

Kyrgyzstan beyond “Democracy Island” and “Failing State”

Contemporary Central Asia: Societies, Politics, and Cultures

Series Editor: Marlene Laruelle, George Washington University

At the crossroads of Russia, China, and the Islamic world, Central Asia remains one of the world's least-understood regions, despite being a significant theater for muscle-flexing by the great powers and regional players. This series, in conjunction with George Washington University's Central Asia Program, offers insight into Central Asia by providing readers unique access to state-of-the-art knowledge on the region. Going beyond the media clichés, the series inscribes the study of Central Asia into the social sciences and hopes to fill the dearth of works on the region for both scholarly knowledge and undergraduate and graduate student education.

Titles in Series

Kyrgyzstan beyond "Democracy Island" and "Failing State," edited by Marlene Laruelle and Johan Engvall

Kyrgyzstan beyond “Democracy Island” and “Failing State”

Social and Political Changes
in a Post-Soviet Society

Edited by
Marlene Laruelle
and Johan Engvall

LEXINGTON BOOKS
Lanham • Boulder • New York • London

Published by Lexington Books
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

Unit A, Whitacre Mews, 26-34 Stannary Street, London SE11 4AB

Copyright © 2015 by Lexington Books

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote passages in a review.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Laruelle, Marlene, editor of compilation. | Engvall, Johan, editor of compilation.

Title: Kyrgyzstan beyond “democracy island” and “failing state” : social and political changes in a post-soviet society / edited by Marlene Laruelle and Johan Engvall.

Description: Lanham, Md. : Lexington Books, 2015. | Series: Contemporary central Asia : societies, politics, and cultures | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2015033438 | ISBN 9781498515160 (cloth : alk. paper) |

ISBN 9781498515177 (electronic)

Subjects: LCSH: Kyrgyzstan—Politics and government—1991- | Political culture—Kyrgyzstan. | Post-communism—Kyrgyzstan. | Social change—Kyrgyzstan. | Geopolitics—Asia, Central.

Classification: LCC JQ1092.A91 K87 2015 | DDC 320.95843—dc23 LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2015033438>

∞™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

Acknowledgments	vii
Introduction	ix
<i>Johan Engvall and Marlene Laruelle</i>	
1 Kyrgyzstan and the Trials of Independence	1
<i>Johan Engvall</i>	
2 The Evolving Role of Political Parties in Kyrgyz Politics	21
<i>Shairbek Juraev</i>	
3 Why Are Public Offices Sold in Kyrgyzstan?	39
<i>Johan Engvall</i>	
4 Peripheral Protests as an Opportunity: “Brokers” in Action	59
<i>Asel Doolotkeldieva</i>	
5 In Search of <i>Tolerantnost’</i> : Preventive Development and Its Limits at the Kyrgyzstan–Uzbekistan Border	79
<i>Madeleine Reeves</i>	
6 Why Class Matters in Kyrgyzstan: Everyday Experiences, Moral Sentiments, and the Politics of the Poor	99
<i>Elmira Satybaldieva</i>	
7 Sewing to Satisfaction: Craft-based Entrepreneurs in Contemporary Kyrgyzstan	123
<i>Aisalkyn Botoeva and Regine A. Spector</i>	
8 Myths and Realities of Bishkek’s Novostroikas	143
<i>Emil Nasritdinov, Bermet Zhumakadyr kyzy, and Diana Asanalieva</i>	

9	Kyrgyzstan's Nationhood: From a Monopoly of Production to a Plural Market <i>Marlene Laruelle</i>	165
10	The Affective Politics of Sovereignty: Reflecting on the 2010 Conflict in Kyrgyzstan <i>David Gullette and John Heathershaw</i>	185
11	"We Disputed Every Word": The Plight of Moderates in Post-Violence Kyrgyzstan <i>Erica Marat</i>	211
12	Islam beyond Democracy and State in Kyrgyzstan <i>David W. Montgomery</i>	229
	Bibliography	243
	Index	265
	About the Contributors	271

Chapter 9

Kyrgyzstan's Nationhood

From a Monopoly of Production to a Plural Market

Marlene Laruelle

Works devoted to nation-building in Kyrgyzstan typically explore the ambivalence of the civic- versus ethnic-based national construction and leaders' failed attempts to integrate minorities and secure the titular nation,¹ especially since the 2010 Osh riots.² During the Soviet period, the dichotomy between civic and ethnic was easily managed, because the ethnic nation was a *local* nation, which did not claim to overlap or challenge the Soviet supranational one. The civic versus ethnic dichotomy has been questioned by many works and quite rightly cast as being an ideal-type, unobservable in any reality. Studies by ethnologists such as David Gullette and Svetlana Jacquesson have shown just how insufficient this framework is for grasping the current search for a national and state identity in Kyrgyzstan. Past analysis of "clan politics" also misconstrued it.³

In this chapter, I argue that what we usually see as Kyrgyzstan's difficulties in choosing *between* ethnic and civic identity is a misformulation that stems from applying a poorly understood Western theoretical framework to Central Asia. In the case of Kyrgyzstan, the authorities' goal is certainly to make ethnic Kyrgyz attributes—language and cultural symbols—the bonding element around which a civic identity can emerge. The titular group is urged to partially merge its ethnic and civic identities, while the minorities are supposed to embrace a civic identity, some elements of which constitute "Kyrgyzness."

I thus hypothesize that at stake for Kyrgyzstan is not the *choice* between two opposed policies, civic or ethnic, but the *evolution* from a monopoly over the production of nationhood to an open market shaped by multiple actors and narratives. This plurality is perceived by the authorities as a threat to sovereignty and a means to weaken attempts at nation-building because it fragments what is traditionally perceived as unified and above division. In Soviet times and partly in the 1990s, both the state apparatus and academia

had a firm stranglehold over defining nationhood. This narrative could be sometimes challenged, but it was possible for people to differentiate between the consensual orthodoxy on nationhood and heterodox points of view. But since the 2000s, it has been impossible to provide this symbolic security: the discourse on nationhood has been deeply decentralized. It is this “decentralization” and the accompanying contest for discursive hegemony that is perceived as chaotic, directionless, and therefore endangering the nation.

To demonstrate my hypothesis on this production of nationhood, I explore the *longue durée*, going back to the Soviet decades in which ethnogenesis, and the study of “ethnic processes,” was esteemed as the supreme science for promoting the rightfulness of the ethnic nation. I then follow the post-independence framework through which ethnogenesis was reformulated as part of a search for Kyrgyz statehood, with Manasology being used as the *primus inter pares* argument in favor of the nation-state, and new genealogies developed as legacy of the study of “ethnic processes” so prevalent in the Soviet period. In the third part, I focus on the two processes of decentralization: a plural political life that questions the legitimacy of state-backed nationhood, and a plural editorial market that tests academia’s monopoly over the contents of nationhood.

ETHNOGENESIS, THE SOVIET ORTHODOXY FOR NATIONHOOD, AND KYRGYZ EXCEPTIONALISM

Modern historiography regarding Kyrgyzstan emerged during the first decades of Soviet rule and crystallized in the post-World War II period. In the 1920s and early 1930s, historical accounts were mostly devoted to the struggle of the progressive forces of the Kyrgyz nation against its multiple enemies, ranging from local feudal exploiters and conservative *bey*s to Russian chauvinistic forces. In the late 1930s, with the structuring of National-Bolshevism in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic,⁴ the federal republics—Kyrgyzstan became one only in 1936—were allowed to look for a more sophisticated historical narrative. The new narrative had to follow Stalin’s definition of the nation: “A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture.”⁵ Territory and economic life were at the core of the Soviet process of forming national entities during the delimitation period of the 1920s and 1930s,⁶ while a community of culture was already worked out by ethnographers, and a community of language was in the process of being shaped by Stalinist linguistics.⁷ The “historically evolved” nature of the nation was, paradoxically, more difficult to grasp as

it posits the development of a plausible storyline explaining the immemorial existence of the nation on its current territory.

The core historical argument took the form of “ethnogenesis,” a concept supposedly authenticating the overlap between a people aware of its distinct identity, its territory, and a state structure. An article in the journal *Sovetskaya etnografiya* in 1942 proclaimed the birth of the discipline of ethnogenetics (*etnogenetika*) that could only “attain its authentic scientific realization in the Soviet Union, on the basis of the theories of Marxism-Leninism, and with the help of progressive teachings in the domain of linguistics such as those of Nikolai Marr.”⁸ This ethnogenetic discourse emerged within the specific context of the late 1930s, as a response to German critics arguing the non-European essence of the Slavic people and their illegitimate claim to be part of the Indo-European or Aryan legacy.⁹ These historiographic polemics pushed Soviet discourse to reject all migrationist theories. What applied to the Slavs, as the original target of the Nazi discourses, extended equally to all the peoples of the Soviet Union. Following the lead of the Slavs, all Soviet nationalities were invited to play the autochthonism card and challenge migrationist ideas.

Aleksandr Bernshtam (1910–1956), a famous Soviet archeologist who specialized in Kyrgyz history, asserted that migrationist theories were “reactionary” and derived from bourgeois science whose goal was to diminish the Soviet peoples’ place in world history.¹⁰ In 1936, at the initiative of Academician Yurii Got’e, the *Ancient History of the Peoples of the USSR (Drevnyaya istoriya narodov SSSR)* was published. The All-Union Academy of Sciences decided to pursue this initiative further and organized, under A.D. Udal’tsov’s leadership, four scholarly conferences on ethnogenesis. The conference focusing on Central Asia was held in August 1942 in Tashkent and involved some fifteen researchers, mostly Russians, whose papers were published in summary form in a 1947 volume of *Sovetskaya etnografiya*.¹¹ This foundational conference established the principles of ethnogenesis for Central Asia as a region: each eponymous people with their own republic was to establish a dynasty of reference and identify a chronologically well-defined historical period in which the process of the nation’s formation was completed; the period should be as ancient as possible for maximum prestige value.

By the late 1940s, all the Central Asian republics had at least one book that established the principle of ethnogenesis—all except Kirgizia. Reconciling the different historical sources that mention the term “Kyrgyz” proved difficult and required a choice between two different approaches: either make the autochthonist claim that the Kyrgyz were the original inhabitants of the Tian-Shan mountains, but do without authoritative historical sources to document it, or glorify the Kyrgyz as having constituted a “state” since ancient times

but in various places located outside the borders of the present-day republic, mostly in the Altai region, and therefore recognizing that Kyrgyz migrated over time. Neither of these two solutions was acceptable, considering the underpinning logic of the ethnogenesis doctrine.

In 1952, the Kyrgyz branch of the Soviet Academy of Sciences expressly asked the Presidium in Moscow to organize a series of new ethnological expeditions with the hope of collecting new evidence for one theory or the other. A special session of the Academy of Sciences, held in Frunze (now Bishkek) in 1956, was devoted exclusively to the question of the ethnogenesis of the Kyrgyz, and three anthologies were slated for publication between 1956 and 1959, exploring this ethnogenetic question with combined approaches from ethnology, linguistics, folklore, and physical anthropology, with the hope of reaching a definitive consensus.¹² Bernshtam's conclusion, reflecting the dominant view, was officially reproduced in 1956 in the first *History of the Kirgiz SSR (Istoriya kirgizskoi SSR)*: unlike its neighbors, the ethnogenesis of the Kyrgyz happened in multiple historic stages, with no foundational dynasty, and in multiple places, from Altai to the Tian-Shan.¹³ Kyrgyzstan was thus—already—standing apart from the regional ideological framework, allowing for a greater diversity of opinions to be expressed, precisely because of the lack of an orthodox historiography. However, it fully participated in the Soviet search for “patriotic archeology,” with archeological expeditions trying to demonstrate that a unique genius lay at the heart of each of the cultures encompassed within the Soviet Union, which was thus projected onto the past as a historical space unified since time immemorial.

In the 1960s and even more the 1970s, Soviet historiography on nationhood was enriched by its growing interaction with ethnology. Under the influence of Yulian Bromley (1921–1990), director of the Moscow-based N.N. Miklukho-Maklai Institute of Anthropology and Ethnography, the term *ethnos* became one of the major intellectual tools of Soviet science.¹⁴ Bromley was in part inspired by Sergei Shirokogoroff (1887–1939), an ethnologist who had immigrated to China to escape the Bolshevik Revolution and who developed a general model of classification of ethnic groups (*ethnos*) as humanity's equivalent for species based on his studies of a Siberian people, the Tunguz.¹⁵ Bromley endowed this postulate with the norms of a Marxist reading of history. For him, the *ethnos* was a socio-historical phenomenon that could be explained by the forces of production and the social relations stemming from them. Bromley claimed that *ethnos* identity, although it is a historical and not a biological phenomenon, remains absolute once it emerges: it passes from one generation to the next and forces itself on individuals who are unable to renounce it, to mix with others, or to evolve in time. It forms what Soviet academia named *genofond*, a supposedly specific “gene pool” that embodies

a collective destiny superior to individual will and views the nation as a living organism with its own essence.¹⁶ The nationhood of the Soviet peoples thus shifted from a mostly historical definition to a more ethnic-based one.

Physical anthropology came to reinforce the salience of ethnic unity. Mutually supporting data from craniology, serology, odontology, and dermatology were displayed to affirm the physical unity of the nation. The internal divisions represented by tribes, clans, or regionalisms were treated as matters of history or folklore, “vestiges” (*perezhitki*) that are doomed and scarcely relevant to understanding the reality of contemporary societies. Kyrgyz Soviet society was thus thought of as having been liberated from these “backward” traditions and symbols of times gone by and as shaped only by its current class status. Combined with the assertion of the people’s physiological unity, the ethnogenetic discourse made it possible to affirm the modernity of society: no disruptive internal element such as tribal divisions, considered “shameful,” could challenge the existence of an indivisible nation.¹⁷ Kyrgyz ethnology, as its Soviet sisters, specialized heavily in the study of what it called “ethnic processes” (*etnicheskie protsessy*), that is, the supposed evolution of ethnic identity based on ethnographical data. However, for Kyrgyz ethnographers, the study of these ethnic processes was complicated because genealogies or line descents were considered to be a “surviving remnant.” Collecting genealogies was thus forbidden, and ethnographers were obliged to keep to a discussion of the “remnants” of “tribalism” (*traibalizm*), and to present “clan-tribal relations” (*rodoplenenye svyazi*) as a folklore inherited from the past that no longer had any reality in contemporary society.¹⁸

While Soviet propaganda was busy advocating the friendship between peoples and their possible merger into a single nation, ethnologists were inquiring into the methods used by each people to protect their genofond. According to the doctrine, members of an etnos inherited cultural behaviors and tended instinctively to protect their gene pool. The dominant statement that an etnos was unable to mix with others without being destroyed led Soviet ethnology to promote endogamy as a means to stabilize the “gene pools” of each people and to guarantee respect for their traditions. The idea that some peoples had incompatible gene pools and “ethnic behavior” (*etnicheskie povedeniya*) became widespread, particularly in the publications put out by the republican Academies of Sciences. This shift of narrative went hand-in-hand with the intense indigenization (*korenizatsiya*) of academic and university circles in the 1970s. The new generation of scholars could be entirely trained in the republic—even if getting a PhD in Moscow or Leningrad was held in high regard—and the number of ethnic Kyrgyz faculty grew in comparison to a previously Slavic-dominated milieu.¹⁹

FROM ETHNOGENESIS TO STATEHOOD: MANAS AND KYRGYZCHILIK

Historiographical discourses on ethnogenesis and ethnological doctrines of “ethnic processes” were upheld as orthodoxy throughout the entire Soviet period, and even into independence. They are part of a continuity between the Soviet and the post-Soviet periods. Political authorities, intellectual circles, and the population share the assumption that a national ideology is a critical element of statehood that contributes fundamentally to guaranteeing social order.²⁰

The ethnogenesis doctrine posits—implicitly during Soviet times, explicitly after 1991—that the nation-state emerges as the legitimate result of centuries of ethnic genesis. Formulated in a post-Soviet framework, it means positing “statehood” (*gosudarstvennost’*) as the obvious goal of the nation. Nationhood and statehood are hypothesized as intimately linked: the supposed presence of an ancient people on its present territory confers contemporary political legitimacy and implies that the titular group intersects with the state both territorially and culturally.²¹ Post-Soviet Kyrgyz historiography is thus built on a teleological logic: it is the history of the nation marching toward its independence. The ideas that futures are multiple and that linearity is a retroactive construction of the historian are not considered.²² Historical moments that are inconsistent with this linearity are conceptualized as transgressions that hijacked the nation from its destiny and put it into hibernation until the moment it “woke” again.

History is also ethnicized. Peasants and nomads are exaggeratedly foregrounded as the repository of national authenticity, whereas urban cultures, in which minorities are dominant, receive more discrete mentions. The nation is also an ethnos that possesses a *genofond* to be preserved, often expressed in the form of cultural and linguistic purism. National history is therefore simultaneously populist and statist, as was Stalinist National-Bolshevism: statist, because only the state represent the completed form of national consciousness; and populist, because the ethnicized people form the center of attention, as is proven by the incessant references to a national mentality (*mentalitet*) or psyche.²³

To pursue the Soviet tradition of “patriotic archaeology,” the first president of independent Kyrgyzstan, Askar Akaev, organized several jubilees, most notably the 3,000-year anniversary of the city of Osh. However, the jubilee also had a clear political aim, that of curbing the popularity of the former secretary of the Kyrgyz Communist Party, Absamat Masaliev, who scored 80 percent of votes in the 1995 presidential election in his native Osh region.²⁴ In 2003, Akaev celebrated “2,200 years of Kyrgyz statehood” in the hope of reviving his declining popularity and improving public support ahead

of the 2005 presidential elections.²⁵ On this occasion, the Academy of Sciences published a new history textbook, *History of the Kyrgyz of Kyrgyzstan*, uniquely centered on the titular ethnic group.²⁶ However, compared with the history textbooks of neighboring republics, those edited in Kyrgyzstan are more nuanced. The idea that the Kyrgyz went through a unique ethnogenesis at a precise time and place remains contested, with most textbooks giving priority to the notion that there were multiple phases of “ethnic crystallization.” The textbooks also recognize that the territory of the Kyrgyz has spread out enormously, stretching from Siberia (Altai) to present-day Kyrgyzstan, whereas their neighbors lay claim to their autochthonism or nativeness.²⁷ The historiographic vacillations inherited from the 1950s have therefore been carried over into the contemporary corpus and are recognized and accepted as the dominant framework.

Unlike its neighbors, Kyrgyzstan cannot celebrate a founding dynasty whose reign would be commemorated as the golden age of the nation, a glory to be reached again in the future. To compensate for the absence of any historically proven dynasties or founders, the authorities have focused their attention on the hero of Kyrgyz great national epic, *Manas*. The *Manas* epic, celebrated for being longer than Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, was recorded in written form for the first time by the Kazakh ethnologist and historian Chokan Valikhanov in the Issyk-Kul region in 1856, then completed by Vassilii Radlov, who, between 1862 and 1869, noted down further episodes from the Bugu in the Tekes Valley, the Sary-Bagysh of Issyk-Kul, and the Soltu of the Tokmak region. During the Soviet period, the great bards Sayakbay Karalaev and Sagynbay Orozbekov gave the epic poem its definitive form. The facts related in the epic are vague enough to facilitate today's many attempts at ideological appropriation.

In the first years of the USSR, the epic was rather well received. In 1925, poet Kasym Tynystanov, first minister of Education of the Kyrgyz republic, recommended the publication of *Manas*, but the rise of Stalinism blocked the project. Not until 1946 would it be possible to see an extract of the epic poem published in Moscow, when the Kyrgyz “lobby” nominated the opera *Manas* for the Stalin Prize. But *Manas* fell victim to the ideological hardening in the arts and culture symbolized by Andrei Zhdanov (1896–1948), who accused the epic of “bourgeois cosmopolitanism.” In 1951–1952, the ideological struggle over *Manas* raged between the two official Kyrgyz dailies, *Kyzyl Kyrgyzstan*, which was in favor of the epic, and *Sovetskaya Kirgiziya*, which echoed Moscow's official line, as well as between the sections of the Communist Party in Moscow and in Frunze (today's Bishkek). The major figures of the Kyrgyz cultural world, such as Aali Tokombaev, who was member of the Party and a deputy in the Soviet Supreme of the Kyrgyz Republic; Kasymaly Bayalinov, then president of the Writer's Union; and

writer Tugelbay Sydykbekov, took a stance in favor of the epic poem.²⁸ In 1952, official discourse shifted and criticized the epic for being anti-Russian, anti-Chinese—at the time a serious political crime given the Sino-Soviet honeymoon—and pan-Islamic. Celebrated Kyrgyz writer Chingiz Aitmatov re-opened the discussion in the 1980s, and the first statue to Manas, the hero of the epic, was eventually erected in 1985.

With independence, Manas was acclaimed as the embodiment of Kyrgyzstan's nationhood. Manas is now considered to be a historical figure who lived in the ninth century, the man who gathered the scattered Kyrgyz clans together and launched the great campaign of 840–842, which laid the foundation of the first Kyrgyz state. President Akaev, with the support of UNESCO, organized a jubilee marking the millennium of Manas in 1995. The authorities built a historical park, Manas Ordo, around Kumböz, a Karakhanid-era mausoleum thought to be his final resting place, which is situated in his supposed birthplace, Talas. In 2014, almost 150,000 people visited Manas Ordo,²⁹ confirming its status as one of Kyrgyzstan's main tourist spots.

For the celebration of 2,200 years of Kyrgyz statehood, Akaev invoked Manas as the embodiment of statehood, with a book published under his supposed authorship, *Kyrgyz Statehood and National Epos Manas*. In it, he did not hesitate to draw religious parallels: “For the Kyrgyz people, *Manas* is more than an epic. . . . It is what the Bible is to Christians”; “My thoughts lead me to draw a parallel between Manas and the biblical figure of Moses who took back his people to their native country, leading them out of captivity.”³⁰ During the festivities, the Kyrgyz president delivered a political speech in which he formulated “seven commandments” drawn from the epic and declared that he would make them the core of his program of action for independent Kyrgyzstan: (1) Unity and Cohesion of a Nation, (2) International Concord, Friendship, and Cooperation, (3) National Honor and Patriotism, Prosperity Through Hard Work and Knowledge, (4) Humanism, (5) Generosity and Tolerance, (6) Harmony with Nature, and (7) Consolidation and Protection of Kyrgyz Statehood. “By seeking to evaluate the *Manas* epic from the viewpoint of the idea of the state that it contains,” wrote Akaev, “it is easy to see that for the ancient Kyrgyz people and its constituents, the epic was a prototype for the national constitution, a code of laws and decrees, a code of honor and morals, a testament for the Kyrgyz generations to come.”³¹

Since the 1990s, the discipline of “Manasology” has become mandatory in all university curricula. It follows a syllabus focused on both knowledge of the epic poem itself, its main characters and events, the values it defends, and its role in national construction.³² The Academy of Sciences launched the National Center for Manasology, exclusively devoted to studying the epic, and a group of literature and folklore specialists, led by the Center's director,

Sagymbay Orozbekov, worked from 1994 to 2014 to compile and publish a monumental nine-volume edition of *Manas*.³³

To Bishkek's chagrin, in 2003 China launched the first campaign to include *Manas* on UNESCO's list of National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Beijing claimed to be acting on behalf of its Kyrgyz minority in Xinjiang.³⁴ UNESCO approved China's application in 2009. If the Kyrgyz political authorities are proud of this international recognition, they nonetheless had to live down the humiliation of China's having "stolen" the paternity of the epic from them.

Despite this Chinese appropriation, *Manas* remains the hero who embodies the values publicly cherished by the Kyrgyz state: a warrior defender of the motherland, the incessant struggle for independence waged by the Kyrgyz, and the need for self-reliance, although the multi-ethnic nature of *Manas'* entourage is also emphasized.³⁵ However, its applicability for nationhood is not easy, and it may raise more questions than it can answer. For instance, the epos insists on the division of the Kyrgyz tribes, depicting them as unable to unify except when fighting an external enemy. It does not specify to which tribe *Manas* belonged, only that he was born in today's Talas region.³⁶

Aside from *Manas*, the Kyrgyz have few historical figures available to construct a national pantheon. Among the oldest is Yusuf Khass Hajib, also known as Yusup Balasagun, an eleventh-century Turkic poet based in Balasagun, the capital of the Karakhanid Empire, which was located on Kyrgyzstan's territory—but the Uyghur contest this heritage. For more modern periods, the country can celebrate *Atake baatyr*, who initiated contacts with the Russian Empire of Catherine the Great at the end of the eighteenth century. In addition, there is Kurmanjan Datka (1811–1907), nicknamed "The Queen of Altai," a female tribal leader who initiated annexation to Russia and fought against the Uzbek-led Bukhara Emirate and Kokand khanate and her adviser *Shabdan baatyr* (1839–1912). That these are pro-Russian figures presents no difficulties in the country: Russophobia is very limited, and Kyrgyz nationalist groups are more guided by historical rivalries with Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, as well as strong Sinophobia.³⁷

To make up for the lack of historical continuity, the political authorities have turned to campaigns to "raise national awareness," with efforts to brand "Kyrgyzness" or some unique "Kyrgyz path" (*kirgizchilik*) and to the revival of *sanjyras*, which are traditional Kyrgyz genealogies. The celebrated *Kirgizchilik* means respect for ancestral customs (*ata babadan kalgan salt*), duties stemming from kinship (*tuuganchilik*) and from genealogical belonging (*uruuchuluk*), in particular knowledge of one's lines of descent for several generations, and local history (*jurtchuluk*).³⁸ The parliament is one of the main sounding boards for this discourse, as MPs have to cultivate their constituencies, which are often rural origin. As Jacquesson notes, they make

use of a simple diction but one that has significant political consequences, which is that “the best leaders are those with whom we share a common ancestor”.³⁹ The political authorities’ interest in genealogies was confirmed by the 1996 publication of the genealogy of President Akaev, which claimed that he belongs to the Saribag’ish clan, which as a long tradition of holding power.⁴⁰ These genealogies have recently invaded the educational system, with textbooks that mention the tribal origins of the main national heroes.⁴¹

The Soviet prism has thus been at once maintained and transformed within the new framework of independence. The principle of ethnogenesis remains the theoretical foundation that authenticates the nation: the quest to find an overlap between an awareness of the nation/ethnicity and the state/struggle for it is henceforth reformulated under the umbrella of statehood. This linearity is materialized in the official appropriation of the *Manas* epic that, once forbidden, today is sanctified not only as the historical incarnation of the nation, but also as the living “encyclopedia” of the cultural and moral values of the Kyrgyz nation. The ethnic obsession of Soviet ethnography has been carried over into *kirgizchilik*, a symbol of the quintessence of the etnos and of its values, and into the *sanjyras*, which, with official state sanction, make it possible to chart the “substructures” comprising the modern nation.

NATIONHOOD DECENTRALIZED? A PLURAL MARKET FOR NARRATIVES ON THE NATION

However, it is probably in the production of discourse on the nation that the change is most abrupt. This change had its full effect not with the immediate collapse of the Soviet Union, but rather a decade later, once the political and social fabric of Kyrgyzstan had been altered. In Soviet times, the state and academia were the sole authorized bearers of discourse on collective identity. Academia was made up of civil servants working to fulfill the political objectives of the state apparatus. This model was challenged with independence but remains the standard for both the political elites and academic personnel. However, this centralized process of stating—and staging—the nation has been increasingly tested by the pluralistic nature of Kyrgyzstan’s public space: pluralism emerged both among politicians and within “civil society,” each with different agendas that use the realm of nationhood to advance new societal projects. The first plurality pertains to the political elites *stricto sensu*, many of whom raise the issue of nationhood as an agenda by which to obtain political legitimacy and to capture constituencies. The second zone of pluralism is academia, which is being increasingly fragmented due to the emergence of competing institutions and, more important, by new, popularly produced interpretations of nationhood.

Pluralism and the State

In the 2000s, some political elites, often associated with the southern regions of the country, developed a narrative on nationhood that directly challenged the state-produced discourse. In their perception, state-backed nationhood presented several disadvantages. First, it is too oriented toward creating a civic nation with preferential rights given to the ethnic minorities—both the Russians/Russian speakers and the Uzbeks.⁴² According to them, this trend toward a civic nation, sponsored by Western perceptions and funders, could threaten the revival and reassertion of the Kyrgyz nation, its language, and its traditions and push Kyrgyzstan toward a failing nationhood where the titular nation does not control the country's future. Second, they denounced the state-backed narrative as produced mostly by northern elites. The writing of history would be too northern-centered (Manas himself is seen as a symbol of the North), focused on the relationship with Russia and Kazakhstan, favoring a positive reading of Russian colonization and the Soviet decades, and giving no room for the southern elites to express their regional identity and their Fergana-centered sensitivities.⁴³

The more assertive Kyrgyz nationalism that emerged in reaction to the civic vision of Kyrgyzstan was embraced as a tool for southern political figures—even if some northern politicians also supported it. Kurmanbek Bakiev, president after the Tulip Revolution until his overthrow in 2010, relied on a different style of political mobilization than his predecessor, and his legitimacy, both symbolically (creating narrative) and pragmatically (creating consensus among elites), was based on a more affirmed Kyrgyz nationalism.⁴⁴ Two other figures also promoted a muscular discourse about Kyrgyz identity: parliamentary deputy Adakhan Madumarov, who did not hide his ethno-nationalist convictions in declaring that the “Kyrgyz in the country are masters of their own house, the others are only renters”;⁴⁵ and, to a lesser extent, Omurbek Tekebaev, a former presidential candidate and leader of the opposition group Ata-Meken (Fatherland).

With the 2005 Tulip Revolution and the partial change of elites, the state narrative lost its previous uniformity. The new ruling elites shared with their predecessors the assumption that the state should generate a unifying ideology, but the contents of it became more difficult to define once Akaev's regime was removed. The Bakiev era was marked by a long succession of—mostly failed—attempts to build a new state narrative, with several commissions in charge of finding the appropriate components. One predated the Tulip Revolution: the “Ideological Program of Kyrgyzstan: Charter for the Future” was launched in 2003. But the main attempts happened under Bakiev. On December 30, 2005, Bakiev signed a decree establishing a working group invested with a mission to elaborate “guidelines (*kontseptsii*) for

the state and national ideology of Kyrgyzstan.” This commission was first chaired by Dastan Sarygulov, a former secretary of the local communist party, who continued his political career as governor of the Talas region. He is known for advocating an anti-Muslim ethno-religious revival called Tengrism (see below). The Sarygulov Commission reported interviewing several thousand people and asking them to answer questions about national ideology. The pupils of the last classes of secondary school also had to hand in an essay on “What should be the ideology of the state of Kyrgyzstan?”⁴⁶ Sarygulov was quickly forced to resign, but calls for a more assertive Kyrgyz voice continued. In 2006–2007, State Secretary Adakhan Madumarov was appointed head of the commission in charge of developing “guidelines for a pan-national ideology.”⁴⁷ As the Madumarov Commission proved unable to forge consensus, no guidelines were ever published, and it was disbanded as part of the 2009 government reorganization.

The state elites were not the only ones trying to formulate a new nationhood narrative with a more ethnonationalist color. Between 2005 and 2010, the number of political groups using the Kyrgyz ethnic nation as their point of reference multiplied. In summer 2005, a new nationalist party was created. Uлуу Biridik (Great Unity) was led by the former vice governor of the Issyk-Kul region, Emilbek Kaptagaev, a member of the united opposition against Bakiev. The party’s first mission was declared to be the preservation (*sberezhenie*) of the Kyrgyz people, and it called for defining Kyrgyzstan as the ethnic state of the Kyrgyz.⁴⁸ Kaptagaev has made regular calls to strip Russian of its official-language status, arguing that such recognition damages the development of Kyrgyz national consciousness. Then in 2007, the first *kurultay* (a traditional assembly or council in Turkic and Mongol cultures) of self-described “national-patriotic” forces convened in Osh. This *kurultay* brought together several tens of small, scattered political groups.⁴⁹ Sarygulov accused the authorities of having “lost the sense of the holiness of the homeland,”⁵⁰ and Nazarbek Nyshanov, leader of the Patriotic Party of Kyrgyzstan, made similar remarks. After the overthrow of Bakiev and the introduction of a parliamentary system in 2010, the new political diversity allowed ethnic nationalism to be heralded as a political agenda by party such as Ata-Jurt, but also by political figures such as the former ombudsman Tursunbai Bakir uulu (Ar-Namys), famous for his advocacy of political Islam.

Pluralism and Academia

Pluralism also emerged inside the academic realm. Kyrgyz higher education has been deeply transformed and weakened by two decades of painful economic transformation. The Academy of Sciences and its Institutes lost a major share of their funding, human capital, and scientific legitimacy.

Intellectual circles became more diverse and, because of the country's openness to foreign initiatives, Kyrgyzstan became a particularly competitive environment for higher education.⁵¹ Many private universities—the Slavic-Russian University, the American University, the OSCE Academy, and several Turkish universities—attracted young professionals and the best scholars away from state-run institutions, providing a more dynamic environment with higher salaries and better international career prospects. These institutions tend to produce plural narratives that do not necessarily follow the state storyline, and they offer a more diversified market for textbooks publishers.

Compared with the Soviet era, contemporary Kyrgyz academia has also shed its unidirectional approach. If the idea that the mission of intellectuals is to substantiate a national ideology is still largely shared by academic elites, looking for a unifying ideology has become more challenging. The Soviet models for discussing ethnogenesis have faced fundamental criticism. Polemics among Russian scholars, which are closely followed by their Kyrgyz counterparts, have also influenced local scholars. Bromley's theories and their primordialism have been challenged by the new director of the Moscow Institute for Ethnology and Anthropology, Valerii Tishkov, a passionate supporter of a constructivist approach,⁵² and the debates in the main Russian ethnological journal, *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, have reverberated in Kyrgyz publications such as *Izvestiya Natsional'noi Akademii Nauk*. Physical anthropology, considered a legitimate discipline during the Soviet decades, has fallen into obscurity, while at the same time the arrival of population genetics has created a smokescreen, seeming indirectly to validate biology-based approaches.⁵³

Finally, alternative history has become an important component of the popular production of narratives on nationhood. The combination of freedom of speech and the market economy in the publishing world has created a boom in alternative histories across the former Soviet Union. The genre blurs the boundaries between legitimate science and popular knowledge and enables numerous actors to invade public space with their own, sometimes highly imaginative, narratives. This includes rewriting national and world history, conspiracy theories, counterfactuals, and the paranormal—especially the study of parallel worlds and the mysteries of ancient civilizations. While some authors label these alternative histories as fiction, others position themselves in direct competition with what they denounce as “official scholarship.” The decline of the Marxist meta-narrative has generated new interpretative frames, including the notions that no single explanation is legitimate and that “hidden hands” have shaped history.⁵⁴

In Kyrgyzstan, alternative history has taken the form of pan-Turkic nationalism. This may seem contradictory: Kyrgyz—as well as Kazakh—ethno-nationalism is based on references to a superior identity to that of the nation

alone, one that encompasses the other Turkic neighbors and nomads. With ethno-nationalism being mainly framed as a cultural response to Russian and Uzbek domination, belonging to a bigger Turkic entity is not received as inconsistent.

Personalities such as the historian Lev Gumilev (1912–1992), son of poet Anna Akhmatova, and a semi-dissident during the Soviet era, who advocates a Turkic-centered historical metanarrative, enjoyed unique posthumous prestige in the country—as well as in Russia and Kazakhstan. President Akaev, for example, quoted Gumilev several times, repeatedly acknowledging him as a source of inspiration for his own analysis of the peoples of the steppe.⁵⁵ Gumilev straddles the worlds of academia and pseudoscience, and his scientific output has produced heated debated between those who consider him one of the greatest historians of the Turkic world and those who see him merely as a marginal figure. Gumilev embodies a specific version of Eurasianism that gives prominence to Turkic peoples, particularly nomads, and which projects a magnified history stretching from the large migrations of the Huns to the Mongol Empire. Gumilev’s biology-based definition of ethnos and valorization of the nomadic past made him a key reference for many Kyrgyz scholars with a nationalist sensibility.⁵⁶

More clearly identified as promoting alternative histories, figures such as Murad Adzhi helped spread an epic vision of the Turkic past and its role in world history. Adzhi’s work can be considered as the Turkic equivalent of the New Chronology movement advanced by Anatolii Fomenko in Russia, which states that Russia was the cradle of great major ancient civilizations but had its legacy stolen by German historiographers in the service of European powers in their fight against Russia.⁵⁷ An economist by training, Adzhi specialized in the early 1990s in an alternate history of the Turkic world, claiming that a huge historiographical plot had been orchestrated by the Russians to erase from the eyes of the world the existence of the unity of the Turkic world and its state, *Desh i Kipchak*.⁵⁸ Silently borrowing from the “sun theories” of Ottoman Turkey, Adzhi proclaims that Turks are the origin of all the great ancient and modern civilizations, that they brought Christianity to the European barbarians, and that Turkish was the *lingua franca* of Europe and of Eurasia until the Renaissance. His best-known book, *Europe, Turks, and the Great Steppe*, published in 1998, was widely available in Kyrgyzstan and in Kazakhstan and inspired many local writers to produce similar storylines for popular consumption. His success declined in the 2000s with the refocus on local historiographical production on genealogies.

Kyrgyz alternative history has also taken the form of Tengrist nationalism. Tengrism emerged as a more ethnocentric alternative to the state-backed narrative in the 1990s and early 2000s.⁵⁹ Supporters of Tengrism stated that Islam is a religion foreign to the Kyrgyz nation, which should go back to

its pre-Islamic belief in the Sky, or *Tengri*, that is present in Turkic mythology. Tengrism developed in several autonomous republics of Russia, from Tatarstan to Buriatia, as well as in Kazakhstan, but it has gained the highest visibility in Kyrgyzstan because of Dastan Sarygulov. Close to Bakiev, who appointed him to the prestigious office of state secretary, Sarygulov tried to officialize a new national ideology that would be largely founded on Tengrism, without success. His association, *Tengir-Ordo*, attracted the support of several other figures seeking to revive Tengrism, more as a national ideology than a religion, even if some followers boast of practicing animist rituals. Tengrism can be considered as the local version of a New Age movement, insofar as it endorses an individualized religion, has no holy texts or clergy, emphasizes harmony with nature, and encourages ethnic nativism.⁶⁰

More important, the public space devoted to debating nationhood has been deeply transformed by the mass production and mass consumption of genealogies and local history, which have emerged as a “field,” *per se*. As insightfully explored by Svetlana Jacquesson, the popular mass media accounts of the 1990s about Kyrgyz customs and traditions accelerated in the early 2000s into a frenzy for genealogical searches (*uruu/uruk*), narratives, and family trees, with an impressive level of popular involvement. Progressively, fluid oral traditions consolidated into fixed narratives that are now presented as reflecting the “true” and “authentic” roots of the Kyrgyz nation.⁶¹ This process challenged the conventional state-backed nationhood project, largely inherited from Soviet academia, which dismissed genealogies as shameful and conflated political clans with lines of descent. On the contrary, genealogy is now regarded as the embodiment of an authentic Kyrgyz democracy, providing a written form to a collective identity and memory where morality plays an important role.⁶² The construction of this popular knowledge about nationhood has been facilitated by the Internet, where numerous sites offer genealogical reconstructions or discuss them. Once again, academic knowledge seems dispossessed of its right to speak at the expense of a narrative on nationhood presented as the advent of the people. Amateurs or connoisseurs in local history have reached such levels of notoriety that from now on it will be difficult for official historiographers to avoid integrating their narratives into the officially produced one.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I hypothesized that at stake for Kyrgyzstan is not the binary choice between a civic nation or an ethnic nation, but the *evolution* from a monopoly over the production of nationhood to an open market shaped by multiple actors and narratives. In their chapter in this volume, David Gullette

and John Heathershaw accurately insist on the importance of collective emotions in the definition of sovereignty, as well as on the necessity for scholars to explore the field of affectivity to understand the current diffuse, but sustained, feeling that the fundamentals of Kyrgyz sovereignty are threatened. An additional component could be added to their argument, namely that current Kyrgyzstan lacks a hegemonic voice that would achieve a consensus on staging the nation.

The state in Kyrgyzstan no longer speaks with one voice: elites in power, the presidential apparatus, the parliament, and the political parties, which today develop more structured ideological platforms as part of the dynamic of the parliamentary system put in place in 2010, all project multiple several, sometimes conflicting, narratives on nationhood.⁶³ The state itself has become an object of competition among different groups and, parallel to this, nationhood features a range of offerings that are open to negotiation. This decentralization has also hit the places of narrative production with full force: academia has lost its uniformity but also its legitimacy—and with it probably its exclusive claim to teach history at schools—and many alternative actors are advancing their own agendas, claiming a right to participate in defining the nation.

Exploring the efforts to produce a narrative on nationhood in Kyrgyzstan thus opens the door to several broader theoretical debates, in particular concerning the growing overlap between consumers and producers. Similar to the world of social media, each person alternates between the roles of consumer and producer. This inherent, emerging plurality thus makes it possible to blur the boundary between orthodox and heterodox narratives, between science and para-science, and between the global and the local. The fashion for genealogical knowledge and local history, often mixed with broad statements about globalization and the need to know one's own roots, highlights this "glocalism" aspect of Kyrgyz public space. This decentralized, competitive production of rival discourses on nationhood gives many actors the impression of chaos, which echoes the fears related to endangered sovereignty.

Two components should be added to this discussion. First, this plurality of narratives is increasingly a Kyrgyz-speaking one. The gap between the rigidity of the Russian-speaking market on nationhood—mostly produced by the state, academia, and official institutions—and the lively and multifaceted Kyrgyz-speaking public space is growing. Second, a new actor has entered this race to produce a narrative on the nation, and it is Islam-related. The success of neo-fundamentalist piety movements such as the Tablighi Jamaat and other proselytizing groups in making Islamic components fashionable and respectable, and in producing new individual and collective identities, adds a supplementary, and probably decisive, element in the context of Kyrgyzstan's decentralized—and democratic—nationhood.

NOTES

1. See Erica Marat in this volume for the reframing of the civic/ethnic debate, and David Gullette and John Heathershaw for the discussion on sovereignty.
2. Morgan Y. Liu, *Under Solomon's Throne: Uzbek Visions of Renewal in Osh* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012); Nick Megoran, "Shared Space, Divided Space: Narrating Ethnic Histories of Osh," *Environment and Planning A* 45, no. 4 (2013): 892–907; Andrew R. Bond and Natalie R. Koch, "Interethnic Tensions in Kyrgyzstan: A Political Geographic Perspective," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 51, no. 4 (2010): 531–562.
3. David Gullette, *The Genealogical Construction of the Kyrgyz Republic: Kinship, State, and "Tribalism"* (Leiden: Global Oriental, Brill, 2010); Svetlana Jacqueson, "Power Play among the Kyrgyz: State versus Descent," in *Representing Power in Ancient Inner Asia: Legitimacy, Transmission, and the Sacred*, eds. Isabelle Charleux, Gregory Delaplace, and Roberte Hamayon (Bellingham, WA: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University, 2010), 221–244.
4. David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931–1956* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).
5. Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question* (New York: International Publishers, 1935), 8.
6. Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005). See also Arne Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics in Soviet Central Asia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
7. Jacob M. Landau and Barbara Kellner-Heinkele, *Politics of Language in the Ex-Soviet Muslim States* (London: Hurst, 2001). See also Ingebord Baldauf, *Schriftreform and Schriftwechsel bei den Muslimischen Russland- und Sowjettürken (1850–1937)* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiado, 1993).
8. "Sessiiia po etnogenezu Srednei Azii," *Sovetskaia etnografiia* 6–7 (Moscow: Akademiia nauk SSSR, 1947), 301. On the connection between ethnogenesis and Marrism, see Peter Skalnik, "N. Ia. Marr and the National Origins of Soviet Ethnogenetics," *Slavic Review* 55, no. 4 (1996): 826–862.
9. More in Marlene Laruelle, "The Concept of Ethnogenesis in Central Asia: Political Context and Institutional Mediators (1940–1950)," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, no. 1 (2008): 169–188.
10. V.F. Shakhmatov, "K voprosu ob etnogeneze kazakhskogo naroda," *Izvestiia Akademii nauk Kazakhskoi SSR*, no. 6 (1950): 81.
11. "Sessiiia po etnogenezu Srednei Azii."
12. G.F. Debets, ed., *Trudy kirgizskoi arkhologo-etnograficheskoi ekspeditsii*, no. 3 (Frunze: Akademiia nauk, 1959), 234.
13. Published in S.M. Abramzon, *Kirgizy i ikh etnogeneticheskie i istoriko-kul'turnye sviazi* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1971; republ., Frunze: Kyrgyzstan, 1990). In an

article in *Sovetskaya Kirgiziya* (February 28, 1973), the first secretary of the Kirgiz Communist Party, T.U. Usunbaliev, criticized the book for undervaluing the Russian contributions in the region and the changes experienced by the Kirgiz in the Soviet period. If Abramzon's study was not conciliatory enough on the question of the Russian "older brother" or the analysis of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the text did represent orthodox thinking on ethnogenetic matters and is still considered a standard reference work today.

14. Ernest Gellner, "Ethnicity and Anthropology in the Soviet Union," *European Journal of Sociology* 18, no. 2 (December 1977): 201–220.

15. Peter Skalnik, "Towards an Understanding of Soviet Ethnos Theory," *South African Journal of Ethnology* 9, no. 4 (1986): 157–166.

16. Valerii Tishkov, *Etnologiya i politika* (Moscow: Nauka, 2004): Tishkov, "The Phenomenon of Ethnicity in Russian Context," *V.A. Tishkov Blog*, accessed May 26, 2015, http://www.valerytishkov.ru/cntnt/publikacii3/knigi/the_mind_a1/the_phenom.html.

17. Gulette, *The Genealogical Construction of the Kyrgyz Republic*, 66–79.

18. Svetlana Jacquesson, "From Clan Narratives to Clan Politics," *Central Asian Survey* 31, no. 3 (2012): 277–292.

19. Marlene Laruelle, ongoing research

20. Asel Murzakulova and John Schoeberlein, "The Invention of Legitimacy. Struggles in Kyrgyzstan to Craft an Effective Nation-State Ideology," *Europe-Asia Studies* 61, no. 7 (2009): 1229–1248.

21. Baktygul Ismailova, "Curriculum Reform in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan: Indigenization of the History Curriculum," *Curriculum Journal* 15, no. 3 (November 2004): 247–264; Tyntchykbek Tchorev, "Historiography of Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no. 2 (2002): 351–374.

22. Ronald G. Suny, "Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations," *Journal of Modern History* 73, no. 4 (2001): 862–896.

23. Ronald G. Suny, "Provisional Stabilities: The Politics of Identities in Post-Soviet Eurasia," *International Security* 24, no. 3 (1999–2000): 139–178.

24. Erica Marat, "National Ideology and Statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan," *Silk Road Papers* (Washington, DC: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 2008), 38.

25. This 2,200 years figure is based on ancient Chinese sources stating the existence of a Kyrgyz state in 200 BC.

26. A. Kakeyev and V. Ploskikh, *Istoriia Kyrgyzov Kyrgyzstana* (Bishkek, 2003).

27. Damira Umetbayeva, "Official Rhetoric and Individual Perceptions of the Soviet Past: Implications for Nation Building in Kyrgyzstan," *Central Asian Affairs* 2, no. 3 (2015): forthcoming; See also Ismailova, "Curriculum Reform in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan"; Tchorev, "Historiography of Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan."

28. Remi Dor, "L'épopée centrasiatique: Manas, le fils de la montagne," in *Clats d'empires. Asie Centrale, Caucase, Afghanistan* [Pieces of Empires. Central Asia, Caucasus, Afghanistan], eds. Marlene Laruelle and Sebastien Peyrouse (Paris: Fayard-CERI, 2013), 379–384.

29. "147 Thousand Pilgrims Visit Manas Ordo National Complex in 2014," *CA-News*, February 5, 2015, accessed May 26, 2015, <http://dem.kg/en/article/12284/147-thousand-pilgrims-visit-manas-or-do-national-complex-in-2014>.

30. A. Akaev, *Kyrgyzskaia gosudarstvennost' i narodnyi epos "Manas"* (Bishkek: Uchkun, 2002), 280.
31. *Ibid.*, 282.
32. Heide van der Nienke, *Spirited Performance: The Manas Epic and Society in Kyrgyzstan* (Amsterdam: Rozenberg, 2008).
33. "V Kyrgyzstane zavershili rabotu nad akademicheskim izdaniem eposa Manasa, kotoroe dlilos' 20 let," *Kabar.kg*, August 28, 2014, accessed May 26, 2015, <http://www.kabar.kg/rus/science-and-culture/full/81700>.
34. "Manas," UNESCO website, accessed May 26, 2015, <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/?RL=00209>.
35. Gullette, *The Genealogical Construction of the Kyrgyz Republic*.
36. Umetbayeva, "Official Rhetoric and Individual Perceptions of the Soviet Past."
37. On the ambivalent place of the Soviet period in Central Asia's new historiographies, see among others, Marlene Laruelle, "Academia and the Rewriting of National Identity in Central Asia: The Soviet Union and Colonialism Issues," in *Central Eurasian Studies: Past, Present, and Future*, eds. H. Komatsu, S. Karasar, T. Dadabaev, and G. Kurmangaliyeva Ercilasun (Istanbul: Maltepe University, 2011), 215–224.
38. Jacquesson, "Power Play Among the Kyrgyz."
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*
41. Umetbayeva, "Official Rhetoric and Individual Perceptions of the Soviet Past."
42. More in Erica Marat's chapter in this volume, and Marlene Laruelle, "The Paradigm of Nationalism in Kyrgyzstan: Evolving Narrative, the Sovereignty Issue, and Political Agenda," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 45, no. 1–2 (2012): 39–49.
43. Laruelle, ongoing project.
44. Anna Matveeva, "Legitimising Central Asian Authoritarianism: Political Manipulation and Symbolic Power," *Europe-Asia Studies* 61, no. 7 (2009): 1095–1121.
45. "Kto v Kirgizii koziaini," *Easttime.ru*, June 30, 2008, accessed March 18, 2011, <http://www.easttime.ru/news/1/4/599.html>.
46. On that issue, see *Vechernii Bishkek*, February 21, 2006, accessed May 26, 2015, www.centrasia.org/newsA.php4?st=1140514860.
47. *Kontseptsiiia obshchenatsional'noi ideologii*. Madumarov was appointed secretary of the Security Council in 2008–2009.
48. V. Katargin, "Kirgizia dlia kirgizov? V respublike poiavilas' pervaiia partiia natsionaliticheskogo tolka," *Gazeta.kg*, August 29, 2005, accessed August 3, 2010, <http://gazeta.kg/article/2005-08-29>.
49. "V Oshe namechaetsia provedenie respublikanskogo kurultaia natsional'no-patrioticheskikh sil," *AkiPress*, April 13, 2007, accessed August 3, 2010, <http://fergana.akipress.org/news:23167/>. O. Khamidov, "Propishetsiya li kurultai 'patriotov' v Kirgizskoi konstitutsii?" *Centrasia*, April 18, 2007, accessed August 3, 2010, <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1176871380>.
50. "D. Sarygulov perechislil prichiny nyneshnogo krizisa v Kyrgyzstane," *AkiPress*, April 14, 2007, accessed August 3, 2010, <http://fergana.akipress.org/news:23175/>.

51. Alan J. DeYoung, ed., *Lost in Transition: Redefining Students and Universities in the Contemporary Kyrgyz Republic* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2011); Pinar Akçali and Cennet Engin-Demir, eds., *Politics, Identity, and Education in Central Asia: Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan* (London: Routledge, 2013).
52. Valerii Tishkov, *Rekviem po etnosu. Issledovaniia po sotsial'no-kul'turnoi antropologii* (Moscow: Nauka, 2003).
53. Laruelle, ongoing project.
54. Marlene Laruelle, "Conspiracy and Alternate History in Russia: A Nationalist Equation for Success?" *Russian Review* 71, no. 4 (2012): 565–580.
55. Akaev, *Kyrgyzskaia gosudarstvennost' i narodnyi epos "Manas,"* 15–16.
56. On Lev Gumilev, see Mark Bassin, "Narrating Kulikovo Gumilev, Russian Nationalists, and the Troubled Emergence of Neo-Eurasianism," in *Between Europe and Asia: The Origins, Theories and Legacies of Russian Eurasianism*, eds. Mark Bassin, Sergey Glebov, and Marlene Laruelle (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), and Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Press/Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 50–81.
57. More on Fomenko in Konstantin Sheiko and Stephen Brown, *Nationalist Imaginings on the Russian Past: Anatolii Fomenko and the Rise of Alternative History in Post-Communist Russia* (Stuttgart: Ibidem Verlag, 2009) and in Laruelle, "Conspiracy and Alternate History in Russia."
58. M. Adzhi, *My – iz roda Polovetskogo* (Moscow 1992); Adzhi, *Polyn' polovetskogo polia* (Moscow 1994); Adzhi, *Evropa, Turki, velikaia step'* (Moscow 1998).
59. Marlene Laruelle and Aurélie Biard, "'Tengrism' in Kyrgyzstan: In Search of New Religious and Political Legitimacy," in *Representing Power in Ancient Inner Asia: Legitimacy, Transmission and the Sacred*, eds. Isabelle Charleux, Gregory Delaplace, and Roberte Hamayon (Bellingham, WA: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University, 2010), 55–96.
60. Marlene Laruelle, "Religious Revival, Nationalism, and the 'Invention of Tradition': Political Tengrism in Central Asia and Tatarstan," *Central Asian Survey* 26, no. 2 (2007): 203–216.
61. Jacquesson, "From Clan Narratives to Clan Politics."
62. Roland Hardenberg, "Collective, Communicative, and Cultural Memories: Examples of Local Historiography from Northern Kyrgyzstan," *Central Asian Survey* 31, no. 3 (2012): 265–276.
63. See Shairbek Juraev in this volume, and Erica Marat, "Kyrgyzstan: A Parliamentary System Based on Inter-Elite Consensus?" *Demokratizatsiya* 20, no. 4 (2012): 325–344.