

THE FORMATION AND NATURE OF POLITICAL CULTURE IN PRESENT-DAY KYRGYZSTAN

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Present-day Kyrgyzstan is going through a rather difficult period in its development. The transformations in culture, the economy, and the state-political structure have affected all aspects of Kyrgyz society's life across the board, whereby these processes are often very excruciating and accompanied by severe social upheavals. A fundamental element of the dynamics of the social transformations aimed at establishing market relations in Kyrgyzstan is the constant change in those values on which the nation's people, who have grown up in a traditional and then Soviet society, are building their world outlook. This has given rise to a legitimate interest in searching for rational explanations to the processes occurring in the country's political culture. In this article we will try to analyze the main factors influencing the formation and nature of political culture in Kyrgyzstan.

Political culture is a structure that becomes increasingly richer and more complicated. The problem of forming and advancing a different type of political culture that is better suited to the democratic trend in Kyrgyzstan's development is extremely pertinent for the Kyrgyz people. This requires its re-examination from the viewpoint of the new democratic values taking shape in the republic. It is particularly important in current conditions when globalization and democratization are drawing new and nontraditional strata of the population into political life.

Political culture is quite a stable phenomenon. It, just as culture in general, is a system that is least affected by change. Its main function is to reproduce an image and on its basis guarantee the continuity of society's political life and support of society as a systemic whole. At the same time, society cannot adapt to the changing conditions and fundamental transformations in political life and the entire social system without profound metamorphosis of political culture. So in each specific situation it is a unique synthesis of its formation, functioning, and development, whereby it can be regarded as a dynamic rather than petrified system.

Political culture undergoes the most significant changes during transition periods of revolutionary changes or reform in society and the state, when certain value and ideological shifts occur in the mass consciousness generated by an abrupt change in the customary political practices. At times of radical social change and a breakdown in the former political system, new images can be incorporated into the system of political cultures. However, this process is complicated and contradictory.

The political and cultural transformations that occurred and are occurring in sovereign Kyrgyzstan show that the political culture of Kyrgyzstan, as of all the post-Soviet states, is of a mixed, polarized, and segmented nature. It is characterized by different value references, contradictions between traditionalism and modernism, between secular and religious orientations, and between the elite and mass culture, as well as by differences between the subcultures of the urban and rural population and the electorate of the capital city and provincial towns. The political culture of the Kyrgyz people today is segmented because it is forming on the basis of several factors.

The first and most important of them is current domestic political practice, which is formed by regulatory acts and sociopolitical reality. In present-day Kyrgyzstan there are groups demanding that the country's state structure be based on tradition, that is, they insist on dividing the Kyrgyz people into the right and left wing, as has always been the case historically; another part of society is oriented toward Islamic values, while a third has its sights set on modernizing the republic on a secular basis.

The second factor is ethnic tradition. The political culture of any society, particularly one that has deep-rooted multi-century traditions, develops on the basis of continuity. American political scientist L. Pye believed that political culture provides the meaning, form, and predictability of the political process. This understanding graphically shows that "traditions of a society, the spirit of its public institutions, the passions and the collective reasoning of its citizenry, and the style and the operating codes of its leaders are not just random products of historical experience but fit together as a part of a meaningful whole and constitute an intelligible web of relations."¹

For millennia Kyrgyz political culture has been patriarchal with a strong orientation toward tribal values and a charismatic leader, whereby the *azho*, *kagan* (state leaders), or *bii* and *manapy* (clan chiefs) were chosen for their merits and capabilities, their ability to defend and feed the people in the harsh conditions of nomadic life. At each historical stage, when the political structure of the states the Kyrgyz belonged to changed, tribes and clans (*uruu*) acted as the social foundation and internal regulator of clan relations. After 1293, when they lost their statehood, the Kyrgyz people had a subservient and subordinated political culture. In so doing, the clan self-identification of

¹ L.W. Pye, "Introduction: Political Culture and Political Development," in: *Political Culture and Political Development*, ed. by L.W. Pye, S. Verba, Princeton, 1965, p. 7.

the Kyrgyz people (we—they) remained unchanged, which was based on the preservation of internal social relations.

During the seventy-year Soviet period, representatives of all the clans lived all over present-day Kyrgyzstan. During their incorporation into the Soviet structure and culture, the political self-identification of the Kyrgyz people was associated with the U.S.S.R. In so doing, the social tribal self-identification of the Kyrgyz was mainly retained at the rural level (where most of the nation lived) and was incorporated into the Soviet administration system as individual self-identification.

In sovereign Kyrgyzstan, where there are no institutions of political self-identification of the Kyrgyz people, their functions began being carried out by institutions of tribal self-identification. This explains why traditionalism has come to the foreground in today's political culture of the Kyrgyz people.

Today the Kyrgyz themselves call all the surviving ethnic traditions "kyrgyzchylyk." This concept has come to include a set of rules based on the hypertrophied idealized national traditions and cultural values of the Kyrgyz people, including *sanzhyra* and other genealogical legends. The creative intelligentsia have attempted to recognize it as the foundation for forming public relations and rules of conduct, both in everyday life and in politics. Today in the capital of Kyrgyzstan, for example, concerts of well-known pop stars at the Sports Palace, which holds approximately three thousand people, usually begin 30 minutes to one hour later than the time indicated on the ticket; people invited to *toi* and *ashi* (feasts) arrive one or two hours late; holding regional assemblies and seminars not according to schedule is considered normal, and for Kyrgyz society all of this falls under the concept of "kyrgyzchylyk." In our opinion, it is precisely these "traditions" that inculcate a sense of irresponsibility and dependency and help to justify all kinds of political and economic mistakes. Paradoxically, the members of other nationalities and confessions of the republic are very understanding of the concept "kyrgyzchylyk."

The third factor is the Soviet experience where contemporary key political ideas and values and, ultimately, today's Kyrgyz political elite were formed. Moreover, some of the elements of Soviet culture were a converted form of traditional culture adapted to the conditions of the 20th century.

The sovereign Kyrgyz Republic was resurrected from the ruins of the Soviet state and the population accepted the new government traditionally by inheritance as a continuation of Soviet power. Confidence in Soviet power was shifted to the new government. Askar Akaev's election as president was explained by the fact that he took advantage of the Kyrgyz people's confidence in Soviet power: after all he was a member of the power structures during the Soviet period and this choice was an advance of trust. A. Masaliev's candidature was identified with the image of the CPSU, which was described as evil after the collapse of the Soviet Union, so he was defeated at the elections. On the other hand, according to N. Omarov, the activity of national-democratic associations and the clandestine conflict between the regional elites, which was personified by A. Masaliev and M. Sherimkulov (the first and second secretaries of the Central Committee of the Kirghizia Communist Party who represented the south and north of the republic, respectively), brought Askar Akaev, who seemed to be the most acceptable candidate for the post of first president at that time, to power in the fall of 1990.² As a result, this stratification of factors placed a "democrat" who supported the modernized, urbanized, and Russified elite of the northern clans at the helm.

At this time, a subordinate (dependent) political culture was inherent of the Kyrgyz people, who were largely characterized by a trusting, passive, and laid-back attitude toward the changing political system. As we know, a dependent political culture is distinguished by greater interest in the activity of the authorities. Citizens of such a culture have their own idea about the government, but they are

² See: N. Omarov, "Evolutsiia politicheskikh sistem Kyrgyzstana v 90-e gody XX-nachale XXI vekov: itogi i perspektivy demokraticheskogo stroitelstva," available at [www.omarov-nur.narod.ru], 2002-2003.

subservient to it even if they do not approve of its activity. In this type of political culture, citizens do not nurture the hope of being able to change anything in the government's activity through their personal efforts. They perceive the authorities as a "given" and "inevitable" fact.

An important and decisive factor is the Russian experience, which is essentially "copied" by the Kyrgyz political elite. Many regulatory acts of the post-Soviet period are an actual copy of the Russian laws.

The next factor is foreign experience and political culture, mainly Western. Modernization of the Kyrgyz political culture is a prerequisite and at the same time a consequence of the formation of political institutions. As a country still on the path toward modernization, Kyrgyzstan borrows Western cultural images of values and institutions in the political sphere as well. These images give the political culture of the Kyrgyz people its own specific qualitative uniqueness.

Today European-American "images" are being borrowed and assimilated chaotically and unsystematically, at random. Time will correct this process by sifting through and selecting precisely those elements that can take root and flourish in Kyrgyz soil.

The collapse of the Soviet system was at first accompanied in Kyrgyzstan by liberal-democratic rhetoric, and it appeared that soon a revived and sovereign Kyrgyzstan would be created that would "become a member of the family of civilized nations," quickly assimilate basic Western values and ideals, and imbibe the liberal-democratic civil culture, but this did not happen.

Today it has become obvious that the Islamic religion, which is having an increasing influence on Kyrgyz society, is also becoming one of the serious factors of the political process in Kyrgyzstan. Islam is becoming politicized due to the difficulties being encountered in the economic restructuring of Kyrgyz society, the drop in the status of social strata, and the increase in the influence of organized crime and the people's disappointment in many features of current reality. In these conditions, many are concluding that one of the solutions to this situation is to return to the ethno-confessional values that were lost in the Soviet period.

Criteria of justice are being found in Islam under the conditions of the growing social injustice and moral degradation in Kyrgyzstan, whereby the people are appealing all the more frequently to Islamic political slogans. Islam is already being regarded as a fundamental world outlook and way of life. The author agrees with researcher K. Malikov who notes that "the public conscience of the people of Central Asia is simultaneously sub-national, national, and supranational. In other words, they identify themselves depending on the circumstances as members of a certain tribe or nationality (Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Tajiks), or as Central Asians, or as Turks (apart from Tajiks), and of course as Muslims."³ Indeed, a triple self-identification can be seen in Kyrgyz society—affiliation with the ethnic group, the tribe, and Islam.

Islam remains one of the most important elements of the Kyrgyz ethno-cultural identity along with affiliation with a single ethnic group, state, common historical past, and language. Kyrgyz society is characterized by identical ethnic and religious origins and so, in the public conscience of the Kyrgyz people, ethnic traditions are very often perceived as Muslim and Muslim traditions as ethnic.

This confessional-cultural identification of the Kyrgyz people has been going on since the time Islam was adopted (approximately since the beginning of the 16th century), but under Soviet power such self-identification existed unofficially, which helped to reinforce the local significance of Islam.

A very important aspect is the fact that since the country gained its independence, the opinion has been popular in Kyrgyz society among traditional Muslims that Islam should be revived as a com-

³ K. Malikov, "Problema religioznoi identifikatsii Kyrgyzstana v usloviakh globalizatsii," Specially for Tazar Internet edition, 3 September 2007, available at www.omarov-nur.narod.ru, 2002-2003.

ponent of the ideological-traditional way of life and as part of the state policy and ideology, but not as a religion in the true sense of this word.

Today most of the Kyrgyz population, despite the strong influence of atheism in the past, continue to regard themselves as Muslim. Not only most of the population, but also the cultural and political Kyrgyz elite that formed during the years of Soviet power uphold Islamic traditions at the everyday level and most of its representatives regard themselves as the followers of Islam. Among practicing Muslims, the number of people with higher education has increased, including politicians, policemen, and servicemen. The number of adolescents and young people participating in the Friday prayer meetings in the mosques of Bishkek and other cities of the republic has grown.

Now a double self-identification—Kyrgyz-Muslim—has been fully reinstated and sounds just as natural as Arab-Muslim or Persian-Muslim. In the mid-1990s, 95% of the Kyrgyz in Kyrgyzstan regarded themselves as Muslims.⁴

As we know, the attitude toward Islam in the Central Asian states varies keeping in mind that two forms of economic life and two types of culture—settled and nomadic—have always lived side by side here. There is a big difference in Kyrgyzstan between the republic's south with its religious pilgrimage sites and the eastern regions of north Kyrgyzstan where strict Islamic norms only have an insignificant influence on everyday life.

An important reason for stepping up the activity of religious structures in Kyrgyzstan has been the liberal foundations of social organization enforced in the Constitution, whereby each person has the right to confess any religion or not confess a religion at all. The activity of religious structures in Kyrgyzstan is carried out on the basis of the Law on Religion of 1991 (in the version of 19 November, 1997, No. 79) and the presidential decree of the Kyrgyz Republic on Measures to Realize Citizen Rights to Freedom of Conscience and Confession issued in 1996.

Mosques and Islamic schools offering general and religious education have begun opening in sovereign Kyrgyzstan. Religious literature is widely published: the Koran itself and its study guidelines. Pilgrimage (hajj) to Mecca shows the growing Islamicization of Kyrgyz life, and the number of pilgrims is growing with each passing year.

The Islamicized population, individuals, and foreign states, including Saudi Arabia and Iran, have begun supporting Islam in Kyrgyzstan. In April 1993, the kazyiat of Muslims of the Kyrgyz Republic was registered, and on 17 September, 1993 the republic's Spiritual Administration of Muslims was established. Since then, mass resurrection and building of mosques has begun and Islamic spiritual learning institutions have opened.

As early as the beginning of 2002, 1,212 religious facilities were registered in Kyrgyzstan: 975 Islamic organizations, 918 newly built or restored mosques in Bishkek, Osh, Naryn, Talas, and others, and 29 Islamic learning institutions, newspapers, funds, centers, and associations.⁵ Whereas in 1991 there were 39 mosques in the republic, in 1997 there were 160, in 2000, 857 and in 2001, as many as 1,395, by 2007, according to the State Commission for Religious Affairs, the number had grown to more than 2,500 and, according to the muftiats, to 3,000.⁶

The building and reconstruction of cultic buildings is often carried out using the people's money, although the state also makes its contribution. The doors of madrasahs, Muslim learning institutions, have been opened in Bishkek, Osh, and Karakol. The Hazreta Umar Islamic University was opened in the capital, a higher Islamic madrasah in Osh, a theological school at Osh State University, and the

⁴ See: *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 15 July, 1995.

⁵ See: *Dialog kultur i religii—garantiia mira i stabilnosti* (Dialogue between Cultures and Religions—a Guarantee of Peace and Stability), documents of a round table devoted to the 50th anniversary of Arabaev Kyrgyz State Pedagogical University, Bishkek, 2002, p. 5.

⁶ See: E. Kanimetov, B. Temishev, "Politizatsiia islama v Kyrgyzstane i alternativnye proekty razvitiia," *Tsentranaia Azia i kultura mira* (Bishkek), Special edition, No. 1-2 (21-22), 2007, p. 105.

Lugman al Haqim Institute in Tokmak. Kyrgyz also study at the Bukhara madrasah and the Tashkent Islamic Institute. In 2002 alone, 284 citizens of Kyrgyzstan acquired a theological education abroad, whereby 80% of them studied in Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia.⁷

The Muslim clergy of Kyrgyzstan has been drawing attention to itself by means of its participation in the republic's sociopolitical life: political campaigns, the national movement, and written and oral statements. In 1991, a newspaper of the republic's Muslims called *Yyman* was established; at the same time the founding congress of Muslim representatives of all the republic's nationalities—the Islamic Center—was held. Religious Muslim holy days, Kurman ait and Orozo ait, are being widely celebrated. They have been declared official holidays.

The representatives of nontraditional Islamic trends also took advantage of the Kyrgyz' striving for ethnoconfessional self-identification. In the summer of 1992 a large Wahhabi mosque and madrasah began being built in Osh using Saudi money. At the end of the year, the Wahhabis opened a new mosque in Bishkek. The imams of this mosque explained that they were forced to turn to the Wahhabis because the republic's leadership would not finance the building project.

In the north of Kyrgyzstan popularization of Islamic fundamentalism is encountering serious obstacles. This is exacerbated by the fact that other ethnic minorities live here, which makes it impossible for Islamic parties to create a movement that could cross ethnic borders. The high level of literacy, strong influence of the Slavic and now Western culture, and development of a market economy in Kyrgyzstan are preventing most Kyrgyz from participating in the fundamentalist movement.

In Kyrgyzstan, particularly in the cities of Osh, Jalal-Abad, and Batken, several radical Islamist groups tried to acquire official registration from the Ministry of Justice. The influence of fundamentalist ideology is noticeable in Osh and around it, where more than 1,000 mosques function according to official data. The main bearers of this ideology are the Uzbeks living there, as well as the agitators from Tajikistan who have penetrated into this region.⁸ In 1996-1997, propaganda was carried out in the republic in favor of creating an Islamic party.

Kyrgyzstan's development over the past few decades shows that Islam is having a strong influence on the political process in society as well; its role grows in conflict situations both within society and due to the tension in relations between believing Muslims and the secular regimes.

Out of all the Central Asian republics, Kyrgyzstan provides the most fertile ground for the activity of Islamic religious missionaries. The Tabligi daawat movement, for example, the main task of which is sermonizing, is operating very actively in the republic. In addition, the banned radical political party Hizb ut-Tahrir actively functions in Kyrgyzstan, which is pursuing the political goal of creating an Islamic state. Wahhabism is also practiced, a religious-political trend that arose in Central Arabia (Nejd).

The results of a sociological poll carried out by the Institute of Strategic Analysis and Forecasting at the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University in the summer of 2006 in two of the country's southern regions (Osh and Jalal-Abad), two northern regions (Chui and Issyk Kul), and the city of Bishkek graphically show the immense increase in the religious consciousness of the people of present-day Kyrgyzstan. Most (90.7%) of the respondents said that they believe in Allah (whereby 87.9% of them have higher education). A large number (35.85%) fully observe the religious laws and constantly perform Muslim rituals. More than half of the respondents (69.7%) said that they observe religious rituals, although not always, while 88.65% have the Koran at home.⁹

⁷ See: Ibidem.

⁸ [http://www/ca-c.org/iournal/cac-1999/st.11_malashenko].

⁹ See: B. Moldakhmetov, "Religioznaia situatsiia v Kyrgyzstane: analiz i perspektivy razvitiia," available at [<http://www.easttime.ru/analitic/3/6/120.html>].

The results of the special election of the Kyrgyzstan president held on 10 July, 2005 convincingly showed the qualitative changes that have occurred in the ideological views of the republic's citizens. **Shifts toward religiosity are being seen in the political and ideological preferences of most of the electorate.** Political analysts note that the parliamentary and presidential elections held in 2005 in Kyrgyzstan showed that for the first time in the history of sovereign Kyrgyzstan the Hizb ut-Tahrir activists agitated for a Muslim candidate, who performed namaz not only in the mosque, but also at the public election agitation sites. As a result, not only was Tursunbai Bakir uulu nominated as the country's president, but he also gleaned rather serious support from the electorate.

Another no less important trend that manifested itself during the change in power in the republic was the intention of several politicians and businessmen "to occupy the free niche" by creating a political Islamic party in Kyrgyzstan and then obtain seats in the new parliament on the party lists. According to the initiators of this idea, they already have contacts with colleagues from Turkey and the UAE.¹⁰

In this way, in 2005, for the first time in Kyrgyzstan's entire history, a Kyrgyz citizen who placed the emphasis on his religiosity was registered as a presidential candidate. Also for the first time Kyrgyz citizens regarding themselves as Muslim and regularly performing namaz were extensively incorporated into the election campaign agitation. These facts convincingly indicate the growing role of religion in the state.

Political Islam is gradually taking a stronger hold in Kyrgyzstan, but this process is of a complicated and contradictory nature. On the one hand, since the first Constitution of 1993, the Kyrgyz Republic has been a secular state and religion has been separate from politics. On the other hand, during the discussion of the new version of the Constitution in the republic in April and November 2006, different drafts of the KR Constitution were offered that suggested eliminating the provision about the state being secular. However, under public pressure, the country remained a secular state in the new version of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic adopted at the national referendum on 21 October, 2007.¹¹

Thus it is obvious that Islam is having a steady influence in Kyrgyzstan on the sociopolitical processes going on, is shaping people's value orientations, and is regulating relations among them. On the other hand, there are influential forces in the republic that are insisting on limiting the role of religion and withdrawing it from the political sphere. It is obvious that the most optimal solution to this dichotomy is a compromise between the purely secular and the Islamic trends, keeping in mind the polyethnic nature of the Kyrgyz Republic, where more than 80 different ethnic groups live.

The extent to which Islam as a religion can become a stabilizing and fortifying factor of public pacification in the republic will depend on how efficiently and perspicaciously the state establishes its relations with religion and how consistently it implements its policy.

Kyrgyz society, which is going through a period of building new social structures and mechanisms of their self-realization, is still extremely dependent on its past. One of the main features of the formation of political culture in present-day Kyrgyzstan is the contradictions between the historically developed patriarchal-subordinate type of political culture of the Kyrgyz people and the system of democratic values that still has to be validated in public consciousness.

Segmentation of political culture in present-day Kyrgyzstan is going on during transformation of the sovereign state and its transition to market relations. E.V. Pritchina notes that transformation of political culture has a certain logic and framework which are created by its qualitative uniqueness and the specific experience of the country's political development being generated, on the one hand, and

¹⁰ See: "Rol religioznogo faktora v Kyrgyzstane: Osnovnye vyvody i tendentsii. Analitika," *Tazar*, 6 July, 2007.

¹¹ See: *Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic*, Bishkek, 2007.

the institutional changes going on under the influence of social development and the acquisition of new experience by the political actors, on the other. Nor can it be viewed as a unilinear process of transition from a traditional to a contemporary value system. It is contradictory and complicated in nature and leads to an enlargement and sophistication of the cultural context of politics in which the old stable layers continue to exist and have an influence on the new cultural formations, thus allowing society to develop without losing its national identity.¹²

An assessment of political culture of the Kyrgyz people from the perspective of classifying it as traditional or modernist also shows a combination of these elements, admittedly with the domination of traditionalistic orientations. If the following are regarded as the main indicators of modernization: private property as the foundation of personal freedom, the formation and activity of political parties as associations of free citizens with similar personal political interests and goals, and the use of information technology in all spheres of public life, including in the government, we have to admit that modernization is only just beginning in Kyrgyzstan.

G. Almond wrote that the deepest fissures in political culture force us talk about sub-cultures. They differ from each other in terms of dissimilar basic values, views, orientations, etc.¹³ Walter Rosenbaum notes that “a fragmented political culture is one whose population lacks broad agreement upon the way in which political life should be conducted.”¹⁴ The following features are characteristic of them: predominance of parochial (patriarchal) political loyalty over national; absence of legitimate and effective procedures of conflict settlement; acute mistrust of social groups in each other; and unstable and short-term governments.

On the whole, the political culture of the Kyrgyz people belongs to the subservient type with the domination of traditional orientations and an indifferent attitude toward the country’s political system, which is expressed in the absence of citizen response to the actions of political institutions, the absence of interest in the central government and, on the contrary, interest in political life at the grass roots level. A unique feature of Kyrgyz political culture is also the traditionally low authority of law and order, which is associated with the low educational legal culture and lack of knowledge about the mechanisms of the government’s actions. It is also associated with the personal perception of the entire power system in the state and in the defining role of individuals and not institutions and with the low level of civil society and non-acceptance by the people of public control over the government (and at times the moral justification by a large part of the population of even tyranny of the authorities).

“Simultaneous augmentation in the system of political culture of elements of modernism, traditionalism, and antiquity leads to an increase in the measure of its complication and stimulates disintegration of the super-complicated whole. This creates the possibility of a split in the political-cultural expanse by forming a fragmented political culture in society.”¹⁵

Research confirms the author’s hypothesis that the political transformations that occurred and are occurring in sovereign Kyrgyzstan show that the political culture of the Kyrgyz people is at the stage of modernization and is of a mixed, polarized, and segmented nature. It is characterized by different value orientations, contradictions between traditionalism and modernism and between secular and religious orientations, as well as by differences between subcultures of the urban and rural population and between the electorate of the capital city and provincial towns.

¹² See: E.V. Pritchina, *Politicheskaia kultura v tsiklakh rossiiskoi modernizatsii*, Barnaul, 2005, p. 6.

¹³ See: *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, Little, Brown Book Group, Boston, Toronto, 1974, p. 54.

¹⁴ W.A. Rosenbaum, *Political Culture. Basic Concepts in Political Science*, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1975, p. 37.

¹⁵ I.I. Glebova, *Obrazy proshlogo v strukture politicheskoi kultury Rossii*, dissertation abstract for Doctor of Political Sciences, Moscow, 2007, p. 25.

So at the current stage political culture in Kyrgyzstan is characterized by segmentation and polarity, that is, it represents an aggregate of subcultural formations that are distinguished by the attitude toward the government structure, power as a whole, the pro-government and opposition parties, as well as methods of political participation, attitude toward religion, and so on. Segmentation is defined by the effect of different, often contradictory, factors, such as the contemporary political practice of sovereign Kyrgyzstan and the traditional, Soviet, Russian, Western, and Islamic models of political culture.

The political culture of the Kyrgyz people can be classified as patriarchal and subservient with predomination of the first. At the same time, a participatory political culture is forming, which shows that the Kyrgyz people are interested in participating politically in the country's life.

As the current situation in Kyrgyzstan shows, the social heterogeneity and acute conflict potential of group outlooks have given rise to a low level of integrity of the Kyrgyz political culture and created high fragmentation of the cultural field, that is, they have predetermined the absence of that cultural form which could politically integrate a heterogeneous community.

These facts unequivocally show the split in the political culture of the Kyrgyz people, which indicates the absence of a basic value consensus in society. This is manifested in the opposing positions of "tribalists," "Islamists," "democrats," and "communists," that is, "ours" and "theirs." This all characterizes it as an internally split and polarized culture, whereby its main segments contradict each other in their basic and largely secondary reference orientations.

This split must be overcome and an intrinsic synthesis ensured between the country's civilizational-cultural uniqueness and the world political trends of social democratization.