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Integration Issues of Ethnic Kyrgyz in Kyrgyzstan: The Example of Kyrgyz Who Moved from Tajikistan

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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper studies integration issues of ethnic Kyrgyz living in Kyrgyzstan,¹ particularly those ethnic Kyrgyz who moved from Tajikistan. Even though the ethnic Kyrgyz moved to Kyrgyzstan more than 20 years ago, they face difficulties in terms of finding a common language with locals due to existing integration problems. The ethnic Kyrgyz began to move to Kyrgyzstan in large numbers in 1993, a process that continues today.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, the ethnic Kyrgyz who have moved from Tajikistan are the largest in number and face the most challenges, compared to the other ethnic Kyrgyz who moved from elsewhere.² Their flow to Kyrgyzstan is increasing annually. According to statistics,³ this trend will further intensify. Those who came in the first waves have acquired Kyrgyz Republic citizenship, while those with “*kayrylman*”⁴ (returnee) status are still great in number. However, there are also some ethnic Kyrgyz without documents and have yet to be registered.

The ethnic Kyrgyz enjoy legal support from the

government, but their social issues, e.g., lack of housing and social benefits, remain unaddressed. They encounter unwelcoming attitudes from locals, who call them “migrants,” “Tajiks” and “*jergetalidyktar*” (from Jerge-Tal.) The integration of ethnic Kyrgyz from Tajikistan is impacted by their different culture, customs and traditions, their distinctive dialect of the Kyrgyz language, and the role of Islam in their daily lives.

The conditions created by Kyrgyzstan’s market economy significantly affected the integration of some ethnic Kyrgyz in Kyrgyzstan. Their skills and work ethic played a role in this regard. However, there have been issues related to their cultural, linguistic and religious customs that have had a serious impact on integration. Understanding these differences will go a long way to developing mutual understanding and open communication, shared celebrations, customs and daily activities, and building relationships, marriages and more.

The paper’s research is based on my observations, field-trip materials based on interviews conducted with ethnic Kyrgyz and locals in Chui Oblast, archival and statistical documents, essential ethnographic literature

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as well as articles, media interviews and blog posts. Field research was conducted between 20 July and 10 August 2016. I met and conducted detailed interviews with approximately 20 people.⁵ Ethnic Kyrgyz's traditions and the conditions they live in meant I was able to have extended interviews with only a few women.

In Chui Oblast, the villages chosen for field research were: Ivanovka and Dmitrevka in Yssyk-Ata Rayon; Vasilievka in Alamudun Rayon; Sokuluk, Jany-Jer and Vinogradnoye in Sokuluk Rayon; Petrovka in Moskva Rayon; and the town of Kaiyndy in Panfilov Rayon. These villages were selected because their ethnic Kyrgyz population is quite dense. It is estimated they represent half the ethnic Kyrgyz in the country. These are multi-ethnic villages. Local Kyrgyz, other Muslim ethnic groups (Dungans, Uyghurs, Lezgins, Dargins) and Russians live in these areas along with the ethnic Kyrgyz. Also, the ethnic Kyrgyz, who came from distinct regions such as Tajikistan's Murgap, Jerge-Tal, Khudjand and other provinces, now live together.⁶

Pre-determined interview questions were aimed at uncovering the reasons behind the ethnic Kyrgyz's move to Kyrgyzstan, special aspects of their cultural, linguistic and religious lives, and how these aspects are different from those of local Kyrgyz.⁷ In addition to the information obtained through interviews, I observed ethnic Kyrgyz activities such as receiving guests, household conditions, food, household goods and the use of dowries for girls. I was granted permission in some cases to take photographs of their handicrafts.

II. KEY REASONS FOR ETHNIC KYRGYZ FROM TAJIKISTAN MOVING TO KYRGYZSTAN

According to the information in mass media and other scholarly articles⁸ on the subject of ethnic Kyrgyz from Tajikistan, and the results of my research, the ethnic Kyrgyz moved from Tajikistan to Kyrgyzstan due to the following reasons:

1. As “refugees” from Tajikistan during the 1993 civil war (5 May–27 June);
2. As “migrants” facing a lack of employment and difficult socio-economic situations in Tajikistan (they had temporary employment and returned to Tajikistan periodically) and;
3. As “*kayrylmans*” (returnees) due to pressure from local Tajik officials and Tajikistan's “Tajikization” processes.⁹

Before 1993, during the Soviet era, there were ethnic Kyrgyz who moved from Tajikistan to Kyrgyzstan, but their relocation was not as impactful and some returned to their homeland.

The first wave of migration occurred between 1993 and 1997, when the ethnic Kyrgyz moved in large numbers as refugees due to the civil war. The United Nations (UN) gave them refugee status. According to the UN, the number of people who fled to Kyrgyzstan because of the civil war reached over 16,000. The Migration Ministry states the total number of refugees during the civil war was over 20,000.¹⁰ Those ethnic Kyrgyz who came during the first wave stated in their interviews that there was no other choice but to move, and they did in great number.¹¹ Abduhalim Raimjanov, president of the Tajik community in Kyrgyzstan,

stated, “During the civil war in Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic received over 40,000 refugees viewed as their blood relatives, with the President of the Kyrgyz Republic issuing a decree in 2001 that granted refugee status and allowed the majority to obtain IDs. During the war, no country helped Tajikistan more than Kyrgyzstan.”¹² UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata’s visit to Kyrgyzstan in 1997 signalled the seriousness of the refugee situation because of their large number and the gravity of the issues they faced.¹³

The elderly among the ethnic Kyrgyz recalled that bloody and tragic event with tears, saying it forced them to flee to Kyrgyzstan and that they “had no other option.” The ethnic Kyrgyz who fled from Tajikistan left their houses and livestock, and took children, women and the elderly to hide in nearby mountains. The armed people¹⁴ entered the village and shot those who had not yet escaped, or were too weak to do so; they plundered homes, and then left. After several days, the escapees came back to the village, but the armed people returned and threatened the villagers again. The ethnic Kyrgyz fled towards Kyrgyzstan.¹⁵ The civil war forced about 200,000 people to move to neighbouring countries as “refugees.”¹⁶

The second wave of migration, according to the ethnic Kyrgyz, was caused by post-war socio-economic difficulties, particularly high unemployment, forcing them to relocate to Kyrgyzstan as “migrants” and then stay permanently. The civil war in Tajikistan was among the biggest wars in the post-Soviet territory, which led to much bloodshed and many deaths. The civil war resulted in, among other issues, an incredibly difficult socio-economic situation. Unemployment forced ethnic Kyrgyz youth, just like other Tajik citizens, to seek seasonal jobs (in the spring and summer months) in Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Kazakhstan. Many used connections with family and friends in Kyrgyzstan to find work there. They earned some money and then returned to Tajikistan. After working in Kyrgyzstan for several years, many decided to stay after finding stable employment.¹⁷

The third wave of migration was caused by intense pressure from local Tajik officials on the ethnic Kyrgyz in an effort to “tajikify” them, as well as the signing of a number of documents¹⁸ that underscored the friendly relationship and status of mutual assistance between the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan. This included an agreement simplifying procedures for changing citizenship between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The ethnic Kyrgyz welcomed this agreement because, during this period, there were increasing cases of local Tajik officials putting pressure on the Kyrgyz. For example, decisions by local Tajik authorities related to changing their tax code¹⁹, switching the language in schools to Tajik, and giving geographical locations new Tajik names and others²⁰ were viewed as an attempt to put pressure on the Kyrgyz. The ethnic Kyrgyz stated that increasing pressure from local officials pushed them to move in great numbers from Shahristan Rayon’s Borugon (Buragan) village to Kyrgyzstan.²¹

Taytoro Batyrkulov, an elder Kyrgyz, helped the ethnic Kyrgyz relocate from Tajikistan to Kyrgyzstan.²² He had come to Kyrgyzstan as a refugee in early 1996 after the civil war. Batyrkulov is well known to the Kyrgyz-Tajik community as a researcher, who studied Kyrgyz-Tajik cultural ties; as a translator (he translated Chyngyz Aitmatov’s *Samanchynyn Jolu [Milky Way]* into the Tajik language); as a recipient of Tajikistan’s Friendship Medal; and as a veteran of the Second World War.²³ After arriving in Kyrgyzstan, Batyrkulov raised issues affecting the ethnic Kyrgyz, and helped them obtain documents and settle in villages. In the early 2000s, Batyrkulov gathered the ethnic Kyrgyz living in Tajikistan and helped them move to Kyrgyzstan as “*kayrylmans*” returning to their historic homeland.

During the working visit to Tajikistan, Kyrgyz government officials voiced a commitment to grant citizenship to the ethnic Kyrgyz and to provide them with land, which was a reason for their migration en masse to Kyrgyzstan. The ethnic Kyrgyz in Murgap

believed the officials who said that, “If they return to the Fatherland, the government will help;” and therefore, began their preparations for relocation.²⁴

Although Kyrgyzstan changed laws in 2004 so as to enable the ethnic Kyrgyz to obtain citizenship through simplified procedures, its migration policies were not properly carried out. In 2007, the Kyrgyz government established a special program that replaced the terms “refugee” and “migrant” with “*kayrylman*” and “citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic” status. According to the ethnic Kyrgyz, today almost all of the ethnic Kyrgyz (approximately 80%) living in Chui Oblast hold Kyrgyz passports.²⁵

III. ETHNIC KYRGYZ DEMOGRAPHICS IN CHUI OBLAST

Kyrgyzstan’s migration procedures, which have been in place since its independence in 1991, have dramatically changed the country’s ethnic composition. For example, according to the National Committee for Statistics of the Kyrgyz Republic, the number of Kyrgyz increased by 20% (from 52.4% to 72.2%) over the last 20 years.²⁶ The movement of the ethnic Kyrgyz to Kyrgyzstan has impacted these percentages.

The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic’s Migration Service estimated the number of the ethnic Kyrgyz in Chui Oblast in 2015 at 24,024. The Agency for Self-Government and Interethnic Relations gave the number as 30,356; and the newly established Association of Ethnic Kyrgyz estimates the number at 34,618.²⁷ Although there are considerable differences in the numbers, the population of ethnic Kyrgyz in Chui Oblast is currently as follows: 2,809 in Panfilov Rayon; 6,996 Moscva Rayon; 197 in Jaiyl Rayon; 10,915 in Sokuluk Rayon; 5,823 in Alamudun Rayon;

4,363 in Yssyk-Ata Rayon; and 3,485 in Chui Rayon.²⁸ In Sary-Ozon Chui the number of ethnic Kyrgyz from Tajikistan are several times larger than that from other countries.

As the research revealed, the ethnic Kyrgyz in Chui Oblast are comprised of the following tribes: Kesek, Jookesek, Aktachy, Teyit, Kydyrshaa, Boston, Kypchak and Nayman. According to the ethnographical resources, in addition to the tribes above, there were small representations of Noygut, Kyzyl Ayak and Taz tribes in Tajikistan.²⁹ All these tribes are part of a tribe group called Ichkilik.

According to my observations from visits to villages in Chui Oblast, and the view of almost all the interviewees, the ethnic Kyrgyz have chosen to settle in Chui region for the following reasons:

1. In ethnically mixed villages, Russians, Germans, Ukrainian and others sold their houses for cheap prices before their emigration (according to the 1989 census, the population of Chui Oblast was 41.55% Russian, 9.02% German, 5.47% Ukrainian³⁰).
2. The governor of Chui Oblast made a timely decision allowing the ethnic Kyrgyz refugees to use old and empty buildings as temporary shelters.³¹
3. The availability of agricultural lands (bought, rented) and the ability to sell agricultural produce.
4. More opportunities to find employment because of proximity to Bishkek, and the opportunity to solve issues, such as obtaining documents.

There are also those who moved to Chui Oblast because of their relatives, access to stable public employment or seasonal work opportunities, accessible education and other conditions.

IV. GENERAL INTEGRATION ISSUES AMONG ETHNIC KYRGYZ

It became obvious during meetings with the ethnic Kyrgyz that there had been little movement in dealing with issues of their integration into local communities at large. They have been able to obtain documents, including *kayrylman* (returnee) status and citizenship, but social issues remain unresolved. This has left many unable to fully participate in community life, while facing unwelcoming attitudes from locals. I consider integration issues in two sections based on the analysis of information from the research findings.

The first section deals with issues related to policy, and the legal and social activities of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, which aims to integrate the ethnic Kyrgyz into society. The second section examines integration issues related to cultural, linguistic and religious aspects of the local population.

The leadership of the Kyrgyz Republic developed, passed and publicly announced legislation,³² programs³³ and the legal framework aimed at helping the ethnic Kyrgyz integrate into legal and social spheres. These laws, programs and legal framework were designed to give the ethnic Kyrgyz the status of “refugees,” *kayrylmans* and “citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic.” They were considered the main step that would serve as a basis for the residence registration of the ethnic Kyrgyz, counting them, finding employment, school registration and others activities.

Although these statuses were granted, efforts to address ethnic Kyrgyz social issues lagged behind due to poor financing (many were left unaddressed entirely). Even with having *kayrylman* status, the ethnic Kyrgyz were not able to fully use it, leaving some without social support, including benefits, pensions and medical security packages.

There are several reasons for these discrepancies. Local governments have not developed special programs or work plans to help the ethnic Kyrgyz with adjustment and integration. Social workers also do not have a good understanding of the conditions they live in. In the past, the government provided plots of land to about 5% of the ethnic Kyrgyz living in Chui Oblast. Currently, the latter spend their own money to buy and improve abandoned houses. Hundreds still live in rented houses in their villages.

Some of the ethnic Kyrgyz who came in the 1990s as refugees moved into empty kindergartens and hospital buildings. There are still those who live there.³⁴ They said, in 1993, in Ivanovka village, 45 families with refugee status were given an old hospital building, and although documents have been prepared to privatize it, the process has yet to be completed.³⁵ Living in temporary, rented houses is leading to further deterioration of the social conditions of some of the ethnic Kyrgyz. From Gulbayra Jorobekova, an ethnic Kyrgyz woman who came from Murgap Rayon:

Hoping for a strong support,
Here we came searching for kin,
But no one pulled us close as relatives,
Lost we are with a void between.³⁶

The ethnic Kyrgyz have to rent small houses that accommodate 2–3 families (in small rooms) as the housing issue has not yet been addressed. Such “big families” have no choice but to share one house.³⁷ Otherwise, according to Kyrgyz tradition, sons are expected to leave the family home once they are married and start their own family.

Many ethnic Kyrgyz criticize the lukewarm attitude of the local government. The National Strategic Research Institute issued a special report on *kayrylmans*, which noted poor integration of the ethnic Kyrgyz who moved to Kyrgyzstan from other countries.³⁸ In the report, the experts thoroughly examined the social issues. For example, the migrants reported that due

to lack of legal awareness, some failed to register in time and could not get pensions, benefits and other social support and felt excluded and forgotten from society.³⁹ Further, according to Professor A.A. Asankanov, central and local government agencies lack the mechanisms to register the ethnic Kyrgyz in a timely fashion and oversee them, which impedes state policies, which were designed to support them, by treating them humanely.⁴⁰

In December 2014, the ethnic Kyrgyz established a public organization, the Association of the Ethnic Kyrgyz, to solve local legal and social problems. Muzaffar Abdullaev was selected as its chairperson.⁴¹ Although the ethnic Kyrgyz raised this initiative, it created grounds for implementing the government's integration-related programs, since the association began to work closely with state agencies through its coordinators, who were elected in every village and rayon. The association's objective was to connect the ethnic Kyrgyz with authorities, help them engage with locals and solve their problems locally.⁴² Through the association's initiative, on 3 February 2016, a national conference was held to discuss ways of solving the integration issues of the ethnic Kyrgyz.

It requires considerable financial resources to address social issues (housing, benefits for poor families). No state budget funds have been allocated to address ethnic Kyrgyz issues over the last 20 years. It was noted that funds allocated by donors would be used to support previously established programs.⁴³

Since the social issues of the ethnic Kyrgyz remain unaddressed, most of them live in poverty. This has a negative impact on the integration process because the ethnic Kyrgyz feel less forthcoming towards the locals and tend towards isolation.

Cultural Aspects

In addition to the social issues in the integration process of the ethnic Kyrgyz, there are issues related

to their adaptability to the local social environment. Instead of perceiving the ethnic Kyrgyz as members of the same ethnic group, some locals reportedly insult them, referring to them as “newcomers,” “Tajiks” and sometimes “*Jergetali*” These insults are based on their distinct traditional culture, linguistic and religious differences. Difficulty in building friendly relations and poor integration in local communities remain issues, particularly since these issues are neglected at multiple government levels.

Looking at the integration situation from a cultural perspective, differences in the ethnic Kyrgyz's culture in terms of material items, traditions, norms and customs appear to pose obstacles for integration with locals, sharing and living together under a single national and legal identity. These differences became apparent during the research for this paper. I observed that, in general, their culture is largely identical to that in areas of the south of Kyrgyzstan, especially Batken province, which is densely populated by Ichkilik tribes. There are, however, some distinctions. The ethnic Kyrgyz preserved cultural traditions, which can put them in one group with Pamir and Chinese Kyrgyz. There are also strong influences from Islam and the Tajik culture.

K.I. Antipina, a researcher in southern Kyrgyzstan, noted that Kyrgyz belonging to the Ichkilik tribe had a distinct culture with regards to material items, with decorations looking similar to those of the Uzbeks and Tajiks. Antipina believes the Ichkilik tribes' material culture has a series of old elements, and these elements might be explained by their isolated and independent existence in Eastern Turkestan or emerged after a separation from nomad herders.⁴⁴

Since the ethnic Kyrgyz are comprised primarily of Ichkilik tribes and lived along with Uzbek and Tajik people, the ethno-sociological aspect of their culture is visibly different. Such differences can be observed to a lesser extent in their clothes and food, but substantial differences exist in traditions and customs.

Although the ethnic Kyrgyz strictly follow the tradition of naming a newborn child while reading an *azan* (call for prayer), the names are more Tajik than Kyrgyz and are related to Islam. When the ethnic Kyrgyz name their children, they want the names to hold meanings such as faithfulness and tolerance, thus the names are drawn from the Quran and famous devout people.⁴⁵

In Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyz baby names usually have meanings reflecting a certain event or wish, and are easily interpreted to provide information on the period he or she was born, body features or certain ceremonies that were held.⁴⁶ Many of the ethnic Kyrgyz males I met and talked with had Islamic or Arabic names, and some had Tajik names. For example: Abdil-Ahat, Bahadur, Abduvali, Abdumanap, Mustafa, Sayfullo, Hayrullo, Ubaydullo, etc. Such names sound unusual to the Kyrgyz living in Chui Oblast and are uncommon among the local Kyrgyz. However, the names of women and girls are little different from those of Kyrgyzstani Kyrgyz.

Today, the ethnic Kyrgyz's male children are circumcised by well-known elders or Arabs who are temporarily in Bishkek.⁴⁷ They believe that the Arabs know the proper Sharia rules for circumcising children and therefore take their children to them. It is only in Ivanovka, where Isakov Abdrahman, an ethnic Kyrgyz from Jerge-Tal, performs circumcision of children both as a surgeon and a Muslim. The ethnic Kyrgyz often go to Abdrahman because of his knowledge of medicine and Sharia.

Among the Kyrgyz from Murgap and Jerge-Tal traditional headwear (*kalyak* and *elechek*) is widely used. B.H. Karmysheva describes the Jerge-Tal women's hair covering in the following way: *mangday* (front); *jaak* (covers ears and some parts of the neck); and *kuyruk* (tail: back covers all the way to the belt). *Kelek* (*elechek*) is worn by wives and consists of a hair covering, *kyrgak* and a headscarf (*duriya*).⁴⁸ Even today, during a wedding ceremony, an ethnic Kyrgyz

bride puts on a hair covering and wraps it with *kelek*, and the bride's father (or, if she has no father, then a male relative) wraps a scarf around her waist with bread hidden in it.⁴⁹ Ethnographer N. Momunbaeva writes that the tradition of a father putting a scarf around his daughter's waist and hiding two pieces of breads in it has been maintained for a long time. The tradition is a sign of wellbeing for the ethnic Kyrgyz from Jerge-Tal and Murgap.⁵⁰ I was told the ethnic Kyrgyz still use their hair coverings, but I did not observe any during my research.

There are certain ceremonies practiced by the ethnic Kyrgyz when a daughter-in-law meets her mother-in-law. The daughter-in-law presents a handkerchief with her handmade trceries to guests. Such handkerchiefs, brought by daughters-in-law, are carefully stored in the houses of the ethnic Kyrgyz who came from Khudjant and Jerge-Tal. The handkerchiefs are made of expensive materials decorated with buttons in patterns along the edges. Ethnic Kyrgyz women said they are teaching their daughters this tradition so that when they cross their husband's threshold, they can present the handkerchiefs to special guests.⁵¹

The ethnic Kyrgyz living in the village of Jany-Jer in Sokuluk District told me that a daughter's dowry plays an important role in wedding ceremonies. In Sayfullo Tashbekov's house, which I visited, dowries are piled against a wall in one room and include the handmade tracery made with "*basma sayma*" and "*ilme sayma*" techniques. The trceries are displayed on a variety of "*jakandos*" (traditional mattresses to sit on); "*jazyk*" (a triangular-shaped pillow); "*balysh*" (a square-shaped pillow); "*kol joluk*" (a handkerchief decorated with tracery in the centre and buttons along the edges); "*baypak*" (socks especially made for groom); and "*jooluk*" (kerchief). Dilbar Tashbekova showed me examples of trceries on the "*balysh*" for her daughter's dowry. She uses an awl to produce disc-shaped trceries with embroidery signifying seedlings (field flowers). Tashbekova says both mother and daughter are responsible for the dowry. In-laws learn

about a soon-to-be daughter-in-law's skills through her dowry.⁵²

Compared to Murgap, in Jerge-Tal, marriages between Kyrgyz and Tajiks are common. My interlocutor Abdil-Ahat Kurbanov stated that if a Kyrgyz girl marries a Tajik boy, the latter's wedding traditions are followed, and similarly, if a Tajik girl marries a Kyrgyz boy, the Kyrgyz traditions were observed.⁵³ This led to some changes among the ethnic Kyrgyz from an anthropological point of view.

The ethnic Kyrgyz have a commonly practiced wedding ceremony called "*un elgek*" (flour sifter). Researcher Jeenbai Mukanbaev interpreted this ceremony the following way: "... flour, as a symbol of generosity, satiation, abundance, is spread not only on the shoulders of in-laws, but also on the sheep to be slaughtered, dowry and presents. White felt or another material in white colour is unfolded under the broom."⁵⁴ The ethnic Kyrgyz still fully observe this tradition in Kyrgyzstan because they believe it "brings well-being and is a symbol of satiation."

The ethnic Kyrgyz try to establish marriages with the Kyrgyz from their villages. There are reported cases when differences in traditions and customs for organizing marriage ceremonies have led to disagreements.⁵⁵

Among the ethnic Kyrgyz before their arrival to Kyrgyzstan, fathers would often select a bride for their sons after consulting with (only) male family members.⁵⁶ This old tradition of making marriage decisions on behalf of their children is still respected. In many ethnic Kyrgyz families, parents decide on the selection of their daughters' future in-laws and the size of her dowry.

The traditions and customs of the ethnic Kyrgyz changed substantially as Islam spread deeper. Compared to weddings, birth, and circumcision celebrations, funeral ceremonies underwent more

changes.

It is not obligatory for the ethnic Kyrgyz to set up a yurt if someone dies. Since they strictly follow Islam, the ethnic Kyrgyz must bury the dead within a day, or "before he or she gets cold."⁵⁷ They strictly follow this rule. They practiced it when they were in Tajikistan and closely link it with requirements of Sharia law. Unlike the local Kyrgyz, the ethnic Kyrgyz do not practice traditional funereal rites such as *uchilik* and *jetilik* (commemoration after three and seven days respectively) and do not slaughter livestock in great numbers to feed all the funeral attendants and erect a *kumboz* (tomb) at gravesites.

In northern Kyrgyzstan, where pre-Islamic traditional beliefs are still partly practiced, local Kyrgyz keep the dead for three days before burying. As expected by society, relatives keep the dead, saying, "We are not fed up with the dead."⁵⁸ Such distinct processes of bidding farewell to the dead are considered big cultural differences between the ethnic and local Kyrgyz.

"*Koshok*," a lament-like style of vocal music performed by Kyrgyz women to mourn a loss, has generally not been preserved among the ethnic Kyrgyz. Females perform the *koshok* quietly while males stay silent. Many ethnic Kyrgyz can recall only certain lines of their grandmothers' *koshoks*.⁵⁹ Local Kyrgyz women in Kyrgyzstan perform *koshoks* to commemorate, praise and bid farewell to the dead, while men loudly and continuously express their grief.⁶⁰ This ritual is quite common in Kyrgyzstan.

Apart from the above examples, the ethnic Kyrgyz have a culture of greeting and feting guests, which is unusual to the local Kyrgyz. When hosting guests, only males may sit with the guests in one room. Women prepare meals and tea, serve the men and then leave. It appears to be a long-held custom.

In addition to certain celebrations, such as weddings and funerals, a communal celebration of the Nooruz

holiday seems to bring the ethnic and local Kyrgyz together. Both groups view it as a people's holiday and come together to cook “*sumolok*” (a paste made of wheatgrass).

There are more differences than similarities with regard to cultural aspects of the ethnic Kyrgyz and the local Kyrgyz in Chui, which appear to negatively impact general integration processes. In addition to the traditions mentioned above, there are differences in their daily activities and practices. Local Kyrgyz share a common basis for cultural interaction, while those of the ethnic Kyrgyz have changed under the influence of certain factors (adoption of Tajik customs, influence of Islam, weakening of old traditions, and others). Due to such differences some traditional events are held without local Kyrgyz's participation and are exclusive to the ethnic Kyrgyz.

Linguistic Aspects

The ethnic Kyrgyz represent the Ichkilik tribe and speak a Kyrgyz dialect (when they lived in Jerge-Tal and Murgap) distinct from the one spoken in northern parts of Kyrgyzstan. B.M. Yunusaliev, who studied the Ichkilik Kyrgyz language, noted that the Ichkilik's ancestors broke away from the core group of Kyrgyz (right wing, left wing Kyrgyz) and were isolated when the Kyrgyz language spoken by the core group was undergoing transformation or, since they lived in the southwest, they were influenced by the Uighur language.⁶¹ J. Mukambaev believes that because of mixed marriages in Jerge-Tal, and integration between Tajiks and Kyrgyz, many Kyrgyz-Tajik common words appeared, which enriched the language by generating more synonyms.⁶² During field research, I noticed that the ethnic Kyrgyz still preferred their dialect, even though they have lived in Kyrgyzstan for almost 20 years. Nonetheless, they try hard to speak the literary Kyrgyz language to express their ideas.

In general, language researchers understand that a dialect is a special form of local language used in a

particular territory. Dialect can give information as to where the owners of the dialect live and which ethnic groups they share borders with.

The ethnic Kyrgyz refer to the person who carves up cooked meat as “*bokool*” and call the meat distributed on plates “*tan*.” They have kept old Turkic words including *ede* (*ele*—in local Kyrgyz), *jugor* (*jiber*), *sudro* (*suyro*), *aach* (*ach*), *adak* (*ayak*, *but*), *agyl* (*mal saray*), *turuk* (*jata turgan jer*), *alchi* (*kuu*, *mitaam*), *amach* (*buursun*) and *art* (*ashuu*, *daban*). During weddings, they have used ceremonies called *boksolmoi*, *otko tartaar*, *pokcho booguz*, *tabak*, *shakek-juzduk*, *dura* and *un elgek*.⁶³ My interviewees all said they still use these terms.

The ethnic Kyrgyz also describe household goods differently. For example: *gazambir* (*attish*—pliers), *supar* (*buursun*—plow), *kepkil* (*tor suzgu*—perforated spoon), *pangshak* (*beshilik*—pitchfork), *paytava* (*chulgoo*—blanket), *chakchoo* (*atalgy*—ax) and others. Although the roots and meaning of these words are Turkic, to the local Kyrgyz, they sound unusual and are perceived as Tajik. The local Kyrgyz say they use these words when speaking with the ethnic Kyrgyz. In the previously mentioned villages, the number of the ethnic Kyrgyz is growing with new arrivals, leading to the frequent use of the dialect language. Those who are fluent in literary Kyrgyz can express their thoughts comfortably.

Despite implicit efforts at Tajikization in Jerge-Tal and Murgap, the ethnic Kyrgyz were able to maintain their language partly because Kyrgyzstan had been providing Kyrgyz-language books and methodologies to Kyrgyz schools there. In addition, as a member of the Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan sent many Kyrgyz-language teachers to Murgap and Jerge-Tal in an effort to keep the purity of the Kyrgyz language. The ethnic Kyrgyz confirmed that when they were of school age, they were taught by teachers from Kyrgyzstan.⁶⁴ The education they received was based on Kyrgyzstan's school programs and books. The ethnic Kyrgyz from

Murgap, compared to those from Jerge-Tal, are not well versed in the Tajik language and seldom use Tajik words. Therefore, certain words from the northern dialect are familiar to the ethnic Kyrgyz from Murgap. When I asked the Kyrgyz from Jerge-Tal if they knew some of the words used by locals, some said they had never encountered the words and were not able to interpret them. This is most likely because some of the ethnic Kyrgyz hadn't completed school because of hardship and the stronger Tajikization policies in that area, which made them study at Tajik schools.

"Nowadays in Tajikistan ethnic Kyrgyz are switching to the Tajik language, with the Kyrgyz language slowly losing its necessity," says Bahadur Olimov, an ethnic Kyrgyz.⁶⁵ Doolot (Dolo) Babay uulu, an elderly resident of Shar-Tuz village in Tajikistan, complained in his interview with Azattyk Radio that "... my cousins speak in Tajik, as they study in Tajik at school."⁶⁶ Since independence, Tajikistan put a great effort into Tajikization across all areas populated by the ethnic Kyrgyz. This process is one of the factors pushing the ethnic Kyrgyz to move to Kyrgyzstan. They are afraid of forgetting and losing their language.

The ethnic Kyrgyz in Khudjant, Tajikistan, have always spoken Kyrgyz despite their isolation from both the Kyrgyzstani Kyrgyz and Tajikistani Kyrgyz. Given the dominant presence of the ethnic Uzbeks in Khudjant, children of the ethnic Kyrgyz there attended Uzbek-language schools. Despite the fact that Tajikization was in full swing and the ethnic Kyrgyz lived among Uzbeks, they have been trying to preserve their language.

Even with these circumstances, the ethnic Kyrgyz are slowly switching to the local version of Kyrgyz, which is smoothing the integration process. Still, there are many differences. Those who do not have higher education continue speaking their dialect. This is one reason why the ethnic Kyrgyz are apprehensive and are slow to integrate with the local Kyrgyz. They go out to work in groups (most of the groups I met

are engaged in agriculture; some work in seasonal construction, while the rest hire themselves out for short-term jobs). In order to hide their origin and their native language, some told me they were from Batken (Leylek).⁶⁷ There are no special courses on Kyrgyz language grammar and literature available to help the ethnic Kyrgyz adapt more easily.

Religious Aspects

There are many historical sources indicating that Islam was strictly followed in the Ferghana Valley before Soviet rule and that people lived according to Sharia norms. These areas were the territories of the Central Asian state, which recognized Islam as a state religion. Islam was deeply rooted in people's lives with a strong influence on their culture, traditions and customs, and mentality. After Soviet control was established, atheistic ideology prevailed and the observance of Islamic norms was banned in Tajikistan. In Murgab and Jerge-Tal, religious holidays such as Orozo Ait (Eid) and Kurban Ait (Kurban Eid) were forbidden (as they were in other places), and violators were barred from *kolkhoz* [collective farm] works.⁶⁸ Communist ideology was wide spread.

In the 1990s, Islamization was in full swing. During the civil war, the opposition called for embedding Islamic values in state policies. According to the ethnic Kyrgyz, Islamists would check entrants at local mosques and fine Kyrgyz who did not come. During the civil war, these actions influenced the Kyrgyz to become religious.

Although the ethnic Kyrgyz followed the Hanafi School of Islam few of their pre-Islamic religious practices have survived. For example, according to Abdil-Ahat Kurbanov, an ethnic Kyrgyz, elements of fire worship, which contradicts Islam, were absorbed into local traditions and have been maintained. Also, there is the cult of *Umai Ene*. J. Mukambaev, who studied the ethnic Kyrgyz situation in Jerge-Tal and Murgap in the pre-Independence period, described

an element of fire worship: “the purpose of [the ceremony] ‘bringing to fire’ is to introduce the new daughter-in-law to the spirit of the house which is fire. The daughter-in-law is seated near the fire so the fire welcomes her. She is instructed to put oil in the fire and not pour water and soup, etc.”⁶⁹ However, unlike the local Kyrgyz in Kyrgyzstan, they do not practice many, if any, elements of several old beliefs including animism, totemism, shamanism and *tengirchilik* (sky worship). To the ethnic Kyrgyz, the pre-Islamic religious beliefs are not unfamiliar, but traditional Islamic elements were widely used in ceremonies, thereby altering their traditional cultural behaviour. When they lived in Tajikistan, representatives of the older generation had seen the old beliefs weakening. Today, the ethnic Kyrgyz put newborn children in *beshik* (traditional cradles), and elderly women use some of the “*Umai Ene* belief”-related ceremonies, but ceremonies that feature body parts of predator animals such as teeth, knuckles and nails to protect from the evil eye or spirits are not widely practiced.⁷⁰

The local Kyrgyz still carry out ceremonies that pay tribute to the spirits of the dead and seek their support by commemorating them in a series of gatherings such as *uchuluk* (after three days), *jetilik* (after seven days), *kyrk* (after four days), *kara ash* (after half a year) and *jyldyk ash* (after a year). It has become a tradition to set up tombs on graves among the locals, whereas the ethnic Kyrgyz no longer practice such ceremonies and do not set up tombs.⁷¹ Their level of religiosity and the ongoing Islamization of their cultural traditions explain such behaviour.⁷² Thus, when studying the ethnic Kyrgyz, it was clearly observable how Islam strongly influenced their overall daily life, culture and beliefs.

Another aspect worth mentioning is that mosques in the ethnic Kyrgyz’s villages serve as a frequent gathering place. In their villages people pray en masse (at the mosque). Some serve as imams. Some women wear hijabs. I was told there are many girls in the village of Kamyshanovka that prefer to pray

in mosques. The older generation call on their sons and daughters to respect Sharia norms and receive education at madrasas. They strongly concentrate on Islam as their religion and have chosen a path of adhering to its main principles. It demonstrates how Islam’s wide influence plays a large role in their daily lives, and has changed their customs and traditions.

V. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the government has addressed the political and legal issues of ethnic Kyrgyz integration by providing assistance during the initial period of their arrival in order to help with integrating with the locals. Kyrgyz citizenship has been obtained by 80% of the ethnic Kyrgyz, who were also provided with passports. There are those who have still not taken citizenship yet. Although their social issues have not been solved, the ethnic Kyrgyz have adjusted quickly to the market economy and have been able to improve their livelihoods. Using their earnings from temporary work and agricultural employment, they have purchased houses. A majority of the ethnic Kyrgyz now own homes. The Kyrgyz government provided land plots only to some ethnic Kyrgyz. Therefore, integration, although slow, is progressing in the socio-economic sphere. The ethnic Kyrgyz consider Kyrgyzstan their homeland and some are ready to serve, whether in the military, as academics, or in the civil service, for the benefit of the country.

There is no special concept that could regulate the cultural, linguistic and religious integration of the ethnic Kyrgyz in villages where they are densely populated. With local governments not taking measures to raise awareness of their situation and to help them adapt, the ethnic Kyrgyz have not yet been able to integrate with local communities.

The lack of accurate data, systemic accounting and documentation leads to the continuation of the issues

addressed in this paper. The Kyrgyz government has not allocated financial resources or quotas (housing or provision of land plots, loans, etc.) to address social issues of the ethnic Kyrgyz in order to help them integrate. There are no information campaigns in mass media, or on social media, aimed at stopping the unwelcoming attitude of the local Kyrgyz and promoting the positive image of the ethnic Kyrgyz, celebrating their achievements and supporting creative people from their groups.

I am far from saying that the integration issues related to the cultural, linguistic, and religious aspects have been fully researched in this paper. However, my research to an extent provides information on traditions, customs, dialectic words, religious beliefs and other factors that make integration of the ethnic Kyrgyz difficult. There is room for further and deeper research into the integration of other ethnic Kyrgyz in other regions of Kyrgyzstan with a focus on local ethnic composition, traditional, religious, and linguistic characteristics.

In order to build an inclusive society in Kyrgyzstan, there must be, in addition to the concept of state policy in the sphere of religion, a strategy on traditional culture and language aimed at promoting mutual understanding, respect for each other's culture and language. In the strategy, ways of building a pluralistic society, particularly a society that values and recognizes diversity must be considered. Respect for diversity can contribute to strengthening of peace and stability through a harmonious and united society. Since the main priorities of the state are to ensure peace, development and equal rights, its citizens should move towards building an inclusive society that ensures equal rights, and respect for customs and traditions. These principles provide opportunities for the ethnic Kyrgyz to slowly integrate, find their own place in society and improve their livelihoods. Removing controversies in a society is key to a prosperous and peaceful life for all its members.

NOTES

¹ Ethnic Kyrgyz are the Kyrgyz who have another country's citizenship and live outside of Kyrgyzstan. Today, ethnic Kyrgyz live in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, China, Afghanistan, Russia and Turkey.

² After Kyrgyzstan gained independence, ethnic Kyrgyz came from Tajikistan, China, Uzbekistan, Turkey, and Afghanistan.

³ *Особенности социокультурной интеграции кайрылманов в принимающее сообщество в Кыргызстане. Отчет [Peculiarities of the Socio-cultural Integration of Kayrylmans in Host Communities in Kyrgyzstan. Report]* (Bishkek, 2015), accessed 3 February 2018, <http://www.nisi.kg>.

⁴ “*Kayrylman*” is a temporary status (a special document is provided) given to the ethnic Kyrgyz before citizenship is granted. *Kayrylman* is a stateless ethnic Kyrgyz or a Kyrgyz with another country's citizenship who moved voluntarily to the Kyrgyz Republic.

⁵ The interviewees were selected based on recommendations from representatives from the Association of Ethnic Kyrgyz, a public organization, and from my acquaintances that live in those villages and the interviewees themselves. Information was collected primarily from those informed on village issues.

⁶ There used to be many Kyrgyz living in Murgap, Jerge-Tal and Khudjant. According to the ethnic Kyrgyz, these areas are their historical homelands. In “*Bahr al-Asrar fi Manaqib al-Akhyar*” (The Sea of Secrets Relative to the Virtues of the Most Excellent), a medieval manuscript written by Mahmud ibn-Valinin, it is said in reference to the movement of Kyrgyz to the territory of present-day Tajikistan that “...on 11 December 1635, 12,000 households

of Kyrgyz moved to Hissar via Karategin.” D.B. Saparaliev writes that plundering raids by the Jungar Khanate led, at least two times, to a mass migration in which Kyrgyz from Kyrgyzstan's north and northeast moved to the south and southwest to join their tribal kin there. In folk genealogical records, the events became known as “Kazakhs milked birch-trees, Kyrgyz went to Ysar and Kulep” («казак кайың саап, кыргыз Ысар, Кулепке кирди»). S.M. Abramzon links the movement of Kyrgyz from Tengir-Too to Tajikistan (Karategin, Murgap, Hissar and Kulyab) to a legend about Kudayar Khan from the 19th century. The Kyrgyz residing in these areas call themselves “Kyrgyz from Sarykol.” Researchers put the Kyrgyz who moved to these areas in the pre-revolution period into two groups: 1) migrants from Andijan (Ferghana-Alay); and 2) local “*sarykol*” Kyrgyz. Today, 80% of Murgap's population and 65% of Jerge-Tal's population are Kyrgyz. In Khujand, there are about 5,000 Kyrgyz.

⁷ Before embarking on my field research, I met several times with my mentor Elmira Kochumkulova to discuss the direction of my research, working with interlocutors and to determine interview questions.

⁸ Таиров Бекjol (2002), Сары-Кол тарыхынын кыскача очерктери (Мургап) [*Brief feature on the history of Sary-Kol (Murgap)*], 112-123; Karimov Mirzoholim (2007), Тажикстандыккыргыздар (Бишкек) [*Kyrgyz from Tajikistan*]; Sh. Sa'diev (2002), Таджикистан: путь к миру и согласию (Душанбе) [*Tajikistan: Way to Peace and Accord (Dushanbe)*].

⁹ “*Kayrylman*” is a temporary status (a special document is provided) given to the ethnic Kyrgyz before citizenship is granted. *Kayrylman* is a stateless ethnic Kyrgyz or a Kyrgyz with another country's citizenship who moved voluntarily to the Kyrgyz Republic.

- ¹⁰ Meerim Sultangazy (2004), «Этностик кыргыз качкындарынын көйгөйлөрү» [“Problems of Refugees of Kyrgyz Ethnicity”], accessed 10 July 2018, <http://www.azattyk.org>.
- ¹¹ Abdrahman Isakov (2016), in discussion with the author, 8 August.
- ¹² Abduhalim Raimjanov (2004), «Этникалык кыргыз качкындарынын көйгөйлөрү» [“Problems of Refugees of Kyrgyz Ethnicity”], interview by Meerim Sultangazy, accessed 15 July 2016, <http://www.azattyk.org>.
- ¹³ Roza Otunbaeva (2016), «Качкындарга кайрымдуу болулу» [“Let’s be Compassionate towards Refugees”], accessed 29 June, <http://www.sary-kol.kg>.
- ¹⁴ Armed groups were the representatives of the United Tajik opposition which fought against the government during the civil war in Tajikistan. The group included the Islamic Renaissance Party, Tajikistan Democratic Party and other movements. The armed groups’ activities had a negative effect on civilians, including the ethnic Kyrgyz living in Tajikistan.
- ¹⁵ Asomudin Abdullahimov (2016), in discussion with the author, 9 August.
- ¹⁶ Sh. Sa’diev (2002), *Таджикистан: путь к миру и согласию* [Tajikistan: A Way towards Peace and Accord] (Dushanbe), 12.
- ¹⁷ Kubat Egemberdiev (2016), in discussion with the author, 7 August.
- ¹⁸ *Положение об упрощенном порядке приобретения гражданства Кыргызской Республики гражданами Республики Таджикистан* [Provision on Simplified Procedure for Obtaining Citizenship of the Kyrgyz Republic by Citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan], №220, 3 April 2006 www.cdb.minjust.gov.kg; «Отношения Таджикистана с Кыргызстаном. Внешняя политика Таджикистана» [“Relations between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Tajikistan’s Foreign Policy”], accessed 15 July 2016, <http://www.Mta.tj>.
- ¹⁹ Zulpukar Sapanov (2012), *Uchur*, №17, 3–10 May.
- ²⁰ Таджикистандагы кыргыздар тамырынан ажырагысы келбейт [The Kyrgyz in Tajikistan do not want to lose their roots] (7 May, 2012) www.bbc.com; www.azattyk.org Таджикистандагы кандаштар кандайсыңар? [How are our blood brothers in Tajikistan?] (4 March, 2010).
- ²¹ Bahadur Olimov and Arzybek Olimov (2016), in discussion with the author, 27 July.
- ²² Joldosh Turdubaev (2016), «Жерге талдын кел-кели менен кет-кети» [“Welcomes and Goodbyes of Jerge Tal”], accessed 12 July 2016, <http://www.azattyk.org>.
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- ²⁴ Amanbek Japarov (2011), «Убайымдуу Умар» [“Sad Umar”], accessed 13 July 2016, <http://www.azattyk.org>.
- ²⁵ *Особенности социокультурной интеграции кайрылманов в принимающее сообщество в Кыргызстане. Отчет* [Special Characteristics of Integration of Kayrylmanov to Host Communities in Kyrgyzstan. Report.] (B., 2015), <http://www.nisi.kg>.
- ²⁶ Second National Census of Kyrgyzstan’s Population (2009), accessed 13 July 2016, <http://www.stat.kg>; Interethnic Relations in the Kyrgyz Republic: Analysis of the Situation and State Policy, <http://www.nisi.kg>.

- ²⁷ Abylabek Asankanov (2016), *Кайрылмандар: интеграция көйгөйлөрү жана жергиликтүү эл менен ыңгайланышуунун формалары конференциясынын тезиси* [*Kayrylmans: Conference Thesis on Issues of Integration and Forms of Assimilation with Local Population*] (Bishkek: State Enterprise “Typography”), 11.
- ²⁸ Muzaffar Abdullaev (2016), in discussion with the author, 10 August.
- ²⁹ A. Abyshkaev (1965), *Каратегинские киргизы в конце XIX– начале XX вв* [*Karategin Kyrgyz at the End of 19th and Beginning of 20th Centuries*] (Frunze “Ilim” Print House); Balkis Karmyshaeva (2009), *Karategin Kyrgyz* (Moscow: Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, named after N.N. Mikluho-Maklay of the Russian Academy of Science).
- ³⁰ Национальный статистический комитет КР. Перепись населения и жилищного фонда Кыргызской Республики. Книга III (в таблицах) [The National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. Population and Residential Properties Census of the Kyrgyz Republic. Book III (in tables)]. Chui Oblast. Bishkek, 2010. С.52. www.stat.kg.
- ³¹ Alym Ismailov (2016), in discussion with the author, 8 August.
- ³² The Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on State Guarantees provided to the Ethnic Kyrgyz that moved to the Kyrgyz Republic, #175, 26 November 2007 [#157 edition, 18 July 2008; #27 edition, 27 January 2015].
- ³³ The State Program “Kayrylman” on providing assistance to the ethnic Kyrgyz returning to their historic homeland for 2006–08, issued with the Government Decision #737, 19 October 2006.
- ³⁴ Saltanat Barakanova (2007), interviewed by Sanji Tuytunova, *Zaman*, 27 February.
- ³⁵ Abdrahman Isakov (2016), in discussion with the author, 8 August.
- ³⁶ Nazgul Bostonbaeva (2007), «Боор тартып келип бул жакка, бейдарек калдык арабөк» [“Here We Came Searching for Kin, But No One Pulled Us Close like Relatives”], *Zaman*, 27 February.
- ³⁷ Kyrgyz nomads had large family units. Sons would set up their family yurts close to their father’s yurt. Property and livestock were shared amongst the family as well.
- ³⁸ *Особенности социокультурной интеграции кайрылманов в принимающее сообщество в Кыргызстане. Отчет* [*Special Characteristics of Integration of Kayrylmans to Host Communities in Kyrgyzstan. Report.*] (B., 2015), <http://www.nisi.kg>; Eleonora Beishenbek kyzy (2016), «Кайрылмандардын кубанычы жана түйшүгү» [“Joy and Hardship of Kayrylmans”], 2 February, <http://www.azattyk.org/>; A. Shepelenko (2016), «Как стать на родине своим» [“How Not to be Alien in Your Homeland”], *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 3 February, accessed 2 August 2016, <http://slovo.kg/>.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Abylabek Asankanov (2016), «Кайрылмандар: интеграция көйгөйлөрү жана жергиликтүү эл менен ыңгайлашуунун формалары» [*Kayrylmans: Integration Issues and Forms of Finding Common Ground with Locals*], Conference Thesis, 10.
- ⁴¹ Muzaffar Abdullaev (2016), in discussion with the author, 10 August. Muzaffar Abdullaev was an ethnic Kyrgyz who moved from Uzbekistan and founded the Association of Ethnic Kyrgyz. Nowadays, the association is part of the People’s Assembly of Kyrgyzstan. Abdullaev organizes

- events drawing attention to the issues of the ethnic Kyrgyz.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ The State Program “Kayrylman” on providing assistance to the ethnic Kyrgyz returning to their historic homeland for 2006–08, issued with the Government Decision #737, 19 October 2006
- ⁴⁴ Kladviya Antipina (1959), *Kyrgyz Archaeological and Ethnographic Expedition T.3*, 208–10.
- ⁴⁵ Sayfullo Tashbekov (2016), in discussion with the author, 7 August.
- ⁴⁶ For example, one of the elderly people invited as a guest to a festivity for a newborn child would offer a prayer: “Your child has been born in summer, when people move to *Jailoo* (high pasture lands). For centuries, Kyrgyz lived by roaming (көчүү—*kochuu*) from one pastureland to another, and this nomadic life is sacred for Kyrgyz. Let this nomadic life continue and let us name your child Kochumkul.” Elmira Kochumkulova and Mamatkerim Kochumkulov (2014), *Советтик Ўзбекистандын кыргыз чабандары: тарыхый-этнографиялык баян [Kyrgyz Shepherds of the Soviet Uzbekistan: Historical and Ethnographical Feature]* (Bishkek: University in Central Asia), 30.
- ⁴⁷ Arabs provide circumcision services for charitable purposes. Arabs who come temporarily to the Eastern University named after Mahmud Kashgari in Bishkek announce their arrival and circumcision services through advertisements. There are reports that Turkish nationals also provide circumcision services.
- ⁴⁸ Balkis Karmysheva (2009), *Каратегинские кыргызы [Karategin Kyrgyz]* (Moscow: The Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology named after Mikluho-Maklay at the Russian Academy of Science), 163–64.
- ⁴⁹ Abdrahman Isakov (2016), in discussion with the author, 8 August; Abdil-Ahat Kurbanov (2016), in discussion with the author, 2 August.
- ⁵⁰ Назира Момунбаева (2014), Түштүк кыргыздардын салттуу кийимдери [*Traditional Clothes of the Southern Kyrgyz*] (Bishkek: Printing House of Private Businessman [Сарыбаев Т.Т.]), 25.
- ⁵¹ Alym Ismailov (2016), in discussion with the author, 7 August.
- ⁵² Dilbar Tashbekova (2016), in discussion with the author, 9 August.
- ⁵³ Abdil-Ahat Kurbanov (2016), in discussion with the author, 2 August.
- ⁵⁴ Jeenbai Mukambaev (1982), *Эл ичи өнөр кенчи / Памир мени эңсетет... [Among People Abundance of Talents/Pamir Calls Me...]* (Frunze: Printing House [Kyrgyzstan]), 111.
- ⁵⁵ Dilbar Tashbekova (2016), in discussion with the author, 9 August.
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- ⁵⁷ Alym Ismailov, Abdrahman Isakov, Sayfullo Tashbekov (2016), in discussion with the author, (2–10 August) (discussions with the interviewees here held separately).
- ⁵⁸ Аударбек Коchkunov (2013), *Этнические традиции кыргызского народа. Социокультурные аспекты и некоторые вопросы генезиса [Ethnic Traditions of Kyrgyz People. Socio-cultural Aspects and Certain Issues of Genesis]* (Bishkek: NGO

- Kyrgyz Land), 143.
- ⁵⁹ Abdil-Ahat Kurbanov (2016), in discussion with the author, 2 August.
- ⁶⁰ Kochkunov (2013), 149.
- ⁶¹ В.М. Yunusaliev (1956), «Квопросу о формировании общенародного киргизского языка» [“To the Question about Forming a Widely Spoken Kyrgyz Language”], Tr. Yal National Academy of Science, Kyrgyz, Issue 42; Egemberdi Maanaev (2008), *Ethnic History of the Kyrgyz People* (Bishkek: The Kyrgyz State University named after I. Arabaev), 141.
- ⁶² Jeenbai Mukanaev (1982), *Эл ичи өнөр кенчи / Памир мени эңсетет... [Among People Abundance of Talents/Pamir Calls Me...]* (Frunze: Printing House [Kyrgyzstan]), 124–26.
- ⁶³ Mukanaev (1982), 110.
- ⁶⁴ Abdil-Ahat Kurbanov (2016), in discussion with the author, 2 August; Abdrahman Isakov (2016), in discussion with the author, 8 August.
- ⁶⁵ Bahadur Olimov (2016), in discussion with the author, 27 July.
- ⁶⁶ Janyl Jusurjan (2016), «Шаар-Туз кыргыздары. Дөлө атанын дубай саламы» [“Kyrgyz of Shaar-Tuz. Regards from Elderly Dolo [Doolot]”], accessed 21 August 2016, <http://www.azattyk.org>.
- ⁶⁷ Kubanychbek Chikilinov (2016), in discussion with the author, 9 August.
- ⁶⁸ Murgab, Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (Pamir), accessed 10 July 2016, <http://www.sary-kol.ru/>.
- ⁶⁹ Mukanaev (1982), 115.
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- ⁷¹ Karyganbai Iskandarov (2016), in discussion with the author, 9 August; Sayfullo Tashbekov (2016), in discussion with the author, 9 August.
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