

REVOLUTION IN KYRGYZSTAN

ON THE POLITICAL BEHAVIOR OF
THE KYRGYZ PEOPLE TODAY

Baktykan TOROGELDIEVA

*Ph.D. (Hist.),
Associate Professor at the Chair of Sociopolitical Sciences,
Academy of Management under
the President of the Kyrgyz Republic
(Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)*

Introduction

An analysis of the political events that began in Kyrgyzstan on 6 April, 2010 makes it possible to conclude that the influence of the existing political power system has aroused a distinctive response. This is explained by the rise in the population's level of socialization. This article makes an attempt to find a rational explanation for the events that occurred from the perspective of the level of political culture of the Kyrgyz nation, which, being a mobile structure, takes shape during mutual interaction between political consciousness and behavior.

The behavioral element in the political culture structure presumes the deliberate participation of citizens in all forms of political activity (legitimate and illegitimate).

Legitimate forms of political activity include the following: discussion of the drafts of

state and party documents, referendums, and elections; participation in the work of various state and sociopolitical structures and organizations and other forms of sociopolitical activity (membership in political parties, sociopolitical organizations and movements).

Illegitimate forms of political activity include: participation in unsanctioned meetings and pickets; seizure and sabotage of various institutions, and so on.

Igor Orlov notes that political behavior, as well as power relations (supremacy, conflict, or consent), is determined by such factors as the general situation in the country, the alignment of political forces, the personal interests of a political figure, and so on.

Not only their personal views and convictions, political sympathies and antipathies, but

also, frequently, subconscious stereotypes and habits developed under the influence of the surrounding social environment and passed on from generation to generation have a direct effect on the political behavior of citizens. Mass psychoses are a significant factor of political behavior (particularly in extreme circumstances).¹

¹ See: I.B. Orlov, *Politicheskaja kultura Rossii XX veka*, Moscow, 2008, p. 23.

Political behavior is defined by three parameters:

- level of awareness of political actions;
- types of political participation (protest, passive, and active);
- forms of political behavior (legitimate and illegitimate).

The political behavior of the Kyrgyz people today will be examined in terms of these parameters.

Electoral Behavior

At the beginning of Kyrgyzstan's sovereign existence, destruction of the previously existing social structures led to the appearance of new group unions. The previous class division of society into blue-collar workers, peasants, and white-collar workers lost its meaning. Affiliation with a particular Kyrgyz clan or tribe and patron-client relations took the upper hand. Institutions of social clan identification began to meet the need for a new political culture.

The sociopolitical transformations that began in sovereign Kyrgyzstan indicated the nation's desire to uphold ethnic traditions and customs in all spheres of social life, beginning with politics and ending with family holidays.

According to well-known political scientist Vladimir Khanin,² after seizing the levers of official power in the aftermath of the August coup of "liberals," Akaev and his group took steps that showed they understood the role of the traditional-political culture, social reality, and rules of the political game existing in Kyrgyz society.

Recognition of these rules was an integral part of the official legalization that began of traditional political standards, relations, and institutions, which have always been legitimate at the level of real Kyrgyz policy.

In our opinion, the addresses of the ex-president of the Kyrgyz Republic (KR) at the World Kyrgyz Kurultais show that he recognized the traditional political standards of the Kyrgyz people.

Talking at the 1st Kurultai (28 August, 1992), in which Kyrgyz from two dozen foreign countries participated, he said in his speech: "Dear fellow tribesmen, sons and daughters of the Kyrgyz people..."³

At the 2nd Kurultai (end of August 2003), Akaev welcomed the participants with the words: "I cordially welcome and bow my head before this magnificent gathering of the best and most worthy representatives of the Kyrgyz clans who have come together here from all the corners of the earth, from twenty-two countries of the world where, as fate and history will have it, Kyrgyz now live..."⁴

These addresses emphasize the president's admission of the informal rules of Kyrgyz policy and show the clan self-identification of the ex-president and the entire nation, which is represented by different clans and tribes.

² See: V. Khanin, "Kyrgyzstan: Ethnic Pluralism and Political Conflicts," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3, 2000, pp. 125-126.

³ "Let our multinational state thrive, let the spirit of our ancestors headed by Manas support us," *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 2 September, 1992.

⁴ Archive of the President of the KR. Documents of the Department of Social Policy, 2003, 48/190, sheet 12.

The highest leadership declares political tribalism as the traditional political standard; it is officially emphasized that clan-tribal self-identification is a reality.

Manifestations of clan-tribal social self-identification of the Kyrgyz people can be seen in the formation of political and economic institutions of the sovereign republic; division of the population into regions, tribes, and clans began in the country. This led to the formation of political parties according to regional characteristics (the representatives of other regions were ousted from the power structures).

Zhumagul Saadanbekov notes that in the post-Soviet Central Asian republics, principles of localism (particularly tribalism) have their own special features. It is well known that communist policy and ideology were irreconcilable both with ethnocentrism and with manifestations of tribalism, which yielded certain results: thanks to the seventy years of Soviet totalitarianism, which put everyone through the same mangle, these principles of social organizations are of a residual rather than dominant nature. Kyrgyzstan, however, acquired state independence before national consolidation of the indigenous people was fully complete. The local groups of these people retain their regional self-consciousness and elements of the tribal culture.⁵

It is well known that regional self-consciousness (self-identification of the population with a particular territorial community and drawing a line between oneself and other territorial communities, including within the framework of a particular ethnic group) is also characteristic of a whole series of long consolidated nations. In the event of poor national consolidation, inter-tribal enmity could well put down roots at the sub-ethnic level.

In post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, clan ties also acquired an economic underpinning during land privatization. In essentially all rural areas, land plots (*ulush*) were distributed according to clan characteristics after disbandment of collective farms, that is, the members of one clan or tribe acquired their land plots next to each other; this principle developed as early as the 1920s-1930s when nomadic Kyrgyz began to settle in one place and collective farms were established.

For millennia, *belonging to a clan was the main social value*, and so people only settled close to their fellow tribesmen; in traditional society, the Kyrgyz could not imagine themselves outside of their own clan.

In addition to common genealogy (*sanzhyra*), the existence of a kind of common fund for representatives of a particular tribe, to which the unofficial leaders of the clan (*koshumcha*) made regular contributions, became an effective cohesive element of traditional tribalism (*uruuchuluka*) in sovereign Kyrgyzstan.

Unofficial meetings of fellow clansmen during traditional holidays and specially organized gatherings (*sherine*) became regular features of daily life. This was where problems relating to a particular clan participating in government and the distribution of resources were discussed and tactics and a strategy of further action were drawn up. The unofficial clan leaders belonged to the newly created political elite of the Kyrgyz people.

Since Kyrgyzstan was not ready for independent governance based on democratic principles of state-building, principles of patron-client relations came into being and were supported by the state political elite.

Until 1293, the Enisei Kyrgyz had their own form of statehood; after they lost it, for millennia, the main political actor in the state structures that the Kyrgyz belonged to were tribes or clans which had their own demands and performed specific duties (some were conscripted and participated in wars, others paid tribute, still others ransomed themselves).

When Soviet power first emerged (beyond the clan structure of the Kyrgyz people), it was demanded that ethnocultural uniqueness be preserved and an independent form of statehood created. It goes without saying that the Soviet regime rejected these demands.

⁵ See: Zh. Saadanbekov, *Avtoritarizm i demokratiia na Vostoke*, Astana, 2003, p. 286.

However, the Kyrgyz staunchly retained elements of clan sociopolitical identification even within the Soviet state, which, in our opinion, also helped to politicize the nation's social clan self-identity in sovereign Kyrgyzstan.

Today, Kyrgyz clans are a kind of regional unions, the activity of the leaders of which is subordinated to their own interests; affiliation with clan or tribal unions is a political reference point in the struggle for power. Having a representative in the clan who occupies a high post in the state power structures reinforces the position of the entire clan.

This system of relations definitely includes the principle of nepotism; government representatives choose their close entourage from among relatives or kinsmen, thus providing them with a job and protection. In this way, patron-client relations are penetrating Kyrgyz society from top to bottom. These relations ensure an effective bond between the elites and the masses and are an integral part of the existing mechanism for obtaining and distributing public resources.

In practice, the principle of clan-tribal and ethnic solidarity on which these social relations are based does not demand that the social grassroots fight against their ethnic bosses, but, on the contrary, encourages maximum support of their tribal elite in its fight against the leaders of other tribes.⁶

Division into clans and affiliation with families (which frequently number up to several thousand people) has acquired a new significance for people, becoming a factor of informal social guarantees. Having high-ranking officials among the members of a clan (or family) has only promoted an even more virulent hierarchy in and mobilization of such a family union.

It does not take much effort for a clan to quickly organize an uprising of several thousand people (in the event one of its members finds himself in trouble). Signs of clan-family relations (if a member of a clan gets married, his new relatives automatically become members of the family, and so on) are very clearly manifested in rural areas, while they are not as prevalent among Kyrgyz living in the capital and the Chu Valley (which is an industrial, educated, and "Russian" part of Kyrgyzstan).

But as a result of internal migration, new micro regions (areas of compact residence) have sprung up in the suburbs of Bishkek, the population of which represents the electorate of various regions of the country. Certain groups of the population are ready to support their fellow tribesmen who are elected as deputies or who occupy a government post.

The first alternative elections (at all levels), which demonstrated clan self-identification of the Kyrgyz people (elections to the Supreme Council in 1990, to the Zhogorku Kenesh in 1995, and to regional, district, and rural administrative structures), gave a graphic example of how this mechanism operates. Introduction of a single-mandate election system has made it possible for each tribe or clan to nominate only its own deputies; elections have been accompanied by tough competition among tribes and clans.

During elections in the mono-national regions of the republic (the Naryn and Talas regions, and in certain districts of the Osh and Issyk Kul regions), the authorized representatives of candidates for deputy, the mass media, and the electorate placed the emphasis on where a candidate was from and to which tribe he belonged. In this respect, traditional expressions were often heard: "*Bizdin zherdin kulunu*" (literally, "a foal from our district"), "*Ozubuzdun bala*" ("our man"), "*Al bizdin uruudan*" ("he's from our tribe"), and so on.

In order to be nominated for people's deputy in sovereign Kyrgyzstan, state and public figures living and working in the capital, as well as representatives of the creative intelligentsia, had to discover their own clan-tribal roots. The business, intellectual, professional, organizational, and moral qualities of a contender were not than important. As before in traditional society, candidates for deputy arranged feasts for relatives and organized gifts at different levels; the entire clan shouldered the cost.

⁶ See: V. Khanin, op. cit., pp. 126-127.

Both in rural areas, and in district centers, people began to ask who was who and who came from which clan, who was a newcomer and who was a native, whose ancestors occupied a particular *jayloo* (natural boundary) or water spring, and so on.

In 1990, as a result of the alternative elections, only locals became chairmen of all the district councils (at that time there were five of them); the same picture was also characteristic of the elections of chairmen of district councils and the heads of collective and state-run farms.

Often, each large tribal subdivision nominated their candidate for deputy, and there was a tough competitive struggle for power among the clans.

Clan self-identification of candidates for deputy was strictly preserved at all levels; kinsmen were an extremely reliable electorate, laying great store by their elected representative in terms of finding a job, being granted a loan, etc.

According to Osmonakun Ibraimov (former vice premier minister for social policy of the KR), "...all these elections to parliament and local self-government structures, and the first years of democracy as a whole, did more to disunite than unite us and whipped up regionalism; everyone suddenly began talking about sanzhyra, clans, and tribes."⁷

The alternative presidential election in 1995 was a graphic manifestation of clannishness and regionalism in the political culture of the Kyrgyz people. Administrative resources, which were used by the country's leaders (including the media) to support the ex-president, did not yield the anticipated results; in the Osh region (Akaev's homeland), he received 51% of the votes and in Jalal-Abad 61.3%, while in the Chu region 87.2% of the electorate voted for him, in Issyk Kul 92.2%, and in Naryn 97%.

In the Osh region, 46.5% of the electorate voted for Absamat Masaliev, a native from a southern region, in Jalal-Abad 64.4%, while in the Chu region he received only 7.3% of the votes, in Issyk Kul 4.3%, and in Talas 2%.⁸

The elections revealed the Kyrgyz' prevalent clan-tribal self-identification, that is, tribal interests were placed higher than national.

It should be emphasized that a significant role in this process was played by sociopolitical, cultural, and scientific figures from the regions. When assessing the results of the 1995 presidential election, S. Mamytov wrote that regionalism was fed primarily by the ambitions and strivings of individual representatives of the political stratum of two regions. The political elite of the southern region actively claims that law, the economy, and culture of the south are infringed upon, so priority should go to the south.⁹

For fifteen years there was not a single case in the republic of a national deputy of the Zhogorku Kenesh from the south of the country being elected in the north of Kyrgyzstan, or vice versa (not one native of the north could become a national deputy in the south); at the same time, the population of the multiethnic districts consolidated in order to promote their Kyrgyz candidate as a national deputy.

Protest Demonstrations

It can be said that the first open protest demonstrations by the people in sovereign Kyrgyzstan began after the tragic events of 17-19 March, 2002 in the Aksy district of the Jalal-Abad region.

⁷ *Erkin Too*, 26 August, 1996.

⁸ See: Asaba, 27 September, 1996.

⁹ See: S. Mamytov, "Paralich kyrgyzskoi demokratii na iuge," *Respublika*, 27 September, 1996.

They were prompted by the arrest on 5 January, 2002 of opposition parliamentary deputy A. Beknazarov.

According to the members of an independent public commission created to analyze the reasons for this tragedy, the crisis situation began emerging in the spring of 2001. At that time, Zhogorku Kenesh deputy A. Beknazarov started to fight for Kyrgyzstan's territorial integrity, coming forward with severe criticism of the government's decision to transfer vast areas of Kyrgyz territory to China, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. There was a call for impeachment of the president.¹⁰

A. Beknazarov's fellow tribesmen and kinsmen began organizing pickets in his support and participating in hunger strikes (380 people, including 2 parliament deputies). Despite the acts of protest, Beknazarov went on trial. On 14 March, Beknazarov's supporters in the Aksy district closed off several roads joining the villages of Kerben, Zhangy-Zhol, Kara-Suu, and Sary-Chelek with boulders. The situation continued to gain momentum and, on 17 March, the security and defense structures opened fire on the residents of the village of Kyzyl-Tuu who had set off on foot to the village of Kerben (the center of the Aksy district). After this, the residents of the region set fire at night to the building of the district police department in the village of Kerben and threw stones at the district administration. According to official data, during the disorder, five people were killed and 80 injured. President Akaev accused the opposition of organizing the disturbances.

After the Aksy events, meetings began in Bishkek under slogans of "Akaev resign," "*Aksylyktarga akyykat kerek*" ("the people of Aksy need justice"), "*Deputattar zherdi satpagyla*" ("Deputies, don't sell our land,") "*Akaev ak yudon ket*" ("Akaev, get out of the White House"), "Kulov, you are right," "*Eldi atkandarga olum*" ("Death to those who fired on the people"), "*Kyrgyz zheri satylbasyn*" ("Kyrgyz land should not be sold"), and "Freedom for Kulov."¹¹

These were the first political acts against Akaev's government. On 17 May, 2002, members of the Ata Meken party in the Bazarkurgan district and residents of the Akman village (approximately 250 people) took up positions along the Osh-Bishkek highway armed with banners bearing the following slogans: "*Elektroenergiasy kymbatylbasyn*" ("Stop the rising cost of electricity"), "*Aksy okuiasyna tura baa berilsin*" ("The people of Aksy need justice"), "*Sot biylygin El shaylasyn*" ("Judicial power should be elected by the people"), "*Karylarga kamkorduk, zhashtarga ish*" ("Concern for the elderly, jobs for the youth"). At the meeting, the following questions were asked: "Why were the picketers in Bishkek arrested?" and "Why is the government commission on the Aksy events not reporting on its findings and not punishing the guilty?" and so on.¹²

The Aksy tragedy was a watershed in the political life of sovereign Kyrgyzstan. Those who fired on peaceful citizens were not punished, and this aggravated the sociopolitical situation even more.

At the same time, the Aksy events gave the people an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of sovereign power; the absence (for a millennium) of independent statehood helped to form an attitude toward the government as something alien. Using arms against their own Kyrgyz people who came out for a peaceful demonstration was a kind of revelation. The authorities proved capable of using violence.

It was precisely the Aksy events that prompted the situation that led to the March events of 2005 and the fall of Askar Akaev's regime.

The Aksy events of 2002 were a kind of bloody Sunday (as the events on 9 January, 1905 that heralded in the Russian Revolution were called). The image of the country's president (who was consid-

¹⁰ See: Z. Galieva, *Politicheskaiia transformatsiia suverennogo Kyrgyzstana: dinamika i osobennosti*, Bishkek, 2007, p. 237.

¹¹ *Tekushchie dela*, Archive of the President of the KR, 2002, rec. gr. 1, f. 04-4, Vol. 9.

¹² *Perepiska po osnovnym voprosam*, Archive of the President of the KR, 1996, f. 03-2, p. 139.

ered an *azho*, czar) as a symbol of national protection was shattered in the minds of the Kyrgyz after the shooting of peaceful demonstrators.

The Aksy events, which gave rise to an extremely acute political crisis in Kyrgyzstan, coincided with the end of Askar Akaev's third presidential term. According to the current constitution, he could not run for another term. Therefore, at a referendum held on 2 February, 2003, in addition to raising the question of impeachment again, a new text of the Kyrgyzstan Constitution was presented, and a decision was made to hold elections according to a new system. Instead of former mixed election system (majoritarian-proportional), only the majoritarian was left, which gave the parties the right to nominate their representatives to parliament. This kind of election system made it possible to use the administrative resource and achieve a controllable parliament; according to Z. Kurmanov, it made it possible to "preserve the current archaic political system dominated by regional groups and clans, rather than political parties."¹³

At that time, the opposition forces in Kyrgyzstan were mobilized; two political blocs were created—a radical ("For the Power of the People") and a more moderate ("The National Congress"). In the spring of 2004, the Civil Union for Honest and Fair Elections was formed from the members of these blocs, which included a large number of high-ranking "retirees."

The joining of five opposition blocs into a single Forum of Political Forces testified to the ability of politicians dissatisfied with Akaev to join forces. The opposition acquired a real opportunity to occupy seats in the new parliament.

In the context of the intensified economic crisis in the country, the ex-president said that by March 2005 Kyrgyzstan had become a stable state that was resolutely striding toward democracy. But this stability was only skin-deep and did not have any fundamental bearings in society.

The desire to enforce domination of the ruling political group in parliament at all costs led to two of the ex-president's children (his son Aidar and daughter Bermet), as well as relatives of his wife Mairam Akaeva (son of the country's prime minister Nikolai Tanaev, and others), being nominated for deputies of the Zhogorku Kenesh (at the parliamentary elections in February 2005).

Moreover, despite the support of the electorate, the group of opposition candidates for deputy to the Zhogorku Kenesh (Kurmanbek Bakiev, Adakhan Madumarov, Ishenbai Kadyrbekov, and others) could not participate in the elections due to active resistance by the local authorities. The local administrations interfered in the work of the election commissions, the provisions of the Election Code were violated, and there was open bribery of the electorate and members of the constituency election commissions. This situation promoted an increase in the population's protest activity in all regions of the republic.

Mass protest meetings were held in all regions of the country: in the Nookan district of the Jalal-Abad region, in the Kochkor and Naryn districts of the Naryn region, and in the Ton, Tiup, and Jety-Oguz districts of the Issyk Kul region. The demonstrations in the town of Karakol¹⁴ were accompanied by blocking off the strategic highways that link it with Bishkek.

Z. Galieva notes that, in essence, this meant that the people, awakening from their apathy, were standing up to protect their interests, whereby not political, but rather clan-kinship and parochial preferences.¹⁵

The demonstration of the people in the town of Jalal-Abad, who wanted the elections to be cancelled, was the most organized. It ended in seizure of the district governor's building, establishing

¹³ See: Z. Kurmanov, "Evolution in the Party Structure in Kyrgyzstan," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 5 (29), 2004, p. 13.

¹⁴ See: *Analitika. Obshchestvenny reiting*, 8 March, 2005.

¹⁵ See: Z. Galieva, op. cit., p. 276.

governance by the people, and election of a National Council. A new power structure was formed and a governor was appointed.

On 4 March, a National Kurultai was held there under the supervision of leader of the National Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan Kurmanbek Bakiev, and the following main radical revolutionary demands were put forward:

- (1) resignation of the current Kyrgyz president;
- (2) holding of an early presidential election;
- (3) cancellation of the results of the first round of elections to the Zhogorku Kenesh;
- (4) holding of a special session of the Zhogorku Kenesh of the previous convocation to resolve all of these problems.

On 5 March, the residents of the Suzak, Bazarorgan, and Nookan districts joined the Jalal-Abad demonstrators. Dozens of people from the Uzgen and Karakuljin districts of the Osh region came to Jalal-Abad. Journalists from Azattyk radio claimed that there were “about three thousand demonstrators” on the square in front of the administration building.¹⁶

During March 2005, demonstrations and seizures of administration buildings were carried out in Uzgen, Osh, Talas, Toktogul, Issyk Kul, and other cities. But at first the demands of the demonstrators in these cities only concerned cancellation of the district election results and nomination of their own candidate for deputy to the Zhogorku Kenesh.

Not until after the events in Jalal-Abad began did the slogans of the demonstrators in other cities reach the same level of radicalism. These protest demonstrations were largely aroused by the fact that a large part of the population did not agree with the results of the previous parliamentary elections (of deputies to the Zhogorku Kenesh).

Before the voting in the second round of the parliamentary elections began, which was held on 13 March, 2005, protest demonstrations were seen in the Chu (Ysyk-Atinsk district) and Talas regions, as well as in Bishkek.¹⁷ The participants in the protest demonstrations were administratively punished.

After the parliamentary elections, the crisis situation led to loss of the government’s legitimacy in the south of Kyrgyzstan, where the people began creating “their own alternative national structures.”

On 15 March, 2005, the national kurultai in Jalal-Abad (700 delegates) announced the creation of a regional Coordinating Council of National Unity and elected Zhusup Zheenbekov as national governor of the Jalal-Abad region.

The kurultai made a decision to hold Osh and Talas regional kurultais in order to create similar regional structures of the national keneshes and to form a national squad (“*El koshunu*”) to prevent the use of coercive measures on the part of the former power structures.¹⁸

Things began to gain momentum after 18 March when the demonstrators seized the district administration building in Osh. The protest demonstrations became more intense after the Special Police Forces used force against women and children.

On 20 March, the authorities carried out another Special Police Forces operation to liberate and regain control over the administrative buildings in Osh and Jalal-Abad, but these measures were only crowned with temporary success.

¹⁶ See: [<http://www.asattyk.org/news/domestic/ru/2005/03>].

¹⁷ See: Iu. Gruzdov, “Pereshli k karatelnyim aktsiiam: Khroniki narodnogo protesta,” *MSN* (Moia stolitsa-novosti), 15 March, 2005.

¹⁸ See: Z. Osorov, “Sozdan oblastnoi eldik kenesh,” *MSN*, 16 March, 2005.

Soon thereafter, city residents armed with sticks and stones began to stream out onto the central square in Jalal-Abad. The military began firing into the air using blank cartridges, but this did not stop the masses from storming the building of the regional administration, as well as of the regional and city departments of internal affairs. People were injured during the clashes on both sides, some of the policemen went over onto the insurgents' side, and many of them ran off. The Osh airport was also seized, tires were set on fire on the runway and several truck-loads of rubble were emptied out on the pavement to prevent additional forces from being transferred there.¹⁹

On 21 March, a national kurultai was also held in Osh. Around 17,000 people gathered on the square, Georgian deputies spoke to them, as well as R. Otunbaeva, A. Madumarov, and Kurmanbek Bakiev. Elections began of alternative government representatives; D. Chotonov and A. Artykov were nominated as national governor; the latter won the post.²⁰

The leaders of the law-enforcement structures in Osh and Jalal-Abad went over to the side of the alternative government. This essentially meant that parallel "national" administrations had been formed in two of the large southern cities, representing a direct threat to the existing regime.

Soon self-declared councils of people's power were created in certain districts of the Talas and Naryn regions. On 20 March, in an interview with the Russian newspaper *Izvestia*, a leader of the opposition, Roza Otunbaeva, said that a provisional people's administration controlled six of the seven districts of the Osh region, five of the eight districts of the Jalal-Abad region, as well as three of the four districts of the Talas region, and one of the five districts of the Naryn region. Things were moving toward control being established over half of the republic. The next target, of course, was Bishkek.²¹

Soon meetings also began in Bishkek; the young people who participated in them continued walking around the city streets in small groups chanting anti-presidential slogans.

On 19 March, a meeting organized on the initiative of the social democratic party of Kyrgyzstan headed by A. Atambaev was held in the capital. About 4,000 people participated in it, mainly residents of the suburban villages Kok-zhar, Tash-Tobo, Baytik, Yssyk-Ata, and others. Representatives of the opposition forces began arriving in the capital with the intention of organizing an anti-government meeting on 24 March (along the lines of the demonstration held in Maidan in Ukraine). On the morning of 24 March, thousands of people gathered in the capital at a meeting in front of the Dr. Zh. Nazaraliev medical center and the building of the Lenin akimat, after which they continued on to the central square of Ala-Too. The number of demonstrators rose, merchants from the Osh bazaar and curious citizens joined them. The square gradually filled with representatives from different regions of the republic calling for satisfaction of the demands put forward by the National Front.

During the mass demonstrations, the country's government administration could not perform its duties and its activity was paralyzed. The demonstrators took control of the House of Government and national television, and by the evening of 24 March, 2005, they had established full control over the city. President Askar Akaev fled the country. Several researchers blamed the oppositionists for what happened, others the government headed by the president.

We completely agree with the opinion that the events of 24 March, 2005 cannot be evaluated unequivocally. The rural population was the main participant in the protest demonstrations that began as a national revolution in the Jalal-Abad, Osh, and Talas regions. Then the disturbances escalated to the capital, and the peaceful demonstration ended in the forceful seizure of the House of Government.

¹⁹ See: R. Prizhivoit, "Vlast vrode est, no ee pochti net," *MSN*, 22 March, 2005.

²⁰ See: *Vesna 2005 g glazami kyrgyzstantsev*, Bishkek, 2005, p. 10.

²¹ See: Z. Galieva, op. cit., p. 283.

S. Mikheev notes that the main reason for the March events was artificial introduction of the new democratic model without taking the local specifics into account. The opposition leaders made skillful use of the population's real discontent with the election results, while the official authorities proved incapable of coping with the real challenges to social order.

The parliamentary elections were the final straw; the masses, tired of the lawlessness reigning in the country, had reached the end of their tether. And this storm swept away all and everything in its path.²²

When analyzing the events that occurred in Osh and Jalal-Abad, A. Brudny writes that the people did in fact succeed in establishing new forms of power. Society's direct and forceful interference in the country's state life (but not in the state system) is not something that happens very often.²³

As a result of that political crisis in the country, the former government disbanded itself; a coalition headed by former prime minister of Kyrgyzstan Kurmanbek Bakiev, who became the country's acting president, came to power.

Replacement of the so-called political elite on 24 March, 2005, which was expressed in the form of a people's revolution, put an end to further absolutization of the president's power and the possibility of passing it on through inheritance. The main purpose of the March events of 2005 was dismantling of the authoritative family-clan system of government by adopting a new, truly democratic, constitution.

But the March events showed that the Kyrgyz people, who perfunctorily accepted the democratic rules of the game, could not stick to them and did not show adherence to the democratic principles of a constitutional change in power during a crisis.

Democracy, having encountered serious challenges in Kyrgyzstan and without the needed flexibility and mass support, was unable to retain its stability. This was also promoted by the population's low political culture (which the March events 2005 revealed with particular clarity), which proved a very long way from assimilating democratic values, they being the most important factor of an established democracy.²⁴

The state commission of 16 members created after the March events 2005 for drawing up measures to further stabilize the sociopolitical situation in the Kyrgyz Republic came to the conclusion that the main reason for the government's fall was the mass debauch of lawlessness at all levels of state power and throughout society as a whole. The political, economic, social, and spiritual spheres of the country were affected. The republic's economy began working not to develop the real sector and replenish the budget, but to make a small number of people rich and increase the income of the president's family. The economic reforms carried out were not socially oriented.²⁵

During 2005, there were approximately 2,500 acts of civil insubordination in Kyrgyzstan. The most widespread was the political demarche on 29 April, 2006, during which the political opposition, demanding democratic reforms, brought about 20,000 demonstrators out into the streets.²⁶ Unable to achieve the concessions they were hoping for from President Kurmanbek Bakiev, the opposition threatened to hold an even larger national demonstration on 27 May, 2006, this time demanding the president's resignation.

²² See: S. Mikheev, "Zhertva durno poniatoi demokratii," in: *Kirgizskiy perevorot*, Collection, Compiled by G. Pavlovsky, Evropa, Moscow, 2005, p. 47.

²³ See: A. Brudny, "Chto eto bylo?" in: *Martovskaia revoliutsiia v Kyrgyzstane: shag vpered ili shaga nazad*, Bishkek, 2005, pp. 15-17.

²⁴ See: Z. Galieva, op. cit., p. 317.

²⁵ See: [<http://www.akipress.org/28/05/2008>].

²⁶ See: Z. Kurmanov, "Zakon ob oppozitsii kak faktor formirovaniia demokraticheskoi politicheskoi sistemy v Kyrgyzstane: neobkhodimost, ugrozy, riski..." *Wednesday*, 28 June, 2006.

A year later, a situation that could lead to an unconstitutional change in power again developed in Kyrgyzstan. So the initiatives of the country's president to build a constructive and civilized dialog with the opposition (legitimization of "government-opposition" relations by means of personnel re-shuffling) and adopt a corresponding draft law had in fact yielded certain results.

Attempt to Form a New Model of Political Behavior

In November 2007, a national referendum was held in the republic on whether to adopt the draft of the new version of the Constitution, as well as a new version of the Election Code. The demands of various nongovernmental organizations were met on issues regarding gender, ethnic, and youth policy; the government had introduced quotas for these groups of the population. The new regulatory acts adopted at the referendum enforced standards in compliance with which elections of deputies to the Zhogorku Kenesh would be carried out according to party lists with observance of the following rules of representation:

- No more than 70% of people of one gender, whereby there should be no more than three ballot paper cues between the names of men and women candidates nominated from the political parties;
- No less than 15% of people younger than 35;
- No less than 15% of citizens representing different nationalities.²⁷

The Code also stated that in order to win at the elections, parties not only had to overcome the 5% barrier set in many countries, but also the 0.5% barrier—to gather at least 0.5% of the votes of the electors in each of the republic's seven regions, as well as in the cities of Bishkek and Osh.²⁸ Introduction of this barrier restricts access of parties that have influence on the electorate exclusively at the local level (which take into account only kinsman, regional, and clan interests). Expert from the Institute of Public Politics Zh. Ormonbekov wrote that "the demand for national representation of a party wishing to take part in elections will only promote the development and enlargement of parties."²⁹ This idea should be welcomed, since party-building in Kyrgyzstan has experienced significant difficulties from the moment it acquired its sovereignty.

On the whole, the institution of political parties (in the current political system) has only developed quantitatively. Whereas in May 2005, when constitutional reform began, there were 40 political parties, by the fall of 2006 this number had reached 86. By 2007, the republic's Ministry of Justice, in keeping with the Law on Political Parties, registered 101 parties as of the day early elections of deputies to the Kyrgyz Republic Zhogorku Kenesh were scheduled.

Experts believe that two main factors largely prevented full-fledged development of the institution of political parties in Kyrgyzstan³⁰:

- first, the many years of absence of the state's full-fledged support in the form of political and legal mechanisms for parties to be represented in parliament according to the proportional

²⁷ See: *Kodeks Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki o vyborakh v Kyrgyzskoi Respublike*, Bishkek, 2007, p. 280.

²⁸ See: *Ibid.*, p. 283.

²⁹ Website: Oasis journal, No. 19 (63), October 2007.

³⁰ See: Z. Kurmanov, "Evolution in the Party Structure in Kyrgyzstan," p. 8.

representation system and the possibility of forming a government with parliamentary political parties;

- second, psychological non-acceptance by most of the population of the institution of political parties, as a vestige from Soviet times (as we know, the C.P.S.U. interfered in all aspects of citizen life).

The political community in Kyrgyzstan today is distinguished by the obvious inability of many political parties and movements to formulate their own ideological platform capable of attracting national interest. Essentially all parties encounter the problem of increasing their electorate. Experts, on the whole, assess the unsophisticated nature of the parties from the perspective of their participation in elections.³¹ Many of them noted that a proportional election system should be introduced in order to raise the prestige of political parties in Kyrgyzstan.³²

The new edition of the KR Constitution, which legalized the proportional system of representation in parliament, naturally created some real premises for qualitative development of party-building. Articles 54, 69, and 70 of the new Constitution,³³ which envisage party representation in parliament and principles of forming the government, presented a real opportunity, for the first time in the political history of Kyrgyzstan, for the parties that won the elections to dramatically change the political system and political behavior of citizens. So there was an opportunity to form a *new model of political behavior of the Kyrgyz* based on the use of legitimate methods.

The results of a poll conducted in November 2007 by El piker, a sociological company, showed that 48% of the Kyrgyz electorate (1,300 respondents participated in the poll) support elections according to party lists, 20% were against, and 30% abstained.³⁴

In the fall of 2007, a new party, Ak zhol (“Have a Good Journey!”), was created in the country, headed personally by the country’s president.

On the eve of the early parliamentary elections scheduled for 16 December, 2007, only 22 political parties submitted their documents to the KR Central Election Commission to register the lists of their candidates; and only twelve of them were allowed to take part in the election race.³⁵

It should be noted that the names of many parties did not give any inclination of their political orientation; just as at the previous elections, the struggle was not among parties, but among their leaders. The choice was determined in keeping with personal contribution, rather than by merit of a party’s assignments and aims.

According to the official data, the People’s Party Ak zhol, Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan, and the Social-Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan exceeded the 5% barrier and were represented in the KR Zhogorku Kenesh. The mandates of the Kyrgyz parliament were distributed as follows: 71 went to the People’s Party Ak zhol, 11 to the SDPK, and 8 to the Communist Party.

As a result of these elections, well-known politicians lost their deputy mandates, who, thanks to their clan-tribal ties, were elected every time according to single-mandate constituencies—A. Beknazarov (Aksy), A. Maliev (the Ton district), and others.

³¹ See: A. Akunov, “Mnogopartiynost i demokratiia v Kyrgyzskoi Respublike (istoriko-politologicheskii analiz),” in: *Sb. Statei po itogam seminarov, provedennykh v 1995 g. v ramkakh programmy “Podderzhka vysshego obrazovaniia*, Bishkek, 1996, pp. 10-20; B. Malabaev, “Uchastie politicheskikh partii v vyborakh deputatov Zhogorku Kenesha: problemy i perspektivy,” in: *Sb. nauch. trudov iuridich. f-ta KRSU*, KRSU Publishers, Bishkek, 2001, pp. 19-28.

³² See: A. Akunov, E. Attokurov, “K pervym vyboram deputatov ZS ZhK KR po partiynym spiskam,” *Politika i obshchestvo*, No. 2, 2000, pp. 144-156; Z. Kurmanov, “Evolution in the Party Structure in Kyrgyzstan”; K. Ismailov, N. Kazak kyzy, “Stanovlenie mnogopartiynoi systemy v Kyrgyzstane,” in: *Sotsialno-politicheskie protsessy v Kyrgyzskoi Respublike*, Bishkek, 2003; U. Chynaliev, *Politicheskie partii Kyrgyzstana*, Moscow, 1999; B. Malabaev, op. cit.

³³ See: *Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic*, Adopted at a referendum of the Kyrgyz Republic on 21 October, 2007, Bishkek, 2007, pp. 72, 80, 81.

³⁴ See: Website: Oasis journal, No. 19 (63), October 2007.

³⁵ See: [http://www.shailoo.gov.kg, e-mail: cec@shailoo.gov.kg].

In this way, the early parliamentary elections held in December 2007 became a watershed in the country's political life; they were held according to the new model that excluded the family and clan factors.

The Opposition Movement

On 14 January, 2008, a forum of the public For Justice Movement was convened in Bishkek, in which the representatives of 15 parties and more than 20 nongovernmental organizations unhappy with the election results took part. Two deputies of the Zhogorku Kenesh took part in the forum (representatives of the Social-Democratic Party R. Otunbaeva and B. Beshimov), as well as ex-deputies O. Tekebaev, T. Sariiev, and D. Sadyrbaev.³⁶ A decision was made to create an opposition Public Parliament in the near future.

On 12 April, 2008, a National Kurultai was held in Bishkek organized by the For Justice Movement. It was attended by 1,474 delegates from all regions of Kyrgyzstan, who were elected in the regions in February and March of 2008.³⁷

Representatives from such international organizations as the OSCE, NDI, and European Union, as well as from the U.S. and German embassies in the Kyrgyz Republic, and others took part in the Kurultai as observers.

The Kurultai was held under the following slogans: "*El baylygy—adilet*" ("Wealth to the people—justice"), "*Taianychy kalystyk*" ("Bastion of justice"), "*Kelechegi akyykat*" ("Future justice"), "*El biylygi—elge*" ("People's power for the people"), and so on.

The National Kurultai adopted a resolution and decision³⁸ which gave a critical analysis of the country's political and socioeconomic development.

According to our observations, the Kurultai exuded a sense of mistrust among most of the deputies in the leaders of the Public Parliament, three of whom were former parliamentary speakers (A. Erkebaev, M. Cholponbaev, and O. Tekebaev). The audience listened to most of the reports without enthusiasm since they were full of criticism rather than proposals for alternative ways and programs for the country's development.

The Kurultai closed with a shout of "Manas," which was pronounced from the rostrum by a member of the Public Parliament B. Sherniiazov.

All the above-mentioned facts showed that the opposition had nothing new to offer in terms of Kyrgyzstan's strategic development and recovery from the crisis.

After this unsuccessful kurultai, there was no obvious consolidation of the opposition in the republic; moreover, the government used every permissible and impermissible method in order to repress it and cause a schism in it. As a result, certain oppositionists (E. Baysalov, K. Kadyrov, B. Beshimov, R. Zheenbekov, K. Baybolov, and others) were forced to leave Kyrgyzstan in search of political asylum; others tried to oppose Bakiev's regime.

The joint national movement created by the republic's opposition at the National Kurultai on 17 March, 2010 made a statement to the following effect: "The joint national movement believes that Kurmanbek Bakiev does not have the moral right to head the country today. The power usurped by his

³⁶ See: Information Agency "24.kg," available at [<http://www.24.kg/politic/2008/01/15/73423.html>].

³⁷ "Personal participation in the Kurultai (Method of inclusive observation)," available at [<http://www.24.kg/politic/2008/04/13>].

³⁸ Ibidem.

family clan should be returned to the people. The people of Kyrgyzstan, as the only holder of sovereignty and power, has the complete constitutional right to hold National Kurultais in all the regions with a single agenda—restoration of people's power."³⁹

National Demonstrations (April 2010)

The events that occurred in Kyrgyzstan between 2005 and 2010 prove that the democratic spirit of the Kyrgyz people played a significant role in the Tulip, or Talas, Revolution.

Since 2005, mass meetings have not abated in the republic, but the government essentially chose not to react to them. The only lever the government applied was forceful pressure. The people were displeased; after the Tulip Revolution they expected new approaches to governance from the leadership, but these hopes were not justified.

It is very difficult to give an objective evaluation of what went on in the republic; there is even talk about the likelihood that external forces played a part in the Kyrgyz events.

But despite the many different ways the above-mentioned events can be assessed, the author of this article believes that the heroism and courage of those who were killed while rising up against the current government cannot be underestimated. Bakiev, who came to power in the wake of the Tulip Revolution (2005), was overthrown and replaced by a provisional government headed by leader of the opposition and former foreign minister Roza Otunbaeva.

The likelihood of a repetition of the events of 2005 in Kyrgyzstan was very high, since corruption, clannishness, and nepotism continue to prosper in the republic; public opinion is ignored and, as a result, unresolved social problems accumulate.

It comes as no surprise that the global economic crisis has been having a severe impact on the Kyrgyz economy (the production slump was aggravated by high inflation). As a result, the price of electricity, water, and heating increased 2-10-fold in some cases. The situation was aggravated even more by the fact that the main utility companies, as well as Severelektro, Vostokelektro, and Kyrgyztelekom, were controlled by the Bakiev clan. The drainage of labor resources abroad is a major problem for the state, as well as the rise in unemployment and lumpenization of the population.

Reform of the state administration, as a result of which a shadow government was created headed by Bakiev's son, the government's disregard of the Constitution and other laws, as well as the president's shortsighted foreign policy promoted acceleration of the collapse of the current government.

The social problems that had accumulated and the shocking rise in prices prompted the mass demonstrations in the regions, primarily in Naryn. The increase in prices, primarily for electricity, in this highland district of the republic, which was greater than anywhere else, had an impact on people's lives. As early as 26 February, 2010, meetings were held there demanding cancellation of the price hikes on electricity and restoration of privileges for residents in the republic's highland districts.

But the government (with participation of the country's president) organized a so-called Kurultai of Consent, linking its holding to the 5th anniversary of the March 2005 events. The oppositionists and other objectionable elements were not invited; the issues raised by the Joint National Movement and people of Naryn were not discussed.

³⁹ "Statement of the Joint National Movement," Sociopolitical newspaper *Forum*, No. 21, 26 March, 2010, p. 3.

The socioeconomic problems and disappointment in the country's president escalated into a spontaneous mass protest. On 7 April, the opposition planned to hold national kurultais in all the regions and Bishkek, but they were prohibited from being held and arrests of the opposition leaders began. This led to representatives of the local authorities being taken hostage and so-called national governors being appointed.

On 6 April, disorder began in Talas; the building of the regional administration was seized by demonstrators armed with sticks, stones, and fire bombs, and an attempt was made to seize the regional department of internal affairs building. The attempts of the special police forces to restore order were unsuccessful.

The same day, the opposition announced it had elected an alternative governor, Sh. Adbyldaev, and representative of the opposition Ata-Meken (Homeland) party K. Kurmanalieva became his deputy. During the night of 7 April, Minister of Internal Affairs M. Kongantiev was sent to Talas; in the morning he was seized and brutally beaten by the demonstrators.

In the meantime, during the night the events in Talas began the National Security Service arrested the opposition leaders who publicly supported the demonstrators.

The Talas events and arrest of the opposition leaders prompted the mass protest demonstrations that occurred the next day in Bishkek, Naryn, and Kara-Kol.

On the morning of 7 April, a thousand-strong crowd took the parliament building by storm and tried to take over the House of Government in the capital, but the demonstrators came up against resistance from the police and detachments of the National Guard. Snipers opened fire from the roof of the House of Government; dozens of people were killed and injured. The republic's president Kurmanbek Bakiev signed a decree instituting a state of emergency in the country and curfew in the capital.

It is worth noting that almost all the actions to seize the House of Government were performed by "on-the-spot commanders" nominated by the demonstrators, that is, there was no targeted supervision. This fact shows the national character of the April events in Bishkek.

The demonstrators released the people held in custody in the pre-trial detention center of the State National Security Committee and seized the television center. On 7 April (at approximately 17:00), the reserve studio of the national channel (the main studio was destroyed) began broadcasting live, in which coworkers of nongovernmental organizations and a few human rights activists took part. Head of the Ata-Meken party O. Tekebaev announced that "power has fully been transferred to the people;" then it was announced that retired police colonel T. Madalbekov had been appointed commandant of Bishkek.

On the evening of 7 April, 2010, the republic's government resigned; the president flew from Bishkek to Osh. The opposition formed a provisional government of national trust (for a term of six months) to organize democratic elections headed by former foreign minister Roza Otunbaeva.

Decree No. 1 of the Provisional Government of Kyrgyzstan adopted as early as 7 April, 2010 said: "Taking advantage of their sacred right of holder of sovereignty and the only source of state power of the Kyrgyz Republic, on 6-7 April, 2010, the people of Kyrgyzstan overthrew the anti-people's regime of Kurmanbek Bakiev. In keeping with the people's expression of will, state power has been transferred to the Provisional Government of the Kyrgyz Republic."⁴⁰

It should be emphasized that the participants in the April events in Kyrgyzstan constituted a wide range of different people; modernists, who demanded legal and democratic changes, traditionalists, who believed that the new government should be based on clan division of society, marauders, who delighted in the opportunity to seize other people's property, Islamists, and so on.

⁴⁰ See: Information Agency Kabar, available at [<http://kabar.kg>].

All the above-listed groups joined together in general protest against the current government and president, but this did not last for long. After the House of Government was seized, the protestors again found themselves on different sides of the barricades.

The first group mainly consisted of those actively involved in seizing the House of Government, who came to the capital from the Talas, Naryn, Issyk Kul, and Chu regions, as well as from the suburbs of the capital, to participate in the national kurultai (it was supposed to be held by the opposition on 7 April). They were the core of those who stood on the capital's main square on 7-8 April in the hope that the opposition that had come to power would undertake measures capable of changing the situation in the republic; they are still demanding justice today.

Another group consisting mainly of residents of the capital began rallying together in a truly national movement; it acted within the law, setting about to form self-defense, national militia, and national volunteer squads. This group included youth associations and various public organizations—The Union of Afghanistan Veterans, sports clubs, police and army veterans, associations of Kyrgyz businessmen, as well as the Ar-Namys party, which published its address to the republic's citizens.

In Bishkek, a headquarters of national militia and self-defense units was created which coordinated their activity with that of the police. It was this group that began to protect the lives and property of ordinary citizens, trying to eliminate the chaos reigning in the country.

Similar groups were created not only in the capital, but also in other cities of the republic.

The third group acted outside the law; it decided to take advantage of the situation created and engaged in marauding. During the night of 8 April, a wave of marauders stormed the capital. In Bishkek, large trade centers, Vefa and Goin, which belonged to Turkish and Chinese businessmen, were plundered, as well as Caravan, Dordoi Plaza, the Narodny supermarket chain, 7 Days, and several other stores located both in the center of the city and its outskirts.

Expert L. Khoperskaia said the following about this: "The marauders were extremely discriminating, attacking certain buildings and facilities while leaving others, next door, entirely untouched... It is thought that marauding of the White House on 8 April was not accidental, when documents were thrown out of its windows and very specific rooms were set on fire with the purpose of destroying certain documents that could be used as evidence. Dozens of facilities that did not belong to the property of Bakiev's family and entourage were mercilessly destroyed. The numbers of marauders, their level of organization, and their singleness of purpose leave no doubts about the fact that they were used as a lever of pressure on the opposition that seized power, as a way to scare the people and oust 'alien' business."⁴¹

Still one more group composed both of demonstration participants and casual observers began to seize the land around Bishkek on 9 April in order to use for their personal purposes.

Attention should be paid to the fact that almost 80 percent of the participants in the protest demonstrations were young people. The youth public organization *Manas zhashtar kyymyly* (Manas Youth Movement) replied to the question "Who do you support?" by saying that they did not support the government or the opposition, but were in favor of New Kyrgyzstan. Similar youth organizations also tried to act within the law, calling for a halt to the routing of the House of Government and creating a revolutionary committee.

The next day (8 April), the governors and akims in most of the country's regions and districts were overthrown; the demonstrators appointed their own "people's" representatives in their places.

On 9 and 10 April, 2010, the provisional government declared a day of mourning in the republic for those killed on the central square. On 9 April, the funerals of those killed (76 people)

⁴¹ L. Khoperskaia, "Politicheskiy krizis v Kirgizii: Osnovnye aktory," *Eurasian Home Portal*, available at [<http://www.eurasianhome.org/xml/t/default.xml?lang=ru>].

were held; they were buried as batyrs (heroes) of the Kyrgyz republic at the Ata-Beyit⁴² memorial close to Bishkek.

On 17 April, 2010, the republic's Ministry of Public Health announced that 83 people had been killed by bullet wounds inflicted on 7 April; more than 1,000 injured people are being treated in the republic's hospitals.

Today the Kyrgyzstan people have great expectations of the provisional government that has come to power: improvement of the standard of living, freedom of speech, freedom of thought, and so on. In their speeches on national television, the members of the provisional government assured the republic's people that administration of the country and a return to democracy would be ensured during the transition period.

Conclusion

So new forms of the people's political participation in state life have appeared in sovereign Kyrgyzstan, such as targeted statements, addresses to the highest power structures and highest officials and ways of applying coercive pressure (pickets, demonstrations, seizure of administrative buildings, closing of strategically important highways, and so on). All of this is promoting the development and transformation of the political culture of the Kyrgyz people, since elements of deliberate and protest political participation have become characteristic of it.

An analysis of the specifics of the political behavior of the present-day Kyrgyz people, from the time the country acquired its sovereignty until the April events of 2010, makes it possible to draw the following conclusions:

- clan and regional self-identification has become more prevalent and a basis of political self-identification;
- social clan institutions of the Kyrgyz people have become politicized and have begun performing the functions of the absent political institutions;
- the government has accepted politicization of the clan structures and begun to use it to its own ends;
- the political behavior of the Kyrgyz people (electorate) shows clan self-identification at elections of all levels, beginning with the ail okmotu to the Zhogorku Kenesh, as well as during election of the country's president;
- legitimate and illegitimate (deviating) forms can be identified in the structure of the political behavior of the Kyrgyz people;
- legitimate forms of behavior of the Kyrgyz people is expressed in statements and addresses to the power structures and officials, in peaceful meetings and demonstrations, as well as in advancing specific political demands;
- illegitimate forms of behavior are usually based on political myths and irrational demands (the seizure of government buildings, holding unsanctioned national kurultais);
- intensified protest strivings have been manifested in the actions of political actors against unfair elections (February 2005) and violations of the Constitution, and also in the formation by the opposition of the Public Parliament, and so on;

⁴² The bodies of 137 people repressed by the Soviet government in the 1920s-1930s were buried at the Ata-Beyit memorial, who were shot without a trial and investigation as "enemies of the people," including Chinghiz Aitmatov's father, Torokul Aitmatov. It was here that great writer Chinghiz Aitmatov himself was buried (at his request).

- since December 2007, attempts have been made to form a new model of behavior of the Kyrgyz people based on legitimate forms and the establishment of a new election system (proportional) and political actions of the actors within the law.