

NEXUS BETWEEN POLITICS AND ISLAM IN KYRGYZSTAN SINCE 2005 IN
THE CONTEXT OF ISLAMIC REVIVAL AND UNCONSOLIDATED
DEMOCRACY

A THESIS

Presented to the MA Programme

of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Politics and Security Programme (Central Asia)

by

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December 2019

DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Islam is one of the discourse strands in politics in Kyrgyzstan. This study is aimed at investigation of the correlation between the problems of democratization process manifested in reduction of the public recognition of Kyrgyzstani political actors and growing public interest to Islam, on the one hand, and addressing Islam by Kyrgyzstani political actors in their speeches and behavior, on the other. In this respect, the study asks: how have Kyrgyzstani political actors addressed Islam in their public rhetoric and behavior in the context of unconsolidated democracy since 2005, and what is the role of Islamic revival in this process? Basing on literature review, media analysis of facts of addressing Islam by Kyrgyzstani political actors, and critical discourse analysis of their speeches, the study has provided the following results. First, there is a tendency of growing number of facts of addressing Islam by Kyrgyzstani political actors in years of national election campaigns since 2005. This address is in the form of external and most visible manifestations of their religiosity. Since 2015, there are facts of illegal direct involvement of Islamic clergymen in election campaigns. Second, there is a correlation between growing public salience of Islam and growing number of facts of Kyrgyzstani political actors' address Islam in their rhetoric and behavior with emphasis on their trustworthiness and honesty, as well as social justice and mutual accountability. Third, it is impossible to make strong assessments regarding pragmatic or pious religiosity of Kyrgyzstani political actors, as well as the crucial importance of Islamic rhetoric in political competition. Thus, the results indicate that: a) Islamic rhetoric can be used by Kyrgyzstani political actors both as a tool of their image-making and manifestation of their pious religiosity; b) addressing Islamic rhetoric by Kyrgyzstani political actors is aligned with the process of Islamic revival in the republic.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research project would not have been realized without contributions and assistance on behalf of a number of people. My most immediate gratitude is to my supervisor, Dr. Pal Dunay, for his patient guidance, valuable recommendations, and helpful criticism he has provided me at all stages of my work on the thesis. I have been lucky to have a supervisor who has paid his attention to every detail of my research.

I would also like to thank research staff of the Aleksanteri Institute for their keen interest in my project, useful discussions, advice in searching for the relevant literature, as well as invaluable suggestions of possible ways of improving my research methodology and elaboration of the theoretical framework.

I express my thankfulness to the academics of the OSCE Academy for sharing their immense knowledge and research experience that have provided a profound ground for planning and development of this research.

My sincere thanks are to all interviewed experts for their encouragement in realization of my research project and evaluations that have been valuable both from the standpoint of contribution to my research and development of my arguments and ideas.

Finally, I extend my thanks to my family and friends for their empathy, support, and encouragement I needed over the period of my study.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Research questions and hypotheses

The collapse of the Soviet Union has become a benchmark for the liberalization of socio-political life in Kyrgyzstan. That has greatly influenced the religious life of the country as well. In this regard, considering the results one of the latest researches that 94.79% of the population of Kyrgyzstan is Muslim,¹ one of the significant tendencies since independence has become a multi-faceted process of Islamic revival. This process can be described as a shift from Soviet “privatized” Islam to “public” one that means Muslims get the right to demonstrate freely their religiosity – observe religious rites and norms in clothes, get religious education, as well as visit places of worship.²

In its turn, this new public discourse is imbedded in the socio-political circumstances, evolves under their influence aggregating new requirements towards the functioning of government and political actors, and makes the latter answer these requirements to secure stability.³ In the framework of this research, political actors are defined as individuals or cohesive collectivities that participate in power relations

1. Barbara Junisbai, Azamat Junisbai, and Bourzghan Zhussupov, “Two Countries, Five Year: Islam in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan through the Lens of Public Opinion Surveys,” in *Being Muslim in Central Asia: Practices, Politics, and Identities*, ed. Marlene Laruelle (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2018), 46.

2. Adeb Khalid, *Islam after Communism. Religion and Politics in Central Asia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 118; David W. Montgomery, “Islam beyond Democracy and State in Kyrgyzstan,” in *Kyrgyzstan beyond “Democracy Island” and “Failing State,”* ed. Marlene Laruelle and Johan Engvall (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 233; Chris Hann and Mathijs Pelkmans, “Realigning Religion and Power: Islam, Nation-State, and (Post) Socialism,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 61, no. 9 (November 2009): 1524.

3. David Levy, “The Impulse to Orthodoxy: Why Illiberal Democracies Treat Religious Pluralism as a Threat,” *Religion, State and Society* 46, no. 3 (2018): 244; Salwa Ismail, “Being Muslim: Islam, Islamism and Identity Politics,” *Political Islam. A Critical Reader*, ed. Frederic Volpi (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 17.

(allocation and exercise of power),⁴ and encompasses deputies, political parties, public officers, as well as public activists intended to take part in politics.

The aim of the proposed thesis work is to analyze the nature of Kyrgyzstani political actors' address Islam in their public rhetoric and behavior in correlation with deficiencies in the political regime defined by the Bertelsmann Foundation Transformation Index as "defective democracy" (that is the stage in the process of democracy transition preceding consolidation of democracy)⁵ and the process of Islamic revival since 2005. In turn, three factors determine the focus of the analysis on Kyrgyzstani political actors' behavior within the time frame of 2005-2017. First, in 2005 and 2010, there were two unconstitutional changes of power in Kyrgyzstan. They are prominent due to their unprecedented character for other Central Asian republics and reflection of deficiencies in democracy in Kyrgyzstan.

Second, in 2015 and 2017, parliamentary and presidential elections marked the second cycle of elections within a new constitutional framework. So, the essence of the political regime in Kyrgyzstan can be examined from the perspective of retrospective approach with the special accent on functioning of formal state institutions.

Third, due to easier access to diverse information regarding political activity in the mass media, as well as social surveys on the peculiarities of the religious situation in Kyrgyzstan than in other Central Asian states, the research can be concentrated on less researched nature of behavior of different political actors addressing Islamic rhetoric in its dynamic imbedded in the institutional and societal contexts of Kyrgyzstan.

4. Frederick W. Frey, "The Problem of Actor Designation in Political Analysis," *Comparative Politics* 17, no. 2 (January, 1985): 129.

5. "Country Reports," Bertelsmann Foundation Transformation Index, accessed July 12, 2019, <https://www.bti-project.org/en/data/rankings/status-index/>

Thus, the analysis of the abovementioned aspects provides basis for revealing insights into the key research question:

RQ₁: How have Kyrgyzstani political actors addressed Islam in their public rhetoric and behavior in the context of unconsolidated democracy since 2005?

Answering this question poses the second one:

RQ₂: What is the role of Islamic revival in Kyrgyzstani political actors' address Islam?

Hence, the research is aimed on the revealing the validity of the following assumptions concerning its possible results that serve as hypotheses:

H₁: Kyrgyzstani political actors address Islam in their public rhetoric and behavior as a mechanism to improve their political images in the context of unconsolidated democracy.

H₂: Kyrgyzstani political actors' public Islamic rhetoric is aligned both with the citizens' attitudes towards the government and political actors, as well as current manifestations of religiosity of Muslims.

Theoretical framework

The aim of this research determines a complex theoretical approach to get a comprehensive understanding of the correlation between two independent variables – unconsolidated democracy and Islamic revival and dependent variable – political actors' address Islam in their public rhetoric and behavior. Therefore, it presumes that this theoretical framework should provide a basis for analysis of how two dimensions – institutional and societal ones relate to the establishment of nexus between politics and Islam in Kyrgyzstan.

Institutional explanation of the nexus between politics and Islam is based on the state-citizen interaction concept of democracy by Charles Tilly. According to this concept, a political regime is considered to be a democratic one if the interaction between the state and the citizens is characterized as a “broad, equal, protected, and

mutually binding consultation”.⁶ Thus, a specific feature of democracy is a non-zero-sum bargain between state institutions and citizens. In turn, this bargain in terms of Tilly is implemented through public politics presuming the most visible facts of engagement of state power and performance in the state-citizen interaction (e.g. elections, legislative activity, tax collection, military conscription, as well as revolutions, coups, civil wars, and etc.) that is opposite to private politics manifested in corruption and kinship relations.⁷

From the perspective of establishment of a stable democratic regime, the success of state-citizen bargain depends heavily on state institutions capacity: a) to provide involvement of trust networks into public politics; b) to prevent inequality within public politics; c) to reduce the influence of autonomous power centers.⁸ Here, one of the relevant for the research definition is trust networks defined by Tilly as isolated from the state control social networks with strong relationships manifested in their members’ ability to pursue collective enterprises at risk to the deliberate misuse of power or false steps of others.⁹ In turn, networks’ involvement in public politics, according to Tilly, presumes their relying on state protection, as well as handover of their resources and delegation of members to the state in their persuasion of collective enterprises that are the indicators of growing trust to the state and confidence in their ability to influence public politics through established formal institutions.¹⁰ Thus, Tilly underlines the

6. Charles Tilly, *Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 59.

7. Tilly, *Democracy*, 12-13.

8. Tilly, 23.

9. Tilly, 81.

10. Tilly, 89, 96.

crucial role of trust between state agencies and citizens for stable functioning of a democratic regime that presumes formalization of state-citizen relations. Meanwhile, one of the main factors that prevents this formalization, weakens state capacity, and as a result undermines trust of citizens to the state is corruption and rent-seeking behavior of state officials.¹¹

In general, the process of democratization presuming the "... movement toward broader, more equal, more protected, mutually binding consultation", according to Tilly, is very fluctuating in the aspect that any reversal in any of the three abovementioned characteristics of the state capacity leads to de-democratization.¹²

However, Tilly's concept of democracy leaves open the issue of the mechanisms of formation of trust networks that is crucial from the standpoint of this research. In this aspect, the concept of symbolic capital by Pierre Bourdieu is applied. He defines symbolic capital as any type of capital owned by people, including honor, prestige, and reputation that should be recognized and perceived by others as a value in order to get the dividends from it.¹³ In the aspect of power relations, the philosopher indicated that it is a "very mysterious power, power of nomination".¹⁴

Against this background, Bourdieu introduces the term "legitimate imposture" or "legitimate symbolic violence" when representatives of groups in their political / social activities can achieve recognition and effectively pursue their own interests if they commensurate their interests with interests of their constituents not

11. Tilly, *Democracy*, 95.

12. Tilly, 59, 140.

13. Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason. On the Theory of Action* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 47.

14. Bourdieu, *Practical Reason. On the Theory of Action*, 51.

being just “calculating cynics”.¹⁵ From this perspective, he states that they should identify themselves with the group of constituencies, in other words “be reduced to the group” in order to get recognition and disguise their misappropriations of power.¹⁶ This is the foundation of Bourdieu’s “homology principle”, according to which interests of representatives and their constituents are interrelated, and when the former effectively carry out their responsibilities to the latter, they serve their own interests.¹⁷

The results of the media analysis, expert interviews, and desk research conducted within this theoretical framework highlight that the peculiarities of political actors’ address Islamic factor in their activity in Kyrgyzstan are defined by low effectiveness of formal institutions. This ineffectiveness is defined at large by political actors’ corruption and rent-seeking practices. They destruct the “homology principle” and reduce the level of trust to them on behalf of their constituencies. Against this background, Islamic rhetoric of political actors especially sound in years of national election campaigns is a source of rebuilding of trust with their constituencies, although, there is no certain evidences that they in terms of Bourdieu are “calculating cynics”.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to underline some limitations of the proposed theoretical framework. It does not provide theoretical tools to analyze the influence of economic and external factors, as well as issue of national identity on the establishment of nexus between politics and Islamic revival in Kyrgyzstan that can complicate the results of the research. Subsequently, each of these missed aspects can become subjects for new research.

15. Pierre Bourdieu, “Delegation and Political Fetishism,” *Thesis Eleven* 10-11, no. 1 (1985): 65-66.

16. Bourdieu, “Delegation and Political Fetishism,” 60-61.

17. Bourdieu, 66.

Research methodology

This research rests on the mixed-methods approach that provides analytical and research tools for unpacking of links between two independent variables – unconsolidated democracy and Islamic revival and one dependent variable – addressing Islamic rhetoric by political actors within single country case-study in Kyrgyzstan. In turn, these links are determined according to the applied concepts: state-citizen interaction concept of democracy by Tilly and concept of symbolic capital by Bourdieu. It is also necessary to indicate that the choice of mixed-methods approach was made, because of lack of previous research in this field that is the condition where verification of data is crucial.

The set of methods of data collection includes as follows. First, desk-research for identifying the peculiarities of the political regime and religious situation (namely in the context of Islam) in Kyrgyzstan was applied. The set of resources included peer-reviewed articles, books, earlier conducted researches, as well as numerical recourses – statistical data provided by international organizations reflecting detailed information on Islamic revival and peculiarities of political regime functioning in Kyrgyzstan. In turn, analysis of different types of sources provided the opportunity to explore different manifestations of democratization process's problems and Islamic revival both from the perspective of independent researchers, as well as international and national agencies.

Second, media analysis of the facts of addressing Islam by Kyrgyzstani political actors was conducted in the form of searching six keywords relevant for the research – “Islam”, “namaz”, “namazkana”, “mechet”, “hijab”, and “musul'manin” in the time frame between March 2005 and November 2017. Synonyms and Russian equivalents

of the words (“namaz” – “molitva” and “namazkana” – “molel’naya komnata”), as well as truncation function were used to include all possible publications.

The search for relevant publications with the abovementioned keywords and their variations was conducted in the news archives of three news portals (“24kg”, “Vb”, and “Azattyk”) in order to double-check the existing data and prevent the using of fake news for the analysis. The choice of the these news portals was based on the fact that they are in the list of the popular news resources for the population according to one of the latest media research,¹⁸ and was limited to three criteria: a) they are in Russian language; b) their archives are free of charge; c) they provide information in the textual format.

In turn, the filter for finding the necessary events in news or analytical articles was the definition of “addressing Islam” as using Islamic attributes publicly by political actors excluding their official congratulations with religious holidays or reports on the conferences dedicated to religious issues. The main focus was made on such characteristics of the event as: type of addressing Islam, time period, and initiators. The third characteristic is of great importance due to the fact that it was one of the criteria for choosing speeches of political actors for critical discourse analysis.

So, the third method used in this research is critical discourse analysis of the speeches of political actors, as well as of religious actors in support of political actors in the context of their religious rhetoric. The selection of the political actors was based on the results of conducted media analysis, which helped to identify the most active political actors (A. Atambayev, T. Bakir Uluu, and N. Motuev) and clergymen involved in the election campaign rallies (Chubak azhi Zhalilov and S. Kamalov). In

18. “Media Research (8th Wave),” M-Vector, accessed September 12, 2019, <http://m-vector.com/uploads/files//5c53b6487df1e.pdf>

turn, the identification of texts for analysis was based on the criteria of whether they can be qualified as “addressing Islam” and searched on web site www.president.kg for A. Atambayev’s speeches and www.youtube.com for speeches by T. Bakir Uluu, N. Motuev, Chubak azhi Zhalilov and S. Kamalov in accordance with the data in the secondary sources.

Critical discourse analysis of six transcribed texts, three of which were previously translated from Kyrgyz into Russian, was conducted with appealing to the findings of the desk-research that constitute the context of discourses. The relevance of context for critical discourse analysis is based on the definition of discourse as a form of social interaction that both influences the social context (including social and power relations) within which it takes place and is being influenced by this context as well.¹⁹ In turn, the limited number of texts for analysis is determined by two factors: a) this discourse on religion in the aspect of its utility in political competition is not the main one in Kyrgyzstan; b) lack of coherent speeches where it is possible to trace the logic of addressing Islam by political actors.

Although there is no any specific set of techniques of conducting critical discourse analysis, it is necessary to note that the research is grounded on the research approach and textual mechanisms suggested by Dunn and Neumann. First, the “plastic” approach was used to analyze a certain text on the basis of principle of intertextuality presuming revealing its links with the other analyzing texts.²⁰ Second, within this approach the technique of double reading was applied. The aim of the first reading was to identify the main points (or discourse strands) of the text. In turn, the aim of the

19. Marianne Jorgensen and Louise J. Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (London: SAGE Publications, 2002), 61, 62.

20. Kevin C. Dunn and Iver B. Neuman, *Undertaking Discourse Analysis for Social Research* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 104.

second reading was to define the potential social effects that these discourse strands should have through providing correlations with the identified socio-political context. It was made through applying the following textual analysis mechanisms: a) presupposition – identification of the possible alternatives to the statements that are presented as a common knowledge; b) predication – identification of the ways of generating of certain meanings of the words through different predicates, adjectives, and adverbs; c) subject positioning – identifying the ways, in which a network of relationships between subjects is created.²¹

Meanwhile, the supportive method of data collection is semi-structured expert-interviews. The process of selection of experts for the interviews was based on the purposeful and snow-ball sampling. In turn, the preselection criterion for the search for experts was the definition of expert as a person, who has the knowledge beyond the reach of each person in the field of research.²² Therefore, interviewees were found out on the bases of reviews of lists of participants of specialized conferences and their comments in mass media corresponding with the thesis's topic. However, owing to the fact that not all experts were available for the interview, the snow-balling sampling was also used presuming asking interviewed experts for references for other experts who could agree to give an interview. In this way, the initial list of three experts has been extended to eight interviewees (The list of interviewed experts is represented in appendix A.).

21. Dunn and Neuman, *Undertaking Discourse Analysis for Social Research*, 109-11.

22. Michael Meuser and Ulrike Nagel, "The Expert Interview and Changes in Knowledge Production," in *Interviewing Experts*, ed. Alexander Bogner, Austria Beate Littig, and Wolfgang Menz (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 18.

In this case, it is necessary to highlight that the choice of expert interviews, rather than elite interviews is determined by the fact that the issue of faith and religion is very sensitive, especially in the context of using it in the political field. The other fact that determined the choice of expert interviews, rather expert ones is a high risk to get a false picture from interviewing politicians due to their inclination to please their constituencies. In this respect, experts are in the position to interpret political actions from their perspective. In general, interviews are aimed to find out alternative view points on the nexus between politics and Islam in Kyrgyzstan and reveal any new facts that can contribute to a better, more systematical, and analytical interpretation of this nexus.

Interviews with local experts were hour-long and conducted face-to-face in Russian language with eight respondents over the course of one month. There is a fifteen-question questionnaire that involves a combination of specific questions regarding the problems of democratization and the process of Islamic revival in Kyrgyzstan since 2005 (The questionnaire is represented in appendix B.). Before each of the conducted interviews an expert was asked for a permission for direct referencing to him / her in the research. Therefore, there are two types of reference: a) with indication of a name and affiliation of the expert; b) with indication of an affiliation of the expert.

The combination of these methods is aimed to compensate single method limitations and deficiencies by conducting triangulation in data collection and discovery of the findings.

However, the chosen methods of data analysis have some disadvantages. First, it is a single-case study, the results of which cannot be extended to the other cases due to their different contexts of development. Second, media analysis made on the basis of

the available information in mass media cannot represent the fully objective data on political actors' address Islam in their rhetoric and behavior, because some facts could be reflected neither in the media nor in the selected three specific sources. Third, the data collected from critical discourse analysis of political actors' speeches and expert interviews are related to high risks of errors and subjectivity especially in the case of discourse analysis of the translated speeches from Kyrgyz into Russian. However, these weaknesses are not crucial in the framework of this research, due to the fact that its aim is to identify the general links between Islamic revival, pitfalls of democratization and addressing Islam by Kyrgyzstani political actors, the specificity of which can be explored in further research.

Islamic revival: defining approach

Islamic revival being one of the independent variables of this research is a very multi-faceted phenomenon that determines a necessity to provide its operationalization in order to find out the sort of nexus between politics and Islam in Kyrgyzstan. In general, there are two approaches to Islamic revival according to the issue of correspondence between Islamic revival and radicalism. The first approach is reflected in the works by Lewis and Huntington and presumes that these two processes are necessarily interlinked that, on the one hand, explains Muslims' resistance to democratic values, and, on the other, contains potential threat of Islamic radicalization.²³

23. Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage. Why So Many Muslims Deeply Resent the West and Why Their Bitterness Will Not Be Easily Modified," *The Atlantic Monthly*: 266, no. 3 (September 1990): 57, 59-60; Samuel Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 32; Francis Fukuyama, "Identity, Immigration and Liberal Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 17, no. 2 (2006): 10.

The second approach presumes that Islamic dogmata do not imply any correlation between Islamic revival and radicalism. Roy asserts that Islamic revival is a process, which is manifested in the social sphere in the form of growing spiritual needs of Muslims who demonstrate their growing adherence to Muslim practices, rites, and etc., as well as predominance of their religiosity as self-formulation or self-expression of their personal life over religion, rather reconsideration of the Islamic dogmata.²⁴ Meanwhile, he underlines that the concept of Islamic revival is a dynamic and multi-faceted process that encompasses both privatization of religion by Muslims bypassing political sphere (when Muslims reject state borders and identify themselves with the global ummah) and creation and spreading of generated by radical movements discourses of converting Islam into political ideology of an Islamic state.²⁵ In this respect, Roy introduces new term “Islamization of radicalism” emphasizing that Islam, as a set of dogmata, does not contain provisions for radicalism in the aspect of violence in the name of an Islamic state, but it is used by a some groups of people isolated from their Muslim communities’ traditions and cultural norms as a tool for justification of their violence.²⁶ In other words, “Islam is not a theological corpus, but the discourses and practices of Muslims.”²⁷

Therefore, there are two main polar opinions in the academic literature regarding Islamic revival. The first one is based on the assumption that Islamic revival

24. Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam. The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 3-4, 7.

25. Roy, *Globalized Islam. The Search for a New Ummah*, 2,4,5,7.

26. Oliver Roy, “France’s Oedipal Islamist Complex. The Country’s Jihadi Problem Isn’t about Religion or Politics. It’s about Generational Revolt,” *Foreign Policy*, January 7, 2016, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/01/07/frances-oedipal-islamist-complex-charlie-hebdo-islamic-state-isis/>

27. Roy, 10-11.

is inevitably linked with politicization of Islam, turning it into political ideology. In contrast, the second discourse supposes that Islamic revival is a multi-faceted process that combines different subdiscourses including an Islamist one.

This research is based on Roy's concept of Islamization of radicalism as one of the discourses within a complex process of Islamic revival and Roy's definition of Islamism as a political ideology proclaiming the recreation of the Islamic community of the seventh century purified from cultural peculiarities, where Islam is a universal system of rules defining all spheres of social life, where Allah is the only sovereign, and where the distinction between secular and religious spheres is eliminated.²⁸ Therefore, as it is admitted by Ayoob, an Islamic state based on principles of justice and equality of the "golden age Medina" is the "central focus for Islamist energies" so that reveals Islamism as a political activity.²⁹ Meanwhile, establishment of this state can presume both moderate and reformist and radical measures against corrupted Muslim governments.³⁰

Thus, this research is grounded on Roy's definition of Islamic revival as a process of growing public salience of Islam that can be manifested in, but not reduced to Islamization of radicalism in the form of converting Islam into political ideology – Islamism that claims establishment of an Islamic state as a political entity functioning in accordance with literal interpretation of Islamic holy books by different means including a violent one.

28. Oliver Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, trans. Carol Volk (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994), 37-38, 41.

29. Mohammed Ayoob, *The Many Faces of Political Islam. Religion and Politics in the Muslim World* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008), 4, 6, 9.

30. Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, 41-42.

CHAPTER 2

PECULIARITIES OF THE KYRGYZ POLITICAL REGIME

This chapter argues that the current regime in Kyrgyzstan is not a consolidated democracy, a regime in the process of democratization disrupted by periods of de-democratization. In its turn, this argument is based on both the data from the reports of international organizations and ratings, as well as research of scholars. Owing to this argument, the chapter offers two interrelated propositions formulated within the framework of state-citizen interaction concept of democracy by Tilly and symbolic capital by Bourdieu. First, the key characteristic of political regime in Kyrgyzstan in terms of Tilly is domination of private politics in contrast to public politics. Secondly, the interaction between political actors and their constituencies is being undermined by reducing symbolic dimension in their interaction.

Private politics in Kyrgyzstan

This section argues that the process of democratization in Kyrgyzstan in terms of Tilly is hindered by private politics practices among political actors. This argument is based on the following suppositions. First, Kyrgyzstani political parties are mainly informal institutions without elaborated programs, and legislative / constitutional transformations regarding rules of their interaction have not led to the qualitative changes in their functioning. Secondly, development of political parties in Kyrgyzstan is disrupted by atmosphere of mutual distrust among political actors – party members.

It is necessary to indicate that the accent on political parties in this research is put due to the fact that they represent a crucial link between the state and the citizens being a mechanism of aggregating, articulating, and representing the interests of different social strata, as well as socializing population into certain values and political

competition in the democratic system.³¹ From the perspective of concept of democracy by Tilly, political parties are channels of influence of citizens on the determination of direction of public politics.

However, the fact there is a spectrum of political parties in this or that country is not the indicator of the country's success on its way to a stable, consolidated democracy. Being a complicated process, successful democracy transition needs not only superficial institutional transformations, but normative as well.³² In this aspect, it is necessary to underline that free, fair, and frequent elections as a crucial element of democracy from the perspective of a "broad, equal and protected consultation" between the state and the citizens, nevertheless, are not the guarantees of its consolidation against the background of advancement by political actors within political parties "parochial interests instead of serving democracy."³³

It is necessary to take into account ideational and organizational aspects of parties' functioning. According to Samuel Huntington, the problem of newly independent states is that there is lack of strong institutionalized parties, i.e. parties that are formal institutions functioning in accordance with the principles of meritocracy and articulating social interests, but constraining personal interests.³⁴ He emphasizes that the entities that function in the newly independent states on behalf of parties are based

31. Peter Burnell, "Building Better Democracies Why political parties matter," Report, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, December, 2004, accessed July 22, 2019, <http://www.eods.eu/library/WFD.%20Building%20Better%20DemocraciesWhy%20political%20parties%20matter.pdf>

32. Kathleen Collins, "After the Kyrgyz Spring: Challenges to Democratic Deepening," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 19, no. 1 (fall / winter 2012): 23.

33. Tilly, *Democracy*, 86.

34. Samuel Huntington, "Political Development and Political Decay," *World Politics* 16, no. 3 (1965): 403, 411, 425.

on informal personal ties, members' affiliations to the leader, as well as permanent competition for the resources that weakens them and leads to their degradation.³⁵

Arguably, the nature of functioning of formal and informal political institutions is defined by Robinson and Acemoglu who introduce synonymic definitions of such institutions as “inclusive” and “extractive” ones respectively. Inclusive institutions are characterized both by legitimate centralization and pluralism, presuming that this synthesis prevents understanding of pluralism as a chaotic relationship between different actors acting beyond commonly recognized rules and creates access to economic resources to the vast majority of actors.³⁶ Accordingly, extractive institutions are featured by destructive actions of various political actors who are aimed at blocking initiatives regarding changes in the functioning of the political system as it can undermine their power authorization, and concentration of economic resources in their hands.³⁷ So, the main difference between these two types of institutions is that formal ones function in accordance with the “homology principle” presuming compromise between state rationale and personal interests of political actors that is contrary to the expropriation of the state by private interests within informal ones.

In Kyrgyzstan, since 2007, the institute of political party has to play a crucial role in its political system due to the adoption of proportional electoral system that should have strengthened the democratic regime and constrained presidential power. However, despite those constitutional transformations the process of party building was not successful, because the political field was dominated by pro-presidential party “Ak-

35. Huntington, “Political Development and Political Decay,” 425.

36. James Robinson and Daron Acemoglu, *Why Nations Fail. The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2012), 94-95.

37. Robinson and Acemoglu, *Why Nations Fail. The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*, 95.

Zhol” that gained the majority of seats in Zhogorku Kenesh. So, on the one hand, that situation can be explained as a result of the gap between the real imbalance of power in the political field of the Kyrgyz Republic at that period and separation of powers prescribed in the constitution, when the amendments in the latter could not guarantee the transformation of former.³⁸ Arguably, it is possible to apply the term of Luong “transitional bargain game” to characterize the sort of constitutional and institutional changes as an attempt of the political actors to disguise the old system of power distribution through new institutional design.³⁹

In this respect, a sound statement is made by McGlinchey, who asserts that despite the fact the “Tulip revolution” was driven by elite discontent with “disproportionate capture” of state resources by Akayev and his closest surrounding, the “winning coalition” of opposition leaders just reiterated the strategy of the predecessors by appropriating the access to assets and that previously were under the control of Akayev and his family.⁴⁰ Thus, constitutional transformation did not provide in terms of Tilly a “broad, equal, protected and mutually binding” state-citizen consultation. Accordingly, it is noteworthy that after the “Tulip revolution” ousting Akayev’s soft authoritarian regime in 2005, the status of Kyrgyzstan in the Bertelsmann Foundation Transformation Index in 2006 was still moderate authoritarianism.⁴¹

38. Emilbek Dzhuraev, et al., “The Law and Politics of Keeping a Constitutional Order: Kyrgyzstan’s Cautionary Story,” *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law* 7, no. 2 (2015): 269.

39. Pauline Jones Luong, *Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press), 12.

40. Eric McGlinchey, *Chaos, Violence, Dynasty. Politics and Islam in Central Asia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 83, 99, 100-1.

41. “Status Index,” Bertelsmann Foundation Transformation Index, accessed July 12, 2019, <https://www.bti-project.org/en/data/rankings/status-index/>

On the other hand, according to the new Constitution of 2010 with the amendments of 2016, the parliament got more power authorization, that some experts consider as a mechanism of formal regulation of relationships between different centers of neopatrimonial power that appeared after the revolution of 2010.⁴² In this respect, neopatrimonialism is defined as a system of relations between a leader and his constituencies presuming mutual exchange of resources and basing on existing system of local moral values and sentiments of reciprocity and solidarity, i.e. loyalty on behalf of the constituencies, and material assistance on behalf of the leader.⁴³ For instance, one of the expert interview partners considers that despite the fact it is too soon to draw strong conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the new constitutional provisions, still to date it is possible to say that they have determined some positive developments in the political system of Kyrgyzstan such as restrictions imposed on executive power that should reckon to legislative and judicial branches, autonomous parliament, as well as political fighting taking place on the margins of the parliament.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, until today some experts consider that under the conditions of proclaimed parliamentary democracy political parties in Kyrgyzstan are institutionally informal entities taking into account their organizational cohesion and ideational dimension.⁴⁵ From the perspective of organizational cohesion of political parties in

42. Erica Marat, "Kyrgyzstan: A Parliamentary System Based on Inter-Elite Consensus," *Demokratizatsiya* 20, no. 4 (2012): 326.

43. Scott Radnitz, *Weapons of the Wealthy. Predatory Regimes and Elite-Led Protests in Central Asia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2010), 83.

44. Interview with lecturer at one of the higher education institutions in Bishkek, August 22, 2019 (On file with the author)

45. Shairbek Juraev, "The Evolving Role of Political Parties in Kyrgyz Republic," in *Kyrgyzstan beyond "Democracy Island" and "Failing State"*, ed. Marlene Laruelle and Johan Engvall (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 21; Marat, "Kyrgyzstan: A Parliamentary System Based on Inter-Elite Consensus," 336-37;

Kyrgyzstan, there is low level of intra-party communication when the regional cells are not informed about the decisions of the center,⁴⁶ as well as non-transparent mechanisms of drawing a list of representatives for the legislative assembly.⁴⁷

From the ideational perspective, political parties do not have elaborated programs based on a set of integrating values for a certain cultural or socio-economic group.⁴⁸ Huskey and Hill state that despite the absence of elaborated programs there were some distinctions between the parties competed for mandate to become deputies in 2010 that manifested in their appeals to regional and nationalistic rhetoric, as well as preferences in the foreign policy (pro-Russian or balanced) and form of government (presidential or parliamentary).⁴⁹ However, the following defections, party schisms and

Eugene Huskey, *Encounters at the Edge of the Muslim World. A Political Memoir of Kyrgyzstan* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 96; Eugene Huskey and Gulnara Iskakova, “The Barriers to Intra-Opposition Cooperation in the Post-Communist World: Evidence from Kyrgyzstan,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 26, no. 3 (2011): 253; Radnitz, *Weapons of the Wealthy. Predatory Regimes and Elite-Led Protests in Central Asia*, 81.

46. Asel Doolotkeldieva and Elmira Nogoibaeva, “Razvitie partii i predvybornaya situatsiia v regionakh. Vzgl'yad regionalnykh predstavitelei partii,” *Polevoe issledovanie*, Natsional'nyi institut strategicheskikh issledovaniy Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki, *Predstavitel'stvo Instituta Fridriha Eberta v Kyrgyzskoi Respublike*, 2014, accessed July 29, 2019, <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/bischkek/11507.pdf>

47. Juraev, “The Evolving Role of Political Parties in Kyrgyz Republic,” 29.

48. Eugene Huskey and David Hill, “Regionalism, Personalism, Ethnicity, and Violence: Parties and Voter Preference in the 2010 Parliamentary Election in Kyrgyzstan,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 29, no. 3 (2013): 241; Iqbalzhan Mirsaitov (political scientist, independent expert), in interview with the author, August 28, 2019 (On file with the author)

49. Huskey and Hill, “Regionalism, Personalism, Ethnicity, and Violence: Parties and Voter Preference in the 2010 Parliamentary Election in Kyrgyzstan,” 242-43.

deputy groups formations during the term of office of newly elected deputies blurred those distinctions.⁵⁰

Consequentially, constitutional changes have not resulted in republic's quick advance in the direction of the consolidation of democracy. According to the Bertelsmann Foundation Transformation Index, in 2012, 2014, and 2016 Kyrgyzstan was attributed to the category of highly defective democracies, and only in 2018, it got its place among defective democracies.⁵¹ In this context, one of the interviewed experts admits that political regime in Kyrgyzstan is still a hybrid one, because, on the one hand, the government tries to follow democratic procedures and principles fixed in the constitution, but, on the other, there are some problems in its functioning, the most essential of which is that political parties in Kyrgyzstan are nominal being oriented at personalities, rather than ideologies.⁵² In the same vein, Head of the Law Department at Ala-Too International University in Bishkek Nurlan Ismailov argues that political regime in Kyrgyzstan can be defined as a "young democracy" where the main problems are in the spheres of party building, political culture, and generation of political views and ideas.⁵³

Presumably, it can be stated that the new constitution has reflected the majority of power centers, but it has not changed the nature of political actors. According to

50. Asel Doolotkeldieva and Alexander Wolters, "Uncertainty Perpetuated? The Pitfalls of a Weakly Institutionalized Party System in Kyrgyzstan," *Central Asian Affairs* 4 (2017): 41.

51. Bertelsmann Foundation Transformation Index, "Country Reports."

52. Interview with lecturer at one of the higher education institutions in Bishkek, August 22, 2019 (On file with the author)

53. Nurlan Ismailov (associate professor, head of the Law Department at Ala-Too International University), in interview with the author, August 23, 2019 (On file with the author)

Collins, transformations after social and political turbulence in Kyrgyzstan concerned superficial characteristics of the governance, but not necessarily the essence of the system and its agents.⁵⁴ Therefore, the nature of political competition in Kyrgyzstan can be characterized as disagreements on power distribution between different political actors, rather than the type of public politics. In this respect, independent expert Iqbalzhan Mirsaitov highlighted that Kyrgyzstani political actors' aspiration of power was determined by distribution of state resources, rather than nation building.⁵⁵

Furthermore, this informal competition has three negative consequences. First, the establishment of the atmosphere of mutual distrust between political actors. The facts of frequent intra-party collisions, schisms, as well as members that flow from one party to another or from opposition camp to pro-government can be considered as manifestations of what Walle calls "tipping game".⁵⁶ That is attributed to the democratizing states where political actors in the absence of elaborated programs and as a result of asymmetry and uncertainty of information regarding the actions of their counterparts are free of responsibilities with respect to their interactions to get the political power.⁵⁷

Consequently, this lack of trust determines the second characteristic of the informal nature of political parties in Kyrgyzstan, such as the degradation of political opposition that is characterized by Huskey as "political activity" rather than stable

54. Collins, "After the Kyrgyz Spring: Challenges to Democratic Deepening," 24.

55. Iqbalzhan Mirsaitov (political scientist, independent expert), in interview with the author, August 28, 2019 (On file with the author)

56. Van de Walle, "Tipping games: When do Opposition Parties Coalesce?" in *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition*, ed. Andreas Schedler (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2006), 84.

57. Walle, "Tipping games: When do Opposition Parties Coalesce?" 83-84.

formal institution due to permanent defections based on personal ambitions, which blur the cleavage between the government and opposition.⁵⁸ This aspect is emphasized by an associate professor at the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University who claims that there is no differences between political agendas of sitting authorities and opposition groups, because the essence of the political struggle in Kyrgyzstan is to get a public post that provides an access to the state recourses.⁵⁹

From this perspective, the fact that after the revolution of 2010 the representatives of the Interim Government did not create a coalition, but rather contested each other can be considered not as a realization of their power potential, but rather in terms of Walle as a “collective action dilemma” – inability to cooperate on the basis of medium- and long-term policy strategies.⁶⁰ In this context, cooperation against the monopolization of power by one actor can be considered as a means of political survival.⁶¹ Whereas following disintegration aims at the maximization of personal benefits from the favorable circumstances. In this respect, Juraev indicates that the absence of alliance between the members of the Interim Government during the parliamentary elections of 2010 was aimed to distribute the governmental positions after the elections.⁶² This statement is supported by the findings of Marat, according to which the only consensus achieved by the members of the Interim Government was not

58. Eugene Huskey, “The Changing Role of the Opposition in Postcommunist Kyrgyzstan,” *CASI Working Paper*, October 2011, https://www.auca.kg/uploads/CASI/Working_Papers/WP_Huskey.pdf

59. Interview with political scientist, associate professor at the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, August 16, 2019 (On file with the author)

60. Walle, “Tipping games: When do Opposition Parties Coalesce?” 86.

61. Huskey, “The Changing Role of the Opposition in Postcommunist Kyrgyzstan”

62. Juraev, “The Evolving Role of Political Parties in Kyrgyz Republic,” 27.

in the sphere of public politics and a strategy of state development, but the necessity to provide the window of opportunity to take offices in the system of state regulation.⁶³

Third, political parties are being commercialized when the priority in the party lists for the elections is given to a wealthier candidate able to provide the necessary number of votes for the party⁶⁴ that limits in access of talent representatives of younger generation of politicians.⁶⁵ According to Marat, the factions of political parties in the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan consist of three groups: a) famous politicians with strong financial basis who make decisions; b) a wide pool of middle-size entrepreneurs and former government officials who follow the decisions of the first group; c) a small group of people with ideological preference.⁶⁶

Summing up, it is necessary to underline that political parties in Kyrgyzstan are based on the private politics practices of interaction between political actors who consider them as mechanisms for satisfying personal interests. Virtually, political parties can be considered as extractive institutions based on the logic of creation and distribution of rents within a small group of political actors that limits the access of grass-roots members to the process of party decision making and the opportunities for any innovations and development.

This fact determines two interrelated effects. First, political party programmes do not matter in the relations between parties when their members flow from one party

63. Marat, "Kyrgyzstan: A Parliamentary System Based on Inter-Elite Consensus," 333-34.

64. Doolotkeldieva and Wolters, "Uncertainty Perpetuated? The Pitfalls of a Weakly Institutionalized Party System in Kyrgyzstan," 41; Huskey, "The Changing Role of the Opposition in Postcommunist Kyrgyzstan"

65. Huskey and Iskakova, "The Barriers to Intra-Opposition Cooperation in the Post-Communist World: Evidence from Kyrgyzstan," 246.

66. Marat, 336-37.

to another one pursuing their private interests. Second, political actors pursuing their interests do not trust each other taking into account the absence of ideational restrictions on their actions.

Meanwhile, it is noteworthy that despite constitutional changes aimed to block monopolization of power by one political group or person and de jure reflect the existing de facto spectrum of political power in Kyrgyzstan the nature of political actors has not been transformed.

Peculiarities of interaction between political actors and their constituencies in Kyrgyzstan

This section argues that in Kyrgyzstan, the interaction between the political actors and their constituencies is undermined by reduction of symbolic dimension in their interaction. This argument is grounded on the propositions within the framework of Tilly's state-citizen interaction concept of democracy with appealing to the concept of symbolic capital by Bourdieu. First, the relations between political actors and their constituencies are strongly determined, on the one hand, by neopatrimonial links presuming private politics practices, and by inefficiency of state institutions, on the other. Second, the absence of visible changes in the functioning of state institutions since 2010 has led to decreasing level of popular trust / recognition due to corruption of political actors, but not due to the dissatisfaction with democracy as a political regime.

Taking into account that the political parties in Kyrgyzstan are not based on elaborated programs, their mobilization capacities should have another source. According to experts, such a source is neopatrimonial or patron-client link between

leaders and their constituencies⁶⁷ that is perceived by the latter as mechanism of dealing with a corrupt system of government that cannot meet the needs of the population.⁶⁸ Arguably, the choice of the neopatrimonial alternative to the ideational dimension can be explained by two factors. On the one hand, political actors can effectively pursue their interests following widespread norms of solidarity in the society. On the other hand, these neopatrimonial practices let them continue acting within rent-seeking practices using a rhetoric of social welfare. These statements are based on the following logic of analysis of the existing data.

First, the correlation provided between the description of local communities functioning in Kyrgyzstan made by Radnitz, Reeves, Ismailbekova, and Beyer, on the one hand, and Tilly's definition of trust networks on the other, let define the former as trust networks. According to Tilly, trust networks not involved in public politics have two main characteristics: a) they interact with state institutions with respect to paying taxes, education, medical services, working at state-owned organizations and institutions, appealing to law enforcement and courts, as well as participating in elections; b) they put their common values, collective support, enterprises and

67. Huskey and Iskakova, "The Barriers to Intra-Opposition Cooperation in the Post-Communist World: Evidence from Kyrgyzstan," 250; Marat, "Kyrgyzstan: A Parliamentary System Based on Inter-Elite Consensus," 250; Doolotkeldieva and Wolters, "Uncertainty Perpetuated? The Pitfalls of a Weakly Institutionalized Party System in Kyrgyzstan," 37; Radnitz, *Weapons of the Wealthy. Predatory Regimes and Elite-Led Protests in Central Asia*, 71.

68. Aksana Ismailbekova, "Performing Democracy. State-Making through Patronage in Kyrgyzstan," in *Ethnographies of the State in Central Asia. Performing Politics*, ed. Madeleine Reeves, Johan Rasanayagam, and Judith Beyer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 80-81, 93.

resources at risk to others.⁶⁹ The evidences of these facts are provided in the research by Reeves, Beyer and Ismailbekova.

So, according to Reeves and Beyer, the image of the state in local communities they studied in Kyrgyzstan is associated with the source of formal authority that is manifested in necessity to appeal to certain state institutions for formal permissions, and documents.⁷⁰

In turn, Ismailbekova provides an analysis of the peculiarities of parliamentary election campaign in Vostok village in 2007. The representativeness of this case study for the research is based on the fact that despite the dominant position of pro-presidential party “Ak-Zhol” in that year the mechanisms of patron-client relations were still salient. According to her findings, firstly, political parties that competed for the votes in the village used the same set of promises regarding mainly socio-economic aspects of the community’s life that correlated with the general quest on behalf of the residents.⁷¹ However, the second finding by Ismailbekova indicates that socio-economic promises, as well as material assistance are not sufficient to get loyalty in a community. The second element is the fact of candidates’ integration into the local trust network, to be a “native son” with delegated authorities on behalf of the community to interact with an unfair and corrupt government.⁷² This finding corresponds with the

69. Charles Tilly, *Trust and Rule* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 6-7.

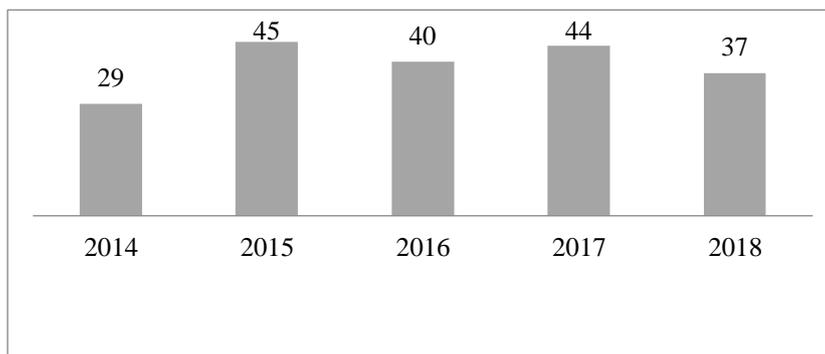
70. Beyer, “There is this law...” Performing the State in the Kyrgyz Courts of Elders,” 110, Madeleine Reeves, “The Ashar-State: Communal Commitment and State Elicitation in Rural Kyrgyzstan,” in *Paradox of Power. The Logics of State Weakness in Eurasia*, ed. John Heathershaw and Edward Schatz (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017), 225.

71. Ismailbekova, “Performing Democracy. State-Making through Patronage in Kyrgyzstan,” 83.

72. Ismailbekova, 83, 88.

statement by McMann that elaboration of legitimacy criteria is a two-way street by the leaders and their constituencies – the latter evaluate and adopt promoted by credible leaders’ ideas from the standpoints of perspectives to realize material interests, as well as moral commitments.⁷³ In their turn, these findings as well as the fact indicated by Ismailbekova that elections were the only period when many politicians appeared in the village,⁷⁴ can be used to explain swings in the level of public positive opinion about parties before, during and after the year of national election campaigns (in 2015 and 2017) deducted from the surveys conducted by the International Republican Institute.⁷⁵

Figure 1. The dynamics of positive opinion of Kyrgyzstani citizens about the work of political parties (%)



Source: International Republican Institute, 2018, <https://www.iri.org>

The third finding by Ismailbekova is that the infringements of law in favor of “native son” in the form of agitation during the day of elections, voting without identification documents, as well as distribution of unused ballots between representatives of parties presented during the process of votes counting were not

73. Kelly M. McMann, “Developing State Legitimacy: The Credibility of Messengers and the Utility, Fit, and Success of Ideas,” *Comparative Politics* 48, no. 4 (July 2016): 539.

74. Ismailbekova, “Performing Democracy. State-Making through Patronage in Kyrgyzstan,” 82.

75. “Public Opinion Survey. Residents of Kyrgyzstan. November 22 – December 4, 2018,” International Republican Institute, accessed July 8, 2019, https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/february_2019_kyrgyzstan_poll.pdf

considered by the local community to be as such due to the fact that they did not contradict the community sentiments of solidarity and loyalty to provide support to their “native son”.⁷⁶ This fact is supported by the findings of Radnitz, who asserts that the leaders of communities where he conducted his research were of the view that breach of the state law was less significant, in comparison with departure from community norms, providing the example of the cases when the facts of recruiting of young men in Islamist groups were settled within the community without attracting the attention of the law enforcement.⁷⁷

Accordingly, patron-client relations have two consequences. The first one is the significance of symbolic capital of trust to “native son” to foster the legitimacy of political actors in the view of their constituencies. The second one is the ineffectiveness of formal state institutions – in terms of Radnitz “subversive clientalism”.⁷⁸ From the perspective of the first one, applying the concepts of symbolic capital by Bourdieu and state-citizen interaction concept of democracy by Tilly it is necessary to provide the correlation between the research by Radnitz and Marat. According to the former, there is a social quest that their “native sons” being in the status of deputies ought to help their constituencies not only through passing the legislation, but also through their personal spending that is perceived as distributive justice combined with symbolic gestures of participating in important local events.⁷⁹ In turn, the findings by Marat are representative in the aspect that the deputies of Zhogorku Kenesh try to follow social

76. Ismailbekova, “Performing Democracy. State-Making through Patronage in Kyrgyzstan,” 83, 88, 89.

77. Radnitz, *Weapons of the Wealthy. Predatory Regimes and Elite-Led Protests in Central Asia*, 50-51.

78. Radnitz, 82.

79. Radnitz, 85-86.

expectations in the sphere of private politics to maintain the allegiance of the electorate in their communities that is reflected in both their personal investments and discussions of the needs of local communities including material and symbolic ones (for example, repairing of objects of social infrastructure or celebrating the anniversary of representatives of local outstanding people) during parliamentary sessions.⁸⁰

Thus, political actors prevent involvement of trust networks into public politics pursuing their rent-seeking behavior supplemented by sporadic manifestations of their community commitments necessary to secure symbolic capital through nominal adherence to the “homology principle”. Taking into consideration the atmosphere of uncertainty in the interaction between political actors, the turn to the formal, inclusive institutions or in terms of Pierson exit from “path dependence” could be made only if the rationale of this measure were obvious for all political actors, when the costs of this measure were less than its benefits.⁸¹

Therefore, state institutions have remained very weak in providing public goods for the population. The evidence that justifies this statement can be traced from the ethnographic research by Beyer of aksakal courts in villages of Talas oblast between 2005 and 2010. According to her findings, local people were dissatisfied with ineffective state institutions that do not provide law and order, do not “work for the people”, and are not a source of justice.⁸² Meanwhile, Montgomery has drawn the same

80. Marat, “Kyrgyzstan: A Parliamentary System Based on Inter-Elite Consensus,” 338.

81. Paul Pierson, “Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics,” *The American Political Science Review* 94, no. 2 (June 2000): 252, 258.

82. Judith Beyer, “There is this law...” *Performing the State in the Kyrgyz Courts of Elders*, in *Ethnographies of the State in Central Asia. Performing Politics*, ed. Madeleine Reeves, Johan Rasanayagam, and Judith Beyer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 116-18.

conclusion on the basis of his research results in the south of the republic in 2005. He reveals that his respondents are dissatisfied with the governance and that the uprisings in 2005 and 2010 were the manifestations of this dissatisfaction.⁸³ Moreover, the weakness of formal institutions in the circumstances of widespread neopatrimonial practices is salient so far. This statement is based on the data from Engvall who asserts that in Kyrgyzstan, the state is used by political actors in their private interests as a mechanism to protect or increase their wealth through managing the decision-making process and having immunity from prosecution that, in turn, has undermined the state's primary function to serve the population.⁸⁴ The interviewed experts admit this fact. So, an analyst at one of the state institutions asserts that political parties are bogged down in the interests of their leaders functioning in the atmosphere of irresponsibility and lack of state managers.⁸⁵ In the same vein are statements of Mirsaitov and Director of Research Institute for Islamic Studies Mametbek Myrzabaev. For instance, according to the former, state officials do not set national targets,⁸⁶ and in accordance with the opinion of the latter, there is a weak system of state administration in Kyrgyzstan, because state officials are dependent on informal interpersonal contradictions.⁸⁷ These

83. David W. Montgomery, "Islam beyond Democracy and State in Kyrgyzstan," 231-33.

84. Johan Engvall, "Why Are Public Offices Sold in Kyrgyzstan?" in *Kyrgyzstan beyond "Democracy Island" and "Failing State,"* ed. Marlene Laruelle and Johan Engvall (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 40-44.

85. Interview with analyst at the State Commission on Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, August 22, 2019 (On file with the author)

86. Iqbalzhan Mirsaitov (political scientist, independent expert), in interview with the author, August 28, 2019 (On file with the author)

87. Mametbek Myrzabaev (social scientist, PhD, director of Research Institute for Islamic Studies), in interview with the author, August 29, 2019 (On file with the author)

opinions are shared by the interviewed lecturer at one of the higher education institutions in Bishkek who claims that the key factor for establishment of a stable democracy in Kyrgyzstan is not new political personalities, rather strong institutions (courts, ministries, parties, and etc.) functioning within the system when all the branches of power are balanced.⁸⁸

Consequently, considering the results of existing research of the elections of 2010 and 2015, national parliamentary and local elections of 2016, it is necessary to underline the following tendencies of: a) declining trust of the population to politicians;⁸⁹ b) blurring the strong regional networks of support for parties due to commercialization of party lists.⁹⁰

These findings correspond with the results of the survey of young people at the age of 14-24 conducted by the GIZ in Kyrgyzstan in 2015 and the nationwide survey conducted by the International Republican Institute in 2018 on corruption. According to the former survey, young respondents do not trust state authorities as they are of the view that the state functions on the basis of corruption and nepotism.⁹¹ This fact is emphasized by researcher at the Institute for strategic Analysis and Prognosis under the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University Aman Saliev. He claims that Kyrgyzstani citizens are losing their trust in the state capacity due to state authorities' permanent initiating

88. Interview with lecturer at one of the higher education institutions in Bishkek, August 22, 2019 (On file with the author)

89. Huskey and Iskakova, "The Barriers to Intra-Opposition Cooperation in the Post-Communist World: Evidence from Kyrgyzstan," 243.

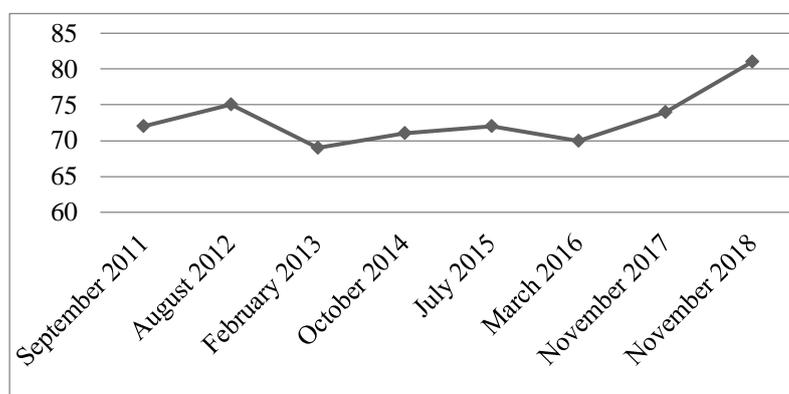
90. Doolotkeldieva and Wolters, "Uncertainty Perpetuated? The Pitfalls of a Weakly Institutionalized Party System in Kyrgyzstan," 40, 44.

91. Heide Möller-Slawinski and Marc Calmbach, "Youth in Kyrgyzstan Bridging Tradition and Modernity," Report, GIZ Kyrgyzstan, Project "Prospects for Young People," 2015, accessed July 29, 2019. <https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2015-en-youth-in-kyrgyzstan.pdf>

of reforms without definite positive results (mainly without changes for the better on the job market).⁹²

In turn, the results of the survey by the International Republican Institute indicate that corruption is a very big problem for the development of the state and perceived so by the largest number of people since 2011.⁹³ The dynamics can be presented in the following chart.

Figure 2. The dynamics of Kyrgyzstani citizens' perception of corruption as a big problem for the state (%)



Source: International Republican Institute, 2018, <https://www.iri.org>

Accordingly, the significance of corruption can be traced through the data of the International Republican Institute survey as of 2015, according to which on the eve of the parliamentary elections 38% of the respondents answered that the parties should eliminate corrupt practices, and 19% indicated that they should not betray the people.⁹⁴ Arguably, the negative attitude of people to corruption can be used to understand the

92. Aman Saliev (researcher, Institute for Strategic Analysis and Prognosis under the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University), in interview with the author, August 9, 2019 (On file with the author)

93. International Republican Institute, “Public Opinion Survey. Residents of Kyrgyzstan. November 22 – December 4, 2018.”

94. “Public Opinion Survey. Residents of Kyrgyzstan. February 10 – March 5, 2015,” International Republican Institute, accessed July 8, 2019, https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/2015-04-21_public_opinion_survey_residents_of_kyrgyzstan_february_10-march_5_2015.pdf

swings in the popularity of political actors after revealing their infringement the law and deep engagement in grand corruption deals. The contradictions between ex-president A. Atambayev and current president S. Jeenbekov reveal the same logic. Against the background of being accused in numerous cases of lawlessness, the popularity of the former dramatically went down compared with the latter in 2018 in contrast with 2017 that can be traced by the data of the International Republican Institute's surveys. So, in 2018, 31% of the respondents trusted A. Atambayev and 3% trusted S. Jeenbekov,⁹⁵ and in 2019 the former has only 3% of social support whereas the latter has been supported by 27% of the respondents.⁹⁶ However, according to research by McMann, Beyer, as well as data from social surveys, lack of trust to political actors does not correspond with lack of trust to democracy as a favorable political regime. As it is asserted by McMann, citizens of Kyrgyzstan perceive democratic procedures as legitimate due to the democratic ideas as such, but not because of the credibility of political actors who spread them.⁹⁷ Similarly, Beyer indicates the difference between people's perception of politics as a sphere of corruption, criminality, and nepotism on the one hand, and hope for future positive transformations in the state they associate with new virtually sacrosanct constitution, on the other.⁹⁸ Accordingly, the results from the social survey conducted by the International Republican Institute in Kyrgyzstan in 2018, 12% of the citizens of

95. International Republican Institute, "Public Opinion Survey Residents of Kyrgyzstan. November 22 – December 4, 2018."

96. See note 95 above.

97. McMann, "Developing State Legitimacy: The Credibility of Messengers and the Utility, Fit, and Success of Ideas," 552.

98. Judith Beyer, "Constitutional Faith, Law and Hope in Revolutionary Kyrgyzstan," *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 7, no. 1 (2015): 325.

Kyrgyzstan were satisfied with the way democracy was developing, and 37% indicated that they were somewhat satisfied with democracy.⁹⁹

Thus, it is necessary to underline that the logic of the functioning of political parties in Kyrgyzstan is defined by their neopatrimonial nature that includes both their symbolic obligations vis-à-vis the communities to make their voice heard by the central corrupt government, as well as opportunity to pursue personal benefits. However, this system of interaction determines the persisting inefficiency of the formal state institutions despite transformations in the legislation due to predominance of private politics practices, rather public ones presuming distancing of citizens from intensive cooperation with state institutions on the issues of public politics. In turn, this decreases trust of citizens towards political actors involved in corrupt practices although that coexists with their belief in democracy as suitable for Kyrgyzstan's political system. Therefore, it can be stated that political actors in Kyrgyzstan are facing the dilemma of reducing of their symbolic influence or their public recognition by in terms of Bourdieu breaching the "homology principle" within neopatrimonial networks, because of their reluctance to optimize the functioning of the formal institutions.

99. International Republican Institute, "Public Opinion Survey Residents of Kyrgyzstan. November 22 – December 4, 2018."

CHAPTER 3

ISLAMIC REVIVAL IN KYRGYZSTAN: IS THERE A NEXUS BETWEEN RELIGIOSITY AND ISLAMISM?

In recent years, the growing interest towards religion has become soundly established in the social life of Kyrgyzstan. The fact that religion is playing more and more important role in the society in Kyrgyzstan can be demonstrated on the basis of the data from the World Values Survey. If according to the data of 2003,¹⁰⁰ religion was a relevant aspect of life for 69.1% of the population,¹⁰¹ in 2011, this indicator grew to 84.8%.¹⁰² Considering that the majority of Kyrgyz citizens identify themselves as Muslims and perceive this religion as an integral part of their culture and national identity,¹⁰³ it can be concluded that the role of Islamic values in social life is high. As a result, research is conducted to find out the essence of this process.

This chapter rests on the argument that the growing interest towards Islam (Islamic revival) of Kyrgyz citizens, nevertheless, does not lead to mass radicalization. In turn, justification of the argument of this chapter encompasses two stages. The first

100. Despite the fact of crossing the line of the research period, the data as of 2003 is taken in order just to demonstrate the tendency of change.

101. "World Values Survey. Wave 4: 2000-2004," Online Data Analysis, World Values Survey, accessed August 8, 2019, <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp>

102. "World Values Survey. Wave 6: 2010-2014," Online Data Analysis, World Values Survey, accessed August 8, 2019, <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp>

103. Rouslan Jalil, "The Social Significance of Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia. The Case of Kyrgyzstan" in *Islam, Society, and Politics in Central Asia*, ed. Pauline Jones (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017), 4; David W. Montgomery, *Practicing Islam. Knowledge, Experience, and Social Navigation in Kyrgyzstan* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016), 149.

section argues that Islamic revival in Kyrgyzstan is very multi-faceted and complex. The second section argues, that there is no direct link between Islamic revival and Islamization of radicalism in Kyrgyzstan.

Islamic revival in Kyrgyzstan: implicit versus explicit manifestations

This section argues that there is growing public interest to Islam in Kyrgyzstan and it is very multi-faceted and complex. In turn, this argument is based on the following suppositions formulated in the framework of Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital. First, Islamic practices and new elements of culture from the Middle East manifested in clothes of the Kyrgyzstani Muslims can for some people be a form of objectification of their religiosity, rather for others – a pragmatic approach based on exploiting of the existing public connections of a religious person with honesty and sincerity in order to settle personal issues through gaining public recognition. Second, the “homology principle” determines the nature of functioning of Islamic charity organizations and local communities.

According to the statement by Montgomery, there are three main modes of Islamic discourses in Kyrgyzstan: a) *general* as common interest in Islamic principles; b) *traditional* that presumes syncretism of local pre-Islamic and Islamic values; c) *orthodox* based on the interpretations of Islamic dogmata in accordance with teachings originated from outside the region.¹⁰⁴ The first two types, according to Montgomery, involve most of the Muslim population of the Kyrgyz Republic and manifested in the attempts to fill the everyday life with meaning through religious

104. Montgomery, *Practicing Islam. Knowledge, Experience, and Social Navigation in Kyrgyzstan*, 90-91; David W. Montgomery, “Namaz, Wishing Trees, and Vodka: The Diversity of Religious Life in Central Asia,” in *Everyday Life in Central Asia: Past and Present*, ed. Jeff Sahadeo and Russell Zanca (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 355-56.

practices that do not necessarily change their lifestyle, rather presume openness and tolerance to various Islamic schools both Sunni and Shia and rejection of the idea of the establishment of an Islamic state.¹⁰⁵

In turn, it can be identified at least in two submodes of Islamic religiosity within the general mode of Islamic revival defined by Montgomery: a) pious adherence to Islamic norms; b) superficial adherence to Islamic norms. This statement rests on the analysis of answers of the experts interviewed and findings of research. Superficial essence of Islamic religiosity of the citizens is defined by Jalil. According to the findings of his research of the level of significance of Islam in Kyrgyzstan in 2011-2012, the growth of the number of religious institutions (mosques, madrasas, and etc.) in the republic does not necessarily presume conscious participation of people in religious practices (fasting, veiling, attendance of mosques, and etc.).¹⁰⁶ In the same vein, Ismailov emphasizes that in Kyrgyzstan, there is a process of religion regaining its pre-Soviet status in the society, that still presumes that faith is not conscious, but rather an emotional element of human mindset determining that many people participate in Friday namaz, because others do that unravelling their superficial attitude to this ritual.¹⁰⁷ This opinion correlates with the statement of an analyst at the State Commission on Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic that nowadays religiosity is a trend based on the intention to be like other people without critical attitude towards

105. Montgomery, *Practicing Islam. Knowledge, Experience, and Social Navigation in Kyrgyzstan*, 91.

106. Jalil, "The Social Significance of Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia," 3.

107. Nurlan Ismailov (associate professor, head of the Law Department at Ala-Too International University), in interview with the author, August 23, 2019 (On file with the author)

information getting from other people than from the Quran.¹⁰⁸ In turn, these opinions correspond with the information provided by the other interviewed experts who based on their research point out that only 1/3 of the interviewed Muslims follow all five Islamic precepts indicated in the Quran,¹⁰⁹ and pray five-time namaz.¹¹⁰

Meanwhile, besides religious objects construction and Islamic practices, there are other forms of objectification of religiosity in Kyrgyzstan, such as special clothes, when women begin wearing hijabs and niqabs, and men prefer skullcaps instead of traditional national clothes and headwear. According to McBrien's research in Bazaar Korgon town, these clothes are perceived by the people who wear them as the evidence of their being good and obedient Muslims that can be derived not from religious texts, but rather from popular soap operas.¹¹¹ In turn, they can be the manifestation either pious or superficial adherence to Islamic norms. For example, in accordance with the research conducted by the Search for Common Ground, demonstration of religiosity in the appearance of Muslims can in some cases just be a manifestation of their intentions to follow fashionable tendencies out of touch with the necessity to understand the essence of Islam tenets and transformation of the inner life in the direction of spiritual improvement.¹¹² In turn, some experts interviewed by the author also supported such

108. Interview with analyst at the State Commission on Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, August 22, 2019 (On file with the author)

109. Interview with analyst at one of the state research institutes, August 19, 2019 (On file with the author)

110. Interview with lecturer at one of the higher education institutions in Bishkek, August 22, 2019 (On file with the author)

111. Julie McBrien, *From Belonging to Belief. Modern Secularism and the Construction of Religion in Kyrgyzstan* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017), 164.

112. "The Situation of Religious and Violent Extremism in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). Baseline Research. Major

assertions. So, the associate professor at the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University points out that some daavatchi do not know the peculiarities of religious attributes using Christian prayer beads and wearing Jewish skullcaps.¹¹³ Meanwhile, the analyst at one of the state research institutes asserts that some young women use hijab as a tool to get married, and young men involved in trade use daavatchi style clothes to increase the number of their customers as this clothes is an indicator of their honesty and piety, but in reality they do not follow this lifestyle.¹¹⁴ In this respect, Mirsaitov claims that, in Kyrgyzstan, religion is sometimes used as an instrument to gain a social status, i.e. as a social lift that creates a new social unit – a practicing Muslim influencing economy and challenging bad practice.¹¹⁵

However, on the other hand, these are not the characteristics of the whole Muslim population of the Kyrgyz Republic. Arguably, that is well manifested in the case of spreading by one infamous educational foundation and supported by ex-president of Kyrgyzstan A. Atambayev of the social billboards. They displayed preference of national heritage in women dress to new Islamic fashion craze related to radical Islamists movements. However, the reaction of the society was controversial. For instance, according to Tucker, the national minorities in Aravan town perceived those billboards as indicators that Kyrgyz ethnicity is the main channel to become a full

Findings,” Kyrgyzstan Reports, Search for Common Ground, November 2015, accessed August 18, 2019, <https://www.sfcg.org/tag/kyrgyzstan-reports/page/2/>

113. Interview with political scientist, associate professor at the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, August 16, 2019 (On file with the author)

114. Interview with analyst at one of the state research institutes, August 19, 2019 (On file with the author)

115. Iqbalzhan Mirsaitov (political scientist, independent expert), in interview with the author, August 28, 2019 (On file with the author)

member of the Kyrgyzstani society.¹¹⁶ On the other hand, the reaction of women on this implicit criticism of their way of dressing indicated that clothes are one of the markers of their religiosity, the way of its objectification. There an explicit link was manifested between hijab and such qualities of its bearers as morality, honesty, and purity.¹¹⁷ It is noteworthy that every expert indicated in the interview that those billboards had been an ill-considered initiative of the state authority that did not lead to any positive results.

In these circumstances, the notion of a “good Muslim” has very vague characteristics combining both internal and external elements that should not necessarily go hand in hand: behavior in accordance with moral commitments and without bad practice, visiting Friday prayers and participating in building mosques,¹¹⁸ as well as dressing adequately. In this respect, Louw basing on her research admits that people at large do not know how to explain the nature of a pious Muslim, because it is an overwhelming notion for them that can include any ideas and practices related to Islam as sources of moral inspiration.¹¹⁹ In turn, this statement is supported by Fadil and Fernando who argue that observation of ethical norms that are universal

116. Noah Tucker, “What Happens When Your Town Becomes an ISIS Recruiting Ground? Lessons from Central Asia about Vulnerability, Resistance, and the Danger of Ignoring Perceived Injustice,” *CAP Paper*, no. 209, July 2018, <https://centralasiaprogram.org/archives/12497>

117. Emil Nasritdinov and Nurgul Esenamanova, “The War of Billboards: Hijab, Secularism, and Public Space in Bishkek,” in *Being Muslim in Central Asia: Practices, Politics, and Identities*, ed. Marlene Laruelle (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2018), 234.

118. Montgomery, *Practicing Islam. Knowledge, Experience, and Social Navigation in Kyrgyzstan*, 100.

119. Maria Louw, “Even Honey May Become Bitter When There Is Too Much of It: Islam and the Struggle for a Balanced Existence in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan,” *Central Asian Survey* 32, no. 4 (2013): 516.

prescriptions both for religious and not religious people can be manifestations of Islamic piety of the former.¹²⁰

Meanwhile, it is necessary to highlight that Islamic practices and values can constitute the moral basis for realization of the “homology principle” generated by the cooperation within local communities. For instance, McBrien in her research reveals this moral aspect of Islamic revival in Kyrgyzstan through analyzing the social perceptions generated by the construction of a mosque in Bazaar-Korgon town. According to her findings, the process of mosque construction besides being an indicator of “obedient Muslims” although not necessary presuming strong religious commitments, was a factor of building solidarity and trust within the community.¹²¹

In turn, the second aspect of symbolism of mosque construction determined by McBrien is its developmental nature in the context of building of new social infrastructure in a degrading district of the town.¹²² This developmental aspect of cooperation on the basis of common religious dispositions is highlighted by McGlinchey considering the establishment of Islamic charity organizations or collective, ashar based activities within the local communities for providing the vulnerable social strata with public goods and services in the circumstances of inefficient state institutions.¹²³ This fact is emphasized by the interviewed expert at one of the state research institutes, who states that “Adep Bashaty” charity foundation is

120. Nadia Fadil and Mayanthi Fernando, “Rediscovering the “everyday” Muslim Notes on an anthropological divide,” *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 5, no. 2 (2015): 64.

121. McBrien, *From Belonging to Belief. Modern Secularism and the Construction of Religion in Kyrgyzstan*, 143, 145.

122. McBrien, 143.

123. McGlinchey, *Chaos, Violence, Dynasty. Politics and Islam in Central Asia*, 37, 106.

gaining considerable popularity among Muslims by providing financial assistance to Muslims mainly in the issues of education, as well as financial support of poor people.¹²⁴

Virtually, providing correlations with the research by Reeves on the essence of principle of *ashar-state* in Kyrgyzstan, as well as by Beyer on *aksakal courts state institutions* in this context are perceived as the source of formal authority, formal permissions, and documents, when the most important issues are settled informally. The validity of this fact can be justified by the data from the case-study research by Khamidov in Nookat and Kara-Suu in 2008. There the rejection of the local officials of the former to organize the celebration of Orozo-Ait instead of the celebration of Senior Citizens Day on the central square in accordance with the prescriptions of the central authorities claiming that adepts of “Hizb ut-Tahrir” would use the celebration of Orozo-Ait to advance their radical ideas resulted in mass uprisings. Unofficial cooperation of the representatives of the local administration, security forces, as well as clerical leaders in Kara-Suu resulted in a compromise decision of public festivity of Senior Citizens Day organized by the local administration with unofficial involvement of funding by ordinary Muslim people in the context of their celebration of Orozo-Ait.¹²⁵

In general, it can be stated that the process of Islamic revival in Kyrgyzstan is taking place in the form of growing religiosity in the aspect of growing salience of Islam for the citizens manifested in: a) their increased attention to the external signs of Muslim religiosity, when they can openly observe religious rites and choose the way of

124. Interview with analyst at one of the state research institutes, August 19, 2019 (On file with the author)

125. Alisher Khamidov, “When Religion Resorts to Violence. Explaining the Spatial Variation in Religious-Based Mobilization in Kyrgyzstan,” in *Islam, Society, and Politics in Central Asia*, ed. Poulina Jones and Douglas Northrop (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 2017), 212, 217-18.

dressings; b) piety as adherence to moral values and community solidarity ethos. This process is complex for two reasons. First, external and internal manifestations of religiosity do not necessarily go hand-in-hand. Thus, a way of dressing and observation of Islamic practices can be used by citizens at least for one of three determined in the research purposes: a) genuine desire to follow the Islamic tenets; b) fashionable trend; c) dealing with private issues basing on the existing correlation between religiosity and honesty. So, it is impossible to create a portrait of a “good” Muslim judging exclusively by external manifestations of his / her religiosity that can encompass any of three abovementioned intentions. In other words, using terminology of Bourdieu, it is impossible to provide strong watershed between pious believers and “calculating cynics”.

Second, Islamic values implying universal moral principles of honesty and trustworthiness create the symbolic basis for operation of Islamic charity organizations and cooperation within local communities / trust networks on the basis of the “homology principle”.

Islamic revival and Islamization of radicalism in Kyrgyzstan: are they bound one to the other?

This section argues that there is no direct link between Islamic revival and Islamization of radicalism in Kyrgyzstan and rests on the theoretical conclusions by Roy about Islamic revival as a multifaceted process generated within the society that cannot be reduced to the activity of radical movements converting Islam into political ideology of an Islamic state.¹²⁶ In its turn, this theoretical approach combined with the concept of trust networks by Tilly makes possible to provide the analysis of the situation in

126. Roy, *Globalized Islam. The Search for a New Ummah*, 2,4,5,7.

Kyrgyzstan through the elaboration of the following arguments. First, there is no social request for changing the secular government for a theocratic one, but increasing religiosity of the Muslims who put forward the demands for a moral and trustworthy type of politicians and just government. Second, Islamization of radicalism encompasses an element of mutual trust on behalf of adepts of Islamism.

It is necessary to note that there are two opposed set of data provided by both independent researchers and international organizations regarding the social request for a theocratic state on the basis of sharia law, according to which there is either a significant percent of population adhered to the sharia law, or there is a demand for a justice in the context of moral governance.

The former set of data is constituted by the results of the surveys conducted by three groups of independent researchers in 2006, 2007, 2012 and 2018. Collins and Owen conducted their focus-group research in Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan in 2006 aimed at revealing the nexus between Muslim religiosity and regime preferences. According to their data, most of the surveyed 892 Muslim respondents in Kyrgyzstan – 50.4% preferred Islamic alternatives to secular democracy, i.e. Islamic democracy, Islamic sharia, and Islamic sharia with rights for non-Muslims proving researchers' hypothesis that more religious Muslims prefer more religious political regime.¹²⁷ However, taking into account the examples provided in the research of the most popular answers among both Kyrgyzstani and Azerbaijani groups of respondents regarding the nature of Islamic democracy, there is evidence of their superficial speculation on this issue. So, most of the respondents associate Islamic democracy with such conditions as legalization of polygamy, enforcing or freedom of wearing hijab, banning non-Islamic

127. Kathleen Collins and Erica Owen, "Islamic Religiosity and Regime Preferences: Explaining Support for Democracy and Political Islam in Central Asia and the Caucasus," *Political Research Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (September 2012): 503, 506.

missionaries, and favoring sharia law, while opposing religious leaders in the state based on the premise that such a state should secure Muslim morality.¹²⁸ Lack of understanding of sharia law is also admitted by one of the interviewed expert, who indicated that according to his experience of communication with adepts of “Hizb ut-Tahrir”, mostly they know neither the essence of Caliphate administration nor providing differences between Shia and Sunni versions, nor different types of jihad.¹²⁹

The second research was conducted by Barbara Junisbai, Azamat Junisbai, and Bourzghan Zhussupov in two stages – in 2007 and 2012. According to it, as of 2012, 10.34% of the interviewed respondents associated good government with the implementation of sharia, whereas in 2007, this indicator was 7.17%.¹³⁰ Still, the results of this research point out three findings from regression analysis. First, in 2007, correlation was found between the perception of the respondents as far as income differences in the country and their lower adherence to Islamic practices (Friday prayers).¹³¹ However, in 2012, a correlation between the respondents’ negative evaluation of the level of fairness of the economic system of the republic and the growth of salience of daily prayers was identified.¹³² At last, both in 2007 and 2012 there was a positive correlation between the respondents’ perceptions of income differences and

128. Collins and Owen, “Islamic Religiosity and Regime Preferences: Explaining Support for Democracy and Political Islam in Central Asia and the Caucasus,” 501.

129. Interview with political scientist, associate professor at the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, August 16, 2019 (On file with the author)

130. Barbara Junisbai, Azamat Junisbai, and Bourzghan Zhussupov, “Two Countries, Five Year: Islam in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan through the Lens of Public Opinion Surveys,” 46.

131. Barbara Junisbai, Azamat Junisbai, and Bourzghan Zhussupov, 52.

132. See note 131 above.

their support of the idea of establishment of sharia law.¹³³ In this case, it is necessary to provide here the opinion of Myrzabaev who asserts that it is wrong to say that Islam is filling the ideological vacuum in Kyrgyzstan, because people are mostly pragmatic, they believe that Islamic political system will provide “employment, pensions, wages, justice, and social welfare compared to secular one.”¹³⁴ “Moral religiosity” of the Muslims in Kyrgyzstan is reflected in their understanding of the nature of a good government as a government that is aimed to support the social order on the basis of moral principles.¹³⁵ As a case in point, according to the report of the International Crisis Group, there is growing number of citizens that address the representatives of the Islamic clergy to solve their social problems in accordance with the principle of justice being assured that only Islamic precepts contain it.¹³⁶

The third research conducted in 2018 by a group of scholars on the basis of Research Institute for Islamic Studies provided the figure of 33% of respondents who were adhered to the idea of sharia law in the republic.¹³⁷ However, it is necessary to emphasize two crucial aspects. First, the age category: most of the respondents were

133. Barbara Junisbai, Azamat Junisbai, and Bourzghan Zhussupov, “Two Countries, Five Year: Islam in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan through the Lens of Public Opinion Surveys,” 57.

134. Mametbek Myrzabaev (social scientist, PhD, director of the Research Institute for Islamic Studies), in interview with the author, August 29, 2019 (On file with the author)

135. Montgomery, “Islam beyond Democracy and State in Kyrgyzstan,” 239.

136. “Kyrgyzstan: State Fragility and Radicalization,” Briefing, no. 83, Crisis Group Europe and Central Asia, October 2016, <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/b083-kyrgyzstan-state-fragility-and-radicalisation.pdf>

137. Emil Nasritdinov, et al., “Vulnerability and Resilience of Young People in Kyrgyzstan to Radicalization, Violence and Extremism: Analysis across Five Domains,” *CAP Paper*, no. 213, January 2019, <https://centralasiaprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/CAP-paper-213-Emil-Nasritdinov.pdf>

under 23 years old (87%), and 25% of the respondents were students of madrasa. So, they do not represent neither the whole population, nor youth in totality, and moreover, have been more introduced to Islamic norms. Second, most of the surveyed: a) do not sympathize with Salafi – movement providing the idea of returning to the original Islam of the seventh century without any novelties reflecting the contemporary world; b) express support to hypothetical candidates for state positions with religious views, rather than with secular ones. 29% of the respondents would strongly and 31% presumably support for a religious person in the elections; c) demonstrate more trust to religious organizations, rather secular state institutions.¹³⁸

Therefore, the detailed analysis of the research emphasize the number of people adhered to the idea of sharia law that can indicate it is mainly perceived by the population as a symbol of justice and there is stronger demand for moral and just government, rather than introduction of sharia as a legal basis for state regulation taking into account: a) found correlation between people’s dissatisfaction with economic realities and adherence to religious practices and the idea of sharia law; b) low level of religious knowledge of the essence of sharia law. In this respect, Saliev emphasizes that this situation is determined by the fact there is no well-organized movement in Kyrgyzstan that has clearly elaborated idea regarding Islamic principles in politics, i.e. building of Islamic Caliphate, in contrast to just sporadical claims and actions of certain public activists and theologians.¹³⁹ In the same vein, Mirsaitov asserts that if radical

138. Nasritdinov, et al., “Vulnerability and Resilience of Young People in Kyrgyzstan to Radicalization, Violence and Extremism: Analysis across Five Domains.”

139. Aman Saliev (researcher, Institute for Strategic Analysis and Prognosis under the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University), in interview with the author, August 9, 2019 (On file with the author)

ideas were popular in Kyrgyzstan, radical groups had come to power during the socio-political turbulences in 2005 or in 2010.¹⁴⁰

These findings are supported by data from other surveys. For instance, in accordance with the results of the survey conducted by the International Republican Institute in Kyrgyzstan in 2016, 40% of the citizens of Kyrgyzstan consider that it is necessary to carry out certain reforms in governance, which, however, should not lead to destruction of the existing political system, and 15% of the respondents indicate that the actors, who aimed to do so, constitute the main threat to national security.¹⁴¹ The credibility of these results are supported by their correlation with the results of the social research by the experts of the Pew Research Center that conducted public opinion survey of the social and political views of Muslims in 39 states from 2008 to 2012. According to its figures, in Kyrgyzstan, there is only 10% of the respondents considered that religious leaders should have the overwhelming influence on politics, whereas 36% of respondents were assured that religious leaders should influence politics, but not overwhelmingly; meanwhile, and 51% of the respondents pointed out that the sphere of politics should be closed for any religious influence.¹⁴²

In general, it is virtually impossible to create a social portrait of a potential adept of Islamist ideas, because there can be both structural (socio-economic or political), as

140. Iqbalzhan Mirsaitov (political scientist, independent expert), in interview with the author, August 28, 2019 (On file with the author)

141. "Public Opinion Survey Residents of Kyrgyzstan. March 7-20, 2016," International Republican Institute, accessed August 8, 2019, http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/public-iri_poll_presentation-kyrgyzstan_march_2016_eng.pdf

142. "The World's Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society," Report, Pew Research Center, April 30, 2013, accessed August 8, 2019, <http://www.pewforum.org/files/2013/04/worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-full-report.pdf>

well as subjective (psychological) reasons and determinants to join radical groups. In this case Myrzabaev indicates that in Kyrgyzstan, there is no tendency of mass radicalization, there are certain groups – ethnic, young, marginal, and etc., which are radicalizing.¹⁴³ However, for mass radicalization of the population it is necessary to combine many factors.¹⁴⁴ This statement is supported by the expert at one of the state research institutes, who believes that only certain groups within the process of Islamic revival in Kyrgyzstan will be radicalized due to various reasons, drivers, and other factors.¹⁴⁵

These factors and drivers of radicalization can be divided into two main blocks – external and internal. Radicalization of certain people can be caused by their experience of discrimination by the state or / and in the society. In this aspect, the two representative research are the ones conducted by Montgomery and Tucker. According to the research by the former, the inefficiency of the state institutions manifested in the forms of shadow economy, criminal outrage, low capacity of law enforcement bodies, people cease to recognize the legitimacy and relevance of the state to their lives disengaging themselves from it in the religious communities where they can solve the problems of their everyday life. There is only a very small number of people who actually wants to replace the current government with a theocratic one.¹⁴⁶ In the same vein, Mirsaitov claims that the government’s failure to solve social issues such as access

143. Mametbek Myrzabaev, (social Scientist, PhD, director of Research Institute for Islamic Studies), in interview with the author, August 29, 2019 (On file with the author)

144. See note 143 above.

145. Interview with analyst at one of the state research institutes, August 19, 2019 (On file with the author)

146. Montgomery, “Islam beyond Democracy and State in Kyrgyzstan,” 237.

to medical services, education, and etc. can create premises for some people's anger and dissemination of radical ideas under the tenets of Islam.¹⁴⁷

In turn, internal drivers of radicalization are mainly connected with two factors: a) psychological problems of people; b) the lack of religious literacy, when religious information is acquired by Muslims from their friends and relatives without strong profound data. In this respect, the research by Tucker is of importance for this chapter. Tucker's findings indicate that both some descendents from well-off families and marginalized ones, as well as participants of criminal groups disillusioned by the status quo in their life are mainly susceptible to the radical ideas of establishment of an Islamic state through violence.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, according to Tucker, interpersonal ties between recruits and their fellow citizens are more significant triggers for perception of radical views, rather than their religious affiliations both in the case of radicalization and preventing them from joining radical movements.¹⁴⁹

This statement is supported by the data from the research of the ways and peculiarities of Kyrgyzstan citizens' involvement into radical movements conducted by the Search for Common Ground. According to it, 47% of respondents trust the information that they get from social media either because it is written in understandable terms and contains citations from the Quran or because the messages contain images or videos with acquainted fellow citizens.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, those

147. Iqbalzhan Mirsaitov (political scientist, independent expert), in interview with the author, August 28, 2019 (On file with the author)

148. Tucker, "What Happens When Your Town Becomes an ISIS Recruiting Ground? Lessons from Central Asia about Vulnerability, Resistance, and the Danger of Ignoring Perceived Injustice."

149. See note 148 above.

150. Inga Sikorskaya, "Messages, images and media channels promoting youth radicalization in Kyrgyzstan," Analytical Report, Search for Common Ground, January

respondents with absence of basic knowledge of the Quran and possibility of their different interpretations trust any information from social media, whereas those who have religious education see the distortions of the Holy book by the authors of the Islamists' messages.¹⁵¹ In this respect, Mirsaitov claims that Islam is a very favorable tool for conscious manipulation, because each person can interpret its Holy books – Quran and Sunna basing on his / her s experience and knowledge that determines the fact that the threat is emanating not from Islam, but from radical groups and those who do not understand or interpret Islamic dogmata properly.¹⁵²

Thus, the analysis of the possible causal links between Islamic revival and prospects for radicalization in Kyrgyzstan allows for the conclusion that there is no such causality although there can be some correlations. First, it is necessary to indicate that the data from both applied and academic research indicate that Islamic revival in the republic in the aspect of public attitudes to the state authorities is accompanied by claims for moral and trustworthy political leaders and government able to solve socio-economic problems that, however, can be expressed in terms of an Islamic state revealing lack of religious literacy. Second, the radical discourse also presented in Kyrgyzstan being generated by some movements under the influence of external and internal factors and is embedded in the process of Islamic revival through addressing Islamic dogmata in a distorted way basing on the citizens' religious illiteracy and their trustfulness to their fellow believers.

2017, accessed July 23, 2019, https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/ACTION_RESEARCH_FINAL_ENG.pdf

151. Sikorskaya, "Messages, images and media channels promoting youth radicalization in Kyrgyzstan."

152. Iqbalzhan Mirsaitov (political scientist, independent expert), in interview with the author, August 28, 2019 (On file with the author)

CHAPTER 4

KYRGYZSTANI POLITICAL ACTORS' STRATEGIES OF ADDRESSING ISLAM IN POLITICS: TESTING THE HYPOTHESES

Based on the analysis above provided of the peculiarities of the political system in Kyrgyzstan and Islamic revival it can be stated that both neopatrimonial and religious relations are based on the notion of trust, as well as social commitments to moral behavior. Meanwhile, if the neopatrimonial commitments of political actors are being undermined by the persisting ineffectiveness of formal state institutions, religious commitments are in growing salience having a strong symbolic potential.

This chapter argues that Kyrgyzstani political actors address Islam in their public rhetoric and behavior as a symbolic mechanism to improve their political images in the circumstances of unconsolidated democracy and the process of growing religiosity among Muslims. In its turn, this argument is revealed within two suppositions. First, Kyrgyzstani political actors' address Islam in their behavior and statements is correlated with the identified tendencies of losing their legitimacy and growing salience of Islam among population. Second, the political actors' Islamic public rhetoric correlates with the public claims defined in chapter 3 for political leaders with high moral standing, just governance, as well as fears of threats of Islamization of radicalism.

Dynamics and circumstances of using Islam by Kyrgyzstani political actors

This section argues that lack of legitimacy and growing public religiosity are in correlation with Kyrgyzstani political actors' address Islam in their behavior and statements. In turn, this argument is based on three propositions with appeal to findings of the researchers who made their fieldwork in the sphere of Islamic revival as

supplementing evidences of the credibility of the propositions. First, there is a growing number of facts reflecting political actors' address Islam in their public rhetoric since 2005 that corresponds with losing of trust towards them by the population and growing popular salience of Islam identified in chapter 2 and chapter 3, respectively. Second, addressing Islam by political actors are especially evident during the years when election campaigns take place. Third, it is impossible to provide strong distinctions between the real religiosity of political actors and their statements and actions.

The issue of addressing Islam in public statements and actions by politicians and businessmen is highlighted by several authors, whose works have been analyzed in previous chapters. So, Radnitz asserts that mosques are playing a crucial role in the life of Muslims in Kyrgyzstan not only as objects of cult, but as the places for communication and spreading news. This makes them attractive for politicians as during elections campaigns they can demonstrate their adherence towards local life and their personal morality there.¹⁵³ In this way, mosques are very significant for election campaigns from two perspectives: on the one hand, as places of concentration of people, on the other, as sacred places of moral values. In this respect, Montgomery indicates that some Kyrgyzstani politicians use the symbol of mosque in their election campaign materials or make hajj in order to be associated with moral purity and religiosity.¹⁵⁴ These facts of utilization of mosques for the aims of election campaigns are mentioned in the expert interviews. So, the analyst at the State Commission on Religious Affairs

153. Radnitz, *Weapons of the Wealthy. Predatory Regimes and Elite-Led Protests in Central Asia*, 46, 85-86.

154. Montgomery, *Practicing Islam. Knowledge, Experience, and Social Navigation in Kyrgyzstan*, 92.

states that some deputies build mosques in order to attract the votes of his home folk.¹⁵⁵ This fact is also noted by the analyst of one of the state research institutes who indicates that during their survey of worshipers in mosques they faced the facts of calling certain deputies to find out what kind of research they conducted.¹⁵⁶

Meanwhile, basing on the research by Khamidov, it is necessary to emphasize that clerics play significant role in the societies in both the regulation of social relations and by providing support to political actors to gain more votes during elections, i.e. they are among the “power brokers”.¹⁵⁷ The first statement is supported by findings by Biard, in accordance to which one of the prominent imams in Kara-Suu Rashod Kamalov in his interview said to her that he had called the worshippers of his mosque amounted to 5000 – 6000 people to cast their votes for T. Bakir Uulu during the presidential election campaign in 2009.¹⁵⁸ The nexus between the cleric and politician can be traced in the fact that the latter was actively opposing of the detention of R. Kamalov in 2015 on a charge of being adept of banned “Hizb ut-Tahrir” party.¹⁵⁹ This fact is supported by Mirsaitov who claims that Kyrgyzstani political actors during latest both parliamentary

155. Interview with analyst at the State Commission on Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, August 22, 2019. (On file with the author)

156. Interview with analyst at one of the state research institutes, August 19, 2019. (On file with the author)

157. Khamidov, “When Religion Resorts to Violence. Explaining the Spatial Variation in Religious-Based Mobilization in Kyrgyzstan,” in *Islam, Society, and Politics in Central Asia*, 207, 2018.

158. Aurelie Biard, Power, “Original” Islam, and the Reactivation of a Religious Utopia in Kara-Suu, Kyrgyzstan,” in *Being Muslim in Central Asia: Practices, Politics, and Identities*, ed. Marlene Laruelle (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2018), 116-18.

159 Aizada Kutueva, “V Kyrgyzstane deputat vstupil'sya za imama, obvinyaemovo v deyatelnosti ekstremistskoi organizatsii Hizb ut-Tahrir,” 24.kg News Agency, accessed August 30, 2019, https://24.kg/parlament/6872_v_kyrgyzstane_deputat_vstupilsya_za_imama_obviny_aemogo_v_deyatelnosti_ekstremistskoy_organizatsii_hizb_ut-tahrir/

and presidential election campaigns tried to get support from the ulama popular and influential among population.¹⁶⁰

In turn, to find out whether there is an increasing dynamic in addressing Islam in Kyrgyzstan by political actors since 2005, media analysis of such facts has been conducted. Each fact has been double checked in two sources in order to prevent relying on inaccurate data. The results are systemized in the following table. (More precisely information is performed in appendix C.)

Table 1. Media analysis of the facts of addressing Islam by political actors in Kyrgyzstan

Category	Type of fact	Date	Initiator
Indirect actions	Demonstrations, meetings with Islamic rhetoric	November 2008	Initiators – Public activist N. Motuev and ex-ombudsman T. Bakir Uulu;
		November 2012	Initiator – Public activist N. Motuev
		July 2014	Initiator – Deputy T. Bakir Uulu
		January 2015	Initiator – Deputy T. Bakir Uulu
	Hijab issue	September 2013	Initiator – Mayor of Osh M. Myrzakmatov
		September 2013	Initiator – Deputy T. Bakir Uulu
		September 2014	Initiators – 20 deputies of Zhogorku Kenesh
		November 2014	Initiator – President A. Atambayev
		July 2015	Initiator – Prime-Minister T. Sariyev; Initiator – Deputy T. Bakir Uulu
		July 2016	Initiator – President A. Atambayev
	Namazkana/mosque issue	April 2009	Initiator – President K. Bakiev
		January 2011	Initiators – Deputies T. Bakir Uulu and A. Zhaparov
		July 2011	Initiators – Deputies of the Parliament
		September 2013	Initiators – Deputies of the Parliament
		April 2015	Initiator – President A. Atambayev
	Unrealized initiatives	November 2007	Initiator – ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic T. Bakir Uulu
		April 2014	Initiator – Deputy T. Bakir Uulu
		January 2015	Initiator – Deputy O. Bakirov
		April 2016, February 2017	Initiator – Deputy T. Ikramov

160. Iqbalzhan Mirsaitov (political scientist, independent expert), in interview with the author, August 28, 2019 (On file with the author)

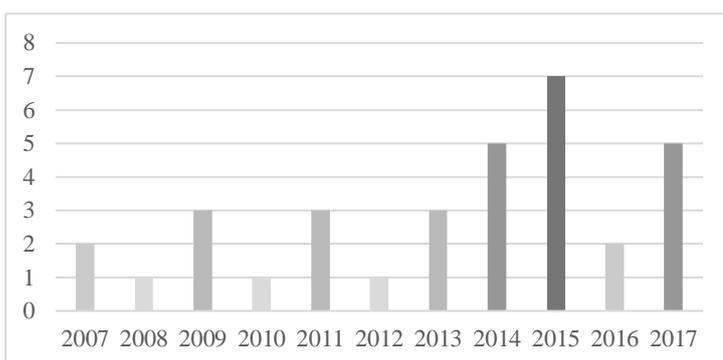
	Public actions	January 2009	Initiators – Public activist N. Motuev and T. Bakir Uulu
		November 2010	Initiator – Deputy T. Bakir Uulu
		April 2011	Initiators – Deputies of the Parliament
		August 2014	Initiator – Deputy T. Bakir Uulu
		February 2015	Initiator – Deputy T. Bakir Uulu
		May 2017	Initiator – T. Sariev
		November 2017	Initiator – Ex-President A. Atambayev
		Creation of Muslim organization/foundation	June 2009
Direct actions	Involving clergymen in election campaigns	November 2007	Initiator – political party “Erkin Kyrgyzstan”
		October 2015	Initiator – party “Kyrgyzstan”
		September 2017	Initiator –B. Torobaev / O. Babanov
		September 2017	Initiator – K. Tashiev / S. Jeenbekov

Note: The official and social positions of the political actors are indicated as they were at the moment the fact took place in order not to distort the essence of the fact.

Source: News portals “24.kg”, <https://24.kg>; “Vb”, <https://www.vb.kg>; “Azattyk”, <https://rus.azattyk.org>; Central Election Commission on Elections and Referenda of the Kyrgyz Republic, <https://shailoo.gov.kg/ru/>

In order to draw conclusions regarding the practice of addressing Islam by political actors in Kyrgyzstan the following graph summarizes the situation.

Figure 3. The dynamics of the tendency of addressing Islam in public rhetoric and behavior by Kyrgyzstani political actors according to the results of media analysis



Basing on this graph, table and data from appendix C it is possible to conclude the following. First, the number of cases of addressing Islam was the highest in 2015. Furthermore, if 19 facts took place in an eight-year long period (from 2007 to 2014),

14 facts were found for the following three years (from 2015 to 2017). In other words, using the formula of arithmetic mean it can be stated that in the former period the average number of facts per year is 2.4 and in the latter period that indicator is 4.7. This corresponds with the finding of chapter 2 of this research that there is a tendency of decreasing level of trust to political actors and their losing of symbolic capital due to persisting inefficiency of state institutions and widespread corruption.

Second, there are two types of mechanisms Kyrgyzstani political actors use to demonstrate their religiosity: a) direct one, through demonstrating of having the support of Islamic clergymen; b) indirect one, that is applied before the official start of the electoral campaign. Meanwhile, the actions classified within these two ways can be either legal or illegal. In this respect, it is necessary to underline that before 2015 the main way of using Islam was indirect legal mechanisms such as establishing Muslim unions / foundations, expression of the support to Muslims abroad through: a) demonstrations, meetings with Islamic rhetoric; b) raising the issue of hijab; c) initiatives of and building of prayer rooms / mosques; d) unrealized initiatives (organization of amnesty for prisoners on Orozo-Ait, substitution of the day-off from Sunday to Friday, to condemnation of “Charlie Hebdo” magazine, and prolonging the dinner hour for namaz on Friday); e) creation of Muslim organization; f) public actions (the oath on the Quran during inauguration ceremony of deputies of Zhogorku Kenesh, act of religious sacrifice in front of the Parliament, burning and tearing of flags of other states, and blessing congratulation of the newly elected President).

However, there is a tendency among political actors’ election campaigns strategies since the parliamentary elections of 2015 to use direct illegal mechanisms, such as drawing on the participation of the clergymen in the election campaigns. So, in accordance with part 15 of article 22 of the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On the

Elections of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Deputies of the Zhogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic” dated July 2, 2011, no 68 that prohibits agitation on behalf of the representatives of religious organizations in the election campaigns,¹⁶¹ “Kyrgyzstan” party, O. Babanov and K. Tashiev got the warnings on behalf of the Central Election Commission on Elections and Referenda of the Kyrgyz Republic.¹⁶² In addition, it is necessary to highlight that there are some cases of illegally using Islamic rhetoric by the Kyrgyzstani political actors not represented in the mass media such as indicated above the fact of R. Kamalov’s claim in his interview to Biard that he had been involved in the 2009 presidential campaign in support for T. Bakir Uulu.¹⁶³ According to the data provided by the interviewed specialist of the State Agency on Religious Affairs, during the presidential election campaign one of the candidates used

161. “Konstitutsionnyi zakon Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki o vyborakh Prezidenta Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki i deputatov Zhogorku Kenesha Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki ot 2 ijulya 2011, no. 68,” Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic, accessed August 29, 2019, <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/203244?cl=ru-ru>

162. “No 132 O preduprezhdenii politicheskoi partii ‘Kyrgyzstan’,” Decisions of the Central Election Commission on Elections and Referenda of the Kyrgyz Republic, accessed August 20, 2019, https://www.shailoo.gov.kg/ru/npacik/Resheniya_CIK_KRKR_BShKnyn_chechimde/ri/132-O-preduprezhdenii-politicheskoi-partii-Kyrgyzstan/; “No 102 O zhalobe upolnomochennovo predstavatelya kandidata na dolzhnost’ Prezidenta Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki Jeenbekova S. S. Smanbaevoi Z. A.,” Decisions of the Central Election Commission on Elections and Referenda of the Kyrgyz Republic, accessed August 20, 2019, https://www.shailoo.gov.kg/ru/npacik/Resheniya_CIK_KRKR_BShKnyn_chechimde/ri/102-o-zhalobe-upolnomochennogo-predstavatelya-kandidata-na-dolzhnost-prezidenta-kyrgyzskoj-respubliki-jeenbekova-ssh-smanbaevoj-zh/; “No 84 O zayavleniyakh grazhdanina Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki Turdukulova A., upolnomochennogo kandidata na dolzhnost’ Prezidenta Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki Babanova O. T. Iriskulbekova E., direktora OF ‘Grazhdanskaya Initsiativa’ Usupbekovoi A.,” Decisions of the Central Commission on Elections and Referenda of the Kyrgyz Republic accessed August 20, 2019, https://www.shailoo.gov.kg/ru/npacik/Resheniya_CIK_KRKR_BShKnyn_chechimde/ri/84-o-zayavlbekovoj/.

163. Biard, Power, “Original” Islam, and the Reactivation of a Religious Utopia in Kara-Suu, Kyrgyzstan,” 116.

the house of the member of the Muslim Spiritual Authority of Kyrgyzstan as his campaign headquarters.¹⁶⁴

Third, this increased interest in Islamic rhetoric of Kyrgyzstani political actors corresponds with the finding in chapter 3 that the salience of Islam for the Kyrgyzstani Muslims is growing taken into account the data by World Values Survey, as well as national surveys.¹⁶⁵ In this respect, Mirsaitov emphasizes that politicians in Kyrgyzstan in order to be competitive in politics have to take into account the fact that the population at large are losing their hope in the political elite and trust more Islamic clerics who are associated with truth and honesty, understand the problems they face, and are not involved in corruption, hypocrisy, and fraud.¹⁶⁶ This opinion is shared by Myrzabaev who claims that Kyrgyzstani political actors have to react on the growing interest to Islam among population by changing their public rhetoric, wear beard, and go to mosques that gives them their social status and political capital.¹⁶⁷

Fourth, the issue of wearing hijab is entangled into the Islamization of radicalism, Kyrgyz traditional way of dressing, and moral values revealing different understanding of this tendency by political actors. On the one hand, there is embarrassment on behalf some of them (A. Atambayev and T. Sariyev) regarding the

164. Interview with analyst at the State Commission on Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, August 22, 2019 (On file with the author)

165. "Kyrgyzstan 2011. Important in life: Religion," World Values Survey Wave 6: 2010-2014; Barbara Junisbai, Azamat Junisbai, and Bourzghan Zhussupov, "Two Countries, Five Years: Islam in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan through the Lens of Public Opinion Surveys," 40.

166. Iqbalzhan Mirsaitov (political scientist, independent expert), interview with the author, August 28, 2019 (On file with the author)

167. Mametbek Myrzabaev (social scientist, PhD, director of the Research Institute for Islamic Studies), interview with the author, August 29, 2019 (On file with the author)

changes in the Kyrgyzstani Muslims way of dressing that is equaled by them with the threat of radicalism and contradicts national traditions as far as dressing. Meanwhile, other political actors do not provide parallels between radicalization and hijab, rather interpret these clothes either as manifestation of women's religiosity (M. Myrzakmatov) or as a way of dressing corresponding with the Kyrgyz tradition. (T. Bakir Uulu).

In general, political actors try to demonstrate religiosity through addressing external religious attributes (building of prayer rooms and mosques, discussions on prolonging dinner hour on Friday wearing hijabs, public prayers and demonstrations), rather than calling to use Islamic values as an inspiration tool for the population for solving economic and social problems like it was during H. Boumediene ruling in Algeria in the 1970-s.

Fifth, the number of Islamic gestures is higher in years of presidential and parliamentary elections compared with other years, i.e. in 2009, 2011, 2015, and 2017 (with exceptions in 2007 and 2010 – the years of parliamentary elections and adoption of new constitution that correlates with the findings of chapter 2 on the basis of Beyer's research regarding people's belief that the new constitution can change the order that existed before).¹⁶⁸ Meanwhile, due to identified not very long list of facts of using Islamic rhetoric by Kyrgyzstani political actors defined during media analysis against the background established in chapter 2 concerning the salience of financial resources during election campaigns, it can be stated that the religious factor is not decisive in the political competition. This fact is also supported by the opinion of all interviewed experts. For example, according to the analyst at one of the state research institutes and

168. Beyer, "Constitutional Faith, Law and Hope in Revolutionary Kyrgyzstan," 325.

associate professor at the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, the main tool of election campaigns in Kyrgyzstan is financial in the form of buying votes.¹⁶⁹

At last, it is necessary to highlight that there are three political actors that are especially active in appealing religious capital in politics. They are the initiators of 21 facts of addressing Islam: T. Bakir Uulu (15 facts), A. Atambayev (4 facts), and N. Motuev (4 facts).

In turn, these facts of addressing Islam by political actors accentuate the issue whether this is the manifestation of their true religiosity or just a pragmatic strategy in the political competition before and during elections. There are 11 facts in the media analysis conducted that can be attributed neither to the preparation to election campaigns, nor to elections themselves.

Based on the short remarks in the literature, as well as comments of the interviewed experts it can be argued that there is no definite answer. For instance, according to McBrien, the businessman who provided assistance in building mosque in Bazaar Korgon was an example of a person who had changed his behavior to fall within the moral characteristics of a Muslim reading namaz and not drinking alcohol to contribute to the development of his native town that was in contrast, according to McBrien, to many other projects where religion was used only as a discourse to get support for virtually secular projects.¹⁷⁰ The example of the latter case is described by Huskey who was impressed by the fact that most emotionally and publicly demonstrated his religiosity Kyrgyzstani politician T. Bakir Uulu in the private

169. Interview with analyst at one of the state research institutes, August 19, 2019 (On file with the author); Interview with political scientist, associate professor at the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, August 16, 2019 (On file with the author)

170. McBrien, *From Belonging to Belief. Modern Secularism and the Construction of Religion in Kyrgyzstan*, 144-45.

conversation with him as a citizen of the USA talked not about his views on the US foreign and internal politics regarding the Muslim world, but rather about his disappointment with the US government's prohibition on him to enter the USA after his critical notes on US invasion of Iraq, as well as his fears concerning the US base withdrawal from the territory of Kyrgyzstan.¹⁷¹

The same ambiguity has been revealed in chapter 3 regarding the complexity of Islamic religiosity manifested in the impossibility to provide strong watershed between pious believers and “calculating cynics” and highlighted by the interviewed experts. So, Saliev indicates that political actors have their own religious commitments that they express in different ways both in public and private life.¹⁷² However, in his opinion, it is questionable whether there are real actions corresponding with these commitments or they are just a rhetoric, and he adds that “... at large religion is a factor of image, because ... the situation in education, economics, and politics in Kyrgyzstan from the perspective of religion is antireligious.”¹⁷³ This opinion is shared by Ismailov who considers that the high level of corruption and crime in the republic is a prominent indicator of low number of truly religious politicians who deliberately express their religiosity in visiting mosque or praying through social media resources.¹⁷⁴ The other expert at one of the state research institutes also emphasizes that there are very few truly

171. Huskey, *Encounters at the Edge of the Muslim World. A Political Memoir of Kyrgyzstan*, 120-21.

172. Aman Saliev (researcher, Institute for Strategic Analysis and Prognosis under the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University), in interview with the author, August 9, 2019 (On file with the author)

173. See note 172 above.

174. Nurlan Ismailov (associate professor, head of the Law Department at Ala-Too International University), in interview with the author, August 23, 2019 (On file with the author)

religious politicians in Kyrgyzstan, mostly, they use Islam as a political instrument to influence coreligionists and get into power, and that, especially in the south of the republic, where religiosity defines state officials' access to informal channels of communication.¹⁷⁵

Concluding, it is necessary to highlight that the results of the media analysis of addressing Islam by Kyrgyzstani political actors indicate that three arguments of this section are feasible and correlate with the findings of the previous chapters. The increasing number of references to Islam in various forms corresponds with two independent variables: a) the diminishing symbolic influence by political actors who are reluctant to optimize the functioning of formal institutions; b) peculiarities of growing salience of Islam in the life of the Muslim population mainly in the form of explicit markers.

Meanwhile, the established fact that the number of religious gestures of political actors is higher in the years of national elections, as well as the fact that virtually one third of them do not correlate with election campaigns are evidences of the impossibility to make strong statements regarding pious or pragmatic religiosity of political actors in order to strengthen their positions in the political field and confirm their legitimacy. That correlates with the findings that a multifaceted process of Islamic revival, when external and internal manifestations of religiosity do not obligatory coincide, complicates the issue of determining of certain criteria of a "good" Muslim. So, there is a correlation between the behavior of political actors' and their constituencies.

The essence of Kyrgyzstani political actors' Islamic public rhetoric

175. Interview with analyst at one of the state research institutes, August 19, 2019 (On file with the author)

As determined in this chapter above, the correlation between the growing numbers of behavioral and oral references of political actors to Islam says little about the essence of these references. This section argues that the political actors' Islamic public rhetoric correlates with the claims for a moral type of political leaders and government as defined in chapters 2 and 3 and fears of threats of radicalism. A critical discourse analysis of speeches of both political actors (A. Atambayev, T. Bakir Uulu, and N. Motuev as the most active in appealing religious capital in politics) and clerics (Chubak azhi Zhalilov and S. Kamalov as the clergymen who were directly and illegally involved in election campaign rallies) have been conducted.

A. Atambayev spoke twice on issues meaningful for this research close to the end of his office term in October 2017. The first one was an interview with Ian Bremmer, journalist of "Time" magazine dated October 9, 2017. The parts of the interview relevant for the research were analyzed in English in order to decrease the number of potential misleading due to double translation. Presumably, the main discourse strand of A. Atambayev's is compatibility of Islam with democracy. In turn, the words "Muslim", "democracy" and "justice" play crucial role throughout the interview being built in contrast with other words – radicalism / terrorism, authoritarian regime, and social injustice.

First, it is necessary to mention that answering the question of the journalist about the future of democracy in the region and in the world, A. Atambayev reiterated the widespread juxtaposition between democracy as the way to a "bright future" and authoritarian / dictatorship regimes as the reason of "inequality and social injustice". The president also highlighted the importance of the Islamic factor in this distinguishing by embedding it into the context of Islamization of radicalism as the reaction to

authoritarian rule in the Muslim countries, citizens of which are especially sensitive to the issues of injustice and inequality.

Further comparison of the idea of building of “Islamic Caliphate” as the manifestation of Islamization of radicalism with ideas of K Marx and V. Lenin of building socialism, as well the interpretation of social injustice in the authoritarian regime as the absence of opportunity on behalf of citizens to change the authority and not working principle of meritocracy gives the ground for following statements. In A. Atambayev’s interpretation, Islamization of radicalism means violent change of power with subsequent violent distribution of wealth under the tenets of Islam. Virtually, A. Atambayev’s utterance: “What is an “Islamic caliphate”? It’s what Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin had proposed, a society of justice” coupled with the previous utterance that Muslims are especially sensitive to the issues of social inequality can be considered as indicator that Islamists just use Islam for justification of their actions. Owing to the failed attempts to build a socialist state in the Soviet Union, this parallelism can be an indicator of the former president’s evaluation of the idea to build of Islamic Caliphate as utopia.

Against this background, the former president’s alternative to Islamic Caliphate and authoritarianism is a secular Muslim democracy. From this perspective, it can be stated that A. Atambayev raised two actual topics in the society. First, he emphasized the issue of social justice pointing out that a democratic state provides equal opportunities, but not material benefits as it was in the USSR or supposed to be in the Islamic Caliphate for citizens dissatisfied with the work of state institutions. Second, he highlighted the growth of interest to religion in the society making a difference between “Muslim country” as a secular and democratic state in providing citizens with all the rights to observe Islamic rites including “particular” clothes (that corresponds

with the abovementioned case of ambiguous reaction of citizens on the billboards with women in national clothes and niqabs), as well as joining different religious organizations that are banned in other states (the reference may be made primarily to “Tablighi Jamaat” that is not banned in Kyrgyzstan unlike in other Central Asian states),¹⁷⁶ and “Islamic Caliphate” as a state entity without distinction between religious and secular spheres. So, “Muslim” has more neutral meaning coexisting with the notion of a secular democratic state, related to citizens’ religious identity, and reflecting the democratic notion of social justice, rather than ideology as in case with the adjective “Islamic.” In this respect, the link between Islam and ideology is manifested in the phrase: “... people want to build an Islamic caliphate, just like the Bolsheviks were attempting to build socialism.” This distinction can also be traced in his statement about “Muslim world” as a part of the “whole Islamic world”: if former could include secular states with Muslim majority, the latter could encompass both secular and theocratic ones.

So, three main alternative equations can be constructed as suggested by A. Atambayev: “Muslim country + democracy = bright future” that in his opinion is unique for Kyrgyzstan, “Muslim country + authoritarianism = Islamic Caliphate”, and the third one “Muslim country + authoritarianism = bleak future”. It is worth noting that from the point of view of choosing of pronouns, emphasis on “I” when A. Atambayev talked about these models of development of states with Muslim majority can be an indicator of his intention to demonstrate his literacy in religious and political issues. On the other hand, the accent on inclusive “we” in the statements like “This is where we want to be the first ones, we want to be the example. We are not

176. Bayram Balci, “Reviving Central Asia’s religious ties with the Indian subcontinent? The Jamaat al Tabligh,” *Religion, State & Society* 43, no.1 (2015): 26.

afraid to be the example” can be interpreted as an attempt to stress that it is not his own voluntary decision to build a Muslim democracy, rather the common decision of the Muslim majority population of Kyrgyzstan.

From the perspective of his own image-building, the final statement of his interview is of great interest. Arguably, the phrase “with God’s help” in relation to the achievements during Atambayev’s office term in the context of his work for the benefits of the population, creates the image of an honest and just leader against the background of the public demand for moral and just political leaders revealed in chapter 3.

The fact that A Atambayev despite any reference of the interviewer to religion in the question on democracy started to elaborate on different types of political regimes with appealing to the Muslim identity of the majority of the population can be an indicator of his intention to follow the social context of growing religiosity of the population in Kyrgyzstan and their striving for social justice, on the one hand, and, his fear of spreading of radical ideas associated with establishment of an Islamic Caliphate, on the other. Presumably, there is a mix of two discourse strands in this speech – discourse on democracy and social justice, and discourse on Islam as an ideology of Islamists.

The second speech was delivered by A. Atambayev during the awarding ceremony of the best students of higher educational institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic on October 18, 2019. The significance of Islamic factor in it can be established due to the fact that the former president used six times the word “God” in different senses throughout his speech.

This speech took place after the presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan on October 15, 2017 when there was a strong competition between the two candidates – S. Jeenbekov supported by A. Atambayev and O. Babanov, as well as discussions on

involvement of foreign actors and Islamic clerics in the election campaign rallies. Therefore, the main point of the speech is the independence of the Kyrgyz Republic that was linked with Islam as “ideological independence.” From this perspective, Atambayev’s speech is significant in three interrelated aspects. First, his metaphoric description of O. Babanov. Second, his raising the issue of radicalization. Third, building of his political image.

In the first respect, A. Atambayev uses the metaphor of “devil” (*d’yavol, iskusitel’, satana*) to describe O. Babanov presumably in an attempt to explain the fact that great amount of people cast their votes for him (33.49% of the voters),¹⁷⁷ not because his popularity among people that had been found out before the elections by the International Republican Institute (indicators of level of trust and favorable opinion),¹⁷⁸ rather because of O. Babanov’s charismatic appearance and his bright promises that were assessed negatively by A. Atambayev. In turn, this negative nature of O. Babanov is linked by A. Atambayev not just with electoral fraud, but with his intention, being an “extraneous” (*chuzhdyi*) candidate advanced from abroad, to betray the national interests of the Kyrgyz Republic. Presumably, this religious argumentation is linked with the fact that O. Babanov used the support of one of the famous Kyrgyz clerics S. Kamalov during his election campaign.

It is noteworthy that the adjective “extraneous” (*chuzhdyi*) was also used by A. Atambayev in his speculations on the threat of Islamization of radicalism. In contrast

177. “Tsentrizbircom opredelil resul’taty vyborov Prezidenta Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki 15 oktyabrya 2017 goda,” Central Election Commission on Elections and Referenda of the Kyrgyz Republic, accessed August 20, 2019, <https://shailoo.gov.kg/ru/news/1973/>

178. “Public Opinion Survey Residents of Kyrgyzstan. November 19 – December 2, 2017,” International Republican Institute, accessed July 8, 2019, <http://siar-consult.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Kyrgyzstan-Poll-Winter-2017-Public.pdf>

to the previous interview mainly aimed at international readers, he raised the issue of external signs of religiosity in women's dressing and men's wearing beards not in the framework of freedom of consciousness, rather in the aspect of Islamization of radicalism correlated with his previous statements regarding religious dresses in 2016 revealed in chapter 3. Arguably, in this speech by citing the Quran he tried to provide a solid justification of his opinion regarding wearing "black sacks" (*chernye meshki*) by women and beard by men as imposed by the adepts of "extraneous" (*chuzhdaya*) ideology and "other" (*drugaya*) religion linked with violence and religious intolerance. It is noteworthy here is that he did not mention specific names of women's clothes in both speeches using word combinations "particular clothes" and "black sacks" that could be considered as demonstration of the intention to show his respect to religious people taking into account the negative public reaction to the supported by him in 2016 social billboards reflected the correlation between women's dress and inclination to radicalism.

Virtually, he elaborates the previous speech's logic of differences between the adjectives "Muslim" related to citizens' religious identity and coexisted with a secular democratic state, and "Islamic" related to political ideology and violence by speculations on religious intolerance, religious and secular illiteracy, as well as kindness, mutual respect, and care for others as the core values of any religion. Presumably, the distinctions between Islam and "extraneous" (*chuzhdaya*) ideology are provided by him through the following pairs of dichotomic word combinations: "kind and merciful Allah" – "bearded men calling for intolerance", and "Muslim ulama" – "dogmatists from Islam".

Meanwhile, the universal religious principles in his speech can be considered as a change from the discourse on Islamization of radicalism and his own political image.

Presumably, his utterances about the universality of religious values and dependence of belief in and looking for kindness on a person's internal ability plays a crucial role in A. Atambayev's image performance in contrast to O. Babanov's one within the linear "religious" – "not religious" owing to the fact that his utterance about the inability of the latter to see any improvements during A. Atambayev's six-year term of office is linked with further speculations on the sayings by Jesus on the necessity to pure eyes to the goodness and help people.

Virtually, through the speech, A. Atambayev represents himself as a person who meets all the requests of Islamic tenets. First, he is a person who reads and cites the Quran and can make difference between "extraneous" (*chuzhdaya*) religion and Islamic principles fixed in Quran: "The main tenets of the Quran are quite different" (*Glavnyye postulaty Korana sovershenno inye*). Second, this image of a religious literate person is supplemented by such characteristics of himself as a person who says only the truth, depends on kind people, and forgives people, and arguably confirmed by the statement that he was declared jihad for twice, but "These jihads are declared against normal people" (*Eti dzhihady ob'yavlyautsya protiv normal'nyh lu'dei*). Third, presumably, A. Atambayev puts an emphasis on the universal character of moral principles of Islam owing to the fact that during his speech he mentions universal "God" (*Bog*), rather than "Allah" (*Allah*).

Meanwhile, presumably this address to God besides being a factor of image-building of Atambayev, however owing to phrases "Thank God for that" (*Slava Bogu*), "God saves us" (*Bog nas spas*), "God has mercy on us" (*Bog nas miloval*), and "God examines us" (*Bog ispytyvaet nas*) may serve, on the one hand, as a mechanism to appeal to religiosity of the population, and as a tool to reduce his personal responsibility for the processes taking place in the state, on the other.

Thus, the second speech of A. Atambayev also encompasses religious aspects despite the fact that the format of the event where he declared it did not presume this rhetoric. In contrast to the first speech, this one contains discourses not on democracy and Islam, although not contradicting them, rather than on two aspects of literacy and Islam : a) religious illiteracy is the cause of violence and misunderstanding the way of dressing; b) Islam is religion, and its tenets correspond with universal moral norms presented in any religion. However, the second characteristic of this speech that differs it from the first one is stronger emphasis on A. Atambayev's image traced through the whole speech playing on the contrast with O. Babanov in the focus of the religious metaphor of "good" and "religious" versus "bad" and "not religious". Presumably, these differences can be explained mainly by different appealing audiences: emphasis on democracy is for the external audience, and on issues of Islamization of radicalism and political competition imbedded in the domestic of secular and religious literacy is for the internal audience.

Therefore, taking into account both speeches, presumably it can be stated that A. Atambayev tried to fix a certain meaning of how to understand and follow Islamic norms as norms corresponding with the principles of a secular democratic state and universal moral norms, and not mandatorily presuming changes in dressing or appearance that are not guarantees of people's religiosity and can be compatible with violence whereas Islam is a religion of kindness and mercy. Virtually, he suggests his own view trying to make it a mainstream discourse as the most appropriate one on distinguishing between "good" and "bad" Muslims that correlates with the finding of chapter 3 that there is ambiguity within the society regarding this question due to a variety of interpretations based on personal knowledge and experience.

The analyzed utterances of T. Bakir Uulu are his answers to the questions during the TV debates of the candidates for the post of president of the Kyrgyz Republic that were held on October 30, 2011. Arguably, the main discourse strand of T. Bakir Uulu's utterances on Islam is his image as a candidate for the post of president due to two factors. First, the speech unlike A. Atambayev's ones was a part of the presidential election campaign. Second, at large questions on behalf of the TV debates managers and audience in the TV studio to T. Bakir Uulu regarded religious issues owing to his explicit religiosity. However, this main discourse strand on image-building encompasses other points that allows to figure out how T. Bakir Uulu constructs his arguments regarding the model of state-Islam relations, social justice, and people's accountability.

From the perspective of image-building it is necessary to emphasize the words mentioned a number of times by T. Bakir Uulu. "God" (*Bog*) and "Allah" (*Allah*) were used three and eleven times respectively. Meanwhile, the nature of three questions addressed him did not presume the religious rhetoric of the answer: a) "Name three reasons why you should be elected as a president" – one time; b) "How will you solve the problem with closed borders with Kazakhstan" – two times; c) "Why should you be elected as a president?" – four times. So, the greatest number of mentions was made in the answers to these questions – eight times. From this perspective, it is necessary to highlight two moments. First, in comparison with the speeches by A. Atambayev addressing God in the speech by T. Bakir Uulu is characterized by the rhetoric of fear of God as the supreme judge taking into account his phrase: "Do not be afraid of people praying namaz and fearing Allah, be afraid of people who are not afraid of Allah" (*Ne boites' teh lu'dei, kotorye chitau't namaz i boyatsya Allaha, boites' lu'dei, kotorye ne boyatsya Allaha*). Arguably, this rhetoric is used by him as a response to Kyrgyzstani

citizens' expectations of his possible intention to build a theocratic state in Kyrgyzstan basing on his explicit image as a religious person. This statement is grounded on the fact that most of the questions addressed to him by the audience in the TV studio and population during debates concerned the issues of state-Islam-society relations. Second, his address Islam in the context of the fear of God corresponds with playing on the contrasts between his image and the images of his past and current at that moment opponents. On the one hand, T. Bakir Uulu tries to reload the responsibility for his distorted image as a person aimed at building a theocratic state manifested in labeling him as "Wahhabis" (*vahhabist*) and "extremist" (*ekstremist*) and a person who favors the subordinate position of women in the society on former presidents of the Kyrgyz Republic, A. Akaev and K. Bakiev. Arguably, this can be considered as an attempt to show his strong competitive positions based on his religiosity if his opponents used such tools to have an upper hand in the elections. On the other hand, his blaming of the current opponents in using administrative resources is represented compared with the results of unfair mechanisms of election competition used by his past opponents – people's victims and their loss of power – as the punishment imposed by God.

Meanwhile, arguably, from the perspective of discourse strand on mutual accountability, pronoun "us" in his phrase "God is examining us during these elections" (*Bog proveryaet nas na etih vyborah*) is referred to the population in the attempt to demonstrate their accountability for the results of the elections based on whether they are afraid of threats on behalf of the candidates who are being corrupted and do not keep their promises and violate human rights or they follow their religious principles.

In turn, in his discourse strand on compatibility of democracy and Islam T. Bakir Uulu virtually supports the same point as A. Atambayev – a secular Muslim democracy reflecting on the request of the society to develop in the direction of

democracy-building but with increased level of responsibility and morality on behalf of the political actors as revealed in chapter 2. However, arguably, owing to his image of a religious person that, as it was mentioned above, mostly correlated in the citizens' views with intentions to build by him a theocratic state in Kyrgyzstan, his utterances on this issue are quite vague. So, from the perspective of the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate he solves the problem of performance of his religiosity by combining two aspects. On the one hand, he rejects his personal will to build a Caliphate, rather his subjugation to the will of Allah, and on the other, not providing a certain definition of a secular state asked by the debates manager, but naming himself as a "secular person" (*svetskii chelovek*) in the aspect of his way of dressing: a tie and shoes instead of Kyrgyz national (chapan, maassy) and Arabic attributes (skullcaps) of clothes. Presumably, these references to dressing are made to his attempt to demonstrate the possibility of compatibility of external secular attributes with religiosity of a person, as well as compatibility of the national way of dressing with the Arabic one taking into account his statements reflected in the media analysis.

Further, in his discourse strand on social justice he emphasizes by mentioning the name "Allah" at the beginning of his statement that being a pious Muslim and acting as a president he will have the responsibility to defend the rights of all social strata in Kyrgyzstan as Islamic norms are universal. Meanwhile, the economic policy on the basis of Islamic norms, in his view, presumes the development of Islamic banking system based on non-interest credits to help the population to solve their socio-economic problems.

Arguably, such kind of religiosity represented by T. Bakir Uulu can be considered as an attempt, on the one hand, to save the existing symbolic capital within certain groups of the population (according to the results of the presidential elections in

2011, T. Bakir Uulu got 0,82% of votes¹⁷⁹), and, on the other hand, to increase it by emphasizing his “secular religiosity” within a discourse strand of social justice as social equality in political sphere and market economy encompassing Islamic principles of behavior in an attempt to overcome social prejudices about his extreme religiosity correlated with intention to build an Islamic state.

In turn, the speech by N. Motuev in the form of his address to the “people of Kyrgyzstan” before the parliamentary elections of 2015 is characterized by very abrupt metaphors and utterances in comparison with the speeches of A. Atambayev and T. Bakir Uulu. Arguably, that can be attributed to the fact that N. Motuev is a representative of a non-system opposition being on the margins of politics.

This abruptness is manifested in three discourse strands. First, in his discourse on image-building that is based on the metaphor comparison with his opponents he uses extensively predication of “kaafir” (*kafirskii*) meaning disbelief in Islamic values and tenets¹⁸⁰ in relation not only to the current authorities of Kyrgyzstan as his opponents, but also to foreign investors in the sphere of mineral exploration. Presumably, his accent on investors is determined by the criminal proceedings against him for annexation of one of the coal deposits after the “Tulip revolution” in 2005 with subsequent tenders for investors for its exploration. Second, his interpretations of Quranic Surahs and Hadiths deny the favorability of democracy for the development of Kyrgyzstan from the perspective of contradiction of multiparty system favoring dissociation of the

179. “Ob opredelenii rezul'tatov vyborov Prezidenta Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki 30 oktyabrya 2011 goda,” Decisions of the Central Election Commission on Elections and Referenda of the Kyrgyz Republic, accessed September 23, 2019, https://shailoo.gov.kg/ru/npacik/Postanovleniya_CIK_KR-BShKnyn_toktomdoru/Ob_opredelen-994/

180. Mahmoud Ismail Saleh, *Dictionary of Islamic Words and Expressions* (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2011), 118.

Kyrgyzstani society to the prescribed in the Quran, in his opinion, call for unity. Meanwhile, despite the fact that he describes the constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic as based on the "... kaafir legislation of Europe and USA" (... *kafirskie zakony Evropy i Ameriki*), he does not provide an alternative model and calls for struggling with "kaafir" politicians by casting votes "against all". It is noteworthy, however, that in some of his further speeches he emphasized the ideal of ISIS as a model worth following for Kyrgyzstan that had become a reason for his being charged with extremism and subsequent prison confinement. Third, his discourse on incompatibility of democracy and Islamic norms correlates with his discourse on social justice represented by him as a necessity to nationalize of national property "privatized" and "devastated" by "kaafir" authorities and investors.

However, there are two aspects, in which his rhetoric reiterates the rhetoric of A. Atambayev and T. Bakir Uulu, although with some differences. First, his appeal to religious illiteracy of the population of Kyrgyzstan preceded and followed by the citations from the Quran can be considered as a tool to demonstrate his main characteristic as a religiously literate leader distinguished from the population that, in contrast to A. Atambayev and T. Bakir Uulu, is unintentionally emphasized by his statement on the consequences of Kyrgyzstani people's ignorance in religion and political issues through a complex sentence with pronoun "I" in the main clause and "you" in the subordinate one. However, presumably, the following sentence with uniting pronoun "we" is an attempt to disguise this distancing from the "people of Kyrgyzstan" (*narod Kyrgyzstana*) that is essential from the perspective of gaining of symbolic capital. Second, he reiterates the discourse strand on mutual social accountability for the type of leadership interpreting socio-economic problems and natural disasters as a result of people's religious and political ignorance and "kaafir"

politicians. However, in this way he was distancing himself from population as an external stakeholder. Third, N. Motuev, addresses “people of Kyrgyzstan” (*narod Kyrgyzstana*) in two languages – Russian and Kyrgyz that can be considered as an intention to demonstrate the universality of Islamic norms through national dimension.

In general, basing on the analyzed discourse strands, it can be stated that A. Atambayev and T. Bakir Uulu do not provide a revolutionary model of state-Islam-society relations (a theocratic state), but speculate on the compatibility of democracy and Islam justifying their personal address Islam by the fact that the majority of the population is Muslim. Moreover, the theocratic state is presented either in the negative aspect (A. Atambayev) or as something that is not dependent on the political will of a certain political actor (T. Bakir Uulu) encompassing social quest for a democratic regime and social justice represented as equality in socio-political dimension. However, the main difference between A. Atambayev’s speeches and T. Bakir Uulu’s one is that the former are based on juxtaposition of “good” and “bad” Muslims and the latter on “believers” and “non-believers” presuming the contrasts between them and their opponents as honest and moral people as they are versus fraudulent and immoral people as their opponents.

These statements are supported by the results of expert interviews. So, three of them are sharing the same opinion that there are no political actors in Kyrgyzstan who can advance elaborated projects of reorganizing the existing model of state-Islam-societal relations and know exactly how to control socio-economic processes in accordance with the Quran, that is why their address of Islamic rhetoric is in the form of mottos, rather than real programmes, and in most cases it is an image-building

strategy and intent to become popular.¹⁸¹ In the last aspect, Myrzabayev indicates that these mottos and external attributes of religiosity correspond with the expectations of the people.¹⁸² In turn, the other experts emphasize that the essence of these expectations are emotional based on trust to a religious person who is associated with morality, honesty, incorruptibility, and upholding of public interests.¹⁸³

In turn, N. Motuev's speech is standing distinctively from those A. Atambayev and T. Bakir Uulu due his rejection of compatibility of democracy and Islamic norms and the emphasis on distributive notion of justice rather than meritocratic one. Virtually, his speech contains the patterns of radical discourse presented within the process of Islamic revival in Kyrgyzstan. In turn, technical circumstances of Motuev's speech delivery indicates the level of popularity of this discourse taking into account that A. Atambayev and T. Bakir Uulu express their speeches through official national and international information platforms, while N. Motuev uses his private YouTube video hosting channel.

181. Aman Saliev (researcher, Institute for Strategic Analysis and Prognosis under the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University), in interview with the author, August 9, 2019 (On file with the author); Mametbek Myrzabaev (social scientist, PhD, director of the Research Institute for Islamic Studies), in interview with the author, August 29, 2019 (On file with the author); Interview with lecturer at one of the higher education institutions in Bishkek, August 22, 2019 (On file with the author)

182. Mametbek Myrzabaev (social scientist, PhD, director of the Research Institute for Islamic Studies), in interview with the author, August 29, 2019 (On file with the author)

183. Interview with analyst at one of the state research institutes, August 19, 2019 (On file with the author); Interview with analyst at the State Commission on Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, August 22, 2019 (On file with the author); Interview with lecturer at one of the higher education institutions in Bishkek, August 22, 2019 (On file with the author); Nurlan Ismailov (associate professor, head of the Law Department at Ala-Too International University), in interview with the author, August 23, 2019 (On file with the author)

Meanwhile, speeches of clergymen involved in election campaigns rallies are of high importance for this research with respect to identifying correlations with the speeches of political actors as possible evidences between public discourse strands and political actors' ones.

The speech by S. Kamalov who is at the head of the International Center of Islamic Cooperation of Kyrgyzstan and “Sadyk Kary Kamaluddin” madrasa in Kara-Suu town, delivered his speech in support of O. Babanov during the presidential election campaign on September 13, 2017 in Osh, nevertheless it correlates with A. Atambayev's views.

Structurally his speech consists of three parts: a) addressing the issue of importance of elections; b) characteristics of the candidate worth to cast a ballot for; c) his requests to O. Babanov. These parts are following each other in a deductive logic and linked through the word “amanat” – thing, heritage or duty that a person is entrusted and should keep or fulfill carefully.¹⁸⁴

The first part of S. Kamalov's speech is noteworthy from two perspectives. On the one hand, he positioned himself as a person who is a popular and respectful clergyman stating that “Many people ask me if it is allowed to participate in the elections” (*Mnogie lu'di sprashivau't menya, mozhno li uchastvovat' v vyborah ili net*) On the other hand, he demonstrates his religious literacy to answer this question by making reference to the Quran. Here, he uses “amanat” to characterize elections as a moral duty of each Muslim and strengthens it by such words as “fard” and “wajib” – prescribed norms of behavior of each Muslim that should be treated as religious commandments¹⁸⁵ combining them in one sentence. Meanwhile, taking into account his

184. Saleh, *Dictionary of Islamic Words and Expressions*, 24.

185. Saleh, 55, 253.

statements that people have those leaders they deserve in accordance with their values and that their position will not change unless they change themselves, presumably, can be considered as a reference to the people's moral accountability for their choice of the leaders. In turn, this can be a reflection of the context of specificity of religiosity revealed in Kyrgyzstan in chapter 3. This means religiosity as adherence to moral values and community solidarity ethos that sometimes can be used for pragmatic aims.

On the other hand, S. Kamalov refers "amanat" to the leader who should follow his promises and carry out his duties. Arguably, he raises the issue of people's dissatisfaction with the political actors neglecting their promises they make during election campaigns defined in chapter 2 mentioning that a decent president is a person who "... will do what has promised" (... *budet delat' to, chto obeshchal*), "... will keep his promises" (... *budet vpolnyat' svoi obeshchania*), and "...has opportunities to carry out his duties" (... *u kotorogo est' vozmozhnosti vpolnyat' obyazannosti*). Arguably, the same meaning can be traced in his utterance regarding the necessity to elect the person with strong leadership characteristics, rather than the one who promises to be "people's slave" (*sluga naroda*).

The transition from the ideal candidate to O. Babanov is made by S. Kamalov through his own blessing of O. Babanov on behalf of his knowledge and status mentioning that Allah is ready to support and improve the life of all people. So, there is no direct indication that O. Babanov is the right candidate preferable by Allah, it is just S. Kamalov's own opinion as a cleric. In contrast, S. Kamalov twice makes reference to A. Atambayev who was in the status of president in that period as a person who acts in accordance with Islamic values by providing conditions for fair competition during the elections.

Meanwhile, the third part of S. Kamalov's speech devoted to his personal address to O. Babanov regarding the regulation of tense interethnic relations in Osh city. From one perspective, it can be considered as interpretation of relationships between the electorate and leaders through "amanat" as mutual accountability of both sides for the situation in the country. From the other perspective, owing to his demonstrated loyalty both to the current president in that period A. Atambayev and O. Babanov as a possible successor his address O. Babanov with the request, obviously, helps him to distance himself from the political battle, involvement in which is banned by the law.

In turn, ex-mufti of Kyrgyzstan Chubak azhi Zhalilov being a member of ulama council of Kyrgyzstan delivered his speech on September 20, 2017 in Barpy village where he earlier served as imam of the central mosque. The structure of his speech is very symmetrical. At the beginning he emphasized that his participation in the meeting is based on the right of a citizen of the Kyrgyz Republic and that it was K. Tashiev who had invited him. The second part is devoted to the description of the characteristics of S. Jeenbekov as a decent candidate for the post of president of the Kyrgyz Republic and mutual accountability for the election of this decent candidate of the Kyrgyzstani Muslims. The third part of the speech is devoted to K. Tashiev as an inviting person and Chubak azhi Zhalilov's active position as a citizen, rather than a clergyman, supporting S. Jeenbekov. The last part is devoted to blessing of the participants of the rally.

This structure of the speech is very important in two respects. On the one hand, Chubak azhi Zhalilov justifies his presence at that meeting that is prohibited in accordance with the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On the Elections of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Deputies of Zhogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic"

dated July 2, 2011, no 68, and on the other, distances S. Jeenbekov from this event by representing K. Tashiev as the organizer of that meeting.

From the standpoint of the discourse strands used, Chubak azhi Zhalilov's speech reflects the following ones: democracy, mutual accountability, and the image of a decent candidate. Arguably, he asserts that democracy is compatible with Islamic principles in two ways – explicit and implicit ones. The former is expressed in his explicit personal example by his a) demonstration of his double identity – as a citizen of the Kyrgyz Republic who has the right to express his citizen position being involved in election campaign rallies that nevertheless can correspond with his position as a clergymen that is more clearly demonstrated in his statement in the third part of his speech where he negates his identity as a cleric and emphasizes his identity as a citizen in the framework of the election campaign rally; b) emphasis that believers' participation in the election campaign's arrangements is pleasing to God deal (*Chtbody reshit' sud'bu Kyrgyzstana, buduchi veruu'shchimi, my su'da prishli*). Virtually, Chubak azhi Zhalilov tries to demonstrate his ability to change his identity depending on the situation. However, the last part of his speech, that is the most emotional due to containing calling for casting votes for S. Jeenbekov through blessing the participants of the election rally and demonstrated support as a citizen's position, reveals that his negations of support of S. Jeenbekov as a clergyman are, probably, used with the totally opposite aim – to emphasize this identity. Meanwhile, the implicit way of demonstration of compatibility of democracy and Islam is expressed through his address to different social strata in Kyrgyzstan – "... Kyrgyz people, all minorities, and all believers" (... *ves' kyrgyzskii narod, vse men'shinstva, vse veruu'shchie*). So, presumably, the representatives of the Kyrgyz people and minorities can be non-

believers, but still citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic having the right to vote for a decent candidate.

The second discourse strand on mutual accountability for the fate of Kyrgyzstan is very soundly represented in Chubak azhi Zhalilov's statement where he describes an image of a decent leader through using inclusive pronoun "we" referring both to voters as believers "in the same God" (*v odnogo Boga*) and to a leader who knows about their accountability "in the other world" (*v tom mire*). On the other hand, it can be claimed that this statement is, probably, used to assert that this leader should be a believer. And more precisely this leader should be a Muslim who can represent the whole population of Kyrgyzstan taking into account the above mentioned address to the different strata of this population and blessing with the name of Allah the participants of the meeting. From the other perspective, arguably, it can be interpreted as the universality of Islamic norms that can be accepted by all the population.

The third discourse strand on the image of a decent candidate for the post of president is noteworthy in the sense that Chubak azhi Zhalilov combines the characteristics of S. Jeenbekov as a person who follows the Kyrgyz people's traditions and norms, as well as who observes Islamic practices making five-time namaz. In the former aspect it is necessary to indicate the emphasis Chubak azhi Zhalilov made on S. Jeenbekov's engagement with the people by characterizing the peculiarities of the process of meeting guests at S. Jeenbekov's house through the statement that "he does not have servers at home" (*u nego net sluzhashchih doma*) and modesty by addressing the figure of K. Tashiev that, presumably, lets him emphasize that despite their long friendly relationships with S. Jeenbekov, the latter did not ask him to support him by himself.

From the perspective of observation of Islamic practices and norms, it is noteworthy that Chubak azhi Zhalilov highlights the age of 60 of S. Jeenbekov providing parallels with the age of Prophet Muhammad that, arguably, can be interpreted as some sort of S. Jeenbekov's honesty taking into account that this statement is preceded and followed by the statements that during the last years he worked hard and there are no evidences of his involvement in corruption. Presumably, this image is built on the contrast to O. Babanov owing to the statement that people who are above 40 (O. Babanov is 49) are making promises, rather than working and are involved in corruption, and A. Atambayev who are in a metaphoric way is blamed by Chubak azhi Zhalilov in betraying national interests taking into account the statement that S. Jeenbekov will not give the fate of the country to somebody "once more" (*opyat*) for six years. Arguably, the comparison with these persons is predetermined by the facts that O. Babanov was the main competitor of S. Jeenbekov. In turn, the absence of support of A. Atambayev on the initiatives of deputy of Zhogorku Kenesh T. Ikramov on prolonging the dinner hour on Friday for Friday praying for state officials supported by Chubak azhi Zhalilov's is notable here.

So, both S. Kamalov and Chubak azhi Zhalilov understand their popularity and importance during the election campaigns and both of them support the current democratic way of development of the Kyrgyz Republic emphasizing the importance of elections and citizens' accountability for casting votes for a decent candidate. However, the main differences are: a) in types of certain characteristics of political actors highlighted by them; b) the ways of demonstration of their law-obedience. S. Kamalov highlights the importance of keeping promises by political actors and distances himself from the political battle, involvement in which is banned by the law, by declaring a request to O. Babanov and demonstrating loyalty to different political

camps. In turn, Chubak azhi Zhalilov puts the emphasis on the honesty of S. Jeenbekov, rather than on his adherence to keeping promises. He was warned by the Central Election Commission for being involved in election campaigns earlier and he openly underlines his citizen, and not clergyman, status during that presidential election campaign rally.

Thus, the main common discourse strands in the analyzed speeches of two political actors (A. Atambayev and T. Bakir Uulu) and clergymen are: a) compatibility of democracy and Islamic religiosity, b) mutual social accountability; c) image-building of a political actor of high morality who does not betray and keeps his promises to the constituencies due to his religiosity. In turn, these discourse strands correlate with the results of the desk-research. First, two political actors and Islamic clergymen express adherence to the democratic political regime that correlates with the expectations of the majority of the population regarding the political regime according to the results of the social surveys analyzed. Second, they put an emphasis on mutual social accountability that can be interpreted as an attempt to gain symbolic capital against the background of identified process of destroying of neopatrimonial trust networks and diminishing their symbolic capital by corrupt practices that undermine the effectiveness of formal institutions. The proper functioning of institutions has to provide evidence of political actors following in terms of Bourdieu the “homology principle” within their trust networks. Third, the strategy of image-building of political actors relies on the widespread understanding of religiosity as adherence to moral values of honesty and trustworthiness that correlates with the expectations of citizens of political actors’ adherence to struggle with corruption and to keeping promises. In turn, owing to the results of the media analysis, this strategy of image construction is supported by actions as explicit manifestations of political actors’ religiosity.

However, there are two discourses missed by clerics. The first one is an Islamic state discourse and, the second one – social justice. From one perspective, it can be explained by the fact that clergymen’s involvement in politics is prohibited in accordance with the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic and the revealed attempts of S. Kamalov and Chubak azhi Zhalilov to underline their civil role in the election campaign rallies can serve as evidence of their awareness of this. However, the main aim of their participation in the election campaigns rallies is to support a certain candidate that presumes the necessary emphasis on the political actors’ personal characteristics.

Meanwhile, the social justice interpreted by A. Atambayev and T. Bakir Uulu as the perspectives of getting higher social positions on the basis of a person’s merits as one of the core characteristics of a Muslim democracy is crucial for them from the standpoint of communication with their constituencies for whom, in accordance with the results of the research by Ismailbekova and Junisbai et al., socio-economic aspect of well-being is of great importance.

In turn, the issues of an Islamic state and Islamization of radicalism are raised by A. Atambayev and T. Bakir Uulu in the context with Roy’s statement that this process presumes rejection of cultural differences. Arguably by providing a causal link between people’s inclination to Islamism and violence and their way of dressing and their appearance coming from another culture these political actors show their fear of inability to control the dynamics of Islamic revival and try to fix the criterion for quick identification of “good” and “bad” Muslims.

From these perspectives, N. Motuev’s speech is standing apart from the rest of the analysis. It contains opposite discourse strands on democracy as a political regime incompatible with Islamic values and social justice as a distributive one that can be a

reflection of opinions of certain social groups, which, however, are inconsiderable in number due to the revealed fact that the majority of the Muslim population in Kyrgyzstan do not embrace Islamist ideas, and correlates with the status of N. Motuev as a non-system opposition figure. Presumably, that can be a supportive evidence of one of the arguments of this research that Islamization of radicalism in Kyrgyzstan can be correlated with Islamic revival, but Islamic revival cannot be reduced to the Islamization of radicalism.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis was aimed to analyze the nature of Kyrgyzstani political actors' address Islam in their public rhetoric and behavior in correlation with dysfunctions in the democratic regime and process of Islamic revival since 2005 that supposed to find answers to two research questions:

RQ₁: How have Kyrgyzstani political actors addressed Islam in their public rhetoric and behavior in the context of unconsolidated democracy since 2005?

RQ₂: What is the role of Islamic revival in Kyrgyzstani political actors' address Islam?

Based on the literature review two hypothetical answers to these research questions were formulated in the following way:

H₁: Kyrgyzstani political actors address Islam in their public rhetoric and behavior as a mechanism to improve their political images in the context of unconsolidated democracy.

H₂: Kyrgyzstani political actors' public Islamic rhetoric is aligned both with the attitudes of citizens towards the government and political actors, as well as current manifestations of religiosity of Muslims.

In turn, the conducted desk-research provided the following context necessary for interpretation of the results of the subsequent media analysis and critical discourse analysis. First, the political parties in Kyrgyzstan lack ideational dimension and are functioning on the basis of neopatrimonial networks that are the models of trust networks identified by Tilly. However, these trust networks are being destroyed due to inefficiency and corruption within formal state institutions that breach in terms of Bourdieu the "homology principle" when the interests of the political actors are not interrelated with the interests of their constituencies that undermine the public recognition of the former. In turn, reducing of public recognition of the political actors

is manifested in two ways: a) self-organization of the population aimed at substitution of the ineffective formal state institutions that leads to the alienation of the citizens from the state, rather than to close cooperation when it is perceived just as a source of formal authority; b) blurring the strong regional networks of support for political actors so when ordinary vote-buying can make people vote not for their “native son”.

Second, one of the characteristics of the Muslim majority of Kyrgyzstan is the growing salience of Islam. This growing religiosity is a multi-faceted process that is manifested both in external and internal transformations. In the former, it concerns increasing numbers of religious objects (madrasa, mosques, prayer rooms, and etc.), observation of Islamic practices (fasting, hajj, Friday prayers, and etc.) and changes in the appearance of the believers (wearing hijab by women, skullcaps, and beards by men). In the latter, growing religiosity presumes adherence of Muslims to values of morality (mainly, honesty and trustworthiness) and social reciprocity and tolerance without reconsideration of Islamic dogmata and mass adherence to change the secular government for Islamic one, presuming the establishment of a theocratic state where secular and religious authorities overlap. However, it is noteworthy, that sometimes religiosity can have pragmatic aims for Muslims, so as when external manifestations do not correspond with adherence to moral values contained in Islamic dogmata. In turn, this makes virtually impossible to provide watershed between pious and pragmatic believers.

Consequently, these institutional and social contexts correlate with addressing Islam by Kyrgyzstani political actors. Regarding the first hypothesis, it is necessary to highlight that the findings of the research have proved its feasibility. The results of the media analysis and critical discourse analysis demonstrate that political actors do treat Islam as a mechanism in their strategy of image-building due to several factors.

First, there is a tendency of growing number of facts of addressing Islam by Kyrgyzstani political actors in the years of national election campaigns. In general, the mechanisms used to demonstrate a high level of religiosity of political actors can be divided into two groups. The first group encompass different types of actions that are applied before the official election campaign starts, i.e. indirect mechanisms (demonstrations and public actions with Islamic rhetoric, creation of Muslim organizations / foundations, building mosques, prayer rooms, as well as different initiatives to reschedule the working days and days-off and the working timetable of the state institutions). The second group of mechanisms is represented by practices applied within election campaigns, i.e. direct mechanisms (involving Islamic clergymen in election campaign rallies).

Second, the facts of addressing Islam through direct and indirect mechanisms concern external and most visible manifestations of the religiosity corresponding with widespread identification of a religious person as a person of high morality who will not betray or be corrupt, rather the presentation of any elaborated programme on how Islamic values can be used for the realization of large scale economic or social programmes.

Third, the results of discourse analysis of the speeches of the three most active political actors (A. Atambayev, T. Bakir Uulu and N. Motuev) indicate that they use Islamic rhetoric to build relationships of trust with their constituencies by appealing to discourse strands of social justice, mutual social accountability, and the image of moral political actors due to their Islamic religiosity. In turn, this image of a religious person is constructed by political actors through the metaphor comparisons between them and their opponents, who have been punishment by God (toppling from power, loosing of

elections, socio-economic problems, and etc.) due to their fraud of the citizens (unfair election competition, corruption, and etc.).

Within the applied theoretical framework that can be considered as attempts to accumulate symbolic capital presuming restoration of the “homology principle” between them and their constituencies undermined within the system where formal and informal institutions co-function. This fact of absence of trust to political actors are supported not only by the findings of desk-research, but also by the discourse analysis of the speeches of Islamic clergymen (S. Kamalov and Chubak azhi Zhalilov) who reiterated the discourse strand on mutual accountability between a future president and the constituencies.

In turn, the second hypothesis is justified by the following research findings. First, it has been established that there is correlation between the growing salience of Islam for the Muslim population of Kyrgyzstan and the growing number of facts of Kyrgyzstani actors’ address of Islam in their rhetoric and behavior. Moreover, the fact of illegal involvement of Islamic clergymen in the election campaign rallies corresponds with the declining trust of the population to political actors involved in harsh commercialized and fraudulent political competition highlighted in reports of international organizations and by some researchers.

Second, the significance of political actors in the speeches is devoted to discourse strands on compatibility of democracy and Islam – a Muslim democracy, and Islamization of radicalization as a threatening one, where the Islamic state is represented as an alternative to the secular democratic state with Muslim majority that corresponds with the theoretical framework of Roy concerning the diversity of the process of Islamic revival in Kyrgyzstan that presumes the existence of Islamist discourse although it is not overwhelming as concluded during the desk-research.

It has been established during the research: a) only few facts of addressing Islam in the years of parliamentary elections (2007 and 2010) that were also the years of adopting new constitutions of the Kyrgyz Republic perceived as an event corresponding with the hope for a bright future, as it has been stated by Beyer;¹⁸⁶ b) only few political actors who are permanently active in addressing Islamic rhetoric, and whose actions are covered by the mass media, while the media representation of others is occasional; c) impossibility to distinguish between real and pragmatic religiosity of political actors or in terms of Bourdieu to find out whether they are calculating cynics or pious Muslims, based on their behavior and discourse strands in their speeches, can be the evidences of the supportive rather than the decisive role of Islamic rhetoric in the instrumentarium of political actors. In turn, there is evidence of the lack of causal links between the identified independent and dependent variables of the research. Therefore, it can be concluded that unconsolidated democracy and Islamic revival can be sufficient rather than necessary conditions for Kyrgyzstani actors' address of Islam in their behavior and rhetoric.

186. Beyer, "Constitutional Faith, Law and Hope in Revolutionary Kyrgyzstan," 325.

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APPENDIX A

List of interviewed experts

- Expert#1: Saliev, Aman. Researcher at the Institute for Strategic Analysis and Prognosis under the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University. August 9, 2019.
- Expert#2: Political scientist, associate professor at the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University. August 16, 2019.
- Expert#3: Analyst at one of the state research institutes. August 19, 2019.
- Expert#4: Lecturer at one of the higher education institutions in Bishkek. August 22, 2019.
- Expert#5: Analyst at the State Commission on Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic. August 22, 2019.
- Expert#6: Ismailov, Nurlan. Associate professor, head of the Law Department at Ala-Too International University. August 23, 2019.
- Expert#7: Mirsaitov, Iqbalzhan. Political scientist, independent expert. August 28, 2019.
- Expert#8: Myrzabaev, Mametbek. Social scientist, PhD, director of Research Institute for Islamic Studies. August 29, 2019.

APPENDIX B

Semi-structured expert interview guideline

Brief description of the project: Краткое описание проекта										
<p>The aim of the research is to find out how Kyrgyzstani political actors have addressed Islam in the context of Islamic revival and unconsolidated democracy since 2005. It is supposed that they addressed Islam in their public rhetoric and behavior as a mechanism to save their positions within the unconsolidated democracy and considering a growing significance of Islam for the Muslim population of the republic without the intention to establish an Islamic state.</p> <p>Цель исследования состоит в том, чтобы выявить, каким образом кыргызстанские политические акторы относятся к исламу в контексте исламского возрождения и неконсолидированной демократии с 2005 г. В исследовании делается предположение, что обращение к исламу в публичной риторике и поведении политических акторов является механизмом сохранения своих позиций в условиях неконсолидированной демократии и отмечаемого роста значимости ислама для мусульманского населения республики, что, тем не менее, не предполагает их стремления установить исламское государство.</p>										
Name ФИО										
Affiliation / Academic degree Должность, научная степень										
Agreement on using citations from the interview in the thesis Согласие на использование цитат из интервью при написании тезиса	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%; text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">Yes, Да,</td> <td style="width: 60%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">with name с указанием ФИО <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 20%; text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">only with affiliation только с указанием должности, научной степени <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Anonymously анонимно <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Yes, Да,	with name с указанием ФИО <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		only with affiliation только с указанием должности, научной степени <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Anonymously анонимно <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	Anonymously анонимно <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Agreement on using tape-recorder during the interview Согласие на использование записывающего устройства во время интервью	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Да</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">No <input type="checkbox"/> Нет</td> </tr> </table>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Да	No <input type="checkbox"/> Нет							
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Да	No <input type="checkbox"/> Нет									
Questions										
Notes and scheduled probe questions										
1.	<p>How can you characterize the political system in Kyrgyzstan? Как бы Вы охарактеризовали политический режим Кыргызстана?</p>	<p>Can it be characterised as an unconsolidated democracy? (ideational expedience and populism of political actors, informal institutions, frequent constitutional changes) Можно ли его охарактеризовать как неконсолидированную демократию? (идеологическая беспринципность и популизм, неформальные институты, часты изменения конституции)</p>								
2.	<p>In your opinion, what kind of transformations have taken place in the political system of Kyrgyzstan since 2010? Какие, на Ваш взгляд, произошли трансформации в политическом режиме КР с 2005 г?</p>									
3.	<p>The data according to the annual social survey for 2018 by the International Republican Institute (IRI) indicates that Kyrgyzstani citizens are satisfied with the existing political system.</p>	<p>According to data, 4% of the respondents do not trust anybody from the list of renown Kyrgyzstani politicians and 28% have not given any</p>								

	<p>However, they are dissatisfied with politicians. Is it possible to conclude that there is a quest in the society for new type of politicians, rather than a different political system?</p> <p>Принимая во внимание данные за 2018 г. ежегодно проводимого социологического исследования Международного республиканского института о том, что граждане КР удовлетворены существующей политической системой, но при этом недовольны политиками, можно ли утверждать, что в республике существует социальный запрос на новый тип политика, а не политического режима?</p>	<p>answer. Meanwhile, 12% of the respondents are strongly satisfied with the way democracy is developing in Kyrgyzstan and 37% are satisfied to some extent. ^a</p> <p>Согласно данным, 4% респондентов не доверяют ни одному из перечисленных известных кыргызстанских политиков, а 28% не ответили на данный вопрос. Вместе с тем 12% опрошенных полностью удовлетворены тем, как функционирует политический режим КР, а 37% – выражают частичное удовлетворение.</p>
4.	<p>In your opinion, in what aspects is Islamic revival manifested in Kyrgyzstan?</p> <p>На Ваш взгляд, в чем проявляется процесс исламского возрождения в Кыргызстане?</p>	<p>Are the changes more quantitative (the number of mosques, madrasas, pilgrims to hajj, etc.) or qualitative (adherence to moral code of conduct according to Islamic norms)?</p> <p>Больше количественных (количество мечетей, медресе, человек, отправившихся в хадж и т.д.) или качественных изменений (приверженность моральному кодексу поведения в соответствии с исламскими нормами)?</p>
5.	<p>Islamic revival and Islamization of radicalism: are there causal links between these processes or they are two independent processes?</p> <p>Исламское возрождение и исламизация радикализма: существует ли между ними каузальная связь или это два независимых процесса?</p>	<p>For example, according to Olivier Roy, Islamic revival is a dynamic and multi-faceted process and does not necessarily lead to politicization of Islam and violence. He asserts that the appearance of Islamist movements cannot be explained as a structural and logical consequence of Islamic revival and basing on this fact introduces the new definition of Islamization of radicalism emphasizing that Islam, as a set of dogmata, does not contain provisions for radicalism. ^b</p> <p>Например, по мнению О. Руа, исламское возрождение представляет собой динамичный и многоаспектный процесс, который не обязательно ведет к политизации ислама и насильственным действиям. Он утверждает, что зарождение исламистских движений нельзя рассматривать как структурное, логическое следствие исламского возрождения и, основываясь на данном факте, он вводит новое понятие исламизации радикализма, подчеркивая, что ислам как вероучение не содержит положений, призывающих к насилию.</p>
6.	<p>According to your opinion, does the process of Islamic revival influence the political preferences of the citizens of Kyrgyzstan?</p>	<p>Could you please, provide evidence supporting your opinion?</p>

	Оказывает ли исламское возрождение, на Ваш взгляд, влияние на политические предпочтения граждан КР?	Не могли бы Вы пояснить свою точку зрения?
7.	In your opinion, is there a social base for the Islamization of radicalism in Kyrgyzstan? С Вашей точки зрения, существует ли в Кыргызстане социальная база для исламизации радикализма?	Could you please, provide evidence supporting your opinion? Не могли бы Вы пояснить свою точку зрения?
8.	According to your opinion, what role could the factor of ideational homogeneity of political party programmes play in light of addressing Islam by Kyrgyzstani political actors? На Ваш взгляд, какую роль в акцентировании внимания политическими акторами КР на исламском факторе мог сыграть фактор идеологической гомогенности программ политических партий в Кыргызстане?	
9.	From your perspective, is Islamic revival a determining factor for addressing Islam by Kyrgyzstani political actors in their public rhetoric and behavior? С Вашей точки зрения, является ли исламское возрождение детерминирующим фактором обращения кыргызстанских политических акторов к исламу?	
10.	Are Kyrgyzstani political actors addressing Islam as a political instrument to increase their popular support, or is it a manifestation of their true religiosity? Используют ли политические акторы в Кыргызстане ислам как политический инструмент или это проявление действительной религиозности?	For example, Pierre Bourdieu introduces the term “legitimate imposture” or “legitimate symbolic violence” to define the phenomenon that representatives in their political / social activities can effectively pursue their own interests when they align their behavior with the interests of their constituencies. ^c Например, П. Бурдьё ввел понятие «легитимного самозванства» или «легитимного символического насилия» с целью определения феномена, когда в своей политической / социальной деятельности политические / общественные деятели могут эффективно реализовывать свои интересы только в условиях соизмерения своего поведения и интересов своих последователей.
11.	From your perspective, is it possible to confirm that Kyrgyzstani political actors demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the law of the Kyrgyz Republic regarding the state-religion relationship by breaching it during election campaigns? С Вашей точки зрения, можно ли утверждать, что политические акторы КР, нарушая законодательство КР относительно государственно-религиозных отношений во время избирательных кампаний, таким образом демонстрируют свое недовольство им?	For example, the involvement of famous clergymen (Sadiq-jan Kamalov and Chubak Azhi Zhalilov) in the election campaign rallies of Omurbek Babanov and Soorobay Jeenbekov in 2017 and “Kyrgyzstan” political party in 2015. Например, привлечение известных духовных лидеров (Садыкжана Камалова и Чубака Ажи Жалилова) к предвыборным митингам в поддержку Омурбека Бабанова и

		Сооронбая Жээнбекова в 2017 г. и партии «Кыргызстан» в 2015 г.
12.	<p>In your opinion, is it possible to confirm that the billboards that appeared in Bishkek in 2016 where the picture of women in traditional Kyrgyz national clothes was counterposed to the picture of women in Arabic clothes reflected the position of Almazbek Atambaev regarding the unacceptability of a theocratic regime for Kyrgyzstan through provision of the correlation between the type of women's clothes and the type of interpretation of Islam?</p> <p>По Вашему мнению, можно ли утверждать, что появившиеся на улицах Бишкека в 2016 г. билборды, противопоставляющие женщин в традиционной национальной кыргызской одежде и арабской одежде, отражали позицию экс-президента Алмазбека Атамбаева относительно неприемлемости для Кыргызстана установления теократического государства, учитывая проводимую им связь между типом женской одежды и типом интерпретации исламских норм?</p>	
13.	<p>According to your opinion, do Kyrgyzstani political actors' address Islam as a main or a supportive means in their political competition?</p> <p>С вашей точки зрения, в настоящее время обращение к исламу политических акторов КР является дополнительным инструментом в политической конкуренции или основным?</p>	
14.	<p>According to your opinion, how do the precedents of addressing Islamic factor in politics influence the political image of various Kyrgyzstani political actors?</p> <p>На Ваш взгляд, как прецеденты обращения к исламскому ресурсу в политике влияют на политический имидж политических акторов КР?</p>	<p>Are there any indicators of improvement of political images and growing popularity of Kyrgyzstani political actors or vice versa?</p> <p>Есть ли индикаторы улучшения имиджа и роста популярности политических акторов КР, или наоборот?</p>
15.	<p>In your opinion, is there a noticeable tendency of growing interest of Kyrgyzstani political actors to Islam as a factor in political competition?</p> <p>С Вашей точки зрения, с 2005 г. отмечается ли тенденция роста интереса политических акторов КР к исламскому фактору в политической борьбе?</p>	<p>Could you please provide evidence supporting your opinion?</p> <p>Не могли бы Вы пояснить свою точку зрения?</p>

^a“Public Opinion Survey. Residents of Kyrgyzstan. November 22 – December 4, 2018,” International Republican Institute, accessed July 8, 2019, https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/february_2019_kyrgyzstan_poll.pdf

^bOliver Roy, “France’s Oedipal Islamist Complex. The Country’s Jihadi Problem Isn’t about Religion or Politics. It’s about Generational Revolt,” *Foreign Policy*, January 7, 2016, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/01/07/frances-oedipal-islamist-complex-charlie-hebdo-islamic-state-isis/>

^cPierre Bourdieu, “Delegation and Political Fetishism,” *Thesis Eleven* 10-11, no. 1 (1985): 65-66.

APPENDIX C

Media analysis of the facts of addressing Islam by political actors in Kyrgyzstan

	Event	Date	Note (initiator and context (elections))
1	Initiative on organization of amnesty for prisoners on Orozo-Ait	November 2007	Initiator – ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic T. Bakir Uulu; context – the year of the parliamentary elections (December 16, 2007) where his party “Erkin Kyrgyzstan” took part
2	R. Kamalov is in the top 5 in “Erkin Kyrgyzstan” party list	November 2007	Initiator – political party “Erkin Kyrgyzstan” context – the year of the parliamentary elections (December 16, 2007) where the party took part
3	Protest demonstrations against the sitting President organized by the Union of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan with appealing to Islam in Osh, Talas, Jalal-Abad, Batken oblasts	November 2008	Initiators – Public activist N. Motuev and ex-ombudsman T. Bakir Uulu; context – the year before the presidential elections (July 23, 2009) where both intended to take part
4	Burning of the flags of the USA and Israel to demonstrate support for the Palestinians	January 2009	Initiators – Public activist N. Motuev and ex-ombudsman T. Bakir Uulu; context – the year before the presidential elections (July 23, 2009) where the former took part, and the latter accepted the suggestion of the current authority to become an ambassador in Malaysia instead of run for office
5	Provision of municipal land plot for building of a new Bishkek central mosque	April 2009	Initiator – President K. Bakiev; context – the year of the presidential elections (July 23, 2009) where he took part
6	Creation of Union of True Muslims of Kyrgyzstan	June 2009	Initiator – Public activist N. Motuev; context – the year of the presidential elections (July 23, 2009) where the he took part
7	The oath on the Quran during inauguration ceremony of deputies of Zhogorku Kenesh	November 2010	Initiator – Deputy T. Bakir Uulu; context – the year of the presidential elections (October 30, 2011) where he took part
8	The initiative on opening of the first namazkana in the building of the Parliament	January 2011	Initiators – Deputies T. Bakir Uulu and A. Zhaparov; context – the year of the presidential elections (October 30, 2011) where the former took part
9	Act of religious sacrifice in front of the Parliament to get rid of evil spirits	April 2011	Initiators – deputies of the Parliament, context – the year of the presidential elections (October 30, 2011)
10	Opening of the first namazkana in the building of Parliament (with the participation of Chubak azhi Zhalilov)	July 2011	Initiators – Deputies of the Parliament, context – the year of the presidential elections (October 30, 2011)
11	Manifestations in Bishkek organized by Union of true Muslims of Kyrgyzstan to free from the jail of K. Tashiev using public prayer and the influence of aksakals presence	November 2012	Initiator – Public activist N. Motuev

12	Statement during the session of the Mayor's Office that the city administration of Osh does not have authority to prohibit schoolgirls wearing hijabs as it is the manifestation of their religiosity in the democratic state	September 2013	Initiator – Mayor of Osh M. Myrzakmatov; context – on December 5, 2013 he was dismissed and on January 15, 2014 he lost the elections for the post of mayor of Osh
13	Statement that there will be the second namazkana in the Parliament	September 2013	Initiators – Deputies of the Parliament
14	Statement on the necessity to respect religious commitments of the girls wearing hijab	September 2013	Initiator – Deputy T. Bakir Uulu
15	The initiative on substitution of the day-off from Sunday to Friday	April 2014	Initiator – Deputy T. Bakir Uulu, context – the year before the parliamentary elections of 2015 (October 4, 2015) where “Azattyk” party, which he belonged to took part
16	Meeting against attacking of the Gaza Strip (with the presence of Chubak azhi Zhalilov)	July 2014	Initiator – Deputy T. Bakir Uulu
17	Tearing of the flag of Israel to demonstrate support for the Palestinians (with the presence of Chubak azhi Zhalilov)	August 2014	Initiator – Deputy T. Bakir Uulu, context – the year before the parliamentary elections of 2015 (October 4, 2015) where “Azattyk” party, which he belonged to took part
18	Statement on necessity to pay a special attention to the hijab issue in the elaboration of a unified model of a school uniform	September 2014	Initiators – 20 deputies of the Parliament, context – the year before the parliamentary elections of 2015 (October 4, 2015)
19	Statement on traditional Kyrgyz clothes for women and hijabs at the session of the Security Council of the Kyrgyz Republic	November 2014	Initiator – President A. Atambayev
20	The initiative on condemnation of “Charlie Hebdo” magazine's caricatures against the Prophet	January 2015	Initiator – Deputy O. Bakirov; context – the year of the parliamentary elections (October 4, 2015)
21	Demonstration in Bishkek against “Charlie Hebdo” magazine in support of Muslim terrorists	January 2015	Initiator – Deputy T. Bakir Uulu; context – the year of the parliamentary elections (October 4, 2015) where “Azattyk” party, which he belonged to took part
22	Support to R. Kamalov during session of the Parliament	February 2015	Initiator – Deputy T. Bakir Uulu; context – the year of the parliamentary elections (October 4, 2015)
23	The initiative on building of a new mosque in honor of perished in the April revolution	April 2015	Initiator – President A. Atambayev

24	Statement on necessity to prohibit wearing of hijabs during meeting in Ministry of Internal Affairs	July 2015	Initiator – Prime-Minister T. Sariyev
25	Statement during the press-conference that hijab does not contradict Kyrgyz national peculiarities of women dressing (with the presence of Chubak azhi Zhalilov)	July 2015	Initiator – Deputy T. Bakir Uulu
26	Using the article by Chubak azhi Zhalilov as an agitation material during election campaign	October 2015	Initiator – party “Kyrgyzstan”, context – parliamentary election campaign (October 4, 2015)
27	The initiative on prolonging the dinner hour for namaz on Friday	April 2016	Initiator – Deputy T. Ikramov
28	The billboards with the picture of women in traditional clothes counterposed to the picture of women in niqab	July 2016	Initiator – President A. Atambayev
29	The initiative on prolonging the dinner hour for namaz on Friday	February 2017	Initiator – Deputy T. Ikramov
30	The present of an ancient copy of the Quran to the Islamic University in the face of Chubak azhi Zhalilov	May 2017	Initiator – T. Sariev, context – the year of the presidential elections (October 15, 2017) where he took part
31	The invitation of S. Kamalov to the election meeting	September 2017	Initiator – B. Torobaev/O. Babanov, context – presidential election campaign (October 15, 2017)
32	The invitation of Chubak azhi Zhalilov to the election meeting	September 2017	Initiator – K. Tashiev/S. Zheenbekov, context – presidential election campaign (October 4, 2015)
33	Blessing congratulation of the newly elected President of the Kyrgyz Republic during the inauguration ceremony	November 2017	Initiator – Ex-President A. Atambayev

Note: The official and social positions of the political actors are indicated as they were at the moment the fact took place in order not to distort the essence of the fact.

Source: News portals “24.kg”, <https://24.kg>; “Vb”, <https://www.vb.kg>; “Azattyk”, <https://rus.azattyk.org>; Central Election Commission on Elections and Referenda of the Kyrgyz Republic, <https://shailoo.gov.kg/ru/>

APPENDIX D

List of speeches for critical discourse analysis

- Azhi Zhalilov, Chubak. “Chubak Azhi Zhalilov Presidenttike Talapker Sooronbai Jeenbekov zhonundo.” YouTube.com. September 20, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NP0NgovdYKM&t=43s>
- Atambayev, Almazbek. “Q&A: Kyrgyzstan’s President on Democracy, Islam, and Being Friends with Putin.” Interview by Ian Bremmer. *Time.com*, October 9, 2017. <https://time.com/4972381/kyrgyzstan-almazbek-atambayev-muslim-russia/>
- Atambayev, Almazbek. “President Almazbek Atambayev: ‘My sdelali pravil’no, kogda sdelali stavku na investitsii v budushchee, na obrazovannoe molodoe pokolenie’.” President.kg. October 27, 2018. http://www.president.kg/ru/sobytiya/videomaterialy/5503_prezident_almazbek_atambaev_mi_sdelali_pravilno_kogda_sdelali_stavku_na_investicii_v_budushee_na_obrazovannoe_molodoe_pokolenie
- Bakir Uluu, Tursunbay. “Teledebaty – T. Bakir Uluu, A. Karimov, K. Tashiev.” YouTube.com. October 20, 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLI2MhXS7cw&t=4537s>
- Kamalov, Sadiq-jan. “Muftii Sadiq-jan Kamalov Babanovdu koldodu.” YouTube.com. September 22, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OR8SQ_WI7hs
- Motuev, Nurlan. “Obrashchenie.” YouTube.com. September 20, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IJTdsRXV4A>