

---

# **Between Khans and Presidents. Anthropology of Politics in Post-Soviet Central Asia**

---

**Nikolay N. Kradin**

*Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnology,  
Far Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences,  
Far Eastern State Technical University in Vladivostok*

## **ABSTRACT**

*Political anthropology is important for understanding of political processes in modern societies which are on their way to the construction of the democratic system of government. Not taking into account the fact that the character of institutions of power and political processes in these societies is in many respects traditional (by Max Weber) and direct uncritical adoption of the Western liberal values can bring to the opposite and surprising results. The multiparty system can be expressed in the formation of the party structures on the clan-tribal or confessional basis and, then, in the large-scale interethnic or religious conflicts. The separation of powers can result in chaos and disorders (because the separation of powers is, in essence, not characteristic of traditional societies) and, next, in the establishment of the military junta and so on.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The political anthropology is traditionally considered to mean a part of anthropological science that studies institutions of power and control in the archaic and pre-industrial societies as well as modernization processes of traditional and post-traditional political structures (Balandier 1967; Claessen and Skalník 1981; Lewellen 1992; Abélès and Jeudy 1997; Gledhill 2000; Kradin 2001; Kurtz 2001; Skalník 2004; Bocharov 2007 etc.). As independent discipline, it has formed in the framework of the British structural functionalism in

early 1940s. After WWII, David Easton has attempted to formalize the political anthropology as the interdisciplinary line between the political science and anthropology (1959). However, political scientists were slightly interested in pre-history and anthropologists' interpretations contained much exotic. As a result, the politanthropology has remained within the framework of the science about human and culture.

Now, there are several different scientific schools: American neo-evolutionism, British and American structural functionalism, French structuralism. In the USSR the political anthropology was officially considered as the bourgeois science and servant of imperial colonialism. Really, many researchers were occupied with political anthropology. First of all, these are orientalists who studied the state origin and wrote about the Asiatic mode of production. In addition, there were researchers of Africa and Third World, Russian ethnologists and pre-historians, some archaeologists. Lev Kubbel' contributed much to the formation of political anthropology in the USSR. In 1988 he published the first book about this subject in Russian. In this paper the subject of this discipline, political culture of primitive, early-state and colonial societies are in detail analyzed and much attention is given to investigation of ideological mechanisms of power. As within the framework of Marxism it was considered that a politics is institution of the state, class society, the ethnographic discipline specializing in studying of pre-state structures could not have a word 'political' as a generic feature. As a result, the *potestary ethnography* (from Latin *potestas* – power) was obtained. Beginning from *perestroika*, a term *political anthropology* has gradually come into common use of the Russian scholars. This discipline has become the subject of teaching in some universities. The academic politanthropology also exists in post-Soviet Russia.

One can speak about two main tendencies of the development of this discipline in Russia. Major interests of the representatives of the first line concentrate around sociobiology of power (Butovskaya 2000; Dol'nik 1994), typology of early forms of leadership (Artemova 2000, 2003), multi-linear evolution of complex societies and state origin (Vasil'ev 1993; Berezkin 1995, 2000; Popov 1995; Bondarenko and Korotayev 2000; Kradin *et al.* 2000; Korotayev 2003; Grinin *et al.* 2004; Bondarenko 2006, 2007; Kradin

and Skrynnikova 2006; Korotayev *et al.* 2006; Grinin 2007; Grinin, Beliaev, and Korotayev 2008 *etc.*). The second tendency includes a study of transformation of traditional and post-traditional power into the modern political institutions. By the use of ethnographic (qualitative) methods, a politanthropologist can efficiently investigate the power and control mechanisms in modern societies. The book by Viktor Bocharov (1992) where the author, on the basis of the secondary sources, showed the modernization processes in Africa became one of the first works in this field. At present this field is related to the study of the post-traditional power, tribalism, patrimonialism, clan relations, ethnocultural factors of authoritarianism, ethnic conflicts in different regions of Russia and the other countries of the CIS (Bocharov 1995, 2007; Afanas'ev 1997; Tishkov 1997, 2000, 2004; Kradin 2000; Kadyrov 2004; Bannikov 2009; Lamazaa 2010 *etc.*).

In this publication I will touch upon contemporary political systems of the post-Soviet states of the Central Asia and will show that some social phenomena and institutions can be interpreted as a legacy of the traditional institutions of power. I argue that combining aspects of traditional societies with the direct and uncritical adoption of Western liberal values can produce surprising results that are the opposite of what was intended. The multiparty system can be expressed in the formation of party structures on a clan-tribal or confessional basis, and also may result in large-scale interethnic or religious conflicts. The system of reciprocity and gift economy can bring to bribes and corruptions. The separation of powers in democratic societies can result in chaos and disorder (because the separation of powers is, in essence, not characteristic of traditional societies).

## **THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

The political anthropology has accumulated a great experience of the problem solving in the traditional and colonial societies of Asia, Africa, America, and the Pacific. This experience shows that the traditional and bureaucratic (by Max Weber) patterns of domination are difficult to be compatible in practice. Democracy is the voluntary integration of independent individuals. In the post-traditional societies a man is a part of a single whole (tribe, clan, friendly association), hence, all of his activity is mediated by this

single whole. Such features identified by Weber as rationality, depersonalization, competence are not characteristic of them (in the more general context, of all non-western societies). In the course of time the anthropologists have understood that the support of the westernized youth, formal abolition of the traditional power institutions (it is characteristic of the states of socialist orientation) and an appointment of petty officers from residential population getting the European education did not mostly give a desired result. The former chiefs have reserved for themselves a high status while the appointees from the nonprivileged groups and, especially, from the strangers had, as a rule, no prestige (Cheng Tun-Yen and Womack 1996).

A pressure of the rational bureaucratism of colonizers resulted in a deformation and even, in some places, in a destruction of the traditional model of domination, its de-sacralization and establishment of the temporal *per se* system of power. In many former traditional societies (especially in Africa) the original dual political culture is established in which traditional forms of power are present in parallel with the official administration bodies. The particular interdependency is traced between the position of an individual in the party-state machinery and his status in the man's union or secret society. At that the advancement up in the hierarchy in one system is, as a rule, accompanied by the raising of a status in the another one; quite often the leaders of the traditional system of hierarchy not presented directly in the official political power have a profound impact on making the most important political decisions. Moreover as the parallel structures exert often a greater effect on their supporters than state, they influence directly on a character, forms and rate of the democratic evolution. Therefore, the perspectives of the stable democratization in Africa depend on whether the African governments will come to an agreement with these authoritative social forces about the mutually acceptable and able-bodied mechanism of the separation of powers and responsibility and fair distribution of material resources to the benefit of all (Owusu 1997: 147–148).

In a society with a strong clan and tribal relations, a scale of this phenomenon becomes really large. It is related to the fact that a bearer of power in a traditional society acts always not by himself but as a representative, leader of the particular group. He is appre-

hended as its centre, concentration of the sacred force and should share with it his power functions and privileges. Therefore, it is not surprising that, in the countries of the Third World and new independent states, the ruling elite is making efforts to displace everyone who is not related to the members of these groupings by blood, family, and other ties from the responsible posts.

Finally a non-coincidence of their administrative-territorial division and boundaries with territories of residence of traditional tribal structures is characteristic of the colonial and post-colonial societies often causes acute ethno-national and intergovernmental disputes (Balandier 1967: 188–189, 194). As recently colonial societies preserve their traditional tribal structure, party structures are often formed on the clan-tribal or confessional basis or as a tool of the personal influence of one or another leader. In this situation, there are often no political and ideological differences between the programs of different parties. Under such conditions, the elections to the representative bodies of power are based on tribal or confessional principles rather than on political programs. On the whole, all this produces instability of the ruling coalitions, they are often changed, there is an acute interfractional struggle and there is no political stability in the society. Any Asiatic state of the CIS can serve as an example of the anthropological analysis, where parties and movements arisen in the years of *perestroika* and after the USSR collapse have been established on the ethnic basis.

### **CLANS POLITICS IN CENTRAL ASIA**

At present, one can trace the influence of the local clan and clan-tribal groups both in every now independent Central Asiatic state of the CIS and in the multinational republics of Russia. This phenomenon in the Soviet anthropological thought was designated in different terms: *mestnichestvo*, *ulusizm* or *kumovstvo* (tribalism or tribal nationalism) and considered as a remnant of the clan-tribal or patriarchal-feudal order. The Soviet party functionaries faced it seriously after the establishment of the Soviet power on the whole territory of the country. After the political repressions of local clan's elites in the 1930s, this problem was temporarily forgotten although it persisted up to the present and the anthropologists' studies of the Soviet political system demonstrate its presence in Central Asia and the Caucasus. In the years of *perestroika*,

the publications on this subject appeared again in the mass media. It turns out that the question of the *ulusizm* as applied to the power problem remains to be as urgent as it was about seventy years ago (Masanov 1996; Amrekulov 2000; Dzhunushaliev and Ploskikh 2000; Kradin 2000, 2001; Collins 2004, 2006; Geiss 2004; Edgar 2004; Kadyrov 2004; Schatz 2004, 2005; Efegil 2006; Gullette 2006; Dzusupbekov 2009; Lamazaa 2010 etc.).

The protectionism with respect to the relatives is a particular aspect of the so-called personal relations in the pre-industrial, traditional society. In the industrial society, each person is presented as a detached individual while the relations between people take the form of the commodity-money ties. In the pre-industrial social systems each person appears as an element of any stable collective (community, clan, military-hierarchical organization *etc.*) and relations between people are personal rather than physical. It is the personal coercion and power as applied to the relations of inequality and domination.

The practice of personal relations is founded on the important theoretical grounds. According to Max Weber, in the traditional society,

the place of firm business competence is occupied by the competition of initially given by the master at a free discretion, then becoming long-term and, finally, stereotyped commissions and powers. They produce the competition for due chances for the payment of made efforts of both special messengers and masters themselves: owing to such interests, the business competences and, thereby, existence of departments are often constructed. All of special messengers having the long-term competence are, first of all, the court functionaries of the master; the competence *not* related to the court (extrapatrimonial) is given to them on the basis of a quite superficial business similarity of the activity field in their court service or on the basis of, mainly, quite arbitrary choice of the master (Weber 1922: 131–132).

Hence, all activity in the similar political structures is based on personal relations, personal devotion (one should remember the developments of the fall of 1998 – summer of 1999 with the permanent reshuffle of the government of the Russian Federation!).

This phenomenon has an extensive character in a society with the strong clan and tribal ties. This is related to the fact that a power bearer in a traditional society acts not by himself but as the representative and leader of a certain group. He is perceived as its centre, focal point of the sacred force and should share with it his imperious functions and privileges. It is not accidental that not a particular ruler but the whole of his lineage or clan has been considered as a holder of the 'Mandate of Heaven' for the ruling of one or another territory as it was in the empire of Chingghis Khan and his heirs (it is especially true with respect to Central Asiatic states). Therefore, it is not surprising that in the countries of the Third World and new independent states, the ruling elite is making efforts to remove all those who are not connected with members of these groupings by blood, family and other ties from the responsible posts.

The authoritative closeness of the manpower policy of the party-governmental nomenclature is favorable to such a removal. So, for example, a holding of the post of the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic by Geidar Aliyev resulted in the gradual removal of Akhundov's protégés and penetration to the republic's governing bodies of his countrymen from Nakhichevan. After Aliyev's movement to Moscow with a promotion, during the reign of Bagirov, a new rotation of cadres in Azerbaijan began. Similarly, the improvement of the party-governmental nomenclature was performed, for example, in the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic during the reign of Rashidov.

Sometimes the information of the clan character of the government bodies in the republics of Central Asia and the Transcaucasia infiltrated to the press bodies. In 1973 in Georgia a change of the nomenclature elite occurred. In the official party newspaper (*Zarya Vostoka*, February 28, 1973) information of the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia taken place on that occasion was published the following:

The favoritism, regionalism, *zemlyachestvo* (friendly association of persons coming from the same area), place-hunting prosper owing to kindred ties and corruption... wives and members of the family begin to substitute their husbands of high standing in the post and the state problems begin to be solved in the narrow kindred, family and friendly circles.

The officials were commissioned basing on patronage, pulling strings, kindred ties, and on the principle of personal devotion rather than on their professional and moral qualities. Sometimes the unworthy persons were appointed to the top posts by recommendations of come-and-go people. The words 'master said so', 'master wishes so' sounded more often. In a number of cases, contrivers, bribe-takers, blackmailers were able to take the governing posts by means of deceit. Among the leading employees a quite adverse opinion about undesirability to air dirty linen in public was cultivated. The facts of bribe-taking and thefts were kept secret. It is not difficult to understand what kept back in reality the official jargon of the standard newspaper formulations of those days adjusted by advisers and censors.

At present, in every nowadays independent state of the Central Asia region the influence of local clan and clan-tribal groups remains in a local tradition.

### **KAZAKHSTAN EXAMPLE**

The questions of the Kazakhstan's political structure are more studied. In the ethnic self-consciousness of Kazakhs, four levels are identified: 1) ethnic-national, 2) *zhuz* (tribal or chiefdom confederation), 3) clan-tribal, 4) territorial independently of the ethnic belonging. Local (clan) structure is based on the *zhuz* genealogy (Great, Middle and Small Horde). The great *zhuz* traditionally roamed near the *Semirechye* (Seven Rivers of Central Asia). Middle *zhuz* occupied the East Kazakhstan territory. Small *zhuz* was located in the West Kazakhstan. However, the privileged clans – descendants of Chingghis Khan *tope* and descendants of saints *tozha* – were genealogically above any of *zhuzes* (Naumova 1991; Khazanov 1995; Masanov 1996; Smagambetova 1998).

The northern Kazakhs, as a rule, know the name of their *zhuz* and tribal group of the lower taxonomic level. In the south this information is of more essential significance because an individual's status and financial position depends on this (especially, under conditions of socialist deficit). The elder generation tries even to be consistent with exogamy. The clan division could be traced in funeral ceremonial rites as when carrying out the burial, the family of the deceased should give presents to the patriarchs of all clan groups residing in the settlement in question (Naumova 1991).



A well-known Kazakhstan anthropologist and the leader of political opposition Nurbulat Masanov in detail considered the history of the struggle between the clan groupings of Kazakhstan in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (1996). It was the first publication about post-Soviet clan systems in anthropology. In Soviet times, in spite of the cruel Stalin's repressions, the representatives of the Middle *zhuz* predominated over a long period of time in the Kazakh intellectual elite: in art, science (many academicians and even the Presidents of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic) and, partly, in the party-state machinery. Since the 1960s the leading positions were caught by the Elder *zhuz*. Its first famous promoted worker was the main Kazakh poet Dzhambul. Kunayev holding this post from 1962 to 1986 came from the Elder *zhuz*. Making use of personal contacts and patronage of Leonid Brezhnev, Kunayev gradually appointed his fellow-tribesmen and relatives to many key posts. His cadet became the President of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic. It was during his reign that Nursultan Nazarbayev started his career. In the years of Kunayev's reign, Kazakhs on the whole were recruited in the party-state machinery of all levels. By 1989 they made up 51 % of the administrative personnel but only 3 % qualified and 11.3 % unqualified workers in the Republic. But by 1994 the disproportion reached even greater quantities. A share of Kazakhs in the President's administration and ministry reached 74 %. The disproportion between Kazakhs and Russians in favor of the formers was present even in the local administrations of the northern areas where a share of Russians is traditionally higher. This tendency continues to grow. Only the elections to the Supreme Soviet reflect approximately a real ratio of the number between the nations and ethnic groups (Galiev *et al.* 1994: 43–44, 47–51; Khazanov 1995: 159–160).

The younger *zhuz* traditionally played the secondary part. Thereby, it differed in the higher corporative solidarity. During the reign of Yury Andropov, he possibly considered the promoted workers as the competitors to Brezhnev's party elite and appointed them to a number of the key posts. However, Andropov's quick death and restoration of Brezhnev's system were a drag on this process.

In the years of *perestroika* the rivalry between *zhuzes* recommenced. Having found himself under difficult circumstances M. S. Gorbachev decided to send to Kazakhstan a man from the outside – Kolbin who was at that time the First Secretary of the Ulyanovsky regional committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. However, this resulted in spontaneous disorders in December, 1986. Since Kolbin, in Masanov's opinion, mainly considered his armchair as a jumping-off place for the following career in the metropolis, the coming of Kunayev's protégé N. Nazarbayev was a matter of technique (Masanov 1996).

In 1989 Nazarbayev's time came. Having come to power, he pensioned off all his former and potential competitors, approved a monopoly of power of the Elder *zhuz* and, after the Soviet Union collapse, consolidated even more his clan positions appointing to different state posts his nearest relatives. This phenomenon reached such a scale that a new term – *chemolganization* of power structures (the village of Chemolgan is Nazarbayev's homeland) appeared in the press. It was not also accidental that just Akmola and Karaganda, to which Nazarbayev's childhood and youth were related, trusted him to a greater extent than other regions of Kazakhstan.

Nevertheless, an invisible for outside observers clan struggle continues to this very day. The expert inquiry carried out by the Institute of Kazakhstan development showed that 29 % respondents believe that the *zhuz* and clan belonging plays a significant part in the distribution of privileges, posts and offices (Smagambetova 1998: 23). Once the members of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences (as noted above, this niche was traditionally occupied by the representatives of the Middle *zhuz*) rejected the Nazarbayev's protégé Dzholdasbekov and elected the candidate of their clan economist Sagadiyev, the destiny of the Academy was predetermined. The Academy was reorganized into the Ministry where all of the highest posts were distributed from the top.

Just the confrontation of *zhuzes* and backstairs, in Masanov's opinion (1996), or, rather, a dread of joining up into the opposition of the Middle and Younger *zhuzes* predetermined the abolition of the presidential election, prolongation of Nazarbayev's authorities as well as a transfer of the metropolis to Akmola. As the ethnic peace in Kazakhstan is very delicate and exists mainly due to rela-

tive equilibrium between two major ethnic groups, a transfer of the metropolis to the north, according to the plan of the ruling elite, should contribute to the growth of migration from the south and increase in a share of Kazakh population within the northern regions and, in that way, consolidation of the national state system. On the other hand, a movement of all key power mechanisms to then territory of the traditional residence of the Middle *zhuz* should additionally weaken the opposition to the today's president's power.

But such a situation exists not only in the nowadays independent countries of the CIS. In the above-mentioned Kalmykia, about 85 % of townsmen and more than 90 % of rural population identify themselves with one or another tribal group. The struggle for power is carried between three major tribal groupings: Torgut and Derbent ones (the origins of the confrontation of which are rooted to the double-ternary wing system) as well as Buzavsk group which is more young and consists of the descendants of the Don Kalmyks. The similar processes are traced, for example, in Tuva as well as in many multinational subjects of the Russian Federation.

### **GIFT AND BRIBE ECONOMY**

Many mechanisms and standards of the political behavior peculiar to the traditional societies also continue to function today. The descriptions of the bribery, corruption, protectionism are widely known in the post-colonial and post-traditional societies. It is not unreasonable to give one of the demonstrative examples fixed by the Russian anthropologists in the Mountain Kirghizia in the mid-1920s.

The whole way of life makes easier and, to a certain extent, provokes the bribery. One should start with the fact that the 'presents' are given to all who come to the nomads' camp or winter camp... An honorary visitor (it should be noted that a chief is always an honorary visitor) was given victuals of all kinds, horses for movement, foodstuffs for the journey and all of this is free of charge, in view of hospitality. To take money from a visitor is considered to be an exaction; being on the move within the mountain country, a 'chief' pays nothing: he eats, drinks and takes foodstuffs in the living form (sheep) for the journey free of charge... There are many heads in the Mountain Kirghizia. Not only militiaman is a head. The heads are a secretary of the Komsomol cell and secre-

tary of the Party cell, any instructor, investigator and judge, forest ranger etc. All of them should be given 'soish', it is necessary to entertain and give present to all of them. Finally, the very 'soish' has transformed into the special kind of tax which is in random way paid by population in view of different fortuities (Kushner 1929: 102–103).

Construing this brilliant sketch from the life of mountain Kirghizs, it is necessary to understand that the phenomena described are characterized by somewhat different matter as compared with the modern ones. So called bribe goes back to the institutions of the redistribution and exchange of gifts in pre-industrial communities. It is not only and not so much as the 'reward for the fulfillment of particular actions in the interests of a briber', in the modern juridical interpretation, but also as a certain obligatory (resulting from the custom, tradition), symbolic-communicative act of behavior. Without it, the following establishment and maintenance of relationships between the parties seems to be impossible. The cases are known when the functionaries of local level in the Third World countries refused to take gifts from petitioners, did not give preference to relatives in the redistribution of statuses, resources or any other services in an attempt to conform to the liberal standards of the Western civilization. This has provoked a condemnation of not only their congeners but also other persons as it violated the ordinary norms.

It is known from the ethnographic descriptions that there were customs to give presents to chiefs and elders for intermediary functions in the settling of conflicts in many traditional societies of Africa, Asia and Oceania. The superpower in new independent states of Africa quite often attempted to abolish this practice with the assumption that the functionaries should work for people and should not have the self-profit as their object. However, the ordinary members of communities insisted on reservation of the former customs (to the extent of the appeal to the superior bodies) motivating this by that the success of the peacemaking action directly depended on the taking of a gift by the intermediary. In such a situation the Tanzanian political leaders made, for example, a peculiar compromise. They permitted to give to intermediaries the symbolic presents: office supplies, national flags etc.

These archaic principles of the prestigious economy became a fertile field for a bloom of bribe-taking in Central Asia and Transcaucasia republics in Soviet times. Here, so-called *baksheesh* flourished on a grand scale. According to the data cited in the closed report of G. Aliyev at the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist Party in 1970, the cost of post of a district public prosecutor in this union republic was 30 thousand rubles (cf. the price of the best car was 9000 rubles at that period). In order to hold the post of the chief of the district department of militia, it was necessary to pay slightly more – 50 thousand rubles. In comparison, it should be indicated that an official monthly salary of a public prosecutor amounted 150–180 rubles while that of the chief was 200–250 rubles. The prices of the Party armchairs were much more expensive. The position of the first secretary of district committee cost 200 thousand rubles while that of the second secretary ‘only’ 100 thousand rubles. The profitable post of the head of the institute of higher education could be also bought for 200 thousand rubles while the post of the minister of trade cost by 50 thousand rubles more (Voslensky 1991: 280–284).

Azerbaijan was no exception to the rule. In Georgia the minister posts cost from 100 to 300 thousand rubles. However, a competition here was more intense and, according to Voslensky, changed into a ‘peculiar auction’ (*Ibid.*: 284–285).

All the above said is, in full measure, applicable to both the past (Orlova 1999) and the present state of Russia (may be, at a large scale) where bribe-taking and corruption of functionaries have reached huge scales which is confirmed by intuitive feelings as well as sociological inquiries of people being confronted with such phenomena in their activity. According to some assessments, about 70 % of Russian functionaries accept bribes (Glinkina 2000).

The presents-bribes in the traditional and present-day societies are closely related to mass holidays. The most scaled of ritual holidays are mediated by different important events in the human or community life (wedding, funeral etc.). The higher the man status and his material prosperity are, the more splendid an associated festival should be. In the communities with strong traditional way of life this phenomenon takes especially grandiose character. Poor men make efforts to save their faces and to show that their position is not worse than that of the others. The rich men try to obscure

with the pomp the people of equal status rather than their neighbors. It enhances their prestige further in opinion of their relatives and countrymen. Some years ago several functionaries of higher rank in Uzbekistan lost their posts for 'demonstrated immodesty and vainglory, pomposity and squandering when celebrating a wedding' (*Pravda Vostoka*, October 22, 1998). In a week another presidential decree was published in the same newspaper in which the anxiety was expressed in connection with the intensifying of gift exchange rituals.

Currently in many locations of our country, when carrying out weddings, family festivities, funeral rituals, arrangements devoted to memory of the diseased, such vestiges of the past as vainglory, pomposity, excessive extravagance, neglect of people's traditions, dandyism, neglect of needs of people living around are allowed (*Ibid.*).

Unlikely, the situation presented differs markedly from the state of affairs in other Central Asia republics of the CIS and in the multinational republics of Russia. I observe time and again the similar customs among the Buryats. One can also consider that these phenomena are widely present in many post-traditional states of Asia and Africa.

### **NON-SEPARATION / SACRALIZATION OF POWER**

Thus a distortion of the primordial aim of modernization is also demonstrated by the results of the direct introduction of the western liberal-democratic institutions to the traditional societies. The multi-party system, parliamentarism, separation of different power branches etc. – all of this causes, quite often, the inverse results, very undesirable from the viewpoint of the democratization task. An experience of the politico-anthropological studies reveals that the party structures in the post-traditional societies are, quite often, formed on the clan-tribal or confessional basis or as a tool of the personal influence of one or another leader. Under such conditions the elections to the representative power bodies are, as a rule, based on the tribal or religious principles rather than on the political programs. As a result, many people are induced to participate in tribal, interethnic and interconfessional conflicts, which results in the instability of the ruling coalitions and in the absence of political stability. All this causes the crises and political revolution.

The developments in Chechnya in the last ten years also can serve as an illustration of this.

In the present state of affairs, the power sees, quite often, that the only way to keep stability lies in the establishment of the authoritarian – one-party, military – regimes. It is not accidental that practically all states appearing on the territory of the Asiatic part of the CIS are characterized by the autocratic nature of power. It is true that another feature of the traditional power must be kept in mind. The separation of powers is an institution that gone through a long evolution and, one might say, endured by Europe in the course of many rebellions and revolutions. In principle, the similar phenomenon is not characteristic of the archaic and traditional societies. The ruler of traditional society is the only bearer of the sacral status and all other independent branches of power are automatically taken as the undesired competitors not only by the ruler himself but also by most people. Therefore, in the post-traditional societies a political leader of a charismatic type invested with nearly plenary powers is, quite often, the governing body of both country and party.

The tendency to the sacralization of the state ruler appears. The most striking example is the cult of personality of the Turkmenistan President Niyazov (he died on December 21, 2006). His birthday (February 19) was declared as the national holiday. During the first month of a year more than a hundred of different objects including the former Krasnovodsky Bay (Caspian Sea), the Academy of the agricultural sciences, ships, many streets, kolkhozes and sovkhozes and, what is very symbolic, former Lenin avenue and Leninsky administrative district in Ashkhabad were renamed after his name. The portraits and busts of Turkmenbashi stood out in all official and public places. One needed to turn over the pages of republic's newspapers to make sure that they were crammed with slogans: 'Turkmenbashi is our strength', 'Turkmenbashi is our wisdom', 'Turkmenbashi is our hope'.

There were composed legends about Turkmenbashi. According to one of them he, similar to the archaic chiefs, was able, at the time of the official meeting with the President of the USA which was held outdoors, to disperse black clouds and to prevent rain. Moreover, the text of the daily morning appeal of announcers of the Turkmenian state television and radio broadcasting stations to

the people is impressive (now all codes of Turkmenbashi cult of personality are cancelled – *N. K.*):

Allah, bless our chief. Keep his life for a long period of time and give support in all his undertakings... Turkmenistan is my fatherland and if I do damage to my homeland, let my hands dry out, if I talk anything bad about my President, let my tongue fail me and if I am false to my fatherland, let my being stop.

The semantics of this appeal is evident and does not require expanded comments. If in the rational state, the use of sanctions is based on the legal violence, then, in the traditional community the power has a sacred character; an infringement of the established norms causes the disequilibrium between the people world and world of supernatural forces, intervention of gods and wicked spirits in people's affairs.

From the above reasoning, it is clear why most countries of the CIS followed the analogous path of political transformation. The events in them developed according to the scenario of the same type: dissolution of the legislative bodies, enactment of the constitutions extending the powers of the President, gentle terror with respect to the opposition and independent mass media communication.

Let us illustrate the above said using several examples. In 1993 in Kazakhstan a certain confrontation between the legislative and executive powers came into existence. However, in contrast to Russia, where the analogous confrontation took the form of armed conflict, here the main threads of the political game were always in the President's hands. In spite of unwillingness of the Supreme Soviet to self-destruct, the enterprising group involving the 'approved' deputies was established and began to agitate for the self-dismissal within the parliament. In December the parliament ceased to exist. Under the new constitution of Kazakhstan of 1995, the legislative and judicial authorities were under the executive one (the President appointed judges, the Constitution Court was liquidated etc.), in 1995 the referendum in Kazakhstan prolonged Nazarbayev's presidential authorities to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (this phenomenon received the name *bashism* after Turkmenbashi Niyazov being the first who began the campaign concerning the prolongation of authorities of leaders of the Central Asiatic states of the CIS to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century).



The most unitary form of the state structure was in Turkmenistan in the period of the Turkmenbashi's rule. In 1992 a six-year moratorium on the multi-party system was proclaimed. President Niyazov was the supreme official in the state being out of control of the legislative power. All the levers of the executive power were concentrated in his hands, he appointed and dismissed the Prosecutor-General, Chairmen of the Supreme and Superior Economical Courts. The President was entitled to dissolve the People's Assembly (the country's parliament) if the latter gave a vote of non-confidence to the government appointed by the President. Nominally, the country was the republic with the presidential form of government. But its head had actually unlimited authorities. The regime of Turkmenbashi fantastically combined the features of both savage and patriarchal rule and it resembled more and more the rule of the traditional oriental monarch using, nevertheless, some modern techniques of power. The party structure was absolutely undeveloped, the press was semi-official and frankly mercenary. Any criticism of the power was excluded, opposition was crushed and expelled (Kadyrov 2004).

The Russian variant differs from the Central Asian states of the CIS only in a single respect. There were no clans, but a personal patrimonial political system. If the usurpation of the power in the above-listed countries was amicably achieved, President Yeltsin needed tanks and armored troop-carriers in October 1993. However, on the whole, the mechanism of transformational processes was practically the same. The monstrous swelling of the state machinery, adoption of the Constitution in 1993 in which the President was granted the right to control the judicial authority and dismiss the legislative bodies and introduction of the institution of the Governor-Generals were also characteristic of Russia. After Boris Yeltsin's resignation, some balance between the democratic ideals of the first President of Russia and his inconsequent policy based on the former experience of the Party leader was broken. Putin followed other principles of the rule. The tendency to the power hierarchy and abolition of appointment by election of the heads of different levels became even stronger. In fact, the local government – one of the bases of any democracy – disappeared. The changes which consolidated legislatively the right of the power to intervene in affairs of individual regions and to dissolve local parliaments were introduced into the Constitution. Similarly, the transformation of Russia occurs also at the local level. The main components of these processes are the all-embracing role of the patrimonial power

and the lack of development of personality and civil society. All the above testifies against that on the most part of the former Soviet Union the rational system of power was formed.

## CONCLUSION

All the above said suggests that the developed democratic political system in the independent Central Asia states of the former USSR as well as in the most part of this territory was not created, its key components such as the emancipation of the individualized political individual, the stable multiparty system, the independent mass media etc. were not developed. The authorities, as a rule, are very suspicious in respect of independent mass media, prefer to act in the atmosphere of closeness. They use different methods to put pressure upon the press, attempt to achieve the state monopoly of the tele- and broadcasting and even to control the Internet.

There is a large quantity of small parties and associations established for solving any situation or problem. The overwhelming majority of already existing parties (may be, except for communist ones) were established as a tool of the personal influence of one or another leader, while in the multinational regions, the parties and movements are established on the ethnic sign. Quite often it is the only difference between parties (even names and programs can be very similar). In the politics and power structures, the patron-client relations predominate.

Most political forces are unwilling to observe the democratic rules of play accepted in the West. The elected presidents (not only they but also heads of all ranks) as well as subordinate functionaries try to get out of any restrictions of their personal power, dispose hard of the legal opposition. However, the latter coming to the power acts in the same way. Too much in the political culture of the CIS countries belongs to the past and is related to the traditional system of power and rule.

From this point of view, it is clear why the majority of the CIS countries have not become democratic after a period of twenty years traversing, in the process, similar path of political transformation accompanied by dissolution of legislative authorities, adoption of new constitutions expanding the president's authorities, velvet terror in relation to opposition and independent mass-media. In the political life the informal, clan, patron-client or personal relations predominate. All this suggests that the political anthropology is not only of academic importance but also can be useful in studying modern regimes.

## REFERENCES

- Abélès, M., and Jeudy, H.-P. (eds.)  
1997. *Antropologie du politique*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- Afanas'ev, M. N.  
1997. *Klientizm i rossiiskaya gosudarstvennost'* [Clientele and Russian State]. Moscow: MONF.
- Amrekulov, N.  
2000. Zhuzes and Kazakhstan's Social and Political Development. *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 3: 131–146.
- Artemova, O. Yu.  
2000. Initial Phases of Politogenesis. In Bondarenko and Korotayev 2000: 54–70.  
2003. Monopolization of Knowledge, Social Inequality, and Female Status: A Cross-Cultural Study. *Cross-Cultural Research* 37(1): 62–80.
- Balandier, G.  
1967. *Anthropologie politique*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Bannikov, K. L.  
2009. *Printsipy kul'turogeneza v rezhimnykh soobshchestvakh. Sotsial'no-antropologicheskii analiz rossiiskoy armii vtoroy poloviny 20 veka* [Principles of Culturogenesis in Regime Institutions: Socio-Anthropological Analysis of the Russian Army in the Second Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century]. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Moscow: Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences.
- Berezkin, Yu. E.  
1995. Alternative Models of the Middle Range Society. 'Individualistic' Asia vs. 'Collectivistic' America? In Kradin, N. N., and Lynsha, V. A. (eds.), *Alternative Pathways to Early State* (pp. 75–92). Vladivostok: Dal'nauka.  
2000. Once Again on Horizontal and Vertical Links in Structure of the Middle Range Societies. In Kradin *et al.* 2000: 220–224.
- Bocharov, V. V.  
1992. *Vlast'. Traditsii. Upravlenie* [Power. Traditions. Administration]. Moscow: Nauka.  
1995 (ed.). *Eticheskije aspekty vlasti* [Ethnic Aspects of Authority]. Saint-Petersburg: Yazykovoy Tsentr.  
2007 (ed.). *Antropologiya vlasti. Khrestomatiya po politicheskoy antropologii* [Anthropology of Power. Reader in Political Anthropology]. Saint-Petersburg: Saint-Petersburg University Press.
- Bondarenko, D. M.  
2006. *Homoarchy: A Principle of Culture's Organization. The 13<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries Benin Kingdom as a Non-State Supercomplex Society*. Moscow: KomKniga.  
2007. Homoarchy as a Principle of Sociopolitical Organization. *Anthropos* 102: 187–199.

- Bondarenko, D. M., and Korotayev, A. V. (eds.)  
2000. *Civilizational Models of Politogenesis*. Moscow: Center for Civilizational and Regional Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences.
- Butovskaya, M. L.  
2000. Biosocial Preconditions for Socio-Political Alternativity. In Bondarenko and Korotayev 2000: 35–53.
- Cheng, Tun-Yen, and Womack, B.  
1996. General Reflection on Informal Politics in East Asia. *Asian Survey* 36: 320–337.
- Claessen, H. J. M., and Skalnik, P. (eds.)  
1981. *The Study of the State*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Collins, K.  
2004. The Logic of Clan Politics: Evidence from the Central Asian Trajectories. *World Politics* 56(2): 224–261.  
2006. *Clan Politics and Regime Transition in Central Asia*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Dol'nik, V.  
1994. Estestvennaya istoriya vlasti [Natural History of Power]. *Znanie – Sila* 10: 12–21; 11: 36–45.
- Dzhunushaliev, Dz., and Ploskikh, V.  
2000. Tribalism and Nation Building in Kyrgyzstan. *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 3: 115–123.
- Dzusupbekov, A. K.  
2009. *Etnicheskaya identichnost' nomadov* [Ethnic Identity of the Nomads]. Bishkek: Ilim.
- Easton, D.  
1959. Political Anthropology. *Biennial Review of Anthropology* 1: 210–262.
- Edgar, A. L.  
2004. *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan*. Princeton – Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Efegil, E.  
2006. Authoritarian/Constitutional-Patronage Regimes in Central Asia. *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 5: 107–115.
- Galiev, A. B. et al.  
1994. *Mezhnatsional'nye otnosheniya v Kazakhstane: Etnicheskie aspekty kadrovoy politiki* [International Relations in Kazakhstan: Ethnic Aspects of Rulers Polity]. Alma-Ata.
- Geiss, P. G.  
2004. Regionalismus und Staatlichkeit in Turkmenistan. *Welt Trends* 12(45): 25–37.

Gledhill, J.

2000. *Power and its Disguises: Anthropological Perspectives on Politics*. London etc.: Pluto Press.

Glinkina, S. P.

2000. Korruptsiya v Rossii: Prichiny, masshtaby, kachestvennye izmeneniya [Corruption in Russia: The Reasons, Scales, Qualitative Changes]. *Vostok* 1: 75–83.

Glukhov, I.

1928. *Ot patriarkhal'nosti k sotsializmu* [From Patriarchy to Socialism]. Astrakhan.

Grinin, L. E.

2007. *Gosudarstvo i istoricheskiy protsess* [State and Historical Process]. Vols 1–3. Moscow: URSS.

Grinin, L. E., Beliaev, D. D., and Korotayev, A. V. (eds.)

2008. *Hierarchy and Power in the History of Civilizations: Ancient and Medieval Cultures*. Moscow: URSS.

Grinin, L. E., Carneiro, R. L., Bondarenko, D. M., Kradin, N. N., and Korotayev, A. V. (eds.)

2004. *The Early State, Its Alternatives and Analogues*. Volgograd: Uchitel.

Gullette, D.

2006. *Kinship, State, and 'Tribalism': The Genealogical Construction of the Kyrgyz Republic*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Cambridge: University of Cambridge.

2010. *The Genealogical Construction of the Kyrgyz Republic: Kinship, State and Tribalism*. Cambridge: Global Oriental.

Kadyrov, Sh.

2004. *Tribalism v Turkmenistane. Stanovlenie i evolutsiya etnopoliticheskoy organisatsii turkmen* [Tribalism in Turkmenistan. Formation and Evolution of the Ethnopolitical Organization among the Turkmen]. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Moscow: Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Khazanov, A. M.

1995. *After the USSR: Ethnicity, Nationalism and Politics in the Commonwealth of Independent States*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Korotayev, A. V.

2003. *Sotsial'naya evolutsiya: Factory, zakonmernosti, tendentsii* [Social Evolution: Factors, Patterns, Tendencies]. Moscow: Vostochnaya literatura.

Korotayev, A., Malkov, A., and Khalturina, D.

2006. *Introduction to Social Macrodynamics. Secular Cycles and Millennial Trends*. Moscow: KomKniga.

Kradin, N. N.

1997. Predmet i zadachi politicheskoy antropologii [The Subject and Tasks of Political Anthropology]. *Polis* 5: 146–157.

2000. Elementy traditsionnoy vlasti v postsovetskoy politicheskoy kulture: Antropologicheskii podkhod [The Elements of Traditional Power in Post-Soviet Political Culture: Anthropological Approach]. In Shestopal, E. B. (ed.), *Obrazy vlasti v politicheskoy kul'ture Rossii* [The Image of Power in the Political Culture of Russia] (pp. 51–73). Moscow: MONF.

2001. *Politicheskaya antropologiya* [Political Anthropology]. Moscow: Lodomir (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Moscow: Logos, 2004).

Kradin, N. N., Korotayev, A. V., Bondarenko, D. M., de Munck, V., and Wason, P. K. (eds.)

2000. *Alternatives of Social Evolution*. Vladivostok: Far Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Kradin, N. N., and Skrynnikova, T. D.

2006. *Imperiya Chingis-Khana* [The Genghis Khan Empire]. Moscow: Vostochnaya literatura RAN.

Kubbel', L. E.

1988. *Ocherki potestarno-politicheskoy etnografii* [Essays in Potestary-Political Ethnography]. Moscow: Nauka.

Kurtz, D.

2001. *Political Anthropology: Paradigms and Power*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Kushner, P. I.

1929. *Gornaya Kirgiziya. Sotsiologicheskaya razvedka* [Mountain Kirghizia (Sociological Investigation)]. Moscow.

Lamazaa, Ch. K.

2010. *Klanovost' v politike regionov Rossii. Tuvinskie praviteli* [Clan System in Regional Policy of Russia. Rulers of Tuva]. Saint-Petersburg: Aleteya.

Lewellen, T. C.

1992. *Political Anthropology: An Introduction*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Masanov, N. E.

1996. Kazakhstanskaya politicheskaya i intellektualnaya elita: Klano-vaya prinadlezhnost' i vnurietnichskoe sopernichestvo [The Kazakhstan Political and Intellectual Elite: A Clan Belonging and Interethnic Rivalry]. *Vestnik Evrazii* 1: 46–61.

Naumova, O. B.

1991. *Sovremennye etnokul'turnye protsessy kazakhov v mnogonatsional'nykh rayonakh Kazakhstana* [Contemporary Ethnic and Cultural Processes in Multicultural Regions of Kazakhstan]. PhD thesis. Moscow: Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Orlova, G. A.

1999. Bjurokkraticheskaya realnost' [Bureaucratic Reality]. *Obschestvennye nauki i sovremennost'* 6: 96–106.

Owusu, M.

1997. Domesticating Democracy: Culture, Civil Society and Constitutionalism in Africa. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39: 120–152.

Popov, V. A.

1995 (ed). *Rannie formy politicheskoy organisatsii: Ot pervobytnosti k gosudarstvennosti* [Early Forms of Political Organization: From Prehistory to Statehood]. Moscow: Nauka.

*Pravda Vostoka*, 1998. October 22.

Schatz, E.

2004. *Modern Clan Politics. The Power of 'Blood' in Kazakhstan and Beyond*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

2005. Reconceptualizing Clans: Kinship Networks and Statehood in Kazakhstan. *Nationalities Papers* 33(2): 231–254.

Skalnik, P.

2004. Chiefdom: A Universal Political Formation? *Focaal* 43: 76–98.

Smagambetova, B. D.

1998. Rodoplemennoy factor v sisteme 'rukovoditel' – podchinenniy' [The Clan and Tribe Factors in System 'Boss – Subordinate']. *Sotsiologicheskie issledovniya* 3: 20–23.

Tishkov, V. A.

1997. *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame*. London etc.: Sage Publications.

2000. *Politicheskaya antropologiya* [Political Anthropology]. Lewiston etc.: The Edwin Mellen Press.

2004. *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society*. Berkeley – London: University of California Press.

Vasil'ev, L. S.

1993. *Istoriya Vostoka* [History of the Orient]. Vols 1–2. Moscow: Vysshaya shkola.

Voslensky, M.

1991. *Nomenklatura* [The Nomenclature]. Moscow: Sovetskaya Rossiya.

Weber, M.

1922. *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*. Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr (P. Siebeck).