A TALE OF TWO BLOODSHEDS: COMPARISON OF FRENCH REVOLUTION WITH KYRGYZSTAN’S “TULIP REVOLUTION”

Almaz Ibraev Orozakunovich, Ammar Younas

Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek;
1Eastern University named after Mahmud Kashgari Barskani, Rector;
2Eastern Center of Strategic Studies, Eastern University named after Mahmud Kashgari Barskani, Director

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ABSTRACT
Both the Kyrgyzstan’s Tulip Revolution and French Revolution were the outcomes of similar series of the events which lead to the bloodshed in both contexts. From political science point of view, regime change is considered as the actual product of an uprising, no matter even if the new regime is similar as of the previous one. It happened in the case of Kyrgyzstan. With such an ideological basis, it becomes clear when one sets out to compare the French Revolution and Kyrgyzstan Revolution that people feel the need to be free from oppressive or tyrannical rule of absolute rulers (no matter if they are monarchs, appointed or elected presidents) and have the ability to live independent from such forces. The leadership in both countries at the time of their revolutions was certainly repressive, especially in terms of corruption and nepotism. Both areas suffered social and economic hardships that led to the realization that something must be done to topple the hierarchy and put power back into the hands of the people. This is the extended abstract of the ongoing research project at the Eastern University named after Mahmud Kashgari Barskani Kyrgyzstan, where we are trying to reverse engineer the incidents happened before the French revolution and to study those patterns in the context of the Kyrgyzstan.

Introduction. Political demonstrations which lead to the violence including revolution can be compared with earthquakes. The tectonic plates under the earth surface are like social, political, economic and religious factors which can initiate big earthquakes of revolutions and civil wars. Geologists say that if we keep facing small and low intensity earthquakes with a regular interval of time, we can avoid a big single earthquake which can be more devastating. Today, political scientists are also agreeing on this fact that states should allow small revolts, protests, public demonstrations and conflicts on the name of freedom of expression, human rights and liberties to avoid a big revolution or a civil war. (1)

It happened that social and political events follow a logical and long-range pattern which can be generalized. If we see similar events through the prism of past events, things become more clear and explanatory. That is why; examining the patterns of past events like revolutions can help us anticipate events in current situations like understanding the resolutions and their consequences. French revolution has been compared with other resolutions like Russian and American revolutions and it is considered an igniting factor towards a stable democracy. A comparative chronological study of French and Kyrgyz resolutions can be a great contribution to the literature as well as can help in concluding factors which can be imported in Kyrgyzstan for its road to a stable democracy.

Problem Statement. In Russia and the West, the scholarly and journalistic communities have been reluctant to accord the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan the same status as the earlier revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine. Commentators point to the absence in Kyrgyzstan of a single leader who could personify the opposition, such as a Saakashvili or a Yushchenko. They also argue that popular protests in Kyrgyzstan were less disciplined and organized than those in Georgia and Ukraine. Yet, in most respects, the overthrow of the regime in Bishkek closely followed the pattern established in Tbilisi and Kiev. (2)

No one ever tried to compare Kyrgyz Revolutions with the French Revolution. According to a more realistic approach, both revolutions have emerged from a common background imbedded in the feeling of the ordinary populaces. People can bear hunger, but they cannot bear humiliation. French rulers were humiliating them. When a mob arrived at the door of palace and demanded their rights, queen asked that what they were demanding. Some of her officials said that they are demanding bread.
The queen replied that why don’t they eat cake? As for her understanding, cake was something easily available to the people. In the response of a similar question, the French general replied that if people want to eat something, we have a lot of grass. These are some of the incidents which clearly show that how the ordinary populaces were being humiliated by the rulers. On the other hand, Britishers were the rivals to the French and Britishers were as poor as of French but they didn’t think about the revolution. Because of the simple reason that British monarch were not humiliating their people and were trying to handle the situation diplomatically.

Same happened in the case of Kyrgyzstanz. The ruling elite was considered as humiliating the ordinary people. It was not possible for the people to take more of corruption and nepotism. A single spark was enough to trigger the revolution.

But before all these temporal political discussions, it would be better to investigate the following questions like: What were the forces leading to these both revolution? Factors escalating Kyrgyz revolution, are they similar as of French Revolution? What were early and crisis stages of Kyrgyz Revolution which can be compared with French Revolution? Was there a Conservative reternchment and the dictator stage in Kyrgyz Revolution which can be compared with the French Revolution? And finally, but most important is that what were the factors after the French revolution which contributed towards a gradual evolution toward stable economy & democracy? And are there techniques and tricks learned from French experience can be implemented in Kyrgyzstan?

Objectives. After comparing French Revolution with Kyrgyz Revolution, the long-term goal of the research is to develop a formalized model for understanding the transition of democracies after the revolutions. Besides French revolution, when world of mouth was the only reliable media, Kyrgyz revolution got coverage in media as well as attention of the international community. “In Kyrgyzstanz, the people seemed won their freedom in the streets of capital Bishkek and southern cities of Osh and Jalal Abad. President Askar Akayev apparently fled the country and his government resigned. Democratic opposition, which includes the former Vice President Felix Kulov, the former Foreign Minister Roza Otunbaeva and the former Prime Minister Kurmanbek Bakiev, consolidated power and had been welcomed by Russia. The Parliament chose the former opposition lawmaker Ishenbai Kadyrbekov as acting president. The transition was marred, however, country faced a widespread looting.

A wave of democratic uprisings swept the former Soviet Union. The Kyrgyz called it the Tulip, or Lemon, Revolution — similar to Georgia’s Rose and Ukraine’s Orange Revolutions. It looked like the Kyrgyz will make lemonade out of these lemons after all. However, the Kyrgyz opposition did not have one recognized leader, such as Viktor Yushchenko in Ukraine, or Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia. Thus, free and fair elections for parliament and president were definitely needed. The United States, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Russia should cooperate in preparing and observing them.” (3)

After comparing French Revolution with Kyrgyz Revolution, the long-term goal of the research is to develop a formalized model for understanding the transition of democracies after the revolutions. The objective of the current study is to provide a comprehensive review of literatures and state practices in relation to the overcoming the after effect of revolutions. Reverse engineering the French transition to the democratization. Moreover, this project aims to define some specific domains related to politico-economic structures of the France and Kyrgyzstanz before the revolutions and try to link the external validity of French case to the Kyrgyz one.

Methodology. The primary research method for this study is literature review and conceptual modeling. For the descriptive study, this research is strengthened by the various facts and concepts, therefore the theory with is used for exploring and analyzing the present topic and answering questions is realism. The reason for using realism as an appropriate theory is that in our understanding the Kyrgyz case is reciprocal to the French one. Kyrgyzstanz faced similar events just before the revolution as France did. For making it an empirical study and to investigate more about the French experience, there will be a need to conduct survey, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with the scholars of French history, political scientists and leading specialist in the field of political theory.

REFERENCES


2. Interview of Roza Otunbaeva by Eugene Huskey, William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor of Political Science and Russian Studies at Stetson University in DeLand, Florida.