of democracy in Central Asia”[2; C.8-10.]. In 1997, it was turned into the “Demos” youth club who discussed social-democratic issues, in 1989 – to Peoples Front social movement, in 1989 “Ashar”, “Osh Aymaty”, in 1990 – “Asaba”, “Achuuldukdemilge” (“Civil initiative), Kyrgyzstan Democratic Movement (lately turned into the Mayly Say Democratic Party), A Democratic Union was established in Jalalabad. After these movements were united – “Kyrgyzstan” democratic movement. “Memorial”, “Kyrgyzstan social-democrats” and “Oq-kema” associations also joined it. The Kyrgyzstan democratic movement started acting as a political party. On the 25 of October 1990, it organised a meeting at the Supreme Council of Kyrgyzstan and demanded retiring of A. Masaliev, First Secretary of the Communist Party of the country. The Supreme Council took a resolution to establish the institution of Presidency in the country and arranged presidential elections. The President of the Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic A.A. Akaev won the elections. Some researchers called it as “support of young democracy” [3; C.31]. Thus Kyrgyzstan stepped into democratic development. The day of the 8th of September 1990

was declared the Independence day and on the 5th of May 1993, the Constitution of the young independent state was adopted. It declares that the strategic purpose of Kyrgyzstan is to build a democratic civil society loyal to human right and freedoms [4; C.2.].

The Democratic Movement (Party) of “Kyrgyzstan”, “Asaba” National Renaissance Party, Kyrgyzstan Social-Democratic Party, “Khalq Birligi” Democratic Movement moved forward their demands for multi-party system, division of the power into legislative, executive and court powers, building of state management on the basis of democratic values, building a society that puts human and his/her interests as priority, and that supports different private ownership forms and free thinking and pluralism of cultures. The fact that the state power was still in hands of retro graphs, especially that they were illegally getting rich, urged the “Khalq birligi” democratic party to address to the nation to show the threat to independence, democracy from all sides: “We urge everybody, who values the independent state of Kyrgyzstan and the future of all people who live in the country, and who support the democratic changes, who realise that it is their purpose to build a society in accordance with democratic bases and interests of the nation, irrespective of their political views, religious beliefs, world vision, all those with sound thinking to gather around the President of the country Askar Akaevich Akaev, to support him in implementation of the reforms in social-economic and political life of the country” [5.]. In reality, this meant that the struggle for power was still ongoing and implementation of democratic reforms had to face many obstacles. Having realized this, President A.A. Akaev set up a Consultative Social-Political Council – advisory body at the President of the country. Indeed, at initial stages, this Consultative body proposed a number of recommendations, discussing the issues related with country’s life and conveyed them to the president, but what happened to it lately remains unknown. It is indubitable that President read the decisions and recommendations of the Council, but there is no reliable information as to how they were implemented in social-political life. Possibly, there had been certain discrepancies between the “Kyrgyzstan” Democratic Party and the President. Then the struggle for power among the democratic forces obtained a new form. By 1993, the “Kyrgyzstan” Democratic Movement (party) was fragmented into the “Erkin Kyrgyzstan” (Erk), “Asaba” and “Ata-Makon” parties. In May 1993, some activists of the “Kyrgyzstan” Democratic Movement re-established the party in its old name. In Kyrgyzstan, 18 political parties were founded in the period of 1991-1998 [3; C.46.]. Political analysts divide them into parties that support independence and state policy, are loyal and those who are in opposition [6; C.58.].

Western researchers and political analysts like the political pluralism and competition between political parties, therefore they are of the opinion that in Central Asian region Kyrgyzstan implemented democratic reforms that can be an example to other republics of the region. According to M.B. Olcott, until mid-1900’s, Kyrgyzstan tried to build a democratic state in parallel with the processes in Romania, Bulgaria and

Slovakia in Central Europe. However, later under pressure from some neighbouring countries, including his own family, President Akaev lost interest in democratic reforms and his activities resembled more to the activities of the leaders in other Central Asian countries [1; C.168.].

During A.A. Akaev, Kyrgyzstan adopted its Constitution, the number of political parties rose (they were mainly established from lower levels – at the initiatives of ordinary people), and a two chamber parliament was established, it became traditional to run open, democratic elections, mass media was given full freedom, friendly relations were established with neighbouring countries, inter-ethnic (47% of the population of the country are non-Kyrgyz nationality people) peaceful coexistence was achieved, important laws on state management, on complex bases of progress and the state strategy for reduction of poverty were adopted, social institutions were founded to control Internet and public bodies activities, and basics of civil society were created. Did the society give an objective assessment to these social, political and economic reforms? Unfortunately, no. This was primarily caused by A.A. Akaev and his family. A.A. Akaev, who received too much foreign aid, especially from the USA (up to 130% of GDP), for democratic reforms in Central Asia, promised to bring Kyrgyzstan to civilisation in Central Asia, but he did not forget his own personal interests either. The worsening life and living standards of population made the Paris Donors Club restructure Kyrgyzstan's debt, i.e., they wrote off 124 million dollars and agreed to get the remaining 431 million dollars back later [7.]. But the debt obtained did not improve the condition of population, the funds were lost without a trace among the authorities, heads of financial institutions. According to World Bank information, in 2003-2005 the poverty index in Bishkek oblast reached 41%, Jalalabad 55%, Osh 56%, Talas 67%, Issyk-Kul 7%. The opposition, who had not forgotten their political purposes, joined the disapproval of the nation and made A.A. Akaev retire from his office.

The social-political situation and life standards of population did not improve during the second president of Kyrgyzstan – K. Bakiev (2005-2010). In public management, K. Bakiev used methods of application of force, taking revenge from opposition and liquidation, killing of those, who he did not like. He appointed his family members, close friends to high-level government positions. The opposition, whose purpose was to participate in social-political life, started criticising management methods of K. Bakiev, disclosing the illegal acts of his family members, his close friends. “Medieval tyranny methods” of Kurmanbek Salievich Bakiev caused disagreement of population. In April 2010, the people's movement, initiated in Jalalabad, spread to the entire country, the opposition attempted to remove Bakiev from his position. In response, on accusations of “illegal, anti-Constitutional uprising” K.S. Bakiev arrested the opposition leaders, and tried to stop the people's movement at threat of using weapons. As a result, over a thousand and five hundred people were wounded by shooting, 90 people were killed, 266 policemen were injured. K.S. Bakiev and his

family fled from the country, but on 11-16 June 2010, his supporters managed to raise ethnic conflicts in Osh and Jalalabad. As a result, over 300 people were killed. Almost 70% of Osh city was damaged. Many buildings and houses were ruined in Jalalabad. Kyrgyzstan was on the edge of disappearing as a state [9; C.130 – 132.].

Today, professional analysts see democracy as the cause of the social-political progress of Kyrgyzstan. “Tribal democracy was the saviour of nomad Kyrgyz people. The democratism in thinking and way of life of Kyrgyz people made it easier for accepting democratic values after decay of the USSR” [9; C.145.]. A.A. Akaev’s management, initially imitated Western democracy, the crises, conflicts, which occurred one after another later, the struggle for power without taking into account the interests of people, historic-political experiences and cultural traditions demonstrated impossibility of ensuring national development.

The unofficial political institutions and relations that originate from tribal traditions, take an important position in Kyrgyz social-political life. Already in the Soviet era, though there were no open conflicts between the “north” and the “south”, Bishkek, Issiq-Kul, Chuy, Talas, Osh and Jalalabad oblasts, each of these tried to bring their representatives to the state government. The first secretary of the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan A. Masaliev was from the “south”. The decay of the Communist system was convenient to the “southerners” and this ensured A.A. Akaev stepping in as the President. The modern life style, intention to think and live democratically seemed to the people as a force that could stand against the communist system that had lost trust of people. But the tribalism traditions that had spread long roots in Kyrgyzstan could not help taking their demonstration in the high-level government, and generally in entire social-political life of the country. The fact that A.A. Akaev was a “northerner” ensured taking strong tribal representatives positions not only in central government, but also in local government offices. On those days, this tradition was even confirmed officially [10.]. Building of the state government on tribalism unofficial institutions and relations also led to other forces with intentions to get rich, and the positions, and thus protect their own interests.

Local governors’ offices were still held by communists, and they would not support A.A. Akaev in his reforms. They won the 1998 local government elections. This resulted in the higher power being held by the “northerners,” while “southerner” communists held local government. The analysts of the situation drew a conclusion that “Akaev created a monster that he himself could not do anything with” [11; C.407.]. Priority position of political institutions and relations based on unofficial tribalism in state management is not a positive situation, it does not lead to accretion of political management. This is confirmed by the social-political processes that had been created in Kyrgyzstan for the past periods. However, Kyrgyzstan cannot deny its tribalism traditions, therefore, it requires giving them political significance in reasonable use of such by directing the positive aspects of tribalism to democratic changes. This primarily

required developing a development strategy of Kyrgyzstan regions on the basis of “unified economic unit” [12; C.155.].

Economic progress of Kyrgyzstan does not have clear orientation and principles like social-political development. During early years of independence, imitation to the West, especially to the reforms in Russia, dominated. With this, Kyrgyzstan tried to demonstrate that it had intentions to tend to the Western liberal model. For instance, Kyrgyzstan was the first in Central Asia to start privatisation of stage property and lands. In 1991-1992, Kyrgyzstan saw distributing of lands to individuals, sales of enterprises/companies to those officials, who were associated with the government at very cheap prices against vouchers. It soon proved that sale of collective farm lands that had been ensuring supplies of the needs of the population in Kyrgyzstan, and sometimes highly profitable lands, had not been the right thing. Almost half a year later the collective farms had to be re-established, which also liquidated the new farmer entities, which nearly started being commercially viable [13; C.162.].

Sales of state owned enterprises/companies did not lead to economic growth either, on the contrary, it aggravated the fight for property. For instance, when it became known that the government had its hands on gold mining rights of Canadian Cameco, trust to the government fell rapidly [14.]. Today, the Kyrgyz-American Joint venture “Vostok” (Sharq) used funds of the state company (“Kyrgyzgasmunayzat”, “Oshgazmunayzat” and others) to build an oil processing plant, it takes the proceeds from sales of the oil, imported from Russia, they found false companies and turn them into bankruptcy. At discussions at Jokorku Kenesh (parliament) of privatisation of national companies, it turned out that the strategically important and highly commercially profitable companies like “Kyrgyztelecom”, JSC “Kyrgyzenergo”, NA “Kyrgyz Aba Yullari”, Issiq-Kul Holiday Hotels (average price at 1 bln US dollars) had been sold at dozens, even hundreds times less than their nominal prices [13; C.162.]. Many other examples can be shown here.

The plan of privatisation of small and medium size companies ended by 2000. During A.A. Akaev’s Presidency, 70.7% of total number of state companies had been privatised, and over 60% of Kyrgyz population work there and produce 85% of gross national product and as high as 93% in agriculture [15; P. 13 and 16; P. 20-21.].

By 2000, the government plan of developing the agriculture and forming a private sector in it was completed only verbally. If we take the 0.28 hectare per capita of cultivated land, we see that the land area is not that vast. Support of farmer units together with reinstatement of collective and soviet farms created a specific synthesis. Free sale of grown products reanimated the trade markets, the feeling of interest rose at collective farms. But the agriculture could not become a profitable field because the equipment and technologies used in agriculture did not meet the requirements at all.

Kyrgyzstan’s agriculture is not short of water like in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, or Turkmenistan. Back in the Soviet era, it took the third position for its water resources.

But selling agricultural products abroad was prohibited and foreigners cannot rent the land. It has its reason – there is no too much arable land in the country. Although agriculture needs foreign investments, there is no a clear programme or regulation for it yet. Existing laws stipulate the interests of local farmers only. In addition, state ownership to land is preserved.

The economic situation in 1991-1995 was very sensitive. Gross Domestic Product dropped to 38% and industrial production dropped to 68% [17; C.47.]. Only in 1996, the country's economy started stabilisation and growth. For instance, in 1992 the gross domestic product dropped by 13.9% and 1994 – by 20.1%, by 1996 it grew by 7.1% and in 1997 – +9.9%. And by 2000 – +5.0%, in 2005 – -0.2%, in 2009 – +2.3%, in 2015 – +3.1%. [17; C. 49 Ba 18; C. 6-8.].

In addition, in 1997 according to the company development scheme-plans of large property owners, large monopoly companies were denationalised. In 2006-2007 (stage four of economic reforms), large companies in telecommunications, electrical energy, mining industry, aviation services (Kyrgyzgas, Kyrgyz temirjolu) were privatised. Thus, Kyrgyzstan fully complied with the requirements of International Monetary Fund. In reality, this shows that Kyrgyzstan tried to implement the Western liberal economic model.

The Kyrgyz government pays a special attention to develop economic and trade relations with foreign and neighbouring countries. For this purpose, the country became member of the World Trade Organisation (1998) and the Customs Union (2012). This resulted in creation of free trade zones like “Norin (Norin oblast), “QoraKul” (Issiq-Kul oblast), “Maymak” (Talas oblast, “Bishkek” (Bishkek city). The “Norin” free trade zone was established in 1991 to be the first international trade complex in Central Asia. Today, the “Bishkek” open trade zone is a place that meets world standards. Over 600 companies from 30 countries participated in creation of this zone and it is the only open trade zone without state support. In addition, “Botken” (Batken oblast), “Jalolobod” (Jalalabad oblast), “Baliqchi” (Issiq-Kul oblast, “Osh” (Osh oblast) and “Burona” (Chuy oblast) free economic zones were commissioned. The main organisers and commodity suppliers to these zones are businesspersons from Russia, China, Germany, and Turkey [19; C. 273.].

Although the country's economic growth has been positive since 1996, the economic life in Kyrgyzstan until 2000 was “absolutely negative.” By 1998, foreign debt of the country was 897.7 million US dollars (65.8% of GDP), 50% of population was poor [19; c. 274.]. While today, gold mining sector share in industrial production makes almost 40%.

After the 2010 social-political crisis, required laws and Presidential orders were adopted for ensuring stability in economic life, business environment, support of small business, and making state management transparent. President of the Republic S.Zheenbekov elected in 2017, first of all, considers it necessary to create tried and

tested mechanisms for ending the illegal power struggle in the socio-political sphere, freeing state institutions from the negative phenomenon of using kinship ties, searching for a common language with disgruntled “southerners”, eradicating poverty population, solving territorial problems, examining the causes of ethnic conflicts, entering into broad integration with neighboring states, evidence of dedication to clause about eternal friendship.

Imitation to the Western liberal democracy resulted in complicated situations similarly to what happened in Russia. Radical democratisation of economy, liberation of prices, privatisation of companies within a short period, spread of tribalism in state management, neglecting far away regions, especially to the southern regions would not have gone without trace. State management cannot stand vacuum, indifference, calmness, and injustice. Ignoring people’s interests, giving preference to personal interests over national interests indubitably causes disagreements. Therefore, radical change of state management that has lost nation’s trust, turning the state into institutions that serve the nation should correspond to national development features. It is difficult to ensure social development without identifying these features.

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