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## The Biopolitics of the Family and Demographic Policies for the “*Ideal*” Representation(s) of the National Identity(-ies): The Case of Kyrgyz Republic

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### Empirical Puzzle:

- 1) Nation and National Identities are dynamic. And Kyrgyzstan has been witnessed of this process. Unlike other presidents, Sadyr Zhaparov’s government deploys family and demographic policies for the construction of the National Identities.

F.e: Decree “*On the spiritual and moral development and physical education of the individual*”; *National Program for the Preservation and Development of National Traditions for 2022–2027*; *The concept of the Ministry of Education of the Kyrgyz Republic spiritual and moral development and physical education of students 2021*

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## Empirical Puzzle:

2) Different Narratives between the State and the Population:

<b>From the Perspective of the State: (Top-Down Approach - The State)</b>	<b>From the Perspective of the Population: (Bottom-Up Approach - The Society)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People's body belongs to the government. <i>"the most important direction of domestic policy is the spiritual and physical education of citizens through the assimilation of high moral standards, Kyrgyz traditions, traditional family and social values, a healthy lifestyle". (Decree on National Tradition 2022)</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "My body belongs to me"</li></ul>

3) In the literature, Central Asia, furthermore, has been mostly examined through the lens of geopolitics (particularly under the competition of super and regional powers in the New Great Game). However, biopolitics is an alternative to explain the study of the region, including Kyrgyzstan.

## The Aim of the Research:

To explore why and how Zhaparov's government has been used to deploy the demographic and family policies for the "ideal" representation of the (ethnic) Kyrgyz national identity (-ies). More importantly, this study analyzes the (re-)construction of the national identity through biopolitics and governmentality in the Kyrgyz Republic.

## Research Question:

### Central Research Question:

- **Why does Zhaparov's government, unlike the previous presidents in the Kyrgyz Republic, decided to deploy biopolitical instruments for the construction of the national identity?**
- *SQ1 - How does Zhaparov's government regulate and manage the human bodies of individuals for the construction of national identity?*
- *SQ2 - How does Zhaparov's government promote an "ideal" representation of a nation through*

## Hypothesis:

Unlike the previous presidents in the Kyrgyz Republic, the Zhaparov's government has legitimized its power, control, and authority over the society through biopolitical instruments such as the management of the family and demographic policies, in the name of "ideal" representation of the national identity.

Those sexualized and gendered (bio)policies and programs now became part of the Kyrgyz national identity and helped Zhaparov's government to legitimize its power and authority.

Under the 'ideal' representation of the national identity by political elites, citizens' bodies are considered as the main subject of state, indeed, subject of state control; the Zhaparov's government successfully implemented through various policies and programs to control the sexual and gender aspects of its population.

## Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks:

<b>Biopolitics :</b>	This is a form of power based on the total control of all forms of human life through complete observation and intervention in it reaches the point of absurdity and turns the state into "the coldest of all hated monsters" (Foucault 2008, 3)
<b>Biopolitics of Governmentality:</b>	Governmentality argues that the final goal of the state is how the citizens control other citizens and themselves, and how the government becomes one and for everyone (Foucault 1991, 91-113).
<b>Constructivism:</b>	As the constructivists of state ontology claim, behind every action of the state lie ideological structures that serve the interests of the government (Reus and Smith 2013, 220). National identities are created by political elites, in particular, based on their own ideas and interests. Biopolitics became one of the strategies of power in the creation of national identities.

## Literature Review: Nation Building studies of Kyrgyzstan

<i>Statist Approach</i>	<i>Bottom -Up Approach</i>	<i>Religious Approach</i>	<i>Gendered Approach</i>
Marat 2008	Kevlihan 2013	Pembeci 2007	Handrahan 2001
Aydingun 2014	Ó'Beacháin & Robert 2015	Artman 2019	Ismailbekova 2016
Hezhoglu 2017	Ventsel 2012	Toktogulova 2020	Akisheva 2021
Kamrava 2020	Wilkinson 2015		Mueller 2022

## Methods and Methodology

Qualitative Method of Analysis:

Poststructuralist discourse analysis

- Post-structuralist discourse analysis seeks to uncover the underlying power structures and ideologies that shape how discourse is created and interpreted (Hansen 2013, 15).

Text Coding: MAXQDA

- Text coding is a valuable tool for conducting poststructuralist discourse analysis because it allows researchers to systematically analyze language patterns and identify underlying power relations in a particular discourse (Gee 2014, 49-56).

Combining text Coding with contextual analysis

- By combining textual coding with contextual analysis of broader social and political contexts, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how language is used to construct social reality and shape power relations (Gee 2014, 50-54).

## Data Selection:

As the focus of the analysis is Zhaparov's government's official national identity making, Hansen's three models for the poststructuralist discourse analysis is used. It focused on the official sources and political leaders with political authority in the selection of the empirical data:

1. Speeches and texts are characterized by "a clear expression of both identity and politics";
1. Texts and speeches are widely read and attended; and finally
1. Texts must have official authority to determine the political position (Hansen 2013, 76).

## Data Collection:

**1)The official speeches by president Sadyr Zhaparov: (4)** Speech by President Zhaparov on the Independence Day of Kyrgyzstan on August 31, 2021 ; Speech by President Zhaparov on the Independence Day of Kyrgyzstan on August 31, 2022 ; Speech by president Zhaparov at the First People's Kurultai 2022 on November 25;Speech on Women's Day by president Zhaparov 2023.

**2)Presidential decrees and State programs: (4)** National Program for the Preservation and Development of National Traditions for 2022-2027; Decree of the President Sadyr Japarov "On spiritual and moral development and physical education of the individual" 2021; Decree "On additional measures for the comprehensive study and popularization of the trilogy of the Manas epic"2021 ; The concept of the Ministry of Education of the Kyrgyz Republic spiritual and moral development and physical education of students 2021.

## Methodological Concerns:

- The approach of poststructuralist discourse analysis does not rely on a cause-and-effect model and does not adhere to positivist methodology. This is because the connection between identity and policy is interdependent, making it impossible to isolate identity as a variable that causes outcomes (Hansen, 2013, 1-2).
- Although discourse is not solely responsible for causing events, this does not diminish its significance. Discourse shapes what actions are feasible and what are not, enabling analysts to determine the range of potential outcomes (Neumann, 2008).

## Main Findings and Analysis

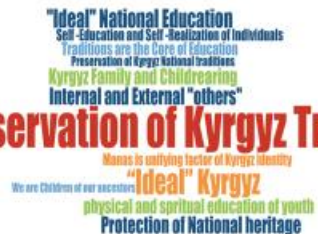
## Results of the text coding:

Fig.1 Word Cloud



- "People"-232 hits
- "Education"- 206 hits
- "State development"- 164 hits
- "Physical Education"- 146 hits
- "Moral Education"-145 hits
- "Kyrgyz" - 138 hits
- "National Values" -138

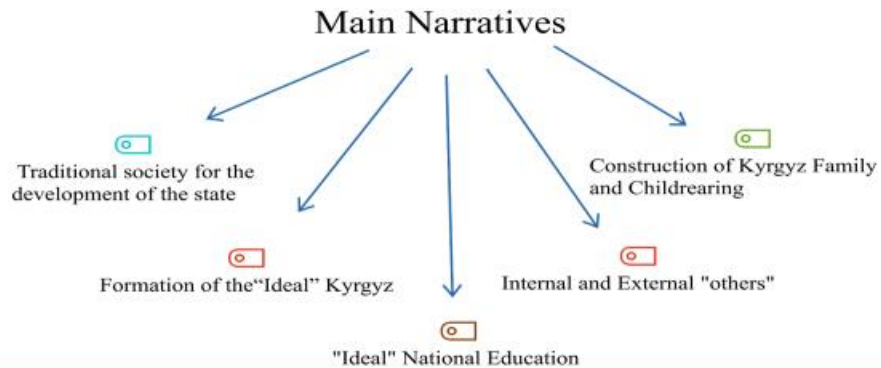
Fig.2 Code Cloud



# Protection and Preservation of Kyrgyz Traditions and Values



Fig.3 Main Narratives and Coding Categories



## Analysis:

**1) Traditional society for the development of the state-** is a society where national traditions, values and history stand above all other "universal" laws (Zhapparov 2022b). To create and protect the traditional society Kyrgyz government attempts:

- to promote epic of "Manas"
- Kyrgyz Language policies

- The survival of Kyrgyzstan is connected with the conditions of traditions and values.
- Biopolitics can lead to the creation of new traditions or the modification of existing ones in order to better regulate or control populations (Agamben 2003,33-53).



## 2) Positioning External and Internal “Others”:

**External “Others”:** Democracy; Liberalism; Globalization

**Internal “Others”:** Opposition activists of the Kempir-Abad case; Previous presidents of the KR

- Biopolitics has a strong moral and religious basis for building self-other positioning (Makarychev & Yatsyk, 2017, 3-5).
- By covering certain rights in the name of the people, the state has a biopolitical mechanism for deciding which lives will be considered as belonging to the recognized community (Agamben 2020, 234-238)

## 3) Formation of the “Ideal” Kyrgyz Nation:

*“The ideal of a national personality type is a person who is: healthy, competent, respecting and honoring the culture of his country, observing and respecting the ideals of national education, the spiritual memory of the Kyrgyz society”.* (Concept for the spiritual and physical education of the individual 2021)

- The final goal of political elites, in particular when they create identities, is to create a society that is easy to manage. However, the population itself, without noticing it, becomes the subject of the state and contributes in the implementation of these goals (Foucault 1991,91-113).
- As a result, an “obedient” personality appears, and this means that the approach of the national structure of the Zhaparov’s state has been brought to the most personal.

#### 4) Construction of Kyrgyz Family and Childrearing

*"The priority of promoting traditional family values as the country's main resource" (Decree On National Tradition 2022)*

The success of the state in the discourse of the Kyrgyz government is directly related to family life. The government is interested in analyzing the mechanisms of power through various methods, agencies, groups, and even those that are very loosely connected to the state, such as the family (Foucault 1991, 101-113).

*The concern of the family is to bring up "the boy as a real Kyrgyz boy, and the girl as a real girl" using the heritage of the Kyrgyz tradition and values about raising a child (The Program on National Tradition of Kyrgyzstan 2022-2027).*

"Sexuality" and "Gender" are problematized as a "problem of power" and through instrumental reason in the control of sexuality, power increased and strengthened (Foucault 1999). The legitimization of this approach of the state is to protect segments of the population considered particularly vulnerable-children(Foucault 1999b 33-34).

#### 5)“Ideal” National Education

**5. 1)Spiritual Education:** *"... a person who reads, knows and understands moral norms, is able to control his behavior ... Spirituality protects humanity from the effects of impurity, just as clothing protects the human body from heat and cold"* (Concept for the spiritual and physical education of the individual 2021).

The ultimate goal of the state is to create "self-control" in the population - which contributes to the strengthening and diversity of power.

## 5)“Ideal” National Education

**5. 2) Physical Education:** *“Physical education is a specially organized pedagogical process aimed at improving human health based on the full development of his physical qualities”*. (Concept for the spiritual and physical education of the individual 2021).

Citizens’ bodies become the center of the discourse of the physical education of the individual. This is the direct basis of biopolitics - where the "bodies" of people are regulated by the state. Penetrating into the private lives of people, regulating their bodies, and justifying themselves by “protecting the nation” and the population, the Kyrgyz state politicizes the people’s “body”.

## Concluding Remarks:

The Research Question(-s) of the Study:	Main points from the Analysis:
<i>Why does Zhaparov's government, unlike the previous presidents in the Kyrgyz Republic, decided to deploy biopolitical instruments for the construction of the national identity?</i>	By promoting traditional family values and traditional society concepts, Zhaparov's government becomes the society's defender and regulates the people's bodies, in order to expand and stabilise its power.
<i>SQ1 - How does Zhaparov's government regulate and manage the human bodies of individuals for the construction of national identity?</i>	The body is created as a translocal boundary and a central node around which the imaginary traditional society stabilizes.
<i>SQ2 -How does Zhaparov's government promote an "ideal" representation of a nation through biopolitics and governmentality.</i>	In the traditional society of Zhaparov's government, an "Ideal" individual is one that has received a particular gendered and sexualized education, which enables it to exercise self-control. By managing self-control of the population Zhaparov's government is aimed to strengthen and stabilise it's power.

**Thank you very much.**