Kyrgyzstan: The Challenge of Post-Soviet Multiethnic Nation Building

By

Eliza Taitelieva

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Chairperson John Kennedy

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Committee member Mike Wuthrich

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Committee member Mark Joslyn

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The Thesis Committee for Eliza Taitelieva

certifies that this is the approved version of the following thesis:

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Chairperson John Kennedy

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Abstract

The thesis attempts to understand why it is difficult to establish peace and stability in Kyrgyzstan; to determine how to establish interethnic and cultural harmony; Understanding the importance of ethnic and national identities and their dynamics also helps to clarify potential problems such as separatism and conflict, which are likely to recur in the future. The World Bank Data Survey from 2004 is used to investigate different variables in which the presence of significant influences (ethnicity, citizenship, education, territory) on building national identity. It also elucidates the ongoing debates of ethnic division in the development of national identity and its challenges. The first significant trend was the fact that ethnic Kyrgyz are more apt to prioritize the importance of ethnicity rather than citizenship. For some, living in Kyrgyzstan provides a context that is necessary for being Kyrgyz. Here again we see the importance of Kyrgyz civic identity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Ethnic conflict in 2010 is symptomatic of the failure of multiethnic Kyrgyzstan to build a state that commanded the allegiance of all its citizens irrespective of ethnicity. In that sense the country has failed to integrate the different ethnic groups for a common national purpose after independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Arguably, the 2010 conflict was a re-eruption of the earlier conflict in 1990, which had remained dormant after violent hostilities subsided (Rezvani 2013, 61). Along with enormous problems after independence and the lack of national awareness and unity also made national consolidation uncertain. The weakness of Kyrgyz national identity is related to the confusion of surrounding the ethno-genesis and the development of the Kyrgyz people (Lowe 2003). Attempts to reassure the ethnic minorities have been less visible than the efforts to nurture a sense of Kyrgyz national identity.

In the post-Soviet period, the newly independent states of Central Asia have engaged in extensive nation building projects in an attempt to assert an idea of national identity in a region of the world where the nation-state has never before existed. These projects differ in their orientation and implementation in the various countries of the region. Kyrgyzstan, one of those states, has shied away from strict nationalism and overt authoritarianism while attempting to maintain the multiethnic character of the state. After the disintegration of Soviet Union into fifteen separate Republics, Kyrgyzstan gained its independence and became a multi-ethnic sovereign state with about 4.5 million population. In the north, where the capital Bishkek is located, the legacy of Soviet rule left a more Russified population, and a more urbanized and industrialized landscape. In contrast, the southern regions tend to be more agrarian, and also have a larger proportion of ethnic Uzbeks (Ryabkov 2008). Moreover, there are about 80 different

ethnic groups' representatives. The Kyrgyz are state-forming ethnic group and comprises 70 percent of population living in Kyrgyzstan. They are the majority in all regions of the country. The Uzbeks are the second largest ethnic group and the third largest ethnic group is the Russians (Nedoluzhko and Agadjanian 2010, 163-164).

Fig. 1. General map of Kyrgyzstan, showing the location of provinces, administrative centers, and other features of interest mentioned in the text. A number of small exclaves of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are not shown within Batken province due to the small scale of the map. (Source: Bond, A. & Koch, N. (2010). Interethnic tensions in Kyrgyzstan: A political geographic perspective. Eurasian Geography and Economics. 51:4. 531-562 DOI: 10.2747/1539-7216.51.4.531)

Today, Kyrgyzstan has been an independent country for over 20 years, and it is one of the more democratic and open societies in the Central Asian region (Diener 2008, 5). Yet, inter-ethnic conflict seems to be a significant component of the recent history, and Kyrgyzstan needs to learn how to deal with differences in a non-violent way. This is a challenging long-term process that requires transformation of society in almost all its dimensions, political, economic, social, cultural, and psychological. It requires a voluntary coming together of protagonist groups that were bitter enemies not so long ago to work for the common good and for a higher purpose. This requires agreement on sharing resources that are often in short supply in an equitable manner, and an agreement that, despite their apparent differences, be they ethnic, religious or any other, there must be higher common goals and purposes in their shared country.

Both conflicts in 1990 and 2010 happened in the south of Kyrgyzstan in Osh. Osh is one of the largest cities in the Ferghana Valley, a region spanning the borders of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, in what is Central Asia's most densely populated and one of the more ethnically mixed area (Fumagalli 2007, 217). Most of the 15 per cent of the country's population who are Uzbeks live in the Ferghana Valley of the South where they have historically been sedentary farmers, urban dwellers and traders, while the Kyrgyz have traditionally lived as nomads (Mullerson 2011). Two prevailing groups Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, were engaged in both inter-ethnic conflicts. In the summer of 1990, they erupted in violence during the progressive collapse of the Soviet Union that was relatively quickly dealt with by Soviet intervention. In contrast, the June 2010 conflict lasted longer and there were more casualties, destructions of property and other acts of violence (Mullerson 2011, 408). The violence that broke out in Osh apparently began with an isolated incident between groups of young Uzbek and Kyrgyz men at a casino located near the center of the city. The conflict quickly escalated, as both sides mobilized

friends and supporters by calling them on cell phones, turning the situation into an all -out riot within a couple of hours (Hanks 2011, 180). There is a rumor that Uzbeks attacked a local university dormitory and raped Kyrgyz girls. The conflict resulted in bloody pogroms, massacres of civilians, refugee crisis, and the property destruction. Hanks (2011) also notes that over the course of the next several days, Kyrgyz civilian reinforcements, perhaps numbering in the thousands, arrived in the city from the surrounding region, in some cases coming from over an hour's drive away. Over three days, thousands of Uzbeks fled across the border into Uzbekistan, more than 2500 structures, mostly private residences, were burned and almost 400 people were killed, a figure more than double the number of fatalities reported from the riot (Hanks 2011, 181). These events, separated by 20 years have some common characteristics, one of which is the legacy of the Soviet nationalities policy, in combination with regional peculiarities – particularly its ethno-demographic features.

The Soviet Union's strategy for ruling Central Asia was to create and promote a universal civic "Soviet" identity for the entire country by emphasizing a common Soviet culture and homeland, rather than groups' ethnic differences (Gorenberg, 2006). This approach was implemented through nation building, religious repression, linguistic assimilation, and shifting ethnic population dynamics. One of the most important areas to foster national identity was in the schools and education system. In 1924, Stalin oversaw the demarcation of national boundaries and the creation of national socialist republics. The current boundaries were imposed, in part reflecting an identification of different nationalities premised on identification of different languages and dialects, and at the same time in part a conscious design of weakening potential nationalist resistance in the region by deviating from ethnic boundaries and creating substantial minority populations (Mellon 2010). Ethnic distinctions were blurred rather than absent, and the

Soviets were able to develop the classification begun by Tsarist scholars. Taking language as the prime marker of ethnicity, they crafted national republics from Central Asia's ethnic mix (Lowe 2003). With ethno-nationalism came regionalism, tribalism and ethno-linguistic fanatism. These issues were solved by means of a 'big fist'. Such autocratic measures resulted in the suppression of individuality and failed to promote and empower genuine participation of citizens in society's life. The post-Soviet realities give no room to such autocratic measures.

The process of nation-building in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan started in a range of ways. Largely, they took up an ethnic, instead of civic, discourse of nation-building by using cultural resources (language, land, religion, memories, etc.) to establish a new national identity and citizenship. In Kyrgyzstan, the term "titular nation" (core ethnos) and ethnocentric slogans became central components of the nation-building rhetoric, relegating non-titular groups to the secondary level. The issue of ethnicity in Central Asia is also tied up with the issue of kinship networks and the influence of regionalism on political preferences that localism *'zemlyachestvo'* (support for people originating from the same village or locality) mostly the role of the south/north divide in Kyrgyzstan's domestic politics is a factor in determining the population's political identities and their potential mobilization. Clan ties remain an important element of politics in the region (Bond and Koch 2010, 536). For example, both groups Uzbeks and Kyrgyz who witnessed the Osh riots have become the symbol of the most important event in their history. Moreover, the fact that the Osh riots of 2010 had validated that diversity in Osh didn't mean unity and mutual understanding. Although a majority of people has thought that the residents were progressive about diversity, the riots have proven otherwise (Chotaeva 2010). Looting of Uzbek stores by Kyrgyz, subsequent gun battles, and brutal beating is an indication of

anything but certainly not integrity between different groups. This brings to the complex issue of state building and nation building.

The goal of this project is to advance an understanding of national identity as well as the concept of "homeland" in Kyrgyzstan. Soviet ethnofederalism, according to which the territory was divided into hierarchically organized units each associated with one particular ethnic group (of which it was supposed to be the historical homeland) defined the institutional design of the Soviet state (Fumagalli 2007, 216). "….according to the "Soviet nationality policies" national groups were supposed to have one and one only homeland (*rodina*). This inevitably meant that 'Soviet internal diasporas", or members of ethnic communities to whom Soviet authorities had already granted the state of titular or indigenous (*korennaya*) nation within a given territory (e.g. Uzbekistan for Uzbeks, Kyrgyzstan for Kyrgyz)……" (Fumagalli 2007, 216). Examining how members of different traditional ethnic groups, particularly Kyrgyz and Uzbek, identified themselves in terms of different scales of territory while also regarding nationality, citizenship, institutional arrangements such as education, and territorial affiliations, makes it possible to compare and contrast how different groups responded to various factors of identity. Understanding the importance of ethnic and national identities and their dynamics also helps to clarify potential problems such as separatism and conflict, which are likely to recur in the future. The thesis makes an attempt to answer to question Is traditional ethnic identity hindering the development of a national identity in Kyrgyzstan?

In order to accomplish the objectives of this research, the paper is organized into five chapters. Chapter 2 provides a detailed review of some of the most prominent scholars of both ethnicity and nation building in an effort to show if the existence of self-identification is hindering to integrate peoples of different ethnic/national heritage within a system of

nationalizing state like Kyrgyzstan. The literature review is composed of three major parts. The first part looks at the successful and unsuccessful nations that are the examples of nation building models. These works are the indispensable literature of any research on nation building. The second part of the literature review is focused on the discussions on the nation building process in Kyrgyzstan post Soviet period. In this part of the thesis the author reviews available and most relevant works, which touch upon state policy programs of building multi-ethnic society directly or indirectly, and other works on the role of ethnic/civic identity in recognizing cultural differences that are conducive to loyalties at the Kyrgyzstani's national level. The third part explicates on what theories the research is grounded and why these theories are used in examining nation building. Chapter 3 explains the method employed in conducting the research. I use World Bank Data Survey from 2004 in order to investigate different variables in which the presence of significant influences (ethnicity, citizenship, education, territory) on building national identity. Chapter 4 focuses on the results and analysis of national identity in Kyrgyzstan as a concept, practice, and field as well as various paradigms developed by scholars to explain and improve nation building. It also elucidates the ongoing debates of ethnic division in the development of national identity and its challenges. This chapter also explores the importance of national/ethnic identity through the prism of a survey questions done by World Bank. Chapter 5 discusses the research question and findings. It examines how national identity development in Kyrgyzstan is conceptualized, designed, and implemented by the state and how it is viewed and experienced by citizens. Finally, it examines the contemporary situation and issues of ethnic and civic identity in nation building development Kyrgyzstan.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

A successful nation building does not negate ethnic and cultural differences. On the contrary, in progressive multiethnic societies such as Canada these are celebrated as strengths and they have succeeded in holding together despite incredible diversity. Keating (1997) states that Canada traditionally sustained a doctrine of 'two founding peoples', the French and the Anglophone community, who in practice were anything but equal. Civic nationalism, while continuing to promote a French-speaking Quebec, could welcome other ethnic groups into the community and allow cultural pluralism (Guibernau and Rex 1997, 174). Canada is now home to the largest number of U.S.-born immigrants in more than two-and-a-half decades. They are attracted by their perceptions of Canada's more liberal political system, multicultural policies, prosperous real estate market, and universal health care. A number of key Canadian policies appear to support the notion that Canada is more of a mosaic than a melting pot, including, most recently, the Multiculturalism Act passed in 1988, which granted legal protections and statuary powers to distinctive minority groups in Canada. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) and Official Languages Act (1969) also expressed support for diverse linguistic and cultural groups in Canada (Hardwick & Mansfield 2009, 389). Canada as a successful civic nation facilitates common identification and advance territorialization for their diverse populations.

In contrast, in Sri Lanka, core ethnos and ethnocentric slogans became central components of the nation-building rhetoric in the 1950s, relegating minorities to the secondary level. Two major ethnic groups, the Sinhalese and Tamils, emerged after gaining independence. A population of over 19 million broke down into Sinhalese (74%), who are mainly Buddhist; Tamils (18%), who are predominantly Hindu, and the largely Tamil-speaking Muslims (8%)

(Bloom, 2003). Both the Sinhalese and Tamils claimed homeland rights and territorial division. Sinhalese is the majority and considered to be a indigenous ethnic group whereas Tamils immigrated from India during British colonialism. However, both of the groups belive because of mythological and religious history that they possess the land. Land colonization schemes and legitimization of their control of polity created territorial disputes between Sinhalese and Tamils. Furthermore, there were unequal seat rights in political institutions which promoted tension between leaders of both parties (Sinhalese and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam-LTTE). The Official Language Act of 1956 recognized Sinhala language of Sri Lanka and led to discrimination in social sectors such as business communication and job security issues in the government for Tamils (Samarasinghe 2011). The State universities' admission quota system restricted Tamil student enrollment, which invoked anger among Tamil youth. All of these inequitable policies implemented by the government were only for the benefit of the Sinhalese majority and Tamil protests were ignored with apparent impunity. As a result, conflict escalated into violent and bloody massacres and the armed confrontation lasted over 25 years, took the lives of over 70, 000 people, and displaced millions more (Lewis 2011). The more Sinhalese political nationalism developed that initiated reforms and prioritized the Sinhalese community over the Tamil minority the worse mobilized attacks and riots organized by both sides. The conflicting sides have repeatedly abandoned opportunities to work out a peace settlement through negotiations in Sri Lanka's peace process. Unfortunately, both mediation and negotiation attempts were unsuccessful because of inability to compromise and reconciliation never was on agenda, which led to intractability of the conflict. Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict produced a militarized country, political fragmentation, and a deep ethnic division (Podder 2006).

The nation building process in Kyrgyzstan (Background)

Similarly to Sri Lanka, in Kyrgyzstan, nation-building is a relatively new and challenging concept. The discussion and definition of the Kyrgyz national identity were necessary as the country faced an ideological vacuum and a lack of a clear understanding of itself to determine its vision of the future (Berdikeeva 2006). Once Kyrgyzstan became an independent nation, the first president Askar Akaev had to manage both the evolution of political legitimacy during and after the Soviet collapse, and the legacy of the ethnic conflict, which gave a voice to rising Uzbek and Kyrgyz nationalisms. Akaev thus sought to reconcile two contradictory trends: the country's interethnic stability by proclaiming Kyrgyzstan a homeland for all its inhabitants. He developed the slogan "Kyrgyzstan, our common home" (Kyrgyzstan – nash obschii dom) as the flagship for the country's new identity (Laruelle 2012). Moreover, Akaev was the primary craftsman of the countries' new national identity. He used the phrase "Island of democracy" or "Switzerland of Central Asia". This conception of national identity rejected the communist and authoritarian past by placing the country in relation to another more favorable and ideal model. For Akaev, the "Switzerland of Central Asia" provided for an apt comparison because of the mountainous and landlocked geographical position of both countries as well as their policy of neutrality surrounded by strong regional neighbors (Huskey 2003).

Akaev also avoided adopting policies that would further split the country along regional or ethnic lines. Akaev's challenge as a northerner was to create policies that addressed the various interests within the country without alienating ethnic Kyrgyz or his own northern networks. As a foundation for his policies, Akaev stressed a conception of national identity that rested on citizenship while incorporating traditional Kyrgyz symbols and stories. He met with various groups. Later on, he assembled leaders of the national cultural centers and social

organizations and formed the more institutionalized "Assembly of the Peoples of Kyrgyzstan" which drew together leaders from 27 ethnic communities and gave them a voice in the political process. He also restored indigenous Kyrgyz holidays and place names that favored the ethnic Kyrgyz (Spector, 2004).

In Kyrgyzstan the mix of Russification and titular privilege that the Kyrgyz elites consider ethno-nationalization was the most practical strategy for forming a national identity. "Sovietisation became increasingly related to Russification in Central Asia as Moscow sought to impose the language, industry, society, culture and 'glory' of the Russian people upon an 'inferior' civilization. The Russians were presented as generous friends who had released the Muslims from their barbaric medieval past and brought them forward into the shining light of socialist progress and modernization. Teaching of the Russian language in schools became compulsory under Stalin, while Khrushchev extended the Russification of the Soviet model. The language failed to penetrate rural Kyrgyzstan fully, but urban areas populous with Slavs developed as Russian-speaking towns, and most urban Kyrgyz educated after the WWII are more comfortable speaking Russian than their own language" (Lowe 2003). For Akaev, Russians and Germans were important political constituents as well as valuable contributors to the Kyrgyzstani economy. In 1993, Akaev moved to halt the post-independence exodus of Slavs and Germans. Without waiting for the approval of parliament, he postponed the implementation of the language law that would have made Kyrgyz the state language and granted Russian the status of an official language instead. By the middle of the 1990s, the outflow of European administers had slowed to a trickle (Huskey, 2002). At a time when some leaders sought to outflank Akaev by championing an ethnic nationalism of the Kyrgyz rather than civic nationalism of all citizens of Kyrgyzstan, it was vital to maintain a large multiethnic coalition consisting of Russians, Uzbeks, and the more

moderate segments of the Kyrgyz community. More importantly, certain institutions became virtual Kyrgyz preserves, such as law enforcement institutions and the staffs of executive agencies. Ethnic minorities in Kyrgyzstan still found themselves in an unenviable position due to growing street crime, patronage and hiring practices, and electoral politics (Huskey, 2003). A fundamental failure of the Kyrgyz state was the inability to construct institutions of civil society, most importantly those tasked with public safety and maintaining social order (Hanks 2011).

Today Kyrgyzstan faces the difficult task of reuniting two traditionally opposed and distrustful groups of citizens even though it presents its national identity as a multi-ethnic secular and democratic state. The goal is to form an identity that is multi-ethnic in nature and achieve a national unity based upon a common system of values and principles for all citizens of the state. The education system is critical in shaping values and attempting to create a national identity. In addition, the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan states that citizens shall have equal rights and equal opportunities to take up posts in civil and municipal service as well as promotion in accordance with the regulations established in the law (Section III, Article 52).

However, state-building decisions overwhelmingly result in the privileging of titular populations, their language and the imposition of old and new national myths (Kolossov 1999). The ethnocratic policies of the Kyrgyz State caused the rise of nationalism and interethnic tension. Akaev used national feelings or dignity in his speeches saying "Being a Kyrgyz, I think that the regeneration of the national memory, national spirit, and national dignity are among the goals of my presidential activities. I am a resolute champion of the comprehensive development of the Kyrgyz language, the Kyrgyz culture, the Kyrgyz history" (Eshimkanov 1995, 28). The oral poem *Manas*, long a cultural identifier exclusive to the Kyrgyz, was elevated to the status of 'national epic', with images of the eponymous hero, Manas, appearing on the country's currency,

and seven axioms from the tale were incorporated into the national educational curriculum (Berdikeeva 2006). The myths surrounding Manas ignore non-ethnic Kyrgyz. Thus, the promotion of the very "Kyrgyzness" of this national icon simultaneously automatically excludes non-Kyrgyz citizens (Lowe 2003).

Yet at the same time, Akaev was especially well-positioned to champion a variant of consociational democracy (a stable democratic system in deeply divided societies that is based on power sharing between elites from different social groups, Saurugger 2007) in Kyrgyzstan, which was designed to forge a grand coalition of the country's ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups under the slogan, 'Peace and Concord Between Peoples'(Huskey 2003). However, with a powerful presidency, a weak parliament, and fledgling parties that are not ethnically-based, consociationalism has taken a different and less robust form in Kyrgyzstan. In addition, the economic collapse accompanying the transition from communism to democracy accelerated considerably the movement of rural Kyrgyz into the country's small number of cities. This rapid urbanization created serious political, social, and environmental problems. Many of the new migrants settled in shantytowns on the outskirts of Bishkek and other cities and they sought to construct housing for themselves in areas that often lack the basic infrastructure of electricity, water, and sewer, and transportation. Poor housing conditions, lack of jobs and increasing crime rates as well as political discontent was blamed on others (non-Kyrgyz) expressed itself in Kyrgyz nationalist directions (Huskey 2003).

The 'Tulip Revolution' of 2005 drove Akaev into exile, and installed Kurmanbek Bakiyev as president. Bakiyev was an ethnic Kyrgyz whose power base was in the south, and he was viewed as a figure who could heal the north/south rift that had emerged in the country's politics under Akayev. Bakiyev's efforts to congeal a national identity for Kyrgyzstan retreated

somewhat from the promotion of Kyrgyz culture via Manas and other ethnic symbols. Rather, the Bakiyev regime offered an identity ideology rooted in abstract principles of 'national unity', 'freedom', 'rule of law' (Hanks 2011). The blueprint for this strategy, entitled 'Development Through Unity: The Comprehensive National Idea of Kyrgyzstan' was promulgated in 2007 (Murzakulova & Schoeberlein). Although basically devoid of ethno-national elements, the new ideology was obtuse and ill-defined, and there appears to have been little motivation to institutionalize its framework (Marat 2010). Bakiyev was no more successful than his predecessor in cobbling together a concept of universalized, non-ethnic national identity that incorporated Kyrgyzstan's minority populations (Hanks 2011).

Traditional Ethnic Divisions

One explanation for the lack of national identity is the historical ethnic split between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz. This suggests that neither Uzbeks nor Kyrgyz identify themselves as citizens of the nation-state. Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan live on the border of their ethnic homeland, the adjacent state – Uzbekistan. They do this to protect themselves with a dense social and commercial network to assure their economic security, and the Uzbeks have felt less vulnerable and disoriented than the Russians who largely left after independence. Despite enjoying formal legal and political equality in Kyrgyzstan, the Uzbeks have seen their presence in state institutions decline significantly in the post-Soviet era. Although the Uzbeks represent about 15 percent of the population, they hold only 6 percent of the seats in parliament. More importantly, certain institutions have become virtual Kyrgyz preserves, such as law enforcement organs and the staffs of executive agencies (Huskey 2010). Perceptions of losses in both socio-economic status, and in political influences resulting from the political changes constituted the background

factors leading to the outbreak of violence (Tishkov 1995, Fumagalli 2007). The conflict had essentially socio-economic causes, but it manifested itself along ethnic lines, and demands started to take on ethnic tones, including requests for recognizing Uzbek as official language or even a request for annexation of parts of territory to Uzbekistan (Spector 2004).

Conflict may arise between two national communities with regard to the 'ownership' of territory, cultural traditions, myths or heroes (Triandafyllidou 2010). The polarization in Osh, the city where riots took place in 2010, is the main obstacle to restoring good relations between the ethnic groups. The stories told by Uzbek and Kyrgyz about how they have competed with each other, how each group has lost what it considered to be theirs, how both groups felt offended and insulted, told by both ethnic groups have led to the conflict in 2010. The reasons of both Uzbek and Kyrgyz discontent and hostility, which led to tragic events, are land distribution policy and ultra-nationalistic politics of the post-Akaev regime. The stories of Uzbeks about how Osh, the city Uzbeks saw as their ethnic enclave, was taken away from them and given to Kyrgyz,and the narratives of Kyrgyz people about how their own city was being taken over by Uzbeks eventually have resulted in the ethnic conflict both in 1990 and 2010 (Megoran 2010). "It seems to some that a prime objective of Soviet officials, including Josef Stalin, during this period was the delineation of borders in such a way as to discourage the emergence of independent cores for pen-regionalism and border demarcation in the region was the result of a complex power struggle between Moscow, regional political and commercial elites, and ethnographers employed on the ground" (Bond & Koch 2010, p.543). As a result, national identity in the Soviet Union brought with it concrete advantages and disadvantages, but advantages granted to certain nationalities were only available to those residing in their own republics. Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan, for example, were generally excluded from the ranks of power in the Kyrgyz SSR (ibid., p.550). Analyzing

this historical relationship, the authors also argue that the political and geographic relationships have long been implicated in making this conflict possible. The Historical relationship of two traditionally opposed and distrustful groups of citizens have been broken and will take time to reunite both groups to call Kyrgyzstan home. However, it is not necessary to draw the conclusion that all elements of historical or political relationship are invariably calculated.

The ethnic division hypothesis is that neither the Uzbeks nor Kyrgyz will identify themselves as citizens of the state. Thus, both ethnic groups including Russians and other smaller groups will identify more with their own ethnicity than as citizens of the state.

Kyrgyz Citizenship

The key reason is the Kyrgyz believed they are citizens of the nation-state the other ethnicities are not especially Uzbeks (Matveeva 2011). The state security officials failed to manage the crisis both before and during the conflict (ibid., p.4). Two revolutions within 5 years, split regional loyalties, low morale, and widespread corruption have led to deteriorating of Uzbek-Kyrgyz relations (ibid., p.5). The lack of basic security of life provides scant stimuli for potential state-makers to develop a longer time horizon. There is not just a severe deficit with regards to the establishment of well-defined and secure property rights, but the most fundamental aspect of all – personal security – is also under constant threat due to the lack of credible enforcement mechanisms other than the use of violence (Engvall 2006). Instead of responding to minor conflicts between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in Osh and undertaking preventive measures, the Provisional Government was busy with political reform and drafting a new constitution. The absence of civic identity and unstable political life brought to inter-ethnic tensions. “The inter-ethnic conflict occurred because of the gradual loss of control by the state following the

overthrow of ex-president Kurmanbek Bakiyev on April 7, 2010" (Radnitz 2010, 3). The Provisional Government's decision to cooperate with local Uzbek leader Kadyrjan Batyrov (leader of Uzbek ethnic group during the conflict) worsened the inter-ethnic situation and led to violence. The failure of the state security sector and weak central government led to the escalation of ethnic conflict.

The Kyrgyz citizen hypothesis is that neither the Kyrgyz will more strongly identify themselves as citizens of the state. Thus, the non- Kyrgyz ethnic groups such as Uzbek and Russians will view themselves as outside the states and identify more with their own ethnicity than as citizens of the state.

Non-Kyrgyz Citizenship

The double identity narrative of the Kyrgyz state, and especially the civic side of it became more and more disconnected from the social and political evolutions of the country throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s. This suggests that while other ethnicities within Kyrgyzstan are identifying themselves with the state, Kyrgyz have become less central to the national identity and they may start to consider themselves outside the nation-state. Kyrgyzstan as an island of democracy, a bearer of citizen identity, and a successful manager of a rapid transition to the market economy, quickly failed and the trauma of the Osh events has fostered the political forces to structure themselves around nationalist claims (Laruelle 2012). Laruelle's argument touches both sides of identity ethnic and civic. The imbalance of both identities in state-building projects failed to develop a pluralistic society. At times, the regime appeared to view inhabitants as citizens of Kyrgyzstan, and at other times appeared to view the state as a nation-state in the ethnic sense as the homeland of the ethnic Kyrgyz. The dual policies that

promote an inclusive Kyrgyzstan as well as the reinforcement of nationalist myth may weaken the national identity of Kyrgyz (Mellon, 2010). Kyrgyzstan drafted a somewhat nationalist-minded constitution that was less concerned with the status of the non-Kyrgyz than subsequent government policy has been (Lowe 2003, 120). The Soviets institutionalized the difference between nationality and citizenship manifestly in the fifth column of USSR internal passports that denoted nationality (Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Russian,Tatar) in addition to citizenship (Soviet). In 1996, the Kyrgyz government decided to remove the line denoting nationality and replace it with the phrase 'citizen of the Kyrgyz Republic'. Nationalist protests and accusation of 'betraying national interests' followed and the fifth column was restored shortly after. 'Kyrgyzstani' was proposed as the most appropriate adjective for all resident in Kyrgyzstan as it encourages a collective sense of belonging and inter-ethnic harmony (Lowe 2003, 121). The designation of the year 2003 as the 2,200th anniversary of the Kyrgyz statehood, throughout which the government held numerous events celebrating the country's cultural legacy, was also seen by opposition politicians and journalists as a source of inter-ethnic tension (Saipjanov 2003).

The Non-Kyrgyz Citizenship hypothesis is that Kyrgyz identify more with their own ethnicity than as citizens of the state. This suggests that Kyrgyz are more nationalist and attach greater legitimacy to their own group than the national government.

Regional Ties

If there is one aspect of Kyrgyz identity that must be watched carefully by the government as well as the individual Kyrgyz, it is regionalism. Divided between the south (Osh, Jalalabad and Batken) and the north (Talas, Chuy Valley, Naryn, and Issyk Kul), Kyrgyzstan plays host to two divergent sets of political, economic, and ideological interests. The south,

densely populated, is settled, ancient, deeply rooted in faith and, economically, a basket case. The north, still involved in a nomadic existence and herding, is much less affected by religion than by the other ideologies outlined above. As applied here, the social distance scale reveals substantial differences in subtle prejudice not only between but also within ethnic groups. To better understand the implications of such prejudice in Kyrgyzstani society, it is important first to identify some of the likely structural antecedents, or roots, of distance among the ethnic groups (Faranda & Nolle 2003). The most important facet of residence in determining social distance is the geographical region in which a respondent lives, or, more to the point, the history of contact between ethnic groups in that region. As Huskey (2002) noted "Potentially the most serious division among the Kyrgyz runs along urban-rural lines. The urbanized quarter of the ethnic Kyrgyz population has appropriated the language and at least some of the cultural values of the Russians," while among the rural Kyrgyz there has been a rise of atavistic nationalism and pride in traditional Kyrgyz values. In the South, where Uzbeks are most numerous, Kyrgyz are most likely to accept them in the closest relationships. At the same time, Kyrgyz who live in the North or in Bishkek are more likely than Kyrgyz in the rest of the country at accept Russians into kinship (Faranda & Nolle 2003). The ethnic revival has more resonance for the rural Kyrgyz, who today number over two-thirds of the ethnic Kyrgyz population (Lowe 2003). It is difficult to judge the full significance of such ties and assess how deeply sub-national allegiances are held amongst the general population, but it is clear that the ideal of the nation is compromised by these familial, local and cultural attachments.

Fig. 2. Kyrgyzstan ethnicity map showing the distribution of Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, and "other" nationalities ("other" nationalities exceeding 1 percent of the total population of Kyrgyzstan in 2009 include Russians, Dungans, Uyghurs, and Tajiks; National, n.d.). (Source: Bond, A. & Koch, N. (2010). Interethnic tensions in Kyrgyzstan: A political geographic perspective. Eurasian Geography and Economics. 51:4. 531-562 DOI: 10.2747/1539-7216.51.4.531)

The regional hypothesis is that individuals identify more with their own region than as citizens of the state.

Education

Public education has a socialization influence on students, and government use textbooks and lessons as a way to create citizens of the state. Citizens within the education system are exposed to a particular set of ideas or norms (Geddes and Zaller, 1989;Key, 1961). Observing

American public opinion, V.O. Key (1961, p. 340) argued that 'formal education may serve to indoctrinate people into the more-or-less official political values of the culture'.

A great deal of the linguistic situation that obtains in Kyrgyzstan today is related to the degree of comfort that the speakers of Russian or Kyrgyz feel in satisfying their daily linguistic needs. In other words, the educational base of the individual is a main determining factor in how that individual interacts in society. If the Kyrgyz individual is a graduate of a Russian school, he or she feels comfortable in Russian because he or she also thinks in Russian. Similarly, those who graduate from Kyrgyz schools feel comfortable in Kyrgyz and think in Kyrgyz. In fact, individuals educated in the Kyrgyz language feel uncomfortable when speaking Russian and, often, have difficulty expressing themselves in Russian. In 1989, only three of Frunze's (Bishkek) 69 schools used Kyrgyz as the primary language of instruction and 4 per cent of the national library's books were in Kyrgyz, while 83 per cent of students took higher education in Russian (Huskey 1993). Following Mikhail Gorbachev's 'glasnost' policies, the titular language earned the status of a state language of Kyrgyzstan and the leaders tried to revive it as part of the greater nation-building effort.

The state encouraged a more effective teaching of the Kyrgyz language by adopting better teaching methodologies. However, books and teaching methods of the Kyrgyz language remain rather ineffective (Berdikeeva 2006). Despite the moves to encourage or discourage the role of the Russian language in the country, the reality is that those not speaking the Kyrgyz language are not able to fully participate in the political and decision making process. More than a decade after the Law on State Language was passed, the linguistic shift is clearly visible, most obviously in the use of Kyrgyz place-names, though modest progress has also been made in strengthening the language. The use of Kyrgyz in schools and higher education has increased

considerably, and there has been some success in teaching or improving the language of adult Kyrgyz. Kyrgyz-language publications have significantly increased, and the constitution adopted in 1993 made knowledge of Kyrgyz essential for the presidency (Lowe 2003). As far as a script for Kyrgyz is concerned, Cyrillic seems to be the winner; it will remain viable at least for the near future.

Still another factor is the demography. Whether the individual, especially the youth, is urban or rural plays a major role in the type of attitude that is expressed in given educational contexts. An urban youth may use Kyrgyz at all levels but might choose to speak and think in Russian. In sum, demography and educational context constitute two of the major deciding factors in the promotion of languages and the levels of comfort in each.

Moreover, Kyrgyzstan has been engaged in the process of re-writing its history in order to pursue the goal of creating new national identity. In 1995 the Kyrgyz people celebrated the 1000th Anniversary of the epic Manas and in 2003 the 2200th Anniversary of Kyrgyz Statehood (Dukenbaev & Hansen 2003). The mythical Manas has been given much academic and public attention. One of the reasons was his consolidation of the dispersed Kyrgyz tribes and their subsequent united opposition to foreign conquerors. *Manas* is a trilogy consisting of *"Manas,"* which deals with the life and heroic deeds of the founder of Kyrgyz national identity; *"Semetei,"* the story of Manas's son and successor who continued Manas's efforts for gaining the Kyrgyz their independence; and *"Seitek,"* the story of Semetei's son, who brought the efforts of his father and grandfather into fruition. Both Manas, and the 2200th Anniversary of Kyrgyz Statehood published in high school as well as university history books. Since secondary education is compulsory in Kyrgyzstan, and school curriculum and reading materials are assigned and approved by the state (Ministry of Education and Science in Kyrgyzstan). It is

argued that the state uses educational institutions as a tool for spreading national ideologies and creating national identity. According to President Akaev's decree, the Ministry of Education and Science in Kyrgyzstan introduced the study of Kyrgyz history at all levels of the Kyrgyz educational institutions. It was required that Kyrgyz schools hold classes dedicated to the celebrations of the anniversary and that discussion of the national continuity be based on President Akaev's 'Kyrgyzskaya Gosudarstvennost' I narodnyi epos Manas (Kyrgyz statehood and national epic Manas) book (Mellon 2010).

The Education hypothesis is that individuals with higher education will identify themselves more as citizens of the state rather than ethnicity or region.

CHAPTER 3

Concepts, measures and methods

I examine the development of national identity in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, seeking an answer to the research questions if traditional ethnic identity hinders the development of national identity and what influences people's national identity. Therefore the key independent variable is ethnic identity that issue of ethnicity causes tensions to integrate peoples of different ethnic/national heritage within a system of nationalizing state like Kyrgyzstan. The dependent variable is national identity that the Kyrgyzstan faces the difficult task of reuniting two traditionally opposed and distrustful groups of citizens even though it presents its national identity as a multi-ethnic secular and democratic state. To form an identity that is multi-national in nature and achieve a national unity based upon acknowledging a common system of values and principles for all citizens of the state.

The key dependent variable is perceived citizenship and national (or strictly) identity. The concept of an ethnic identity by Max Weber (1922), in order to create an ethnic identity, groups must display a common language, a belief that they are descended from common ancestors, a feeling of ethnic affinity, and a shared belief system. He notes "The belief in common descent, in combination with a similarity of customs, is likely to promote the spread of the activities of one part of an ethnic group among the rest, since the awareness of ethnic identity furthers imitation" (Guibernau and Rex, 1997 p.22). Weber's ideas have been influential to study how ethno-national identities are constructed and develop. Common language, belief in a common decent or heritage, and the effect of religious doctrines on perceived group mentalities and senses of identification can all be observed in the context of Kyrgyzstan.

As for the definition of the nation elaborated by Anthony Smith (1991, p.14), a nation is 'a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members'. In order to analyze national identity as a concept and as a social phenomenon it is often necessary to study the movement that brings nations into being, namely nationalism. The latter is defined as the 'ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential nation' (Smith 1991, p.73). In Kyrgyzstan, nationalism combines a narrative on the titular ethnic group and its relation to a civic, state-based, identity, feelings of imperiled sovereignty, and a rising electorate agenda for political forces. Nationalism has become the engine of an interpretative framework for Kyrgyzstan's failures and enables the society indirectly to formulate its perception of thread, both on the Uzbek and Kyrgyz sides (Laruelle, 2012).

In addition, Brubaker (1995) speaks of "nationalizing states" and their prevalence in post-communist context. He defines nationalizing states as being considered nation-states while at the same time being ethnically heterogeneous. Elite individuals in these states emphasize citizenship of the state, but do so through the language, culture, economic advantage, and political dominance of the state-bearing nation. Brubaker (1995) also states that minority groups with "external homelands" can draw on ethnic territory and group members for support across political borders. The idea of external homeland is important in Kyrgyzstan because many individuals have had some contact with other former-Soviet territories throughout their family histories. Homeland conceptions that relate to places of residence (*malaya rodina*) and to some extent the state territory (*bolshaya rodina*) have manifested across the ethnic spectrum. Identity parallels may be drawn to the increasingly common reference to ethnicity through the term

"people" *(narod)*, whereas the political nation *(natsiia)* is understood as being Kyrgyzstani – though, as noted above, this term is not commonly used in daily discourse (Diener 2014). Such dynamics that does not identify specific ethic groups shows a prospect for social solidarity, loyalty, and belonging generating from the "prosaic act of living together within a politico-institutional bounded space" (Antonsich 2009, 797).

As the state possessing ethnonym Kyrgyzstan faces an inherently a complex task of integrating peoples of different ethnic/national heritage. According to Herb, national identity can exist in "civic" or "ethnic" terms, where the civic variant refers to the identification to all the people within a given (state) territory, thus referring to a "civic nation," and the ethnic variant refers to one's identification with one group within the state, thus referring to an "ethnic nation". These two forms of national identity were especially important in Eastern Europe (Herb 1999). They are also evident in Kyrgyzstan today.

To explore issues of identity, ethnicity, and homeland between the two major ethnic groups in Kyrgyzstan, I utilized a qualitative methodology. Using a case study method I tested how citizens perceive ethnicity and citizenship in Kyrgyzstan. I used the World Bank Survey of Conflict Prevention and Cooperation in Kyrgyzstan, data from 2004. There are 7 provinces, with Bishkek city is considered as an eighth province for the survey. Each province is divided into several districts (rural areas) and city councils ("gorodskoy kenesh"). Overall Kyrgyzstan has 56 units (44 districts and 14 city councils). There were 1500 respondents to the survey questions. The survey project used public opinion polling to gather and then analyze a sample that represents the entire population in Kyrgyzstan. The survey ranked various factors of ethno-national identity according to importance. In the surveys participants were asked to identify themselves in terms of region (oblasts), nationality, age, gender, education level, and urban/rural

areas. Participants identified their feelings regarding the importance of citizenship to their conception of ethno-national identity. A value of importance of ethnic identity and citizenship according to respondent's ethnicity is the first analyzed point. The question is "What is more important your nationality or citizenship?" The Responses were categorized as "Nationality", "Citizenship", "Equally Important". I also used a chi-squared test to identify significant correlations between variables.

The key independent variable self-identified "Nationality" (ethnic identity) is chosen to examine differences in responses between ethnic groups. It helps to test whether or not having a different ethnic identity is important for how one considers both place-based and traditional identity factors. My hypothesis is ethnic identity is stronger than national identity, which is demonstrated if the majority of respondents choose a nationality (Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Russian) rather than citizenship as (Kyrgyzstani). I will test two hypothesis.

The Kyrgyz citizen hypothesis is that the Kyrgyz will more strongly identify themselves as citizens of the state.

The Non-Kyrgyz Citizenship hypothesis is that Kyrgyz identify more with their own ethnicity than as citizens of the state.

"Region" is independent variable, dividing the participants into the seven oblasts of Kyrgyzstan. The purpose of this category is to examine differences in responses between participants living in a more multiethnic and homogeneous oblasts. Out of seven oblasts five are multiethnic which are Osh, Jalal-Abad, Batken, Issyk-Kul, and Chui. Talas and Naryn are homogeneous. My assumption is there is a greater regional variation in national identity. The Regional hypothesis is that individuals identify more with their own region than as citizens of the state.

"Education" is another important independent variable which is categorized "Incomplete secondary or less", "Special secondary", "Complete secondary", "Incomplete higher or bachelor" and "Complete higher or greater level". This variable helps to explore whether or not having a higher level of education influences participants' opinions regarding the importance of nationality or citizenship. The Education hypothesis is that individuals with higher education will identify themselves more as citizens of the state rather than ethnicity or region.

To analyze the data I compared the average mean scores of the entire sampling group regarding their responses to each dependent variable. This strategy allows me to rank the four identity factors in terms of their overall importance in the context of the study. Noting the mean differences between each category among the independent variables also allow me to see which groups prioritized which dependent variable and to what degree.

The key limitation of this research is its focus on descriptive statistics. Thus, the necessity of using more comparative data, especially after the conflict 2010, remains. It also creates opportunities to do cross-national comparative research on nation building in Kyrgyzstan.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis and Results

Showing the following tables I will discuss various elements of ethno-national identity as they were considered by the World Bank Survey (2004) participants in this study.

Table 1. Importance ethnicity/citizenship according to respondent's nationality

		NATIONALITY				
		Kyrghyz	*Uzbek*	*Russian*	*Turk*	*Other*
Nationality	*Num. of resp.*	353	68	25	7	19
	%	37.7%	25.9%	17.6%	18.8%	24.7%
Citizenship	*Num. of resp.*	236	50	24	8	22
	%	25.2%	19.2%	16.7%	21.5%	28.0%
Equally Important	*Num. of resp.*	347	135	68	22	32
	%	37.1%	51.6%	47.7%	59.8%	40.1%
Total	*Num. of resp.*	936	439	328	265	287
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: World Bank Survey of Conflict Prevention and Cooperation in Kyrgyzstan, 2004

The data suggested that with respect to self-idenfication, it seems like the nation building efforts of the state in 2004 (at the time of the survey) seem to be effective.

As we see the importance of ethnicity or citizenship according to respondent's nationality 25.2% Kyrgyz marked the importance of citizenship whereas 20% Uzbeks indicated the importance of citizenship. Interestingly equally important for Uzbeks shows 51.6% and 37.1% for Kyrgyz. For Uzbeks the importance of both suggests a closer connection to citizenship than the Kyrgyz. Thus the majority within ethnic group reports that they self-identify as citizens or both. Differences in how groups responded regarding the importance of citizenship were essential between those with titular status and those without. Thus the data rejects both the Kyrgyz citizen hypotheses. However, there is some evidence for the non-Kyrgyz hypotheses because over one thirds Kyrgyz identify with their own nationality over the state (citizenship). In addition, the larger proportion of "equally important" responses casts doubt the complete success

of creating a national identity. Among the templates that are relevant to the formation of Kyrgyz identity, ethnicity is the one that has continuously given me pause. For the non-Kyrgyz ethnicities, identity is a more painful and pressing concern because Kyrgyz as a titular ethnicity feels more comfortable living in their own soul land indicating all non-Kyrgyz ethnicities as 'others'. The revival of Kyrgyz culture and language has encouraged Kyrgyz national awareness. The data supports some of the scholars' suggestion that the state should continue to treat its people sensitively while the promotion of the term 'Kyrgyzstani' could be useful in creating a shared attachment to this impoverished country. It may be too early for the country to form such a sophisticated definition, but the concept of a 'Kyrgyzstani' rather than a 'Kyrgyz' nation must be the goal (Lowe 2003). The national ideology of the future will require a formula to meet the far greater challenge of creating a 'Kyrgyzstani' nation.

While respondents seem to self-identify with the state as opposed to ethnicity, there may be different or stronger connections with region and hometowns. Indeed, Table 2 suggests that in some areas the combination of ethnic and regional identity may undermine national identity.

Table 2. Importance ethnicity/citizenship according to respondent's region

	REGION							
	Batken prov.	Dzhalal-Abad prov.	Issyk-kul' prov.	Naryn prov.	Oshskaya prov.	Talas prov.	Chui prov.	Bishkek city
Nationality	34	112	43	53	109	15	42	64
	29.9%	43.0%	33.4%	67.1%	30.9%	23.6%	21.5%	29.1%
Citizenship	27	79	21	16	107	3	50	35
	24.1%	30.6%	16.6%	20.5%	30.4%	4.6%	25.5%	16.0%
Equally Important	52	69	64	10	137	47	104	121
	46.1%	26.4%	50.0%	12.4%	38.7%	71.8%	53.1%	54.9%
Total	114	260	129	78	354	66	197	220
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: World Bank Survey of Conflict Prevention and Cooperation in Kyrgyzstan, 2004

I examined region-based elements of ethno-national identity in terms of how they form a spatial or territorial context for ethno-national identity. Being from somewhere is a potential component that everyone can consider regarding how one self-identifies. It helped to explore what living in certain places meant to participants in terms of their own personal and perceived group attachments and to check whether some territorial distinctions were more meaningful than others. As the table shows in monoethnic region (Kyrgyz dominates) like Naryn 64.9% say the importance of ethnicity whereas pluralistic region like Osh (conflict zone) 37.7% (majority) highlight equally important. The data supports the Regional hypothesis. Regions with an ethno-geographic configuration display relatively highly homogeneous pockets of ethnic concentration. Naryn as a highly homogeneous region emphasizes the importance of ethnicity and is more focused on regional construct. One reason for the importance of ethnicity to those with titular status might be linked to old system of internal passports where an individual's nationality is listed in his or her official documents noting the importance of civic identification.

Education is expected to have a positive influence on the generating national identity. However, Table 3 suggests that education has little influence.

Table 3. Importance ethnicity/citizenship according to respondent's education

		EDUCATION				
		Incompl. second. or less	*Spec. second.*	*Complete second.*	*Incompl. higher or bachelor*	*Compl. higher or greater*
Nationality	*Num. of resp.*	35	80	234	41	83
	%	32.0%	27.8%	39.1%	24.4%	32.7%
Citizenship	*Num. of resp.*	27	86	124	44	58
	%	24.6%	30.3%	20.8%	26.0%	23.1%
Equally Important	*Num. of resp.*	48	120	241	83	112
	%	43.4%	41.9%	40.2%	49.6%	44.2%
Total	*Num. of resp.*	111	286	598	168	253
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: World Bank Survey of Conflict Prevention and Cooperation in Kyrgyzstan, 2004

Indeed, the level of education has little influence; unexpectedly higher education is associated with greater ethnic identity. The data rejects the Education hypothesis. It demonstrates a low quality of education and it projected that Kyrgyzstan needs to reform its education system towards to multicultural education. Education in Kyrgyzstan is still ongoing transformation after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The education system is structured and organized as primary education, the first stage of general secondary education, lasts four years (grades 1 to 4) and children start attending school at the age of 6 or 7 and primary education is compulsory. Then, secondary education is the second stage of general secondary education; it lasts five years (grades 5 to 9) and is also compulsory. Complete general secondary education requires two additional years of study (grades 10 and 11) and is mostly provided free of charge in State-owned educational institutions. There are also primary vocational education schools include professional lyceums and vocational technical colleges. Finally, higher education institutions include universities, academies, specialized higher education institutes. The duration of programs at universities and colleges depends on the level of the institution. Higher education institutions also offer *Aspirantura* (PhD) and *Doctorantura* (Post doctoral) (Ministry of Education and Science: http://edu.gov.kg/).

Article 2 of the Law on Education, adopted in 1922 and amended in 2003, stipulates that all citizens have the right to education regardless of sex, nationality, language, social status, political or religious belief. Education in the country is based on the principles proclaimed in international agreements and pacts, as well as in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It adheres to the humanistic values of the nation and world culture as well as the principles of democracy (Ministry of Education and Science: http://edu.gov.kg/).

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The first significant trend was the fact that ethnic Kyrgyz are more apt to prioritize the importance of ethnicity rather than citizenship. For some, living in Kyrgyzstan provides a context that is necessary for being Kyrgyz. Here again we see the importance of Kyrgyz civic identity. Everyone born in Kyrgyzstan, or in a territory that would become it, has this legal Kyrgyz citizenship. However, Kyrgyz tend to factor this civic element into their overall sense of ethno-national identity more than non-Kyrgyz. The facts that ethnic Kyrgyz culture, language, history are all dominant in Kyrgyzstan. One point on which that the south and Chui regions are ethnically diverse. The diversity, in their opinion, leads to tolerance and a multi-national landscape. Data showed that living around representatives of their own ethno-national groups chose the importance of their ethnicity. This trend was especially true for Kyrgyz.

Nationalism with preference given to the titular ethnic group, references to ancient empires and pre-Soviet traditions, and isolation of minor ethnic group from government are three common threads. I agree with Mellon in that the "cultivation of myth" on a national scale may "discourage the enforcement of political accountability and administrative transparency" (2010, p. 149). Until more pressing issues are addressed, including weak economies, rampant unemployment, ecological disasters, and lack of basic human rights, the development of national myth will only entrench the flawed political system that is already in place. If we hope for a truly democratic and stable Kyrgyzstan, we must support efforts that foster political and national inclusionism, democratic participation of minority groups, and an easing of tensions between the ethnic groups.

There needs to be more consensus on what is causing destabilization in Kyrgyzstan. One author argued that lack of strong national identity and government intervention was causing this tension, while another claimed it was the lack of multicultural education failed from the ground. In both cases, issues of ethnicity and equality are largely ignored. I think this theme lacks country-specific issues of destabilization.

I also think the contrast between modernity and traditional ideologies needs to be looked at further, particularly in terms of human rights violations. Are these violations occurring simply because of unfair government? Or is this struggle in building a firm national identity the underlying cause?

Considering region for the purposes of citizenship or titular status supports the idea that one is born into a particular nationality. Having the right region can thus provide someone with all of the civic elements of nationality important for membership in most nation-states. While someone admitted that they saw one's ethnicity as a choice, others stated that everyone is born into a certain ethnicity, seeing it as something that cannot be changed. This variety of opinions illustrates the confusing issue of national identity (citizenship) versus ethnic identity. The possibility of equating one's own sense of ethno-national identity with the grandeur of the state is clear. The extent to which state symbols and propaganda in Kyrgyzstan are targeted toward ethnic Kyrgyz as opposed to the entire citizenry is contentious. However, most scholars agree that in Kyrgyzstan, the abundance of exclusive nationalist movements has increased, and many critics have accused government for pro-ethnic Kyrgyz agenda.

Region-based divisions are bound to get worse if the government fails to provide welfare, infrastructure, and public goods to the remote poor areas in the country. Therefore, viable reforms and changes must begin from the top (Berdikeeva 2006). Only the effective, accountable

and responsive government is able to unify the country and diminish the influence of destructive forces such as regionalism, clanism, and locality. A consensus within the government will not be reached without a more inclusive political system, including regional representation. Kyrgyzstan especially, a country with many sizable ethnic communities, will benefit from a civic model of nationhood. Civic nationalism may reduce the incentive of separatism and ethnic rivalry (Rezvani 2013). This will only be possible when the Kyrgyzstani central and regional authorities implement suitable policies, and when ethnic communities themselves consciously adopt a positive attitude towards a multi-ethnic civic Kyrgyzstani nation.

The education system of Kyrgyzstan is undergoing transformations. Education failed the young; this includes formal secondary and university training as well as informal guidance from parents, other relatives, and community leaders. Curriculum should be modified to encourage cultural diversity and understanding. No local research on cultural diversity has focused on the role of parents and communities in developing and resolving conflict. Despite current post-conflict efforts to educate the young on the value of cultural diversity, many students still claim to hate those who do not look like them. There are many reasons for this, but one critical reason is the lack of knowledge by teachers of the new procedures used in curriculum development and implementation. Teachers in Kyrgyzstan struggle to meaningfully integrate the elements of innovative curriculum development and teaching practices into their work on a daily basis. But they are experiencing enormous difficulties due to the fact that they are not adequately prepared (retrained) for the new changes. They often have to deal with these difficulties with little knowledge and/or support as related to new curriculum development procedures. Reforms and changes on the top should be also reflected in areas such as secondary and higher education,

which should integrate civics and democracy programs, including participatory democracy, public service, elections, and conflict prevention and conflict resolution (Berdikeeva 2003).

In conclusion I'd like to add that Kyrgyzstan is now on the path to build a democratic society. However, the people of Kyrgyzstan showed that power in our country is a truly national and only democratic way will ensure the stability and progressive development in the country. The challenge of the formation and maintenance of ethnic identity is central to the awareness of contemporary political and social dynamics in many regions of the world. As Medina (2004) analyzed several articles about ethnicity and identity. He shows the challenges of differentiating race and ethnicity or how people define themselves as an ethnic identity. Ethnicity intersects with many aspects of identity such as gender, sexuality, class, race, and ethnic groups. They become interrelated in complex ways. One can consider ethnicity and identity in politics, whereas others look them in education or everyday practices. However, it is a problem to conceptualize ethnicity in identity politics (43). As a result, it is impossible to define the boundaries of one ethnic identity and the beginning of another in today's contemporary world. Today the world is becoming as one global village. It is time for migration boom and personal identity as well as ethnic identity often materialise in relation to somebody else. Identity is not sustainable anymore, it is changeable. Therefore, Kyrgyzstan should have more multicultural perspectives rather than ethnocentric.

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