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ПАМИР КЫРГЫЗДАР: АЛАРДЫН ТАШ ДООРДОН ПОСТМОДЕРНГЕ САЯКАТЫ
ПАМИРСКИЕ КИРГИЗЫ: ИХ ПУТЬ ОТ КАМЕННОГО ВЕКА К ПОСТМОДЕРНУ
PAMIR KIRGHIZ: THEIR JOURNEY FROM STONE AGE TO POST-MODERN

Abstract. In the summer of 1982 the last communal attempt by a Central Asian Turkic community, led by a capable traditional Khan, Haji Rahmanqul Kutlu, to reach Anatolia was accomplished. This event which involved over a thousand Kirghiz mobile herders, with a lifestyle resembling the “Stone Age”, may have marked the end of such journeys for the Turkic peoples of Central Asia coming to Anatolia which begun nearly a thousand years earlier. The Kirghiz from the Afghan Pamirs, however, were motivated by entirely different reasons. That is, running away from Communism (Soviets, Chinese and Afghan) for over a century to safeguard their Islamic faith and Kyrgyz identity and not searching for new pasturelands or extend the domain of Islam. Like their ancestors, these Pamir Kirghiz have not only strengthened their Islamic faith and Turkic identity, but they have also experienced unfathomable demographic, social, economic and cultural transformation during the last four decades of their lives in modern Turkiye. In this presentation, I will discuss their remarkable journey based on my anthropological field research among the Kyrgyz which began in 1972 in the Pamirs of Afghanistan.

Key words: Kirghiz, Afghan Pamirs, Wakhan corridor, Rahmankul, Turkiye

Аннотация. 1982-жылдын жай айларында таланттуу салт-санаачы Хан Хажы Рахманкул Кутлу жетектеген Орто Азия түрк коомчулугунун Анадолуга жетүүгө болгон акыркы биргелешкен аракети болду. Таш доорунда жашаган миңден ашуун көчмөн кыргыздарды камтыган бул окуя Орто Азиядагы түрк элдеринин Анадолуга мындан миң жылдай мурда башталган окшош саякаттарынын соңуна чыккан болушу мүмкүн. Бирок Ооган Памиринин кыргыздарынын мотивдери такыр башка болгон. Тактап айтканда, алар коммунизмден (советтик, кытайлык жана афгандык) бир кылымдан ашык убакыттан бери өздөрүнүн ислам динин жана кыргыз өзгөчөлүгүн сактап калуу үчүн, жаңы жайыт издеп же исламдын чөйрөсүн кеңейтүү үчүн эмес, качып келишкен. Бул Памир кыргыздары ата-бабалары сыяктуу эле ислам динин жана түрк өзгөчөлүгүн бекемдеп тим болбостон, азыркы Түркияда жашоосунун акыркы кырк жылында ойго келбеген демографиялык, социалдык, экономикалык жана маданий өзгөрүүлөрдү башынан өткөрүштү. Бул презентацияда мен 1972-жылы Ооганстандын Памиринен баштаган кыргыздар арасындагы антропологиялык талаа иштеримдин негизинде алардын укмуштуудай басып өткөн жолу менен бөлүшөм.

Негизги сөздөр: кыргыздар, ооган памири, Вахан коридору, Рахманкул, Турция

Аннотация. Летом 1982 года была предпринята последняя коллективная попытка центральноазиатской тюркской общины во главе с талантливым традиционным ханом Хаджи Рахманкулом Кутлу достичь Анатолии. Это событие, в котором участвовало более тысячи киргизских кочевников-скотоводов, чей образ жизни напоминал «каменный век», возможно, ознаменовало собой конец подобных путешествий тюркских народов Центральной Азии в Анатолию, начавшихся почти тысячу лет назад. Однако киргизы с афганского Памира руководствовались совершенно иными причинами. А именно, они более века бежали от коммунизма (советского, китайского и афганского), чтобы сохранить свою исламскую веру и кыргызскую идентичность, а не искали новые пастбища или расширяли сферу ислама. Как и их предки, эти памирские киргизы не только укрепили свою исламскую веру и тюркскую идентичность, но и пережили невообразимые демографические, социальные, экономические и культурные преобразования за последние четыре десятилетия своей жизни в современной Турции. В этой презентации я расскажу об их удивительном путешествии, основанном на моих антропологических полевых исследованиях среди киргизов, начатых в 1972 году на Памире в Афганистане.

Ключевые слова: киргизы, афганский Памир, Ваханский коридор, Рахманкул, Турция

Introduction:

In this presentation I will examine transnational leadership of a tribal Khan, Haji Rahmanqul Khan Kutlu, during the century-long saga of small, vulnerable Central Asian Kirghiz (also Kyrgyz or Kirgiz) community of mobile herders, trying to preserve their cultural and communal integrity in the face of repeated forced displacements across several national boundaries within a continent, and the consequences of their resettlement in eastern Anatolia during the past four decades (1982 to 2025). Their multiple migrations/displacements begun because of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution (1917) from the Osh Valley (now in southern Kyrgyzstan) to the Pamirs of Afghanistan, above 12,000 feet altitudes, in the Wakhan Corridor. In 1945, they were forced to move to the Chinese occupied Eastern Turkistan (Xinjiang), due to Soviet Russian hostilities against them. They returned to the Afghan Pamirs in 1949, after the successful Communist Revolution in China; only to take refuge in Northern Pakistan in 1978, because of the Communist coup in Kabul and Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979). They lived

four years in Pakistan before being permanently resettled as refugees in the Van province, eastern Turkey, in 1982. The last four of their displacements were led by Haji Rahmankul Khan Kutlu.

Rahmankul, born on about 1913, was but a child when his father, a Mingbashi (a tribal judge) in the Tsarist administration, decided with his two brothers and their Qochqar clan members, to take refuge in the remote Pamirs of Afghanistan, an area some of them previously used as their summer pastures. Rahmanqul's father, Haji Jabbarqul, had taught Rahmanqul reading, writing and basics of Islamic education via vernacular texts—i.e., he had become a Mullah. Tall, well built, smart, ambitious and conscientious of their vulnerabilities, he had demonstrated his courage and leadership abilities early in his youth. During WWII, he led raids across the Afghanistan border into the Soviet territories while they were busy with the war in the Western front. After the war, in retaliation, the Soviet Russians had raided Rahmanqul's camp and taken him prisoner to Soviet territory. After about six months of detention, he was released. In Soviet lands

he had become enamored by transistor radio and newspapers. Once back, he had decided to lead most of the Kirghiz away from the Soviet Russian's threat, moving them into the Taghdumbash Pamir next door in Chinese Turkistan (Xinjiang). He had proven a capable leader negotiating good terms with the Chinese officials during their brief stay in the Chinese territory. But Moa's success in 1949, forced them to return to the Afghan Pamirs, to preserve their Muslim faith. By then, Rahmanqul had gained the title of Khan (chief), and the story of his fighting the Chinese Communist border guards to return to the Afghan Pamirs had spread widely in northern Afghanistan, reaching even the royal court in Kabul. While in China, he had acquired his first transistor radio, a critical information technology he owned and used avidly thereafter, listening to multiple vernacular broadcasts daily, including the BBC, Radio Moscow, and others.

By late 1950s, Marco Polo sheep hunting in the Afghan Pamirs had become a sought-after prize for international trophy hunters and a source of income for the Afghan governments. The hunting trip to the Pamirs among foreign diplomats and government officials in Kabul had also become popular. Rahmanqul Khan's help facilitating and ensuring security of such VIP's had become necessary. In early 1960s, even King Zaher Shah (r1933-1973) of Afghanistan went for a royal hunting trip to the Pamirs and Rahmankul Khan hosted him. He may have asked the King's permission then to go to the Hajj. Rahmankul Khan made the pilgrimage to Mecca, shortly after and he became Haji Rahmanqul Khan (locally referred to as the Khan Haji). After that, he made annual/biannual trips to Kabul in the autumn, staying for several weeks in Kabul hobnobbing with diplomats and officials as well as trading. It was during this period, when as a boarding school student in Kabul, I saw the famous Khan of the Kirghiz. His special relations with the monarch and courtiers in Kabul had boosted his prestige immensely, especially in Badakhshan province, where the Pamirs are located. It was also during this calm period, at the height of the Khan's fame, during 1972-1974, that I conducted my doctoral dissertation research among the Kirghiz. I revisited them during the summer of 1975, accompanying a documentary film crew from Granada TV, UK, as a consultant anthropologist, to film them for the

well-known, *Disappearing World* series called, "The Kirghiz of Afghanistan". An updated edition of the same documentary with re-edits was screened in 1981, in the US as part of the PBS's ethnographic series, the *Odyssey*.

During my initial dissertation field work, the Khan enjoyed perks from his government contacts, and trading ventures in Kabul, benefiting himself and the Kirghiz community. The Kirghiz had successfully adapted to the stresses of high altitude, extreme cold and closed borders, with virtually all neighbors, except within Afghanistan (Shahrani 1976a, 1976b, 1978, 1979). But that brief tranquility was shattered by the Communist coup in April, 1978, in Kabul. After ascertaining the Communist orientation of the regime, Rahmanqul Khan decided to leave the Pamirs to the safety of northern Pakistan, and virtually all the Kirghiz in the Little Pamir valley, some 1200 souls joined him in his flight across the border to Pakistan. Those living in the Great Pamir valley to the north of them, due to terrain, distance and security, could not join him on this journey and were regrettably left behind (Shahrani 2002, 2016). The Kirghiz spent four difficult years in and around Gilgit region in northern Pakistan, while Haji Rahmanqul Khan managed to negotiate their successful resettlement as refugees in eastern Turkey.

They were settled temporarily in the village of Karagunduz, near the city of Van, and some were placed in Afatevlari in Malatya, while their permanent village, Ulupamir Koyu, near the town of Erciş, was built (Shahrani, Report from ARIT Fellows, Number 7-1988). They were permanently settled in the new village during 1988. As such Rahmanqul Khan may have been the last Central Asian khan to complete the collective movement of communities reaching Anatolia which had begun more than a thousand years earlier. Unlike their earlier ancestors the Afghan Pamir Kirghiz were flown on 747 Boeing airplanes from Pakistan to Anatolia. Upon arrival in Türkiye, Rahmanqul Khan and his family members were assigned the family name of *Kutlu* (fortunate, lucky, endowed with power, etc.). Soon, he also assumed the Turkish titles of Ağa and Han. He had overseen the construction of the new village and resettlement of his community before his death in 1990. Rahmanqul Han has continued to influence the new generations of Kirghiz in Turkey, even after his death, and is

likely to continue to do so, as he is being turned slowly, but surely, into a hero among the Kirghiz, not only in Türkiye, but also in Kyrgyzstan.

From Stone Age to Post-Modern in Four Decades in Türkiye:

From September 2024 to the end of February 2025 I conducted field research in Ulupamir village in Van as well as the smaller Kirghiz communities who have left the village in recent decades in search of employment or due to work requirements around Ankara (specifically in Gölbaşı and Çubuk), also in Yanıfakilli in Yozgat province and scattered Istanbul. The purpose of investigation was twofold: 1) to explore the social dynamics of repeated forced transnational migrations of this small community of Kirghiz pastoral nomads across Central and Southwestern Asia to Anatolia, and their re-adaptation challenges and opportunities in Türkiye, as a community during the past four decades. And 2) to critically examine the role of their transnational tribal Khan/Han, and the ways in which he managed his tasks to ensure social and cultural integrity of his Muslim community, time and again. The life and career history of Rahmanqul offers critical doorway to understanding the saga of the Kirghiz as a part of the presumed "Disappearing World" of tribal life, resembling images of the "Stone Age". The key question I have previously explored and explained (see Shahrani 1986) is: How and why traditional local leaders, particularly in the rural Middle East and Central Asia, who are characterized often as feudal lords, oppressors, exploiters and tyrants, able to mobilize and lead, especially in moments of crises, those who are supposedly objects of their tyrannical rule, often against revolutionary forces who claim to liberate the same poor, exploited rural/tribal masses? This required critical examination and reassessment of our *assumptions about* and *characterization of* the local tribal leadership.

Longitudinal data such as life histories of local leaders from other pastoral nomads in the region has provided the opportunity for comparison and critical response to such questions. My continuous ethnographic research of this Kirghiz community, in virtually all places they have lived over the past a century, and struggled, suffered or triumphed, including in Türkiye, has provided me additional insights and data. I have considerable field notes and audio

recordings of conversations with the late Khan as well as household demographic and economic data, from my previous field research, especially during summers of 1983 and 1986 in Türkiye, when I sked Rahmankul Khan specifically to recount and reflect on his life experiences as the Khan of the Afghan Kirghiz. I have complemented these data from the Khan himself with further new data collected during my most recent field research from the living Kirghiz elders, his surviving sons and relatives who followed and aided the Khan through their collective survival efforts on their journey to post-modernity in Türkiye. I have also gathered ethnographic information from the Kirghiz youth on how they remember him and regard the role of the late Khan in their current lives in Türkiye. Such data is critical to understanding whether and how Kirghiz community leadership has changed since the passing of their Khan. Ultimately, my aim is to write a book about him and his role in the cultural survival and transformations of his community in a radically different health, educational, occupational, economic, social and political ecological environment of Türkiye during the past four decades.

Approaches to Local Leadership and Displacement Studies:

Local/Tribal leadership studies: Fredrik Barth's seminal work among the Swat Pathan (1959) and the Basseri's of South Persia (1961) laid the foundations for the study of the khans, a Turko- Mongol word of Inner Asia origin. Barth's studies suggested two different models: the Basseri Khans resembling the Weberian notions of "traditional authority" justified by birth, class and "Eternalyesterday" (Gerth and Mills 1946:78-79). The Swat Pathan/Pashtun/Pakhtun Khans' authority on the other hand, depended on his ability, at any given time, to wrest support from each of his followers individually, providing them favors in a competitive environment with other Khans. Both models have been applied in later studies with mixed results. The Basseri model has been used by Talal Asad (1970) studying the Khabish Arabs in Sudan, and by Bujra (1971) in Hureida, Hadramout. In these studies, perpetuation of Weberian model within the context of "encapsulation" of tribes by modern nation-states and the impact of market economy's penetration are discussed. Relying to a rigid and unilateral rendition of reality is

criticized by Tennenbaum (1968), "one either leads or is led, is strong or weak, controls or is controlled", leaves no room for the mutuality of power relation and whether and how of obtaining consent (Jacob Black, 1972:63). The assumptions of egalitarian nature of Pathans and other tribal societies exercise choice are questioned by later researchers (Anderson, 1978; Tapper 1980; and Akbar Ahmed, 1976, Asad, 1972, Salzman 1979, Black 1972). Seligman (1968:108) emphasizes the importance of situational needs of a group as well as considerations of their values in their selection of a leader and his/her performance (also see, Tannenbaum, 1968). F.G. Bailey (1988) indicates that "politics of conscience" is always at war with "a politics of [personal] advantage".

Both models suggested by Barth are useful for my study. However, I am also relying on participatory approach to leadership, focusing on the abilities of leader within the changing contextual needs of their community to be able to act as a cultural (in this case cross-cultural) broker, and a mediator between the community and multiple states. Also, demonstration of moral bonds with followers, and acting as an entrepreneur and problem solver in the case of Rahmakul Khan Kutlu has been essential in his accomplishments (see, Bissevain 1974, also F.G. Bailey 1969, 1988, 2001). In addition, performing rituals of hospitality, effective use of symbols, even producing symbols, and oratory skills are necessary attributes for effective leadership (see, Holmes 2000, Trnka 2011, Comaroff & Comaroff 1991, Gledhill 1994, Gupta and Ferguson 1997, Shore 2014). In essence, I have tried to explore and understand the nature of the acquisition of "leadership capital", the competence and capacities of leaders which are «deeply» embedded in and reflective of the culture in which they operate" (Renshon 2000:200). Such a capital may, as Verdery (1999) demonstrates, continue to be valued long after the death of a leader such as Rahmankul Khan. Also, the transnational nature of this Khan's venture has necessitated examination of more than the traditional tribal context, and may require to look for clues to the challenges of the European Union leaders (Abele 2000a, b, 2005; Holmes 2000, Shore 2000).

Ultimately, my aim in addition to a "thick description" of the changing ethnographic context of Kirghiz community, is to further our

understanding of politics “both from the local perspective of leaders and that of the led, and the complex shifting context in which leadership occurs.... [as anthropologists we are urged] to explore the *meaning(s)* of leadership rather than simply its form” (Shore 2014:189, emphasis in the original).

Life History Studies: This collaborative anthropological methodology of narrative construction of a person's life and careers allows navigating intersection of individuals with their institutions and cultural norms to make sense of collective experiences. It is also increasingly used by variety of disciplines beyond the social sciences (for a review of recent literature see, Tierney and Lanford 2019, Ritchie, 2003, for early classics Paul Radin, 1913, 1926/1999, Thomas and Znaniecki, 1918-1920, the Chicago School of Sociology of Robert Park and Ernest W. Burgess (Dollard 1935), which was produced, *The Hobo* by Anderson 1923, *The Gang* by Thrasher 1928,

The Ghetto by Wirth (1928) and many more. C Wright Mills (1959:4) asserts, life histories are “...essential to grasp the interplay of man and society, of biography and history, of self and the world” (1959:4). More recently Tierney & Lanford (2019) are stating, “mass data without life histories of persons is incomplete” (see also Lewis 1936, Bertaux and Thomson, 1997, Epstein 1981, Langness 1965, Spradley 1968, Agar 1980). Life history as an archaeology of the mind/memory is not without its limitation depending on the levels of trust between the researcher and collaborators, confirmability, reflexivity, credibility, objectivity, empathy, power dynamics and involvements with the subjects' lives and more (see, Gelya Frank 1996, Kvale 2007, Atkinson, 2012, Geertz 1973).

Displacement Studies: The growing numbers of forced migration from Afghanistan & displacements globally—one hundred million displaced in 2021, conflict related among them numbered 53.2 million (American Anthropological Association (AAA): 2022). This is a clear indication of the scope of the problem, and a reason for AAA's concerns. Turkey, located in a conflict zone, bridging Europe and Asia, is seriously affected. Fresh refugee influx from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan to Turkey has increased social tensions (Gurcan 2021), and refugee crisis is becoming more politicized.

Refugee integration studies have become an important topic of research in Turkey (Balcioglu, 2018). Indeed, World Bank and UNHCR have created a Joint Data Center (JDC) on “Forced Displacement”, for the purpose of producing monthly, “Forced Displacement Literature Review”, available on a searchable platform (Gillsäter, 2020). It covers all recently published academic and non-academic studies and reports on the subject, organized on thirteen major themes, such as geopolitics of forced migration, impact on health, on host communities and countries, integration, inclusion and more. It is a most valuable resource, and I am utilizing the JDC monthly “Literature Reviews”.

Transformative Changes in Türkiye:

I have studied this Kirghiz community in the Pamirs of Afghanistan since 1972, followed them as refugees in Pakistan (1978-1982), and their resettlement in eastern Türkiye since their arrival in 1982. They marked the 40th year of their arrival on September 25th, 2022, in Istanbul.

I was invited by their Kirgiz Türkleri Kultur ve Yardimlaşma Derneği (Kirgiz Turks' Cultural and Assistance Association, established in 2007) to participate in the celebrations, and I did. I have a monograph first published in 1979 about their lives in the Pamirs of Afghanistan, with an updated & expanded 2nd edition (2002), and many articles on them. The 2nd edition of *The Kirghiz and Wakhi of Afghanistan: Adaptation to Closed Frontiers and War*, briefly documents their first 19 years of experiences adjusting to Türkiye. In my most recent fieldwork (September 2024 to February 2025 supported by NEH grant from ARIT) I collected systematic ethnographic data of their 42 years of adaptation and integration, with a focus on the role and impact of their late Khan, Haji Rahmanqul Han Kutlu in this process.

My preliminary analysis of the data indicates that the Kirghiz community has successfully transformed their stone-aged lifestyle in the Pamirs of Afghanistan and have turned many challenges into significant opportunities in Türkiye. For purposes of this presentation, I will briefly assess the transformative changes in demography, education, health, economics, marriage and family dynamics, social and spatial mobility, professional and occupational achievements as well as religious education and practice.

Demographic Growth: Their population growth in the Pamirs was seriously limited due to the ill effects of hypoxia (see, Shahrani 1979). Since arrival in Türkiye their numbers have almost tripled in size. Upon their arrival Turkish government records indicate the registration of 296 nuclear family/households, numbering about 1,100 individuals. On September 10, 2024, the Ulupamir Mahallesi Muhtarligi (Ulupamir District of Erciş Municipality) shows the resident population of Ulupamir to be 1488 persons, 700 women and 788 men categorized into various age groups. Other statistics from the same Municipality prepared for coal distribution to household living in the village in winter of 2023 put the total number of families at 502 noting that 386 of them lived in the village during the winter and were allocated coal. The remaining 116 households are noted to have left the village residing in other parts of Türkiye. Everyone in the village says some of their younger members have left the village in recent decades in search of employment, higher education or due to their occupation requirements. However, there is no accurate record of out migration from Ulupamir available that I could locate.

In my most recent fieldwork (2024-2025) I visited some places where the Kirghiz have relocated in larger numbers within Türkiye. I was able to obtain estimates of the Kirghiz families living out of Ulupamir and residing in the following places in Türkiye:

- Erciş, nearest town to the village, some 40 families
- Van City, the capital of Van province, 15 families
- The city of Malatya about 15 families
- Yenifakilli in Yozgat province, 39 families (139 persons)
- Gölbaşı, 35 families and in Çubuk 46 families, both places are suburbs of Ankara, and
- Istanbul, various parts, some 20 families.

Another 30 families were said to be living in smaller numbers in Antalya, Kayseri, Diyarbakir and other cities and towns across Türkiye. These add up to some 240 family/household living outside the Ulupamir village. It is also important to note that their demographic growth during the first two-three decades had been larger as each family had many children expecting many of them would die in fancy as they did in the Pamirs. However, soon they discovered their children

survived and that raising many children and educating them was costly. Quickly they adopted family planning methods and controlled the number of births, and currently most younger couples prefer having no more than two or three children. Hence, demographic growth among the Kirghiz of Ulupamir may have already passed its apex and leveled off for now.

Education and Health: In the Pamirs the Kirghiz had no access to formal schools or any form of modern medical services. Rudimentary education in the Afghan Pamirs was limited to basic literacy in traditional Islamic homeschooling in Arabic script to very limited number of children during the winter months by the few Mullahs. The number of literates among them did not number more than a dozen or so. On arrival in Turkey in 1982 they gained universal access to formal schooling in modern Turkish alphabet and eventually to professional and higher education. Adult literacy for both women and men begun immediately and within the first year most adults were able to read and write basic Turkish when I visited them in Karagunduz, their temporary residence near Van city in the summer of 1983. School aged boys and girls were all enrolled in primary school. By 1988 when they moved to their newly built permanent village all Kirghiz children were attending elementary school, and a few had already completed the primary grades of 1-6. Initially the elementary school graduates had to leave the village if they wished to attend middle school or high school in boarding facilities in Erci or Van city. For some families the cost of supporting their children's education during the early decades was prohibitive. Also, cultural resistance to allowing their daughters to live in dorms away from home was a big hurdle. Slowly but sure these problems were overcome. Now the literacy rate among Kirghiz adults is almost universal.

More than 150 girls have completed nursing schools and are serving as Hamshiras in the Turkish health system across the country. A very large number of girls and boys who have completed their BA and BS degrees in universities all over the country are serving as teachers or officials nationwide. A small number (6-7) have completed medical school and are MDs serving as physicians in hospitals in Istanbul, Malatya, Antalya and other towns. Two or three PhD degree holders in mathematics, history and

literature are teaching in universities and at least one is said to be working in a top position in a major engineering-electronic research company near Ankara.

About dozen others are pursuing higher education degrees in universities in Türkiye as well as Kyrgyzstan. As such their educational achievements in Turkey has been remarkable by any measure.

The Kirghiz since their arrival in Turkey have had full access to the Turkish government health services and they have taken full advantage of it. In Ulupamir Koyu they have Sağlık Evi with a resident nurse, currently one of their own Kirghiz hamshiras, and a MD spending one day a week in the village caring for those in need of help. The physician in the village makes referrals to other health centers and hospitals as needed. This same village health center provides family planning services and education as well as home visits. A remarkable outcome has been that there is many elderly Kirghiz in their 80s and 90s and even 2 or 3 who have reached the age of one hundred plus, which in the Pamirs would have been impossible. The village physician told me the Ulupamir population is much healthier and living longer compared to the Turkish villagers in the area.

Economics: In the Pamirs most Kirghiz households were extremely poor and utterly dependent on herding animals of a small number of wealthy Kirghiz, especially the Khan, Haji Rahmanqul, who lent them animals under various contractual arrangements (see, Shahrani 1979). Upon arrival in Türkiye the Turkish government's equal assistance to every one of the 296 nuclear families leveled the extant economic inequality by offering them identical residences and access to the same family monthly cash or kind assistance based on household size. As a result, chronic and persistent poverty and extreme economic inequality of the Pamir is no longer the case.

Indeed, some of the poorest families in Pamir are now the richest merchants and herders in Ulupamir compared to the previously wealthy families in Pamir, including many of the children and grandchildren of Rahmanqul Khan, but not all of them.

The abject poverty which haunted almost 90% of the household in Pamir is no longer the case in Türkiye, in fact there is no family in

Ulupamir according to the village residents who is really considered poor among the Kirghiz. The same happens to be true also among those living outside the Ulupamir in other parts of Türkiye. The determinant of economic difference in Pamir was herd ownership (sheep, goats, yak, camel, and horse). In Turkey it has become education, acquiring crafts skills in construction and having able bodied workers within families. Their and Turkish government hopes of the Kirghiz relying on raising large herds has not materialized.

Initially all Kirghiz families were given small numbers of animals to raise. During the first decade after moving to their permanent settlement with some 38,000 hectares of very good mountain pastureland around the village the Kirghiz built herds reaching some 7000 sheep and goats and hundreds of horses. With their children completing village school left the village in pursuit of higher education and became disinterested in herding. Also, the low price of animals in the market proved less encouraging for many to continue herding. Many Kirghiz families sold or slaughtered their herds. During the late 1990s in the height regional insecurity many young men became Korocu (watchmen, village guard) and still some 150 men are part of the local security force, and one of the main employment sources for the Ulupamir men. In recent years due to the rise of meat prices in the market and government encouragement and extension of credit some families have returned to herding and currently some 17 families own herds totaling over 3000 animals.

Many families own private cars in the village and some of them use them as taxis taking people to Ercis and Van when called. There are also a few minibuses shuttling people between Ulupamir and Ercis on regular daily schedule. The village also has five shops, including a couple of groceries selling fresh produce, one store selling flour and liquid propane, and a couple of general stores. There are also several handymen who repair electrical appliances, fix plumbing problems and even one or two excellent helps for fixing computer and phone problems. Ulupamir seems relatively prosperous and expanding with new construction, much of the work being done by the villagers themselves. Their original two story apartments, the lower story intended for their animals have all been turned into comfortable living spaces accommodating

the younger generation establishing their own household. Yet, the universal complaint in the village is lack of employment and the village youth have search for jobs outside the village and some 250 families have relocated to other towns and cities across Turkiye.

Marriage Practices and Family Dynamics:

In Pamir the Kirghiz were primarily endogamous within the community with occasional marriage of Kirghiz girls from impoverished families being given to itinerant traders coming from Badakhshan and other areas of Afghanistan. Most marriages were within the lineages and clans among the Kirghiz. However, they strictly avoided exchange of women with their neighbors, the Wakhi Ismaili shi'a villagers because of their Hanafi Sunni sectarian difference. These marriage patterns were adhered to for the first two decades or so in Turkiye. However, with education and outmigration of both Ulupamir girls and boys and employment in other cities many Kirghiz men have married with local Kurdish girls and some Kirghiz women from Ulupamir have also married Turkish men. Some Kirghiz men visiting Kyrgyzstan have also brought brides from Kyrgyzstan to Turkiye including a few to the Ulupamir village. More importantly two or three Wakhi Ismaili families attached as servants to rich Kirghiz families came to Turkiye with the Kirghiz. Now, marriages between these Wakhi families and the Ulupamir Kirghiz have also become accepted but not without considerable resistance and rancher.

Weddings in Ulupamir have continued to occur during the summer months as it was common in Pamir, but for a slightly different reason—in Turkiye schools are in recess during summer and those outside the village can return for their summer vacations with their children to the village. Most weddings still take place in home compounds or in the large hall that has been built for public events including weddings and funerals in Ulupamir. But some Kirghiz have begun to hold theirs in wedding halls or hotels in urban settings especially when one of the partners is a non-Kirghiz. The wedding ceremony and dress for women has continued with slight changes but for grooms wearing Turkish style clothing has become common. They have also adopted attaching gold coins and cash on the garments of both brides and groom

Turkish style I am told during the wedding procession some distance from the home of the bride. Because of the spiraling cost of bride price during the earlier decades of after their arrival in Turkiye, the village elders about a decade ago set it at US\$1,000.00 cash payment by the groom's family and it has held so far.

Dividing the Kirghiz extended families upon arrival in Turkey into 296 nuclear units for assigning them housing and benefits was accepted by the Kirghiz community. However, once settled and families grow and young sons married, they have tried to live as extended families when the home spaces were available. The extended Kirghiz families living very close to parents in urban contexts have been held because of the young couples' childcare needs, especially when both couples are working. Respect for the elderly is one of the core values in Kirghiz society.

The Kirghiz elders, especially in Ulupamir are complaining bitterly about the disrespectful behavior of their grandchildren and occasionally their educated daughters-in-law who wish to live separately. The older generation also complain about the fact that in Pamir they visited other families without notification—i.e., they dropped in within the same camp or from distant camps. Now they must call ahead to see if it is alright to visit their relatives or neighbors. This, what the elderly call impoliteness in the community is unfathomable among those who were born and raised in Pamir who came to Turkiye as young adults. Also, divorce in Pamir extremely infrequent has become acceptable in occurrence among the younger generation in Turkey. Overall, the generational tensions within the families seem to be on the rise in Turkiye.

Social and Spatial Mobility:

In Pamir, social and economic mobility within the Kirghiz pastoral nomadic society was extremely restricted, especially to poor herders not owning their own livestock (see Shahrani 1979). The possibilities for equal access to housing, government services (including access to animals), schooling and professional training has dramatically changed Kirghiz fortunes in Turkiye. Children, especially grandchildren of those who were herd owners in Pamir and came to Turkiye with extra cash, if their parent's valued education and supported their children to attend schools and allowed their girls to venture

out of the village to attend boarding schools and universities, some of them have achieved the highest professional degrees and social mobility to boot. The six MDs and a couple PhDs are from among these wealthier families who have moved out of the village and living and practicing in large cities such as Istanbul, Ankara and other cities. Several dozen boys and girls and boys from Ulupamir have earned master's degrees and more than two hundred hold college degrees, among them many trained nurses and medical technicians and even physical therapists and dentists. The Kirghiz have also joined in large numbers the Turkish security forces (police, gendarme, army and Airforce). Among them are twin brothers who are trained as air force pilots. Most of these well-trained professionals have left the Ulupamir village with their immediate families and are living in towns and cities across Turkiye.

During the first two decades after their arrival and before the youth earning school and professional degrees, many Kirghiz from Ulupamir indulged in seasonal work in towns such as Rize on the Black Sea coast picking tea. Others travelled to Istanbul to work with Kazakhs who owned and operated successful leather garment factories in the 1980s and 1990s. As popularity of leather garments declined and cost of living increased in Istanbul by the early 2000s, some of them relocated in the outskirts of Ankara. In Golbasi near Ankara many of them became kapici (caretakers in large apartment buildings). This occupation became attractive because it provided their children or grandchildren with better opportunities for education, training or skilled jobs in large cities. Those concentrated in Cubuk area in another Ankara suburb because of their proximity to textile factories where they found employment. Hence, spatial and social mobility of the Ulupamir Kirghiz have been caused by enhanced educational and job opportunities.

Greater possibilities for social and spatial mobility exist both for the Kirghiz living in Ulupamir as well as for the 250 families who have already moved out of the village in the decades to come as the new generations attain greater professional skills, education and wealth within Turkish society.

Religious Education and Practice:

The repeated Kirghiz flights and exodus

from Soviet Russia, Communist China and Revolutionary Afghanistan during the Twentieth Century was necessitated from their own perspective to protect their religion (Islam) and Kirghiz language and cultural identity. In Pamir their access to religious education was very limited and general knowledge of textual Islam among the population was very low. Because of their mobile herding lifestyle there were no mosques and large congregational prayers, barring funerals or Eid prayers. Seeking religious education outside Pamir, while not uncommon in the past, was not undertaken at least since the 1950s.

For the first time a mosque was built for them as part of the construction of the Ulupamir Koyu when in 1988 they moved in. They had brought a Qari Abdulbaqi, an imam with them from Afghanistan who led the five congregational prayers for the first time in their new village. He also offered regular basic education in reading the Qur'an and other basic texts for the youth along with two other Kirghiz Mullahs (Mullah Ebrahim and Mullah Nematullah now in their early 80s) assisted in running the masjid and teaching the youth about the fundamentals of Islam in more systematic way. The first Ulupamir mosque was damaged during the most recent earthquake (2013?) centered in Ercis, about 20 kilometers away. A larger masjid was built with the Turkish Diyanet İşleri (Religious Affairs Office) plus contributions from the Ulupamir community and beyond. Qari Abdulbaqi has retired and a new well trained Turkish Imam has been assigned to the mosque with local assistant. The Turkish imam conducts the Friday prayer in virtually full congregation and his assistant performs the five daily prayers in well attended congregation mostly with the elderly since the youth go to work.

About a dozen young Kirghiz (girls and boys) from Ulupamir have completed the Imam Hatib schools (Islamic Religious High Schools in Turkiye) and a few have graduated from Ilahiyat Departments of universities serving in the Religious Affairs system within Turkiye. I met one woman with such qualification who taught at a Qur'an Course school in Ercis and she told me that there are others doing the same in other parts of the country including in Istanbul. More importantly during summer months the village youth are offered regular Qur'an courses in the

village teaching them the essential knowledge and performance of Islamic rituals. Turkish tariqat (Sufi organizations) are also active in the village and one of the Naqshbandi tiraqats, the Mazil branch in the province of Adiyaman has been successful in recruiting an estimated 200 plus men and some 150 women as its members. I visited Manzil briefly during my research with three of its leaders, two from Ercis and one Kirghiz from Ulupamir. Most of the female members of the trariqat have adopted hijab and are easily distinguished in the village or beyond. The men have established a space (Sufi lodge) in Ulupamir where they have regular ziker meetings and lectures by the leaders of the Manzil Naqshbandi organization, speakers within the village or from outside. A few older more traditional Kirghiz men and the two mullah's complained to me about some of their beliefs approaching *shirk* (attributing supernatural powers to their Saint) which is considered a major sin in Islam. It is important to note that the Pamir Kirghiz in Turkiye have attained their goal of securing the safety of their religion far beyond their expectation. However, their Kirghiz language and culture is slowly but surely becoming assimilated to modern Turkish language, society and culture.

Conclusion:

Ulupamir Kirghiz, especially the generation who came with Haji Rahmanqul Khan to Turkiye and their children are consistently acknowledging and praying for him for bringing them to Turkiye, despite their longing for the lost homelands. They credit him for his successful leadership in securing their lives from possible violence and delivering them to Anatolia. They also value his leadership after their arrival in Turkey as he negotiated and oversaw the construction of Ulupamir and their settlement two years before his death. Haji Rahmankul is remembered by the older generation with great fondness and thankfulness, but the youngest generation of grandchildren, especially for those who have left Ulupamir, his memory is weakening. In the

village his memory is stronger and kept alive by annual memorial events in his name.

After Rahmanqul Khan's passing the village leadership, the post of Aga, became elected for five-year terms. One of his younger sons, Arif Kutlu, served as Agha for two terms and since several other younger Agas have been elected from other lineages and clans. The current Aga and his capable deceased brother who served as Aga are close relatives of Rahmanqul Khan. In my planned book on the Khan's role in leading the Pamir Kirghiz to Turkiye and his leadership style will be discussed in greater detail. Suffice to say without his capable leadership the brief transformative changes described above would not have been possible. The Kirghiz have indeed turned many challenges, especially during the first two decades of their life in Turkiye into significant opportunities for acquiring education and professional skills which has served their community especially younger generations extremely well. They have left extremes of poverty and social inequality and gained almost universal economic prosperity thanks to Turkish government and societies consistent support for them. Their successful integration into modern Turkish economy and society is laudable especially in view of their "Stone Age" mobile herding economic and technological tradition and total lack of access to education. Their universal access to and use of modern digital technology is a marvel, especially to older generation of the Kirghiz who came from Pamir. They have proven themselves in becoming valuable members contributing to Turkish society, culture and economy with even with greater promise in future.

Their transformative social, cultural and economic experience over the span of four decades is remarkable evidence of human resilience in adaptation and fortitude. In this time forced displacement of millions of people as refugees all over the world, the Pamir Kirghiz experiences are heartwarming examples of hope for humanity.

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