Post-liberal statebuilding in Central Asia:
A decolonial perspective on community security practices and imaginaries of social order in Kyrgyzstan

by

PHILIPP LOTTHOLZ

A thesis submitted to the
University of Birmingham
for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

International Development Department
School of Government and Society
College of Social Sciences
University of Birmingham
December 2017

Abstract

This thesis presents a development of the concept of post-liberalism to analyse processes of statebuilding in Central Asia by the example of Kyrgyzstan from a decolonial angle. Recent debates in peace, conflict and intervention studies have conceived of 'post-liberal' and 'hybrid forms of peace' as modalities of resistance against and re-negotiation of a globally dominant 'liberal peace' template promoted by Western governments and the international intervention architecture. The approach of this research questions the global dominance and prominence of the 'liberal peace', the possibility of resistance and agency against it, and of emancipation of people in post-conflict or transition countries in the global periphery. By introducing 'imaginaries of statebuilding' – understood as mental constructs structuring people's thoughts and actions – as novel analytical concept, the study captures the complex and contradictory processes of reception, adoption and resistance against globally dominant notions of capitalist economic development, democracy, and peacebuilding and security practices. In the empirical part, practices of peacebuilding and community security – and their embeddedness in the post-liberal trajectory of statebuilding – are analysed by the example of local crime prevention centres, territorial youth councils, and a national level NGO network working on police reform and participatory provision of public security. The research demonstrates how exclusion, structural violence and precarity are reproduced and feed into patterns of post-conflict governmentality which exist in sync with seemingly emancipatory and contextually meaningful ways of coexistence and steps towards institutional reform. These negative effects of the combination and hybridisation of the three identified imaginaries of statebuilding – a 'Western liberal peace', 'politics of sovereignty' and 'tradition and culture' imaginary – are critically reflected upon. Entry points for more fundamental critique and social/political practice are provided throughout the dissertation and, in the conclusion, synthesised into a new decolonial approach towards peace, conflict and intervention research.

Acknowledgements

Notes on Transliteration and Language

Most of the research in this project was conducted in Russian language. In rare instances, I have employed Kyrgyz interpreters or retrospectively discussed conversations or events held in Kyrgyz language (these are indicated in footnotes). All translations from Russian are my own unless otherwise indicated. Interviews were transcribed into Russian and, after analysing them, translated for quotation in the dissertation. The original words added in brackets are usually in Russian language or marked as Russian/Ru. or Kyrgyz/Kg.

For transliteration, I use the Library of Congress ALA-LC Romanisation table (https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/romanization/russian.pdf, accessed 13 November 2017), which means that all Cyrillic letters are transliterated with their Latin equivalents and i is used for й; j and zh for ж; kh for х; ts for ц; ch for ч; and sh for ш. For convenience, I transliterate щ with sh as the difference to ш is negligible in spoken Russian. I transliterate я and ю with ia and iu, but use a ya and yu if the letters are used at the beginning of words. I further chose to omit apostrophes and other additional signs for reading and writing comfort. The same goes for the peculiarities of the Kyrgyz alphabet, which includes additional letters that sometimes make a significant difference, and sometimes less so. Most importantly, the word for rural executive committee or administration, айыл окмоту, transliterated as *aiyl okmotu*, is written айыл өкмөтү in Kyrgyz and transliterates as *aiyl ökmötü*. Both in written and spoken Russian, this is usually simplified to the former version, although people tend to use the mutation ü at the end. I also use the Russian names for cities, such as *Uzgen* instead of *Özgön*. To build the plural of transliterated words, I add an s rather than Russian y (ы) or i (и), e.g. *aksakals*.

Table of Contents

List of Figures, Illustrations and Tables

Chapter I Introduction

What are the conditions for transition towards democracy and a free market? Why have many countries failed to democratise and liberalise and how long will it take until they do so? Why are some countries and regions more authoritarian and prone to conflict and social unrest than others? How is it possible to promote peace and security and a democratic path towards development, both on national and global levels? What are the everyday sources of peace?

These are questions that inform a great deal of inquiry in the disciplines of political science and International Relations (IR) and their sub-fields of comparative politics and peace and conflict studies. Since the end of the Cold War, much research has been produced on countries in formerly Socialist Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The post-Soviet space became an area of interest for scholars of peace and conflict studies, and those interested in 'transitology' and democratisation. The way the questions above are posed may appear straightforward for scholars in this field and for social scientists in general. However, they also exhibit a use of concepts such as democracy, authoritarianism or liberalism in a naturalistic, taken-for-granted manner. Similarly, the word 'peace' is used in a way suggesting that the definition of peace, and thus the ways to inquire forms of peace and achieve peace through practices and policies, is more or less straightforward.

This research is not advocating to discard the above questions and the concepts they are framed with. Yet, given the increasingly polarised, unequal and partly conflict-laden trajectories that countries across Eurasia have taken since the end of state Socialism, there appears to be a need to critically reflect upon the guiding questions, concepts and approaches to research and fundamentally rethink some of them (see Petrov 2014, Heathershaw 2013 for peace and conflict studies). This concerns, on a basic count, the way in which concepts and approaches are used in the study of peace, conflict, intervention, development and politics. As Jutila et al. have pointed out, rather than conceiving of themselves as 'physicians of global

society' (2008: 623) who develop the right tonic in the form of social and economic policies that address social ills and foster the development of peaceful and prosperous societies, social researchers should reflect on how the concepts they use may reproduce and entrench forms of knowledge that enable, justify and (re-) produce hierarchy, exclusion, inequality and conflict (see also Barkawi and Laffey 1999, Duffield 2001).

This line of argument has led to the emergence of a sizeable body of 'critical' research, which has mounted a significant challenge against the project of Western-dominated 'liberal peacebuilding' and the structural violence, suffering and entrenched peripheralisation it has produced in its often well-meaning attempts to bring peace and development to post-conflict countries (Duffield 2007, Pugh et al. 2008, Richmond and Mac Ginty 2009). Similarly, critical voices in the debate on transitology and democratisation have provoked the re-consideration of concepts and the development of more nuanced and context-specific approaches towards the study of post-Socialist countries (Art 2012, Gunitsky 2014, Cooley and Snyder 2015). These critical perspectives and their confrontation of orthodox scientific mainstream and policy-making debates has produced new experiences and impressions about the nexus between knowledge, power and questions about peace, conflict, development and democracy.

Yet, when taking stock of this academic critique of foreign policy, development assistance, intervention and peace-/statebuilding, one starts to doubt the ability – perhaps even the possibility, in the first place – of academic research to inform and shape a well-considered, non-intrusive, and still effective policy approach that will lead to sustainable trajectories of social, political and economic development in post-conflict and post-Socialist transition countries. Indeed, the different disciplines under the broad label of 'international studies' have to ask themselves: What can we do? (Brunner 2014) How can scholarship more effectively act upon policy makers not to pursue narrow, national strategic interests or implement projects that benefit elites and capital at the expense of vulnerable populations? And, given this elite, capital,

and imperial bias of geopolitical actors' agendas, is the informing and shaping of policies even a viable way for academic scholarship to bring about change in the world? Are there other ways of improving people's lives that have more immediate effects and a more transformative potential than the standard from-knowledge-to-policy-making trajectory?

The answer I offer in response to these questions is two-fold: First, as regards the question about democracy, peace, conflict and development, I argue that new concepts and approaches are needed to research the dynamics of societies in Central Asia and beyond. Based on previous literature in peace and conflict studies, I develop the concept of post-liberal statebuilding to capture and analyse the combination of different discourses and practices of social ordering, peace- and statebuilding and security provision in Kyrgyzstan. Analysing discourses, practices, policies and institutional formations through a post-liberal lens helps to capture the nuance and ambiguity which is at play in the interpretation and re-appropriation of concepts like peace, security, or democracy in contexts like Kyrgyzstan, the country this research project is focused on. It also provides a viable alternative to objectifying and labelling political attitudes, agendas and ways of thinking as 'un-democratic' or 'authoritarian'. Furthermore, tracing the shift of forms of statebuilding and their underlying processes through a post-liberal lens foregrounds a productive and comprehensive critique of statebuilding and democratisation processes since the break-up of the Soviet Union.

The second contribution of this research is its methodological focus on practices of statebuilding, specifically 'community security'. Thus, rather than taking a broad and macro-level approach in looking for different ways in which the state produces forms of peace, security and order, I look at a specific field within the wide variety of domains within peace, conflict and security research. My research shows how ideas about social order and community shape

discourses and practices of community security[1] and thus reflect – and feed back into – broader patterns of statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan. Thus, I exhibit the nexus between post-Socialist state ideology on the one hand, and seemingly apolitical and rational practices of community security on the other. Furthermore, by inquiring processes of peacebuilding, conflict prevention and transition on the basis of the practices through which they are done, I aim to provide an empirically-grounded analysis of social processes instead of limiting the research to a discursive-semiotic perspective. This focus heeds the calls to overcome the discursive fixation which confines much peace and conflict scholarship – and political/social scientists in general – to a 'myopic gaze' that deduces social dynamics, agency and resistance from public discourse (Lewis 2017) and does not sufficiently take into account the events and 'non-events' of peacebuilding (Visoka 2016).

Although I aim to contribute to a rethinking and reconfiguration of social inquiry[2] into peace, conflict and transition through my research on post-liberal statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan, I do not claim to have final or clear answers to the questions raised above. Rather, I regard the act of asking critical and reflexive questions about the relationship between scholarship, policy and processes of societal (post-conflict) transition, and the search for answers to them, the key

---

[1] In an analogy to the definition in the Saferworld *Community security handbook* (2014: 3), I understand community security as process aimed at reducing or eliminating threats to people's health and wellbeing in the physical, mental and other dimensions they deem important. Correspondingly, it is understood to be a process involving or being driven by people in communities – i.e. municipalities, districts, or other low-scale entities – themselves, rather than state institutions, administrations or law enforcement. The understanding of community security as an end-state, where threats are reduced to a minimum or eliminated is only insofar relevant for the research, as it presents the goal towards which the different organisations and initiatives examined are working (see III.3).

[2] I prefer this term as well as 'research' or 'studies' to the idea of social science, which suggests that people practicing 'science' will be able to make explanatory if not predictive theoretical pronouncements (Flyvberg 2001). This concept of scientific conduct has been pulled into doubt by arguments that the idea of doing social science independent of positionality and interests is elusive and may have problematic links with selective societal interests and power structures (Cox 1981, Weber 2004 [1904]).

contribution of this dissertation. In the remainder of this introduction, I further elaborate the contribution to debates around these issues.

I.1 Rationale for the study

The research is intended to fill the gap outlined above, namely to ask critical questions about the role and effects of theories and concepts, and the positioning and potentials of social inquiry. More constructively, the aim is to develop an approach to research that can help apprehend answers to these questions. This rationale has changed since the initiation of the research project based on my progressively increasing perception of the limitations of the possibility of understanding, explaining or 'knowing' process of peace, conflict and transition.

Initially, the project was aimed at inquiring processes of social ordering and statebuilding and to look for the forms, degrees and expressions of 'local agency' therein. The in-depth study of the literature and my fieldwork experiences led me to the conclusion that 'agency' is a problematic term, as it appears to signify a somewhat deterministic assumption about the possibility that people enact their desires, hopes and visions of a better life in a significant way. Although I do not want to categorically deny this possibility, I realised that using the concept of agency would be imprecise if not misleading. Instead, this thesis will critically examine the effects and implications of post-liberal forms of statebuilding by situating them against the concepts of governmentality and decoloniality.

I understand governmentality primarily in a social sense, i.e. in terms of the effects of government on the ordering, disciplining and structuring of society according to the needs of government (Gordon 1991: 4) – and, thus, implicitly, capital and empire. Decoloniality I see as an opposite ideal-type, a social modality where hierarchy, subjugation and any violent forms of ordering are absent. This understanding, drawn from decolonial theory (e.g. Mignolo 2011, 2012, Tlostanova 2010), is utopian especially when taken as a goal for the set-up of social relations in a given country or global society at large. Still, the concept is useful in looking for

different ways in which the capitalist-colonial system is challenged, especially because it holistically captures the problems of inequality, hierarchy and violence in the late modern capitalist order. It also presents a useful entry point for considering processes of peace, conflict and intervention from the perspectives of the people primarily involved and affected by these processes instead of turning upon them an analytical gaze, which will necessarily be biased and limited for capturing the implications of international assistance and statebuilding and security practices (Sabaratnam 2017, Lottholz 2017b). Thus, the concept of decoloniality allows a more fundamental critique of the limits and contradictions of peacebuilding than other concepts, such as 'empowerment' or 'emancipation', which have hitherto been invoked in peace and conflict research (Richmond 2014, Maschietto 2016). I have decided to situate the study in a decolonial research paradigm, which seeks to not only uncover the legacies and continued effects of imperial and colonial domination, but also the limits of scholarship to challenge and help overcome the latter (Turner and Kühn 2016, Lottholz 2016b: 140).

The rationale of providing a more evaluative than deterministic perspective emerged from my engagement with questions about scientific epistemology and disciplinary make-up of peace and conflict studies. The field appears to be, although mostly implicitly, too immersed in the logic of scientific positivism and causality, judging from a critical angle that is informed by a reading of formative controversies in anthropology and social science at large - specifically the 'writing culture' and 'Third World feminism/women of colour' debates (Lottholz 2017b, see II.2), and the controversy on research participants' objection in the ethnography of aid (Mosse 2006, 2005, Bekmurzaev et al. 2018). This scientistic self-understanding is partly understandable given the orthodox scientific episteme in which mainstream social science research is formulated, and in light of policy makers' and funders' demand for the production of new theories and concepts that promise to make policies more effective.

However, as I will try to show, it is also possible to generate impact outside of the nexus between scientifically framed knowledge and policy. Practice-based and activist research approaches have developed over the last years and present different ways in which researchers can support a given community in their struggle without alluding to the generalisability or applicability of their findings beyond the specific research context. The second rationale is thus to show how a 'practice-based' and 'cooperative' approach to research can yield more analytically meaningful insights and help, furthermore, to satisfy scholars' ambition to have impact and make their work the basis for concrete actions and results. Looking at the concrete practices and ways in which people make sense of challenges to peace and security on the communal level has proved the most viable way to overcome the discursive-deductive logics and lack of empirical grounding in peace, conflict and intervention research discussed above.

A third rationale is on a theoretical, conceptual level and is of interest to both scientific and more decolonial, supra- or post-disciplinary research. It is to demonstrate the value of the concept of 'post-liberalism' in the context of post-Soviet Central Asia and post-Socialist Eurasia more generally. While the two former rationales will be developed especially in the first two, methodological and theoretical chapters and in the conclusion[3], the analysis as such will be focused on the shift from a liberal to a post-liberal modality of statebuilding and social order in Kyrgyzstan, specifically the interplay of practices and imaginaries of social ordering in (re-)producing this post-liberal trajectory. I further show how 'imaginaries' – understood as semantic vehicles that channel different discourses into the practices of statebuilding and social

---

[3] In this sense, I do not conceive of my practice-based and cooperative approach as an additional object of study whose mechanisms, effects and outcomes are to be analysed. I have nevertheless chosen to frame the entire research project through this rationale as reducing it to a methodological or theoretical aspect would re-produce the scientific logic which, as I argue, reduces the potential of peace and conflict studies to bring about progressive social change. Systematically reflecting on why and how research needs to be done differently is in this sense an essential part of my project and figures mostly in the theoretical and reflective, rather than analytical, parts of it (i.e. chapters II, III and VIII).

ordering – are useful to better trace the different levels of the production of meaning. This way, I create a productive link between the realm of discursive and semiotic interpretation on the one hand, and the realm of practices, which is seemingly apolitical, mundane but, as other authors have argued, the main domain for the establishment, stabilisation and normalisation of large-scale societal changes.

I.2   Research objectives

Three objectives guide the theoretical part of this research. The main one is to identify the imaginaries which are most influential for processes of community security and statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan and to inquire:

How do imaginaries of statebuilding shape community security practices in Kyrgyzstan?

The trajectory from imaginaries to practices is not understood in a one-way logic: I conceive of the link between imaginaries and practices or discourses of community security as a circular one, where imaginaries filter certain societal (both nationally and globally circulating) discourses into the sphere of community security. The practices and discourses produced in the field of community security, on their part, feed back into the wider sphere of societal discourses and the imaginaries of statebuilding. This cycle, then, over time and under influence of globally dominant discourses relating to security, peace and conflict, or poltico-economic change, affects the production of post-liberal understandings of society, politics and transmits this shift into discourses and practices of statebuilding and community security (see III.3).

In answering the question about the influence of imaginaries of statebuilding on community security practices, a decisive question is: **How do imaginaries of statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan relate to one another?** As the analysis will show and as I discuss in the conclusion, there are clear **contestations, synergies** but also **ambiguities** between the three key imaginaries of statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan that I identify. Unpacking these modalities of relation is the second key objective besides answering the main research question.

I use the concept of post-liberalism to capture social and political dynamics that cannot be captured by the binary of democratic vs. authoritarian forms of order. I am not interested in the 'top down' logics of government observable in Kyrgyzstan. Rather, my focus is on how the political regime in Kyrgyzstan is legitimised, enacted and reproduced, and thus indirectly wields power and is stabilised in subliminal, non-obvious and possibly unintended ways. The third objective of the research is thus to find out **how specific 'local actors'** such as local government, civil society and the population at large **help produce, challenge and re-shape post-liberal forms of statebuilding**. This theme implicitly underlies all of the empirical chapters IV-VII, as they are intended to present peacebuilding and community security initiatives through a post-liberal lens and demonstrate how this shift is being reproduced, and more rarely, challenged or diverted, by the involved actors. In chapter VIII I answer this question explicitly through a summary of the empirical analysis.

A fourth objective is to use the critical normative concepts of **governmentality** and **decoloniality** to evaluate the instantiation and reproduction of regressive forms of social order and hierarchy in this post-liberal trajectory and ask about the possibility of challenging, overcoming or resisting towards the latter from within. This widens the scope of the research beyond a mere attempt to understand and theorise the ways in which statebuilding and related processes in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia can be seen to be post-liberal. This component thus makes for a more holistic contribution to the rich body of literature that has emerged around debates on post-liberalism.

I.3   Contribution

This research builds up on a body of critical, decolonial research within peace, conflict and intervention studies and political science/IR more generally. Although hard to define as a field of its own, there are some key arguments that help to outline the agenda on decolonial and critical peace research. The first one is a decolonial critique of peace and conflict studies,

particularly of an approach of 'critical peacebuilding', which was expressed in regard to the lack of engagement with, and corresponding absence of, the voices from the societies intervened upon (Sabaratnam 2017, 2013a, 2011a). Although this is not to be understood as a dismissal of the important and well-substantiated critique of the liberal peace, this critique asked important questions about the positionality and composition of the group of people criticising the way in which peace- and statebuilding interventions are done on a global level (Sabaratnam 2013a: 273, Richmond and Mac Ginty 2015: 183). Post- and decolonial approaches in critical IR and sociology, specifically global historical sociology, have pointed out ways in which the Eurocentrism and structural violence of the international system can be tackled in a more systematic manner than it is currently the case (e.g. Shilliam 2015, Bhambra 2016, 2014, Hobson 2012). This project apprehends peace- and statebuilding through the concept of decoloniality (Mignolo 2012, 2011, 2007, Mignolo and Escobar 2013, Quijano 2000). This poses a novelty in peace, conflict and intervention studies – decoloniality has not been used as a frame for larger research projects in the field; and, furthermore, widens the geographical horizon of post- and decolonial scholarship, as the 'Eurasian borderlands' have so far received relatively little attention from decolonial scholarship (for exceptions see Tlostanova 2010, Tlostanova and Mignolo 2012, Boatca 2007).

Another significant strand in peace, conflict and intervention studies literature that has developed out of the critique of the liberal peace is a literature on sociological studies of international intervention in post-conflict countries.[4] This body has generated a by now sophisticated 'sociology of intervention' that inquires why and how post-conflict peace- and statebuilding produce unsustainable and often fragile forms of peace and security (Bonacker et

---

[4] Given the increasing fusion between peace and conflict studies and research focusing on different forms of interventions – broadly understood, including non-military intervention such as conditionality and assistance and aid in various fields – I use, similarly to Bliesemann de Guevara and Kostic (2017) the composite term 'peace, conflict and intervention' studies.

al. 2010, Bliesemann de Guevara 2012, Distler 2016). This critical inquiry into the failures and discontents of international intervention has also inspired researchers to tackle the frictions and resistance occurring in peace- and statebuilding interventions through a range of approaches including political economy (Berdal and Zaum 2013, Zaum and Cheng 2011) or ethnography and project evaluation (Bjoerkdahl et al. 2016, Autessere 2014, Millar 2014a). From a yet more critical stance, Turner and Kühn's sociological analysis of intervention tries to expose how intervention is often an act of 'policing of (colonial) differences globally'; 'an aggressive politics pursuing the preservation of the existing peace of the powerful' and a 'managing exercise that aims to protect the capitalist core from the non-liberal periphery' (2016: 8, see also Bachmann et al. 2014, Hönke and Müller 2012).

Another variation of this critical scholarship has turned the critical gaze back on the academic inquiry into peace and conflict itself. The recruitment of social scientists for research into the reasons and remedies for the threat of 'failed states', terror and insecurity has led scholars to confront academia's complicity with imperial forms of peace (Barkawi and Laffey 1999); the refusal to engage with the challenge that critical theory poses to peace and conflict studies (Patomaki 2000, Pugh 2004); the observation that neither practice nor scholarship on peacebuilding produce sustainable peace (Denskus 2007); and consequently, the naivety and complacency of scholars' self-understanding as 'physicians of global society' (Jutila et al. 2008: 623). More recently, scholars publishing in German language have sharpened this critical perspective by asking how peace and conflict scholarship, including critical variations, may be seen as complicit in reproducing the violence of the global system (Exo 2009); and if the 'peace writing' industry (Visoka 2016: 16) is not unwittingly instantiating forms of epistemic violence vis-à-vis society (Brunner 2016, 2014). Besides the above-mentioned synthesis with decolonial, but also feminist research approaches (Cárdenas 2016, Exo 2015, Engels 2014), a way of tackling this problem involves a critical conversation on the knowledge production practices of

11

the field (see JISB 2017). By linking this debate with new perspectives on practice theory (e.g. Büger and Gadinger 2014, Büger 2014) and participatory and activist approaches (e.g. Hale 2008), I aim to formulate an approach that is both critical about its own limits and dependencies and finds ways to ensure relevance and impact without catering to policy-making audiences.

I further contribute to perspectives on political and social change that dispense with teleological understandings of democratisation, market reforms and 'transition' (Art 2012, Gunitsky 2014, 2015, Cooley and Snyder 2015). As already pointed out, I regard as problematic the uncritical use of concepts of 'democracy', 'authoritarianism' and different versions thereof (Levitsky and Way 2010, Stewart et al. 2013, Bunce and Wolchik 2011). I am interested in the discursive self-legitimation strategies of regimes and governments (Matveeva 2009, Murzakulova and Schoeberlein 2009, Heathershaw 2009, March 2003) and their drawing on registers beyond politics in the usual sense, e.g. identity, culture and history (Kudaibergenova 2017, Marat 2008, March 2003), and other discourses and practices that elicit positive sentiments, emotions and feelings of belonging (Laszczkowski and Reeves 2015, Goode and Stroup 2015, Féaux de la Croix and Ismailbekova 2014). Especially recent ethnographic and anthropological explorations of ideological conflict and contestation, political mobilisation, and the role of customs, traditional values and worldviews in Central Asia provide promising insights that this study seeks to draw on and extend (Pelkmans 2017, Ismailbekova 2017, Lemon 2016b, Reeves et al. 2014, Reeves 2014). Additionally, in trying to understand the community security processes and the people involved in them, I draw on and contribute to research into the lifeworlds of development workers, civil society activists and other social groups and role models in Kyrgyzstan (Satybaldieva 2017, 2015a, 2009, Féaux de la Croix 2013a, 2013b, 2011).

Finally, the thesis presents an application of the concept of post-liberalism, which was initially developed in the political science/IR-based inquiry into peace, conflict and intervention

(Chandler 2010b, Richmond 2011a, 2010a, 2009a) and was applied in cases in West Africa and Latin America (Tom 2015, Graef 2015, Wolff 2013). The debate on the implications of the shift towards a post-liberal politics of statebuilding and intervention (Chandler and Richmond 2015, Tellidis 2012) has led to the critical consideration of the trajectories of governmentality, which, empirically, seem to displace the hopes and ambitions for emancipation and resistance towards the 'liberal peace' (Graef 2015: ch. 3). I adopt this critical 'governmentality' gaze to inquire the potentially regressive and subjugating effects of peacebuilding and community security. The idea of 'post-liberal' and 'hybrid forms of peace' offering an alternative to Western-dominated 'liberal peace' (Mac Ginty 2011, 2008, Richmond 2011a, Richmond and Mitchell 2011) appears, put briefly, optimistic and short-sighted. First, theorising 'emancipation' of intervened-in populations serves to side-line if not naturalise the fundamentally problematic condition of most post-conflict countries, which are caught up in unequal and often neo-colonial relationalities of intervention that usually preclude discussion of alternatives to neo-liberal capitalist restructuring and rent extraction, and to international intervention and dominance, in the first place (Bargues-Pedreny 2016, Finlay 2015). Second, as Lewis (2017: 33 ff.) points out, emancipation or other forms of betterment are usually studied in relation to the subjugation imposed by the 'liberal peace', while other actors who instantiate often worse forms of authoritarian post-conflict order – such as Russia or China – and their hijacking of discourses of emancipation and freedom remain disregarded.

These critiques of the attempts to critically engage with the problem of 'liberal peacebuilding', especially the benign role appointed to the 'everyday' realm, 'local' actors and agency driving the re-negotiation of 'liberal peace' interventions (e.g. Randazzo 2016, Paffenholz 2015, Zaum 2012) led to a critical reflection on the potential of hybrid and post-liberal forms of peace and political order to transcend conflict and avoid regression into authoritarian dynamics (Richmond and Mac Ginty 2016). Echoing this wary stance, Central

Asian studies scholars have contributed perspectives on how peace and security in this region are contested and embedded in hegemonic narratives of geopolitics and the 'war on terror' (Lewis 2017, 2016, Lemon 2016a, Megoran 2017). This research builds up on these critical accounts and aims to present insight into how peacebuilding and security policies and practices often produce performative, fragile and 'virtual' forms of peace (Reeves 2015b, Beyer and Girke 2015, Megoran et al. 2014, Heathershaw 2009) and mere conflict management rather than transformation (Owen et al. 2018, Lewis 2015a).

I.4 Methodology

The main methodological concern in this project was to engage with the practices, outlooks and lifeworlds of people in Kyrgyzstan and to see how these were linked to the emergence and reproduction of post-liberal forms of peace- and statebuilding. I adopt a political sociological framework that combines discourse analysis with multi-sited ethnographic and practice-based research methods. Drawing on these different approaches has allowed me to engage with organisations, actors and people on their own terms instead of imposing my research questions or agenda on them. Nevertheless, established conventions of academic inquiry demand that any research be subject to scrutiny as to its methodological rigour, appropriateness, ethical and positionality aspects as well as the inferences and conclusions it allows one to make. I try to address these issues in the following sub-sections after briefly introducing the context and my practice-based, dialogical approach to research on post-liberal statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan.

Context

Kyrgyzstan, officially called the Kyrgyz Republic, is known to have been the one of five post-Soviet Central Asian republics which was most receptive to international prescriptions of societal, political and institutional reforms (Engvall and Laruelle 2015: ix, Omelicheva 2015,

see IV.1). Free markets and liberal democracy were the notions underpinning its first president Askar Akaev's slogans promoting Kyrgyzstan as an 'island of democracy' and the 'Switzerland of Central Asia' (Marat 2008: 20). However, this role model type of integration, including the implementation of 'shock therapy' economic and administrative reform and accession to the World Trade Organisation in 1998 brought neither the progress and wealth, nor the political stability that people had hoped for when the country embarked on its supposed path to democracy and capitalist development in 1991.

Instead, Kyrgyzstan became notorious for its two successive revolutions within five years, which led to the ouster of Askar Akaev in 2005 and his successor Kurmanbek Bakiev in 2010. The significantly more violent change in government in 2010 left the country in a limbo state, with a series of regional and local conflicts spiralling in what has come to be known as the 2010 'June events': violent clashes in and around the southern cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad which led to hundreds of casualties and hundreds of thousands fleeing their homes (see Matveeva et al. 2012, IV.1). In the aftermath of this conflict, it has become difficult to do research or journalism on issues pertaining to the conflict and the 'inter-ethnic relations' between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, the country's largest minority group which has been said to have been disproportionality affected by the clashes. Widely visible detentions or trials against foreign journalists and NGOs[5] have made it abundantly clear that researchers need to be very careful when doing research on the 'Osh events' and their aftermath, and that research

---

[5] For instance, the US freelance journalist Umar Farooq in 2015 or Dan Church Aid's Conor Prasad in 2013, both whom were detained and questioned by the local GKNB branch under suspicion of breaking the law under article 299 of the Kyrgyzstani criminal code as they had conducted interviews with Uzbek community representatives and human rights organisations ('instigation of religious or interethnic hatred'). While both of these cases were dropped but led to extradition and fines, a court trial against the international NGO Freedom House and a local partner sparked more debate, as authorities argued that a pilot survey run Freedom House and a national partner NGO had included questions about minority rights liable to break article 299, and that the organisation had not sought approval for the survey from the State Agency for Local Self-Governance and Interethnic Relations (Gamsumo) (Beishenbek kyzy 2014).

participants and interlocutors may be subjected to scrutiny by law enforcement or their communities in any case (Bekmurzaev et al. 2018). This context presented extraordinary challenges in terms of safety and risk concerns for research participants and myself as researcher. In the following sections, I show how I attempted to navigate these challenges through a specific approach towards data gathering and communication with research participants and partners on the ground.

A practice based, dialogical approach

In order to appropriately deal with or avoid the risks incurred by peace and conflict research as indicated above, and to overcome the limitations of more standard approaches in peace, conflict and intervention studies generally, I developed a cooperative, practice-based and dialogical approach, which would see its subjects as partners to be engaged in a conversation over a longer period, not as one-off or short-term participants in a linear data gathering, or even data *extraction* exercise. Therefore, in approaching potential partners I expressed interest first and foremost in their own view of their issue area and their work in it. I offered to accompany (Ru. *soprovozhdat*) their activities and to listen to what they had to tell me about their work. In exchange for these insights, I presented different ways of sharing my perspective on these practices in different forms and genres of writing, e.g. reports and analyses for internal use, but also articles and contributions that would describe my partners' work in an accessible language and thus help to raise awareness about their activities and impacts (e.g. Lottholz 2016c, 2016d). In this sense, I used a practice-based methodology which is focused on following practitioners in their respective field rather than relying on the accounts and representations they give in interviews (Graef 2015: 70). The cooperative component ensured that there would be a two-way process of sharing and feedback, meaning that partners regarded their engagement with an academic researcher as at least potentially useful and not an additional burden (Hale 2006,

Lottholz 2017b). Furthermore, this served to ensure whether the framing and scope of my research would be perceived as being potentially too provocative or 'instigating ethnic hatred', of which other organisations or journalists had been accused.

Instead of a unidirectional form of data gathering, analysis and knowledge production, this process is dialogical: interlocutors and co-operators were given the chance to read and disagree with my interpretations and conclusions on different stages of the research. The research was thus produced together *with* them rather than *about* them, as is often the case in studies on peace, conflict and intervention (Sabaratnam 2011a: 800). To the extent that I devoted all of my research time to inquire the lifeworlds of the practitioners, managers and activists in my partner organisations and chose to address the limits and contradictions of their work in a constructive and reflective language, it can also be argued that I had an activist stance in my research. Demonstrating support for and commitment to my partners' success was prioritised at the expense of a stance that would emphasise neutrality and a distanced, supposedly more 'objective' position (Hale 2006: 100).[6]

In the course of my fieldwork, I collaborated with the UK-based international NGO Saferworld (ch. V); the Osh-based NGO Iret and its partners at the OSCE Centre in Bishkek and Osh Field Office as well as the mayoral administration (Ru. *meriia*) in the city of Osh (ch. VI); and finally, the Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result' (CURR, Ru. *Grazhdanskii Soiuz 'Za reformy i rezultat'*, ch. VII). While my early attempts to initiate partnerships with other organisations had been less successful, I was able to convince senior staff at Saferworld's Central Asia Headquarters (in Osh) of my approach to research during a workshop on peace

---

[6] This stance made my work more vulnerable to criticism. For instance, a reviewer of my article on police reform in Kyrgyzstan (Lottholz 2016c) remarked that my conclusions on the potential of new police reform approaches to effect fundamental change were too bold and that my presentation of some measures must have sounded like 'outright cynicism' to people (reviewer comments, 23 March 2016). I further discuss this dilemma of diminished scope for critique in circumstances of cooperation with law enforcement actors in chapter VII.

and security in Bishkek. I was grateful to be given a desk in the office in Osh, to exchange views and knowledge with the organisation's staff, and to be invited to help collect data on a series of visits to so-called Local Crime Prevention Centres (LCPCs, Ru. *Obshetvenno-Profilakticheskie Tsentry*) in Osh, Batken and Jalal-Abad provinces. The results of this cooperative research and additional follow-up interviews is presented in chapter V.

Through my contacts at Saferworld, I got to know people working at the Bishkek head office of the Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result' (CURR), which coordinated the 28 NGOs working on police reform and community security under the umbrella of the organisation across the country (see ch. VII). I offered to conduct an 'accompanying research' (*soprovozhdaiushee issledovanie*) with this organisation, which would include regular conversations at the head office, participatory observation at project implementation events in select municipalities, and further individual interviews and participatory observation with individual members or member organisations of the network in different communities in the country. This case study, which is presented in chapter VII, proved to be the most exhaustive one in terms of data gathered. Still, during my individual visits and requests to get to know the CURR's members' work in different localities, I also encountered access barriers and instances where people refused to participate in the research (see below and ch. VII).

The research on Territorial Youth Councils (TYCs) in chapter VI was conducted with a yet wider range of partners and took more time to complete, while my research collaboration was completed at the end of July 2015 and the one with the Civic Union intermittently conducted throughout the duration of my stay in Kyrgyzstan (June – December 2015). While I had already collaborated with the NGO Iret in Osh for my Masters research project back in 2012, getting consent for a collaborative research on the TYCs required contacting both the OSCE presence in Kyrgyzstan and the Committee for Youth Affairs (CYA, Ru. *Komitet po delam molodezhi*) in the mayoral administration in the city of Osh. While I successfully

established contact to the former via my partners at Saferworld, it required some efforts to arrange a meeting with the CYA's head and write an official letter asking 'for permission to conduct interviews and focus groups' to get to know the TYCs' work and 'obtain a more holistic [*obshirnuiu*] picture of the [project]'. Hence, it was already mid-November when received the approval to conduct this research during the last four weeks of my field research stay.

Data

The general strategy of my data collection was to get to know the initiatives and organisations I researched on their own terms, through available documents and publications, interviews and conversations, and, finally, participatory observation during events and activities. This way, I aimed to trace how these partners and the local level working groups they worked with framed and understood challenges, problems and risks pertaining to peace and security, and how they sought to address the latter through various measures. The table in appendix 1 lists the kinds and volume of primary material that I gathered in my research with different cooperation partners and other participants. I conducted semi- and unstructured recorded interviews and unrecorded conversations (which I documented with notes); participatory observations at community working group meetings and trainings, as well as on national level conferences of the different initiatives. When events were conducted in Kyrgyz language[7] and not Russian, I confirmed the content in subsequent consultations with partners and hired a translator in one

---

[7] One limitation of my research approach is that I did not learn Kyrgyz in order to be able to engage more closely with people on an everyday level, as anthropological researchers have done. Besides the fact that the timeline and funding of the project did not allow this level of immersion, it is important to note that community security and peacebuilding projects in Kyrgyzstan are mostly conducted in Russian language, as the political and legal terminology used is not existent in Kyrgyz vocabulary. See Féaux de la Croix (2013a).

case.[8] The documents and publications of the partner organisations ate not listed in this overview. While these do not constitute a high number in the case of LCPCs in chapter V and TYCs in chapter VI, I have added an overview of press coverage on the Civic Union's work in an appendix to chapter VII. My research is further based on participatory observations conducted during general societal events, accounts from trips through Kyrgyzstan and the post-Soviet space, and other interactions that helped me establish a more holistic picture (all listed in appendix 1).

As further discussed in section III.2, my analysis of discourses and practices of peacebuilding and community security rests on a threefold understanding of discourse as it was developed by Fairclough (1992: 4). Discourse is thus firstly conceived of as text, i.e. spoken or written words; secondly as 'discursive practice', which denotes 'the nature of the processes of text production and interpretation'; and, finally, social practice, which emphasises the social, institutional or otherwise background of a discursive event (1992: 4). While the interpretive analysis presented in chapters V-VII seeks to trace the practices and discourses of peacebuilding and community and their feeding into a national trajectory of post-liberal statebuilding, I base this perspective on my largely primary data (which is partly triangulated with secondary analyses and academic literature) on a mapping of 'imaginaries of statebuilding' and their composite discourses in Kyrgyzstan (chapter IV). This mapping is done with reference to both international and domestic academic literature and interspersed with media material and observations from my fieldwork. Drawing on this purposively selected literature, which sheds (critical) light on the production and formation of meaning, which in turn can be aggregated to

---

[8] Most of the interviews and events during which I did participatory observation were conducted in Russian, which is the main language of communication in the Kyrgyzstani development and peacebuilding/community security sector (see note above). Although the research is thus well-positioned in terms of local language knowledge, it can also be argued that Russian as the language of imperial domination is insufficient to capture genuinely critical and decolonial ideas and perhaps also problematic ways of thinking.

the imaginaries of statebuilding I define, helps me to develop a contextual grounding for the analysis in the following chapters. This contextual overview helps me to build up my study on existing scholarship on processes of social ordering, decision-making and policy, although I did not define my imaginaries or discourses of statebuilding as heuristic device to shape or constrain the focus of my field data analysis and its interpretive outlook.

Ethics, risk and access limits

In order to minimise the risk faced by myself and research participants and to successfully initiative partnerships with organisations in Kyrgyzstan, I attempted to frame my research interests and focal points and to navigate the different issues encountered in the course of the research co-operations in an open and nuanced manner that was not too focused on problematic key words such as 'conflict', 'inter-ethnic relations' and the like. Given my prior research experience in the country and awareness about the political situation, I decided that framing my scope on 'community security and peacebuilding' practices and their relation to globally dominant approaches and templates for social and political ordering, specifically the 'liberal peace' approach (see project information sheet in appendix 2), was the best way to approach and communicate my research. Although this felt self-constraining to the point of self-censorship, I concluded that it was the only way to make sure that both my research partners/participants and I would not get in trouble, given the sensitive reactions on the part of security services provoked by unlicensed research into these topics (see context summary above and Bekmurzaev et al. 2018, Lottholz and Meyer 2016). In the course of the cooperation arrangements with my partner organisations and initiatives, I explored and tested which kinds of topics I could inquire in more depth, and which issues were impossible for me to do research on given their sensitivity and my foreign origin.

Thus, as I show in chapters V and VII, inter-ethnic relations and violent extremism were issues on which I could not get a lot of information, although this varied across communities. The salience of these topics in a given community also decided over whether I could gain entry into these places in the first place. For community security and local administration workers from places affected by the 'Osh events' and radicalisation and violent extremism, inviting or interacting with me was too risky and conspicuous (see sections VII.3, appendix 7 and Lottholz and Meyer 2016). Consequently, my attempts to accompany people in their work were carried out on a trial and error basis, akin to a 'grounded theory' approach, which requires more investment of time and patience (Russo 2014). To ensure the participating individuals' and organisations' safety from any negative consequences, I anonymised all identities of people, organisations, institutions and places unless I received explicit consent for disclosing them.[9] While this helped to minimise the risk potentially faced by participating individuals and communities, it also limits the possibility of further debate and triangulation with further primary or secondary material, which in turn would serve to make the respective persons or places identifiable.

In addition to these limitations, I also experienced instances refusal to participate, as well as foot-dragging and at times inconsistent cooperation during my fieldwork. For instance, arranging the research with Territorial Youth Councils (ch. VI) took not only time for requesting access to these entities' members, but was also rewarded with only mediocre engagement of the participants. This was due to the fact that TYC heads and members were not forwarded the detailed information that I provided to the Committee for Youth Affairs of the mayor's administration and the youth council heads whom I met on its premises. When people did receive full information on the research project and conditions of participation in it, they

---

[9] A separate list with the real names and coordinates of the research is provided to the examiners in a confidential supplement to the thesis.

were usually very open to share their thoughts and perspectives. However, as I was only given limited access to the contact data of the TYCs' members and the interlocutors who were supposed to arrange interviews and interactions on my behalf had a more limited knowledge of the project (and interest in its success), the participant recruitment and initial readiness on part of some participants were rather limited.

In a similar way, the heads of local security working groups – or the members thereof – working under the umbrella of the Civic Union 'For reforms and result' (CURR) were not always entirely convinced that my research project was safe for them to participate in. This led the members of one territorial council and Local Crime Prevention Centres in a community in southern Kyrgyzstan to not engage in my research (see appendix 7), while the head of a community security working group in another community said that he would only admit me to group meetings if he received clear instructions from the head office in Bishkek. These more or less explicit refusals to engage in my research were understandable as the communities in question had reportedly been affected by the violence of the 'Osh events' and, respectively, the recruitment of foreign fighters to Syria. In another case in the cooperation with Territorial Youth Councils, I chose not to further follow up my research with a TYC in a district of Osh, whose Uzbek majority is reportedly subject to discrimination and marginalisation. While all of these communities in which I could not conduct research – or did not feel I could do without putting myself and my participants in harm's way, deserve having their cases examined by researchers and journalists who are better resourced or trusted, I decided that the risks faced by the people concerned and the ethical issues that would have been raised by me potentially trying to push to do research or gather some data anyways, were too significant.

Against this background, I do not claim to capture the actors, projects and processes examined in my empirical chapters in their full substance. Rather, my study is subject to similar as other peace, conflict and security research which needs to navigate access regimes that are

constrained by the increasing 'bunkerisation' (Fisher 2017) and spread of 'danger zones' (Andersson 2016). The possible risk of research cooperations being terminated due to security issues also foregrounded my choice to do research with several partners simultaneously, as proposed in the idea of 'multi-sited ethnography' (Marcus 1998). While focussing on two or only one cooperation in more depth might have enabled a deeper, more wholesome and insightful engagement, I found the 'safe distance' and less frequent interaction of this multi-sited approach to be the best way of balancing my ambition to do in-depth empirical research with the dependencies, uncertainty, often precarious conditions and psychological pressure I experienced during my fieldwork. Besides more structural factors (see Lottholz and Kluczewska 2017), these difficulties were also due to my limited ability to convince partners of the value and potential usefulness of my research and to play the roles that I was expected to play in an often competitive, demanding, masculinised and sometimes unforgiving environment.

In this sense, my fieldwork in Kyrgyzstan certainly made me aware of my limited ability of bridging and combining the roles of researcher, expert, and colleague on the one hand and those of friend, confidant and partner, on the other. Given the fact that in Kyrgyzstan data can only be gathered through highly personalised and informalised interaction[10], I have chosen not to do ethnographic fieldwork with an anthropological approach. Such research has yielded decisive insights into the dynamics of social ordering, faith and religion, conflict and violence, popular mobilisation, social movements and the role of individuals therein (e.g. Ismailbekova

---

[10] Information and insights I obtained through interaction in more private settings often significantly shaped my views and understandings of the processes I sought to research. Given my (likely) inability to 'mine' such data in a normal research setting, however, I also felt helpless and frustrated with the difficulties faced by foreign researchers in Kyrgyzstan. In order to protect both friends and interlocutors, I have tried to draw a clear line between the friendships established in the course of field work, and, on the other hand, instances when these friends became interlocutors or informants, in which case I made sure they were aware what my research was about and how the information they provided would be used.

2017, Pelkmans 2017, Hardenberg 2017, Beyer 2016, Reeves et al. 2014, Megoran 2013). However, I have perceived the issues of informed consent, possible lack of participants'/interlocutors' feedback and dissent on written work, and corresponding danger of objectifying and putting at risk my subjects (see Bekmurzaev et al. 2018) as too challenging in a scenario of doing anthropological research and ethnographic fieldwork 'proper'.[11] Spreading the participatory observations and interviews across a number of organisations and locales seemed to be, alongside comprehensive anonymisation of personal and contextual details, the best way to ensure research participants' protection. Perhaps more importantly, it was also a way for me to ensure access: building up the trust and understanding needed to conduct an in-depth ethnographic study with fewer organisations or individuals would not have been possible in the six months of fieldwork I conducted. Finding practitioners in NGOs and activist networks who share similar concerns, interests and knowledge with me and know how to navigate the difficulties and risks of doing social research in this domain proved the most productive way of arranging this multi-sited and practice-based inquiry.

Inferences and conclusions

As already stated, while I seek to shed light on peace, conflict and transition processes by developing my framework on post-liberal statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan, I do not claim to have final or clear answers as to why certain processes are occurring and not others. Nor do I venture to make any causal explanations. Crucially, I regard the act of asking critical and reflexive questions about the relationship between scholarship, policy and processes of societal (post-

---

[11] I have also not seized the possibility to include insights into life during and after the Soviet Union provided in the literature from the region (e.g. Alexievich 2016 [2013], 1992 [1990]) and Kyrgyzstan specifically (e.g. Aitmatov 1988 [1980]) or in new socio-psychological and psychoanalytical works on post-Socialist countries (Gook 2015, Ashwin 2012, Kay 2006). Still, this research took inspiration from these attempts to inquire people's lifeworlds and make them accessible to the reader.

conflict) transition, and the search for answers to them, the key contribution of this dissertation. This foregrounds an analysis of the ways in which contemporary processes of social ordering and change are understood in Kyrgyzstani society and beyond – a perspective I attempt to develop though the discourses and 'imaginaries of statebuilding', and furthermore means that such a perspective needs to be based on the epistemic and practical regimes as they can be perceived both through textual data and personal observations, but also (critical) academic literature produced in the past decades. In doing so, I seek to point out how understandings, practices and process are shaped in such a particular post-liberal way, that people do not see alternative ways of more radical discussion, contestation, and critique, which could foreground more sustainable, socially inclusive and possibly decolonising practices, policies and institutional designs. In this sense, I do not wish to define a practice or a certain situation as post-liberal, or to make statements about the causal reasons why they are so or otherwise. Rather, I seek to offer a post-liberal lens on the way the Kyrgyzstani state is built through community security and peacebuilding practices and discourses in order to bring forward the historical contingency and future path dependency in which such trajectories and the lives of people in Kyrgyzstan in post-Socialist states more generally are situated.

I.5   Thesis structure

In the first part of this thesis, I present my methodological and epistemological positioning and my theoretical argument on post-liberal statebuilding in Central Asia. In Chapter II, I review debates in peace and conflict studies as to their methodological and epistemological shortcomings, which I try to address. I provide an outline of the critique which critical peacebuilding scholarship, despite its valuable critique of the hegemony of the 'liberal peace', faced for failing to substantially engage with the societies subject to 'liberal peace'

interventions, and for not grasping the systemic nature of peace- and statebuilding interventions as a tool of stabilisation of an inherently unequal and exclusionary capitalist-imperial order. Next, I survey the reception of sociological and ethnographic/anthropological approaches in peace and conflict studies and show how these syntheses reproduce, contra the assumption of critical peacebuilding scholarship, the exclusion of voices of the 'intervened upon' as well as the academic-scientific approach of the field. In then show how, based on recent contributions in practice theory, participatory and activist research, it is possible to overcome these limitations by forging a practice-based and cooperative approach to inquiry.

Chapter III presents the analytical framework and theoretical contributions to peace, conflict and intervention studies. I start by situating the framework in debates on the concept of post-liberalism, emphasising the key idea being that the global shift from liberal to post-liberal forms of governance and statebuilding has brought about a gravitation of social life towards entrenched governmentality (rather than emancipation). As a counter-part to governmentality, I develop the concept of decoloniality as a form of being, knowing and acting which allows more critical and fundamental reflection than concepts like 'emancipation' and its underlying Enlightenment episteme that informs most peace, conflict and intervention research. Furthermore, I introduce the social imaginary, which I understand to be a vehicle structuring statebuilding processes by linking discourses and practices in the empirical realm with understandings and ideational frameworks situated in the metaphysical realm. To set a basis for the empirical analysis, I review literature on community security and show how studying processes and practices in this domain can foreground critical insights into post-liberal forms of peace- and statebuilding and social ordering.

Chapter IV is the first of four analytical chapters on processes of statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan and is based on a review of academic literature and journalistic material that help to identify the key imaginaries and discourses of statebuilding in this country. After giving a

brief overview of Kyrgyzstan's history since independence from the Soviet Union, I present the three imaginaries of statebuilding and their constitutive discourses (four per imaginary) which emanate from my analysis. First, I show how a Western 'liberal peace' imaginary is rooted both in the concept of 'imaginary West', (Yurchak 2006), and in teleological notions of capitalist liberal-democratic modernity and 'liberal peace'. Next is the imaginary of 'politics of sovereignty' (based on Gullette and Heathershaw 2015): I discuss how actors may be compelled to assert the sovereignty and independence of their country and its people (variously defined) through discourses such as the 'bad West' and ethno-national belonging, while discourses of Soviet modernity and anti-colonialism/imperialism present less confrontational and violence-prone materialisations. Finally, I show how an imaginary of 'tradition and culture' links understandings of social order with ancestral traditions, historical heritage and spirituality, which foreground forms of communal life and social resilience that can both affirm and challenge modern forms of social organisation and 'politics of sovereignty'.

In chapter V, I introduce the reader into the context of community security and local government in Kyrgyzstan and present my analysis of the work of Local Crime Prevention Centres (LCPCs) in southern Kyrgyzstan. I begin with a brief overview of the changes that the country underwent since the Soviet period: given the 'new' 'market realities' people found themselves struggling with since the 1990s, some of the Soviet era social and administrative institutions substantially ceased to exist, but were also often sustained by the tireless efforts of few 'responsible' and capable individuals. Local Crime Prevention Centres, created by a 2008 law, are bodies tasked with the coordination of the Soviet and 'traditional' socio-institutional architecture, ideally with the help of international funding. Based on a cooperative research into the activities of LCPCs, I show how these make crucial contributions to community life and public security. I also show how the changes, dialogue and 'boundary work' brought about by LCPCs are highly conditional on local administrations' and other actors' cooperation and

might, if the latter are lacking, take on an unsustainable and performative character, as in the case of peacebuilding based on the Soviet idea of 'people's friendship'. In the final section, I discuss how LCPCs' practices and discourses are often positioned cooperatively vis-à-vis 'liberal peace' actors and drawing on corresponding human rights and democratic framings, but, simultaneously, often enact a 'politics of sovereignty' that super-ordinates state security interests over post-conflict justice and trans-communal outreach.

In chapter VI, I analyse a recent initiative that sought to promote peace and tolerance among youth in Osh and other cities: 'Territorial Youth Councils' (TYCs) were founded as a body for communal outreach in the aftermath of violent clashes in and around Osh and other cities in southern Kyrgyzstan in 2010. After reviewing its institutional history, I discuss how the Osh mayor's administration (*meriia*) adopted this institution into its own structure in order to promote peace, tolerance and security through contributions of local youth. My empirical analysis gives insight into the range of activities geared towards this goal, specifically how they reproduce 'people's friendship' and traditionalist discourses on social order while allowing for opinions and forms of expression situated in the Western 'liberal peace' imaginary. I further show how both TYCs promote ideas of self-help, self-improvement, and self-realisation that resonate with concepts of entrepreneurial subjecthood and individual responsibilisation. While TYCs thus seem to be limited to more momentous and pragmatic ways of tackling the problems and challenges of youth in Kyrgyzstan, I show that other initiatives are underway which try to voice more fundamental concerns in the national arena. In conclusion, I discuss how the different approaches and activities of young activists draw on the imaginaries and discourses of statebuilding in ways that approximate decoloniality, but rarely significantly enough to pose an alternative to overarching trajectories of neo-liberal market governmentality in southern Kyrgyzstan.

In the final empirical chapter VII, I examine the work of the Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result', a national level NGO network which promotes an alternative approach to police reform both through national level lobbying and work in local communities. In a first step, I conceptualise the organisation's emergence and its aim of promoting human security against the usually paramount agenda of national security. Second, I review the activists' confrontations and exchanges with the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MIA), presidential administration and different Inter-Governmental Organisations and INGOs from a sociological perspective to indicate the 'boundary work' done and barriers faced by the activists. In the third section, I present my field work from community security working groups to analyse the cooperative security approach promoted by the organisation, which espouses the idea that security is most effectively produced in a joint effort of local government/administration, law enforcement, civil society and population. Despite its significant contribution, cooperative security exhibits important limits in that community security working groups tend to not take into account the complex nature of security threats and often define problems and associated actors or groups in a way that essentialises, and possibly excludes, different individuals or groups within a community. In concluding this chapter, I show how the examined community security practices, if not combined with more holistic and national level policy making, are liable to give rise to trajectories of post-conflict governmentality and how the persistent hampering of more fundamental national level reform presents a materialisation of post-liberal statebuilding.

In the Conclusion, I first summarise the key findings from the three empirical chapters and map the different community security practices within the framework of imaginaries of statebuilding. Next, I return to the initial research objectives and discuss how the thesis has addressed them, namely the question about imaginaries of statebuilding, the way they shape – and become reproduced and shaped by – community security practices, how specific 'local

actors' reproduce and challenge post-liberal statebuilding trajectories and, finally, how the latter entrench governmentality effects of this trend or indicate possibilities of working towards decoloniality. I link the latter two points back into the discussion on post-liberalism and its implications for re-thinking established concepts of democracy, authoritarianism and knowledge/facticity. I also show how my practice-based, dialogical research approach is useful in uncovering and tracing the processes of construction, contestation and change in post-liberal statebuilding processes, and what steps can be taken in future research to generate substantive insights into peace, conflict and intervention in Central Asia and beyond.

Chapter II   Peace, conflict and intervention research between theory and practice

In this chapter, I situate the thesis within and vis-à-vis recent debates in peace, conflict and intervention studies and the intellectual origins and interdependencies of this field. I elaborate the critical, decolonial approach outlined in the introduction by surveying the critique put forward vis-à-vis the critique of the 'liberal peace'. On this basis, I develop different pathways to re-configure research in a less abstract, scientist way towards a more context- and practice-driven approach. To this end, I point out how the recent 'practice turn' in IR and social science foregrounds a practice-based approach at studying peace, conflict and intervention and how a focus on particular practices can enable an analysis that yields decisive insights into how peace and security are built and how conflict is prevented and 'managed'. In this sense, this chapter provides a meta-theoretical reflection on the way in which research is, could, and should be done, before the next chapter ventures into the academic discourse and constructs the analytical framework and the approach to the study of post-liberal statebuilding in the practical field of community security.

In the next section (II.1), I outline the emergence of and different trends within peace and conflict studies conceived of as a 'scientific' field and the tensions this gives rise to. I discuss the emergence of the paradigm of statebuilding after the dominant 'liberal peace' template following the official end of the Cold War; the critiques put forward against it by critical peacebuilding scholarship; and, finally, sum up the criticisms faced by critical peacebuilding scholarship for its methodological and epistemological shortcomings. In section II.2, I review literatures which promise to mitigate some of these methodological and epistemic shortcomings, focusing on the 'sociology of intervention' and the nascent synthesis of anthropological and ethnographic approaches/methods with peace-/statebuilding research. After concluding that scholarly work in these strands has to overcome the focus on Western/international interveners and an empiricist-positivist epistemology, I discuss new

insights and potentials for developing practice-based and cooperative research approaches in extension of the so-called 'practice turn' in IR and social science more generally (II.3).

II.1 Peace, conflict and intervention research: Intellectual heritage and current challenges

Post-Cold War statebuilding and the critique of the liberal peace

In order to understand the way in which state- and peacebuilding emerged as a paradigm throughout the 1990s and was consolidated in the 2000s, one has to re-imagine the world after the official end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. The break-up of the Soviet Union and other communist regimes was widely perceived to signify what Francis Fukuyama called the 'end of history' (1992), where liberal democracy had proved to be the most viable form of political and economic order. Together with a longer tradition in liberal internationalist thinking[1], this historical determination heralded a new way of thinking about the need to intervene in conflict-affected countries. After the withdrawal of US and Soviet Union military support and aid, different internal conflicts broke out or stirred up again in countries such as Angola, Namibia, Somalia, and most tragically in Rwanda and former Yugoslavia. The increased perception of global chaos in the eyes of ill-equipped international, above all UN, institutions (see Kaplan 1994) led Gerald Helman and Steven Ratner call for assisting so-called 'failed states' in situations of institutional collapse. This was to be done, as they argued, with a 'more systematic and intrusive approach', invoking the parallel of broken families where 'forms of guardianship or trusteeship' are legitimate (Helman and Ratner 1992: 7; 12; see Lemay-Hebert 2013a).

---

[1] Specifically, the idea that liberal democracies perpetuate peace and democratic order while avoiding war between themselves (Doyle 1986; 1983), which foregrounds the justification of intervention to democratise post-conflict and authoritarian countries in order to make them peaceful.

The problem of 'fragile' or 'failed states' and their implications for global security reached their highpoint on the agenda in global politics after the 9/11 attacks, at latest (Hameiri 2007; Grimm et al. 2014). One indicator of this is the emergence of the *Responsibility to Protect*, a norm passed on the UN world summit in 2005 and obliging states to protect their populations from genocide and mass atrocities, and set the basis, or obligation, for international community to intervene in 'emergency' cases.[2] Büger and Bethke show how the different epistemic communities of academic experts, policy advisers and decision makers cooperated and colluded in the (re-)production of the 'fragile states' concept and its translation into statebuilding policies which came to dominate post-conflict reconstruction and development policies of all major donors (see also Lemay-Hébert and Mathieu 2014, Marquette and Beswick 2011). Different genealogies (ibid., Lemay- Hébert 2009, Hameiri 2010) have traced the roles of dominant thinkers in laying the foundation for statebuilding as a paradigm, for instance of Francis Fukuyama (2004, 2995), Robert Rotberg (2004, 2003) and Roland Paris (2004; see Lottholz and Lemay-Hébert 2016 for a concise overview).

This development of statebuilding as a scientific paradigm (Marquette and Beswick 2011) to inform policies has led to a consolidation of a hegemonic position of 'institutionalist' approaches to state- and peacebuilding (Lemay-Hébert 2013a). The problem of fragility and failure was almost entirely constructed in terms of functioning institutions, the delivery of public goods, and provision of a strong, yet 'hands-off' institutional framework for the economy (ibid., Lottholz and Lemay- Hébert 2016). The corresponding recipe of restoring, and in the worst case imposing, the conduct of Western-style, 'Weberian' state institutions, seemed to

---

[2] See UN Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide for a concise explanation and the documents that constitute this action principle: http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/responsibility.shtml (Accessed 15 January 2015). The 'Responsibility to Protect' is outlined in the following way, on the website: 'Sovereignty no longer exclusively protects States from foreign interference; it is a charge of responsibility where States are accountable for the welfare of their people.'

promise success both in theoretical terms and in practical perspective, as a number of recommendations came to increasingly inform state- and peacebuilding practices in the UN and other agencies (ibid., Lemay-Hébert and Mathieu 2014). This loose consensus was termed the 'liberal peace' and included the main pillars of democratisation, marketisation, economic liberalisation and the benchmarks of human rights, rule of law and good governance.[3] It became the most legitimate, and in fact orthodox, approach to statebuilding, embraced by theorists and practitioners alike (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2009, Cooper 2007). Institutionalist statebuilding scholars and other advocates of the 'liberal peace' arguably understood themselves as 'physicians of global society' (Jutila et al. 2008), who hold the remedy for fixing 'failed states' and post-conflict societies.

The idea of statebuilding after the 'liberal peace' template and the intellectual hegemony of 'problem-solving' scholarship, focused on 'fixing' failed, failing and underdeveloped states, came under heavy critique from different authors which can be subsumed under a broad label of 'critical scholarship'.[4] The binary of 'problem solving' and 'critical' theory, which is now most often employed in framing debates on statebuilding (Lemay-Hébert 2013b, see for

---

[3] Duffield defines the liberal peace thus: 'The idea of liberal peace … combines and conflates 'liberal' (as in contemporary liberal economic and political tenets) with 'peace' (the present policy predilection towards conflict resolution and societal reconstruction). It reflects the existing consensus that conflict in the South is best approached through a number of connected, ameliorative, harmonising and, especially, transformational measures.' (2007: 11)

[4] The term 'critical' goes back to the formation of "Critical Theory" by the Frankfurt School of Social Sciences in the 1920s, where this philosophical and scientific approach was developed, first and foremost, by Max Horkheimer in his pivotal essay *Traditional and critical theory* (1972 [1937]), and later in his work with Theodor Adorno (Horkheimer and Adorno 1944, see Rush 2004: 8). While 'traditional' theory was valuable as it helped to understand and steer the production process in the capitalist system (and social and political processes more generally), Horkheimer confronts the problem that 'the conception of theory was absolutized, as though it were grounded in the inner nature of knowledge as such or justified in some or other ahistorical way, and thus it became a reified, ideological category' (1972: 194). Critical Theory, on the other hand, would not aim to explain phenomena through mathematical and quasi-natural scientific rules, but approach the social world in a more holistic way in order to understand it beyond the apparent and measurable, which amounts to a 'radical reconsideration, not of the scientist alone, but of the knowing individual as such' (ibid.: 199).

example Bliesemann de Guevara 2012) can then be ascribed to Robert Cox' seminal article on IR theory. Cox summarises that 'critical theory can be a guide to strategic action for bringing about an alternative order, whereas problem-solving theory is a guide to tactical action which, intended or unintended, sustains the existing order' (1981: 130). Although these two approaches to science may be fundamentally different, the distinction is blurred and a lot of overlaps occur (see below).

A first distinguishable strand in critical scholarship are analyses of the global implications of peace- and statebuilding missions and their (unwitting) complicity with imperial formations of global politics. Duffield, for instance, observed how the merging of security and development served to stabilise substantive levels of disorder in developing countries while also limiting the danger they pose to the global environment (2001). This 'liddism', i.e. the attempt to contain the disorder (with-) in crisis-ridden and war-torn states (see e.g. Jahn 2007), was argued to set the basis for the imposition of peace- and statebuilding missions on non-Western countries as a hegemonic, neo-colonial project of world order (Pugh 2005, 2006, Chandler 2006a). The global scope of these more systematic critiques is augmented by perspectives pointing out the specific shortcomings and insufficiencies of statebuilding missions, especially their delusional and hubristic character (Richmond and Franks 2007, Cooper 2007; see Paris 2010 for an overview). One good example is Aidan Hehir's argument that statebuilding has become a 'hyper-real' endeavour that aims

> … to create political communities which mirror a vision of the Western state – democratic, pluralist, efficient, just, fair – which doesn't actually equate with existing Western states but rather with an idealised composite image of Western democracies. (2011: 1074)

Scholars with an interest in 'critical peacebuilding studies' (Richmond and Mac Ginty 2013) have mounted a critique vis-à-vis the 'liberal peace', which focuses on the failures of liberal

peacebuilding and statebuilding missions on the ground (Richmond and Mac Ginty 2009, esp. introduction; Richmond 2011a, Mac Ginty 2011a, Tadjbakhsh 2009, Pugh et al. 2008, Richmond and Franks 2009, 2007, Bellamy and Williams 2005). The critiques touch upon several issues, including:

i) That the liberal peace would be 'cold and unfeeling, lacking understanding or empathy' vis-à-vis the populations it seeks to empower and liberate (Richmond 2011a: 63);

ii) that it encourages local ownership and participation in statebuilding processes only in rhetoric, not in reality (Richmond 2011a: 3, 10, 83; 2010b; Donais 2009; Mac Ginty 2008);

iii) that it would not engage with local needs and welfare (Richmond 2011a: ch. 4; 2009b; Pugh et al. 2008);

iv) and, in doing so, undertakes a project of social engineering and biopolitics where considerations of global security and stability are prioritised over building a sustainable peace (ibid.).

This critique exhibits a slightly different stance towards the idea of peacebuilding and international intervention than that underlying the imperial or colonial critique discussed above: intervention and the need for peacebuilding as such are not rejected per se, leading Finlay to call this group of scholars 'critical interventionists' (2015: 224).[5] In this sense, the critique of the 'liberal peace', it was argued, is caught in a 'paradox of liberalism', as it does not offer any alternative to the liberal outlook of the orthodoxy in international intervention studies and

---

[5] Chandler calls this critique an 'ideas-based critique', which leads those scholars to propose a re-examination of the concepts underpinning the liberal peace, but also makes this position appear as a rather 'uncritical critique' (2010a).

appears to, instead, unwittingly construct an apology for the failures of liberal interventionism (Chandler 2011: 146, 153; 2015, Paris 2010).

Critical scholars have indeed engaged constructively with the idea of offering improvements for post-conflict peace- and statebuilding policies. Examples include Pugh et al.'s proposition of a 'life welfare paradigm' (2008: 6, 394), the concept of 'social peacebuilding' (Lidén 2011: 67, 2009) or reform proposals for peace-/statebuilding missions that are more effective and sensitive vis-à-vis the needs of recipient populations (Richmond 2011a; 2014). Different exchanges between the scholars of these respective affiliations (Campbell et al. 2011; Newman et al. 2009) have enacted the idea of productive dialogue for dealing with problems of the liberal peace by 'altering and customising, [but] not abandoning the ... elements of peacebuilding' (Paris 2011: 167). As pointed out by Cox, there does appear merit in trying to develop alternative approaches to peace- and statebuilding: 'A principal objective of critical theory … is to clarify [the] range of possible alternatives' (1981:130). Yet, the 'problem-solving critical scholars' engaging in this kind of theorising have to face up to the question as to how and whether at all the 'better solutions' they develop are able to challenge and transform the conduct of peace- and statebuilding missions, and the intertwining of this industry with the interests of global capital and the governments at its behest. To what extent is 'constructive' critical scholarship able to challenge the ways in which inequality, poverty and conflict is produced by the peace- and statebuilding industry, in the first place? It appears that more critical reflection on the possible omissions of such scholarship and its complicity with imperial forms of peace is needed. Instead of such critical reflection and concerns about practical relevance, the 'liberal peace' debate leaves the impression of theoretical expedience and preoccupation with academic ritual (Visoka 2016: 29); a critique that I engage with in turn.

A methodological and decolonial critique of (critical) peacebuilding scholarship

The main line of argument pursued by critical peacebuilding scholarship is that the 'liberal peace' is – despite its predominance in the international arena and in post-conflict reconstruction missions all over the world – being subverted and resisted against in the process of its diffusion and implementation. This idea gave rise to concepts such as 'post-liberal' and 'hybrid forms of peace', which were believed to be the products of re-negotiation of and resistance towards the liberal peace, shaped by the accommodation of locally-specific values, needs and interests (Richmond 2011a; Mac Ginty 2008, 2010, 2011, Richmond and Mitchell 2011). These concepts were also used to theorise the ways in which post-conflict interventions might evolve into pathways that would be more acceptable to local populations and thus more sustainable than the dominant version of (neo-) liberal peacebuilding.

Reading the passages positioning the main works on post-liberal and hybrid forms of peace (Richmond 2011a, Mac Ginty 2011; Richmond and Mitchell 2011; Graef 2015), the impression emerges that not only much of this research is aimed at an IR audience (Lottholz 2017b, Paffenholz 2015)[6], but that it is also supposed to improve and maintain the dominant role of IR (and political science) inquiry into peace and conflict. The following excerpt is a good example of this:

> A research agenda is needed which engages with an understanding of the dynamics of
> the relationship between the liberal and the local, and of the interface between the two

---

[6] Although Richmond himself points out the narrowness and constraints of IR when it comes to peace research, e.g. its 'narrow set of prescriptions about peace, and … functions of the state' (2011a: 86); 'its liberal guise' leading it to assume rights, democracy and rule of law (ibid.: 129); its problematic conceptions of 'the state, sovereignty, embedded liberalism and the international system' (118) and focus on the 'territorial state as the locus of power and order' (125), among other things. See also Richmond and Franks for the criticism of the specific ontology and methodology of the 'peace-as-governance' framework (2007: 295). Similar statements can be found in Mac Ginty (2011: ch. 2).

in terms of everyday life for local communities and actors, as well as for more abstract institutional frameworks. (Richmond 2011b: 434)

Thus, it becomes obvious that rather than pursuing the *inter-disciplinary* research agenda mapped out for the inquiry of hybrid and post-liberal peace, critical peacebuilding studies remain largely situated within an IR-based paradigm, interested in theory-building and -testing and less so in the in-depth study of specific contexts (Randazzo 2016, Paffenholz 2015).

The conceptions of 'post-liberal' and 'everyday' forms of peace (Richmond and Mitchell 2011, Richmond 2011a, 2009a, 2009b) are limited by this reluctance to engage with the actual anthropological and sociological perspectives which are conferred more analytical authority for the study of peace and conflict (see section II.2). The lack of empirical grounding begs the question what the 'the really-existing "local-local" and "everyday" of post-conflict environments' (Richmond 2009b: 325), which are not be represented in the standard peacebuilding approaches, look like, and if they even exist at all.[7] The 'local-local' is supposed to indicate 'the existence and diversity of communities and individuals that constitute political society beyond [an] often liberally projected artifice [of local society]' (2009b: 341, en. 2), but there is little to no evidence of its existence in Richmond's own research. Although his research is generally based on visits of case study countries[8], as some scholars have pointed out (Millar 2014a: 5, Sabaratnam 2011c: 64-81, Zaum 2012), such empirical engagement often remains largely anecdotal, especially when compared to the comprehensive argumentation on 'liberal peace' debates and the need to reform peace and conflict studies methodology. For instance, in

---

[7] Sabaratnam argues that Richmond's work 'seems to reflect an imagined communitarian space characterised by "context, custom tradition and difference in its everyday setting"' (Sabaratnam 2011b: 65, quoting Richmond 2010b: 558). She likens this assumption of a non-modern, somewhat pure, cultural subject with what Mac Ginty has called 'last native syndrome' (Mac Ginty 2011b: 217; Sabaratnam 2011c: 223).

[8] For instance, Timor Leste (2011a: ch. 6), Solomon Islands (2011c) or Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina (2011a: ch. 3, Kappler and Richmond 2011)

analysing 'aspects of the local-liberal hybrid' (2011a: ch. 6), the analysis hinges on few interviews, among which one with a middle-aged district commissioner (166 ff.) is being relied on most heavily in assessing the situation after the conflict.[9]

These methodological shortcomings generally preclude the view on the actual points of view of the 'local' or 'local-local', which remains imaginary and elusive, as does the emancipatory potential of local, everyday forms of 'post-liberal peace'. Sabaratnam points out that it is often not clear why local views would be ethically preferable to Western liberal views, other than 'by virtue of their implicitly "authentic" status' (2011c: 68) or for the sake of their resistance to the liberal peace. It seems that they could instantaneously endorse or embody regressive, negative and structurally violent forms of social order.

Another critic of the liberal peace whose analyses are not exempt from criticism as to their cursory nature is David Chandler. For instance, his argument about the 'fake' quality of how democracy and state institutions are being built in post-conflict environments, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina (Chandler 2000), is almost exclusively based on an examination of interveners' view of the statebuilding process in the country. Thus, the function of a democratic government that conforms to certain standards and blueprints in the acceptance of norms of international governance institutions and actors is paramount in this work, at the expense of a clear perspective of the inner workings of democratisation in Bosnia.[10] Sabaratnam raises concern with the absence of engagement with local voices in Chandler's research on Bosnia:

---

[9] The convenience of such a source is obvious and not explicitly reflected upon.

[10] In *Empire in denial* (2006a), for instance, resistance of local views to this illiberal peace and the international intervention industry is more inferred from the fact that people keep voting for nationalist parties than from any significant examination of the different populations groups' sentiment (ibid.: 154-157).

> [I]f we are to assume, contra the interveners, that people in post-conflict environments are capable of authorising their own politics, why not deal with their expressed views on these issues? (2011c: 80).

This line of criticism is extended to other critical peacebuilding scholars such as Pugh and Duffield, all of which seem to be more preoccupied with the inherent contradictions of Western power and the correspondingly illiberal and failing peacebuilding practices (2011c: 81 ff.). All attempts to critique Western hegemony seem to end up reaffirming the paramount importance to the hegemonic forces of the liberal peace (ibid.: 79-80). The absence of non-Western subjects limits the attempts of critical peacebuilding scholarship to formulate a radical critique of the hegemony of the liberal peace. It might be argued that the focus on resistance towards the 'liberal peace' can be a first step towards taking into account non-Western voices in the study of peace- and statebuilding. However, this is hardly a sufficient condition especially given the often schematic way in which resistance is more assumed than actually engaged with empirically.

This critique of the critical peacebuilding scholarship's critique of the 'liberal peace' and its development of alternative research agendas along concepts such as post-liberal and hybrid forms of peace is largely framed from a methodological and epistemic point of view (see also Paffenholz 2015, Graef 2015, Sabaratnam 2013a). The general logic of this strand of critical peace research and its shortcomings appears to reflect an underlying problem with the production of knowledge in academia in general: The 'almost exclusive focus' on the 'liberal West' at the expense of an abstracted, imagined 'local' alterity whom researchers appeared reluctant or unable to engage with points to a general Euro- or Western-centrism in peacebuilding research (Sabaratnam 2013a), IR and political science (Hobson 2012; 2007; Jones 2006; Agathangelou and Ling 2009) and the social sciences more generally (Restrepo and Escobar 2005).

In this sense, it appears that much inquiry in peace, conflict and intervention studies – whether of critical outlook or not – is susceptible to (re-) produce – or fail to exhibit and challenge - the coloniality of the current modern international system. Suárez-Krabbe defines coloniality as referring 'to the fact that the relationship between colonialism and coloniality is structural and persisting, in opposition to the idea that colonialism is over' and 'that the global ethnoracial hierarchy (that emerged with the 'discovery' of America) remains the main organizing principle of social relations on a world scale' (2009: 2; Quijano 2000). The idea of taking the coloniality of being and knowledge as vantage point for social research was introduced by the intellectual collective *modernidad/colonialidad* (coloniality/modernity) around Arturo Escobar, Walter Mignolo, Anibal Quijano and others. When applied to social relations, coloniality can be understood, according to Tlostanova:

> … as the indispensable underside of modernity, a racial, economic, social, existential, gender and epistemic bondage created around the 16th century, firmly linking imperialism and capitalism, and maintained (though reconfigured) since then within the modern/colonial world. (2012: 132)

From this vantage point, the exclusion, silencing, aggregation and simplification of what is called 'local voices' in peace- and statebuilding research would appear not only to be a methodological or epistemological flaw, but also position such research in complicity with an 'imperial peace' (Behr 2014: 112), as it fails to challenge the Western-centric global order and its mechanisms of 'classifying [humans] in relation to the colonial matrix of power and the ontological marginalization of non-western and not quite western people' (Tlostanova 2012: 133). Different authors have shown how such a colonial bias can be overcome (Sabaratnam

2017, Ziai 2016, Agathangelou and Ling 2009, Jones 2006).[11] I present the practice-based and dalogical approach to peace, conflict and intervention research, which is foregrounded by such a decolonial critique, in section II.3.

II.2   New concepts and approaches to statebuilding: Sociology and ethnography

The forging of new agendas of peace, conflict and intervention research along sociological and ethnographic lines has arguably led to an improvement of the field's methodological apparatus and epistemological orientation. These developments helped to go beyond a mere critique of the liberal peacebuilding interventions and give more comprehensive insight into why and how situations of protracted conflict and negative forms of peace were entrenched and not overcome. The collection *Statebuilding and state-formation* edited by Berit Bliesemann de Guevara (2012) represents a nodal point in the synthesis between sociological literature on state- and peacebuilding intervention.[12] The different contributions highlight how international intervention and assistance can facilitate statebuilding and formation processes, but may also stabilise and ossify predatory and reform-averse state structures and situations of protracted conflict and crisis. For instance, trusteeship (2012: ch. 7), transnational profiteering networks (chs. 4 & 5) and internal groups and actors who act as 'spoilers' (ch.3) can hamper and block statebuilding processes and establish impractical and structurally violent arrangements (2012: parts I and II).

This analysis of 'sate-formation under internationalised conditions' (ibid.: 6) reflects the growth of a literature that tries to establish a critical view of the social, political and

---

[11] Although it has been pointed out that such a radical re-thinking of social inquiry can only happen within limited scope within the current regime of knowledge production in academia (Sabaratnam 2015, Nicolson 2017).

[12] For sake of simplicity, this review is not considering historical sociological perspectives on state formation (for instance Egnell and Haldén 2013, Hobson and Seabrooke 2001) or socio-semiotic analyses (e.g. Lemay-Hébert et al. 2013).

economic dynamics in countries undergoing international statebuilding interventions – and of international interveners' unawareness of them, leading to trajectories of deepening conflict and protracted crises (Pouligny 2006, Heathershaw and Lambach 2008, Lemay-Hébert 2009). Such analyses shed new light on the material dimensions (economic, military and other strategic sectors) of state- and peacebuilding processes and the political struggles occurring under the surface of 'transitions' towards democracy and peace. For instance, different authors have adopted an ethnopolitical lens to show how institutional mechanisms side-line or reinforce ethnic conflicts (Visoka and Gjevori 2013, Visoka 2012, 2011, Finlay 2010, Hehir 2006). Authors with a political-economic angle have shed light on the 'rentier' economies (Lemay-Hebert and Murshed 2016) and adjacent organised crime networks forming under conditions of international rule; the creation of 'bubble economies' around international organisations' compounds, that distort and retard a sustainable and independent path of economic development (ibid.: 15-16; Ghani and Lockhart 2008); and the dependency of political power on illicit and predatory practices, under-the-surface infighting and connections to organised crime, which often render the publicly visible politics a charade (Verkoren and Kamphuijs 2013, Sörensen 2012, Dauderstädt and Schildberg 2006, Pugh 2004).

The paradoxical phenomenon is, then, that the emergence of such largely corrupt and in many ways neo-colonial intervention complexes is not challenged, but rather normalised through different discourses and practises of post-conflict states' structural adjustment and integration into international economic, political and institutional architectures. In order to prepare post-conflict states for such transition and integration, bits of territory, authority, rights and obligations are handed over to international bodies or staff on the ground, which leads to the constitution of 'global assemblages' of intervention (Sassen 2006: 22, Ong and Collier

2005, Heathershaw 2012: 255, 2014: 44 ff.).[13] Furthermore, the delegation of security functions to corporate actors such as private security companies and multinational companies (MNCs) leads to the emergence of transnational security governance assemblages, which superordinate national sovereignty, international governance and security standards over humanitarian, human rights and livelihood concerns (Hönke 2013, Abrahamsen and Williams 2011, Titeca and de Herdt 2011).

The instantiation of precarious and negative forms of peace with the help of international development, political and corporate actors and structures has also been observed in the case of Central Asian post-Soviet states. Heathershaw has provided comprehensive analyses of how peacebuilding processes and reform processes in Tajikistan led to the consolidation of a 'virtual' peace amidst the entrenching of a fragile, and highly unequal political economy, while the government is concentrated on maintaining its grip on power and on mobilising international resources for this purpose (2009, 2011, 2014). He thus concludes that statehood and state sovereignty are *performed*, as for instance in the utilisation of assistance for the country's border regime and politico-technical support for a local government reform, which, apart from a new law that is compliant to international standards, did not produce substantive change in local government practices (Heathershaw 2014, 2009). Other discussions have shown how the integration of capital market and state structures into the global architecture of neoliberal financial capitalism enabled state, government and generally elite actors to enhance and maintain their wealth – with the help of offshore financial vehicles and money laundering arrangements – and thus political power (Heathershaw and Cooley 2015, especially Marat 2015). Other similar trends in the region is the utilisation of discourses on Islamic radicalism

---

[13] This is most apparent in the case of Liberia, where the implementation of the UN Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme (GEMAP) was accompanied by the appointment of foreign staff to national government positions (Andersen 2012: 134), and in the installation of international administrations in Timor Leste (see Jones 2012, Lemay-Hébert 2012 and 2011a) or Kosovo (Visoka 2016, Hehir 2006).

and the 'threat of terrorism' (Lemon 2016b, Galdini 2016), as well as related programmes for police and security forces support and capacity building (Lewis 2011a, 2011b).

This literature provides a lot of insight into the processes of establishment and normalisation of internationalised forms of post-conflict governance, peace- and statebuilding in a macro and political discourse perspective. Political sociological analyses of intervention further highlight how such often illiberal and 'authoritarian' forms of post-conflict reconstruction are mis-perceived by interveners. To this end, some analyses look at interactions between locals and internationals, and lack thereof, and how they affect the outcome of interventions. The UN Mission to Kosovo (UNMIK), for instance, was unable to foster a positive development and reconciliation between Albanians and Serbs in post-conflict Kosovo and got caught up in the frontline of this ethnic conflict (Lemay-Hébert 2013d: 19, 2009).[14] Hughes (2009) delivers further evidence from Timor Leste and Cambodia on how international interveners did not manage to sufficiently engage with the societies they intervened in, at least in terms of engaging with people beyond selective elite groups. The 'symbolic violence' (Lemay-Hébert 2011a: 1834; 2014, Bourdieu 1979) exerted by international interventions towards the local population is thus an important insight offered by sociological explorations of international intervention.

Another crucial contribution of the 'sociology of international intervention' literature is that it shows how the cognitive dissonance, that interveners are often socially distant from intervened-upon societies whom they are supposed to engage with and empower, is possible and even becomes normalised. Bliesemann de Guevara and Goetze, for instance, look at international statebuilders' *habitus*, which they define as 'the entire set of explicit and implicit knowledge, attitudes, ways of thinking and seeing the world (*Weltanschauungen*) [and

---

[14] A failure which, in Lemay-Hébert's view, points to the 'lack of cultural sensitivity and an insufficient understanding of the dynamics of the society, in terms both of power structures and of negotiations' (2009: 39).

thus] and expression of the multitude of meanings that a person has conferred to his life, and … [the] educational, cultural, social and economic capital at the person's disposition' (2012: 201, based on Bourdieu 1979). They conducted a survey among about 70 former and current UNMIK staff in 2008 on their worldviews, life styles, and standpoints in terms of international order and political profiles (2012: 202 ff.) and found that, while 'the large majority of UNMIK staff shares the same values of liberal human rights and a reformist yet interventionist approach to world politics', they exposed high sensitivity and deep understanding of the conflict their mission dealt with. Yet, the contradictions faced by the mission did not lead any of the respondents 'to a major questioning of the international politics of peace- and statebuilding as such' (ibid.: 208). Such contradictory logics of acting and representing actions and success whilst being aware of inherent limitations and contradictions have been shown to underlie international intervention and assistance practices from the micro level (Heathershaw 2011, Autesserre 2014) to specific institutions (Hunt 2014, Koddenbrock 2015) and the organisational bureaucratic culture in general (Mosse 2005, Veit and Schlichte 2012, Distler 2016). The literature thus sheds light on the 'innate conservatism' characterising state- and peacebuilding institutions and actors, which discourage their subjects from reporting problems and demanding reforms (N.a. 2016).

These and other contributions[15] elucidate the processes by which the increased sheltering and isolation of aid, development and humanitarian workers entrench their inability to challenge the environment they work in; its underlying logics of practice and knowledge production; and its effects of stabilising and reproducing global (dis-)order rather than transforming it. What many of these accounts are insufficiently including, or seem to be taking for granted, however, is the 'local' perspective on peace- and statebuilding, which is usually

---

[15] For instance, on the liminality of aid workers (Smirl 2012, 2016) and the 'bunkerisation' and 'humanitarianisation' of peace and statebuilding (Duffield 2010, Koddenbrock 2012, 2015).

included in the form of a number of press articles and selective interviews. Local people are thus understood to be an implicit part of 'intervention society' (Distler 2016), while the dynamics of internalisation or challenges and controversies around intervention and post-conflict peace- and statebuilding policies remain unexplored (Bonacker et al. 2010, esp. Bonacker's chapter). Thus, although it is commendable that sociology and other disciplines have made inroads into traditionally IR- and political science-dominated intervention studies, the currently prevalent focus on interveners in this literature is ironically reflecting the very 'self-referentiality' of Western interventions initially critiqued by proponents of the sociology of international intervention themselves (Bliesemann de Guevara 2012: 15-16). This bias can and needs to be balanced by inquiring the legitimisation and fortification of hegemonic forms of peace through discourses and practices in the domestic realms of the societies intervened upon (Sabaratnam 2017, Millar 2014a, Heathershaw 2009). In the following, I discuss the claim that ethnographic perspectives on statebuilding, similarly to sociological ones, can fill this gap and provide yet 'better' insights into the dynamics of intervention.

The deceptive potential of ethnography and anthropology in peace- and conflict studies

The reception of ethnography and anthropology in the critical peacebuilding literature can be seen as part of the gradual establishment of the critique of the 'liberal peace' and corresponding research agendas on 'hybrid' and 'post-liberal forms of peace'.[16] The interest in previously unexplored aspects of international interventions required new methodologies and research approaches for a field largely embedded in the scientific discourse of IR and political science (see II.1). Different pronouncements that 'anthropological sensitivity' was needed to study the 'bottom-up' dynamic of peacebuilding (Mac Ginty 2008: 139); that 'some varieties of anthropology and sociology are well placed to capture these dynamics' (Mac Ginty 2011: 4);

---

[16] This sub-section and section II.3 are partly adapted from Lottholz (2017b).

or that 'ethnographic methodology' could enable 'an understanding of the local, locality, context and their interactions with and against the liberal peacebuilding architecture' (Richmond 2011a: 14, see also 146, 199 ff.) capture the hope that ethnographic methods would, in Vrasti's words, 'promise a type of knowledge … more empirically accurate than that provided by discursive theories of the political' (2008: 295).

Gearoid Millar's *An Ethnographic approach to peacebuilding* (2014a) presents and applies an ethnographic research framework and thus comprehensively forges a way forward in this synthesis. The ethnographic approach, it is argued, departs from the point where critical peacebuilding scholarship usually stops, as it 'demands a willingness to study closely the local social and cultural context' and 'understand how international projects are experienced by people on the ground' (2014a: 3, 2). The added value of this approach is identified in 'ethnographic preparation' (trying to get as thorough knowledge of the context as possible), and on the appraisal of cultural differences between the understandings and worldviews held by researchers and the researched (ibid., chs. 4 & 5). The book also, however, presents an instrumentalist understanding of the potential role of ethnography in studying post-conflict transitions. The challenge to 'fully capture the local experiences of [peacebuilding] projects' (81) is thus framed as methodological question: 'there are dynamics within societies that demand purposeful sampling within a population if "local engagement" is to be achieved' (83). According to this reasoning, the contextual picture of society drawn by the researcher can be approximated to the 'real' empirical situation so that data gathering and analysis enables the best possible understanding of the effects (and shortcomings) of peacebuilding interventions. Therefore, besides having the right methodological toolkit (including ethnographic methods), the research also has to be based on the 'anthropological knowledge developed over decades by scholars with a deep understanding of Sierra Leone's society and culture' (79).

It can be argued that this reliance on ethnographic data gathering and the results of previous research is reflective of an empiricist-positivist epistemological approach, which is focused on the gathering of data that confirms or disproves a certain theory or argument. It does enable Millar to make critical arguments vis-à-vis international interveners. For instance, he demonstrates how the post-conflict reconciliation and FDI projects in question benefited mostly local elites, who had the educational capital to make sense of the interventions as well as the networks and financial resources and professional qualifications to seize the opportunities brought about by the projects (94-95). Yet, consistent with this heuristic logic, attention to complexity and detail are relegated to a matter of choice: '[A]n ethnographic approach should not be seen as an extension of anthropology but as a tool for any discipline … even non-anthropologists unwilling or unable to commit to this mode of ethnography can adopt and benefit from (it)' (Millar 2014a: 6). Still, Millar also adds that adopting this approach requires 'a healthy "anthropological imagination"' (ibid.).

This ethnographic approach might be effective for engaging multiple audiences, but its implications require critical reflection. Especially given the different ways in which anthropological research has been utilised by states, militaries and the peacebuilding industry (Denskus and Kosmatopoulos 2015, Finlay 2015), it is worth pausing at the point where ethnography is offered as a tool to be applied at one's convenience. What does the 'healthy anthropological imagination' necessary for adopting this approach look like? The understanding implicit in *An ethnographic approach* and the debates leading up to it implies an empiricist positivism for which anthropological strands had been criticised on various occasions in the discipline's controversial legacy (Vrasti 2008, Hale 2006, Restrepo and Escobar 2005).

In this empiricist-positivist imagination, ethnography is conceived of as a tool for gathering data to confirm or refine theories, or to help carry out peacebuilding practices more

effectively. However, as Denskus (2007) has argued, a focus on developing the right instruments and analysing the effectiveness of peacebuilding in delivering its alleged goals also forecloses discussion about how peacebuilding is embedded in, extends and re-produces a global web of power relations (see also Turner and Kühn 2016). In this sense, peace and conflict studies need to confront the biases and blind spots potentially emanating from its self-understanding as academic discipline rather than nurturing an illusion of accessing better knowledge (and policy) if only the right methodology can be developed. Whether the development of a methodological toolkit alone facilitates the field's potential to contribute to the creation of better peacebuilding practices and policies (as suggested by Millar 2014a: ch. 9; Paffenholz and Reychler 2005 among others) appears rather doubtful (Denskus 2007, Brunner 2014, Finlay 2015).

The idea of instrumetalising 'peace knowledge' (Visoka 2015) for the improvement of peacebuilding missions across the globe thus invites a further reflection on the limits of peace, conflict and intervention studies and their complicity with empire from a decolonial perspective. The universalist ontology and the empiricist positivism that inform the anthropological imagination in peace and conflict studies are linked to a Western-/Eurocentric understanding of the world, according to which ethnographic exploration of the supposedly 'savage' but also 'pure' periphery can yield new knowledge to better understand and solve problems of peacebuilding in the global periphery (Sabaratnam 2013a). Anthropology is thus located in the 'savage slot' within the intellectual division of labour of the modern episteme as it came about during the Enlightenment (Restrepo and Escobar 2005: 111).[17] It is construed as a '[form] of knowledge that present[s] the West with its own limits by confronting it with difference and the unconscious. [It] nevertheless find[s] in Western ratio – and, hence, in

---

[17] For instance, Souillac and Fry argue that '[a]nthropology, with its vast documentation of indigenous societies ... can remind the West of the diversity of successful approaches to creating and maintaining peace' (2016: 75).

European dominance – [its] reason for being' (ibid.).[18] This implicit cognitive mapping of the world – often implicit and used as a shorthand without bad intentions – depoliticises and dehistoricises the way in which the 'periphery' or 'Global South' have been created through the process of imperial expansion and colonialism in the first place.[19]

The empiricist anthropological imagination in peace and conflict studies and the predominance of positivist epistemology and universalist ontology in this field bear testimony to the relative isolation in which the 'local turn' and 'post-liberal' or 'hybrid forms of peace' were theorised (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992). Writing on the 'strange case' of the analogous 'ethnographic turn' in IR, Wanda Vrasti noted how, '[d]isregarding the historical controversies and political aporias of ethnographic knowledge has been a necessary condition for such a 'turn' to occur in the first place' (2008: 195). She and other authors (Restrepo and Escobar 2005) have shown how the 'writing culture' and 'Third World feminism' debates had already pulled into doubt and partly done away with ideas about ethnography that have flattered peace and conflict scholars in recent years. The main lesson for peace and conflict research from these debates is that, rather than accepting abstract and potentially problematic categories and assumptions, inquiry should focus on the very effects of categories, assumptions and ideas about how the world works (Lottholz 2017b, Finlay 2015). Critical peace research, ethnographic or otherwise, should inquire how 'how so-called communal identities and indigenous practices are produced, subsumed and reproduced in peacebuilding, i.e. how they are made useful to government'

---

[18] Richmond notices this 'fork in the path' but does not provide an immediate solution or positioning on it (2014; 697-698).

[19] Different scholars have thus argued that 'the local' is somehow 'always-already' global (Chandler 2013: 25, Bhambra 2014: ch. 4). In fact, it can be argued then that 'indigenous' and 'local' are analytical fictions created from the universalist and positivist vantage point of IR and political science-dominated peace and conflict studies (Chandler 2013).

(Finlay 2015: 225). Such an endeavour can arguably best be realised through a practice-based and cooperative approach to knowledge production, which I propose in turn.

II.3   A practice-based, cooperative approach to research

As argued above, getting better insights into people's everyday lives and political struggles cannot be seen a question of methodology alone, but, on the contrary, requires letting go of the model of an accumulative, scientific approach towards studying peace, conflict and intervention. Instead, researchers need to be ready to embrace uncertainty and accept that new insights might not serve to improve and sharpen existing theories and approaches (Denskus 2007: 661, Vrasti 2008, Heathershaw 2013). Rather than imposing analytical frames and question on its subjects, it has been argued that research needs to be based on a dialogical approach at producing knowledge that develops the questions and ways to answer them in the process and not before entering the researched context (Sabaratnam 2011a, Hale 2006, Restrepo and Escobar 2005). This means that the prevalent conception of fieldwork as a one-off data gathering – or rather data *extraction* – exercise followed by analysis and output production needs to be rethought as a long-term, dialogical process of cooperative knowledge production (Bekmurzaev et al. 2018). To fully take into account the way in which people's worldviews affect the conduct and outcomes of peacebuilding projects, arranging a long-term cooperation between researcher and relevant organisations or communities appears the most promising and potentially effective way.

Such a turn appears especially pressing given that the global political economy of research is very much skewed in favour of framings which not too rarely are politically provocative if not exerting epistemic violence upon the subjects of research (Bekmurzaev et al.

2018, Bliesemann de Guevara and Kostic 2017, Paasi 2005, Reeves 2005: 76).[20] To some

extent, this creates the need to compete in a 'political marketplace' (de Waal 2014) structured

by the discourses of danger, conflict and insecurity dominating the field, so as to successfully

apply for funding and produce publications. The epistemic arbitrage people are encouraged to

engage in appears to be structured and accelerated by the fragmentation of the global political

economy of knowledge production into different linguistic-epistemic spaces: The knowledge

generated in post-conflict countries of the Global South or in the post-Soviet space is thus taken

'back home', processed and published to contribute to debates in primarily English-speaking

journals, books, online platforms and conferences in Europe and the Anglo-American language

space (see Tietze and Dick 2009). Setting out with the mission of gathering as much and as

meaningful as possible data on their respective topics, researchers find themselves having to

balance such ambition against the challenges of field research (Lottholz and Meyer 2016) and

ensuring participants' as well as their own safety (Bekmurzaev et al. 2018). Instead of

entrenching this political economy of knowledge production, a critical research agenda and

practice should overcome and counteract such trends by establishing cooperative practices of

research and knowledge production.

This stance is echoed in Büger and Gadinger's discussion of the 'practice turn' in IR

and the social sciences. Practice theory, they argue, 'is not just a new theory, but involves quite

substantial shifts in thinking about the world and the nature and purpose of social science' (201.:

---

[20] Furthermore, the institutional and administrative apparatus of the academic sector and the publication industry that peace, conflict and intervention studies is linked to and depending on for its reproduction exhibit myriad dynamics that require critical reflection as to the effects they have on the kind of knowledge this field produces. Different scholars have raised awareness about how the neoliberalisation of the university (Sabaratnam 2015), and the historical constitution and mechanisms of reproduction of peace and conflict studies – from degree programmes (Sielschott 2010) to aspects of publication, knowledge dissemination and public engagement (Jackson 2015, Brunner 2014) – limit the possibility of critical inquiry to make a positive impact (Visoka 2016: ch. 1). Given these constraints, Claudia Brunner has rightly raised the uncomfortable question, 'What are peace and conflict studies able to do?' (2014).

4). Thus, it takes up the idea of studying the situation of specific people and communities in order to show how their lifeworlds, daily routines and professional practices lead them to act in the way they do. This presents a systematised inquiry and theoretical consolidation of the sociological study of intervention I have reviewed above. Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, capital and *doxa* (i.e. taken-for-granted, normalised forms of expert and lay knowledge) provide the basic tools for practice-theoretical research (Adler-Nissen 2012, Bourdieu 1977). The aim of the latter, as Büger and Gadinger (2014: 4) point out, 'is not to reduce and present abstract explanations of social phenomena' but to 'come to deeper understanding of how the world works in and through practices.' Practices are thus understood as vehicle through which knowledge is constituted and reproduced, making practice-based inquiry a via media between theories emphasising technologies and structures of government and hierarchy (as conceptualised by Marx and Foucault), and, on the other hand, conceptions of social order and ways of life as something inborn, situated within people's brains and therefore hardly changeable (as understood by Weber, Schütz, or Leví-Strauss) (Büger and Gadinger 2015: 451, Reckwitz 2002). Practice theory and practice-based research has a longer-standing synthesis with security studies (Williams 2007, Bigo 2008, Abrahamsen and Williams 2011, Hönke 2013) and made inroads into peace- and statebuilding literature (Visoka 2016, Graef 2015, JISB 2015), on which this project is based (see chapter III).

The main conclusion from practice theory debates and critical readings of debates on methodology and analytical approaches in anthropology and the social sciences generally (Lottholz 2017b) is that knowledge production cannot be emancipatory regardless of who is doing it and by virtue of the radical and emancipatory outlook of the specific theory or methodology used in the process. Rather, in order to describe and engage with political struggles beyond one's own community, it appears indispensable to involve people in a debate to establish a commonly shared picture of the problem and ideas for possible solutions. If reality

is indeed non-unitary but always dialogical, polyphonic and controversial in its nature[21], then academic inquiry should make an effort to reflect this complexity instead of presenting a condensed version. This does not mean that collaborative knowledge production is a decisive fix for social scientists to once again produce a 'better' account of 'reality'. It rather implies to let go of the empiricist imagination that there is one 'reality' which can have an accurate reflection that foregrounds possible action. In this sense, embracing uncertainty, anti-essentialism and radical perspectivism also comes at a price (Denskus 2007: 661, Vrasti 2008: 283): where a concrete and unified picture of a problem used to inform targeted actions, questions as to how and by whom a problem is brought about – and what constitutes a specific problem in the first place – take primacy. This illustrates that a 'dialogical' approach risks to become more of a dialogue than offering much to base any research on, let alone speak of concrete action (Sabaratnam 2011a: 800). This does not mean that practice-based research is meaningless compared to other approaches. Rather, it provides a way to engage with the struggles of people more thoroughly, literally through their own eyes, rather than merely documenting and trying to understand them from a researcher's or generally academic perspective.

In activist research, this reconfiguration of research towards the lifeworlds and viewpoints of the subject is extended into the general positionality and orientation of research. Hale (2006, see 2008, Introduction) notes that activist research is not only loyal to the academic endeavour but also to the respective political struggle of the research subjects, and often beyond the confines of what an academic engagement would include. In this sense, activist research is 'compromised – but also enriched' given its clear positioning *with* its subjects rather than

---

[21] This reflects a dialogical understanding of the world and the corresponding need for a 'dialogist' approach to researching it (Aubert and Soler 2007). See III.1.

outside of their struggles (Hale 2006.: 101).[22] Activist researchers have tried to support minority communities in European metropolises by offering their research as a plane for reflection and development of political and community-building activities (Stringer et al. 2014, Pfadenhauer 2005, Seithel 1990). In another case, academics raised awareness about the major injustice surrounding the outbreak of cholera in Haiti, which was evidently caused by UN peacekeeping troops without the organisation being held liable for the consequences (e.g. Lemay-Hébert and Freedman 2017).[23]

Such positive examples notwithstanding, it is important to understand that activist research is not an easy pursuit, especially in the current regime of academic knowledge production. Most importantly, the criteria by which success or impact of researchers are measured in academia are in many ways diametrically opposed to what partners in the world of NGOs, policy-making and social movements expect (Hale 2006: 110-111). Partner organisations expect researchers to produce outputs that help to raise awareness and, ideally, attract financial support. For this purpose, the respective organisation or project should ideally be presented in a positive light and in an accessible manner. Academic journals or books do not meet these criteria on several counts. Instead, requests to approve the content and framing of analyses in such formats present additional labour for partners in the field, with no near-term benefits in sight (see Mosse 2006: 946). In my own cooperative research with the Kyrgyzstani NGO network 'Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result'' (CURR; Ru. *Grazhdanskii Soiuz 'Za reformy i rezultat'*, see chapter VII), I thus tried to be of practical help by accompanying the

---

[22] Hale himself, for instance, supports Central American indigenous communities in their struggles for land rights (ibid.: 99), which is in keeping with the activist research tradition exemplified in the 1971 Declaration of Barbados, which demands an approach to anthropology 'which perceives the colonial situation and commits itself to the struggle for liberation' (Dostal 1972: 380).

[23] By lobbying national ambassadors to the UN and facilitating debates to establish the legal basis for bringing this case to justice, these 'academic activists' managed to make an unprecedented case for holding the UN accountable for its actions (Ibid.).

activists to meetings and trainings in their different communities across the country. Crucially, by publishing research insights in genres more familiar and accessible to this organisation and its potential supporters (e.g. Lottholz 2016c, 2016d), I showcased how my research could shed light on positive change effected by their promotion of new approaches to community security provision and cooperation between law enforcement, local authorities and the population.[24]

So, logistical support in the field and visibility in journalistic or policy-related genres can offer partner organisations some benefits from cooperative research; but these added benefits are no insurance against disagreements or disappointment with the aspects emphasised and critiqued in academic writing (Mosse 2006: 946). To this end, while the smaller research pieces in accessible genres were welcomed, my research did not yield decisive insights for the practitioners themselves, but served more to describe, contextualise and provide further reflection on the dilemmas the practitioners faced in their daily work. Thus, my interlocutors told me that they and their partners in the communities were more or less aware of the aspects raised in my analysis and were trying to address them.[25] Such dialogical reflection, even if it does not yield major new insights, is arguably the very contribution of activist research, whose components benefit the researcher and the practitioner in different ways. This shows how adopting elements of activist research is useful in forging cooperative and more trustful relations in contexts where research participation can put individuals and organisations at risk or danger or simply does not seem attractive to them. Although I adopted elements and

---

[24] These publications were not released without the editors raising criticism as to the framing of the status quo and future potential of changes in community policing in Kyrgyzstan (which was said not to be critical enough of violations). This points to the dilemma of cooperating with law enforcement actors and maintaining critical distance at the same time, which I will discuss in chapter VII.

[25] Interview with representative of CURR; Bishkek/Birmingham, 26 March 2016; correspondence with representative of international NGO Saferworld, March 2016.

orientations akin to an activist approach, my project can be described as practice-based and dialogical rather than activist in the more classical sense.[26]

A cooperative and practice-based approach at researching peace, conflict and international intervention has already been demanded on different occasions. The need for dialogue – not only within academia but between academics and society – and explicit links to practice have been reiterated in proposals for a more critical approach to peace research (Patomäki 2000, Jutila et al. 2008). The inclusion of action research methodologies into peacebuilding research as a bridge between theory and practice has already been discussed in the 2000s (e.g. Fischer 2008), not least because of the advent of monitoring and evaluation discourse and its ambiguous implications (Millar 2014a: 144). However, these and earlier contributions (e.g. Rothman 1997) have left the theory-practice divide intact, conceptualised 'action research' more as analysis tool (primarily for evaluation) and therefore raised doubts as to their ability to provide the critical reflection on peace and conflict research in the way the discussion above has done.[27] In a similar vein, Sabaratnam's argument that the critique of the liberal peace has 'failed to produce a dialogic account [of the 'liberal peace'], articulated through the perspectives of those supposedly subject to it' (2011a: 796) and that it is necessary 'to think about *the links between analytic and political exclusion* (ibid.: 800, her emphasis)' foregrounds a dialogical approach towards uncovering the voices of people affected by post-

---

[26] In order to get better insights into the practices and struggles of organisations, activist elements were used in that my positionality as researcher was, at least partly, 'predicated on alignment with a group organized in struggle, and on collaborative relations of knowledge productions with members of that group' (Hale 2008, Introduction: 20). Still, there have been strong and valid concerns that calling the overall approach activist would be inaccurate and misleading for the reader.

[27] Which is not to diminish the value of action research literature (e.g. Reason and Bradbury 2001; see Dick 2006 for an overview) for the conceptualisation of action and practice-theoretical research. Many of the insights and arguments offered in the practice theory literature discussed above are already provided in the action research literature but were not picked up in peace and conflict studies.

conflict intervention; and an activist positioning with their concerns, rather than a distanced position of the scientific researcher preoccupied with catering to the Western-centric political economy of knowledge production. In the next chapter, I provide more detail on how this approach is used to examine peacebuilding and community security practices and their implications for the trajectory of post-liberal statebuilding.

II.4   Conclusion

This chapter discussed the origins, critiques and new pathways in peace, conflict and intervention studies methodology and epistemology. I have outlined the critique of peace and conflict scholarship, particularly critical peacebuilding inquiry, concerning its activities, outcomes and impact. I have further indicated a decolonial vantage point, which scrutinises knowledge as to its complicity with, or failure to challenge, capitalist, imperial and colonial power structures. I have argued that there appears more that critical scholars can do to fight the hegemony of the 'liberal peace' and of white, male and otherwise privileged actors in world politics. I have pointed to the ways in which anthropologists, and other scholars more recently, have decided to take an activist stance and make their knowledge and manpower available for interventions in real-world struggles. This indicates an alternative to the prevalent mode of knowledge production in an increasingly competitive and precarious political economy, whose connection with progressive policy and practice, despite excellence and impact criteria, is increasingly pulled into doubt. I have further outlined a practice-based and cooperative research approach, which espouses cooperation and engagement *with* research participants and organisations instead of one-off data gathering exercises which feed into a one-way street of knowledge extraction from the periphery for audiences in the centre.

Two further points should be noted. First, the approach outlined for my project was developed in the course of my fieldwork and based on theoretical reflection throughout this

research project. It was not formulated ahead of the fieldwork, nor fully detailed in its course. The difficulties, pitfalls and learning processes which are part of fieldwork have led me to the reflections provided in this chapter. Furthermore, I have discussed and refined this approach on different occasions (e.g. Bekmurzaev et al. 2018, Lottholz 2017b, Lottholz and Marschall 2017). Throughout the empirical chapters V-II and in the conclusion, I will return to the discussion of this approach and how it helped me to navigate the difficulties – primarily safety and access issues – of doing fieldwork in Kyrgyzstan and how it helped to inquire the process in question in more depth and nuance.

Another point is necessary in regard to the methodological and epistemological critique of critical peacebuilding scholarship. By adopting a decolonial angle, I did not mean to pull into doubt the purpose or possibility of critical scholarship all along. The main purpose of this reflection was to point out the limitations and weaknesses of social science, and peace and conflict scholarship in particular, and the need to reflect on its complicity with the capitalist-colonial global system and its different actors and institutions. The conclusions I have drawn from this critique – pointing out the need for practice-based, cooperative and dialogical research – are by no means exhaustive, nor do they provide a decisive solution to the outlined problem. As I have pointed out, focusing on the engagement with people's lifeworlds and the translation of their views into a perspective compatible with social inquiry complicates or even precludes the idea of also working towards practical solutions and policy recommendations for solving unjust and conflictive trajectories examined.

Covering these different aspects is, for one, simply a question of space and time being available for the detailed discussion of analysis and, more importantly, of taking seriously the obvious concerns about the ability of the international intervention and aid industry and state institutions to bring about sustainable forms of peace (Turner and Kühn 2016, Lottholz 2017b). On the other hand, there are ways to counter-act the logics and modes of operation of the

international intervention architecture 'from within'; and given the longevity, constant extension and reproduction of this system such more 'pragmatic' strategies, as proposed by Millar (2014a: ch. 9) and similarly by Richmond (2011a), appear equally if not more important for the further development of peace, conflict and intervention studies. This research is more interested, however, in identifying potentials and instances of decolonial thinking and action in more micro, particular settings and aims to show how they may be combined and scaled up to effect progressive change, but also hijacked and inverted to merely simulate the latter.

Chapter III Post-liberal statebuilding and community security in Central Asia

This chapter situates the research within debates on post-liberal and hybrid state- and peacebuilding and presents the theoretical approach for the analysis of imaginaries of statebuilding in community security discourses and practices. This serves to specify the contribution of the dissertation to peace- and statebuilding debates on the basis of the critical, decolonial approach I have outlined in the previous chapter. I also set out my analytical framework by discussing the role of imaginaries in processes of statebuilding and, lastly, the literature on community security and its interrelation with debates in peace, conflict and intervention studies.

In the first section, I review recent literature on post-liberal state- and peacebuilding and develop the two normative categories of decoloniality and governmentality that inform my analytical framework for researching post-liberal governance in Central Asia, which I present in more detail as well. In a third step, I conceptualise the role of social imaginaries in statebuilding processes by reviewing relevant literature and linking it to the overall inquiry into the hybridisation of discourses and practices of statebuilding. Finally, I show how research on community security, which is rarely discussed in relation to peace, conflict and intervention studies, revolves around the same themes and is exposing the same logics as the 'liberal peace' debate, namely the problem of governmentality precluding potentials for developing 'emancipatory' practices and policies. The chapter forms the basis for the analysis of the (re-) production of imaginaries of statebuilding in community security discourses and practices, which I present in the remainder of the thesis.

III.1 Conceptualising the global shift to post-liberal statebuilding: Emancipation, governmentality, decoloniality

Emancipation vs governmentality?

The two thinkers that at the forefront of debates on post-liberalism in peace, conflict and intervention studies, Oliver Richmond David Chandler, can both be associated with the strands of critical literatures reviewed above (III.1 and II.1). Coming from an IR background established through publications in a critical realm (Richmond 2008, 2005; Chandler 2009b, 2004, 2002a and 2002b), both have based their work on largely discourse-focused analysis (e.g. Richmond 2011a, 2011c; Chandler 2006a, 2000) and put forward their conceptions of 'post-liberal peace' (Richmond 2011a) and 'post-liberal governance' (Chandler 2010b).

The two authors differ in their critiques of the 'liberal peace' (see section II.1) and more so in the conclusions they draw from it. Richmond foresees a way to mitigate the shortcomings of the liberal peace. In his conceptualisation of 'post-liberal peace', he invokes de Certeau's *Practice of everyday life* (1984) as a way to access the issues that really preoccupy people in post-conflict societies, for instance 'issues of rights, needs and welfare' (2009b: 331, see also 2009a and 2011a, ch. 5), which would lie beyond the scope of liberal peacebuilding. The recognition of and engagement with such local, 'subaltern' points of view would then enable interventions geared towards recipients' needs and a re-negotiation of post-conflict peace- and statebuilding (2009b: 331, 2011a).

David Chandler's approach to post-liberalism emphasises how the emergence of statebuilding as a paradigm has given rise to post-liberal governance with largely problematic and negative implications for political struggle and resistance (Chandler 2010b). Here, 'post-liberal' emphasises that the autonomy of individual states in the international order is limited in the post-Cold War world. Developed in reaction to civil wars and conflicts since the end of

the Cold War, international norms and principles like the *Responsibility to Protect*, 'good governance' and commitment to transparency, anti-corruption and human rights are constituting a default design for new states that are being built after conflict, which predisposes the way they will be integrated into the international system. By exploring the policies of specific liberal peace actors, for instance the European Union and its involvement in South-Eastern Europe (2000a, 2006a, 2010b: ch. 5), Chandler shows how this path-dependency is discursively constructed and consolidated by immense amounts of aid and other assistance in the legal, governance, security and military sectors. The way in which such contingencies are downplayed and naturalised leads him to argue that the European Union is a case of *Empire in denial* (2006a), under whose aegis peripheral and post-conflict countries have no real choice but to conform to all the standards and expectations thrust upon them by Western states. In this sense, Chandler's work points out how the nature of the international order but also life as such in the contemporary, late modern period, posit multiple challenges that have to be tackled in search of a better life.

In these two authors' confrontation of each other's views on post-liberalism (Chandler and Richmond 2015), Chandler generally denies the emancipatory potential that Richmond sees in the concept of post-liberalism. He concedes that 'everyday' voices of ordinary people in post-conflict societies may play a role and have some emancipatory potential, as argued by Richmond, given the fact that this everyday and 'local' perspective has already been incorporated into peacebuilding interventions since the 1990s (Chandler and Richmond 2015: 19, Carothers and Ottaway 2000).[1] Chandler argues that this framework with its focus on the

---

[1] Similarly, Richmond and Mac Ginty (2013) diagnose a 'local turn' in peacebuilding based on the increased level of incorporation of local staff into INGOs and other international actors' operations indicating increased agency, although they remain wary as to the emancipatory potential this shift might have.

societal sphere and social interaction – where, according to Richmond, a solution to the current deadlock may be found – 'despite its claims to "deeper" and more "bottom-up" or "social" understandings of post-conflict peace, remains entirely within the world of superficial appearances' (Chandler and Richmond 2015: 19-20). He bases this argument on Louis Althusser's work about the ideological embeddedness of the subject. According to Althusser (2008), the subject is already embedded in ideology through 'Ideological State Apparatuses' (see III.4) and different cultural and religious institutions, and even through social practices in the private sphere, all of which are shaping the subject's cognitive and ideational understandings (Chandler and Richmond 2015: 18). Therefore, the barrier to shaping more emancipatory, just and peaceful societies cannot be overcome by disclosing the everyday perspectives and needs of populations – it is exactly there, Chandler contends, '…in the "materiality" of the mind-set of the subject, understood to be false, imaginary or ideological, due to the problematic societal practices in which they are embedded' where the problem lies in the first place (ibid.: 20).

Against this impasse situated in the subjectivities produced by technologies of government in the post-liberal social order, Richmond holds that the 'liberal peace' that Northern/Western actors were seeking to install in post-conflict countries around the globe has not materialised yet, either. On the contrary, he argues, 'this is a reconstitution of responsibility in which hybrid political dynamics might lead to a hybrid form of peace … [which] involves agonistic mediations of difference … in which inequalities are teased out and responded to by policy' (ibid.: 11). Whereas Richmond is thus optimistic that '[i]f the international [sic] peace and statebuilding project is a form of neoliberal governmentality, the project collapses when its subjects refuse that direction' (ibid.: 9), Chandler remains sceptical of such a potential for a critical, reflective agency. The two authors seem to agree to disagree on whether post-liberalism bears more emancipatory potential, or whether it is emancipation itself that might conceal

instances of ideological embeddedness and counter-hegemonic trajectories. In this sense, the binary 'emancipatory vs. governmentality' appears to be a useful way to discuss the implications of post-liberal forms of peace- and statebuilding (see Graef 2015: 31). However, as I show in the following, it is the appropriation of the idea of emancipation that helps to justify and legitimise forms of authoritarian governmentality and biopolitical subjectification the world over. My argument for inquiring post-liberal forms of peace- and statebuilding from a practice-based, emic perspective, and the idea of approaching such inquiry from a decolonial angle (see below) is grounded in a common concern with Chandler's sceptical stance on the possibility of emancipatory action and agency.

Decoloniality

Given the shortcomings of peace, conflict and intervention research at large, and especially in light of the contradictions faced by critical peacebuilding scholarship itself (see previous chapter), it appears that a more critical reflection on global peace- and statebuilding intervention along the lines of decolonial theory is possible, desirable and necessary. More than showing how international interveners fail their missions, a decolonial variant of critical peace research would show how peace- and statebuilding programmes reproduce and stabilise political and economic dynamics going back to Cold War and colonial times (see Turner and Kühn 2016, Sabaratnam 2017, 2013b).

A decolonial approach to peace research would go one step further than critical peacebuilding scholars in that it does away with the implicit assumption that peace- and statebuilding interventions might somehow fix societies in such a way that they can evolve sustainably and stably and attain levels of wealth and well-being comparable to industrial countries (Finlay 2015). As different scholars in Marxist political economy and world systems theory have argued, the way the global economy has evolved seems to already have made it

impossible for all non-developed and non-industrialised countries to reach the level of economic growth (and hence, welfare) of the developed world (Held 2007, Duffield 2007, Doucet 2016).[2] Some have argued that so-called 'emerging powers' might be able to challenge this disequilibrium and may be able to affect a reversal of the inequality between developed and under-developed nations. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that these powers increasingly take on a role very similar to that of industrial countries, facilitating the formation of regional trade blocs whose cooperation terms they dominate and thereby entrench the peripheral status of smaller, non-industrialised economies.

A decolonial perspective inquires the ways in which the creation, establishment and reproduction of modernity – in the form of the nation state, its institutions and corresponding forms of knowledge, the Enlightenment or modern 'episteme' – produces adverse effects on people's wellbeing – material, physical, mental, spiritual and otherwise (Mignolo 2011). It inquires how, on the contrary, the adoption and consolidation of modern forms of social organisation leads to the expansion, entrenchment and reproduction of a capitalist system of production, which places people into hierarchical relations of exploitative and coercive character, which generate and entrench precarious livelihoods. Both the current state of the relations of production and social reproduction (i.e. sustenance of livelihood of oneself and one's family), as well past processes leading up the establishment, consolidation and normalisation of these relations are of interest for a decolonial perspective.[3] The specific

---

[2] This seems an inevitable fact not only given the limited energy resources and commodities available on the planet, but also, and especially, when looking at the way in which international institutional regimes and bilateral economic and foreign policies have served to entrench the inequality across (and within) countries across the globe.

[3] In Mignolo's words: 'Decolonial thinking … [is] nothing more than a relentless analytic effort to understand, in order to overcome, the logic of coloniality underneath the rhetoric of modernity, the structure of management and control that emerged out of the transformation of the economy in the Atlantic, and the jump in knowledge that took place both in the internal history of Europe and in between Europe and its colonies.' (2011: 10)

interest for a decolonial peace research perspective is in this regard the establishment non-violent social relations and commensurable foundations for livelihoods.

These considerations from a decolonial angle in peace research lead to the concept which I use to normatively assess the trajectories of peace- and statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan in the analytical part of this dissertation. Rather than asking what 'emancipates' or 'empowers' people in relation to peacebuilding interventions and state policies, I argue that the concept of **decoloniality** is more useful as it helps to inquire if and how people are able to imagine a way of life that does not succumb to the social structure of capitalist modernity and its commodifying, hierarchising and alienating tendencies, in the first place. This does not mean that I am searching for an actually existing decolonial 'political project', i.e. a collective effort to create and facilitate justice, equality and wellbeing in the most unconditional and egalitarian fashion. Rather, I understand decoloniality as a diffuse, amorphous form of being, acting and knowing, which is often only faintly present in the narratives and practices observable in people's lifeworlds (Tlostanova in Megoran et al. 2012: 366). Decoloniality thus rarely takes the form of an analytically identifiable 'political subjecthood' (Sabaratnam 2011c: 199 ff.) let alone agency.[4] Furthermore, a decolonial perspective helps to critically analyse the ways in which emancipatory political projects enact resistance against imperial and neo-liberal geo-political and individual interests, but instantaneously produce social formations with hierarchical and coercive effects (Owen et al. 2018, see Moreiras 1999). As I discuss in the following sections, the (re-) appropriation of emancipatory and empowering ideals for such projects can be conceptualised through the concept of governmentality, which is a useful analytical counter-pole to the ideal of decoloniality.

---

[4] Although these loose threads are of major interest for a decolonial project, which imagines and conceptualises ways to enact a world beyond the vagaries of capitalist modernity.

A decolonial perspective on post-liberal statebuilding in Central Asia

Based on the discussion of the limits and underdeveloped aspects of the post-liberal lens for the study of peace, conflict and intervention (chapter II), I now turn to the implications of the above discussion of post-liberalism for a decolonial perspective on statebuilding processes in Central Asia. This analysis extends Chandler's argument that post-liberalism transcends liberal understandings of politics and society via processes of ideological embedding and interpellation of subjects. This point resonates with recent contributions in the literature on authoritarian regimes in the post-Soviet space, which point to the appropriation of the argument for democratic choice by increasingly undemocratic political leaders and governments (Omelicheva 2015, Szostek 2017, March 2003). The hybridisation of democratic principles with regionally and nationally specific understandings of governance and order-making thus appear to have led to a specific form of neo-authoritarian governmentality, in two key ways.

First, a post-liberal understanding of the international political economy and its dynamics foregrounds a teleological understanding of globalisation and market integration, which in turn helps to justify political ruling and decision-making practices that superordinate 'effectiveness' over democratic deliberation and critical discussion (Omelicheva 2015: 76, 81, 86-87). Similarly, Chandler has observed how in the currently emerging post-liberal politics, the choices available to governments are presented as limited and imperatives of integration with existing international institutional architectures and standards of market economy, human rights and transparency leave little to no alternative (2010b: ch. 2). This discursive construction of a pre-determined integration route is a continuation of the 'there is no alternative' rhetoric hailing from 1970s and 1980s, the early years of neo-liberal configuration of state-market relations (2010b: ch. 3). It also presents a de facto 'post-conditionality' regime, where certain policies and institutional designs are not affected by loan conditionalities as used to be the case

in the 1980s, but are justified in terms of their inevitability and being a natural part of a modern state in the 21ˢᵗ century (2010b: 55, Harrison 2001).

In similar fashion, following fall of the Soviet Union, the presidents of the newly independent Central Asian republics constructed their countries' integration into the international economy and their structural and institutional reform as inevitable, although to differing degrees, depending on their dependence on international financial borrowing (Omelicheva 2015, Broome 2010). Regardless of their degree of integration, trade liberalisation and restructuring of the economy, however, it can be argued that all of these polities maintained a discourse about the necessity of a strong state and 'strong-handed' government in managing economic affairs for the benefit of the people (Omelicheva 2015: 91-92). Prozorov traces this discourse back into Stalinist times and invokes the term of the 'effective manager' (2016: ch. 1), whose supposed competency in managing economic and political affairs reflects the paternalistic logic of policy-making characteristic of other Central Asian and post-Soviet countries (Lewis 2016: 389). The distinguishing feature in post-Soviet politics is that 'state of emergency' kind of policy-making, which gives little space to deliberation, dissent or alternative proposals, is normalised, resulting in a top-down mode of governance justified as inevitable both in light of the precarious conditions of the global economy, but often also with reference to the cultural specificities of the respective country or region (Makarychev and Medvedev 2015, Omelicheva 2015: 91-92).

The second feature of a post-liberal form of governance discernible in the post-Soviet space and Central Asian region in particular is the appropriation of ideas of emancipation and empowerment based on cultural values and welfare needs; the very same idea as proposed in Richmond's conception of a 'post-liberal peace' (2011a: ch. 3; 2009a). Especially the fact that two and a half decades of transition towards a liberal-democratic capitalist order have not yielded tangible improvements in the lives of the majority of people in a relatively open country

like Kyrgyzstan helps to back claims that this and other countries are in need of a special, context-sensitive model of development (Omelicheva 2015: 83, Trevisani 2014). Therefore, the main implication of a post-liberal politics based on culture – Central Asian culture's pronounced difference from 'the West' – and welfare – whose provision through a liberal-capitalist model has proven elusive for the majority of Central Asian populations – is a rejection of Western norms, assistance and intervention (Omelicheva 2015). The Central Asian variant of a peaceful and sustainable post-liberal development path would thus appear to primarily transcend or replace the different components of public debate and scientific discourse for more paternalistic and charismatic forms of politics.[5]

These two trends in the recent politics of Central Asian countries seem to point to the differentiation of a 'neo-authoritarian' governmentality as a hybrid, post-liberal from of order and governance, which might present itself as emancipatory and empowering, but is eventually merely perpetuating or entrenching the essentialist and exclusionary tendencies of capitalist modernity. The new self-branding and legitimation of authoritarian regimes has been noticed in area studies research, which, contrary to earlier research that emphasised the coercive, repressive and manipulative practices of political actors (see Levitsky and Way 2010 and appendix 4), found that especially Central Asian leaders '[a]chiev[e] a degree of "legitimacy" which fosters compliance with the existing domestic order' (Matveeva 2009: 1095). Governing methods from the Soviet period – for instance appeals to a common history, belonging and civilisational heritage and construction or extension of national ideologies – are used to mobilise support and consent extending beyond the status of mere official discourse into the realm of everyday interactions and emotions (Schoeberlein and Murzakulova 2009, Goode and

---

[5] In the next chapter (section IV.3), I show how this trend is best captured in the imaginary of a 'politics of sovereignty' (see Gullette and Heathershaw 2015), through which politics is conceived of as a technocratic exercise carried out by people authoritative by virtue of their expertise or otherwise.

Stroup 2015, Féaux de la Croix and Ismailbekova 2014). The significant degree of discursive and ideational self-legitimation used by Central Asian regimes thus seems to best be captured by the label 'neo-authoritarian' (Becker 2004, Nachtwey 2016).[6] Situated in a conceptual realm beyond the divide between authoritarian, illiberal forms of politics on the one hand and liberal ones on the other, the term 'neo-authoritarian governmentality' captures the ambiguity of the appropriation of the concept of democracy by Central Asian leaders and elites, whose 'local', context-specific forms of democracy are not rarely enacted at the expense of people who think or look differently than the majority in a given country.

As I have argued above (chapter II), focussing inquiry onto the subjectivities involved in statebuilding and political reform processes through a dialogical approach allows to better capture the different perspectives on one and the same reality and the modalities of post-liberal governance arising therein. Still, such a focus on the different regimes of knowledge and processes of ideational/ideological interpellation also brings with it a fundamental challenge. This challenge lies in the fact that political contestation does not only concern debates on peace, conflict or political systems but the very understandings, or rather standpoints of knowledge and facticity in and of themselves (Lottholz 2017a). Different authors have observed that the assertion of cultural variation in understandings of knowledge, facticity and 'truth' has already been applied in political discourse itself, even to the extent that acknowledging the (non-) reality of certain events and facts becomes a matter of political loyalty and national or cultural belonging (Szostek 2017, Ortmann and Heathershaw 2012, Rosaldo 1993). This leads to a conflation of subjectivity and facticity, via political viewpoints and belonging, which has wide-reaching implications for politics in what Pomerantsev has called a 'post-truth world' (2016).

---

[6] Becker develops a concept of neo-authoritarian media system in the case of Russia under Vladimir Putin (2004: 149-150), while Nachtwey argues that the downward mobility of peripheral milieus of German society, both in economic and symbolic terms, makes them susceptible to populist political mobilisation and gives rise to a 'liberalism with authoritarian grounding' (Nachtwey 2016: 78, see also Balhorn 2016).

This means that even if people may be aware of the complexity and contestations around, for instance, a fragile peace marred by coercive governmental policies or disproportionate affectedness of certain groups, conforming to the public discourse on the events and disregarding, or even denying, uncomfortable truths becomes a matter of good citizenship or even personal security.

Encouraging people to admit contradictions in their own worldview, or gathering a wide enough range of viewpoints to do so by triangulation, thus becomes a methodological, and often ethical challenge for the researcher. It also requires a more systematic approach to inquiry which embraces the complexity and contradictoriness of the socio-discursive sphere instead of taking side with the most reasonable version of competing truths about the history, present and future pathways of political and social processes. In this sense, it is necessary to discard the neo-liberal episteme (Richmond 2009b: 332, Mac Ginty 2014) – a conception of knowledge as something being clearly definable and handy for translation across contexts and into practical application– in favour of a 'post-liberal episteme', which, according to Pugh, 'works with rather than challenges complex life' (2014: 316). This is the basis for an analysis of the processes by which certain forms of knowledge – whether narratives about past events and history or conceptions about democracy, development, or peace – become salient and inform dominant, socially grounded, or hegemonic, forms of discourse and corresponding practices of peace- and statebuilding.

In this sense, I understand a post-liberal approach to researching statebuilding processes in Central Asia not only as focussed on the way in which liberal politics and policy-making are transcended, but also as an epistemological commitment to expose the multiplicity and dialogicality of knowledge in Kyrgyzstan, which does not lend itself to an inquiry from a liberal Enlightenment episteme with its unified conception of knowledge. More than conceptualising the shift from liberal to post-liberal forms of social ordering, political debates and

depoliticisation, this approach is intended to depart from the neo-liberal scientific episteme identified above by providing more nuance and grasp of complexity in the analysis of international(ised) processes of state- and peacebuilding, community security and related practices. It does so by departing from a focus on 'international' and 'local' actors and the respective vectors of action, not to say 'agency', they exhibit to follow.

This way, the complex and multifarious ways in which different actors in Kyrgyzstan position themselves with, against or in ambivalent relation to actors that could be called 'international' is captured in a way akin to the concept of *heteroglossia* proposed by the Russian philosopher and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin's conceptualisation of hybridity (1981). In complex environments, one and the same semantic unit may have multiple meanings depending on the speaker, the audience and their respective intentions and agendas. In such a world, any utterance made serves to 'appropriate the words of others and populate them with one's own intention' (Bakhtin 1981: 21). The logical consequence is that '[t]he subject is surrounded by a myriad of responses, each of which must be framed in a specific discourse chosen from this available multiplicity' (Tate 2007: 9). I will attempt to deconstruct and analytically structure this multiplicity of meanings and associations surrounding discourses and practise of peace-/statebuilding and community security through the concept of the imaginary, which I discuss in turn. The contribution of Bakhtin's conception of hybridity and of a focus on hybridity and hybridisation in the conceptual/ideational realm (Millar 2014b) is discussed in more detail in appendix 4.

III.2   Conceptualising the role of social imaginaries in statebuilding processes

In light of the above-discussed necessity for peace- and statebuilding research to engage more directly with the subjectivities involved in the process and the lifeworlds affected by it, I introduce the concept of social imaginary as a device to analyse the nexus between social

discourses on the one hand and concrete practices and events on the other. I first introduce the concept and describe how it is situated at the intersection of socio-psychological and psychoanalytical studies and political and social research disciplines, more generally. After that, I discuss the spectrum of theoretical perspectives on the role of imaginaries, ranging from those emphasising its potential to encourage and enable agency to those conceiving of it as a tool of ideological interpellation and governmentality.

The imaginary as link between material and metaphysical realm

Although primarily associated with the psychoanalytic theory of Lacan and Freud, the key aspect of the concept of 'imaginary' is that it links the realm of cognition and ideas with the real world and the interactions and processes taking place in it. While the concept has been associated with the postmodern turn in the social sciences and its preoccupation with virtual and ideational forces, it can be traced back to the works of Durkheim and Marx's early writings on ideology (Elliott 2002: 143). In this sense, it helps to bridge and mediate between the structural and materialist determinisms of realist and Marxist social theory and the primacy of ideas postulated by radical constructivists.[7]

The scholar with whose work the imaginary is often associated is Cornelius Castoriadis. His *Imaginary institution of society* (1987) has become a reference point from which other applications of the concept were developed. According to Elliot, Castoriadis 'conceptualises political processes, or pretty much any processes of human interaction as taking place in an imaginary, metaphysical realm' (2002: 154):

---

[7] An implicit forerunner of this compromise can be found in the early literature on nationalism and nations. In his seminal work, Benedict Anderson defined nation as 'an imagined political community' (1983: 15) and thereby already lays the ground work for the analysis of political processes not only in discourses and narratives situated in the political or public sphere but also their reception, appropriation and reproduction in the informal, everyday spheres through to the realm of cognition and sub-/unconscious reactions.

> Those who speak of the "imaginary," understanding by this the "specular," the reflection of the "fictive," do no more than repeat, usually without realizing it, the affirmation which has for all time chained them to the underground of the famous cave: it is necessary that this world be an image of something. (Castoriadis 1987: 3)

This is reflective of a cognitive psychological approach which conceives of the imaginary as a mirror image, in which the world is reflected and thus perceived in a unique way by each individual. The perceptions and understandings of the world in this imaginary register are subject to different distortions and influences depending on contextual factors.[8]

While this understanding of the cognitive realm foregrounded a potential for radical change (see below), the structural linguistic aspect of the imaginary also helps to explain stability and normality in the sense that people come to imagine certain behaviours, ways of life and political or historical processes as occurring in accordance to a set of inherent and universal rules. In this sense, the idea of the imaginary extends both Bourdieu's practice theory – in which he argues that practices as well as everyday life follow a natural order that '*goes without saying*' (Bourdieu 1977: 175, original emphasis) – and, in a more implicit manner, Foucault's observations on how this conduct of life may be regulated and governed (Foucault 1991). Castoriadis himself argues that the imaginary is not a mere projection or mirage, but emanates from 'proper', physical things and actions in the 'real world', which can be as diverse as 'a machine gun, a call to arms, a pay check and high-priced essential goods, a court decision and a prison' (Castoriadis 1987: 109).

The imaginary thus helps to analytically capture the establishment, consolidation, normalisation and reproduction of the modern capitalist order. Charles Taylor has added more

---

[8] This subjectivist approach squares with Bakhtin's dialogical imagination in its emphasis on the polyphonic, multifarious and also unpredictable, uncontrollable nature of imagination (appendix 6).

nuance to this conception, arguing that the 'modern social imaginary' is the 'way we understand our society':

> It incorporates a sense of the normal expectations that we have of one another, the kind of common understanding which enables us to carry out the collective practices that make up our social life. (Taylor 2007: 30)

He further advances from Castoriadis' position by way of indicating an entry point for the analysis of the imaginary as the 'way ordinary people "imagine" their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms; it is carried in images, stories, and legends' (2002: 106). This foregrounds a broad perspective on the different ways in which imaginaries materialise in visual artefacts, stories, and, importantly in the case of Kyrgyzstan, history, or specifically historiography as a technique for utilising representations of the past for shaping the way in which society is imagined.

This sets the basis for a conception of technologies of government that is less deterministic regarding the role of language and discourse (something that Foucauldian and Lacanian approaches have been criticised for), and puts a balanced emphasis on the basic cognitive and discursive predispositions of a specific societal imaginary and the corresponding processes of reception of and reaction to certain discourses or imageries. Such processes are conceptualised in Valaskivi and Sumiala's discussion of 'circulating social imaginaries' (2014). They make the conceptual step from conceiving of one imaginary as a cognitive plane on which people's understanding of societies is based (Castoriadis) to thinking about several, co-existing and possibly competing or contradicting imaginaries of what society is and should be. They also provide an idea about the movement of such imaginaries through space and time: 'social imaginaries do not hang in the air, but are attached to material objects and representations, and that, as they travel and take different paths from one location to another' (2014: 240). An imaginary 'gains its power from the circulation in different materials, mediated places and

spaces (including both virtual and physical places), and in the shared encounters between individuals created by circulation' (ibid.).

Under certain circumstances, the (re-) production of an imaginary might thus be a rather straightforward process, such as in the case of a 'highly media-saturated' society with an 'affective economy of virtual encounters, remediation and circulation' (2014: 240).[9] They emphasise, however, that the patterns of circulation are not necessarily linear but may take multiple and hard-conceivable routes. Sneath, Holbraad and Pedersen re-affirm this non-deterministic stance, arguing that:

> While it is amply clear ... that the effects we call imaginary may indeed serve a variety of purposes (divination, politics, ethics, and so on), it is also fundamental to bear in mind that the emergence of these effects *qua* underdetermined 'technologies' is, precisely, not purposeful (2009: 26).

This statement distinguishes the idea of the imaginary from a conceptualisation as a technology of government, i.e. utilisation of discursive, material and practical items for ordering, structuring and regulating society. While Sneath and others may be right that such change may not be in itself purposeful, it is nevertheless important to analytically consider the ways in which technological advancements are used by governments to improve their leverage, as well as by social actors to resist or evade the reach of the latter.

A first conclusion is that imaginaries can be understood as mental constructs materialising in different ways, e.g. in images, stories, and legends (Castoriadis 2002: 106) or different kinds of discourses and narratives circulated through certain types of media (Valaskivi and Sumiala 2014; Sneath et al. 2009). Furthermore, an imaginary need not always be explicitly formulated, but can be implicit in, and made up by, a number of such elements. In this sense, I

---

[9] Such as the US, where, as they show, an absolute personality cult around Apple founder Steve Jobs emerged and was propelled into global consumption circuits (ibid.).

understand the imaginary as a prism or filter that influences people's processing of and relation to images, discourses and implicit understandings of how things should be done and work their way in the world, e.g. in specific 'real-world' practices such as peace- and statebuilding or community security. The experiences and perceptions people make in such a specific field will in turn feed back into their understandings of how things work and should be done, in the process challenging, re-shaping, but also confirming and reproducing the imaginaries that inform their thinking.

Thus, a cyclical understanding of the production of meaning and understanding in social and political life emerges, which, as illustrated below, I apply in my analysis of imaginaries of peace- and statebuilding in chapters IV-VII. In this sense, I see the imaginary as a higher order of discourse or a group of discourses with a common denominator, or, to use Laclau and Mouffe's description of discourse, 'nodal points' that 'fix meaning' in a more significant way than their composite or related discourse (1985: 100, Lewis 2017: 34). My understanding of discourse is based on Fairclough's three-fold conceptualisation of discourse as text, i.e. spoken or written words; 'discursive practice', which denotes 'the nature of the processes of text production and interpretation'; and, finally, social practice, which emphasises the social, institutional or otherwise background of a discursive event (1992: 4). As indicated already in my outline of a dialogical approach to capturing the *heteroglossia*, i.e. multiplicity of meaning underlying signifiers (Bakhtin 1981), I am interested especially in how particular practices or discourses of peacebuilding present hybridisations and combinations of potentially contradictory discourses and imaginaries of peacebuilding.
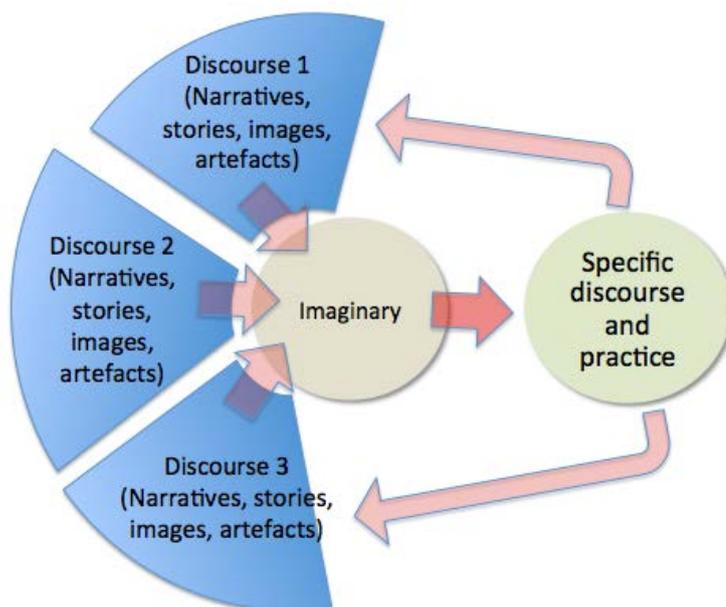
Figure 3.1: Cyclical production of meaning between imaginaries and specific practical fields; All figures are author illustrations

The imaginary between radical alternatives and ideological interpellation

To further conceptualise the usefulness of the imaginary for inquiring processes of post-liberal statebuilding and social ordering, it is worth identifying the different potentials of change and stabilisation that have been theorised for this concept. As already pointed out, the fact that the imaginary is created and reproduced in people's minds made some theorists argue that it has an inherent potential for creativity, unpredictability and even ungovernability – after all, people can be considered free to think what they want regardless how their behaviour and different aspects of life may be regulated or restrained.[10] This view on the imaginary, especially pronounced in Castoriadis' theory, stands in contrast to the structural-linguistic understandings of the psyche and the self in society that dominated the psychoanalytic theory of Freud, de Saussure and Lacan. According to that line of argument, language, understood as a system of

---

[10] In this sense, the imaginary appears a suitable concept to inquire the processes of hybridisation in the conceptual realm as discussed by Millar (2014b, see appendix 6).

signifiers, has the effect of placing the individual within the world as it gradually accesses the different discourses and rules and regulation or more generally 'the way things are done'. This linear conception of individuation and the emergence of social structures foregrounded critical studies of conformity, normalisation and corresponding pathologies and problems, such as the apolitical and authoritarian tendencies of late modern societies (e.g. Marcuse 1964, Castoriadis 1982).

One of the most notable works in this critical tradition is that of the Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser who argued that, by virtue of becoming part of capitalist society and passing through and interacting with 'Ideological State Apparatuses', people are constituted as subjects not only in the social sense, but also as subjects of capitalist ideology or variations thereof. Despite the diverse agendas and audiences of these apparatuses – 'specialized institutions' such as schools, universities, churches, trade unions, political parties, newspapers and the media in general (2008 [1970]: 18), Althusser argues that they are unified in their functioning 'by ideology'; an ideology which is 'in fact unified … *beneath the ruling ideology*' (ibid.: 20, his emphasis).[11] On this basis, Althusser formulates a class critique of the process by which individuals are becoming subjects of the modern state, i.e. the differentiation and normalisation of social structures, practices and understandings that Bourdieu, Castoriadis or Taylor theorised in the following years. More than just a process of becoming a subject or citizen of the modern state, Althusser conceived of subjectification as a process by which people were also, unwittingly, made part of the ideological project of a respective state, or rather its ruling class:

> [I]deology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the
>
> individuals … or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects … by that very precise

---

[11] The most dominant of these apparatuses is the school which, says Althusser, as it 'drums into [children] ... a certain amount of 'know-how' wrapped in the ruling ideology (French, arithmetic, natural history, the sciences, literature) or simply the ruling ideology in its pure state (ethics, civic instruction, philosophy)' (2008: 29).

operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!' … the hailed individual will turn around. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degrees physical conversion, he becomes a *subject.*

In this sense, living according to the normalised rules and rituals of capitalist society, an individual becomes interpellated as a subject of the ruling class ideology, a process as simple as it is inevitable.[12] Althusser's critical account of capitalist modernity is especially crucial for its pointing out how the ideology of the ruling class is not confined to that class and its supporters and affiliates, but in fact permeates all aspects of life via Ideological State Apparatuses which more or less directly propagate, stabilise and reproduce this ideology. Consequently, people's imaginary understood in Castoriadis' holistic sense, as an understanding of or consciousness about life, would be completely formulated out of this ideological interpellation and, therefore, unlikely be able to formulate a critique or ideas about a life alternative to the current one (Althusser 2008: 74, see also Chandler in Chandler and Richmond 2015).

Contrary to this somewhat pessimistic conception, other theorists have attributed a critical potential to the social imaginary. Castoriadis, according to Elliot,

…offers a more differentiated view of the subject's imaginary capacities for self-representation and reflection, particularly as these capacities extend to issues of social domination on the one hand and resistance and autonomy on the other. [He] is cognizant of the dual nature of radical imagination: its omnipotence and illusion on the one side,

---

[12] Althusser also anticipates the normalisation or depoliticisation of this mechanism when stating that 'one of the effects of ideology is the practical *denegation* of the ideological character of ideology by ideology: ideology never says 'I am ideological'. … individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects' (2008 :49-50).

and the curtailments necessary to participation within the social imaginary on the other (2002: 155).

So, Castoriadis believed that reflection, critical thinking and actions towards an alternative model of society were possible, but also, following the line of Althusser and critical theory scholars, acknowledged the limits posed to such an endeavour by the mechanisms of ideological interpellation and normalisation. This made it hard for him to reconcile the idea of a critical alternative with his disillusion with the vastness of the media and cultural industry, the entrenched trajectories of depoliticisation and privatisation in Western societies (Castoriadis 1982). Echoing Althusser's denial that any critical projects could be developed out of the ideologically contaminated sphere within the modern state, Castoriadis argued that radical alternative projects would have to be developed in autonomy from the latter: 'We have to create the good under imperfectly known and uncertain conditions. The project of autonomy is end and guide, it does not resolve for us effectively actual situations' (1989: 400).[13]

Arjun Appadurai posited the paramount significance of the imaginary in light of the proliferation of media and cultural industries and argued that it can be 'a form of negotiation between sites of agency … and globally defined fields of possibility' (1996: 31). Echoing the idea of imagination as a subversive or resistant activity, Appadurai focuses on how fields as diverse as professional cricket and life in local neighbourhoods in Mumbai affords small but not insignificant '*pleasure of agency*' (1996: 111, his emphasis). This stance was criticised for being relativistic at best and elusive at worst. For instance, while Appdurai argued that the

---

[13] This idea of autonomy can be seen as a precursor for the idea of 'de-linking' put forward by Walter Mignolo, and to decolonial perspectives more generally. According to Mignolo, to evade the logics and imperatives of capitalist-colonial governmentality, a decolonial project has to 'de-link' from the institutions, actors and exchange relations of the global political economy (Mignolo 2012). A decolonial project *within* the capitalist-colonial political economy would, on the other hand, be dependent on consequent resistance and tactics for the subversion and utilisation of the system's logics against itself.

Society for the Promotion of Area Resources (SPARC) in Mumbai was an example of 'deep democracy' mediating between the imaginaries of local communities, on the one hand, and the interests of national and international actors, on the other (2002), Whitehead and More argued that he underappreciated the 'ways in which various NGOs may become unwittingly positioned as part of the consensual wing of post-liberalisation governance', in which responsibilities were arbitrated and effectively downplayed to the detriment of poor city dwellers (2007: 2428).

This exemplifies the limitations of a conceptualisation of imaginaries as a potential site for the construction of better lives, or even agency: if the terms of such imagining are the ones established and shaped by capitalist modernity, then the alternative that is being imagined cannot but reproduce this order and its historical legacies. As I show in the discussion of the different imaginaries of statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan in the following chapter, the implication of this critical approach is to see different understandings of what social order should look like, e.g. the Western 'liberal peace' imaginary, on the one hand, and the imaginary of 'politics of sovereignty' on the other, not (only) in terms of their mutual contradiction, but rather in terms of their formulation out of, and inextricable links with, the modern capitalist-colonial system and its logics of producing identity and difference. In the following and final section of this chapter, I show how this system has produced regressive outcomes in the well-meaning initiatives to promote community security and crime prevention in a number of countries.

III.3   Community security as practice of peace- and statebuilding

As I have already argued in chapter II (especially section II.3), rather than conceiving of peace- or statebuilding in the macro perspective and with the universalistic ambition of discussing what sustainable peace should or should not look like, peace, conflict and intervention studies should focus on specific areas within the large pool of practices associated with the field in order to produce more theoretically focused and empirically grounded research. At first glance,

it would appear that community security is of central importance for post-conflict reconstruction, reconciliation and peacebuilding studies. The absence of this concept from the peace and conflict studies literature[14] indicates an omission in the literature that this research aims to fill.

Community security has caught more attention in policy circles, with organisations such as the UK-based international NGO Saferworld and UNDP being the most significant advocates (see Saferworld 2014, 2007 and UNDP 2009, see also). These outputs from existing projects provide a good basis for the discussion of the relevance of community security for statebuilding processes as they sum up the literature and policy knowledge about community security. One puzzle about this literature is that most of the analysis is framed as concerned with the practice of 'community policing' rather than the goal of 'community security' (e.g. Ferreira 1996, Saferworld 2007). This is also the case in more academic studies, where all contributions to 'community security' thinking have been made with primary attention to policing – specifically 'community' or 'plural policing' – and security sector reform (Wisler and Onwudiwe 2009, Brogden and Nijhar 2005, Albrecht and Kyed 2014, Ryan 2011). 'Community policing' appears to be understood as synonymous with community security, which seems inaccurate, though, as certainly not all practises of community policing will also increase the feeling and measureable indicators of community security.

This key difference foregrounds my argument that about the role of community security practices and their role for building, extending, consolidating and maintaining functions of state power. To the extent that community security includes practices of community policing – i.e. surveillance and maintenance of order through patrolling and other actions, we can say that it helps to maintain state power and structures, thus reproducing governmentality. The counter-

---

[14] Apart from little search results in peace and conflict journals, one indication of this side-lining of community security is by the *Routledge Handbook of Human Security* (Martin and Owen 2014), in which the idea of 'community security' is not discussed at all.

model to such governmentality is the idea that community security practice can also include ways of (re-) ordering and steering society in more positive ways, e.g. by identifying and treating root causes of crime and conflict or by encouraging and strengthening solidarity to mitigate and help people deal with them. The latter might include methods more directly relating to crime and security, e.g. crime prevention, education about different criminal practices and on how to avoid them. As I show in chapter V, in Kyrgyzstan community security actors do not only focus on security and crime prevention as such, but try to improve the situation through significant engagement in the spheres of education, culture and everyday life. Still, both practices examined in Kyrgyzstan and contributions in the literature leave open questions as to the wider issues affecting people's lives and thus levels of crime, such as social injustice, economic precarity and insufficient state policies.

To illustrate this 'situatedness' or 'embeddedness' of community security and crime prevention practices within a field of tension between governmentality and more sustainable, decolonial modalities of social ordering, I review the emergence and development of 'community safety' from the 1980s until the early 2000s and show how it became superseded by a more policy-focused concern with 'crime prevention'. Based on this insight into the overlap of cultural and communal rituals and practices on the one hand and technologies of government on the other, I discuss how community security and community policing are situated at the intersection of statebuilding, peacebuilding and security practices and academic discourses and point out their relevance for my analysis of community security practices in Kyrgyzstan.

Community safety: From crime prevention to neoliberal governmentality

A survey of debates and policy-measures around 'community safety' illustrates the trade-off between ambitions to empower and give voice to communities and, on the other hand, to

employ communities' knowledge and forms of social ordering and regulation to deliver results in crime reduction and stabilisation and order in the face of political-economic restructuring. Although largely constrained to the Anglo-American countries, tracing the debate in that context yields a useful insight: That the agenda of the national government and competent ministries – in that case reduction of crime and containment of unrest – will inevitably play some role if community safety programmes wish to receive support from official bodies, which is normally a prerequisite for the structural and financial changes required to introduce and maintain practices of policing that are more responsive to local needs.

This 'path dependency' or 'top-down' logic is apparent in two distinctive ways: First, while 'community safety' and 'crime prevention' had been used as mutually supportive goals of local government and public management programming, a gradual skewing of the agenda in favour of 'crime prevention' is obvious. The aspect of community safety is, for instance, conspicuously absent from works that proclaim to devote attention to *both* community safety and crime prevention (e.g. Tilley 2005a).[15] Hughes has argued that, in contrast to crime prevention, community safety was widely perceived to be too vague and not 'susceptible to [sic] technicist-cum-administrative measurement of success or failure, nor focused on clearly targeted crime and victimisation events' (Hughes 2013: 27). However, the focus on measurable results, at the expense of intricacies of policy implementation in communities, produced secondary effects of social exclusion and 'othering' of certain groups within respective communities. Most instructive in this regard is the observation that in the UK, 'much of the

---

[15] In the introduction to his Handbook of Crime Prevention and Community Safety, the supposedly most comprehensive volume in this issue area, its editor declares (Tilley 2005b: 7):

> … in this introduction, the language has all been of 'crime prevention'. … The coverage certainly goes beyond police crime control competences and includes associated crime harms as well as crime *per se*. Yet it does not extend to issues unrelated to crime.

Furthermore, one of the most comprehensive genealogies does not mention any significant efforts to develop the concept of community safety in an equally significant way as the aspect of crime prevention (Hughes 2013).

impetus for community-based "solutions" were crucially liked to and inscribed in a broader racialised discourse about managing the "race and crime" debate in which black communities throughout the 1980s were often pathologised and "othered"' (Hughes 2013: 25, see also McLaughlin 2002).

Different contributions have declared this problematique of 'otherness' the main pitfall of the new interest in community-based forms of public management: it is in fact impossible to appropriately represent *a* community, as communities are always hierarchised and already structured by power relations, which are reproduced in communal practices (Crawford 1998: 244; Hughes and McLaughlin 2003: 7). This leads to irremediable tendencies to civilise or assimilate people who do not comply to a certain standard of behaviour – something that might be regarded a necessary evil but is nevertheless unpleasant for the involved parties and brushes aside the structural reasons and sources of people's inadequacy (Young 1990, Young 1999, see also Behr 2014). Other critiques have shed light on how certain measures that supposedly increase safety for some members of a community can render others more exposed (e.g. Gaetz 2004), especially when certain problems are not addressed, such as in the case of domestic violence, family cohesion or child-rearing issues stemming from the increasing social polarisation and spatial separation of families observable in Britain (Crawford 1998: 246).

Such perspectives are reflective of a broader synthesis between critical sociological, criminology and public policy perspectives and critical studies on governmentality which evolved in the course of the 1990s (e.g. Rose 1996, 1999a, 1999b, 2001; Gordon 1987 and Young 1990). The attention of these scholars had been caught by the emergence of a new moral discourse on the significance of *community* as the central unit of social life; a locus of political legitimacy, for facilitating grass roots democracy and local problem-solving. This new discourse, most clearly expressed in the writings of Amitai Etzioni (1993, 1997), was taken up most prominently by Tony Blair's New Labour movement which promoted problem-solving

and crime prevention on the community level in its 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, among other legislative initiatives (Crawford 1998: 237, Hughes 2007: 29). New Labour and other policy-makers shared this enthusiasm and the idea of the Third Way – i.e. the community being the most significant domain in life and facilitating decisions and life opportunities as a mediator between market forces and the state (Rose 2000). This reasoning appeared deceptive to Foucauldian and specifically governmentality scholars. Nikolas Rose was most vocal in his criticism stating that:

> Community, rather than the 'social' is the new territorialisation of political thought, the new way in which conduct is collectivised ... in a double movement of autonomisation and responsibilisation. Once responsibilised and entrepreneurialised, they would govern themselves within a state-secured framework of law and order ... Communitarianism thus promises a new moral contract, a partnership between an enabling state and responsible citizens, based upon the strengthening of the natural bonds of community (1999b: 475-476).

The critique put forward by Rose and other scholars vis-à-vis the utilisation of the community is that the responsibilisation and autonomisation of communities, i.e. equipping them with budgets and decision powers to manage their affairs, is done in ways that naturalise both the constraints within which this empowerment of communities takes place and the limits to social and economic development. This indicates not merely a decentralisation, dispersion and pluralisation of social control (and Hughes and McLaughlin 2003: 5, Garland 2001: 126), but also a transfer of responsibility and accountability for the overall economic and societal conditions in which local politics are conducted. This trajectory is reflective of the rise of a post-liberal form of governmentality diagnosed by Chandler (2010b, Chandler and Reid 2016): budgetary responsibility and decision-making powers are devolved to the communal level; and the responsibility for ensuring employment and social reproduction are discursively appointed

to individual households (Chandler and Reid 2016: ch. 2); while demands for redistribution and social welfare are fended off with invocations of competitiveness imperatives and/or policy conditionalities dictated by the global economy.[16]

In other words, while a more centralised governmental apparatus is directly responsible for dealing with the problems and repercussions of political, economic and social developments its national policies cause, a decentralised and community-based approach at social ordering and crime prevention emphasises each community's own responsibility to facilitate not only the solution of problems, but also the design and implementation of measures that prevent social problems in the first place. Many of the concepts used in peace- and statebuilding, democratisation and other forms of assistance and intervention – for instance 'ownership', civil society involvement and community-based activism and service provision – have already been tested in a different form in the community safety and crime prevention policies and practices in the UK, US and other Western countries. A critical analysis of community security foregrounds a more grounded perspective on the reasons, origins and widely used justifications for the decentralisation, responsibilisation and entrepreneurialisation of communities by central authorities, and the implications such moves have for the emergence of neo-authoritarian governmentality and adjacent forms of ethnic and racial profiling.

The dilemmas of community policing and community security beyond Anglo-America

The discursive patterns and governmentality tendencies of the community safety and crime prevention debate were not constrained to the Anglo-American world. The conveyor belt for the new public policy approach that put the community at the centre of attention and action

---

[16] This trajectory is observable in discursive strategies that justify why central government can not do anything about certain problems which are inevitably brought about by such things as inflation, pressures for global competitiveness and corresponding ideas about budget cuts and austerity (see Pratt 1986, Crawford 1998, Young 1999, Cameron and Palan 2004, Fansworth and Irving 2012).

was, specifically in the security sector, the concept of community policing, which emerged in public policy discourses throughout the 1970s, and soon caught the attention of policy makers on a global level. Based on cases of relative (and not always uncontested) success in Western settings such as Northern Ireland, community policing became a major export good among Western policy approaches throughout the 1990s and 2000s. In their analysis of this Western export practice, Mike Brogden and Preeti Nijhar (2005: 4 ff.) note that the demand for this export – and thus the basis for creating a whole 'cottage industry' of consultants, experts and educators – was not so much created by the needs in the localities where community policing practices where introduced and established, but much more by the constellation of the good governance and 'security and development' agendas (see II.1). Especially security sector and police reform programmes that mushroomed during the 2000s created an immense global market for ideas and practical approaches to community policing.

Alongside other scholars (Ryan 2011, Albrecht and Kyed 2014, Jackson and Albrecht 2011), Brogden and Nijhar raise attention towards the problems and trade-offs of community policing, echoing the critiques of governmentality scholarship and critical perspectives on security sector reform. Their 'ten myths' of 'Anglo-American community policing' (Brogden and Nijhar 2005: ch. 3) raise the issues indicated in the above discussion, e.g. the problem of doing justice to all members of a community (49 ff.); the reverse problem that community security initiatives might backfire in case actors feel like they can or do not want to provide the kind of accountability demanded from the population and civil society (52 ff.); or the idea that more fundamental institutional change on the national level of given countries can occur thanks to community policing initiatives (the 'myth of organisational change', 76 ff.). They also criticise the universalist and Eurocentric thinking that underpins many of community policing advocates' philosophy. This 'myth of the Anglo-American model' (79 ff.) would lead policy-makers to take an imagined Western model of Weberian rational-legal state institutions and

their adaptation via community policing for granted, while ignoring other philosophies and practical approaches at social ordering and securing economic exchange, livelihoods and wellbeing. These criticisms of community policing form a useful backdrop to a final consideration of the trade-offs that in the implementation of community policing projects.

Lisa Denney and Sarah Jenkins echo this critical stance towards community policing both in regard to its historical legacy and current practices. They argue that histories of formation of states and political systems, as well as their approaches to managing emergencies, conflict and inequalities, foreground current police-society relations in 'fragile and conflict affected states' (Denney and Jenkins 2013: 17 ff.):

> Given that one of the biggest challenges in many [fragile and conflict affected states] is that the police are unresponsive to local needs and perceived as contributing to community insecurity and injustice, a centralised and top-down approach to reform can miss some of the most pressing reform priorities. … However, a more bottom-up approach to policing, such as that provided by COP [community policing], can help. A focus on community policing, specifically, reinforces the importance of connecting the provision of safety and security to local needs. (2013: 7)

In other words, community policing needs to be made more compatible with its 'end users'' needs (Luckham and Kirk 2012) and needs to be democratised. This is in itself part of the problem, however, as 'it is rarely, if ever, possible to speak about the community in a singular, cohesive sense, as this suggests a uniformity and homogeneity that rarely exists' (Denney and Jenkins 2013: 14). The core problem, if not the impossibility, to holistically grasp the opinion of *a* community as the basis for collective action, hence creates the risk that community policing projects may re-produce, firstly, inequalities between communities, as communities better endowed with time, money and skills to participate in projects and fulfil their criteria such as

reports writing, internal mobilisation etc. In this scenario, 'community policing may be most effective in the places least in need of it' (2013: 33).

Secondly, community policing may reproduce power structures and inequalities within communities: If people in a locality have already established certain patterns and modes of doing things, then these naturalised hierarchies are unlikely to be challenged, so that women, young people and minority groups run a risk of not having their points of view adequately included in community policing programming (ibid.; see Baker 2002, Jackson 2011). The best illustration of this is Ruteere and Pomerrole's (2003) analysis of civil society-supported community policing projects. Their findings from a community policing partnership project between the Nairobi Central Business District Association (NCBDA) suggest that, while the main interest of the businesses who initiated and financed the project were served, this was at the cost of small business, shop and kiosk owners, as well as hawkers and homeless people all of whom depend on the income they are able to generate in the central business district. The latter became increasingly inaccessible due to frequent harassment and checks run by police, who detained or demanded bribes from people who do not fit in the ideal profile for visitors of the inner city (2003: 596 ff.). Similarly, a community patrolling project initiated by the Kenyan Human Rights Commission (KHRC) in cooperation with the dwellers of an informal settlement in a suburb of Nairobi, has slowly turned into a vehicle for local landlords to assert their own interests against tenants who are considered untrustworthy and in too high fluctuation to be entrusted with matters of community security programming and implementation; an exclusion that especially affects women and young people (598 ff.) Ruteere and Pommerolle thus question 'whether community policing as it is currently implemented in Kenya may not be just a reproduction of the undemocratic order that defines the wider Kenyan society' (599).

This leads to the more general question of how specific community policing/security projects are embedded in wider social relations and national security politics. As Denney and

Jenkins note, because the range of objectives to be reached by community policing is so large and the meaning of the term so ambiguous, the very idea of community policing (at least from the perspective pronounced in this work) can be diluted if not altogether defeated (2013: 11). It is obvious, for instance, that governments and the police will be interested in the potential that community-based approaches have for intelligence collection and hence crime prevention/reduction. 'Increasingly, however,' as Denney (2015: 9) argues, 'the very assumption that community policing can reduce crime is being questioned' as it 'suggests crime is caused by dynamics the community has information about, which, when shared with the police, will allow for crime prevention through deterrence.' This does not, as she argues, 'sufficiently appreciate the social causes of crime that community policing is not likely to help address through intelligence collection' (2015: 19, see Elison and Pino 2012)

Furthermore, echoing the critique of the responsibilisation, entrepreneurialisation and thus autonomisation of communities and the corresponding shifting of responsibility from governmental and state agencies to the decentralised level (e.g. Rose 1999b), Denney and Jenkins (2013: 33) have identified the risk the ostensible empowerment of communities to deal with their problems on their own may detract attention away from reforms at the national level that would improve the accountability of police and security forces in the first place. This is reflective of a broader trend of making communities, or the subjects of neoliberal politics more generally, adaptable and *resilient* to the shocks and externalities stemming from economic and political conduct which, especially in developing countries, often takes forms that are disconnected from people's livelihoods and interests (see Chandler and Reid 2016).

In sum, this section has reviewed the problem that, rather than re-configuring security and social ordering mechanisms towards the specificities of the respective context, community security or policing arrangements may also reproduce existing power relations, hierarchies and forms of exclusion in a given community. As community policing/security practitioners need

to operate on the basis of a clear analysis of problems and ways to tackle them, the question is how capable such initiatives are to address or at least be aware about more fundamental, not immediately obvious reasons for security risks and crime, such as social injustice, corruption, or organised crime. While community security practitioners may not be able to tackle or even identify such underlying, more fundamental problems, they will be the ones made responsible for the maintenance of social order and security and may find themselves in a dilemma between performing this role according to the protocol on the one hand and addressing the deeper problems on the other.

This community policing dilemma is directly linked to the dilemmas and fallacies of hybrid and post-liberal forms of peace: Given the fact that such supposedly alternative modalities are always embedded in established modes of ordering, it seems questionable, from a critical decolonial perspective, what innovation or emancipation such approaches have to offer beyond mere rhetoric. The key question is thus whether community security (and 'community policing' and related ones) can serve to create forms of peace, order and security that reflect the needs, preferences and desires of people living in a respective community, or, and to what extent, these practices are influenced and co-opted by state security agendas and preferences.[17] The former scenario would present a form of post-liberal peace that is in sync with a substantive notion of human security. There appears ample possibility, however, as indicated above, to instrumentalise the emancipatory aura of this idea for justifying or covering practices and policies that lead to exclusion and forms of governmentality. This seems especially likely given the fact that human security, especially given its origin in policy making and multilateral institutional settings in the early 1990s (Krause 2005: 2). has in fact become

---

[17] This is also reflected in the understanding of community security as a process driven by people in a given community (municipality, or district) themselves (see Saferworld 2014: 3), rather than something merely done by state institutions, administrations or law enforcements (see Introduction).

'institutionalised and co-opted to work in the interests of global capitalism, militarism and neoliberal governance' (Turner et al. 2010: 83, see Chandler 2008).

III.4   Conclusion

In this chapter, I have situated the framework for the analysis of imaginaries of statebuilding in debates on hybrid and post-liberal peace- and statebuilding, hybrid regimes and transition literature and discussed the concepts of 'imaginary' and 'community security'. In section one, I have shown how the concept of post-liberalism was discussed in terms of its implications for a more emancipatory trajectory which would allow space for the expression of local agency, and, on the other hand, forms of governmentality rooted in people's 'false consciousness' and interpellation in regressive ideologies. In discussing the broader implications of a post-liberal lens on politics in Central Asia, I have argued that local-ness and authenticity could be problematic as they are often instrumentalised for presentation of practices, policies and regime forms as a choice of 'the people', or as the best available alternative. I have shown how, specifically, the two items invoked in Richmond's conception of post-liberal peace, i.e. culture and welfare, have often been invoked by Central Asian leaders to assert their political authority vis-à-vis Western interference and domestic contenders and thus illustrate the regressive of post-liberal trajectories of political reform and statebuilding. I have also developed a more fundamental notion of progressive normative figuration, that of decoloniality, which is posited in a critical position vis-à-vis the capitalist-colonial system and its trajectories of instrumentalisation and inversion of 'emancipatory' politics for the entrenchment of authoritarian forms of social and political order.

In the remainder of the chapter, I have set the basis for the analytical framework by discussing its core element: the imaginary. Reviewing the works of Castoriadis and others, I have shown how the imaginary can be understood as a conceptual vehicle linking the practical

and material realm (the 'real world') and a metaphysical space with different discourses and ideational frameworks. In this sense, the imaginary links the world, and specific domains of practice in particular, with wider socio-discursive frameworks and regimes and facilitates the structuring and shaping of the former by the latter; but also a feedback in the other direction, which indicates a circular movement of ideas and discourses between the two realms. Furthermore, the imaginary, as I show in the next chapter, links the way in which practices are done and conceived of in the present with notions of social order based on past experiences and history, as well as with corresponding (and perhaps contrasting) ideas of what society should look like in the future. For instance, I will show how a distinct understanding of the importance and role of tradition and culture in Kyrgyzstan foregrounds certain practices and the existence of social institutions linked to Kyrgyz history.

In a last step, I have shown how the practico-discursive domain of community security shares commonalities with epistemic (scientific) discourses in peace, conflict and intervention studies. This forms the basis, I have argued, for analysing the way in which concepts and ideas under the 'liberal peace' umbrella are promoted and applied in different contexts and what kind of trajectories such dissemination and diffusion of ideas gives rise to. As I have shown, the field of community security is, very similar to debates on the liberal peace, heavily skewed towards practices and policies that super-ordinate concerns of security and measurable outputs over individual or group welfare and wider, less clearly perceptible concerns pertaining to security. Thus, the same way as the community safety debate in the US and UK was mostly preoccupied with crime prevention as a means for safety, was the global discourse on community security framed in terms of community policing as means to creating security. In both cases, other, less direct means for achieving safety and security played no sizeable role, which has led scholars to argue that the community safety debate and the better-known discourse on community as the

core entity of social life (most notably in the 1990s 'Third Way' agenda) are inherently skewed towards instantiating governmentality and creating forms of profiling and othering.

Especially the issue of marginal individuals or sub-groups within a community was seen as problematic and proved to be a limitation in community policing practices, which, as research in Africa shows, can be captured by the interests of large business and property owners and working to the detriment of people who because of their social standing and economic situation cannot engage in such initiatives and practices. Therfore, the outcomes produced by community security initiatives have often revealed the face of a neo-liberal security regime with limited access for all members of the involved communities. More basically, community security initiatives may not produce the overall measure of security (among all of the members of a community) as they claim or appear to, which can lead to substantial levels of exclusion if the same biases and omissions are repeated across a number of communities.

These issues and limitations of community security, which betray the initially promising impression of the idea of organising security on the community level, point to the tension between governmentality and emancipation discussed in the literatures on post-liberal peace and the imaginary. In the empirical chapters, I use this exposition to show how community security initiatives in Kyrgyzstan exhibit similar positive potentials but sometimes suffer from the same limitations and dependencies. In the next chapter, I discuss the three most pertinent imaginaries of statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan and the different discourses on social and political order constituting them, in order to set out the discursive and ideational background against which community security is discussed and practiced.

Chapter IV Imaginaries and discourses of statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan

In this chapter, I review the literature on processes of peace- and statebuilding, transition and social ordering in Kyrgyzstan. I present the different discourses and imaginaries of statebuilding which are most clearly discernible and instructive for understanding current societal debates in the country. It is the first of four analytical chapters on processes of statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan and is conceived as a review of academic literature, journalistic material and, to lesser extent, fieldwork data. Based on the understanding of the interactions between practices and discourses in specific practical or 'real world' realms, imaginaries of statebuilding, and their composite discourses (see III.3), I identify the key imaginaries and discourses of statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan, whose reproduction and hybridisation I analyse in the following empirical chapters. I begin by giving a brief overview of Kyrgyzstan's transition since its independence from the Soviet Union to outline the field of tension in which different discourses have evolved and form specific imaginaries, and, furthermore, introduce the framework which maps the three imaginaries of statebuilding and their composite discourses (IV.1). Subsequently, I survey the respective discourses constituting the three imaginaries of the Western 'liberal peace' (IV.2), 'politics of sovereignty' (IV.3) and tradition and culture (IV.4). In a final step, I discuss further details about the framework and situate it vis-à-vis normative categories of assessment, i.e. governmentality and decoloniality (IV.5). I use the term 'imaginaries of statebuilding' for sake of simplicity but understand this term as an umbrella for the terms political and social order, peacebuilding or -making, and community security.[1]

The imaginaries of post-liberal statebuilding and their respective discourses as I have mapped them are analytical ideal-types that I have identified as most relevant for the analysis

---

[1] In this sense, it is also possible to focus on non-state forms of peacebuilding and order-making. Still, I concentrate the analysis on the way the latter are overshadowed by, or made useful for, state actors and structures.

of statebuilding, social order and transition in Kyrgyzstan as I came to see it based on my own experience of visiting and doing research in the country since 2012, and based on the literature from international and, although to more limited extent, Kyrgyzstan's national academia.[2]

IV.1 Kyrgyzstan's transition and imaginaries of statebuilding

The ongoing processes of integration and differentiation of Kyrgyzstan's role and position within the Central Asian region and the global political economy and its different institutions are shaping the understandings and imaginaries of its internal structures and processes. Kyrgyzstan was arguably the country in Central Asia that was most open to international prescriptions of political and institutional reforms (Engvall and Laruelle 2015: ix, Omelicheva 2015). Both in light of its historical status of net receiver of transfers during the Soviet Union in exchange for raw materials like cotton, minerals, and agricultural produce and given the considerable investments needed to maintain its costly mining industries (Pelkmans 2017), the newly independent country had no leeway to resist to the lending conditionalities imposed by International Financial Institutions (IFIs), as opposed to its neighbours Uzbekistan or Kazakhstan (ibid., Broome 2010).

However, as its first president Askar Akaev's openness to international assistance for democratisation, liberalisation and integration (see Marat 2008) did not yield any welfare dividends, he faced more and more criticism for the increasing influence that the IFIs and Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs, e.g. UN institutions, the WTO, or OSCE) wielded in

---

[2] Other scholars, based on another outlook, other experiences and other material, may well come up with different imaginaries, through which the same processes as I analyse them are understandable in a different way. Liu (2014), for instance, finds that the main 'political imaginaries' of Uzbeks in Osh are an Islamic one – akin to the discourse of 'traditional' Islam in the 'tradition and culture' imaginary (IV.3.1), on the one hand, and, on the other, that of a social order led by a *khan* – a paternalistic and authoritarian leader who guarantees security and wellbeing development, embodied in the figure of the first president of independent Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov.

the country. In this light, Boris-Mathieu Pétric (2005: 323) has argued that 'Kyrgyz society has gone from being subordinate to Moscow to dependence on the international community', as the loans and grants came in exchange for conditionalities and economic 'shock therapy'. The corresponding rolling back of the state in the welfare and education sector was compensated by UNDP, UNICEF and multiple smaller NGOs, and even political, legal, social and security affairs were increasingly outsourced to a network of IGOs (such as the OSCE or EU). Meanwhile, Kyrgyzstan's failure to reap the benefits of transition was blamed on external economic dynamics allegedly not in the remit of control of the national leadership (Akaev 2002: 193, Marat 2008).

The economic downturn endured by the majority of Kyrgyzstani society and the proliferating reports of Akaev's cronyism and manipulative actions finally led to his ouster in what came to be known as the 'Tulip revolution' of March 2005. Akaev's successor Kurmanbek Bakiev pledged to improve the country's situation with a rigorous anti-corruption programme, thus again subscribing to a reformist agenda that did not only address the perceived domestic political needs but conformed to international donor agendas of 'anti-corruption' and 'good governance' (Marat 2008). The removal of Bakiev in April 2010 brought instability and conflicts along the lines of loyalty with different political players and along ethnic lines (mainly between the Uzbek and Kyrgyz political community). These dynamics culminated in the so-called 'Osh' or 'June events' taking place from 10-14 June 2010; communal clashes in and around the southern Kyrgyzstani cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad, during which hundreds of people were killed, numerous properties and business destroyed and hundreds of thousands of people fled their home.[3]

---

[3] In this conflict that spread out from the city of Osh on the 10th of June 2010, 470 people were killed, about 110,000 left the country to Uzbekistan and 400,000 were internally displaced; although none of these numbers could be confirmed in detail (KIC 2011: ii, see Matveeva et al. 2012 for a comprehensive analysis of the events themselves).

In much of the academic and analytical literature, the Osh events are presented as the culmination point of a difficult development of Kyrgyzstan since its independence. The contestation between the Uzbek minority and different political groupings are often presented as the significant fault-line of an 'ethno-political conflict', but it is also clear that other dynamics linked to Kyrgyzstan's economic and political reform, such as collapse of institutions and social systems as well as political dynamics along lines of clan membership and geographical divisions, played a role (Megoran et al. 2014, Bond and Koch 2010). While many international actors argued that Kyrgyzstan was in need of comprehensive assistance not only for post-conflict reconstruction but also for political and legal reform in order to reach basic human rights and governance standards, even classifying it as a 'failed state' (Wilkinson 2011), the representation of the conflict and the conclusions to be drawn became a major site for the reassertion of the country's sovereignty (Gullette and Heathershaw 2015, see IV.3).

In this sense, different discourses that can be grouped under a 'politics of sovereignty' imaginary (ibid.) pose resistance vis-à-vis the 'Western liberal peace' imaginary that has come to dominate discourses and practices of transition and reform. Contesting the interference and conditionalities of Western and international actors, arguments situated in this imaginary invoke Kyrgyzstan's ability to take care of its own business, as well as its dignity, historical achievements and greatness. The latter are themes that can be situated in a separate imaginary of 'culture and tradition', which, although often invoked and used to demonstrate that intervention, advice or assistance are not needed, also includes discourses of harmony, acquiescence and peaceful coexistence that are combinable with 'liberal peace' notions of social and political order. In the following three sections, I discuss the different imaginaries and their respective discourses, which are illustrated below.
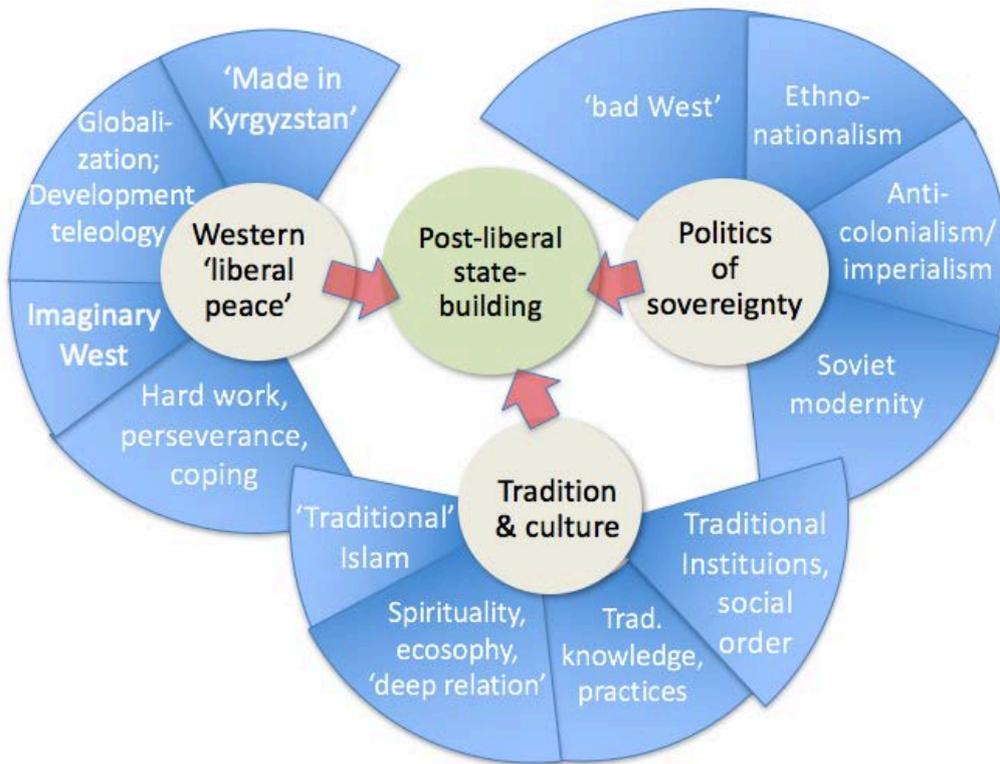
Figure 4.1: Imaginaries of statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan

IV.2 The Western 'liberal peace' imaginary

This imaginary contains the main idea that Kyrgyzstan should be reformed after the model of Western, liberal-democratic countries and according to ideas of free markets and free trade, privatisation, rule of law, human rights good governance, among others. However, instead of understanding the 'liberal peace' or the 'West' as globally dominant in an ahistorical, ideological way, as is done in much of political science, IR and (critical) peacebuilding literature, it is possible to trace the roots of the hegemony of the West back to its historical roots and collectively shared discourses. Based on the key discourse underlying this imaginary, that of the 'imaginary West', I identify three further composite discourses, which are most significant for understanding the reception and reproduction of the Western 'liberal peace' imaginary.

IV.2.1 The Imaginary West

The imagination of 'the West' as a geographical and political space has been quite vivid in the Soviet period and has continued to inform people's perception about the world and their country's position in it. In his seminal work, *Everything was forever until it was no more* (2006), the Russian sociologist Alexey Yurchak develops the concept of the 'imaginary West' as the 'elsewhere of late Socialism'. His argument about the reproduction of this imaginary is that Soviet authorities, knowing that it would be hard to ensure a complete prohibition of the consumption and circulation of Western cultural and entertainment goods (music, movies, etc.), chose to assert their control over the interpretation of any material from and views on the West. The Communist Party thus gave citizens explicit guidance on which elements of Western culture were desirable and legitimate to consume and which ones were too bourgeois and counter-revolutionary and, therefore, to be despised. According to Yurchak:

> The emergence of the Imaginary West was not in contradiction with the ethics and aesthetics of state socialism; on the contrary, and somewhat paradoxically, cultural products and forms of knowledge on which the Imaginary West was based were explicitly enabled by the socialist project itself. (2006: 160)

The result of this filtering and definition process (mostly conducted through Party-controlled media and corresponding societal discourse) is a relatively clear-cut distinction between a 'good' and 'bad' ('extreme', harmful) West (2006: 166-170). Needless to say, this portray might not have been shared by all citizens, but the salience of this imaginary was proved through Yurchak's own research and is apparent in post-Soviet states until this day. The 'imaginary West' informs people's way of rationalising their societies' and their own positioning in the global political economy and the possible vectors for individual and social

development (Pilkington et al. 2002, Rausing 2002, Burrell 2011).[4] Crucially, the West is seen as the place where society and economy function in an efficient way, making migration towards the West or emulation of Western concepts and models of development, free markets and democracy desirable (Manolova 2017).[5]

Kyrgyzstan's incomplete or only superficial adoption of democracy, a free market system, the rule of law, human rights and good governance – all of which can be glossed as 'liberal peace' model (Tadjbakhsh 2009, see II.1) – has been repeatedly emphasised by both politicians and commentators, who appear to attribute the blame for the failed transition either to specific actors and groupings or the entire country and its 'system'.[6] The main problem is seen in the concentration of power and organisation of politics along family, clan and kinship structures, which have been argued to fuel the continuous erosion of political institutions' accountability, privatisation of public offices and state assets and emergence of parallel shadow markets while public goods provision and institutional efficacy drop to a minimum (Engvall 2016, Tucker 2011, Gullette 2010).

In addition to this salient but not unproblematic 'corruption' argument, different authors have shown how discourses of danger and state weakness or failure have dominated the Western gaze upon Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia more generally, and especially so in the

---

[4] Especially the superior quality and high symbolic value of Western consumer goods gave rise to large black markets in the Soviet and other Socialist economies (Yurchak 2006: 171 ff.) and to a fetishism with food, clothing, cars and other consumer goods from the West (Burrell 2011).

[5] While this positive imaginary of the 'West' is the basis for a Western- and Eurocentric view of questions about development and politics – according to which European or Western countries in general make up the benchmark for Kyrgyzstan's ideal development path – the West is also constructed as anti-ideal of a 'bad' and 'immoral West', a discourse I discuss as part of the 'politics of sovereignty' imaginary (next section).

[6] For instance, in a volume looking back at 20 years of 'democratic development', Baktygulov posits that: '[Kyrgyzstan's] short history of democratic experiments was the history of errors and mistakes. The wasting of the resources of society and the inefficiency of the political system continue to undermine the [efforts] of citizens and limit the possibilities for creating a prosperous society' (2012: 186).

context of the global 'war on terror' (Megoran and Heathershaw 2011, Wilkinson 2011, Reeves 2005). Wilkinson (2011) has shown how such concerns were emerging during Kurmanbek Bakiev's tenure after the ouster of Akaev in 2005 and how the formal sovereignty of the Kyrgyzstani state has made international organisations and individual countries refrain from major political interference or assistance, thus allowing Bakiev to consolidate his power and silence or curb opposition with increasingly authoritarian means. The combination of little popular legitimacy and repressive means of authority assertion thus led to the constitution of a 'Potemkin state', which, after the ousting of Bakiev in April 2010, appeared unable to quell the inter-communal clashes in late May and early June the same year in the south of the country (Wilkinson 2011: 120; Matveeva et al. 2012). Both the conflict and its slow and ambiguous recovery with reported irregularities in post-conflict justice and rehabilitation of affected communities have made the country a prime destination for 'liberal peace' style peacebuilding and conflict prevention activities supported by international agencies and donors (Reeves 2015b, 2014, 2005, Megoran et al. 2014).[7] Thus, Kyrgyzstan's distance from the Western ideal of democratic governance and 'liberal peace'-building is framed through concepts such as corruption and 'failed statehood', whose hegemonic status is further elucidated by the discourse exhibiting a teleological understanding of how Kyrgyzstan should evolve.

IV.2.2 Globalisation and capitalist development teleology

The teleological understanding of capitalist development and the corresponding endorsement or at least acceptance of market integration imperatives are arguably based on Marxist-Leninist teachings of national economics during Soviet times (Lottholz 2017a). Drawing on the

---

[7] The rude awakening brought about by the 'Osh events' made the international community, mainly the UN agencies, the OSCE, EU and major donors such as the US or Germany rush to the assistance of the Kyrgyz Republic, both in the form of humanitarian aid, post-conflict reconstruction and institutional reform (Wilkinson 2011).

literature on capitalist development in post-Socialism (Rabikowska 2009: 177, Peshkopia 2010, Amsler 2007), it can be argued that Marxist-Leninist notions of equality and progress were replaced with new ideal model of a liberal-democratic society, which was embraced with the same metaphysical idealism, if not Hegelian historical determinism and teleological thinking, with which people once worked towards a communist society. Central Asian politicians and intellectual milieus of society thus became part of a global movement that believed that liberal democracy and integration into the world economy could bring economic development and prosperity to any country (Carlson 2013: 128-129), thus embracing Fukuyama's 'end of history' thesis (Fukuyama 1992). The formerly *telos* of a Communist society, which was to be reached via different stages of Socialism, had now been replaced with the *telos* of liberal democracy and a free trade capitalist economy.[8]

This reasoning can be explained as 'rooted in the fetishisation of capitalism by the postsocialist societies… [which] reflects [a] deeply ingrained teleological way of perceiving the future' (Peshkopia 2010: 24) in post-Socialist countries. Hence, people perceive and adjust themselves to new 'market realities' and economic imperatives, while participation in politics as a way to improve economic policy-making are not perceived as reasonable alternatives. In his analysis of how the Central Asian 'generation 1991' perceived, internalised and coped with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Christopher Schwartz finds that many people in this generation embraced democracy as a new ideal end state, towards which their country should develop (2013: 191). He demonstrates how even one of his respondents' father, who had grown up during the 'golden years' of Soviet Socialism, adopted free-market values and was at some point accepted within his community:

---

[8] Different authors have argued that the insertion of the local and national economy into international competition, structures and institutions is accepted as an inevitable fact by post-Soviet societies at large (e.g. Collier 2011).

Namazaliev's impression is that his father was a trailblazer, albeit a tragic one: most of the other Kyrgyz in the village were still under the sway of communist ideology and condemned him as a capitalist, 'but now, it's not that way; everybody understands that this is fine, this is how it should work [sic], people are now more market-oriented.' (Schwarz 2013: 197)

This passage signifies how even part of the generation who had lived under the Socialist regime for most of their life found a chance in the breakdown of this system and the newly pursued path towards democracy and economic liberalisation.[9] While such uncritical adoption of the new ideology of the day is of course not the only reaction to new realities (see IV.3.1), Kyrgyzstan's development path has become routinely framed within a market economy and trade-relations paradigm, which justifies the republic's dependence on international markets with its landlocked mountainous location and de-industrialised structure (Lewis 2015b). In a recent interview, president Atambaev expressed the lack of alternatives to the recent accession to the Eurasian Economic Union quite bluntly: 'Then what do you suggest? We have six million people. Should we maybe close ourselves in and live like in the jungle [*v djungliak*h]? We have to develop, we need a market'.[10] This exemplifies how the political establishment is ready to accept the unequal terms under which the EEU and possibly other economic treaties are negotiated. Both in this official discourse and in the sense-making narratives of people at large, ideas of development within the new global market form a standard template for discussion (see Kudaibergenova 2016), while ideas about strong regulation, state investment, subsidisation

---

[9] In this sense, the teleological thinking about national development during Soviet times thus created the basis for an uncritical adoption of the capitalist liberal-democratic development model in its often neo-liberal and socially detrimental variant.

[10] 'Kyrgyzstan's president: We will solve our problems on our own [*Prezident Kyrgyzstana: svoi problemy my reshaem* sami] Euronews, 20 February 2017, accessed 20 October 2017, http://ru.euronews.com/2017/02/17/kyrgyz-president-almazbek-atambyev-talks-to-euronews He also pointed out that thanks to the EEU the more than half a million Kyrgyzstani migrant workers were finally granted working rights after having lived abroad like 'slaves'.

and steering of the economy are largely eschewed for their association with the Socialist legacy (Amsler 2007).

IV.2.3 *'Made in Kyrgyzstan'*

To understand contemporary processes of social change in Kyrgyzstan, it is necessary to take account of a perspective somewhat oblivious to such 'politicised' views. In generational terms, 'Made in Kyrgyzstan' refers to the generation who have been born after the fall of the Soviet Union and in its last years, and who, therefore, see the development of the country and their personal life walks not in the same field of tension as is suggested by the other discourses within this imaginary.[11] This generational focus also foregrounds an awareness that the political contestations on Kyrgyzstan's Socialist legacy and its integration into world markets and regimes of democratic governance is less of a question than a presumed necessity to these younger people, for whom the Soviet Union appears a distant past, with the corresponding sentimentality and nostalgia being hardly understandable, much to the chagrin of many middle-aged and older people (Féaux de la Croix 2013a, Satybaldieva 2017).

For young people, it seems to matter most is the fact that Kyrgyzstan is a unique country and that their everyday lives as well as memories of growing up are valuable in and of themselves, regardless of the country's economic or political situation or its significance in a global perspective (Kirmse 2010, 2009).[12] This also foregrounds an ambitious attitude among young entrepreneurs and professionals who are, empirically, a minority within the population, but nevertheless live by the role model of a new entrepreneurial creative group who put their

---

[11] Ibanez-Tirado expressed this ostensible unaffectedness by the transition and its political implications by citing one of her respondents' question: 'How can I be post-Soviet if I was never Soviet?' (2015: 192).

[12] For an illustration from Uzbekistan see Liza Premiyak and Hassan Kurbanbaev, 'We run this town', *The Calvert Journal*, no date, http://calvertjournal.com/features/show/7457/tashkent-youth-uzbekistan-photography

country on the map of the world. Kasymov and Nikonova (2006: 123) quote the statement of a member of a working group on the National Poverty Reduction Strategy, that by promoting the 'Made in Kyrgyzstan' brand, new firms in niche markets such as handicrafts, food and natural products 'can become key exporters of local goods outside Central Asia, but only under certain conditions: adequate management, adequate marketing, and adequate technologies'. Although these sectors have indeed developed, the majority of people lack the managerial skills or education to marketise their goods in a national and international market.

People's perception of political and social issues, as well as their participation in civil society and politics, are thus dominated by the idea that a young person can achieve everything in life if they only work hard enough and start to embrace their personal dreams early enough. In this sense, 'Made in Kyrgyzstan' also denotes the idea that life styles, identities and personhood are manipulable and subject to one's personal effort at self-actualisation. In line with this ethos, which resonates a great deal with perceptions about Western conceptions of individualism (Schröder 2013: 243) and entrepreneurial personhood (Makovicky 2014), Kirmse finds that the context of cultural globalisation in Kyrgyzstan, with multiple media and life-style consumption portfolios available and creating a 'market place for identities' (Kirmse 2010: 389 ff.) can lead to contradictory combinations of interests and pastimes[13], which are, however, carefully crafted and usually, especially in front of family and neighbours, dismissed in favour of conformity with the frames and role models of gender, 'Kyrgyz-ness' and Islam predominating in Kyrgyzstani society (ibid.: 399).

Kirmse and other authors also shed light on the dreams and imaginations of young people in terms of their future life goals, ranging from material riches in the form of cars and houses to professional self-realisation and success at home or abroad (Kirmse 2009, DeYoung

---

[13] Kirmse shows how possible identities and orientations are ranging from Russian gangster rap, Bollywood, Sunni Islam to social relations with overseas Christian missionaries.

2010). While these dreams of the future resonate with the visions of young people all over the world, the opportunity structure for realising them is certainly more limited in Kyrgyzstan, and leads to selection and social stratification (Satybaldieva 2015b).[14] The prospects of 'making it' to the top quintile of the generation of young Kyrgyzstani professionals are rather bleak, however – a fact often disregarded or realised later by people. Without a foreign university degree or at least experience of working or living abroad, people are often confined to join the local labour market in the NGO or corporate sector, which have on average long working hours and low salaries, making it hard to sustain a family (Satybaldieva 2017).

Given the relatively small size of the business sector, especially the small share of firms paying a living wage and the bleak economic conditions in non-urban areas, people are forced to take on either two or three jobs at a time or by subsidising wages with subletting income (ibid., Sanghera and Satybaldieva 2009). Young people have thus also become a part of the transnational migrant economy that emerged over the 1990s (see next sub-section). Especially in families who do not expect to be able to afford higher education for their children, labour migration is regarded a matter of course, almost a 'rite of passage' akin to the introduction of young folks into nomadic herding cycles (Schröder and Stephan-Emmerich 2016). With wealth and luxurious lifestyles on display in most bigger cities, it is understandable how the inequalities among youth are giving rise to rivalries and conflict, and make some young people turn to networks of businessmen-politicians and their sports clubs to fashion a masculine

---

[14] Stipend programmes of academic exchange services and bilateral donors, which enable years abroad in the US or participation in summer schools and language trainings, or the scholarships and fee waivers to support studies at the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek or at foreign universities are the main sources of hope for many young people, who take additional tuition, extracurricular language courses and internships to shape 'excellent' CVs and acquire the language skills they need to have a chance in the applications submitted (Schröder 2013, Kirmse 2009). Interestingly, while scholarships and grants are proclaimed to aim at nurturing critical thinking, sustained intellectual engagement and social impact, the salaries in the academic or NGO sector are simply not competitive with those in international corporations (see e.g. Schröder 2013: 252).

identity and gain access to career paths in the world of shady business or organised crime (Kirmse 2010: Radnitz 2010).

IV.2.4 Hard work, perseverance and coping strategies

Finally, ideas about hard work, perseverance, and coping mechanisms and non-interference into politics have become popular among people, not least in light of the political instability affecting the country. This perceived virtue of adapting to the processes of transition thus facilitates the ongoing salience of a Western 'liberal peace' imaginary in national politics and statebuilding, but appears to equally effect entrenched destitution, individual responsibilisation and biopolitical subjectification. This discourse thus is a crucial materialisation of the historical legacies and perceptions of geographical and cultural specificity that foreground the post-liberal politics examined in this thesis. It works as counterpart to the notion of 'paternalistic care' going back to Soviet days (Lewis 2016: 391), according to which authority for economic policy-making and provision of welfare is 'put into the hands of rational political leaders … for the sake of a better economic life' (Peshkopia 2009: 27).[15]

The accession to the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) in 2015 is further deepening Kyrgyzstan's position as marginal economy providing cheap migrant labour and raw materials (Leonard 2015)[16] and has further stripped the domestic economy off significant livelihood opportunities apart from labour migration. With almost a fifth (1.5 million; IRIN 2015) of the country's overall population leaving for Russia or other CIS countries in order to secure a living for their families, the burden on the life circumstances of many Kyrgyzstanis is imaginable.

---

[15] These leaders are, implicitly, supposed to have (or be able to develop) the necessary techno-scientific competencies (Makarychev and Medvedev 2015: 46; Heathershaw 2009: 66, Prozorov 2016: ch. 1, section III.2).

[16] A choice that has been constructed as necessities in a way clearly hegemonic discourses of international market integration (see Lewis 2015b, Kudaibergenova 2016, see IV.2.2).

Apart from the dire psychological effects of this reconstitution of Central Asians as inferior citizens in the community of former Soviet states,[17] it is obvious that this social dispersion puts a high burden on families and has led to the general deterioration of the nuclear family as an institution within Kyrgyz society (see chapter V). Such hardship notwithstanding, migration to the countries of the former Soviet Union or beyond (e.g. to China, Europe or the US) has become an established practice for sustaining livelihoods (Schröder and Stephan-Emmerich 2016, Thieme 2008). At the same time, the maintenance and engagement with social structures and networks during migration and the attendance to duties in the home community help people to cope with the conditions of a life dispersed by market forces (Schröder and Stephan-Emmerich 2016, Reeves 2011, Thieme 2008). Both ancient traditions and cultures as well as the virtues of Islamic faith are invoked in the promotion of hard work, perseverance and coping strategies for the maintenance of harmony and unity under such harsh conditions (Satybaldieva 2015b, Beyer 2013, see IV.4).[18]

Whether through such refuge into fatalism or in reference to tradition, spirituality and religion (Satybaldieva 2015b), it appears that many people have become accustomed to deal with the hardship wreaked on them by the transition without complaining, hoping that things will get better at some point in some way or trying to improve their situation with labour migration and multi-local livelihoods (Ismailbekova 2013, Thieme 2008). This discourse on

---

[17] Fryer et al. describe the situation of migrant labourers as such (2014: 172):
> Though most migration is voluntary, the conditions for migrants are often difficult, if not outright inhumane. Central Asians have found themselves tricked and trafficked into conditions of near-slavery, abused and deceived by employers, robbed, and victimized by a Russian public that has been increasingly xenophobic and violent against migrants from the former Soviet "South".

[18] Most illustratively, Satybaldieva (2015b: 116) shows how people engage in a 'politics of patience' as they 'tend to accept their circumstances, choosing to improve their own conditions and finding virtues in self-restraint, self-responsibility, endurance and determination … taking pride in not complaining, in overcoming difficult obstacles, and working hard'. Her informants agree with one another that, 'if we work, things will slowly improve' (ibid.: 117).

hard work, perseverance and coping is thus an important part of the Western liberal peace imaginary, as it renders the suffering and adaptation required in neo-liberal market reforms more acceptable. On the other hand, it is exactly these discourses and positionings that have given rise to disappointment, resentment and positions decidedly rejecting Western and more general international influence in the attempt to assert the sovereignty of the country.

IV.3   'Politics of sovereignty'

This imaginary unites the discourses which can be attributed to Kyrgyztsanis' striving for independence and freedom from external and domestic interference into politics and criticism. David Gullette and John Heathershaw (2015) have analysed the 'affective politics of sovereignty' apparent in debates around the 'Osh events' of June 2010, thus providing the basis for the broader conception of 'politics of sovereignty' that I propose here. They argue that sovereignty should not only be researched in terms of its legal, political and international implications, as has predominantly been the case in the disciplines of political science, IR and legal studies, but that it should be 'considered in terms of its affects as well as its effects' on people's thinking and behaviour (2015: 123).[19] Much in the same way as I have discussed the imaginary as interface between the material and ideational realms (III.3), they contend that '[t]o study the affective politics of sovereignty is to study the emotive, psychological, and embodied discourses of state politics in its full social context, symbolic, and material' (131).

I understand 'politics of sovereignty' in a broader sense than Gullette and Heathershaw. While they focus on the particular role played by affective attachments, feelings and the 'make-

---

[19] In this sense, they implicitly develop an analysis of the role of imaginaries – in this case the imaginary of a strong, sovereign, state – in political discourse and actions, particularly the 'affective attachments between personal identity and national sovereignty, and how these feelings produce the state through its discourse of popular sovereignty and the make-believing of state space' (2015: 130).

believing of state space', I include a wider variety of enactments and discourses of sovereignty, which might be seen as formalistic and legalistic as in the case with sovereignty discourses studied in political science and IR. Still, people's engagement with and support for such sovereignty discourses is equally important in terms of its effects on social order and political decisions, for instance when people invoke ideas about sovereignty, 'titular ethnicity' or territorial integrity and claims going back to Soviet times. Relatedly, I examine the ethno-nationalist discourse alongside and in relation to another three discourses of politics of sovereignty.

The key tension in this imaginary is captured by the ambiguity between discursive positionings that invoke, on the one hand, pride with belonging, history and collectivity that do not stand in contradiction with individuals or groups who identify themselves otherwise, and, on the other hand, positionings that exhibit a readiness to engage in different forms of coercion, violence and exclusion to maintain or improve their perceived relative situation. The former is mostly the case with the discourse I labelled 'Soviet modernity' (IV.3.2), which denotes the acknowledgement of and pride with life quality and achievements made during the Soviet period. The latter position can be glossed as 'ethno-nationalism' (IV.3.3), a sentiment that the Kyrgyz 'titular' and majority ethnic group should be dominating the political agenda (Megoran 2017, Wilkinson 2014a, Laruelle 2012). To develop a better understanding of these discourses, which are key to understanding the recent violent conflict in Kyrgyzstan and current peacebuilding and security policies and practices, I further examine the discourse of the 'bad West' (IV.3.1) as the counter image of the idealistic imaginations of 'the West' in the previous section and trace what I gloss as 'anti-colonial discourse' (IV.3.4) to shed light on the historicity of nationalist 'politics of sovereignty'.

IV.3.1 The 'bad West'

This first discourse is the flip-side of the 'imaginary West' element in the Western 'liberal peace' imaginary discussed above. As Yurchak has argued, Soviet ideologues tried to delineate people's perception of the West into good, acceptable elements (such as knowledge of certain authors, music and a sense of cosmopolitanism and tolerance) on the one hand, and the 'extreme' and harmful features of life in the West, on the other (2006: 166-170). Although not all of the population believed in the pictures conveyed in newspapers and television the portrayal of life in the West and Western societies as inferior in light of their moral weaknesses, greed and lack of solidarity appeared convincing to many people and continues to inform their understanding of world politics and ideas of development and capitalism to this day.

Especially in light of the disappointment with the market reforms, free trade and democratisation, many people came to see the West as an ideal place whose level of development and societal efficiency it was not possible to reach; and whose ideas were not desirable or compatible with Central Asian 'culture' (Omelicheva 2015: 91). The West has thus also been imagined as the source of the neo-liberal development agenda and as primary reference point for the elite project this model embodies in Kyrgyzstan (Pétric 2005) and Central Asia at large (Trevisani 2014, Tadjbakhsh 2009). Ideas hailing from Soviet times, that market exchange and consumption are morally inferior and undesirable (Humphrey and Mandel 2002) informs the West's construction as an anti-ideal associated with moral decay, capitalist greed and social inequality (Makarychev and Medvedev 2015: 45, 50, Omelicheva 2015: 81). In her analysis of senior Kyrgyzstani development workers' view on society, Féaux de la Croix exemplifies these feelings with her interviewee's opinions that that the years of transition have made young people to 'just care about money', have made them lose respect for elder people, which used to be a virtue of Kyrgyzstani society in the Soviet days, and have stripped them off morality or spirituality (*dukhovnost*) (2013a: 225-228). Although this is attributed to the general

lack of education or nurturing (*vospitanie*), it can be argued that the situation is perceived as brought about by the transition towards a capitalist market economy based on a Western template. Critical and anti-capitalist traditions in the West are in this instant reduced to insignificance, and the West is implicitly constructed as the source of the market idea, as well as the mainstay of this economic system with all its adverse effects.

Furthermore, the imaginary West informs argumentative patterns in domestic political debates on human rights and other issues, in relation to which international actors make pressure to comply with global standards. Both in such political discussions and in societal discourses in general it is commonplace to point out that Kyrgyzstani human rights activists and NGOs receive financial support from the United States or other influential geo-political actors, and that no neutrality of positive contributions are to be expected from such 'grant-eaters [*grantoiedy*]' and 'foreign agents' (Féaux de la Croix 2013b: 452, Marat 2013: 16). A particularly politicised issue are the rights of LGBT people (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender), who are generally perceived as 'a perversion of Western origin at odds with local values and identities, with many arguing that there is no such thing as a gay, lesbian or transgender Kyrgyz' (Wilkinson 2014b). The fact that LBGT activism came to be seen as 'imposition of foreign norms by an aggressive group of morally corrupt deviants demanding "special rights" to violate local values' (ibid.) exemplifies the construction of an imaginary West as source of amoral and sexually permissive and deviant ways of life, whose influence the people of Kyrgyzstan have to resist against. This reflects the general logics with which 'the West', or external forces in general, are invoked as the culprits behind the dire situation of the country's economy and different challenges to its sovereignty.

IV.3.2 Soviet modernity

This discourse stands in more implicit tension with the imperialist agenda of 'the West'. It denotes the acknowledgement, pride and nostalgia that is felt towards the Soviet period. While especially the literatures on post-Soviet transition and democratisation appear to not have positioned themselves explicitly or consistently vis-à-vis this issue, it is crucial to understand the meaning that a large part of post-Soviet populations still confer to the Soviet past and, perhaps even more importantly, the cognitive dissonance that such people have endured in the past decades which largely obliterated all the achievements and systems of meaning and organisation which had been established under great effort and strain during Socialism (Cornis-Pope 2012, Kay 2006, Féaux de la Croix 2013a).

The Soviet history of the Kyrgyz Republic and Central Asian republics more generally is often understood as synonymous with the origin of their modern form of statehood. Scholars on Central Asia broadly agree that it was the Bolshevik conquest of Turkestan and the social transformation campaign during Stalin's reign which lead to the establishment of Central Asian nations (e.g. Khalid 2007, Roy 2007, Hirsch 2005, Brubaker 1994). While there had been forms of social organisation under the Russian empire and before (see Borubashov 2013 and IV.4.2), the decisive shift brought about by the Bolsheviks lay in the supposed liberation of the lower classes, and the cultural and social rekindling of the region.[20] Given the absence of a comprehensive historical reflection on the downsides of Soviet Union's reign in Central Asia[21],

---

[20] Although this transformation did of course not happen without resistance and took a significant toll in the form of deaths, loss of property and livelihoods during restructuring and collectivisation campaigns, and most importantly the purges of the 1930s (Khalid 2007, Haugen 2003).

[21] It is not possible to cover these historical processes and the tremendous suffering they have wreaked on the Central Asian populations here, not least because of the little insight on such aspects afforded by archives. Roy (2007), Khalid (2007), *Central Asian Survey* 2007, and to some extent Heathershaw and Herzig (2013) cover these aspects, although a comprehensive history of the Gulag in Central Asia appears to be lacking.

its image is dominated by the well established idea that it was sacrifices under Stalin's rule and during World War II that made the relative welfare and rise in living standards during the post-Stalin era possible in the first place (Féaux de la Croix 2013a: 228, Sievers 2013: 5).

The process foregrounding the founding both the Kyrgyz and other Central Asian republics and the territorial quarrels in the contemporary period is the national territorial delimitation (NTD, *natsoinalnoe razmezhivanie*), which took place roughly from 1924 until 1936. In its course, ethnicity, which, much to the incomprehension of both Tsarist ethnographers and their Bolshevik successors, had hitherto been largely insignificant[22], was elevated to be the major principle by which people, or rather nations (Russian *etnos*), would be distinguished and governed (Roy 2007: 61). The underlying idea was that of ethnogenesis, a combination of primordialist and constructivist conceptions of nationalism, according to which nations were forming based on common history, heritage and ancestral lines, a process also depending on and malleable through the steering of economic conditions, education and political engineering (Laruelle 2008). The division of Central Asia into republics along ethno-national lines was thus supposed to 'accelerate history' (Haugen 2003: 169) and consolidate the nations of the Soviet Union. This ethno-national, primordialist discourse was constantly balanced with an internationalist rhetoric of the 'peoples' friendship' (*druzhba narodov*) emphasising solidarity and brotherhood between different nations and propagating the idea that with the reaching of Communism and equality of people, ethnic belonging would gradually lose its meaning and, thanks to intermarriage of people from different ethnicities, finally fade away (Edgar 2007: 585, Simon 1991: 307).

---

[22] The people of Central Asia had lived in different dynastic, religious, pre-modern territorial arrangements such as the Khiva and Kokand khanates as well as the emirate of Bukhara on the territory of the later Uzbek and Tajik SSRs, as well as under Tsarist protectorates (Haugen 2003: ch. 2).

The idea of 'peoples' friendship' (Ru. *druzhba narodov*) in a multi-ethnic and multicultural Soviet society served as a mobilising vehicle against the adverse effects of many Soviet policies (Marat 2008, Tlostanova 2010, Edgar 2007). Most importantly, it was used to mitigate people's grievances over being cut off from their 'home' national republics[23], which was inevitable as the central authorities attempted to take into account both the ethnic composition and economic and industrial production concerns in the delimitation (Haugen 2003: 181). While the running of political affairs and administration was dominated by the respective 'titular ethnicities', the status of minority groups was secured through so-called 'positive discrimination', meaning that they were granted cultural and linguistic rights as well as certain kinds of benefits and welfare provision (Martin 2001: 17, Reeves 2014: 123). This toeing of a thin line between the reification and indeed promotion of ethnic identity on the one hand, and a civic nationalist emphasis on Soviet citizenship on the other, was fairly successful in forging a peaceful coexistence among Central Asian peoples, especially until the Soviet economy came under increasing strain in the 1980s.[24]

As already discussed in IV.2.3, positive associations with Kyrgyzstan's Soviet modernity appear to significantly depend on people's generational belonging, as people who had grown of age by 1991, i.e. whom Schwartz calls 'generation 1991' (2013) or Yurchak's 'last Soviet generation' (2006), often associate positive memories with their life back then,

---

[23] Haugen (2003, esp. chs. 5, 7 & 8) traces the negotiations between the different Central Asian delegations and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in detail to show the fluidity and contingency of the borders as they were drawn. As a result of the NTD, Tajiks in Bukhara (Uzbek SSR), Uzbeks in Osh (Kyrgyz SSR) and Kyrgyz living in the environs of Andijan (Uzbek SSR) became minority groups in the respective republics (ibid. ch. 8, see also Liu 2012).

[24] Until then, especially during the Krushev and early Brezhnev eras (from 1953 until the mid-1970s), it has been argued that the Central Asian SSRs managed to negotiate the gravely necessary economic reforms and re-orientation towards livestock and foodstuff farming as well as industrial development (Loring 2014) and relative cultural autonomy (Laruelle 2008, Kalinovsky 2013).

despite the possible downsides. As I show in chapters V and VII, the discourse of Soviet modernity particularly foregrounds a sensitivity towards the duties of citizenship along these generational lines, which in turn shapes people's (non-) engagement in and approaches towards local community security practices.

IV.3.3 Ethno-nationalism

As already indicated, the propagation of a civic nationalism super-ordinating Soviet citizenship over ethnic identities aimed at brushing over discontent and grievances stemming from the Soviet republics' territorial delimitation, but succeeded in doing so mostly in times of relative economic prosperity, if at all. As a counter perspective, there are already multiple analyses of the significant role of ethnicity in life during the Soviet Union and the institutional racism and chauvinism experienced especially by Central Asians in relation to their 'European' counterparts, and amongst each other (Sahadeo 2007, Igmen 2012). In Kyrgyzstan, dynamics of social change and spatial restructuring of both urban and rural areas gave rise to a particular ethno-political legacy standing in palpable tension with the 'peoples' friendship' discourse throughout the Soviet and much of the post-Soviet periods. This trajectory was especially pronounced the southern part of the Kyrgyz SSR.

With the increased urbanisation and partial industrial restructuring of the southern city of Osh from the 1960s onwards, more Kyrgyz started moving to the city whose central areas had been inhabited by a sizeable Uzbek population (Megoran 2017: ch. 4, Liu 2012). The city administration shifted began restructuring Osh into a modern industrial town, in which the traditional Uzbek *mahalla* neighbourhoods were supposed to give way to multi-storey residential buildings and urban infrastructures such as parks, boulevards and squares (Harrowell 2015). The assertion of Kyrgyz interests also led to the increased staffing of administrative and intellectual posts with Kyrgyz at the expense of Uzbeks, who had been strongly represented in

this area due to their high educational attainments (Megoran 2013). Despite these changes forcing them to retreat into farming and other professions, Uzbeks managed to maintain their relative wellbeing as perceived by large swathes of poor and needy Kyrgyz coming to Osh from the country side (ibid.). With the Soviet economic model stagnating more and more in the 1980s, increasing numbers of people from rural Kyrgyzstan migrated to the urban centres and tensions in the competition for jobs, state-provided housing and scarce land erupted into deadly clashes in and around Osh and Uzgen in the year 1990 (Tishkov 1995). Since independence, the marginalisation of Uzbeks and other national minorities intensified due the increasingly precarious economic situation and the perception that Uzbeks, traditionally more successful in trade and business, were generally better off than Kyrgyz (Bond and Koch 2010).

The first president of the newly independent Kyrgyz Republic, Askar Akaev, attempted to mitigate these tensions and conflicts by promoting an agenda of 'interethnic unity' (Ru. *mezhdunarodnoe soglasie*, lit. international, meaning between different nationalities or ethnicities) by emphasising the multi-ethnic and multicultural nature of a tolerant Kyrgyzstani society under the slogan 'Kyrgyzstan is our common home' (*Kyrgyzstan – nash obshii dom*) (Marat 2008: 14). His initiatives included the creation of a 'People's Assembly' (*Assambleia narodov Kyrgyzstana*, Assembly of the peoples of Kyrgyzstan) as a forum for the representatives of minorities and for the celebration Kyrgyzstan's traditions and historical legacies (Omelicheva 2015: 81). The epos of Manas (see above) was made a bedrock of Kyrgyz national identity, as its poems and narrations became a mandatory part of school teaching and cultural life of the country (van der Heide 2015). With it, however, Akaev also started to embrace the idea of ethnogenesis and, drawing on the work of Lev Gumilev, a prominent

theorist during the 1960s, drew connections between the Manas epic and the ethnogenesis of the Kyrgyz (Gullette 2008).[25]

Neither Akaev nor his predecessor Kurmanbek Bakiev decided to draw on the ethno-nationalist register for mobilising support among the electorate and the elites, which led to its emergence as a strongly and increasingly accepted discourse among opposition politicians in the course of the 2000s (Laruelle 2012). Some politicians even went so far as to say that the Kyrgyz, being the majority or 'titular' ethnic group of the country, 'are the masters of the house, the other nations and peoples [are] tenants [*Kyrgyzy v strane khoziaeva doma, a ostalnye narody i natsii kvartiranty*.]' (cited in Gullette and Heathershaw 2015: 132-133). Different authors have argued that the 2010 clashes in southern Kyrgyzstan, which disproportionately led to the destruction of Uzbek properties, businesses and loss of Uzbek lives, have to be seen as expression of such sentiment and the feeling of Kyrgyz that their sovereignty as 'titular' ethnic group and majority was being 'imperilled' (Laruelle 2012, Wilkinson 2014a).[26]

The challenge for current research is that the topic of inter-ethnic relations and the ethno-nationalist sentiments is virtually banned from public discourse in Kyrgyzstan. Authorities have argued that compensation, re-construction and reconciliation since the 'Osh events' have been largely effective, while several authors have noted the ongoing discrimination and marginalisation of Uzbeks especially in the city of Osh (Harrowell 2015, Ismailbekova 2013, 2015, Ismailbekova and Karimova 2018, Megoran 2013, Isakova 2013,

---

[25] While Akaev maintained that this legacy could be claimed regardless of ethnicity, making Manas a hero for Kyrgyzstanis of all ethnicities, this civic, modern conception of nationalism was not appropriate for rallying more conservative and ethno-nationalistically inclined groups, especially from rural and southern districts of Kyrgyzstan (Laruelle 2012, 2008).

[26] Although, rather than portraying the Kyrgyz as perpetrators and reinforcing the perpetrator-victim division, of which international NGOs and the international community have been accused, some authors have pointed out that the fears and frustrations underlying this discourse, as well the mechanisms making them a legitimate political sentiment, have to be understood in their own right instead of being dismissed as irrational and uncivilised (Megoran 2017: ch. 4, 2013, Gullette and Heathershaw 2015).

2015). Such critical accounts are not only denied or relativised; but researchers and journalists trying to inquire such topics have recently been targeted by the State Committee for National Security (*GKNB*) (Mets 2015).[27] Although none of the trials against foreign journalists or NGOs led to draconian jail sentences or fines, the logics behind these investigations appears to be one of securitising and monopolising the discourse on inter-ethnic relations in order to keep foreign researchers and organisations from criticising the situation the ground (Bekmurzaev et al. 2018). Peacebuilding and community security projects reflect these regimes which attempts to sanitise the post-Osh reality of Kyrgyzstan, as they do not explicitly or not exclusively focus on inter-ethnic relations, or, when it is unavoidable, only do so in cooperation with authorities.

IV.3.4 Anti-colonial discourse

A fourth discourse discernible within the 'politics of sovereignty' imaginary is that of anti-colonialism. In opposition to the other three discourses, this line of argument rejects interference not only from Western powers, but is also critical vis-à-vis the colonial and exploitative implications of the Soviet Union as well as the Russian Federation, its prime successor state. While opinions on the effects of the incorporation into the Soviet empire have been diverging, different scholars have shown that the terms of the Kyrgyz SSR's integration was in many respects of colonial nature (Loring 2014, Pelkmans 2017) – as it was made to serve as a raw material producer for the centre and thus was reliant on foodstuff and fuel deliveries from the latter – and that the racial and civilisational discourse informing the politics between the republics' leaderships and people often had a strong undertone of white Europeans' supremacy over their counterparts in the 'Eastern Republics' (Sahadeo 2007). These sentiments had already led to fierce battles for political power and control between Central Asian political leaderships and Moscow during the late 1980s *perestroika* period (Lewis 2012), and the

---

[27] For further details, see discussion in the Introduction.

campaigns of post-Soviet Central Asian leaders and their 'nationalising regimes' (Brubaker 2011) fortified this reassertion sovereignty vis-à-vis the interests of the Soviet successor states.

In this sense, most anti-colonial modes of thought seem to be inextricably linked to discourses of Kyrgyz nationalism, and specifically to the ethno-nationalist variant discussed above. The state-sanctioned historiography of the past two and a half decades has spawned different protagonists of Kyrgyz history who were seen as martyrs and fighters for the interests of the Kyrgyz, even in the absence of a consolidated Kyrgyz statehood in the days before the Soviet Union. Similar to the re-discovery and utilisation of the Manas epic by Akaev in the 1990s, the stories of these new heroes were thus explored and moulded into a wider narrative about Kyrgyz statehood. The sourcing, rehashing and circulation of stories of heroic figures from periods of past greatness can be understood as a 'politics of sovereignty', which sought to 'write the nation' in historiographic terms (Kudaibergenova 2017). Going back into history enabled a more substantive and emotive mobilisation than did the civic nationalist discourse of Kyrgyzstan being a 'common home' with its emphasis on diversity and tolerance, which was not convincing for the entire population, especially given the continuity with the Soviet Union's ambiguous legacy in the country.

This difference is most apparent in the above-mentioned introduction of the epic Manas by president Askar Akaev in the early 1990s. The epic's underlying idea about the strength, resilience, and pride of the Kyrgyz is a unifying feature for the stories of other heroes embodying the historic 'politics of sovereignty' of Kyrgyzstan (Bagdasarova and Marchenko 2017).[28] Three of these serve as good examples, which have also been promoted in the form of

---

[28] Erica Marat explains why the epic was the best choice to build a stronger national ideology: The epic recounts the history of major intertribal and inter-ethnic battles and victories, it delineates the foes and friends of the Kyrgyz people and reflects the philosophy of national unity, and it relates the heroic actions of the protagonist and his followers. Its hero, Manas, is the ideal, collective image of what it means to be a male, warrior, defender of the motherland, exemplary son, husband, and father. The epic depicts the Kyrgyz people's lifestyle and the value system of their societal relations. (2008: 15)

movie productions of recent. The first figure, who has been honoured with multiple memorials and streets named after her across Kyrgyzstan, is Kurmanjan Datka, who in recent historiography and popular imaginaries has become regarded as a 'mother of the nation' (Canning 2015). Born in the tribe of the Mungush in the Alai mountains (south of the city of Osh in southern Kyrgyzstan), Kurmanjan ran away from her arranged marriage, entirely defying the patriarchal tradition of the time.[29] She acquired the title *datka* or 'righteous ruler' after the assassination of her husband Alymbek datka by the Russian army, which was encroaching on the Kokand khanate, which governed the lands of today's southern Kyrgyzstan (Pannier 2015). As there was no scope to defeat the Russian army in the long term,[30] the tragic key moment of this story is when Kurmanjan datka accepts the execution of her son as a sacrifice she has to make in order to reach a ceasefire, which incidentally is the foundation for a decades-long peace upheld thanks to the 'queen's' tolerance and ability to persuade the Kyrgyz not to raise their arms against the Russian colonial forces (Pannier 2015).[31]

Another historic hero celebrated for his standing up for the Kyrgyz national interest is Iskhak Razzakov, the first chairman of the council of ministers of the CPSU in the Kyrgyz Autonomous SSR[32]. Having defended the research into and teaching of the epos Manas in the early 1930s, Razzakov was removed from office by the Stalinist regime, a course of events earning him retrospective hero status in the newly independent Kyrgyz Republic, where the

---

[29] This already makes her a 'hero of freedom for Kyrgyz women' whose life is otherwise determined and regulated by traditions.

[30] Although legend has it that the young woman and her army became respected among the Russians for their bravery and sophistication (virtues the protagonist instilled by reminding her soldiers of the legacy of Manas) and the model character of this army, all of which earned Kurmanjan datka the title 'tsaritsa Alaia' (empress of the Alai, female form of tsar).

[31] In this sense, Kurmanjan datka's heroism, selflessness and strategic thinking, tolerance and striving for peace and unity make her a historical hero but also demonstrate the dilemmas of life under imperial rule.

[32] The predecessor of the fully self-governed Kyrgyz SSR, existing from 1926 to 1936, Haugen (2003: 167).

movie on his life story was much celebrated in 2015. The next, and final, example of resistance towards the Soviet regime and its policy of de facto colonisation of the Kyrgyz ASSR and other Central Asian republics is Yusup Abdrakhmanov, who as early as 1929 demanded more autonomy in the policy making for the republic's leadership in order to facilitate its economic development and mitigate dependency on foodstuff imports from other republics (Loring 2014: 80 ff.). Abdrakhmanov's labelling of European CPSU members advocating the entrenchment of the KASSR's position as a raw material and grain producer as 'colonisers with party cards' (ibid.: 79) is a rare instance of the explicit assertion of Kyrgyz interests through an imperial/colonial framing. These figures stand out in a legacy characterised by cooperativeness and of only implicit resistance of many generations of Kyrgyz(stani) political actors.

With political actors seemingly unable or unwilling to challenge problematic developments such as the current integration into the Eurasian Economic Union, a lot of resistance, which can be associated with anti-colonial/-imperial forces, is located in decentral realms of popular protests and activism. The vibrant protest culture of the country springs up to pre-empt interference in a wide range of issue areas.[33] An example of protests with a pronouncedly anti-Western and sovereignty-related underlying concern are the demonstrations against the deployment of an unarmed OSCE mission to southern Kyrgyzstan for the monitoring of post-conflict stability and the reconstruction process after the 2010 events. Under the slogan 'Say No to a 'Kyrgyz Kosovo!', demonstrators decidedly rejected the idea as an expression of Western interference into affairs which the country was to handle itself (Gullette and Heathershaw 2015).[34]

---

[33] In 2006, for instance, a broad coalition of civil society actors rallied against the country's classification as the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC), which would have led to the imposition of the IFIs' loan conditionalities (Marat 2006).

[34] This and other forms of popular support arguably encouraged political decision-makers to reject the report of the international 'Kyrgyzstan's Inquiry Commission' (KIC 2011) as a biased analysis that was 'creating a threat to the national security of the Kyrgyz Republic', and to declare the commission's chair Kimo Kiljunen a persona non grata (Wilkinson 2014a: 430).

Another phenomenon of anti-colonial actions and defence of Kyrgyz heritage and culture is the emergence of vigilante groups, which police people's behaviour at home and abroad. *Kyrk chyro*, literally translated 'Forty riders' and constituted in historical reference to the warriors in the following of the ancient hero Manas according to the legend, raid clubs and businesses run by non-Kyrgyz people or catering international visitors (mostly night clubs or saunas) to expose their lack of morality and decadence and rid the Kyrgyz working in these businesses from their engagement with foreigners (Region.kg 2015). An even more bizarre form of radical (ethno-) traditionalism are the attacks carried out by the so-called 'Patriots' [*patrioty*]; groups of young men who track down Kyrgyz women in Moscow and other diaspora communities (RFE/RL 2012, 2016).[35] Such intrusive and violent measures to police the reproduction of the national gene pool and moral purity – the justification purported by the vigilantes – demonstrates the extreme ways in which people react to the subjugation and marginalisation of Kyrgyzstan and its people. These expressions of anti-colonial discourse indicate the potential sentiments and corresponding problems that initiatives on social order, community security and statebuilding have to deal with in Kyrgyzstan.

IV.4 Tradition and culture

The third imaginary of statebuilding is most appropriately glossed as 'tradition and culture' and refers to the rich cultural and historical heritage of the Kyrgyz, which, especially since its revival after 1991, has been crucial in shaping perceptions of desirable social relations and ways of life. The status of traditions themselves which is subjected to contestation in the current period of their revival and instantaneous confrontation and mixing with multiple influences

---

[35] Often recorded on video, these groups aim to exert control by interrogating Kyrgyz women about their interaction with non-Kyrgyz men and unwillingness to date and marry Kyrgyz men.

from different parts of the world.[36] Contestation on such delineation are most apparent in the religious sphere, where the traditional Kyrgyz denomination of *Hanafi Maskhab* (a sub-domain of Sunni Islam) is said to have been infiltrated and displaced by the entrance of *Shiia* and other strands from the Middle East, which makes the discourse of 'traditional' vs 'foreign' Islam a significant object of examination (IV.4.1). Traditions, customs and culture are crucial in all spheres of life, from the family and household to the community and nation. Ideas of tradition and original and pure Kyrgyz culture serve as a basis for social organisation and ways of life; a fact that can be glossed as 'traditional institutions and concepts of social order' (IV.4.2). That traditions are also understood to foreground a more harmonic way of life and relation of people and nature, is captured in a discourse that can be glossed as 'traditional knowledge for a better life and better society' (IV.4.3). Finally, the discourse of 'tradition as link between human,

---

[36] In this sense, the delineation between this and the imaginary and the 'politics of sovereignty' discussed above might not be straightforward at first sight, because Kyrgyz traditions are often invoked in the discourses constituting Kyrgyz 'politics of sovereignty'. However, it can be argued that the difference between the two is that the tradition and culture discussed in this section is actually present in people's lived realities – and used to play a part in it already before the 'traditionalist' revival from 1991 onwards. The tradition and culture invoked in the 'politics of sovereignty' usually appear as stylised and hybridised with other modes of thought and action for precisely the purpose of presenting the dignity and sovereignty of the Kyrgyz(stani) people. This degree of instrumentalisation or 'invention' of tradition and culture (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) does not mean that the traditions and cultural practices reviewed here are necessarily more substantive or 'genuine'. As Kyrgyz tradition was subject to profound politicisation, classification and regulation, the lines between officially sanctioned tradition under Russian imperial and Soviet rule and other merely tolerated, undesired or illegal customs and practices were often blurred (Beyer 2006: 160, Hirsch 2005). Consequently, many practices that are widely understood as customs are actually denied the status of proper Kyrgyz tradition, as for instance the widespread practice of bride-kidnapping (Langford 2015, Kleinbach and Salimjanova 2007).

natural and spiritual domain' (IV.4.4) helps to shed a critical light on the creation of a modern state, urban infrastructures and mass scale social organisation and to demarcate a critical frame of thinking about statebuilding and social organisation from a decolonial perspective.

IV.4.1 'Traditional' vs 'foreign' Islam

Since independence in 1991, Islam has been strongly embraced both in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia more broadly (Wolters 2014), a 'revival' attributed to the ideological vacuum left after the fall of the Soviet Union (Lipovsky 1996). Islam was made a core feature of Kyrgyzstan's post-Soviet nation building project, with the president and high officials identifying as Muslims, the main Muslim holidays declared as national holidays and extensive building programmes for mosques, which in 2012 counted 1700, up from a handful in 1991 (Tromble 2014: 531). Still, authorities also tried to keep a wary distance to religion as they were aware of the potentially radical and politically transformative ambitions rooted in different variations of it. According to André Biard, they 'hoped to annihilate any pan-Islamist dimension by promoting a "good" national and traditionalist Islam' (2010: 326). This was done through different state and semi-state bodies, most importantly the State Agency for Religious Affairs and the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan or *Muftiat*.[37]

The dominant discourse thus distinguishes a 'good' and 'traditional' Islam that does not challenge the social order and authorities in Kyrgyzstan from newer, more orthodox ideas gaining traction among believers. In fact, Islam itself had been brought to Kyrgyzstan, or rather the country's nomadic forebears, by Arab armies invading the Siberian lands and the Chui valley and more southern areas making up the present-day republic and converting the nomadic population since the 8th century AD onwards (Kargiannis 2005: 137). The denomination

---

[37] The latter is officially declared an independent body but, given the little average competency in religious matters and ideological alignment with state policies and interests of its representatives, is regarded as corrupted and a tool of government (Khamidov 2013).

predominant in Kyrgyzstan, *Hanafi Maskhab*, can itself be seen as a hybrid of Islamic teachings and the customs of different nomadic tribes (Toktogulova 2007). Besides pious and diligent conduct of faith, the *Hanafi Maskhab* also espouses a number of festivities (called *toi* or *ash*), exchange and community relations and sacrifice rituals that are regarded as wasteful in more orthodox interpretations of Islam (ibid.). Especially the permissive stance vis-à-vis alcohol consumption and socialising between men and women makes 'traditional' Kyrgyz Islam appear half-hearted and even sinful; many of its practices are considered as *shirk* (idolatry) and *bidaiat*, i.e. 'innovations' not mentioned in the Islamic scriptures and thus not to be practiced by orthodox Muslims (Tulebaeva 2017: 82).

Tulebaeva's analysis (2017) dissects the value conflict between traditional Kyrgyz Islam (*salttyk islam*) and the newer, more orthodox trend of *musulmanchylyk* (lit. 'according to a religious way'), which prescribes rituals and ways of life directly derived from the Quran and teachings hailing from the Middle East, Turkey, India and Bangladesh. Contestations in the religious sphere do not only concern questions of choice, taste and personal conviction, but are highly politicised as a matter of maintaining 'old' interpretations of Islam and the notion of *salt* – meaning 'culture', 'cultural practices', customs and traditions with a local specificity (Beyer 2009) – that refers to heritage handed down through generations and is considered as inalienable from Kyrgyz people.[38] The proponents of *salttyk islam* or Kyrgyz 'traditional' Islam thus present it as 'the Islam that has been coming from our ancestors' and is worth preserving, while adherents of *musulmanchylyk* criticise it as a 'tool of enemies who want to destroy the religion' (Tulebaeva 2017: 95).[39]

---

[38] Correspondingly, Kyrgyz are seen to be Muslims by virtue of their ethnic identity and are also referred to as 'cultural Muslims' (Tulebaeva 2017: 78). The notion of being a 'good Muslim' does not necessarily depend on piety and diligence but on a minimal level of maintenance of and awareness about one's relationship with Allah (Montgomery 2007).

[39] Conversely, in their zeal to strive for the abundance (*yrysyk*) and *yiman* (conscience, honesty and good manners) promised as reward for piety and diligence, the numerous supporters of neo-

The salience of the topic was exemplified in debates unfolding around the spreading of billboards in the country's major cities, which pictured groups of women in traditional Kyrgyz head-dresses (*elecheck*) and, respectively, women in *hijabs* and fully veiled with black *niqabs*, above the caption: 'My poor people, where are we going?' [*Kairan elim, kaida baratabyz?*]. Despite their potentially provocative if not offensive message vis-à-vis the pious Muslim community, the billboards were greeted by large parts of the population and public actors, with president Atambaev even subsidising the campaign (Nazritdinov and Esenamanova 2016).[40] This shows how foreign religion and orthodox Islam were being framed as invasive and potentially dangerous (Louw 2012: 151), leading to a securitisation of dressing styles and faith (Tromble 2014). Beyond this adversarial discourse on religion in Kyrgyzstan's public discourse, it is necessary to mention that the practice and teachings of Islam are also a source of social harmony, peacefulness, patience and obedience resonating with the coping and perseverance strategies discussed in IV.2.4 (Bennett 2016: 19, Beyer 2013, Louw 2013, Satybaldieva 2017 and 2015b) and have even been conceptualised as entry point for institutionalised peacebuilding practices (Alisheva 2015).

IV.4.2 Traditional institutions and concepts of social order

The second crucial discourse is one emphasising the substance and importance of traditional institutions and concepts of social order and governance. It can be traced through the ongoing

orthodox Islam adopt new dressing styles, dietary requirements and mannerisms (ibid.: 91 ff.), provoking disdain and ridicule among supporters of 'traditional Islam'.

[40] After a counter-campaign parodying the initial bill boards decried the spreading of miniskirts as the hyper-modern opposite to more traditional clothing, Atambaev was also reported to defend mini-skirts, saying that mini-skirts had been worn in Kyrgyzstan since the 1950s and that at least people wearing them 'do not blow up anyone'. KirTAG, Пусть лучше ходят в мини-юбках, но никого не взрывают – Атамбаев [They better walk around in mini-skirts as long as they do not blow up anyone – Atambaev'], 01 August 2016, accessed 17 April 2017, http://kyrtag.kg/society/pust-luchshe-khodyat-v-mini-yubkakh-no-nikogo-ne-vzryvayut-atambaev-

significance of two traditional institutions, the *kurultai* and *askakal* courts and key concepts of order, harmony and peace which I briefly discuss here.

The *kurultai* – an assembly of community representatives – goes back several centuries in the history of the Kyrgyz nomadic tribes. Throughout history, it has been a significant vehicle for the establishment, consolidation and extension of administration, and rule of law, as well as military command.[41] Re-introduced and institutionalised in the post-independence era[42], *kurultais* are still held today, for instance by political parties as a substitute for party congresses demonstrating proximity to the people and traditions of Kyrgyzstan (Gezitter.org 2015; Bedelbek kyzy 2015), and they have been called to protest different issues such as recent government plans to hold a referendum on changes to the constitution.[43] Such popular democracy creates accountability, but is also vulnerable to capture, populism, manipulation and deadlocks as, according to different commentators, 'people yield themselves [for participation] because they are relatives or because they are promised money or offices'.[44]

---

[41] In his anthology of Kyrgyz statehood, Borubashov traces the role of *kurultais* in the different epochs during which the Kyrgyz had lived under Turkic, Mongol, Kokand and Russian rule (2015).

[42] The 2001 Presidential Decree on 'Increasing the role of *Kurultais* in the management of local affairs' institutionalised *kurultais* as village assemblies which would review and approve municipal social and economic development plans and track their implementation (Alymkulov and Kulatov 2001: 533). The concept fit well into Akaev's idea of a multicultural nationalist ideology and led him to create a People's Assembly uniting representatives from all ethnic and religious groups of the country, which mirrored the intercommunal idea underling the *kurultai* (Marat 2008: 14; Borubashov 2013: 18). Omelicheva (2015: 83-84) has shown how Kyrgyzstan's second president Bakiev, in light of the fatigue with the promotion of Western electoral democracy (a 'marathon of money-bags'; quoted in Nikolaev 2010), invoked the *kurultai* as an example of 'consultative democracy' where people raise their everyday concerns and needs to shape policy, rather than leave it to elected officials and technocrats.

[43] Zanoza.kg: Народный курултай: референдум и изменение Конституции нелегитимны [People's *kurultai*: The referendum and changes tot he Constitution are not legitimate], 20 October 2016, accessed 17 April 2017, http://zanoza.kg/doc/345642_narodnyy_kyryltay:_referendym_i_izmenenie_konstitycii_nelegitimny.html

[44] Ganyeva, N. (2016) Курултай новый - проблемы старые [New *kurultai*, old problems], 12 March 2016, accessed 17 April 2017, http://24.kg/perekrestok/28996_kurultay_novyiy_-_problemyi_staryie/

Aksakal (Kg. elder, lit. white beard) courts are an institution in the legal realm has enjoyed yet more popularity. *Aksakals* are seen as authoritative based not only based on their age, experience and connectedness within the community, but also as elders of a respective lineage or *uruu* (clan or tribe) (Beyer 2006: 160, fn. 8). Even in Soviet days, when the courts had not been formally existent, *aksakals* or lineage elders would meet regularly and discuss issues pertaining to life and the community. This social structure was an ideal basis for institutionalisation into lay or alternative dispute settlement mechanism, which could even solve cases that went beyond a particular community. *Aksakals* were institutionalised in 1995 as alternative dispute resolution mechanism to unburden the increasingly unfit ex-Soviet legal system. According to the 2002 law 'On the *aksakal* courts', they are constituted of individuals who enjoy respect within the community and are supposed to judge disputes between people 'according to moral norms that reflect the customs and traditions of the Kyrgyz'.[45] Since then, this institution has been set up in almost every municipality of the country and has become the first point of contact for people in cases of domestic conflicts. Because all 'minor' cases are first reviewed by *askakals* before being handed on to the police and judiciary, it could be said that people are 'forced to interact with this institution if they want to have their cases considered by officials' (Beyer 2006: 147). In light of this lack of alternatives and other limitations of the institution of *aksakals*,[46] it has been argued that they often serve to reproduce a rather

---

[45] Art. 1, I, 2, 'Law on the *aksakal* Courts', accessed 13 November 2017, http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/1070

[46] Most importantly, Kyrgyz traditions are seen to favour certain constellations, for instance, maintaining marriages rather than encouraging divorces in case of conflicts between spouses, or not engaging into all too quarrelsome splitting of property for harmony's sake, but potentially at the expense of one party (Beyer 2006: 152). Further, *aksakals*' knowledge of legislation and procedural regulations is faint if existent at all, which means that decisions are often enforced with almost exclusive reference to *salt* (Kyrgyz traditional law), while statutory law and affiliation with law enforcement are invoked by *aksakals* to reinforce their decisions and build up a status of state officials (Beyer 2014: 106).

conservative and potentially repressive social order while failing to address and normative conflict within society (Beyer 2016, Beyer and Girke 2015).

Askakals are seen as the bearers of the century-old traditions, norms and values which are implicit in customary law or *adat utuk*, which, according to Botokanova, espouses the 'most archaic conceptions of law – with primordial popular understandings of "justice", "reciprocity", "truth", "restraint", "order"'(2015: 171); *uiat bolot* (shame anxiety); *el emne deit* ('what will people say?'); or *narmys* (pride), 'which were … crucial regulating devices for the traditional Kyrgyz society' (ibid: 152; Beyer 2013: 436). These moralistic understandings were 'determined by the socio-economic factors, the nomadic way of life, the domination of the communal psychology over the individual, and the de facto absence of gender equality' (Botokanova 2015: 171). This disposition of traditional law exhibits some level of injustice and bias to the favour of well-endowed elites (ibid.: 171), but, as Botokanova argues, it also ensured the functioning of society in rural areas and secured a sense of belonging to a meaningful social collective under the harsh conditions of social transformation that the Kyrgyz people underwent throughout the 20th century (ibid.: 113 ff., Féaux de la Croix and Ismailbekova 2014).

Traditional law and norms stemming from the Kyrgyz nomad culture informed multiple initiatives of making and securing social order especially in rural communities. Ideas of 'unity' (*birimdik*) and 'harmony' (*yntymak*) are at the forefront of these projects, which are carried out by *aksakals*, imams and local civil society (Beyer 2013, 2016). Different authors have shown how they are mobilised for conflict prevention in inter-ethnic and cross border communities in the Fergana valley in the southern Kyrgyzstan.[47] There appears ample scope, though, for

---

[47] Analysing the work of the NGO *Yntymak saiasaty* ('Politics of harmony'), Bichsel finds that the promotion of harmony and tolerance vis-à-vis intra- and inter-communal division leads to a depoliticisation of the problems at the root of cross-border conflicts and strengthening of the position of local elites who benefit from support for infrastructure rehabilitation (2005: 63). Similarly, Reeves finds that *yntymak* is largely secured by older men and their rituals of cross border visiting and feasting, which throws up the question as to how more fundamental

investigating such practices of 'harmony ideology' (Lewis 2016: 389, Nader 1990) as to how much they present an instantiation of a repressive system where, in Laura Nader's words, 'harmony coerced is freedom denied' (Nader 2001; Beyer and Girke 2015). This completes the outline of a field of tension surrounding the role of traditional institutions and concepts of order which, on the one hand, link the Kyrgyz with their ancient traditions and experience of their ancestors – making them stand above and beyond politics, which become cast in an amoral light – and, on the other, as an instrument for the consolidation of social order on the local level and, hence, of hegemony of the political players of the day.

IV.4.3 Traditional knowledge for a better life and better society

Beyond pragmatic arrangements of governance, organisation and administration, the application of 'traditional knowledge' from the nomadic forebears inspires more sustainable ways of doing policies and organising society. On a more mundane level, nomadic traditions foreground a strong political agenda in regard to agriculture, resources management and environmental protection, which resonate with discourses of 'sustainable development', environmental protection, climate change and 'agrobiocultural diversity' (Botokanova 2015: 18). In the output of a 2010 a research initiative on 'traditional knowledge' (*traditsionnye znania*, plural), it is argued that '[t]echnogenic society', in contrast to its 'traditional' counterpart, is understood to see nature as a 'deposit' on which it draws for the realisation of production, industrialisation and economic growth (ibid.: 110). The technogenic approach has wrought significant damage and the destruction of livelihoods through in form of flooded valleys in Kyrgyzstan's Tian Shan mountains or the salinisation and drying out of the Aral Sea (Féaux de la Croix 2011, Sievers 2013). The more traditional activities such as animal

---

questions and discontents may be addressed within this traditional framework of conflict containment (2015b).

husbandry and cash cropping in agro-, horti- and silvicultural sectors present livelihood strategies (see Schmidt 2013), on the other hand, were similarly elevated to prime importance during the Soviet period while being much more sustainable (Schoch et al. 2010, Shigaeva et al. 2007). Analyses of the decline of cash cropping and animal husbandry since the end of the Soviet Union (Steimann 2011, Isakov and Schoeberlein 2014) show how the sustenance of traditional, pastoral livelihoods depends on the scale of production and integration into the global market or, alternatively, on the embracing of a very basic way of life, which is increasingly marginalised in a society flattered by the comforts of modern-day consumption.

Furthermore, with its emphasis on the collective – the family, kinship and community – renders individual life meaningful in relation to its belonging to this collective. This social and genealogical relationality is expressed in the principle of *zhety ata* – literally 'six fathers', denoting the rule that people should know their family tree into the seventh ancestral generation – or greetings like *Kaisy uruktan, uurudan bolosun?* – 'Which tribe or kin do you belong to?' (Botokanova 2015: 115 ff.). Besides a more material component of mutual obligations in case of need (ibid.: 120), this points to the importance of belonging in an emotional or psychological sense. On the other hand, this emphasis on the absolute value of traditional knowledge, ways of life and identity also exhibits tendencies of ethno-nationalist thinking, both in academic discourse and in its political usage[48]. Botokanova, for instance, opens her volume with the following statement, among others: 'In today's multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-confessional space, the problem of renewal, preservation and dissemination of traditional knowledge with the aim of preserving ethnic identity and securing continuity of cultural

---

[48] In his opening address on the Second World Nomad Games (a world event for nomadic traditional sports with a wide audience) at lake Issyk-Kul, president Atambaev remarked: 'In today's world, humankind is forgetting its roots. There is a threat of the disappearance of unique cultures and peoples; state borders are changing.' Speech accessed 13 November 2017, available at: http://www.gezitter.org/culture/53170_a_atambaev_vsemirnyie_ igryi_kochevnikov_-_eto_prazdnik_vozvrascheniya_k_svoim_istokam_/

development acquires special importance.' (Botokanova 2015: 4) This statement positions traditional knowledge in the familiar opposition with the challenges and changes brought about by globalisation and defines its main purpose as preserving 'unique traditional cultures' and 'ethnic identity', thus invoking a scenario of threat of vanishing or extinction of ethnic identity and culture under conditions of globalisation and, specifically in the Central Asian case, labour migration and multi-local livelihoods. The next and final discourse on 'tradition and culture' points to a more fundamentally peaceful and 'decolonial' modality of being.

IV.4.4 Tradition as link between human, natural and spiritual domain

As a final item in the imaginary of 'tradition and culture', it is necessary to discuss in more depth the importance of discourses in the spiritual domain and how they foreground the three discourses examined above. . It can be said that a distinct sense of spirituality lies beneath the discourses and practices of 'traditional Islam', traditional forms of social order and ways of life discussed above. This is captured in the traditional 'ecosophic' worldview which, based on the nomadic way of life, 'keep[s] in step with the development of nature' and posits as core principle the 'harmony of nature and humans' (Umanbetova and Abdrasulova 2009: 92). According to this worldview, writes Botokanova, 'social welfare, [and] the spiritual foundations of society's and humans' existence are not only depending on the observation of ethico-moral norms … but also on [people's] relationship with nature, the source of life in all its diversity and phenomenality' (2015: 74). Such a relationship or unity between humans and natures is present in in pre-Islamic religions such as tengrism and principals such as *ubal* – responsibility for damage or suffering brought about by affecting nature – and *pir* – the idea that all objects and creatures of the natural world have a patron, a 'supernatural' being, who protects them and to whom one can pray for protection and blessings, both of which indicate how a good standing in the spiritual domain may be seen as crucial for economic activities and

'worldly conduct' more generally (Botokanova 2015: 63). Traditional beliefs and spirituality have continuously shaped social and domestic life of the Kyrgyz and other peoples in Kyrgyzstan throughout the Soviet and into the post-Soviet period.[49]

This implicit critique of and search for alternatives vis-à-vis the exigencies of modern statehood and neo-liberal transformation that Kyrgyz people experienced during the last ca. 100 years is reminiscent of the decolonial approach of 'deep relation', put forward by Robbie Shilliam (2015). Deep relation, according to him, seeks

> … to repair colonial wounds, binding back together peoples, lands, pasts, ancestors and spirits ... to bring back the manifest and spiritual domains. For in the latter domain exist the hinterlands that were never colonized … and therein lie the supports of a global infrastructure of anti-colonial connectivity (2015: 13).

This idea reaches beyond the purpose of this analysis and beyond the intentions and interests of traditional ways of life in Kyrgyzstan. Developing anti-colonial or more generally anti-oppressive/exploitative agency would necessitate a critical awareness and desire for social change. Rather than such ambition, the most significant thread underlying traditional and culturally endowed ways of living is a passive acceptance or evasion of the imperatives of modern, urban life, which appear significant in their own right, even if they are unattractive for many people especially among the urban population in Kyrgyzstan. Other than the first three discourses under the 'tradition and culture' imaginary, this fourth discourse on 'spirituality and nature' reflects the modality of decoloniality, understood as counter-pole of governmentality

---

[49] O'Neill Borbieva (2013), for instance, has shown how the handling of bread and other foodstuffs is acrimoniously regulated in her hosts' household. Adherence to these rules pays tribute to the holy status of bread in Muslim tradition; secures a person's standing according to conceptions of doing good (*soop*) and having enough to live (*rizq/yrysky*); and expresses valorisation of the social bonds (with neighbours, guests or family members) that bread symbolises (ibid.: 504). Conversely, failure to stick to the rules may cause a disequilibrium in the spiritual sphere and incur threats, curses and unhappiness.

(III.2). The decolonial ways of thinking, acting and knowing I examine have a potential to inform practices of peace- and statebuilding; but as I will show, they ultimately stand in an uncomfortable relation to them.

IV.5   Post-liberal statebuilding between governmentality and decoloniality

As already indicated in the introduction to this chapter, the imaginaries and discourses that I have defined based on literature, media material and my own research are ideal-types that rest on certain dimensions and underlying concepts. Given this stylisation into a workable framework, there are many overlaps, synergies and oppositions between the different elements. This synthetic potential foregrounds the combination of different discourses into hybrid practices and discourses of statebuilding; and, conversely, a deconstruction of statebuilding – more specifically community security and peacebuilding practices and discourses – into their composite parts, or, respectively, situating these discourses and practices vis-à-vis the three imaginaries of statebuilding. This helps to show how specific actors, actions and speech acts cannot be seen to belong or refer exclusively to categories such as 'liberal peace' or 'local', or 'authoritarian', 'traditional' or 'culturally authentic'. Rather, as my analysis shows, actors and modalities in statebuilding have to be seen in terms of how they situate themselves vis-à-vis and within different imaginaries of statebuilding by drawing on particular discourses and engaging in certain practices and relations.

The use of the interpretive framework for the analysis of the multiple relationalities and *heteroglossia* underlying peace- and statebuilding discourse and practice is particularly well captured in the intentional choice to name the 'politics of sovereignty' (IV.3) such and not otherwise. This denotation emphasises that resistance by national or sub-national actors can rarely, if ever, be understood to be expressed against 'the West' or the 'liberal peace' in their

very essence, and exclusively directed at them.[50] Indeed, external interference and conditionality are often rejected and resisted by invoking concepts of international law (most notably 'sovereignty' or 'territorial integrity') which are equally associated with the Western 'liberal peace' imaginary and the idea of statehood it implies. While much of the literature on international politics in the post-Soviet space uses a continuum of authoritarianism to label Central Asian states' forms of governance and politics, this framework enables an analysis of how governments, organisations and people use and re-appropriate concepts like sovereignty or 'democracy' to negotiate their relations with international actors. Thus, rather than being opposed to one another, notions and concepts situated within the 'liberal peace' may be combined with discourses from both of the other two imaginaries in the crafting of post-liberal forms of statebuilding, domestic and foreign policy.

Besides this pragmatic, discourse-analytical perspective on the combination and hybridisation of discourses into post-liberal statebuilding, the framework offers a normative perspective on these processes. The different imaginaries and discourses of statebuilding are situated in a space between the 'governmentality' and 'decoloniality' modalities of governance and social ordering (see III.2). Figure 4.2 indicates how this normative aspect can be illustrated in a third dimension in which the plane of the imaginaries of statebuilding is located.

---

[50] Although such a somewhat purer resistance is discussed in the 'bad West' discourse (IV.3.1).
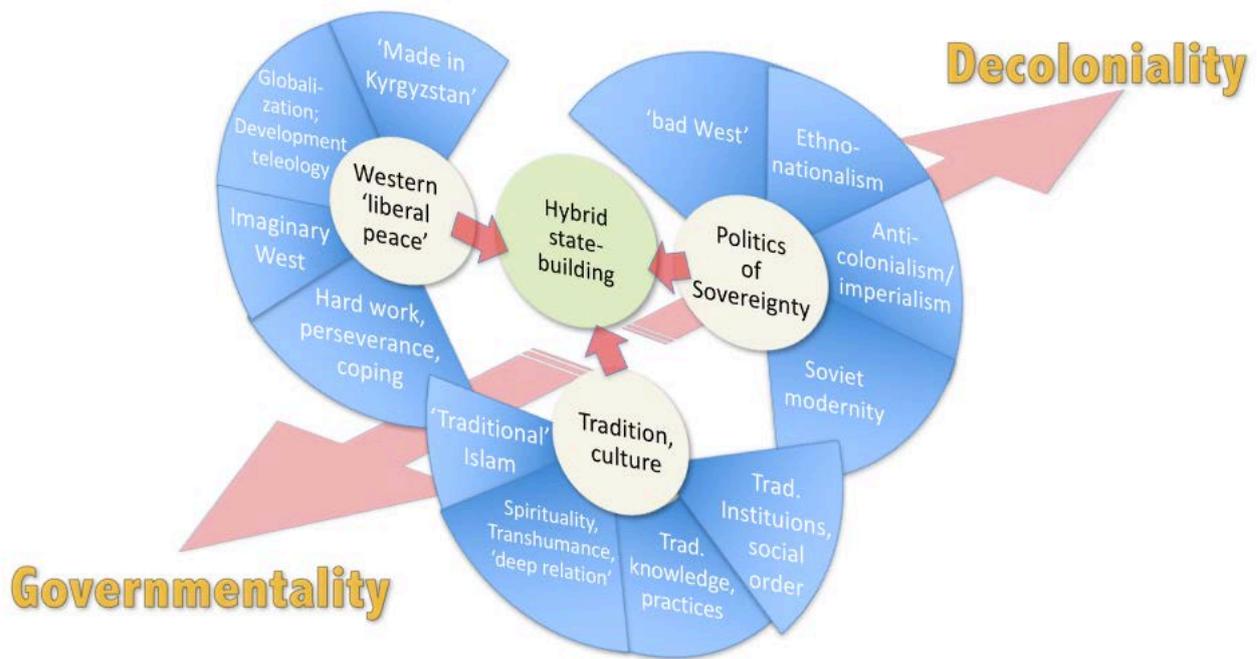
Figure 4.2: Situating the framework between governmentality and decoloniality

In the foregoing sections, I have indicated the tendencies towards governmentality and decoloniality of some of the discourses and imaginaries on their own.[51] The full scale of ambiguity becomes clear in the hypothetical example of a 'liberal peace' style peacebuilding project that uses traditional concepts and institutions of social order: it might appear emancipatory given the valorisation of people, their lifeworlds and cultural backgrounds. However, in the absence of a holistic consideration and critique of the embeddedness of the context in precarious economic and political conditions, such a project is liable to produce a

---

[51] For instance, it can be argued that the discourse of spirituality, 'ecosophy' and the corresponding concept of 'deep relation' – a connection with the pasts, places and ancestors that imperial/colonial interference has disrupted – can be understood as a potential for decoloniality in light of its focus on wellbeing, wholesomeness and harmony. On the other hand, the embracing of this discourse can also imply that people seek refuge in their own homes or communities while society at large continues to suffer from unregulated market forces and declining social support. Similarly, traditional institutions and concepts of social order are portrayed as important and meaningful because of their potential to create harmony (*yntymak*) and to give people a sense of belonging, while their functionality for dealing with conflicts arising from the longings and problems sparked by modernisation, urban life and neo-liberal reforms appears to be limited.

form of governmentality and mere conflict management with possible neo-authoritarian features, instead of transforming conflict and tackling its root causes (see Reeves 2015b, Lottholz 2018).

Finally, it should be emphasised that the discussion of the implications of post-liberal forms of statebuilding is primarily of reflective character and not aimed at generating suggestions as to what could be 'done better' to 'decolonise' the modalities of social order under analysis. Such ideas may emerge from the examination of the different initiatives and actions but are of minor concern here. More importantly, in contextualising the empirical analyses, I aim to show how trajectories of neo-authoritarian governmentality are preconditioned by the Soviet and post-Soviet modes of governance and how these largely preclude decoloniality, although they appear to enable it on individual and group levels in certain instances. I will show how different instances of intervention, engagement, resistance and creativity make contributions to community security and peacebuilding that help to shape a more representative, just and empathetic social order. However, by demonstrating how these instances are most often only exceptions confirming the overarching logics of security governance, politics of sovereignty and governmentality, this research aims to offer a critical and reflective perspective on post-liberal statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan.

Chapter V   Statebuilding in Central Asia: The case of community security and peacebuilding in Kyrgyzstan

In this first empirical chapter, I give an introduction into the realities of life in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, and especially its specifics in semi-urban and rural areas where privatisation and liberal reform have effected a fundamental reconfiguration of public life, social order and economic activity. While the main analytical focus of the chapter is on community security practices in rural and semi-urban localities in Kyrgyzstan, the reason why and ways in which community security 'is done' cannot be sufficiently understood without looking at the livelihoods and struggle for a decent life, if not survival, that people in Kyrgyzstan became caught up in after the country's independence and subsequent privatisation and liberalisation programmes. In chapter IV, I have already shown how the Western 'liberal peace' imaginary and its discourses on liberalisation and reform after the Washington Consensus model have dominated debates policies pertaining to Kyrgyzstan's 'transition' after the end of the Soviet Union. To outline the 'post-Soviet condition of uncertainty' (Pelkmans 2017: 5) and its implications for security, peace and conflict, I give an insight into the poverty, precarity, and dependence on newly emergent institutions, mechanisms and access regimes people were having to grapple with, and new ways of securing existence through labour migration to former Soviet states and beyond. On this basis, I show how different structures of municipal/rural administration and civil society – i.e. voluntary bodies engaged in social ordering and mobilisation – evolved during the post-Soviet period, first sharply declining in their activity and meaning but soon revived as part of the central government's efforts to decentralise and delegate responsibility to local self-governance bodies. Against this background, I analyse so-called Local Crime Prevention Centres (LCPCs, Ru. *Obshestvenno-profilakticheskie tsentry* or *OPTs*) and an initiative of international NGOs to strengthen, or re-vive, their role in maintaining order, preventing crime and building peace in communities across the country.

In the subsequent section V.1, I show how the large scale industrial collapse and concurring downsizing and disabling of state institutional structures led to such degrees of reorganisation of social life and economic activity according to informal principles and mechanisms that a new moral economy of survival came into being. In this new configuration, certain policies and reform measures produced the impression that Kyrgyzstan was slowly transitioning to a market economy with modern, accountable state institutions, while de facto access patterns, social hierarchies and social stratification in many ways defied the idea of a modern and fairly equal society. I also show how the emerging transnational economy of labour migration put increasing strain on families and social networks, which, together with the other challenges, led to many people, especially youth, being increasingly prone to aggression and crime, which in turn had negative implications for peace and security.

In section V.2, I outline the infrastructure of local administration and civil society during and after the Soviet Union and situate Local Crime Prevention Centres within this network. I analyse how they were set up to become nodes for cooperation between state and society while also acting as conduits for international aid funding streams. In section V.3, I present analyses of a sample of LCPCs based on a cooperative project in which I profiled these entities in select localities and observed how they practice and produce security. Besides discussing the overall pattern of security issues and their embeddedness in domains such as infrastructure and the economy, I show how LCPCs draw on their symbolic and social capital as well as donor funding to mobilise communities to work together on solutions for infrastructural challenges; to promote moral strength and cohesion of young families to cope with multi-local livelihoods; and to call divided communities to practice tolerance, harmony and 'people's friendship'. In the concluding discussion, I extrapolate these activities of LCPCs into the framework of the imaginaries of statebuilding and show how, while drawing on the Western 'liberal peace' and 'tradition and culture' imaginaries, LCPCs and their actions reproduce, or at least do not

fundamentally challenge a 'politics of sovereignty' with ambiguous implications for social justice and representation.

V.1 Between Soviet legacy and 'new market realities': Life in semi-urban and rural Kyrgyzstan

As already discussed in the previous chapter (section IV.2) the Kyrgyzstani population at large has accepted the necessity and inevitability of a transition from planned to market economy, and all institutional and political changes this would imply, in a way that suggests teleological thinking ingrained through Marxist-Leninist ideology whose *telos* – the idea of a fully industrially developed Communist society – was replaced with the same image glossed in a free market and individualist version. In this light, I use the term 'new market realities' in inverted commas to suggest that, even though markets may not have become real or at least did not operate as they are supposed to, people perceived their constitution and necessity as real, and therefore were soon confronted with the challenge to find ways to make a living and navigate these realities. In the first part of this section, I show how industrial collapse and the subsequent weakening and partial vanishing of institutional presence of the state gave rise to a reorganisation of life along informal principals and mechanisms of social organisation, resource allocation and inclusion/exclusion, thus creating a moral economy of survival. I further discuss the transnational economy of migrant labour emerging out of this shift and the strain it puts on families and social networks, which in turn feeds into the security and stability risks that local community security practitioners are grappling with.

Industrial and institutional collapse: Privatisation, informalisation and moral economy of survival

Life in post-independence Kyrgyzstan has, for the larger part of the population, been determined by the rapid collapse of the industrial sector and a general slump of the country's GDP and a slow but steady decline of institutional capacities and services. The country's first democratically elected president Askar Akaev, who had already been elected president of the Kyrgyz SSR by its Supreme Soviet in 1990, embraced the 'shock therapy' reforms proposed to former Soviet and Socialist countries across the board – with devastating effects for the population. As Igamberdiev reports in his analysis of the first 'transition years', the country's GDP was diminished by half of the 1990 level within 4 years and thus back to the republic's 1970s level (2016: 150). Mass bankruptcies in the industrial sector led to a plunge to 35 per cent of the 1990 level in 1995. More than privatisation, this collapse had been effected by the stop of financial flows from Moscow and the implosion of distribution channels for Kyrgyz-produced goods throughout the (former) Soviet Union (Gullette 2010: 28). As in other former Soviet republics, the process of setting up channels and infrastructures for market trading took some time, during which barter trading and the informal and black-market economy, as well as organised crime, where the main channels of economic exchange and accumulation.

This had significant ramifications for people's lives. According to statistical data, the real wage dropped to a level of around a fifth of the 1989 level and, given hyper-inflations in the early 1990s and a five-fold rise in food prices made it impossible to live let alone sustain a family if one had employment at all (Igamberdiev 2016: 152). In the absence of employment, and given wage arrears and lack of orders, people had to find ways to secure and their families' wellbeing, and often survival, in the informal economy and through subsistence agriculture (Pelkmans 2017: ch.1). As Muratbek, my driver on trips in southern Kyrgyzstan told me:

In the Soviet times [*pri soiuzu*] I used to work in a cement-asphalt factory, then they closed it. I first sold *samogon* [spirit distilled at home] in the villages, from my car or with the motorcycle. With that money, I would get animal skins for tanning, sometimes also colouring it, and then I would sell it to [people in] Russia. I had clients there. … My wife was at home with the [three] kids, I was the only one working.[1]

This illustrates the inventive spirit and self-initiative people had to develop to find ways to make a living. However, many people lacked such industriousness and entrepreneurial thinking and where thus rendered much more vulnerable. Most people, especially in rural areas, came to rely on a combination of wage labour and subsistence agriculture, which they pursued on newly allotted land plots they were allocated as part of the new land reform that saw the 576 state or collective farms – through which agricultural production was organised on an industrial or large scale – split up into units of up to one hectare's size (Botoeva 2015: 534, Steimann 2011: ch. 4). As much as the privatisation of industrial enterprises, the liquidation of collective farms was a largely uneven process in which former bosses and managers were advantages and managed to acquire the machinery and equipment necessary to cultivate larger plots of land (Steimann 2011: 58). As Botoeva sums up the dynamics in the agricultural sector:

Only a tiny minority of well-off families, who owned large fields (30–50 hectares), full machinery and large herds of livestock (around 300 sheep, 30–40 cows and 20 horses), were able to produce a surplus and generate cash. Although also a minority in the community, the poorer members could not cultivate most of their land and so rented it out (or lost ownership completely), or did not own much livestock (no livestock or one cow and a few sheep) and had to find other ways to generate income. (Botoeva 2015: 535)

---

[1] Trip to Jalal-Abad province, 31 Octover 2015.

This creeping stratification of the rural population slowly produced a sizeable population of rural poor who have increasingly moved into the urban centres in the different provinces – mostly in the capital Bishkek and Osh in the South – in the hope to find jobs in the service and construction sectors (Satybaldieva 2015a: 373; 2015b: 103). This increased the pressures on urban infrastructures and social climate extraordinarily as it added to the strain experienced by the already mentioned industrial collapse experienced across the country.

Today, over 25 years since Kyrgyzstan's constitution as independent country, former factories and production sites lie in ruins and produce feeling of trepidation, abandonment and betrayal among their former workers (Tucker 2011, Satybaldieva 2015b). In Osh, for instance, factories for textile production, pump manufacturing and meat processing once employed up to 45,000 people, with multiplier effects in other sectors and creating livelihoods for a large part of the city's residents (ibid.; Harrowell 2015). Mass lay-offs and suspension of housebuilding and provision has given rise to fierce distribution battles within the labour market and sectors of social housing and land registry. Other middle-sized, once well-constituted towns, especially so-called 'frontier towns', with mineral and raw material deposits of strategic significance for the Soviet Union as a whole, saw an even more marked exodus of inhabitants, leaving behind only a few hundred or dozens of people. The 'complete disappearance of industry' (Pelkmans 2017: 47, see Reeves 2014: ch. 3) and of the social and infrastructural advantages the 'frontier town' status had brought with it evoked feelings of hopelessness and overwhelmedness up to traumatic dimensions (Tucker 2011). 'When they described their city to outsiders, key words included "war zone", "devastation" and "death". ... was a "dying city", a postindustrial wasteland, a ruin of Soviet modernity', finds Pelkmans (2017: 48) in his description of a former mining town in Jalal-Abad province in western Kyrgyzstan.[2]

---

[2] For illustrations see Razul-zade, Tilav, Журавли улетели, забыв о родных гнездах и городе Шураб, превратившемся в бесхозные руины [The cranes flew away, forgetting about their nests back home and about the city of Shurab, which turns into ownerless ruins], 23 June 2010,

The collapse of the economy and especially the industrial sector of the Kyrgyz ex-Soviet Republic also affected a fundamental reconfiguration of the ways in which life was ordered and governed. In this regard, it makes sense to differentiate between downsizing and withdrawal of state institutions on the one hand, and the changes of societal practices, attitudes and approaches to dealing with the challenges and questions of life, most of which lie in an informal realm. While informal institutions and parallel markets and structures had already existed during Soviet times, the massive underfunding of state institutions and often complete disconnect between their budgets and equipment on the one hand and societal demands for services on the other brought to the fore the importance of informal mechanisms in maintaining the ability of public services to operate at all, and secondly, to allow public employees to ensure their own ability to survive and feed their families, but not too rarely to enrich themselves through bribes beyond appropriate levels.

In this sense, informal structures and economic mechanisms can be seen, as suggested by Morris and Polese (2015: 19) 'as response to botched political/economic reform' and 'working solution' among street level bureaucrats' which it would actually make sense to formalise in order to create a working system in the first place (ibid.: 11). In Kyrgyzstan, this compensatory function of informal payments is most apparent in the education and health sectors. According to Reeves, the complete disconnect between de facto and reported levels of educational attainment leads to corruption being 'interpreted not as the deviant action of particular immoral individuals, but the symptom of a much broader, systemic *dis-integration*' (2015a: 22, her emphasis). She shows how academics on every level are systematically

accessed 23 May 2017, http://www.fergananews.com/articles/6626 and Sputnik news, Кыргызский город-призрак — кадры из горного Иныльчека [The Kyrgyz ghost town – people from the mountainous Inylchek, 25 August 2016, accessed 23 May 2017, https://ru.sputnik.kg/photo/20160825/1028764675.html .

incentivised to over-report learning achievements and coverage of courses Reeves concludes that 'the constant – indeed institutionalized – *lack of correspondence between what is claimed and what is delivered* (and what can, in fact, be delivered), between the actual and the "certified," *blurs the boundary between ethical and unethical*' (ibid.: 23, emphasis added). For instance, with university teachers' average salary of 40 USD not covering average living costs of 100 USD for a family (60 USD in rural areas), it is not surprising that, apart from working on several jobs, a culture of bribery is rife in Kyrgyzstani academia, where students can buy themselves good grades or get away with not attending lectures (Sanghera and Satybaldieva 2009: 31). One extreme example of underfunding and operation thanks to workers' ingenuity and readiness to put up with inacceptable conditions is the Kyrgyzstani state morgue in Bishkek, which became renown after a media outlet had reported how drain pipes leak into the examination rooms, most forensic machines date back from the 1970s, staff have to provide 'their own gloves and soap' and 'kitchen knives and saws are used for autopsies'.[3]

Informal activity is thus an important way to mobilise and enable the operation of state institutions in the first place, as in the case of morgue staff bringing their own hygienic equipment, or in Staybaldieva's finding of kindergarten and school staff trying to run their entities on their own, without state support and with the help of parents' payments (Satybaldieva 2015a: 380). This decentralisation or often complete state withdrawal and transfer of responsibility to institutional staff and citizens also relocates the delivery of public service and support into a grey zone that is open to social hierarchies and forms of exclusion. These can be purely economically motivated but also intersect with differentials in educational and cultural capital as well as belonging to certain localities or identity groups. Most shocking in this regard

---

[3] The video was released after the crash of a Turkish cargo plane near Bishkek's Manas airport, which took 39 lives in the settlement Dacha Suu and attracted widespread media attention. RFE/RL, 'Disturbing tales from a Kyrgyz morgue', 31 January 2017, https://www.facebook.com/rferl/videos/10155084038894575/

is Sanghera and Satybaldieva's finding that medical staff could go as far as to withhold basic services like medical treatment and care from those who are not able to make extra payments, or that police officers release criminals upon payments of bribes (2009: 929, 932). They raise awareness, however, 'that it is not easy to make straightforward moral judgements of practices and to condemn corruption because people possess a multiplicity of ultimate concerns, and often prioritise the family over professional ethics' (ibid.: 933, see also Sanghera and Ilyasov 2008: 460-461). Rather, the standard response that '[people] have their own families that they need to feed. That's why they take bribes. Maybe, if their salary were bigger, they would be taking fewer bribes.' makes the authors conclude that: 'public sector workers and professionals justify corruption as necessary for household survival. Their sense of living and being, their modus vivendi, rests upon family commitments, rather than upon a fragile professional ethos' (ibid.: 930). This resonates with Veena Das' (2015) argument that rather than morally repulsive, corruption should be seen as bringing about the 'possibility of life' for many people in the precarious economy of post-Socialist collapse that is still gripping Kyrgyzstan as many other post-Soviet countries.

It can thus be argued that the rife informality and corruption should be seen as an attempt of people to navigate the precarious life after industrial and gradual institutional collapse. While this moral economy approach to corruption and informality (see Olivier de Sardan 1999) adds important nuance to the often ethnocentric and imposing analyses of mainly Western scholars, it is equally important to also point out the grey zone created by the moral amnesty suggested by this approach. Nearly all authors writing about dynamics of informality and social inequality note that people of higher status, i.e. clerks (Ru. *chinovniki*), teachers and other office holders, use their position to extract bribes from people, and this up to a level that goes way beyond the mere survival and reproduction of their families (Satybaldieva 2015a: 376 ff.; 2015b: 101 ff.; Engvall 2011). This tendency to take more than one is entitled to appears to be effected by a

general perception that above oneself within the hierarchy there will always be someone more corrupt and immoral, making one's own misconduct relatively acceptable. In light of the large-scale siphoning of state revenues and privatisation revenues to offshore accounts, which governments and elites practiced throughout the 1990s until today (Heathershaw and Cooley, Marat 2015, Engvall 2011), a complete rejection of this illicit world of unlimited opportunities would seem to be simply belittling and boring to people of average ambition and with social and symbolic capital at their disposal.[4]

A final factor encouraging people to accumulate beyond their needs is an emerging consumerist economy of traditional celebrations and life cycle events. Different systems for collecting money among relatives to finance life cycle event celebrations have existed throughout centuries and had, up to the late Soviet period, the primary function of mutual support and solidarity with those experiencing especial hardship (Botokanova 2015: 123, Féaux de la Croix and Ismailbekova 2014: 7). Most important in this regard are *yrazha* (Kg., literally law, mutual agreement) or *yntymak* (order, harmony) payments which are collected among kin for occasions of weddings or deaths and serve to cover expenses related to the organisations of feasts and gatherings (Kapalova 2015: 252-253). With the increasing affluence enjoyed in the late Soviet period, however, these schemes became more important and the average level of contributions began to inflate. In the post-Soviet period, the increasing social stratification and earning differentials were mirrored in these schemes (Kapalova 2015: 255).[5] This led to the

---

[4] Sanghera (2010, n.p.) illustrates what attitude the widespread corruption and elite excesses give rise to in the population, arguing that: 'Bishkek slum dwellers argue that if the then President Bakiyev's family and elites were looting and grabbing national assets, and improperly acquired the wealth to finance their lavish and wasteful lifestyles, then it is reasonable for the slum dwellers to grab plots of land to make ends meet'. She cites the example of disabled people and NGOs seizing the property of the son of ex-president Bakiev to create a sanctuary: Bennet, D. (2010) Kyrgyzstan: In Wake of Looting, Disabled Seize an Opportunity, 22 April 2010, accessed 23 May 2017, http://www.eurasianet.org/node/60916

[5] Especially in the *koshumcha* and *korumduk* ones, where contributions are not fixed and depend on income and reciprocity patterns.

gradual exclusion of poor people from kin and social networks (Kühnast and Dudwick 2002) and an entrenchment of poverty and inequality as poor people, in order to stay part of networks and not be embarrassed for not being able to pay their contributions, took loans with significant interest or engaged in petty crimes such as growing and selling hashish (Kapalova 2015: 258-259; Botoeva 2015: 542). Thus, it has been argued that informal support networks often merely create the 'illusion of support' (Kapalova 2015: 260) while increasing social pressure on people who lack financial means and social capital. Together with the precarisation of life effected by industrial and institutional collapse, these social circumstances make it understandable why labour migration has become a prevalent way among Kyrgyzstanis to ensure their livelihoods.

Translocal livelihoods and their implications for community security

Alongside its neighbour Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan is the country whose inhabitants are most dependent on labour migration for their survival. During the 1990s migration took place primarily within the country, from rural, underdeveloped localities to urban, administrative and trading centres. The early 2000s saw a deepening trend of labour migration to Russia, Kazakhstan, other CIS countries, and beyond (Schröder and Stephan-Emmerich 2016: 426). Nowadays almost a quarter of the country's overall population – ca. 1.5 million people (IRIN 2015) is working abroad. Given its significance for livelihoods and wellbeing and its widespread practice, Schröder and Stephan-Emmerich have argued that mobility as the constant state of labour migrants has acquired institutional status and become a vehicle through which people negotiate and navigate their own life courses, career choices and relations with relatives (2016: 421). They further argue that conceiving of these livelihoods as *translocal* rather than inter- or transnational (concepts which have dominated migration scholarship until recently) helps to better take into account the often blurred and unclear effects of being in another place: the social pressure and economic hardship in the sending community may be evaded but also

reproduced through networks and moral regimes that reach beyond borders (ibid.: 537).[6]

Somewhat regardless of whether migration has positive effects at home or abroad, it is clear that the institutions, urban infrastructures in Kyrgyzstan are in many ways insufficiently equipped to absorb the pressures and challenges caused by large scale migration.

As far as domestic migration is concerned, its effects on urban life and security questions in communities targeted by migration flows are perhaps the most profound. As already mentioned in IV.3.3, migration from rural areas to urban centres already put pressure on social systems and institutions in the 1980s, and continued to do so throughout the 1990s and 2000s. The population of the capital Bishkek, for instance, increased by up to 35 per cent to circa 1.1 million in the year 2001, while its administrative institutions and infrastructure were not enlarged accordingly (Fryer et al. 2014: 177). While putting additional strain on urban centres like Bishkek and Osh, an additional issue with in-migration of rural poor was that many of them did not have a residence permit (*propiska*) that entitled them to education, health care and social benefits (Hatcher 2011, Azimov and Azimov 2009). Correspondingly, large amounts of people started accumulating in so-called *novostroika* settlements in the outskirts of cities, where land plots were squatted and utilities like water electricity, sewerage and administrative entitlements were only acquired in the course of years if not decades and subject to considerable political struggle, lobbying and mobilisation (ibid., Fryer et al. 2014: 185 ff.; Nazritdinov et al. 2015).[7] Domestic migrants living in *novostroikas* are usually not registered and live in precarious conditions, which puts pressure on them to resort to livelihood strategies beyond legal

---

[6] Schröder and Stephan-Emmerich (2016: 537), alongside other authors (Thieme 2008, Conradson and Mckay 2007, Reeves 2012), show how migrants' dependence on networks also limits their ability to escape the moral imperatives and obligations of their home community.

[7] For an illustration see Leonard, Peter, Life in limbo: inside Bishkek's illegal 'new-builds', The Guardian, 17 Octover 2017, accessed 30 October 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/oct/17/life-limbo-inside-bishkek-illegal-new-builds-kyrgyzstan

boundaries. Especially in more rural settings like Osh and Jalal-Abad such poor groups have been shown to be liable to mobilisation for political purposes if not conflict and violence (Megoran et al. 2014, Radnitz 2012, Sanghera 2010). Although this trajectory is not straightforward, the potential risks emanating from large populations without legal status, care entitlements and opportunities to take part of their society is not deniable and poses a problem in and of itself.

Less visible for outside observers, but more strongly felt and experienced by those affected is labour migration beyond the national borders and its social and psychological effects. To understand the effects of large scale migration in the sending communities in Kyrgyzstan, it is necessary to briefly outline the overall experiences of Kyrgyzstani migrants abroad. Overall, given that few people manage to attain all documents necessary to fully legalise their status – a 2014 report estimated that 60 per cent of Kyrgyzstani migrants manage to do so (MLMY 2014) – and in light of the exposure to rights violations by authorities in Russian cities (FIDH 2016: II.2), most migrants embark on journeys abroad for several years, during which their status is unclear and contact with the family back home sparse. Given the xenophobia and racism prevalent in Russia, Kyrgyzstanis and people from other Central Asian states became reconstituted as subaltern migrant communities across the former Soviet Union, that is, primarily Russia (Zanca 2013). Other than during Soviet times when the Soviet passport enabled free movement across borders (Reeves 2014: 136), now most labour migrants find themselves in a trajectory of systematic reproduction of their semi- or illegal status, as the Russian authorities and government have no interest in legalising large numbers of immigrants (which would add pressure on already struggling administration and welfare state institutions) (ibid.: 130, Reeves 2013). Fryer et al. describe the situation of migrant labourers as follows (2014: 172, see also Reeves 2014: 129 ff.):

Though most migration is voluntary, the conditions for migrants are often difficult, if not outright inhumane. Central Asians have found themselves tricked and trafficked into conditions of near-slavery, abused and deceived by employers, robbed, and victimized by a Russian public that has been increasingly xenophobic and violent against migrants from the former Soviet "South".

Apart from the dire psychological effects of this reconstitution of Central Asians as inferior citizens in the community of former Soviet states, migration has put a high burden on families and has led to the general deterioration of the nuclear family as an institution within Kyrgyzstani society. Researchers agree that it particularly affects children and adolescents who are left with grandparents, other relatives and even neighbours. Empirical studies (Ablezova et al. 2008, Nazritdinov and Schenkkan 2012) have shown that these relatives are often not able or ready to impart the attention, devotion and build the relationships that could substitute the absence of parents, which has a negative bearing on the emotional wellbeing and psychological health of migrants' children. This is most obvious in cases of physical and psychological ill-treatment by surrogate parents (FIDH 2016: 49 ff.), and when looking at the appalling conditions in which foster sometimes children live.[8] Sanghera et al. demonstrate the long-term effects of distress caused by separation from parents and its 'adverse consequences on children's personal development ... and later adult relationships' (2012: 393) which can range from to insecurity complexes and emotional dependence to depression, anxiety and aggression. Another issue is the extensive labour that children are made to carry out in the households of their surrogate parents, which leads to them missing school (Fryer et al. 2014: 182). In this way, and given the general dire economic situation in the country, secondary education and high-skilled jobs are

---

[8] See the documentary short film 'Lost in their childhood' (*Poteriannye v detstve*) on this topic, produced by the NGO network Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result' (*Grazhdanskii Soiuz 'Za reformy i rezultat'*), available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfSWcPXxX2M

by many not seen as realistic means for reaching a good life, while labour migration within or beyond Kyrgyzstan provides the best chances to earn money, found a family and live up to the mutual obligations in one's kin and social networks. Instead of receiving the appropriate emotional protection and economic support, most children and adolescents in Kyrgyzstan are exposed to the hardships of supporting or entirely running a household early on in their lives.

As indicated in section IV.2.3, the omnipresent economic precarity and the struggle for a good life renders dreams about becoming a successful entrepreneur and making money especially attractive, but also foregrounds feelings of exclusion, injustice and anger among people who lack the basic conditions to access such a career trajectory. Seen from the moral economy perspective outlined above, it becomes obvious how inequality and social stratification in Kyrgyzstan and the mental burden people carry in trying to cope with life can foreground leniency towards the spectrum of informal, illicit, illegal and outright criminal practices and actions (Kirmse 2010: 394, Sanghera and Satybaldieva 2009, Sanghera and Ilyasov 2008). Given the downsizing, withdrawal and often virtual absence of the state in sectors of health, education and welfare especially in rural and semi-urban areas of Kyrgyzstan, no significant level of compliance towards state laws and decrees or support for government strategies and appeals can be expected. In the analysis of Local Crime Prevention Centres in section V.3, I show that the precarious living conditions and blurred boundaries and overlaps between legality, licit-ness and the morally acceptable give rise to different security and legal issues in rural communities in southern Kyrgyzstan, and how local administration staff and activists try to address the latter. In the next section, I introduce the structures of local self-governance and civil society that are employed by the Kyrgyzstani state in the effort to maintain order, security and peace.

V.2 Community security and crime prevention: The role of local self-governance and post-Soviet civil society

In this section, I first provide an overview of the local self-governance and social institutions that existed during Soviet times and were (partly) carried forward into the post-independence period, to then analyse the legal set-up of Local Crime Prevention Centres.

Local self-governance and social institutions during and after the Soviet Union

In order to provide enough context for understanding the process of community security provision that will be analysed in the next section, this sub-section focuses on the current structure of local self-governance in the Kyrgyz Republic and draw on historical facts and developments only inasmuch as it appears relevant for understanding this context.[9] A new standard of local self-governance was a major goal in newly independent Kyrgyzstan. Until 1991, the republic's Supreme Soviet, at the top of a vertically integrated pyramid of state institutions, had formally directed and regulated matters of local life, with local councils on various levels merely implementing policies programmed from the top down (Alymkulov and Kulatov 2001: 526). Thus, even though new bodies and competencies were introduced on different levels in different legislative acts throughout the 1990s, no consistent set of normative and legal acts had been created to ensure efficiently functioning local self-governance by the year 2000. Thus, conclude Alymkulov and Kulatov, 'there [was] no such understanding of the essence or limits of delegated state powers, leading to the permanent intrusion of the state into local self-government affairs' (2001: 564). This legislative patchwork provided ample room for local elites, such as former *kolkhoz* heads, managers and people high up in the Soviet hierarchy,

---

[9] See Alymkulov and Kulatov's (2001) or Abraliev et al.'s (2011) for more detailed analyses of local self-governance reform in the last 20 years.

to privatise and divide up key assets and farmland among themselves before legal regulations and accountability provisions were put in place (Steimann 2011: 72). It is important to note that the informal and self-initiative splitting up of collective farms (*kolkhozy*) and state farms (*sovkhozy*) also enabled the continuation of agricultural production, food provision and the maintenance of food security in the dire times of post-Socialist transition and crises (ibid.: 63, 134, Beyer 2016: 55). However, as Steimann and other authors show, the redistribution of equipment, buildings and land once owned by the Soviet state involved a lot of embezzlement, ransacking and insider deals which were at the expense of people who lacked the connections and social capital to secure a good position (Steimann 2011: 59 ff., Satybaldieva 2015a).

Nowadays, local governance structures and competencies are better differentiated and defined and it is mostly the mismatch between the challenges that local self-governance bodies have to put up with and, on the other hand, their insufficient competencies, that requires addressing. The structure of local administration as confirmed in the 2008 Law on Local Self-Governance and Local Self-Administration is sketched in table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Structure of local self-governance in Kyrgyzstan, Author illustration

Level	Territorial units	Governmental administration (Executive body)	Local self-governance (Representative body)
National	Republican cities (Bishkek, Osh)	Mayor's office (*meriia*) and administration	City council (*gorodskii kenesh*)
	Provinces (*oblast*)	Provincial administration w/ head and staff	
Regional	Oblast level city	City administration	City council (*gorodskii kenesh*)
	District (*raion*)	State administration w/ *akim* (head) and staff	District council (*raionnyi kenesh*)
Local	Towns, district (*raion*) cities	City executive committee	City council (*gorodskii kenesh*)
	Rural district (*aiylnyi aimak*)	*Aiyl okmotu* (Rural executive committee)	*Aiylnyi kenesh* or *mestnyi kenesh* (Rural council)

The current set up of local self-governance structure (the local or municipal level) presents a balance between executive bodies (middle column) and representative bodies (right column)

comprising up to 10 councillors (depending on the size of the population; more than 10 in large cities) elected by the population of the respective village, town or city. Over the years, there have been different divisions of labour between local self-administrations and representative bodies on the one hand, and the different line ministries (e.g. Health, Education, Internal Affairs) on the other. This means that local administrations were partly made responsible to maintain infrastructure and basic operations while administering resources and dispensation of e.g. welfare and pensions. With the gradual disconnection of state support and funding levels and from life circumstances in Kyrgyzstan, local administrations and councils have seen themselves in a more and more dilemmic situation. While local economic and social development plans are to be discussed and implemented on the local level, the central problem with public finances in Kyrgyzstan is that there is little that local administrations can do to increase the money they get allotted by the central governmental budget (Alymkulov and Kulatov 2001: 520; Kenzheeva 2016).[10] Allocation of extra-budgetary projects and investments depends on political influence of local politicians in the national parliament. Furthermore, it is normally easier to attract funding from international development agencies.[11] Given the gaping underfunding of city and rural executive committees (*aiyl okmotu*) they often only carry out the bare minimum of their tasks, thus compounding a cycle of despair and destitution (Steimann 2011: 62, Grävingholt et al. 2006).

Given this inability of state bodies to address the entrenched pauperisation of the population, especially older generations without sufficient support from relatives, the

---

[10] Steimann notes that taxes on land and pasture lease fees are the main potential source of communal revenue but that in reality 'the collection of local taxes is hardly ever worthwhile for municipal administrations as revenue is often insignificant compared to the considerable organizational effort needed to calculate and collect them' (2011: 62)

[11] Although their support is usually one-off or limited to the short run and can thus not replace the institutional and budgetary arrangement needed to adequately equip local self-governance (Babajanian 2015, Grävingholt et al. 2006)

international development sector has given rise to a significant sector of local NGOs that apply for grants from international funders and help to deliver projects and repair infrastructure (Féaux de la Croix 2013, Satybaldieva 2015a, Pétric 2005). Especially during a food crisis in the years 2008 and 2009, help from international aid organisations including the World Food Programme was desperately needed to cover the needs of the most vulnerable and food insecure parts of the population (Steimann 2011: 64, Gullette 2010: 94 ff.). This kind of provision and the aid support received by local communities (Babajanian 2015, Grävingholt 2006) in parallel to the state budget indicate a shift in responsibilities and, consequently, accountability of state and government bodies vis-à-vis local communities, with international organisations forming a third, substituting actor in the triangle.

It has been shown that intellectual elites and volunteers who run the myriad of Kyrgyzstani NGOs invest tremendous efforts into the maintenance of a minimal level of provision of social services and support for the poor and elderly (Satybaldieva 2015a, Féaux de la Croix 2013). This relief and charity also, however, serves to brush over the fact that the increasing stratification and destitution within Kyrgyzstani society was affected by uneven process of privatisation and land distribution in the 1990s, and that the beneficiaries of these processes – former farm and state enterprise heads, managers, *nomenklatura* and regime insiders – are often still in key positions both in the private economy *and* in local administrations, which affects grievances and indignation among rural and urban poor who feel like they have lost out and been betrayed in the course the post-Socialist transition (Satybaldieva 2015b, Tucker 2011). The fact that province governors and district heads (*akims*) are appointed rather than elected, also means that 'state representatives often feel more accountable to their superiors than to the inhabitants of their rayon or oblast', which in turn feeds into clientelistic and informal dealings replacing democratic and accountable patterns (Steimann 2011: 63).

In a similar way to questions of administration, welfare and service provision, a networked and decentralised approach is apparent in the way in which the maintenance of community security and public order are organised. There were already numerous public and semi-public organisations integrated with processes of local self-governance and social ordering at the end of the 1990s (Alymkulov and Kulatov 2001: 534-535) and their number increased further thereafter. The organisations relevant for security provision and other issues of community governance, are listed in the table below.

Table 5.2: Social institutions and (semi-) public community structures, Author illustration

Organisation	Description
Voluntary squads for the maintenance of public order, usually 'voluntary people's squads' (*Dobrovolnaia Narodnaia Druzhina*)	Groups of citizens who complement police and other law enforcement organs in sustaining social order; protecting state-owned corporate property or territorial borders during Soviet times
Aksakal (elders', literally 'white beard') courts	Voluntary courts which mediate and arbitrate in minor disputes usually in the domestic household of family and neighbour context; activity inscribed into law in 2002 (see Beyer 2014, IV.4.2)
Women's councils (*zhenskii sovet* or *zhensovet*)	A structure to gather women and represent their interests both in public life and in the production process, as well as oversee compliance with Soviet legislation on women's entitlements
Neighbourhood committee (ru. *kvartalnyi komitet*), also *mahalla* committee in Uzbek-style neighbourhood	Voluntary group of inhabitants of one bloc or borough who deal with their affairs and coordinate action between *domkom*s and higher levels
House committees (ru. *domovoi komitet* or *domkom*)	Group of inhabitants of multi-storey houses regulating social affairs and solving problems
Residential associations	Evolved as response to the privatisation of multi-storey blocs and the corresponding transfer of responsibility from local administration to proprietors/proprietor associations

All of the organisations listed in the table were part of communal life in the Soviet Union, with the exception of *aksakal* courts who appear to have 'escaped' Soviet reform as they were seen neither influential nor very detrimental in comparison to religious practices or clan-based

economic activity (Beyer 2016: 28).[12] Conversely, other social institutions have experienced a relative decline in importance and activity and have operated in places where they were most demanded by people. For instance, in large cities like Bishkek or Osh, residential area or *mahalla* committees or hosing associations were sometimes relatively active in representing their inhabitants needs, while in some rural areas women's councils (*zhensovet*s) would try to foster solidarity and mutual help between women.

Overall, this institutional architecture and the ideational regimes they foreground are geared towards sustaining social order, harmony and peacefulness, even in the face of increasing strain and social upheaval. This is most obvious in regard to the Soviet times, when voluntary squads and different institutions were intentionally established run and extended not only to keep the population under control but also collect intelligence and information that would help to maintain the authorities' effective governing (Alymkulov and Kulatov 2001: 548). Established technologies and mechanisms of social ordering[13] were equally useful for the new governing and economic elites of post-independence Kyrgyzstan, especially given the hardship, poverty and inequality that many privatisation, decentralisation the repealing of social welfare programmes. In this sense, it is no coincidence that Kyrgyzstan's first president Askar Akaev first legalised *aksakal*s and then promoted their transformation into a country-wide institution of alternative dispute settling. The pragmatic purpose they fulfilled – the maintenance of peace, harmony, solidarity and mutual help among the dispossessed and precarious population across the country – was in perfect sync with the development

---

[12] As already discussed in IV.4.2, *aksakal* courts were set up in nearly every municipality of Kyrgyzstan and, given the incapacitation of state law enforcement and justice organs, became the first point of contact for cititzens in case of conflict, which de facto forced them to interact with *aksakals* to seek justice (Beyer 2006: 147).

[13] This would usually involve the settlement of people's discontents in meetings of the respective committee or arbitration in visits of relevant residents and institutions.

community's trends of the day, namely decentralisation and devolution of responsibility to the local level and grass roots governance (Beyer 2016: 33, Ibraeva 2008: 11).

However, given the specific orientation and traditional heritage of this institution, its potential biases and omissions were equally apparent, e.g. in favour of a traditional family model (at the expense of divorces or late marriages) or dispute resolution in line with traditional law (*adat utuk*) while knowledge of the Kyrgyz legal code was faint if existent at all (see IV.4.2). Furthermore, in light of the appointment of *aksakals* by local leaders such as the *aiyl okmotu* head and given the fact that women and poor people are de facto excluded from the institution, Ibraeva concluded that 'no voluntary or civic initiative is to be found in such a 'public organisation'' and that 'regional *nomenklatura* elites are reproducing themselves as *aksakal* institutions' (2008: 4, 6). Thus, while they may be effective for maintaining social order, harmony and for building peace and facilitating inter-communal conciliation *aksakal*s and other social institutions in Kyrgyzstan are prone to be only partially effective in their activities by virtue of their semi-public and informal nature. Some of these shortcomings were supposed to be mitigated by newly-created Local Crime Prevention Centres, which I will discuss in turn.

Local Crime Prevention Centres: Executive authority and societal concerns

After the web of Soviet and newly initiated institutions was more or less active in an overall piecemeal approach to social order and community security, the 2005 Law on Crime Prevention (*Zakon o profilaktike pravonarushenii*)[14] was intended to regulate community security and crime prevention in an overarching framework and on all administrative levels from central

---

[14] The law was signed by the then newly inaugurated president Kurmanbek Bakiev on 25 June 2005, available in Russian and Kyrgyz language at: http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/1679

government down to the village unit. Article 12-1 of the law defines the status and the competencies of Local Crime Prevention Centres:

> The LCPC is a non-commercial organisation founded on the territory of local self-administration for the purpose of the mutual participation of the organs of local self-administration and citizens in the prevention of crime … LCPCs, within the framework of the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic, have the right to:
>
> - constitute themselves as juridical persons, open bank accounts, have the corresponding equipment, stamps and letter heads;
>
> - to create associations and bodies for the attainment of their common goals; to attract domestic and foreign investments;
>
> - to design different projects and programmes on questions of crime prevention in order to receive grants and other transfers, including from international organisations and actors.
>
> - The activity of LCPCs can be funded out of the following sources: the local budget in agreement with the local self-administration; voluntary contributions of juridical or physical persons; grants and other gratuitous and non-refundable support […].

As the final sentence in this excerpt makes clear, LCPCs are not only a platform where citizens and the local self-administration can combine their efforts to prevent crime, but also serve as vehicles to attract and use international funding. Thus, rather than further seeking direct budgetary support from donors on a bilateral level, the attraction of support is devolved to the municipal level, which enables the mobilisation of local residents in the effort to attract funding and conforms to the trend among aid organisations to focus on very specific localities and issue areas in their funding programmes. While the efforts of local activists and civil society in jointly conducting crime prevention is obviously welcomed, the decision to inaugurate an LCPC and transfer competencies and budgetary decisions to it rests with local administrations alone (12-

1). Article 14 details the ample competencies of local administrations apart from this right of initiation, which range from the leadership, coordination, scrutiny, initiation of measures and confirmation of action plans.[15]

While local self-administrations are also given some tasks in terms of establishing and facilitating the development and activities of LCPCs, the law has no binding character and in this sense establishes a unilateral mechanism: local administrations have rights to the initiation and coordination of LCPCs' work (alongside some obligations within the measure of their capacities) while LCPCs or their constituent bodies are largely bound to carrying out their tasks but lack scrutiny or feedback competencies vis-à-vis local administrations. Thus, LCPCs are largely dependent on local administrations when it comes to carrying out their work effectively.

This prioritisation of the executive is also apparent in prime role of law enforcement organs and the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the organisation of LCPC activities. According to article 7, 'crime prevention activities … are *organised and coordinated through consultations of the law enforcement organs ...* on the provincial, city, district and (local) self-administrations' (emphasis added). In such consultations (*soveshania*, also meeting, briefing), the involved parties are supposed to 'execute the preparation and carrying out of criminological research and, on the basis of its results - the design of complex and other programmes of crime prevention, as well as control over their implementation.' Thus, the participation of law enforcement organs (and thus the Ministry of Internal Affairs overseeing their conduct) is the

---

[15] According to the exact formulation, local state administration and local self-administration bodies: carry out the general leadership/coordination on crime prevention and its subjects; facilitate the development of LCPCs and coordinate their activities; hear the reports of the leaders of LCPCs on the state of preventative work on their territories; consider the development of crime prevention measures in the socio-economic development plans; confirm complex and other programmes on crime prevention; consider the possibility of allocating budgetary means for material and other support to aksakal courts, women's committees and other social bodies under the LCPCs for their organisation of prophylactic events.

baseline for crime prevention work. Hence, besides the local executive administrations (*aiyl okmotu*, city administrations or *meriia*/mayor's offices), law enforcement organs are the actors determining the overall process of crime prevention as far as the law is concerned.

State bodies and agencies working on issues inter-relating with crime are called upon to do their share in fighting the conditions conducive for crime, and to help internal affairs and law enforcement organs in their investigatory actions. According to article 11, social protection and employment agencies should deal with the socio-economic and labour market problems at the root of crime trends, for instance by setting up respective social welfare funds and programmes. The different organs and institutions of the educational system, are supposed to 'fully cooperate in the process by delivering all information necessary for identification and study of individuals and groups especially exposed to/likely to commit unlawful behaviour, on which basis the design and implementation of preventative action are possible and to be supported by the same institutions' (article 7).[16]

Overall, the 2005 Law on Crime Prevention constitutes a clear prioritisation of governmental and executive authority in the conceptualisation of crime prevention as the prime mechanism for community security. This is not to say that the understanding of crime is not holistic enough. Rather, the approach at solving the issues at the heart of crime and deviant behaviour appears to be limited if not problematic in its prioritising of executive action, while public initiative and the role of sectoral bodies are subordinate and limited. The latter are merely foreseen in the secondary aspects of design and implementation of crime prevention measures or in the data and intelligence gathering through which health and education institutions are to assist law enforcement and executive organs' operations. The idea to combat and prevent crime

---

[16] Similar to this collaboration and delivery of intelligence and data on crime, the health sector's task is defined as not only helping to rehabilitate and support people recovering from alcohol or drug addiction, but also the 'identification, registration and record keeping' of such individuals; alongside 'softer measures' of educating citizens and offering consultations (article 10).

through data and information gathering, analysis and subsequent devising of measures and policies is convincing with its rational logics of evidence-based policy-making. It also has limitations, however, as essentialism and exclusionary methodologies used in the analysis can lead to alienation and other adverse effects in the population (see III.4). This is best exemplified by the definition of crime prevention in article 1 of the law:

> Crime prevention is defined as actions (*deitelnost*) … directed towards the identification, study, remedy and neutralisation of the reasons for any unlawful actions being carried out (*soversheniu protivopravnykh deistvii*) and any conditions enabling this; as well as towards <u>ensuring favourable living conditions and the individual upbringing of certain categories of persons, whose behaviour reveals anti-social tendencies</u> (*kategorii lic, v deistviakh kotorykh imeetsa antiobshestvennaia napravlennost*); the activation of factors that stimulate the law-abiding behaviour of citizens; and the design and implementation of systems of legal, socio-economic, organisational, educational (*vospitatelnykh*), special and other measures for the prevention of unlawful actions. (emphasis added)

Although this definition demonstrates some holistic and nuanced thinking, the underlined passage exemplifies the above-mentioned tendencies of essentialist thinking in the form of a belief that it will be 'certain', i.e. identifiable, 'categories of persons' who are most likely to require measures for upbringing, education and other things in order to make them refrain from anti-social or criminal behaviour. While it might indeed be the belonging to a certain group that renders people more likely to (have to) engage in certain types of behaviour, this formulation risks a confusion social belonging with the effects of identitarian policies and behaviours in practice. The statistical likelihood of a person from a group engaging in deviant behaviour is not the same as ascribing certain behaviours as part of the habitus or general characteristics of that group. Basing analysis and policy on group categories might thus create a self-fulfilling

prophecy and the usual scapegoating and pathologisation of groups on the basis of stereotypes, which is all but conducive to solving issues of crime and conflict. Thus, the pathologisation and 'othering' already identified as issue in community safety debates in the UK in the 1990s (see III.4) appears to also potentially limit the Law on Crime Prevention in the Kyrgyz Republic. Furthermore, it is the emphasis on dealing with crime and delinquency, i.e. crime prevention and addressing of 'anti-social behaviour', which super-ordinates the creation and maintenance of order and security over the idea of creating secure communities and sustainable livelihoods. The analyses in the next section will show how these apprehensions play out empirically.

International actors' security and peacebuilding programming

Different international organisations including inter-governmental ones like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) or the Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) have invested considerable efforts and resources into community security-related programming in Kyrgyzstan. Especially after the inter-communal clashed in June 2010, projects for peacebuilding and the prevention of a re-emergence of conflict increased in number, making Kyrgyzstan another internationally renowned 'Peaceland' (Autesserre 2014) and laboratory for the development, testing and showcasing of peacebuilding and security approaches. The UK-based international NGO Saferworld is one of the many organisations working in Kyrgyzstan and is involved with local partners across communities in southern Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In their 'community security approach' the organisation aims at 'supporting communities and security actors jointly to identify and implement locally appropriate ways of responding to causes of insecurity' (Saferworld 2015b: 3). The overarching aim of the organisation is to foster cooperation between the local population and, on the other hand, local self-governance and law enforcement and security organs (ibid.:4). This is a crucial undertaking given the fact that in many communities, people have lost trust in these organs

given their perceived corruption, inability to protect people, and, worse so, individual police and other law enforcement staff's complicity with and active perpetration of violence, abuse and extortion (ibid.: 3). In trying to foster cooperative relations between these parties Saferworld also tries to promote an evidence- and analysis-based approach to local actions, in which a 'process of identifying => analysing => prioritising conflict and security concerns' is followed by the 'planning => implementing => [and] evaluating [of] responses' (ibid.: 5-6). Much emphasis is put on the idea of 'hear[ing] different perspectives and concerns' and activating and providing a 'safe place' for potentially excluded and vulnerable groups within of community populations throughout the process, which also means that law enforcement and local administration members are involved 'wherever possible' but necessarily in every step of the process (ibid.: 5, 8, 10). In this sense, Saferworld and its Kyrgyzstani partner, the Foundation for Tolerance International, are trying to nurture potential and build capacity among local civil society and activist elements within communities who are supposed to defend the interest of the population in the cooperative arrangements for community security provision.

Saferworld put a high emphasis on working with already existing structures, such as LCPCs and their constituent institutions as discussed above, to enhance their capacity (Saferworld 2015a), not least because LCPCs specifically often turned out to be 'dysfunctional, non-funded and composed of community representatives without the will or ability to undertake the centres' work' (Saferworld 2015b: 12). The organisation usually approaches the members of LCPCs and increases their motivation and skill set by providing trainings in conflict prevention and community security planning, as well as by initiating dialogue between the different stakeholders of LCPCs, i.e. local government, law enforcement bodies, civil society organisations and active citizens. In cases where LCPCs were not existent or had ceased to work, the organisation gathered interested people and helped them found so-called Community Security Working Groups (CSWGs), which would make plans and implement measures on

crime and conflict prevention and aim at creating or joining an LCPC in the middle to long run (Saferworld 2015a). Presently, Saferworld has enhanced the capacity of 17 LCPCs throughout Kyrgyzstan and helped to create 8 independent CSWGs, out of which 4 new LCPCs were founded (correspondence October 2017). It is important to mention that LCPCs are effectively, as discussed above, under the oversight of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (via the primacy of law enforcement agencies as well as local executive organs), which retains the right to veto or align to its own principles and agendas the activities carried out by the Saferworld community security programme.

The idea to work with structures that already exist in given localities or which are endorsed by Kyrgyzstan's legislation has also been taken up by other organisations active in community security and peacebuilding. Most notable in this respect is the 'Community Security Initiative' (*Initsiativa po Obshestvennoi Bezopasnosti* or *InOBez*) of the OSCE, which was devised to support and help to restructure and adjust the work of the police across Kyrgyzstan, but especially in localities that had been affected by the 2010 events. The goal to 'increase the respect for and protection of human rights by the police and to build confidence between law enforcement agencies and communities' was tackled by allocating civilian police advisors in district police stations across the South of the country, where they would 'follow developments and daily challenges that the local communities and police face' and facilitated 'monthly community-police discussion forums, the Community Safety Working Groups, where police, local authorities and civil society representatives talk about their concerns'.[17] This approach is strikingly similar to that of Saferworld, but markedly more oriented towards reforming law enforcement organs themselves rather than strengthening their civil society and other counter-

---

[17] Thus, while official sources such as then vice prime minister Oleg Pankratov have lauded the exemplary character and crucial contribution of the initiative to the improvement of police-community relations, some inadequacies and residual distrust towards the police often remain to be addressed. OSCE, 'The Community Security Initiative', 12 April 2012, accessed 29 May 2017, http://www.osce.org/bishkek/106312

parts in the given localities.[18] The UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has, among its other institution-focused activities such as penitentiary reform, countering organised crime or drug and HIV prevention, facilitated the of crime prevention plans in two communities and supported cooperative community security and police reform activities in through grant giving to civil society organisations (see chapter VII). Similar to the OSCE, it has provided infrastructural help by co-funding the refurbishment of local police stations in two districts in the country.[19]

The projects of these three organisations only present a small share of the initiatives of NGOs and donors in Kyrgyzstan, but possibly the ones tackling the issues most decisive for impact in the long run. As several analyses of peacebuilding and conflict prevention programmes in southern Kyrgyzstan have pointed out, these activities are often focused on more short term and measurable/presentable approaches and practices, which are likely to be limited in terms of their structural and substantive effects (e.g. Megoran et al. 2014). In section IV.4.2, I have shown how the promotion of harmony (Kg. *yntymak*) and tolerance (Ru./Kg. *tolerantnost*) between communities and ethnicities often leads to the organisation of sport or cultural events among young people or visits between elders of different communities (Bichsel 2005, Beyer and Girke 2015). As Reeves (2015b) has shown, these rituals are often well known to their participants and take on a performative character that distracts form the persistence of underlying tensions and conflicts in the respective community. The idea of changing the behaviour of law enforcement organs though accompanying them and working on improved operations directly with them, or by building skills and capacities among local administrations

---

[18] Kabar, 'Проект «Инициатива общественной безопасности» оказал ощутимую поддержку территориальным подразделениям милиции – О.Панкратов [O. Pankratov: The 'Community Security Initiative' has substantive support to police units]' 12 December 2015, http://old.kabar.kg/index.php/society/full/99975

[19] UNODC, Criminal justice, crime prevention and integrity, accessed 29 May 2017, https://www.unodc.org/centralasia/en/criminal-justice-crime-prevention-and-integrity.html

and civil society to stand up for people's interests, bears testimony to an attempt to create more fundamental and long-term change – an argument I will revisit in chapter VII. In the following section, I show in which areas community security practitioners were particularly struggling to deal with challenges and which solutions they devised.

V.3   Local Crime Prevention Centres (LCPCs) as state-society nodes and recipients of international capacity-building support

Background note

The present analysis is based on a cooperative research with the UK-based organisation Saferworld, which is involved in peacebuilding and community security projects in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, but also in Africa and South-East Asia. I was invited to accompany a contracted consultant in visiting a number of Local Crime Prevention Centres (LCPCs) in the South of Kyrgyzstan to make interviews and write them up into profiles which, combined with other material, were compiled in a brochure to be presented to different partners including the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The LCPC profiling tour was an ideal entry point for my fieldwork, as it gave the opportunity to visit and get insight into the work of nine LCPCs across the South of the country, as well as establish contacts for possible follow-up research. The profiling visits were scheduled to last up to two hours each, during which questions from a standard questionnaire would be answered, followed by exchange of photographs and other material and a swift departure necessitated by a schedule of two to three LCPC visits per day with considerable geographical distance between some of the locations. While this limited the scope for additional networking and research work that I was interested in, it was agreed that I could use the material gathered for my PhD research. The consensus on my official role was that I should introduce myself as a volunteering assistant of the main consultant carrying out the research, while mentioning my position as a PhD researcher and Visiting Fellow with the

American University in Central Asia (AUCA) was left as optional information to be provided depending on the situation. In terms of my positionality as scholar, the profiling tour was somewhat peculiar as the mission and purpose of it was to produce a brochure on 'Success Stories' of LCPCs 'by order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)', as it was stated in the brochure later on (Saferworld 2016: 1). Given my earlier experience of interviewing civil society actors in the aftermath of the 2010 events in Osh, I was aware that this might incur certain biases and pressures to be selective in the writing up of actual 'success stories' (see below).

In the following, I present the overall results from the LCPC profiling work, indicating the main areas of concern for community security and crime prevention in the surveyed communities in southern Kyrgyzstan. Thereafter, I discuss the main aspects emanating from this initial analysis, which I analysed in more depth and context, including follow-up visits to two LCPCs.[20] This analysis of the 'role of community mobilisation', 'moral support and strength' and 'people's friendship' as the three main items promoted by LCPCs will help to show how the activity of these bodies is embedded in the imaginaries of statebuilding identified in chapter IV (see discussion in V.4).

LCPC 'success stories': Overall results and implications

The fact that the brochure for which the contracted consultant and I had gathered profiling data from nine LCPCs was titled 'Success Stories' may raise the concern about bias and partiality in our approach. In fact, however, the presented stories are in most cases only one of many aspects of the LCPC's work and it took my colleague and myself repetitive questioning and tedious inquiry into details to gather enough data to back up the respective success narrative

---

[20] As indicated in appendix 1, the profiling visits in cooperation with Saferworld were conducted between 11 and 15 July 2015, while the follow-up visits that I carried out on my own were carried out in late October.

that we would finally extract from the overall data on a given LCPC. This was because LCPC representatives often found it hard to navigate the multiple expectations and pressures (and often indifference) they were facing from different local administration bodies and the population. Hence, they were struggling to present or even remember positive results of their work. This lack of positive memories and experiences was compounded by the fact that, during our interviews, LCPC activists did not feel able to frame results of their work as a particular success to be presented to their principals from the MIA, Saferworld and its partnering NGO, the Foundation for Tolerance International (FTI or *Fond za Mezhdunarodnuiu Tolerantnost*). This was partly due to their unfamiliarity with Russian – the language in which interviews were conducted, but also with the manifold terms and concepts used in community security and crime prevention, which are not part of everyday language in Kyrgyzstan (and elsewhere). The brochure has to be seen in this light, i.e. with attention to the fact that most of the success stories are – if not 'constructed' – distilled out of the sometimes diffuse array of stories, facts and memories that LCPC representatives recounted. While the brochure itself devotes more attention to the successes of the LCPCs than to challenges (although these are also listed in brief for every locality), I provide deeper insight into the issues faced by LCPCs and the way in which they try to effectively promote security in their communities.

In his 'auto-ethnography of programme evaluation' in Tajikistan, Heathershaw (2011) has provided a critical account of how the success of local development projects as it is presented in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices might far surpass the actual effects on the livelihoods of local populations. This, according to him, is possible because of the remoteness of donors from on-the-ground implementation, allowing local elites to co-opt and redeploy international peacebuilding resources (ibid.: 162). Contrary to Heathershaw's case, the construction and exaggeration of 'success' is less of an issue here, because the brochure was much less of an M&E document than an additional communication tool in Saferworld's

efforts to strengthen stakeholder awareness on community security in south Kyrgyzstan. To this end, it raised awareness about the obstacles faced by the respective LCPCs and their future plans and developments. For everyone aware about the realities in rural communities in this context, it is clear that the 'success stories' presented in the LCPC profiles are not the entire stories of these entities, and that only hard work and the overcoming of existing obstacles leads to such success stories.

To give a brief overview of the overall results of the LCPC profiling, table 5.3 presents the different issues LCPCs were reportedly working on, with their respective number of times mentioned across the nine LCPCs (column 'General'), as well as the issue areas of the success stories (column ''Success''; only one item per 'Success story'). The results from this profiling study present only a small number of communities throughout the vast territory of southern Kyrgyzstan, but comparing them with the results from a report discussed in chapter VII (CURR 2015) and other community security initiatives (OSCE and El-Pikir 2013) shows that the thrust of the issues presented is of relevance for community security in localities throughout the country.

Table 5.3: Issues that LCPCs are working on[21]; Source: Saferworld (2016); author's illustration & analysis

	Issue	General	'Success'
Resources; infrastructure	Land disputes	6	
	New arrivals and squatted territories (ru. *novostroiki*)	1	
	Border issues (crossings etc.)	2	
	Water conflicts (inter-communal; drinking and industrial; usage rota violation)	6	2
	Street traffic danger	2	1
Social, communal, institutional	Interethnic tension/conflict	6	1
	Inter-communal youth conflict	1	
	Racketeering (youth, school)	3	
	Religious radicalism (incl. rel. pluralism; one 'extremism' only)	7	2
	Lack of trust tow/ law enforcement organs (incl. corruption in law enforcement, electricity usage, detentions)	4	2
	Lack of trust tow/ local self-governance organs	1	
	Juvenile delinquency (incl. hooliganism)	4	
	Cattle theft	1	
Family, individual	Migration (incl. consequence of infantile precarity)	2	
	Family conflicts (incl. divorce; domestic confl./*bytovoi konflikt*)	6	
	Early marriage & divorce (incl. unregistered marriage)	4	
	Young female precarity (single mothers, impoverished)	1	1
	Excessive expenses for lifecycle ceremonies	1	
	Alcohol/drug abuse	2	
	Uncategorised	3	

To further facilitate the overview given by the table, I have clustered the different issues into three groups, which are 'Resources and infrastructure'; 'Social, communal and institutional'; and 'Family and individual' issues. It becomes obvious that LCPCs deal with a wide range of issues, which have varying implications for politics on the national level. The following

---

[21] Note: Specific (sub-) issues are listed in brackets if they have been mentioned but can be reasonably included in a given issue count (e.g. 'incl. religious pluralism'); additions in brackets without 'incl.' provide detail on the respective issue, e.g. 'Family conflicts (domestic conflict)'.

analysis is structured along the division of these three fields and will focus on specific items and cases within them in order to illustrate the logic of operation, mobilisation and networked approach to community security of LCPCs.

Mobilisation in the community and beyond

Issues in the first cluster of community security issues – Infrastructure and resources – appear somewhat more straightforward as they are conceivable through the (neo-) liberal modern episteme of science and technology. Thus, a problem can relatively clearly be defined through certain parameters and subsequently be solved through coordination, negotiation, which in turn often require the mobilisation of social and political pressure – especially in cases where regional and national authorities are needed to solve issues, such as in border regions – or of social support and contribution to municipal level-projects such as the building of canals, roads and other infrastructure. The logic of mobilisation sets focus on communities and their own capacities to address problems and conflicts, while the latter are only effectively lobbied at higher levels when they flare up into conflicts between communities and across borders (Reeves 2014: ch. 6). This is reflective of the decentralisation and responsibilisation of local self-governance and administrative structures (see above section V.2), which can be especially problematic when these structures are incapacitated or inactive while tensions among and between communities are mounting.

Disputes over land and water usage, often on an inter-communal level – not rarely between communities belonging to two different states, e.g. to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan – are clear examples of the Soviet historical legacy and its infrastructural aspect. As Reeves observes, the creation of newly independent nations has affected the penetration of former areas of free movement across Soviet republican borders by new borders of sovereign states, which are guarded by military posts and barbed wire (Reeves 2014). Given the fact that during Soviet

times infrastructure had been built with little regard to republican borders but according to the most practicable and resource-saving plans, many water canals and pipes provide Tajik, Uzbek and Kyrgyz villages in their course through the borderlands in Batken and Jalal-Abad provinces, and there are points where streets from different territories meet or traverse the administrative border. The legal uncertainty and arbitrary behaviour of border guards has given rise to tense ways of handling disputes, with car accidents at crossings resulting in 'fights and violent incidents' and disputes over water and border crossings leading confrontations of large groups of men (Saferworld 2015b: 9-10; Reeves 2014: 218 ff.) In such situations, LCPCs and local self-governance bodies are often confined to a rather helpless role of intermediaries who must quickly react to inter-communal confrontations and even violence and convey the urgency of concerns to superiors in the national hierarchy. They also have to resolve quarrels over the rearrangements of water usage rotas and infrastructural adjustment, which not too rarely requires the mobilisation of regional and national political actors (as in the case of LCPCs in Batken and Jalal-Abad provinces, see Saferworld 2016: 22-24 & 28-30).

In the village of Tash-Bulak, a rural community located at the outskirts of Jalal-Abad at Kyrgyz-Uzbek border, a major road leading through the area proved to be a major security issue.[22] An increase in traffic volume was noted years on end, with the number of road accidents and casualties – even fatalities – increasing as well. Although LCPC members understood that something had to be done, especially to protect schoolchildren who crossed the street at dangerous and unmarked spots, the local administration did not seem to pay attention to the issues nor demonstrated any responsibility for solving it. After the constitution as Community Security Working Group and prioritisation of the problem, the following measures were adopted to deal with it:

---

[22] The following three paragraphs are based on the case study as presented in the Saferworld brochure (2016: 6-10) and the profiling visit on 13 July 2015.

- Installation of street signs prescribing a tempo limit on a specific section;

- Consultations with the traffic police (GAI) on the possibility of making the street section safer;

- Building of a sidewalk in the street section by of LCPC members with the support of the rural executive committee, local administration parents of affected children and some other community members;

- Organisation of school lessons by traffic police (GAI) staff on traffic rules and safety;

- Exchange on successful solution of traffic safety problems with other rural districts.

The measurable changes, such as 19 new street signs and speed bumps on the road, as well as the establishment of traffic safety lessons in school given by specialised groups of so-called 'Young police inspectors', yielded immediate results, as no accidents involving pedestrians were recorded in the implementation period. According to the working group members, the main reason why this initiative can be called a success is because people in the community started caring about and supporting this cause when they saw that the LCPC members started to tackle the problem on their own, voluntary initiative (Ru. *na obshestvennykh nachalakh*), without any reward given. The support and mobilisation in their own community helped in turn to lobby the local administration and traffic police departments to help solve the issue.

Among the twelve profiling visits throughout the South of Kyrgyzstan the Tash-Bulak working group stuck out as a positive example as it demonstrated decisiveness and a boost that it had received through the successful solution of this infrastructural issue. On a follow-up visit, I tried to find out more about the motivation and mobilisation principles of the group. The youngest member, an undergrad student at Jalal-Abad university her motivation as follows: 'One would like to see people who are content with life (*dovolny zhizniu*), and when they have problems this is not possible. When you can help solve their problems or lead them in the right direction out of this you can receive some spiritual wealth or tranquillity (*spokoistvie*)'. After

my questions on the reasons for other members to invest considerable free time in keeping the LCPC and its constituent institutions running, the head of the group put forward a statement outlining his own motivation:

> So what, patriotism might play a role [in motivating us to work for the LCPC] ... but whether there is work or no work, a wage or no wage ... this town is ours, these people are ours, all these children are my future I am not indifferent ... I am working here for the state, whether it's real work or not [*mne zdes vot na gosudarstvennuiu rabotu, rabotau ne rabotau*]. I am a human. You shall do good things, because something you have to do [*dolzhen delat chelovek*]. And from us something good shall be remaining, a good future. And in the future, there should also be good people. Their security matters to me [*ix ne bezopasnost bezrazlichno mne ne byvaet*] ... I am working, I should be a pensioner but so what? I come here to work anyways and will spend my energy on this; and then Allah gives me the power, right? I should invest this energy on good things, that's my understanding. Because if you don't do anything then you're not a person ... If I only work for myself [*radi svoego interesa*], what would this be, then I'm an animal or what? An animal, as people say, eats and eats and that's it. But we are people and we have a conscience that tells us to do good. That's my human duty, that's how I understand it.

Thus, the head of the working group and the members who tacitly agreed with him, declared the voluntary work as LCPC a matter of fulfilling the duty that one's human nature and conscious created. In this sense, the motivation to work for the maintenance of community security was attributed to an underlying, universal essence of human life, where people able to contribute to the collective good are morally obliged to do so and risk being identified as merely self-interested, even 'animalistic' creatures if they refuse to contribute their share. On the other hand, ideas of patriotism or Soviet heritage as a unifying framework were more or less explicitly

rejected by the group. The fundamental motivation reasons of the group could not hide the fact, however, that not all people would be able to engage in and support LCPC activities to the same extent as this group, who were partly employed by the local administration (as in the case of the social worker and the group head who was also deputy head of the rural executive committee) or were able to devote time to this cause because their family and economic situation allowed them to. The group agreed that there might be limits to the participation of the poor rural population and that more would have to be done to include destitute and in community building and rights education to prevent the reproduction of poverty through issues such as lack of registration or early marriage, which is the focus of the following part.

Legalisation of marriages

The area of family and individual level issues was of equal relevance on average, as almost as many items were mentioned here as in the Resource/infrastructure category (16 vs. 17). But, other than in the latter category with its straightforwardly identifiable issues and relatively clear division of institutional competencies (even if they were neglected), this area presented issues that LCPCs are on average less equipped or able to deal with. This is, on the one hand, because upbringing, moral and practical education, and the shaping of family relations and values are habitually seen as the area curated by social and educational institutions and, after the downsizing and incapacitation the latter, of family and kin networks (see section V.2). On the other hand, LCPCs, and their relevant constituent institutions such as *aksakal* (elderly) courts, women committees or social workers would usually only step in when tensions and conflicts within families would erupt into an open form or when people affected by family issues and domestic violence would approach them. In this sense, LCPCs were struggling to address the social effects of the transformation and increasing strain put on families in light of the translocal-local livelihood model chosen by an increasing part of the population (compare V.2.2). These effects included, apart from child labour and exploitation by surrogate parents

(see V.2.2), an increasing number of early marriages, subsequent divorces and the consequential social stigmatisation and material destitution of young divorced women and single mothers. With the country-wide rate of underage married girls at 13 per cent in 2015, these issues and the vulnerability and domestic violence they give rise to present a significant challenge.[23]

The LCPC in the Mirmakhmudov district of the small town of Nookat in western Osh province, for instance, recognised an increasing number of young women who were vulnerable and required material support to nurture their children.[24] They had been left alone by their husbands who had migrated abroad, often marrying other women. Young mothers were not only lacking support but also the basis to claim alimony or child benefits as their marriages had not been registered with the local marriage committee (*ZAGS*) but only married through the traditional Islamic *nike* ceremony. According to the representative of the local committee, their social stigma and exclusion made many women 'suffer from anxiety, depression and, in particular cases, made them suicide as the last way out of such a situation' (ibid.). According to statistical data, the local district of Mirmakhmudov was the one with the most divorces of young marriages in the entire country. The following measures were taken to tackle the situation:

- Organisation of a seminar with participation of LCPC members, district committee, coordinators from the NGO FTI and imams on the topic of early marriage, marriage registration and marriage in traditional Islam;

---

[23] Radio Azattyk, 'В Кыргызстане количество ранних браков не уменьшается ['The number of early marriages in Kyrgyzstan is not decreasing'], 9 December 2015, accessed 30 May 2017, http://rus.azattyk.org/a/27424930.html

[24] This case is based on the profile in the Saferworld brochure (2016: 2-5) and the LCPC profiling visits on 11 and 12 July 2015 if not indicated otherwise.

- Organisation of seminar for the population on the topics of religious extremism, early marriage, divorces and the role of the LCPC;

- Dissemination of brochures on the importance of the official registration of marriages, also in specific villages of the rural district; staff of the State Registration Service (GRS) were allocated to the local marriage registration office;

- Organisation of events to strengthen relationships of young couples, e.g. contests between brides or mothers-in-law;

- *Aksakal* courts and other LCPC representatives provided support and consultation to young couples in cases of quarrels;

- On the rural district level, it was decided that imams would only perform *nike* ceremonies for couples who have obtained official marriage registrations.

These efforts had immediate effect: The level of early marriages dropped from 30 in 2015 to only two in 2016 (Mamatjalil uluu 2017: 33); imams complied to the above-mentioned code of conduct and raised more awareness among the religious population; and the population at large, especially parents, became more aware about the negative effects that early marriages can have. The level of awareness on the rights and obligations that the entering of a marriage incurs – and the importance of officially registering one's marriage – were raised by simple means of information events and seminars but also a brochure titled 'What is an official marriage? [*Chto takoe ofitsialnyi brak?*]' handed out to the population. While the effect of this well-coordinated initiative is quite obvious, it should not be forgotten that the basic living conditions of people in the town are likely not to have changed. Thus, even if girls are not forced to get married as early as 17, it is not unlikely that practices like arranged marriages still persist, especially in light of the strong role of religious beliefs in rural areas, according to which girls should be married or at least have a future husband determined for them at the age 13 (Mamatjalil uluu 2017: 30).

Thus, while the LCPC in Mirmakhmudov (as in other places) is right to point out the success it managed to achieve in certain numbers, the underlying reasons for early marriages and stigmatisation and destitution of young brides and mothers should be borne in mind. Events organised by the LCPC and local self-governance intuitions, such as the competition titled 'We are an exemplary [*primernaia*] family' under participation of brides and mothers-in-law or a meeting titled 'The contribution of women-entrepreneurs into families' (Saferworld 2016: 2) are useful in that they present people with role models and introduce the topic to the community in a playful and not all too serious manner. This might help some people to change their mind, but will not be enough to yield this effect among people who justify and normalise early and arranged marriages with reference to their (self-perceived) cultural dispositions and traditions – as in the case of Uzbek communities in Southern Kyrgyzstan, finds Mamatjalil uluu (2017: 29) – or with the lack of alternative ways of taking care of their children – as in the case of rural poor (ibid.: 30). Overall, then, it seems that LCPCs can address and change some of the mechanisms that effect community security negatively but that, given their limited scope, mission statement and resources, a more fundamental transformation of the living conditions and livelihoods that produce precarious living conditions in rural and semi-urban Kyrgyzstan lies beyond the realm of these institutions. This is similarly apparent in the case of inter-communal/inter-group peacebuilding and reconciliation projects administered by LCPCs, which I analyse in turn.

Peoples' friendship

Like in the area of 'Family and individual' issues, security challenges in the 'Social, communal and institutional' domain are often complex, contested and hard to come by.[25] Within this

---

[25] This analysis is partly adapted from Lottholz (2018).

domain, the items of 'Interethnic conflict/tension' and 'Religious radicalism' are of predominant concern and mentioned more often than all other issues together (13 vs. 11 times, respectively). These issues of collective or public security (*obshestvennaia bezopasnost*) are at the heart of community security work throughout the country, especially in multi-ethnic and border communities in the South. Consequently, most LCPCs were busy devising and implementing measures to prevent and reduce the seclusion of people within sub-groups and separate communities, as well as people's joining and supporting of radical religious groups. This part will focus on LCPCs' efforts in the prevention of group-/community-based conflict, which was often reported to form along inter-ethnic lines (violent extremism is discussed in VII.4). As I show in the following analysis, the promotion of peace, harmony and 'peoples' friendship' were the predominant approach but proved a difficult undertaking.

As I have discussed in section IV.3 in the previous chapter, contradictions between infrastructural and institutional policies and arrangements on the one hand and the official discourse of 'people's friendship' and 'Kyrgyzstan is our common home' on the other appear to be an inherent feature of Soviet and post-Soviet policies. The dual principle of using ethnicity to structure and organise production and life as such along ethno-territorial lines while downplaying the importance of ethnic belonging and its gradual fading away with the reaching of Communism (Egdar 2007, Simon 1991) has foregrounded not only the Soviet national territorial division (NTD, 1924-1936), but also subsequent efforts to organise social welfare, state provision and education into the period of Kyrgyzstan's independence (Reeves 2014: 123). Not surprisingly, then, the idea that people's peaceful coexistence is a matter of educating them about the benefits of diversity and peace, and about the irrelevance and irrationality of making one's belonging and identity the primary grounds for action has lived on and informs efforts to build peace and promote security in communities throughout Kyrgyzstan. 'People's friendship' (*druzhba narodov*) has become the core idea behind numerous peacebuilding events

and programmes, which try to call people and communities to unity, harmony and peaceful relations in the face of the violence in June 2010 and the continued impunity of perpetrators and the persisting tensions and everyday forms of violence and marginalisation (Lottholz 2018, Ismailbekova 2013, Ismailbekova and Karimova 2018). As already pointed out, apart from the general structural and institutional arrangements that rather exacerbate competition and conflict, the involvement and complicity of state bodies, specifically law enforcement and judiciary organs, often exacerbated the communal tensions and increased the distrust, feelings of vulnerability and other obstacles to be overcome by peacebuilding and security practitioners.

This situation is well exemplified by the town of Bazar-Korgon, west of Jalal-Abad and about 20 kilometres north of the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border and gravely affected by the violent clashes in June 2010 (McBrien 2013). As the two representatives of the local LCPC told during the profiling interview[26], relations between the population and the police had already been strained in the months and years leading up to the 2010 'events'. The death of an Uzbek inhabitant of the town as a consequence of beatings received while taken in custody and the increasing number of unjustified detentions and interrogations – some of which were ended on the next day, others only after payment of substantial sums of money – made people try to avoid the police at all costs and, especially after the June 2010 violence, produced feeling of grave insecurity. During the 'June events', the destruction of over 2000 properties and killing of 15 people had borne testimony to the 'deep interethnic hostility and the inaction of the law enforcement organs', but also to the involvement of Uzbek people in violent action, as in the case of an armed resistance group who attacked people on a mountain pass, killing one Kyrgyz police man on 13 June. The post-violence period was characterised by continued tensions and confusion in law enforcement and judicial procedures, as detention of especially young people

---

[26] Profiling visit on 13 July 2015; the following analysis is based on the LCPC profile in Saferworld 2016: 18-21.

without other reasons than to extort payments, and the targeting of families of the fled perpetrators of crimes during the conflict. The insecurity and vulnerability people felt after the conflict was so grave that many would send their kids to relatives or to work in Russia and in some cases entire families were leaving their homes behind. Although it was hard to give voice to the issues underlying this exodus and suffering of the town's inhabitants, it was clear that these things would need to be addressed when Saferworld and its partner FTI initiated conversations and the foundation of a Community Security Working Group in 2011.

On the first event organised by the local group, a roundtable for the rapprochement and trust-building between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Bazar-Korgon, it was primarily women who joined the discussion and voiced some of the grievances and worries held by people. This helped to identify and address issues in a series of meetings with representatives of law enforcement organs, prosecution, the local administration and the international partners, where a common approach towards discussing problems and solutions was found and different measures were to improve police performance and inspire trust from the population were agreed. As a result of the measures taken, including the setting up of a help line (*telefon doveriia*), compulsory police badges and accountability mechanisms,[27] the population's perception of the police improved and it was able to develop trust into the institution. If earlier the majority of policemen carried out searches without identification and even without wearing their uniforms, since January 2012 they would always wear their uniforms and badges showing

---

[27] The measures included, more exactly, the introduction of an annual report of the Regional Administration for Internal Affairs [*ROVD*] in front of the population on the 'town gatherings' ['selskii skhod']; procurement of mobile telephones for neighbourhood inspectors to improve the communication within the police and between police and population; procurement of service vehicles for the police with the help of the local administration [*aiyl okmotu*] and private entrepreneurs, which increased the capacity of the police and helps it to react quickly to challenges; opening of neighbourhood posts and observation posts outside the town [*uchastkovye punkty i opornye punkty vozle aiyl okmotu*] to be closer to the population and enable policemen to quickly react to violations of the law; and incorporation of representatives of the police into several events, in order to create connections and positive relations between the police and population.

the respective policeman's family name. Furthermore, law enforcement organs started to incorporate *aksakal* courts who solved specific cases matching their job description (see V.3.1), which limited people's exposure to the police and helped foster a more people-focused approach in settling disputes, rather than prioritising law enforcement and security concerns.

The measures taken by the LCPC to mitigate ethnic tension and encourage a spirit of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence reflect, as indicated above, the Soviet idea of 'people's friendship'. A look at peacebuilding events reported by the LCPCs reveals a consistent attempt to promote friendship and peaceful gathering, for instance in the context of a 'Festival of friendship' (*Festival druzhby*) with music and dance performances, a sport events series titles 'Sport – a messenger of peace' (*Sport – Poslannik mira*), dialogue events titled 'Park of friendship' (*Park druzhby*) and 'Avenue of friendship' (*Aleia druzhby*), and the setting up of a new seating area (*besedka*) on the school courtyard (see fig. 5.1 below). As the two LCPC representatives explained during the profiling interview, these events and the construction of the new seating area, financed by Saferworld, FTI and USAID, were intended to create open spaces where people would be able to get to know and spend time with each other. Furthermore, selected as the best way to illustrate peace out of other competitors, a painting symbolising a peaceful Kyrgyzstan with space for messages of the pupils of the local school (illustration 5.1) presented a viable way of letting young people express their own ideas, hopes and wishes and find a common ground.[28]

---

[28] Interview with LCPC representative during follow-up visit, 30 October 2015.

Illustration 5.1: Peacebuilding based on the 'peoples' friendship' discourse, Bazar-Korgon, author photography

Top left: 'Avenue of friendship';

Top right: 'Friendship square' with seating area (*besedka*); a sign is indicating the funding by Saferworld, FTI and the US embassy.

Bottom: A map of Kyrgyzstan held by hands in which local pupils wrote messages; the hand on the right reads 'We wish Kyrgyzstan peace, unity, harmony, welfare, justice and friendship!' [Kyrgyz: *Kyrgyzstanga kaaloorubuz tynchtyk, birimdik, yntymak, beypildik, adilettik, dostuk!*]

These measures appear more compatible with people's preferences than workshops, training, or 'peace propaganda'. Having grown up with this maxim, for most adults in Kyrgyzstan, 'peoples' friendship' is the frame of reference determining the appropriate positioning on the issue of inter-ethnic relations: As good former Soviet

and now Kyrgyzstani citizens, a multi-ethnic and peaceful Kyrgyzstan is the goal; conflicts and divisions either undesired or even outright denied.[29] The 'friendship of peoples' also foregrounded a host of culturally inflected peacebuilding events across the rest of the country, such as feasts, sport events, and cultural food and costume exhibitions and performances, often themed under the banner of friendship (e.g. 'festival of friendship' or 'garden of friendship') and focused on specific neighbourhoods or uniting people from the entire cities on holidays such as Nooruz or anniversaries (Ismailbekova 2013: 115; Isakova 2013: 24). The arts installation based on a competition among pupils from the local school also shows how such discourses of peace, harmony and unity are carried forward to and internalised by young people. When taken literally, the message written by one young person resonates almost exactly with the discourses of peacebuilding proffered in peacebuilding events: 'We wish Kyrgyzstan peace, unity, harmony, welfare, justice and friendship!'

When thinking about the effects of these peacebuilding initiatives, the most obvious question concerns the audience of these events and new infrastructures of shared space: Who attends and makes use these spaces? It appears likely, that they are utilised by those who already have a basic readiness to interact with people beyond their own immediate social circle (and possibly from other ethnicities). However, whether people from economically and culturally marginalised parts of the communities would also seize these opportunities to reach out and build new bridges appears more than doubtful. This problematique was confirmed by one LCPC representative, who pointed to the history of inter-ethnic conflict during Soviet times, with clashes having happened in the 50s, 60s, in and 1990s and explained how the systematic

---

[29] This crucial role of the 'friendship of peoples' in structuring the interpretation, downplaying and denial of the Osh events and problem of ethnic nationalism is only casually mentioned in the literature (e.g. Laruelle 2012: 45; Khamidov and Marat 2011: 7) but much more apparent on the ground. Middle-aged interviewees laid out their visions of society after this multiculturalist idea and their wish that 'everything was as it used to be' (27 June, Bishkek; 9 November, Bishkek).

division of the ethnic groups in the education system after the fall of the Soviet Union gave rise to a new separation along ethnic lines and to a degree of fear of the two communities from each other:

> The problem is this: In the past, Uzbeks and Kyrgyz were going together to school. Class 'a', that was Kyrgyz, the 'b' classes were Uzbeks, and the 'v' classes [the third letter of the Cyrillic alphabet] were Russians. Here in our school they learnt three languages, more than 40 years ago and they would always live and work together in a friendly way. Just when the Union broke up, they divided up schools, divided up the territorial administrative units [*uchastki*], told the Uzbeks to go there and the Kyrgyz to go here, even though they had lived together. So they created Kyrgyz and Uzbek mono-ethnic communities [*naselennye punkty*].

This re-ordering of urban space after Kyrgyzstan's independence presents a significant 're-materialization' of ethno-territorial thinking, which was closely associated with the materialization and, in 1999, closing of the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border after incursions of Islamist fighters into Uzbekistan (Megoran 2017, 19 ff.). While such compartmentalization is to the benefit of few, if any, the adverse effects have been most painfully felt during the '2010 events' and their aftermath. The LCPC representative concluded:

> … people wouldn't be the way they are now if they worked together, went to school together, played together on sports events and if they knew each other. But now they do not want to be involved in such events, they are scared [*oni boiatsa*]. And the authorities are also afraid and do not let us go to them, we're not invited into the other school, 'it's not necessary', they say, 'don't do it'. But let them mix with each other whether it's a sports event, a festival or something else! Whether it's at work or in a holiday camp [*v lagere*], that's it, you have to mix them and they will live, they will develop a positive view [*u nikh poiavliautsa khoroshie positivy*].

This makes the challenges of peacebuilding and inter-ethnic reconciliation and trust-building abundantly clear: With ethnicised territorial, labour market and welfare policies and provisioning already nurturing tensions during the Soviet period, authorities knew no better than creating mono-lingual schools and mono-ethnic communities (*naselennye punkty*) to strengthen national languages, cultures and traditions (Brubakers 2011: 1802 ff.). As new generations grew up in separation from one another, hardening stereotypes and deepening distrust were compounded by the perceptions of different wellbeing. Most importantly, the relative wealth of Uzbeks, some of whom sported an affluent lifestyle thanks to their bazar businesses and networks with close-by Uzbekistan, stood in contrast to the dwindling livelihood opportunities of rural and urban poor Kyrgyz, who increasingly depended on connections with the local administration or labour migration to the CIS and had accumulated frustration and envy by 2010 (McBrien 2013: 261).

The means of the LCPC are very limited to reach the larger part of the vast population of 36,000 – the less well-off and struggling poor living in the different communities around Bazar-Korgon. The average events usually attract between 20 and maximum 200 people, which, in the representative's words can be regarded a 'drop in the ocean [*kapli v more*]'. He also stated that, given that the people who come to community security, tolerance promotion and peacebuilding events, will usually be the ones with a rather wide horizon anyways, it is the 'housewives, those who do not work, idlers (*bezdelniki*) and, how do you say, all layers of society … you basically should invite them to all events … then it will get better in our community, that's what I think, that's how it seems to me.' This shows how reaching out to those groups within the community who are likely to have been complicit with or affected by the inter-communal violence during the 2010 events poses a significant challenge. The latter should be even more obvious when taking into account the grievances and feelings of injustice in light of the still unaddressed justice issues relating the detentions, trials and money extortion

in which law enforcement agencies had been complicit. Tackling this challenge appears to lie beyond the LCPC's scope, as it is primarily interested in forging a dialogue with law enforcement and security organs in order to secure the cooperation to improve police performance and accountability in the future. Retrospective investigation of (post-) June 2010 crimes would have to be initiated at the provincial or national level and can be seen as a precondition to involve the entire population in peace- and trust-building activities. But given that provincial and central authorities have little interest in solving these cases, and that LCPC workers are depending on the cooperation of law enforcement and security organs in the first place, this precondition is unlikely to be met, which limits the peace and harmony that are built in this and other communities, and will make them appear superficial and wrong in the eyes of the 2010 events' victims.

V.4   Discussion

The examples of peacebuilding and community security initiatives after the 'people's friendship' discourse, and in the case of early marriages and traffic infrastructure issues illustrate the larger issues of livelihoods, local administration and decentralisation in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan. In section V.1, I have shown how the industrial collapse of the Soviet Kyrgyz community and the withdrawal and downsizing of state institutions and provisioning have given rise to a moral economy, in which people's survival was dependent on their amounts of social and cultural capital given the entrenched informalisation and personalisation of once well-endowed and less biased institutions; most importantly the new institutions of the market which brought about a precarious and thoroughly uncertain living conditions for the larger part of the population. In V.2, I have discussed the main effects of recent and current migration trends and the commodification of social and family networks. Most significant for community security and societal conditions is the increasing number of 'social orphans' and entrenching

trends in early marriages and domestic violence mirroring increasing psychological strain by a large part of the population that is in 'trans-local livelihoods' with few people around them to trust. After outlining these challenges, I turned to the institutional architecture of Soviet social institutions and their afterlives in the post-Soviet period, that saw the institutionalisation and incorporation into law enforcement and crime prevention efforts of, most notably, the 'traditional' *aksakal* courts and the newly founded Local Crime Prevention Centres (LCPCs), which came in the focus of international peacebuilding and community programmes after the 2010 events in Osh, Jalal-Abad and their environs.

These societal, economic and institutional dynamics are part of a few key trends in the re-configuration of social policy, state(building) and law enforcement. In other words, while they were changes seen by people in the context of their respective community, they constituted a shift of the role or the state in their overall scale. This shift proceeded from a paternalist welfare state to, at least in some sectors and aspects, a neo-liberal state with decreased levels of provision but a still palpable capacity to regulate and interfere, to a situation where the state vanishes and withdraws altogether, leaving people behind to organise their lives and economic activities largely on their own. This 'post-liberal' configuration is most apparent in the decentralisation of administrative and law enforcement functions and the corresponding responsibilisation of the community level, as well as the family and individual. Thus, what Akaev initiated with his Law on the *aksakal* courts in 2002 was continued by the Law on crime prevention in 2005 by his successor Bakiev and constituted a process of outsourcing of judicial and social ordering competencies that would otherwise have been carried out by the police and judiciary, or by local administrations which were often incapable of doing so. With the founding of LCPCs as coordinating body for municipal and rural institutions and voluntary organs of public order, community level crime prevention and public order and security provision were consolidated as a competency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), with bodies from the

education and health sector tasked to provide the necessary intelligence and support in the analysis of security challenges and implementation of measures.

The result of this decentralisation trajectory, which resonates with Western public management and 'good governance' ideas and adapts them to the local reality – with *aksakals* and other LCPC entities figuring as the locally acknowledged organs of public security and order provision (e.g. Ibraeva 2008: 11) – is the responsibilisation of the communal level for the prevention of and dealing with crime, while reciprocal mechanisms for changing policies and strengthening accountability of provincial and national ministries and the government appear not to match the former. It can thus be said that community security programming is strong on the security side – with structures integrated under the MIA and geared towards effectively ensuring crime prevention – while no equivalent provisions are made to deal with challenges in the economic, employment, family, health and other sectors. This 'security-first' approach has been challenged in some communities where international donors have initiated systematic approach in the LCPCs or Community Security Working Groups, as shown in the first example of an LCPC solving traffic infrastructure issues, but overall a securitisation tendency in institutional design and implementation can be observed.

One feature that makes the work of LCPCs unreliable – in fact many LCPCs across the country are by now, 12 years after the law institutionalising them, inactive[30] – and thus potentially malleable, manipulable, is the de-facto voluntary basis, on which its members are expected to work. The group in Tash-Bulak, for instance, suggested that LCPC members should be given 'the maximal salary, so they can be most effective' in doing their work, while another LCPC head emphasised how 'miserable' the allowances were.[31] It is understandable that there

---

[30] They often consist of 'two old men [*dedushki*]' and thus exist mostly on paper. Conversation with community security activist, community 2, 11 November 2015, see chapter VII.

[31] Conversation with head of LCPC and territorial council, south Kyrgyztsan, 19 October 2015.

are other sufficient reasons for people to get involved in the work of LCPC and CSWGs, as expressed by the head of the Tash-Bulak LCPC who alluded to his religious belief, a general spiritual need to work for society and even framed the issue as a matter of civic honour and even a part of human existence. These motives are honourable and, as the successful solution of a road traffic issue in that community showed, effective in mobilising communal support and overcome the ignorance and deadlock among municipal, regional, and provincial authorities under certain conditions. The same motives are also susceptible to fatigue and exhaustion when issues prove too complex and 'wicked' to be solved, or the ignorance and resistance from local and higher-level administration too stubborn. The representative of the Bazar-Korgon LCPC, reported that in addition to the deep-seated alienation and distrust between ethnicities, the groups' work was also complicated by resistance from the local administration (*aiyl okmotu*) and the rift within the group it affected. To still work and organise events in the face of such adversity he admitted one required a good amount of fanaticism.[32] Although such zeal and voluntary activism are necessary to keep society together, it is equally necessary to note how such initiatives and the LCPCs as such divert attention from questions as to how economic activities and livelihoods are organised and insufficiently provided by public actors and their policies. In the following chapter, I further deepen the perspective on how people's autonomy, resilience and self-reliance is promoted by peacebuilding and community security initiatives in the youth sector.

The trajectory of group and individual responsibilisation, and the use of moral discourses to give weight to calls for perseverance under conditions of economic hardship and strain on family and communal relations, is already apparent in the two initiatives on

---

[32] About the new members of the team, he commented: 'They are such fanatics as we are, we are cast in the same mould [*oni tozhe takie fanaty kak my, s odnogo testa*]', Bazar-Korgon, 30 October 2015.

legalisation of marriages and people's friendship. First of all, the consultation with responsible bodies and actors and measures implemented to reduce child marriages were effective in reducing the number of the latter, which depicts a success in collective action against a social problem co-produced by local and regional level institutions. Still, this initiative did not perceive as its scope the key problems underlying the phenomenon, such as the high number of social orphans and the destitute conditions in the local labour market that make people prefer to marry off their kids as soon as possible, which in turn feeds into the growth of young parenthood via the psychological suffering experienced by young brides. In this light, events for the promotion of family and marriage values ('We are an exemplary (*primernaia*) family') is useful in that it brings to attention these issues and may inspire people in their attempt to navigate the conditions of the post-Soviet labour market. But it can be expected that they also put social and moral pressure on people who due to their family history or economic situation are not able to live up to such 'examples' neither in the present nor in future generations.

Events for the promotion of virtuous values within the family and the community, whether they are about 'exemplary families', 'women entrepreneurs' or diversity, tolerance and 'people's friendship', thus exhibit a performative and potentially elitist character insofar that they present an ideal towards which people should ideally strive rather than being focused on the current state of affairs in a given community and ways to improve it. This function is partly taken by the roundtables and other consultation formats organised by LCPCs for exchange with the population. But again, it cannot be expected that these formats yield insights and results that represent the entire population of a community. This is not to argue that peacebuilding and community security practices of LCPCs or other bodies are insufficient. It is merely to point out that with their capacities and scope they will be able to tackle issues of security, peace and conflict and will most likely be able to identify and tackle the most important aspects pertaining to the latter. These initiatives are unlikely to solve more fundamental issues of material and

psychological wellbeing, however, but are likely to instate – depending on their reach and effectiveness – certain regimes of social and moral desirability which will make people refrain from voicing their discontent and grievances stemming from such issues. This analysis has focussed less on this effect of a peace or 'tolerance governmentality' but more on the institutional and actor side that is likely to produce such effects, which will be further explored in the following chapter. It has become clear, however, that the ways in which peace and security are produced and maintained by LCPCs and their constituent bodies are post-liberal in that they transcend the 'classic' relationship between the state and society and mobilise and responsibilise the latter to take over functions and competencies of the former, partly replacing and rendering it obsolete in the process.

Finally, the dynamics of present-day community security and peacebuilding, and the overarching trajectory of local administration reform and decentralisation can be clearly situated within the three imaginaries of statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan (ch. IV). As already indicated, the local administration reform of the 1990s and 2000s was pursued after the templates offered by international financial institutions and local governance consultants. As I have shown, given that privatisation and the distribution of valuable assets and land had proceeded significantly before rural executive committees (*aiyl okmotu*) and other local bodies were ready to take on and regulate such processes, large parts of the population were already facing dire economic circumstances reducing them to perseverance and coping strategies (IV.2.4) which included labour migration within the country, and by the 2000s, to the CIS and beyond. With Western-style reforms not yielding positive results, Akaev started to embrace Kyrgyz traditions to nurture his own popularity among the population invoke the Kyrgyz people's inherent ability to persevere in the most adverse conditions. He also institutionalised the *aksakal* courts as alternative dispute resolution body especially in rural areas, and held up their exemplary status for the inherently democratic nature and institutions of the Kyrgyz

nomadic tribes, which should help to maintain unity and harmony in the current period of economic and increasing political instability (IV.4.2).

The Law on crime prevention and institutionalisation of LCPCs can be seen as a combination of Western-style local governance imaginary with traditional discourses on social order and institutions into a set of institutions and practices conforming to the 'politics of sovereignty' imaginary (IV.3). While the content of internationally supported projects and practices thus largely draws on Western notions of participatory techniques and local democracy and emphasises their compatibility with Kyrgyzstani local institutions such as LCPCs, *asksakal* courts or district/*mahalla* committees, the overarching priorities and agenda are always agreed with and thus subsumed under the priorities of the MIA. Thereby, domestic authorities' sovereignty is maintained vis-à-vis international actors' criticism or interference in domestic affairs but also vis-à-vis local and municipal actors' challenges and attempts to influence the provincial and national policy making or legislation. Community security initiatives are primarily free to address the symptoms of economic, social and political problems by deriving initiatives that help people reflect on their situation and seek help in coping with them, but a feedback loop that would create additional responsibility and accountability from the top levels vis-à-vis communities appears to be generally lacking in this area. The state is thus re-configured and re-built of the state in to a post-liberal one, where the classic relationship between state and society, which is supposed to be determined and shaped by collective decision making among society, is transcended into one where the state is only active in certain aspects and situations while societal actors and elements, but also private actors or international ones, like donors or peacebuilding and security NGOs, take over functions and responsibilities that state agencies cannot cover. In chapter VII, I will examine attempts to challenge this post-liberal reconfiguration by creating more accountability of state intuitions, specifically the police, vis-à-vis society. There, I will indicate that the trend appears irreversible to the extent

that fiscal arrangements and thus livelihoods of people working within the institution are significantly disconnected from the realities of life in Kyrgyzstan and produce parallel structures and markets undermining accountability and professionalism.

Chapter VI Shaping peace, social order and resilience: Territorial Youth Councils as problem-solvers and voice of youth

The previous chapter has given a first insight into community security and peacebuilding practices against the background of the post-Socialist transition and its effects on livelihoods in rural and semi-urban Kyrgyzstan. As I have shown, forms of insecurity and crime appear inextricably linked to the results of privatisation, liberalisation and market deregulation; either directly, as people try to fight dispossession and poverty through squatting, petty crime and cattle theft; or indirectly, via the social and psychological effects of mass labour migration and incapacitation of education and health and social care institutions who fail to address the hardships and needs of people. In this situation of rolling back, downsizing and sometimes de facto collapse of state institutions and services, I have shown how the web of social institutions and civil society from the Soviet Union has – albeit selectively – lived on and was partly revived by the creation Local Crime Prevention Centres as a coordinating body for them. I have demonstrated LCPCs' high potential to address conflict and related issues, but have also shown that their functioning and operations are highly dependent on the readiness and ability of local activists to invest time and effort into this institution. LCPCs are thus the first example of post-liberal forms of community security provision and foreground two more in-depth cases which will be examined in this and the following chapter.

In this chapter, I present an analysis of the peacebuilding, social ordering and mobilisation practices of the Territorial Youth Councils (*Territorialnye Molodezhnye Sovety*, TYCs), an institution officially created in the year 2011 following the initiatives of young people in the southern Kyrgyzstani city of Osh to promote peace, tolerance and non-violence in the aftermath of the 2010 'Osh' or 'June events' (see IV.1). The TYCs have become firmly integrated into the institutional architecture of local governance and social policy, which presents a success given that their establishment and consolidation was continuously supported

by the Organisation for Co-Operation and Security in Europe (OSCE) and the NGO Iret[1] based

in Osh. The important status of TYCs and similar structures across Kyrgyzstan as a promoter

of tolerance, inter-ethnic and inter-regional exchange and but also self-help and solidarity

among young people make them a pertinent case for post-liberal peace and statebuilding in

Kyrgyzstan. Like the LCPCs analysed earlier, they mobilise comprehensive efforts among

young people but also national NGOs to implement goals which are also in the interest of local

government actors such as the Mayor's Administration (*meriia*) of the city of Osh. In this sense,

as this chapter will show, the practices and discourses of peacebuilding and social ordering

undertaken by this institution can often be situated within the 'politics of sovereignty' and

'Western liberal peace' imaginary at the same time, while their content invoked 'tradition and

culture' as a source of peacefulness and harmony in diversity. I analyse this hybrid constitution

of this institution between the different imaginaries and the implications for the trajectory of

post-liberal statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan.

The data used in this analysis was gathered in participatory observation during national

conferences and community events, and interviews conducted with TYC representatives

between September and December 2015.[2] Access to the conferences was given by the

coordinator of the project working for OSCE and agreed with the staff of Iret. In order to

interview TYC representatives themselves, I first requested and obtained permission to contact

TYC representatives from the head of the Committee for Youth Affairs (CYA) in Osh and,

subsequently, contacted individual TYC representatives to ask for their participation; a process

further facilitated by staff of the Committee. I interviewed current or recent heads or active

---

[1] The Russian acronym for *Initsiativa razvitiia edinstva i tolerantnosti*, or 'Initiative for the development of equality and tolerance'.

[2] See list of attended events and interviews in Appendix 1. The Committee for Youth Affairs helped to arrange some of the interviews, but all interviewees and conversations were conducted on separate occasions.

members from five out of twelve TYCs in the city of Osh, some of whom were currently working as staff in the CYA or in Iret. The analysis draws on only one interview with 'ordinary' members because time and resources to negotiate trust and access to the TYCs of the different communities were limited. Thus, the analyses, views and results discussed in this chapter are largely based on the views shared by people working in the Committee for Youth Affairs of the mayor's administration, and the OSCE and Iret. A first draft of the chapter was shared with the latter in order to confirm the correct representation of the institution.

The chapter is structured as follows. In section VI.21, I discuss the original mission and functions of the TYCs to outline the logics of mobilisation, scope and functions and, on that basis the importance of youth work for territorial governance and peacebuilding. The section sets the analytical frame for the chapter, which is focused on how TYCs are made to work effectively in some areas while their powers are limited in others. Section VI.2 presents the actual content of the activities and initiatives of TYCs. I first focus on the original mission of promoting peace, tolerance and exchange between groups and different urban and rural locales (VI.2.1) to then show how this peacebuilding mission is embedded in discourses and symbolic interactions pertaining to national ideology in Kyrgyzstan, which have ample resonance with some of the imaginaries and discourses of statebuilding (VI.2.2). The next section (VI.2.3) gives examples of how TYCs approached concrete issues of conflict and insecurity and focuses on violent extremism, racketeering and poverty. I further examine the TYCs' positioning vis-à-vis the latter problem, i.e. poverty and socio-economic hardship, which appears to be underlying more visible issues of conflict and crime. I show how TYCs and other youth actors attempt to tackle these more fundamental problems by, on the one hand, promoting solutions of self-help and entrepreneurial subjecthood resonating with free market discourses and, on other hand, also work on providing help through charity and solidarity work (VI.2.4). The tension between the promotion of resilience and more critical and demanding attitude in regard

to living conditions and social policy leads to a more systematic discussion of the opportunities and limits of youth politics and policy in section VI.3. I first examine the different attempts to give youth a voice to raise the issues identified in previous sections in local and national political debates. I turn then discuss Kyrgyzstani state youth policy to show you much of the work of TYCs and other youth policy actors and institutions tackles issues that could more effectively be addressed by a more systematic state youth policy.

The fact that such a policy is only in the process of formulation and that the challenges and problems in the youth sphere are still mainly left to be dealt with by project-based and donor-funded initiatives makes the youth sphere in Kyrgyzstan in a post-liberal trajectory, where state responsibilities and provision are internationalised and outsourced while the content and shape of initiatives are subject to national ideological and sovereignty discourses. I discuss the autonomisation and internationalisation of youth work and its situatedness in and between imaginaries of statebuilding in section VI.4

VI.1 TYCs' mission, functions and the logics of territorial youth work

Although the TYCs are, much like the LCPCs analysed in the previous chapter, aiming to prevent conflict and to promote tolerance, harmony and good citizenship among young people, their establishment and institutionalisation is a special case insofar as they received support from the OSCE and the NGO Iret. This rendered the institutionalisation of TYCs in Territorial Councils of the city of Osh – and the corresponding access to financial means from the city's budget – subject to long negotiation. After discussing the institutionalisation and expansion of the TYCs into other cities in Kyrgyzstan (VI.2.1), I will thus present insights into the roles, scope and logics of mobilisation of TYCs to explain their integration into local government structures (VI.2.2).

Establishment, institutionalisation and expansion of TYCs

The process of establishing TYCs in the city of Osh in the South of the country goes back to the year 2010. One of the more short-term responses to the June 2010 events, which had brought massive damage to large parts of the city and other towns in southern Kyrgyzstan, was to establish eleven working groups across the territory of the city (Info booklet: 7).[3] The young volunteers in these groups attempted to call their peers to peacefulness and dispel the multiple conflict-related rumours circulating in the aftermath of the June event and aimed to build trust, reconciliation and new friendships. This initial activity, often in the form of seminars or trainings, was conducted under the slogan 'I am a Kyrgyzstani' (*Ya – Kyrgyzstanets!*).[4] This expresses the goal of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence among the population regardless of people's identities and under the civic nationalist banner discussed in IV.2.2.

In 2011, the youth groups were institutionalised as Territorial Youth Councils as part of a project implemented by the NGO Iret and realised in cooperation with the Committee for Youth Affairs under the mayor's office (*meriia*) of the city of Osh. The institutional status was documented in a decree by the mayor's office (*Polozhenie o territoralnykh sovetakh*), which also established a Coordination Council (*koordinatsionnyi sovet*) consisting of representatives of the Committee for Youth Affairs, Iret and the OSCE, and one representative from each of the twelve TYCs. In this body, all operative and strategic questions pertaining to TYCs' work were discussed, including the allocation of 'mini-grants' to young people's projects on a competitive basis. The general structure of each TYC includes one head (*predsedatel*), a deputy

---

[3] Most of the information presented in this section can be found in the *Information booklet on the Territorial Youth Council of the city of Osh (Informatsionnyi sbornik o Territorialnykh Molodezhnykh Sovetakh goroda Osh),* Osh, 2015; cited as 'Booklet' hereafter.

[4] Conversation with youth council head, who had been part of the efforts in the aftermath of the Osh events; Osh, 13 November.

head (*zampredsedateli*) and a group of ten active members (*zolotaia desiatka* or 'golden ten') who were supposed to mobilise two active helpers or participants each for any of the events organised in a TYC.

A major factor of motivation and important source for knowledge transfer were select activists' funded trips to Northern Ireland and Vienna, where experiences and perspectives on post-conflict trust building among young people, were exchanged (Info booklet: 8). Further projects on capacity-building and skills training implemented by Iret with the support and advice from the OSCE helped to recruit new people who would gradually partake in the activities of the TYCs, take on responsibility and become second and third generation youth council representatives themselves. The trainings, exchange visits and – once youth initiatives had been started across the country – national conferences for problem analysis, brainstorming and project planning, which were organised in different places across Kyrgyzstan, were regarded as prestigious and attracted many supporters for the TYCs. They could not, however, mitigate the high fluctuation rate in executing and leadership positions in these bodies, and thus also their functions and scope (see below).

The institutionalisation of TYCs did not only have the function of approving of the work done by the young volunteers and granting the authority to continue their operations; it also answered the question about the ownership of the TYC structure. While much of the capacity building and recruitment of volunteers had been supported or actively carried out by Iret and the OSCE, neither of these organisations were realistic candidates to become the TYCs' patrons in the long term. The Committee for Youth Affairs under the office of the mayor of Osh was practically also the only viable partner to institutionalise TYCs and integrate them into its structure. Until the cycle of capacity building projects finished in October 2016, the CYA and Iret were coordinating the work of the TYCs, while the OSCE took on an advisor role and provides mostly project-based support.

An important step in the further institutionalisation of the TYCs was the integration of the twelve TYC heads (*predsedateli*) into the ordinary staff of the office of the mayor of Osh in 2013 (Info booklet: 9). This step, alongside with granting all members of TYCs official status and their specific ID cards (ibid.), increased the visibility and legitimacy of the work of the volunteers. In the words of one representative from Iret:

> We are trying to make the project sustainable, the participants in the youth councils are supposed to have a [consolidated] position. Even if the authorities rotate, our people will already be there and will not be touched by them [*ikh ne trogaiut*].[5]

This statement points especially to the potential problem of rotation in the leadership in the CYA or in the higher levels of the mayor's office. Such fluctuation does now not pose the same problem as it used to in times when the status of TYCs had not been determined by concrete local legislative acts. The institutionalisation of TYCs can thus be seen as a concrete activity of statebuilding, through which state structures, in this case local administrative structures such as Territorial Councils – the sub-division of the mayor's office in the city's districts (see table V.3) – and Local Crime Prevention centres which work in close cooperation or personal unison with them, are supported and in fact extended in order to better reach young people.

The city of Osh has served as a model case for the reinvigoration of youth sector structures in Kyrgyzstan. The establishment and institutionalisation of TYCs was regarded as a success both in Kyrgyzstan and in the OSCE. Through conversations of the responsible ministry and involved international organisation, this concept was also applied and implemented in other localities, foremost the southern provincial capitals of Batken and Jalal-Abad. Another prime example is the city of Tokmok in Chui province, about 70 kilometres east of Bishkek. After the establishment of a youth working group as part of a joint capacity building

---

[5] Youth forum in Batken, 11 September 2015.

project of the OSCE and the local mayor's office in 2012, a Youth Coordination Council (*Koordinatsionnyi Sovet Molodezhy*, *KSM*) was founded in 2013. However, the mayor's office could not support the institutionalisation as in the case of TYCs in Osh, which was explained by the fact that it did not have the competencies as the city of Osh, which is the only republican city apart from the capital Bishkek and thus has significant self-administrative competencies.[6] With Tokmok being downgraded to an ordinary town because of the deindustrialisation and depopulation after 1991, the mayor's administration argued that they could not obtain approval from the provincial administration to officially constitute the Youth Coordination Council (*KSM*) under its auspices. The local initiative group thus had to lobby their case on a higher level and negotiated the possibility of being constituted as official body directly under the Ministry of Youth, Labour and Migration. This agreement was ready to be signed when the 2015 parliamentary elections and subsequent reshuffles in the Ministry and its sub-divisions brought new people, who were not ready to take over the agreements and arrangements of their predecessors. This status of the Youth Coordination Council in Tokmok has not been changed since 2015.[7]

This case and similar difficulties of legally constituting youth structures in Jalal-Abad and Batken[8] indicate the limits and reservations to the official incorporation of youth councils into local administrative structures. It also underlines the accomplishment that the legalisation of the TYCs' activity in Osh represents. As the following sub-section and section VI.4 will show, the responsibilities and commitments in terms of budgeting and claims for shaping local

---

[6] Interview with youth representative, Tokmok, 10 December 2015; correspondence, August 2017.

[7] Interview with youth representative, Tokmok, 10 December 2015.

[8] Although with similar difficulties, Committees for Youth Affairs were eventually instated under the mayor's offices of these provincial capitals and are serving to plan, coordinate and oversee the implementation of youth sphere activities by young activists and NGOs. Participants on youth forum, Batken, 11 September 2015.

policies incurred by the constitution of youth councils or equivalent institutions are not little. It is thus more practical for mayor's administrations and rural executive committees (*aiyl okmotu*) to allow youth initiatives to organise events, educate and entertain young people without creating the structures and liabilities that would make this kind of work more sustainable. It is also important to acknowledge that this mode of spontaneous self-organisation, which is significantly supported by local NGOs working in the youth and peacebuilding sectors, can be regarded equally effective from the perspective of event beneficiaries – young people living in the place where events are organised. If youth affairs are taken care of by voluntary youth activists and NGOs successfully raising and using donor money[9], local administrations do not see a real need to create structures like Territorial Youth Councils.[10] Furthermore, rural administrations are more focused on providing basic services like language and computer literacy courses, which do not require the of administrative and governance capacity of TYCs.[11] In the next sub-section, I will discuss the logic of mobilisation and spontaneity at play in youth work and peacebuilding in more detail, which will substantiate the reasons for why local administrations have little preference to institutionalise youth structures.

TYCs' role, scope and logics of mobilisation

To give a more concrete insight in how TYCs operate and what their implications for peacebuilding and conflict prevention are, I will discuss their external working environment

---

[9] The substituting effect of international donor and local NGOs' activities in the youth sphere was noted by a senior specialist from the Tokmok Mayor's Office Social Department, Tokmok, 10 December 2015.

[10] Conversation, TYC project consultant, Osh, 3 December 2015. The expert in Tokmok (see note 8 above) noted how the creation of an official youth work structure was apparently more a matter of political will than of available resources or approval from higher level structures.

[11] Interview, TYC head, Osh, 4 December. Interview with LCPC representatives, Smarkandek (Batken province), 12 July 2015 (see chapter V).

and conditions and internal logics of working and mobilising young people. This discussion is divided into the aspects of visibility, territorial coverage and cooperation with local government, administration and civil society bodies; cadre recruitment, fluctuation and turnover; and the internal working logics and mechanisms.

Territorial vs social outreach and cooperation with existing bodies and institutions

To understand the way TYCs work it is best to differentiate two kinds of activities: First, activities organised in direct cooperation with and usually on the premises of education institutions such as schools, universities, technical and professional colleges and other educational or administrative institutions. For these events TYC volunteers can utilise existing infrastructure for communicating events, recruiting participants and new volunteers for their work. On the other hand, TYCs also organise street-level activities, usually in the form of sport events or small yard festivals or concerts with the title *Rebiata s nashego dvora* ('Kids from our courtyard'). While both kinds of events have important effects and impacts, I was particularly interested in the social outreach that TYCs could generate given the large population of the twelve city districts they are operating in. With up to 50,000 inhabitants in one district, it is important to consider appropriateness and effectivity of measures taken to build trust and peace and prevent tensions, conflict and crime both by TYCs and other bodies. Accordingly, it is important to assess the degree of TYCs' social outreach, and to what extent their activity fulfils the goal of demonstrating presence and a general offer of activities and events across the territory. It became clear that TYCs' cooperation with the existing social and administrative infrastructure is very likely to generate significant social outreach, but that it is still possible that pockets of young people not knowing about TYCs are still existent across the city. As several TYC representatives explained, their activities are structured across the different schools in a given district, with pupils in each school actively engaged in the their

TYC.[12] The coverage of schools is not always the same, however, as the following quote illustrates:

> In general, many TYC folks [*TMSniki*] work with pupils, yes. Look, we had a Russian school in [our district], and only in this school there was no information about TYCs. In the school of Manas in Kerme-Too, they had information and they participated [in TYC events]. TYC members themselves are pupils. We did not have this [situation] because our school director […] did not admit such youth organisations. She did not want people to undertake such activity but wanted them to only study.[13]

Similar to the dependence on individuals when it comes to incorporating schools or other institutions in the TYC activities, getting to know about TYCs outside of school or any other social infrastructure is yet more dependent on coincidence, but possible thanks to the 'Kids from our courtyard' and similar events. The same ex youth council activist reported:

> In our courtyard, it is possible that people knew [about TYCs]; only I didn't because I didn't go out on the street [to play]. My district is [covered by] the TYC Kerme-Too and it turns out that there, people knew well about it and that monthly events with graffiti and other things were held on the street. I knew that such events are being organised in our district … but I just didn't know that it was TYC people doing them.

This shows how TYCs manage to be present in children's lives through street-level events, even if somewhat subconsciously. At the same time, this social outreach depends on individuals' interaction with their own district and can vary across different districts. Youth activists from another TYC, for instance, reported that their activities were focused on working with higher education institutions as no agreements for doing events with pupils from the

---

[12] For instance, interviews with youth council head, Osh, 13 November; youth council head, Osh, 4 December 2015.

[13] Interview with former 'golden ten' member, Osh, 3 December 2015.

district's schools had been reached.[14] Furthermore, even if some events are advertised through posters or leaflets, it seems that people's participation in them is more effectively brought about by friends, school teachers or pedagogues strongly encouraging them to join.[15] Given her limited interaction with kids in her courtyard, the interviewee quoted in length above was, like many other activists, recruited into her TYC during the first year of her studies at the Faculty of Business and Management of Osh State University. Therefore, it is important to notice that the coverage and 'social outreach' of TYCs varies depending on their own capacity and cooperativeness of different institutions.

This was confirmed and explained in further detail by a current TYC head, who pointed out how it was challenging to cover the needs and requirements of young people at the three universities and eight schools in his district, as well as of the 'city youth' (*gorodskaia molodezh*): only in order to have one event per school, it meant that already one event per month had to be prepared and implemented.[16] TYCs therefore have responsible persons or *sviaznye* ('communicators') in each institution, especially colleges, universities and higher education institutions, to communicate event plans and coordinate their implementation.[17] Thus the high number of events is organised in cooperation with the different institutional partners who also draw on the experience of organising events before the founding of TYCs. As senior voices in the initiative have pointed out, the TYCs have managed to establish a cooperation between 'local administrative organs' (*mestnye organy vlasti*)[18] and, specifically in Osh, 'interact

---

[14] Interview with two youth council activists, Osh, 4 December.

[15] Interview with activists (previous note) & TYC head, Osh, 4 December. The youth representative in Tokmok (interview, 10 December) pointed out the ironic fact that people usually had to be pushed to partake in trainings and events and were keen once they had participated and understood what it was all about.

[16] Conversation, youth council head, Osh, 13 November.

[17] Interview with activists, Osh, 4 December; youth representative, Tokmok, 10 December.

[18] OSCE representative, national youth forum, Janaat resort, 28 October 2015.

closely' with law enforcement organs, territorial councils (the district level sub-division of the mayor's office) and their composite institutions such as *aksakal* courts and women's councils (*zhensovets*).[19] 'As regards the role of TYCs for these institutions', the head of the Committee for Youth Affairs further explained, '[they] are in need of human resources… they need people […] who will realise this, discuss, promote and advertise the events and so on ca call then talk to young people and so on.'[20] The best demonstration of this close cooperation between TYCs and other administrative and civil society bodies are big festivals held on the occasions of Nooruz[21], 1st of May or the Anniversary of the city of Osh (see VI.2.2), where TYC activists help by organising dance and theatrical performances and culinary or arts fairs. Perhaps even more important are smaller projects funded by 'mini-grants' in which young people can realise their ideas on the level of their respective district and in cooperation with young people from different places from Osh province.

Recruitment and fluctuation

To further understand the logics and effects of TYCs, it is important to take into account the yearly turnover of people in each district and the factors of people's engagement in TYCs. The events implemented in schools, colleges, universities also serve as occasions for recruitment, as the ex-golden ten member from a central district TYC explained: 'in BiM [Faculty of Business and Management], we have the Youth Business Club […]. Every year, many first-year students join, young students who do not know at all what TYCs are. … [In the] Youth Business Club … they know us and can spread the information about us to everyone, like, what

---

[19] Interview, Head of the Committee for Youth Affairs, Osh, 19 November 2015.

[20] Interview, Head of the Committee for Youth Affairs, Osh, 19 November 2015.

[21] A holiday celebrating the commencement of spring or, in Persian and Zoroastrian tradition, the new year.

are TYCs, and you can join them and so on.'[22] Another current activist describes how he was recruited by his friend, who had by the time of the interview become head of his TYC:

> When I was studying in the first year ... [the TYC head] told me how they work in TYCs and what events they have there, what they are aiming at and trying to build there. He told me all of this and I became interested. ... So in the beginning I became an active participant in all events in the college, and then I already became a member of the TYC team.[23]

In this sense, the TYCs' different events and trainings serve as places where 'active youth are gathering', can 'present themselves'[24], voice their ambition and be selected to become members of TYCs and their core team called 'golden ten' (*zolotaia desiatka*).[25]

This recruitment practice is limited to the core team, each of whose member is responsible to recruit two more active members for the TYC, so that the overall number of people per TYC is thirty, plus the head of the TYC. With the heads working as regular staff in the CYA and acting as bridge between the latter and their TYC, the golden ten takes on the principal responsibility for the operative work in the district. As one TYC head from a more rural district in Western Osh explained:

> In the morning, I go to my [home district] office, I have a district head there, members, leaders of neighbourhood committees [with whom they cooperate] and youth representatives, youth leaders are doing the whole work there.[26]

---

[22] Interview, Osh, 3 December 2015.

[23] Interview with activists, Osh, 4 December 2015; similar stories were told in interviews by two TYC heads, Osh, 13 November and 4 December.

[24] '*Ty sebia pokazyvaesh.*' Ex-golden ten member, interview, Osh, 3 December.

[25] As explained in an interview by a TYC head of a suburban district, where recruitment was primarily done on festivals organised by the supporting NGO, Osh 13 November.

[26] Interview, TYC head, Osh, 13 November.

Thus, TYC heads depend on their 'golden ten' and have to keep up the mood and performance of their team to keep the activities of TYCs running. The TYC head facing eight schools in his district remarked succinctly that, 'as regards the regularity [of people's contribution], that varies [*eto po raznomu*]' and, worse, within a short period of time, 'the golden ten completely fell apart. They finished the 11th grade and entered university in Bishkek or left for other reasons.' Maintaining operations under such conditions can be hard and presents a core issue faced by TYCs. The head from the rural district explained her situation concerning the challenge of recruiting people and managing fluctuation as follows:

> We had about fourteen leaders, but four already left for their relatives to Moscow to work and only ten were left. The following year, of these ten, another four or five became students or also left to work.[27]

She confirmed that this fluctuation meant that within one year the positions within her golden ten team could change one or more times, as people would join the core team for an average of seven to eight months. This demonstrates that, while working in TYCs may be interesting and atractive for young people for various reasons[28], their life courses, personal plans and obligations vis-à-vis family and relatives may not allow them to be active in TYCs for a long time. This dilemma was particulalry related to the recruitment of pupils from higher grades of high schools, who are all likely to leave Osh to study or work in Bishkek and abroad. Given that the work in TYCs is fully voluntary and any benefits in terms of acquired skills and networking contacts hard to measure and quickly saturated, it appears fairly logical that young people are not able to stay in Osh and work in their TYC when they need to go and work abroad to earn a living and support tehir family or, alternatively, when they have the possibility to

---

[27] Interview, TYC head, Osh, 13 November.

[28] Reasons other than simply being active and working with friends are discussed in the next section.

further their career through studies or jobs in Bishkek. This situation frustrated TYC representatives and was seen as a major issues preventing a more sustainable impact of TYCs.[29] It appears, though, as if replacing the constant stream of leavers with new young activists, thus working as a conduit for constantly fluctuating cadres, is a guiding principle of TYC whose success depends on the few paid heads and staff in the CYA.

Internal communication, hierarchy, division of labour

The high degree of fluctuation combined with high output performance requires effective internal communication, hierarchies and a clear division of labour and leads to questions about benefits, reward and recognition. As already indicated above, communication and implementation of project plans is organised in a decentral manner and based on the principle of delegation. The golden ten team is divided across the different schools, professional higher education and other institutions – or, in more rural areas, different villages or settlements – and tasked with coordinating the efforts of other TYC members and active youth in these respective entities. Meetings of the entire golden ten itself take place once a month or become redundant altogether depending on the communication undertaken by the TYC head. While TYC members are free to propose events and activities suitable for their communities and different target groups, the event plans, budgetary planning and the annual event calendar of the city of Osh with its traditional holidays creates some degree of rigidity in the work of TYCs, which puts expectation and some pressure on TYCs and especially their leaders to deliver their programme. The salary of 2,100 soms[30] that TYC heads received from the CYA until 2016 creates additional expectations and moral pressure on TYC heads to deliver.

---

[29] Presentation at national closing conference, 27 October, Janaat resort, near Bishkek.

[30] Which equals about 22 GBP as of December 2017.

Relatedly, the atmosphere within teams and attractiveness of their programmes and benefits should also be considered in terms of its role in convincing young people to stay, be active and take responsibility in a TYC or excuse oneself and try working in another organisation. One example is a TYC in Osh, which was not content with the appointment of its deputy: 'The members did not want him to be a deputy, at all.', told one TYC head. 'So they set up a meeting [*miting stroili*; laughs], saying 'the guy doesn't do work', 'he is such and such' and they even called for new elections and elected a new deputy. … So that's the kind of internal politics going on.' In another case, the deputy of the head of a local youth activist group decided, as the head told me in an interview, to abandon his activity because he did not agree with the way things were done in the local group. She further told:

> And when I asked him, why did you leave, why do you not want to work, he said [clearing throat], 'these are my principles, I want it like this, that's it.' And I just wanted to kill myself [*ubivalas*] and said, gosh, what's this, what am I supposed to do now, I have to explain this to the boss, what to say in front of [the implementing NGO] and the OSCE. How am I supposed to step up and say that … [this is] the person for whom I did everything to be included into the project. It was my full responsibility that he would work …[31]

This illustrates the stakes involved in the work of TYCs and the trust implicated in decisions on recruiting people and investing into them by sending them to national conferences and trainings. These often significant investments and corresponding responsibility make the people in leading positions vulnerable to the disagreement, resistance or inability of ordinary members to carry out their work. The same activist group leader laid out her own understanding of this feature of youth work as follows:

---

[31] Interview, youth council representative, Tokmok, 10 December 2015.

Anyways, one has to conform to some rules, to some pillars and to move in such a way that it's not only comfortable for yourself but also for others. There were days when I missed classes for three or four days in order to work in some project, to go on a trip. Because this is a responsibility, after all. Because you chose this life [*podkluchilsa v etu zhizn*], after all. You're not supposed to reject this responsibility because they invest money and work into you. And you're supposed to give some feedback [if you don't like something].

As this statement shows, precarious situations and competitive relations can emerge among the activists. These are often mitigated and transformed into constructive and creative cooperation thanks to the year-long friendships and open and honest relationships between people.[32] Still, the entirely voluntary status of TYC work throws up questions as to how people are supposed to carry on in life once they graduate from school or university, and what TYCs have to offer apart from ID cards, participation diplomas and their official status and symbolic prestige.

The answer are the skills, knowledge and experience that can be gained during work in TYCs. I will discuss these in more depth in the next section, as they are to a significant degree linked to the symbolic meaning and goal of the overall project (e.g. development and improvement of one's city of the country at large). Another aspect in relation to young people's own (self-) development is the progression from ordinary member to leader to professional in the sphere of youth activism and policy. It is clear that not everyone can become a leader or professional and that the progression of youth activists into these stages will have a selective logic that requires compensation through friendly relations and more general motivation factors. In this sense, the position of TYC heads and leaders of youth groups in other youth structures in Kyrgyzstan is rendered somewhat precarious in two respects. First, they are having

---

[32] For instance, the same youth leader told how she would regularly have disagreements or even fights with her colleague but would always find a common denominator in the end.

to justify their positioning by juggling different interests from above and below in the hierarchy, and from the spectrum of different preferences across actors. Second, given the absence or insufficiency of monetary compensation in these positions, youth leaders are having to sustain their existence through wage labour or grant writing and project implementation in the youth and wider civil society sector. Given donors' increasing involvement in Kyrgyzstan since 2010 and the intensifying focus on youth as a vulnerable group, this has become an increasingly viable option, as different 'success stories' of (former) youth leaders show.[33]

However, these favourable business cycle conditions cannot betray the fact that existing structures and human resources in youth work and policy – especially those with adequate salaries – are barely sufficient to tackle the challenges of youth work in Kyrgyzstan. TYCs can in this sense be seen as the ideal solution from the point of view of the state and exchequer, as they serve to channel international donor money and large-scale efforts of young people into conducting projects and activities to build trust, tolerance and peace and prevent crime, conflict and delinquent behaviour. The working mode and logic of TYCs is in this sense a post-liberal one, as it mobilises scarce resources, foremost the time and dedication of young activists with precariously sustained livelihoods, with an appeal to a collective effort to build a peaceful and tolerant social order. In the following section, I will analyse how the embedding of this project in a discourse of nation- and peacebuilding served as the key factor of mobilisation and social ordering in accordance with the three imaginaries of social orders identified in chapter IV.

---

[33] Different interviewees have pointed out how ex-youth council/group leaders have become successful workers in the donor-funded civil society sector. Interview, youth work expert, Tokmok, 10 December 2015; conversation, TYC project consultant, 6 July 2017.

VI.2   Tolerance, the right path, self-help and solidarity: Discourses and practices of youth-led (peace) initiatives

VI.2.1 Peace, tolerance and exchange between groups and locales

The original function and mission of TYCs was to build peace and trust between different ethnic groups within and across the districts of Osh city and beyond. Although this initial goal has largely been realised and was shifted into the background by the year 2015, the importance of this mission was still very present, especially in the districts affected by the '2010 events'. One TYC head describes the importance of this aspect as follows:

> You see in 2010 we head an interethnic war[34] … in Amir Temur[35] the population is 99 per cent Uzbek and in our district, there are 90 per cent Kyrgyz. Together with the [TYC] head of Amir Temur, we wrote a project for a training on interethnic conflict. After this conflict, my 'golden ten' and I went to Amir Temur for three days, I think. We looked at everything, made friends, and we saw with our own eyes that Uzbeks are also good people and that there are no bad nations [*natsii*], but only bad people. And they also came to our district and stayed over there. They saw the Kyrgyz, they saw what kind of cuisine we have, what kind of schools, what kind of things pupils learn in schools. … After this war, this event was very important.

This statement demonstrates how the inter-communal conflict of 2010 and the factors leading up to it – such as perceived substantive differences between ethnic groups and cultures, which may easily lead to stereotypes and prejudice – are still vividly present in the memories of young people in Osh. The corresponding significance of exchanges, 'friendship camps' (*lagery druzhby*) and mutual visits of people from different districts of the city and beyond was

---

[34] The term war is not rarely used in referring to the conflict in June 2010; see for instance Ismailbekova (2013: 114) and Megoran et al. (2014: 13-14).

[35] An Uzbek majority neighbourhood in the On Adyr district in the south east of the city territory.

emphasised by several interviewees. One acting TYC head from a central district from Osh, which had been gravely affected by the '2010 events', told how, as a reaction to the conflict and the apparent involvement of people from the distant regions of Osh province, they started organising mutual visits with villages in Chong Alai region.[36] Such exchange between mono-ethnic communities from different ends of the city, for instance Turan and Kerme-Too, and with remote areas beyond such as the Alai or Chong Alai regions, was, as argued by leading project consultants, be one of the biggest successes of the TYCs.[37]

With the years, this component of building peace, tolerance and trust and fighting stereotypes between ethnic communities was increasingly combined with activities that are of general interest for young people, with the latter gradually replacing the former as main event themes. Different so-called mini-projects for peace- and tolerance building have been combined the transfer of skills or performances or sports competition with the promotion of interaction of youth from diverse backgrounds. Ordinary TYC members from one central district reported an event on Origami paper folding, which included visitors from Aravan, a town south of Osh, and the Alai region yet further south, as their most significant achievement of the current year.[38] Other examples include projects like 'Let's debate with one another' (*'Davaite obsudim vmeste'*), where debating and public speech skills training was combined with debating current issues; or 'The world through art' (*'Mir cherez iskusstvo'*), where participants from both Osh city and province, who had special artisan and handicraft talents, created works on specific themes which were exhibited in all represented locales.[39] Another important and more regular event theme is

---

[36] Interview, Osh, 13 November 2015. Chong Alai is one of the regions whose almost exclusively Kyrgyz population is well known for harbouring stereotypes about Osh and its Uzbek population. This was confirmed in an interview with a project consultant on 3 December.

[37] Conversation, Osh, 6 July 2017.

[38] Interview, Osh, 4 December 2017.

[39] Presentations on national forum in Batken, 11 September 2015; Info booklet: 29.

the above-mentioned *Rebiata s nashego dvora* ('Kids from our courtyard'), which offers a stage for young people to present any performances they like to contribute. Attending such an event on the occasion of the International Youth Day, I witnessed a wide spectrum of acts including contemporary pop culture (breakdance, singer-songwriter and rock acts performing Russian and English language songs) and sketches and love songs performed in Kyrgyz language (see Illustration 6.1 below).

Illustration 6.1: Performances during *Rebiata s nashego dvora* event, author photography

Top left: Photograph from the 'Kids from our courtyard' event;

Top right: Kyrgyz language sketch performance during the same event.

Bottom: Breakdance performance.

These events, which make up the large share of TYC activities, place a central emphasis on the idea of practicing and living the tolerance and openness to the diversity of interests, orientations and identities among young people. The promotion of peace and tolerance may be the main goal of these activities, but it is not as explicitly propagated as in the

events organised in the immediate post-conflict period and specifically in communities affected by or assumed to have been involved in the conflict. This recently established focus on more implicit peace and tolerance-building is reflecting the need to 'move forward' from the initial focus of the TYC project,[40] which has already been successful in creating friendship and is in need of 'new directions'.[41] A youth activist from Tokmok, after initially emphasising that peacebuilding was not the only pillar of the work of TYCs, explained the balance as follows:

> Well of course one of the main tasks of our work is, well, our premise is to create a friendly atmosphere among youth because we understand that in five years they will become parents. And if they will be friendly now then they will be friendly in the future and it will be calmer here. … Everything we are doing right now is peacebuilding, only that we are not doing it in a banal way, right? This does not work, at all, right. Trainings [telling] 'You should all live in peace and not fight', right, this for sure does not work. Now, we have to work in new ways [*po novym tekhnologiiam*].[42]

As she further explained, this meant that all rules for promoting tolerance and diversity were still adhered to in projects, such as trying let young people work only in mixed groups, or make them overcome reservations and stereotypes when they surface in interaction. This peacebuilding in 'imperceptible ways'[43] and through an 'indirect model' emphasising cooperation (*sotrudnichestvo*)[44] and simply practicing diversity and tolerance in action, rather than explicitly propagating and educating about it as an end in itself, has emerged in reaction to the above-mentioned need to 'move forward' and to acknowledge that most young people

---

[40] As expressed by the head of the Committee for Youth Affairs, interview, Osh, 19 November 2015.

[41] Conversation, TYC head, Osh, 13 November.

[42] Interview, Tokmok, 10 December 2015.

[43] Interview, youth representative, Tokmok, 10 December 2015..

[44] Conversation, project consultant, Osh, 6 July 2017.

with whom projects are conducted may not have memories from the 2010 conflict or may not feel like they are in particular need to get trained on peace. Megoran et al. (2014: 14 ff.) have noted the feelings widespread especially among urban residents of Osh and Jalal-Abad, that peacebuilding projects conducted and/or funded by international actors were super-imposing, often in patronising ways, ideas of peace and harmony on people who did not feel like they needed any peacebuilding measures, at all. The peace- and tolerance-building of the TYCs has moved on from this problematic and limited approach not only in its more implicit emphasis on this goal, but also by persistently incorporating youth from the regions of Osh province. Stories of friendship and cooperation, like the setting up of a joint coal trading business between people in the Alai region and the Turan district of Osh[45], and the exceptional diversity of people working in TYC themselves[46], help to overcome stereotypes on the part of some people and foreground stories of personal transformation in other peacebuilding projects.[47] These stories, in turn, indicate that the original mission of the TYCs is still of significance and should be kept in sight. This is all the more important in light of the importance that the TYC project is given in relation to the perceived need to strengthen Kyrgyzstan's national ideology, which I will discuss in turn.

---

[45] As told by project consultants, conversation, Osh, 6 July 2017; 4 December 2015.

[46] The booklet lists all TYCs' golden ten members whose backgrounds range from sports (boxer, sportsman, fighter, karate champion) and artistic ones (artist, poet, musician, singer, dancer, *komus* [Kyrgyz string instrument] player) to political and student activist ones (school president, school parliament member, political party youth wing member, NGO chairwoman/-man), and of course including pupils and students.

[47] A story of how a young man from Chong Alai overcame his stereotypes is published by Saferworld under the title, 'From bias to cooperation – A personal transformation in Kyrgyzstan', n.d., accessed 04 September 2017, https://www.saferworld.org.uk/en-stories-of-change/from-bias-to-cooperation-a-a-personal-transformation-in-kyrgyzstan

VI.2.2 National ideology and the 'right path'

On different occasions, the TYC project was positioned vis-à-vis questions of national ideology and the idea of a 'right path' for individual and collective life courses and the development of Kyrgyzstan as a country. As responsible individuals with good outreach in their respective communities, TYC leaders and youth activists from across the country are very aware of the issues that Kyrgyzstan is facing in the areas of economic development (see V.2) and, correspondingly, the challenges that society needs to face up to in the social and educational sector. The repeated pronouncement of event organisers and funders that the young leaders can make a significant impact on the future of the country, or are the embodiment of the country's future itself serve as a good illustration of how TYC and other youth structure members are encouraged to think in national terms.[48] In this context, youth activists on the forum in Batken drew direct links between the social and political problems of the country and the insufficiently developed ideology and moral orientation of Kyrgyzstani society. One participant stated:

> We need make changes; now women drink and smoke, earlier there weren't such things
> [*ranshe togo ne bylo*]. Why are men not protecting their women and their country? We
> have to create jobs in Kyrgyzstan, so that women don't go in the wrong direction; we
> are doing dirty work on the streets; suicides are growing in number, there is a problem
> with upbringing [*vospitanie*]. … We need to preserve our national ideology [*sokhranit*

---

[48] On the forum in Batken, for instance, an OSCE representatives mentioned that the TYC project was a good possibility to lay a good foundation for the future of Kyrgyzstan' and, in the closing remarks, that 'you are the future of this country'. 11 and 13 September 2015. In a theme movie on the TYC project another OSCE staff mentions the possibility that TYC activists may become politicians or presidents, an imagination also shared by one girl interviewed in the same movie.

svoiu natsionalnuiu ideologiu] and not forget our history. We have to help the people

who are not on the right path… [49]

This statement, which initiated a wider discussion problems faced by youth in Kyrgyzstan, touches upon a number of problems, such as deteriorating social relations and role models and behaviours – such as men not living up to their alleged role of protecting women, drug consumption, and suicides – and indicates the possibility of solving these problems by helping those who are not on the 'right path' and by preserving national ideology and historical memory. Although the subsequent plenary discussion was not specifically in resolving this question, participants agreed that there was a problem with people 'embarking on the wrong path' (*nastaiut na nepravilnyi put*) that it was increasingly 'difficult to mobilise people' (*ochen slozhno sobirat ludei*) as spiritual values were apparently changing (*nashi dukhovnye tsennosti izmenilis*).[50] In further determining the signs of the general loss of ideology, people especially emphasised the rise of new Islamic practices: 'People forget their [culture], they wear a *hijab*, but this is Arabic clothing, why don't they wear some Kyrgyz clothing like the kalpak?'. Besides this recasting of the search for national ideology as an issues of 'traditional vs. non-traditional Islam' (see below), one participant from Jalal-Abad also argued that: 'The Kyrgyz language is part of our ideology, …, we should be proud of it; in Bishkek when someone speaks with a Southern dialogue, they relate to him like to a [*sart*], a word usually used for Uzbeks.' This ethno-nationalist framing (see IV.3.3), according to which maintaining national ideology is a matter of preserving Kyrgyz language, with other languages having a secondary role, was not widely disagreed with but corrected by the moderator of the discussion who stated that:

---

[49] Plenary session during youth forum in Batken, 11 September 2013.

[50] Plenary session during youth forum in Batken, 11 September 2013.

> Our national ideology is neither our language nor our clothing – it is justice [*spravedlivost*]! No matter what language we speak or what ethnicity we are of, justice is our national ideology, don't forget this!

Later on, another participant contradicted the opinion that Kyrgyz should be upheld as a language at the expense of non-Kyrgyz speakers, saying that '… nationalism is not good, so as regards the Kyrgyz language, already Aitmatov said, for me the Russian language is a mother tongue just as Kyrgyz'.

This outlines the general tension between the opinion that a stronger national ideology would be needed to improve the situation of people in Kyrgyzstan and that, on the other hand, emphasising Kyrgyz culture and language too much and at the expense of other cultures, ethnicities and ways of life, the overall goal of peace and tolerance among people may be jeopardised. Both the forum in Batken and other TYC events I attended and heard about demonstrated that harmonic conviviality is possible under the banner of Kyrgyzstan's national symbols. The participants of the Batken forum, for instance, collected money to drive to the local Manas Ata (Father Manas) monument and take photos for their memories. They also set up an entertainment event the same evening, where participants recited the Epic of Manas and other traditional Kyrgyz poetry, alongside contemporary sketches and performances.

Similarly, but on a greater scale, the programme of official celebrations in the city of Osh includes anniversaries which are of major importance for Kyrgyzstan as a nation and, in their celebrations, emphasise the history of the Kyrgyz very specifically. For instance, on the ceremony for the Anniversary of the city of Osh in late October 2015 (see illustration below), dozens of young people were mobilised to present different performances, with the core of the programme being the story of Kurmanjan Datka and the murder of her son, the historical sacrifice made to ensure decades of peace (see IV.3.4). This performance of the historically significant legend did not preclude, however, the action-laden shows of hip hop and breakdance

groups, which presented their moves to the beats of western RnB and Drum-n-Bass stars. While this event brought together Kyrgyz legends and dreams of modern life and self-expression on the Lenin square in front of the mayor's office, the adjacent Lenin street and the square in front of the theatre (*dramteatr*) hosted a farmer's market, an arts exhibition and *borsok*[51] festival. With the market hosting stalls representing most towns of Osh province and the *borsok* competition including all districts of the city of Osh, the events gave a genuine display of the diversity of people, traditions and culture living in and around Osh, but also of the things uniting them such as specific products, in which the towns in the periphery have specialised or the *borsok*, which has been baked by all groups inhabiting Osh and its environs for centuries. The TYCs' participation in the Osh Anniversary celebration and other 'festivals of friendship' and similar events[52], thus attest to the fact that Kyrgyzstani national symbolism and the implicit reinvigoration of Kyrgyz traditions are commensurable with both displays of modern hip hop and youth culture and the diversity of ethnicities and cultures of Osh and its environs.

---

[51] Central Asian fried dough specialty.

[52] A city-wide 'festival of friendship' has been held practically every year since 2010, as the following headlines indicate (all accessed 5 September 2017): Aimak: В городе Ош прошел Фестиваль Дружбы [Festival of Friendship held in Osh], 20 March 2015, http://aimak.kg/ru/fotoreportazh/3134-v-gorode-osh-proshel-festival-druzhby.html; Turmush: В Оше в микрорайоне «Амир-Тимур» пройдет фестиваль дружбы [A festival of friendship is held in the Osh microdistrict 'Amir Temur'], 25 March 2014, http://ik.turmush.kg/ru/news:52259; idem: Фестиваль дружбы молодежи различных национальностей прошел в Оше [Festival of friendship among youth of different nationalities held in Osh], 17 June 2013, http://jalal-abad.turmush.kg/ru/news:43123.

Illustration 6.2: Peacebuilding and national symbols, author photography & facebook

Top left: Traditional dance performance, Lenin square, Day of the city of Osh celebration
Bottom left: Group photo of the national youth forum at Manas Ata monument, Batken
Right: Picture from the *borsok* festival in front of the Kyrgyz drama theatre, Osh
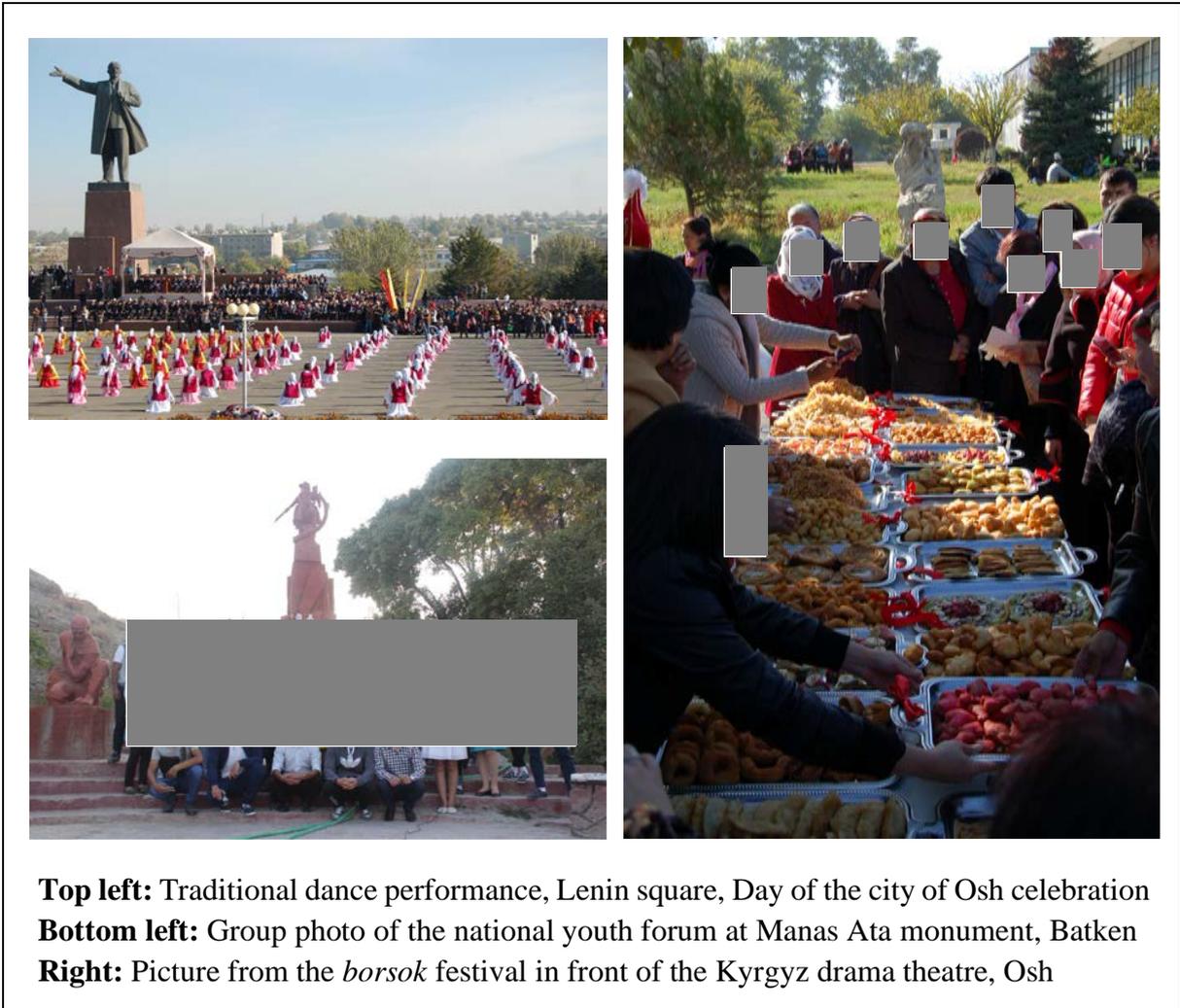
Different interviewees from TYCs stated very explicitly their and their peers' motivation based on patriotic feelings and corresponding desires to develop the country of their town and community. One TYC head, when I asked him how come people were ready to organise all the different events in their free time, explained that:

> Well, there are some patriots among them [smiles]. After school, they all come on their own initiative, we do stuff, they are already like patriots. Of course, we need [to cover a wider] range of interest [*nado v krugozornom*].[53]

---

[53] Interview, Osh, 4 December 2015.

Another ordinary member explained that he was joining the TYC activities because he personally wanted to 'change my country' and 'make a contribution [*dat polzu*]'.[54] The ex-golden ten member from a western district described the important contribution of TYCs for the development of the city of Osh as follows:

> Our goal was to unite the city and to develop it … and I personally did not see such [ethnic] disagreements because I was not only in TYCs but was also active in other organisations … [enumerates organisations] … and I knew that TYCs develop the city by strengthening it and creating interethnic accord. In the team of the business club, for instance, we did not have such an agenda …[55]

In this sense, participation in TYC work and its building of peace and tolerance is seen as an act of patriotism and contribution to building the Kyrgyzstani nation by youth activists in Osh and beyond. In these practices and activities, discourses emphasising Kyrgyz tradition and defence against external influence, which can be situated in the 'political of sovereignty' imaginary, can co-exist with ideas of multi-cultural, civic nationalism and displays of pop culture and youth sub-culture akin to the creativity and self-expression in the Western liberal peace imaginary. Any incompatibilies between these discourses is suspended and temporarily overcome because performance, interaction and expression are the prime focus of Territorial Youth Councils.[56] While this makes a key contribution to educating and socialising tolerant and diversity-oriented people, the approach is not exempt from questions regarding its suitability and sufficiency for helping youth overcome challenges arising from the wider socio-semiotic

---

[54] Interview, Osh, 4 December 2015.

[55] Interview, Osh, 3 December 2015.

[56] Another incompatibility was brought up by a TYC who added his personal opinion during an conversation saying that 'see, our people does not like this LGBT and similar people. Here, no one is forcing their opinion upon you', which hints at the perceived intrusiveness of LGBT discourse in Kyrgyzstan. Interestingly, the topic was not brought up during any other interview with TYCs. Osh, 13 November 2015.

environment. When attending a meeting of a TYC in the southern outskirts of the Osh, during which the upcoming Festival of Friendship (*Festival druzhby*) was planned, a good deal of the conversation revolved around the question what, apart from the festival, could really aide the development of local youth.[57] The concrete issues and problems faced by youth and TYCs' and youth activists' ideas and attempts to tackle them will be discussed in turn.

VI.2.3 Tackling concrete problems: Racketeering and poverty

Events and activities situated in or close to the official discourses on nation-building, interethnic friendship and tolerance are the easiest and most straightforward way for TYCs to promote their goals. However, given their close focus on communities and task of 'identifying problems [*vyiavlenia problem*] and contributing to their solutions'[58], TYCs also work to tackle the issues faced by youth in their respective districts and in the country at large. In the following, I focus on the problems racketeering and poverty, in relation to which youth have appeared to be vulnerable and gravely affected, but were also constructed as concrete source of problems by law enforcement organs and other state bodies. The various degrees to which TYCs have proved to be able and successful in dealing with the problems indicate the challenges posed by these and similar issues.

Some progress had been reached in analysing and devising measures against racketeering in schools and youth milieus of different communities. Already in 2014, TYCs in Osh had realised events to tackle such issues together with the local administration, schools and Inspectors for Youth Affairs (*Inspektor po delam nesovershennoletnykh* or *IDN*) in the police. In a project on the problem of 'Inter-group clashes among youth and racketeering in schools', a 'Dialogue centre' for discussion of the reasons for these phenomena had been established,

---

[57] Participatory observation at TYC meeting, Osh, 13 November 2015.

[58] Interview, head of CYA, Osh, 19 November 2015.

meetings with law enforcement agencies organised, and even an excursion was arranged for 'pupils who [potentially] connected to of informal leaders [*imeiushikh vliiania neformalnykh liderov*]' (Info booklet: 22-23). The TYC head from a central district in Osh reported that racketeering was the number one problem (*pervaia problema*) in his district's schools and how, thanks to his group's efforts to promote moderation, 'some pupils who are racket leaders […] already listen and it's already interesting for them.'[59] He explained that especially sport events were useful in his team's attempts to make racketeers refrain from their practices. By now many of the racketeers had become members of the TYC, because knowing what kind of events were being organised by this entity they started 'considering different things in life' (*soobrazhenie drugogo*). A similar, and more detailed, story of a conversion of racketeers and youth gang leaders was told by the TYC head from the rural district of Osh:

> In my TYC we have thirteen villages [*sel*] and all the time there are fights between youth of different villages. So, together with neighbourhood inspectors and *IDN*s, we set up seminars for the informal leaders … and we went to [a town] in Jalal-Abad province, where they had a good time [*otdykhali*], became friends and learnt new things. So, when they came back home they had already become friends.[60]

Asked what exactly they told the racket group leaders to convince them to come to such a summer camp, the youth council head further explained that they approached them as 'very active young people' whom they sought to recruit for a camp for active people and for the development of new ideas for youth. As the different leaders and the people 'managing different schools' (*smotriashie shkoly*, lit. 'looking after schools') became friends, the number of

---

[59] Interview, Osh, 4 December 2015. A project consultant confirmed that former racketeers and 'gangsters' [*bandity*] had indeed written quite interesting project proposals; conversation, Osh, 6 July 2017.

[60] Interview, TYC head, Osh, 13 November 2015.

physical fights significantly decreased or, if they happened at all, fights were not that grave (*ne tak slozhno*), as the activist told.

While these success cases benefited from good cooperation on the part of law enforcement agencies and financial and organisational support of donors and NGOs, this situation can vary considerably with time and geographical location, even from district to district. One indication of this is the experience of the 'Youth and Security' group on the forum in Batken, who, when trying to further work on their solution to racketeering, were being told by the participating major of the local police that there were no registered facts of racketeering in the area. When discussing the oft-observed issue that police can apply psychological pressure against racket gang members and have abused their powers in the past, the major again replied that 'in Batken province such facts were not being recorded [*takie fakty ne registrirovalis*] … it might be that such things happen on rare occasions when police want to find perpetrators [*vinovnogo*] … but if people have well educated lawyers they can easily find their way out of custody.' This reference to official statistics served to slow down the discussion but, given the likelihood that people abused by the police might simply not file complaints for lack of competent bodies or fear or reprise, the young participants of the group ended up agreeing, although more implicitly, that the abuse of powers by police officers was a problem both in relation to racketeering and other cases of violence and crime.

A reluctant position of law enforcement and other state organs is also important to consider in the final issue which appears to be underlying the two above and other problems TYCs are struggling against. While I have glossed the issue as 'poverty', this must be understood in its different nuances and aspects which can loosely be group into:

- First, the general effects and social ills emanating from poverty and socio-economic hardship;

- second, the social and psychological effects of migration and other attempts of coping with the situation; and,

- third, further entrenchment of this situation through the destitution and deprivation of rights and basic services affecting young people.

Especially the first two aspects are very present in the social sphere across the country as well as in TYCs. The TYC head from the rural district of Osh, for instance, told that her TYC team demanded for a 'crisis centre' to be set up, which would offer psychological help, especially to women who were in dire need of support given the rising percentage of suicides.[61] Similarly, the police major from Batken reported that suicides, especially among children from badly-off families (*maloimushikhsia semei*), were a big problem, alongside children being left by parents who go to work abroad.[62] The social work expert from Tokmok shared similar experiences about the trend in the deterioration of the family as an institution:

> The institution of the family as such does not exist anymore … Now, where you look, you see lone mothers bringing up children, or lone fathers, or the parents went somewhere the child stays behind alone and becomes a social orphan, right? Or the parents leave the child altogether. What's this? To tell the truth, this kind of thing is very developed here now. … in the [municipal] Commission for Children Affairs we had nine cases, and all these nine cases were from disadvantages families [*neblagopoluchnye semi*], all of them! The children don't go to school because the family is badly off [*nuzhdaetsa*], because there is no birth certificate or because the father and mother do not have passports. … And then mothers and fathers, they don't have any upbringing [*vospitania*], no education [*obrazovania*], parents give their child to someone random, it doesn't matter at all what's with their son, he's being brought up

---

[61] TYC head, Osh, 13 November 2015.

[62] Youth forum, Batken, 12 September 2015.

by some strangers or a grandmother who is eighty years old, we had all of these cases.

So [in these cases] we can say that as such the institution of the family does not exist.[63]

This shows how the deterioration of families is associated, on the one hand, with parents' attempts to cope with economic hardship through labour migration and delegation of upbringing and provision roles, but is increasingly conditioned by social destitution and individuals' and entire families' vanishing from the registers of welfare institutions and the state altogether. Under the theme 'The violation of rights of young brides and the break-up of young families', TYCs set up a theatre play to raise awareness about the way in which negative family relations and factors like alcoholism or unemployment can lead to broken homes, while also discussing, in a roundtable, the possibilities of mitigating this trend (Booklet: 29). Analytically, participants on the forum in Batken framed this issue especially as one of children and youth not knowing their rights and ways to (re-) claim their dignity. This point was raised especially in regard to 'social orphans' left behind by their parents and relatives and living in state boarding homes (*internaty*) with only 500 soms per month allocated for their needs – a sum barely sufficient to cover a week's costs. This situation is exacerbated by informal payments requested during hospital visits, even though they were entitled to free medical treatment. The participants thus suggested rights education (*pravovedenie*) in the form of a school subject as a way to counter the entrenchment of the precarity of socially vulnerable children through the withholding of their basic rights. Poverty and destitution as fundamental challenges faced by youth and the Kyrgyzstani population at large both directly affect the TYCs and indirectly condition the problems they deal with, such as family and upbringing problems, domestic violence and conflicts among youth.

---

[63] Interview, Tokmok, 10 December 2015.

The instruments and capacities of TYCs to address these issues were, as this survey shows, often limited to reacting to situations of neediness or conflicts and criminal practices like racketeering, which are deeply intertwined with these socioeconomic dynamics. Furthermore, as became clear in regard to the issue of religious extremism, young people are prone to endorse and reproduce the actions taken by law enforcement and state security organs while insufficiently considering the root causes of such issues.[64] On the other hand, discussions on the youth forum in Batken also brought up some important nuances and facts regarding radicalisation and non-traditional religion among youth.[65] The TYCs' way of dealing with the socio-economic issues in their challenging environment is discussed in the subsequent part.

---

[64] The degree to which youth are affected by non-traditional religion and specifically radical tendencies within Islamic thought, has become a major concern for state and security actors in recent years (Dyner et al. 2015: 5-6), especially in Kyrgyzstan. The importance of the issue was not only identified by participants on the forum in Batken, but also emphasised in the speech of the local *aksakal* court chairman who outlined the issue of religious freedom and radicalism. His juxtaposition of disorientation and lack of education, due to which people join different non-traditional religious sects, with a 'good path [*khoroshiy put*]'[64] shows how the discourse on the 'right path', identified in the above section on national ideology, also runs through discussions on religion in Kyrgyzstan, and specifically the confrontation between traditional Islam, the historically established Hanafi Maskhab which is often constructed as 'good', and, on the other hand, non-traditional Islam adhering to more orthodox, textual interpretations of the Quran and situated in Salafi and Shiia sects (while Hanafi Maskhab is Sunni) (see IV.3, Louw 2013).

[65] The following important points were raised: First, there is no religious education (*religovedenie*) (and theology) subject in schools, which points to the need to create such a subject for both schools and universities. Second, the wearing of the hijab is not allowed in schools, but a law to regulate this is missing. Participants suggested creating a common uniform for girls who want to wear a hijab and face the problem of the ban. Other participants pointed out that increased control, oversight and regulation would be largely ineffective given the fact that it was often parents who made (or forced, *zastavliaiut*) their kids wear religious clothing and failed to tell them how to correctly practice and relate to religious matters. Another participant pointed out that this problem is linked to the issue of early marriages discussed above (V.5.3), where parents often had a prime role in arranging.

VI.2.4 Self-help and solidarity

There are two discernible strands of thinking among TYC activists as to how poverty and socio-economic hardship in Kyrgyzstan can be dealt with. The first strand espouses the idea that these challenges can be overcome and dealt with through working on and improving oneself to be better equipped to make it in life. Although this stance does not deny the possibility of help and support being offered to those in need, it, emphasises the necessity of basic education, knowledge, skills and initiative. This idea of self-help and self-improvement has remarkable significance and resonance among young people working in the TYCs (but also in Kyrgyzstan more generally). One example is the statement of one participant of the youth forum in Batken when reasoning on how to overcome problems in the work of the TYCs: 'One needs start with oneself and to change oneself [*Nado nachninat s sebia, nado sebia meniat*].'[66] This approach is also encouraged by the perception that, while state provision of resources and services may be insufficient, people are simply lacking the right education to fill in the employment positions that actually are available.[67] In light of this 'human resources problem' (*kadrovaia problema*), other forum participants put forward the well-known quote 'We should not only ask what the state does, rather, what can we do for the state?'. On the closing conference, two of the more successful TYC (ex-) heads put forward this self-initiative, entrepreneurial ethos as a key to escape the problems faced by youth. Making references to the 'people who built today's America' such as Steve Jobs, they argue that becoming a successful leader and entrepreneur was mainly a question of will, as the opportunities available for young people nowadays had been unprecedented [*ranshe ne byli takie vozmozhnosti*].[68]

---

[66] Batken, 11 September 2015.

[67] Youth forum, Batken, 11 September 2015.

[68] National closing conference, Jannat Resort, Chuy province, 28 October.

This and other presentations promoted what could be called an entrepreneurial model of personhood, which has gained popularity among youth in Kyrgyzstan. The increasing popularity of studies at the Faculty of Business and Management, numerous programmes and events facilitate young people's self-development, and the annually organised *Jashtar Kemp* ('Youth camp') showcasing successful business(wo)men and their personal development paths are testimony to this new trend.[69] This thinking is very attractive for its focus on empowerment and the possibility to realise one's own ideas and projects, and to become successful in life without being dependent on others. On the other hand, this 'liberal' and entrepreneurial approach runs the risk of homogenising people's experiences in life and their unequal socio-economic backgrounds, recent family histories and other factors that make their attempts to self-improve and realise their potential less successful than those of other people. Under certain circumstances, people who are affected in the described way may not be aware of this situation (or may deny this fact outright), which could render them susceptible to interpret failure or relatively lesser success in their endeavours as being caused by personal insufficiencies, thus causing disappointment or worse. The same individuals who had presented the idea of taking Steve Jobs and other entrepreneurs as role models admitted in later group work that people in their neighbourhood were still forced to go to work in Russia, even if they were very talented. So, while self-improvement and entrepreneurialism were seen as ways to make the best out of the situation, the overwhelming feelings about the socio-economic issues face by youth in Kyrgyzstan and the massive fluctuation they created in the TYCs in Osh and other youth bodies, was one of frustration and desperation.

Here the second, complementary narrative comes into play: solidarity and empathy among young people, and initiative to help those in need were another strong agenda of TYCs

---

[69] For more on the *Jashtar Kemp*, see http://youthofosh.kg/kg/2015/12/24/zhashtar-kemp-2012/.

and the individuals working in them. Most relevant in this regard are TYCs' involvement in solving problems with water access or the regular cleaning of different parts of Osh; as well as the setting up of 'social taxis' [*socialnye taksi*] in an eastern district of the town.[70] The expert from the social department from Tokmok affirmed that youth nowadays are 'aware that it is necessary to help each other, and the poor, and the old.' She enumerated countless examples of organisations and initiatives helping elderly, homeless, poor families, and school children collecting money for their needy classmates. Similarly, the Tokmok youth delegation on the forum in Batken demonstrated how for them, 'everything starts from solidarity and tolerance' as they and their partners in the regions of Chui province worked to support children's houses and had even opened a canteen (*stolovuiu*), whose profits were spent on charity purposes.[71] The head and deputy head of a central district TYC were giving their interview in the headquarters of the organisation they worked for as professionals, which specialised in supporting disabled people for whom state support was insufficient if available, at all.[72] This solidarity and charity aspect of the work of TYCs and their members is a critical complement to the self-help and entrepreneurial narrative examined above. Some interviewees put forward explicit criticism vis-à-vis the latter, remarking that 'there are some people who join [TYCs] only to develop themselves, right? … Just to develop themselves and one's thinking somehow, and when you're done you try to get a job, right.'[73], or indicating that some people were working 'only into their own pocket [*na svoiu karmanu*]' to develop their own business and their profession for enhancing their own life.[74] Another critical voice on the forum in Batken remarked that:

---

[70] Interview with TYC head, Osh, 13 November 2015.

[71] Group presentation, Batken, 11 September 2015.

[72] Interview with TYC head, Osh, 13 November 2015

[73] Interview, ex-golden ten member, Osh, 4 December 2015.

[74] Presentation during the national closing conference, Jannat resort, 28 October 2015.

> … usually you have egoistic people who think about themselves, maybe even one day we will be corrupted [*mozhet byt my i budem korrupcionerami*], we need to pay attention to people around us, in our community [*nado obratit vnimanie cheloveku vokrug, v svoem soobshestve*].

This is not to discredit the idea of self-help and –development altogether, however. Rather, given the specific junction that the different people at their lives were at – the end of their school years and entering studies or professional lives – the idea of developing their own skill sets, abilities to lead teams and projects and to gather and enhance their experience and knowledge is an indispensable part of the project. The combination of this idea of personal growth and experience with empathy about the challenges and hardships faced by peers and society at large, strongly bound many of the young people in TYCs and other youth institutions to put all their time and effort into the improvement of youth policy and politics in Kyrgyzstan and their respective community. Although this dedication was rewarded with a good standing with teachers and professors or follow-up jobs in the NGO sector[75], it also put the youth leaders in precarious positions when it came to finishing implementation and reporting, finding successors or lobbying sustainable changes in the structures and practices of local government and other institutions. These problems were extensively stressed during the closing conference and taken up in the work of the TYCs in the year 2016, which was put under the theme of institutional development and sustainability.[76] In the final section of this chapter, I will discuss the question of whether and how TYCs and related actors are able to bring about substantive change to the situation faced by young people in Kyrgyzstan.

---

[75] As indicated by the same individuals cited in the two previous notes.

[76] Conversation, consultant, Osh, 6 July 2017.

VI.3 A voice of or vis-à-vis youth? Opportunities and limitations of youth politics in Kyrgyzstan

While the previous section has focused on the concrete practices undertaken by TYCs and discourses forming in this milieu, I now re-focus back on national level to critically discuss the question whether and how the problems that youth policy actors encounter can and have to be tackled in more systematic ways, which are possible to initiate only on the national level. After first considering attempts and developments towards the institutionalisation of the TYCs and complementary bodies in order to develop such a more systematic approach (VI.4.1), I will show how the logics of youth policy in Kyrgyzstan appear to be captured in a post-liberal trajectory, where decisions and agendas are not decided by recipients and experts, but more so by a combination of mobilisations of the latter and business cycle of international donor funding more generally.

Further developments and limits of TYCs and related initiatives

As already indicated in the previous section, the problems faced by the TYCs and their fellow activists across the country often appeared to be too entrenched and omnipresent to solve them through the local initiatives, which could merely attempt to alleviate present trends in poverty and social destitution and related issues of racketeering and gang violence and other forms of conflict. In the final days of my research on the TYCs in Osh, more and more reference was made to the upcoming inauguration of a youth parliament for the city of Osh which, according to one TYC head, would perhaps be more effective in solving problems on the city level as it would enter into direct dialogue with the city's parliament (*gorodskii kenesh*).[77] This was affirmed by the CYA head who said that, even though the parliament would not have an official status or any ways to enforce its influence, it was helpful to have this group of active youth who

---

[77] Conversation, TYC head, Osh, 13 November 2015.

could bring to attention issues affecting specific communities or the city as a whole and who could, based on research and analyses, make recommendations for legislation and normative acts to the city parliament and mayor's office.[78] However, besides the opening of the youth parliament, little is known about the results it has reached and recommendations made.

The limited impact of the Osh youth parliament may also be linked to the fact that the city's administration was involved in multiple projects to improve the performance of municipal services and security of inhabitants, which created a positive impression and a feeling that there is not much more to do for a youth parliament. The best example is the OshCity App project supported by USAID and DFID, which offers a mobile phone app through which people can file any concerns or complaints online for everyone to see.[79] One year after the inauguration, the city's mayor Kadyrbaev summarised that: '[With this app] you have all problems of the city and the reactions of the mayor's office and municipal services at one sight. It is very practical in helping us to keep track of the issues that concern our citizens and to efficiently react to them.'[80] The map was introduced as part of the project «8x13», which is aimed at improving eight key municipal services in the areas of transport and infrastructure, energy and utilities and health and cleaning in the by now thirteen territorial councils or districts of the city. With the NGO 'Youth of Osh' as main implementing partner, this initiative presents a significant success and impact of local youth. While the project and its visibility can thus be seen as an indirect success of TYCs' initiatives to build a peaceful, tolerant and more

---

[78] Interview, Osh, 19 November 2015; the same mission was stated during the inauguration of the youth parliament in late December 2015. See Vechernyi Bishkek, В Оше состоялось открытие молодежного парламента [The opening of the youth parliament has been held in Osh], 21 December 2015, accessed 24 August 2017, http://www.vb.kg/doc/331338

[79] See http://www.map.oshcity.kg/

[80] Youth of Osh, В Оше запустили мобильное приложение для приема онлайн обращений [In Osh, a mobile app has been released for filing online requests], 28 May 2017, accessed 24 August 2017, http://youthofosh.kg/2017/05/28/v-oshe-zapustili-mobilnoe-prilozhenie-dlya-priema-onlajn-obrashhenij/

cooperative environment, it also needs to be acknowledged that it absorbs airtime, public attention and thus also capacity and willingness on part of the mayor's office or national institutions, to listen to youth-specific problems and challenges. With the local administration demonstrating genuine interest in hearing about and solving in people's concerns, can it be argued that there are fundamental issues that the city administration of republican level institutions should have to address?

In this light, rather than scaling up the initiatives from the TYCs into other bodies, the recent trajectory of the initiative was more one aiming at further consolidation or maintenance of the established status. The TYCs' support by Iret and the OSCE officially ended in autumn 2016, which also marked the point at which TYCs were 'solely' – i.e. also in terms of funding and capacity-building support – 'in the hand of the mayor's office'.[81] One measure still taken in 2016 was to halve the number of TYC heads who work as ordinary staff members in the CYA: instead of one staff per TYC, the CYA now employs 6 staff for the by now 13 TYCs, each of whom manage the work of two TYCs. Accordingly, the salary for each TYC manager was doubled and can more realistically support their livelihoods than the 2,100 soms previously received by each TYC head. This new arrangement also significantly centralises the procedures and communication channels, however, and puts yet more pressure on the TYC managers and their deputies to recruit, train and coordinate TYC members for the organisation of events and activities. Overall, it appears as if the establishment and institutionalisation of TYCs in Osh marks an achievement that cannot be surpassed by further institutional changes in the local administration or youth-led influence on the city's policies. Youth NGOs mobilising donor support and focusing on issues of common and more pragmatic interest – like Youth of Osh did with the OshCity project – appears the more viable pathway at this point.

---

[81] Conversation, project consultant, 6 July 2017.

This leads to a final glance beyond the 'success case' of Osh. As already mentioned above, activists in the other provincial capitals of Batken and Jalal-Abad had successfully lobbied the establishment of Committees for Youth Affairs under their mayor's administrations. Besides the establishment of TYCs in these major cities, one question of special interest concerns the building of youth institution in regional centres and the country side. In this regard, the project consultants pointed out that youth centres were created in Uzgen, Kara-Kuldja and other larger towns of Osh province. Especially Uzgen, about 30 kilometres north of Osh, was seen as example of success, as its activists had benefited from internships in NGOs (Info booklet: 27) and subsequently, with the help of Iret, Youth of Osh and different individuals, successfully lobbied the creation of a Committee for Youth Affairs.[82] These institutional developments did not automatically mitigate the challenges and hardships faced by youth in Kyrgyzstan, however.

On the national level, a project titled 'Youth parliament' is run on an annual basis and aims to involve young leaders into the 'activities of the state through interaction … with the *Jogorku Kenesh* [Parliament] and other state organs'.[83] Apart from a few press releases on the project itself, the parliament is not making a contribution to public debate and is largely focused on the 'formation of an active civic position' among youth and their 'activation for active participation'[84]; processes which are confined to the non-public sessions of the project. Another recent project titled 'Generation of Democracy' (Ru. *Pokolenie demokratii*, Kg. *Demokratiia*

---

[82] Interview, project consultant, 4 December 2015.

[83] Nazgul Joldosheva, director of the NGO, which implemented the project. Kabar: В Бишкеке стартовал проект «Молодежный Парламент 2016» [The project 'Youth Parliament 2016' started in Bishkek], 29 Spetember 2016, accessed 24 August 2017, http://old.kabar.kg/rus/society/full/111772

[84] AKI Press, Фонд Поддержки Демократии» сообщает о начале проекта «Молодежный Парламент [Foundation for the Support of Democracy informs on the opening of the "Youth Parliament"]; 21 June 2016; accessed 24 August 2017; http://pressrelease.akipress.org/unews/un_post:7794

munuu) organised televised competitive debates between the youth wings of established political parties.[85] This format aimed at 'improving the culture of constructive dialogue and open societal discussion of different issues and draft laws' and at a more concise outlining of the ideological positionings of the political parties by their young representatives, tomorrow's professional politicians and thus, similar to the 'Youth Parliament', appears more as a model project for youth participation in politics rather than a concrete mouthpiece. This largely rhetorical self-positioning of youth vis-à-vis state actors and society at large leads to the question as to which actors should represent progressive interests among young people in an effective manner. The discussion of the post-liberal constitution of youth policy and politics in Kyrgyzstan in the next sub-section shows how such a policy is still in the process of formation, which projects ideas about a systematic representation of youth interests into the distant future.

The state, the NGO sector and Kyrgyzstan's post-liberal youth policy

A systematic state policy in the youth sector appears to be lacking, as initiatives as initiatives have been conceived in piecemeal and ineffective fashion. In late December 2016, a network of NGOs working in the youth sphere uniting under the banner 'Youth politics in action'[86] filed a declaration (*obrashenie*) towards the president, government and parliament (*Jogorku Kenesh*) of the Kyrgyz Republic, asking them to initiate the drafting of a 'Conception for Youth Development 2025', the formation of a youth policy working group and the creation of a

---

[85] Kloop.kg, Публичная дискуссия и конструктивный спор. Зачем нужны молодежные политические дебаты? [Public discussion and constructive arguing. Why do we need young politicians' debates?], 06 July 2017, accessed 04 September 2017, https://kloop.kg/blog/2017/07/06/publichnaya-diskussiya-konstruktivnyj-spor-i-podderzhka-molodyh-politikov-zachem-nuzhny-molodezhnye-politicheskie-debaty/ The project is organised by the Central Asia section of the International Debate Education Association (IDEA), the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the media platform Kloop with the support of USAID.

[86] *Set molodezhnykh organizatsii 'Molodezhnaia politika v deistvii'.*

Council for Youth Affairs under the government.[87] The declaration pointed out that the realisation of youth policy has remained 'on a low level of effectiveness [*effektivnost ee realizatsii ostaetsia na ochen nizkom urovne*]' and that a 'tendency of extreme disinterest on the part of authorities' had led to the relegation of urgent concerns to the margins of internal affairs.[88] Given this neglect, the organisations demanded a 'targeted and consistent process of structuring youth policy' including the drafting of the above Conception and the development of a 'systematic approach in realising youth policy'. Experts from youth organisations and local government I spoke to explained this situation in more detail.

According to the senior specialist on education, culture, sports and youth policy in Tokmok, a more systematic approach and competent institutions had existed during the reign of the first post-independence president Askar Akaev, but were dismantled in the course of the two revolutions in 2005 and 2010.[89] While she had worked in the Committee for Youth Affairs on the level of Chui Province and overseen such committees in each of the regions of the province, this separate structure with its staff and resources was gradually dissolved and integrated with other educational, social and sports committees. 'The programme that is working today on the state level', she compared, 'is not really a programme. It does not work as such. That I can tell you openly. It is only a nominal programme.' The only ordinary staff besides herself competent on youth policy, she, added, did not have any further workers or structures that he could command. This left the work with youth to be done by Non-Governmental Organisations and the Youth Coordination Council mentioned earlier (VI.2.1). The mayor's office regularly helped the youth council and the different cooperating organisations with intermittent financial support, but this provided a much more frail basis than

---

[87] Institute for Youth Development, 'Declaration from youth to the president of the Kyrgyz Republic', 25 December 2016, accessed 24 August 2017, http://dr.kg/ru/news/view/id/62

[88] See note 86 above.; citing the White Book on Education in the Kyrgyz Republic.

[89] Interview, Tokmok, 10 December 2015.

the programme-based funding available in earlier years. 'So, do you know how they get their funding?' the expert asked. 'They write projects for the OSCE and UNDP. I sometimes think that the OSCE and UNDP understand our youth better than we ourselves. I already raised this concern on the ministry level, that's what I can say.' Therefore, although some symbolic support was given by the local administration, youth policy in this town and the country as such is financially largely dependent on international donors and, in terms of the design and implementation of projects, on local NGOs and the activists who retain a precarious, non-official status and corresponding dependence on the goodwill of their partners. The sentiment that international organisations appear to 'know better' and care more about Kyrgyzstani youth than the state itself was voiced on several occasions.[90]

A similar situation of state expertise and capacity being exceeded by a tandem of national NGOs and international donors support appeared to be the case on the national level. The then head of the Institute for Youth Development stated that, even if youth was a cross-cutting theme that required addressing in a range of spheres such as health, education or defence, and was thus a complex matter, state youth policy was insufficient.[91] He elaborated that nor the State Agency for Youth Affairs, Physical Culture and Sport (State Agency or *GAMFKS* hereafter)[92] nor its predecessors were able to provide a clear line for youth policy that coordinated the different relevant ministries and did not manage to provide the vertical connection from the national to the municipal level, where an appropriate framework and conditions for conducting youth work were largely lacking, as well. The third aspect of this

---

[90] On the youth forum in Batken, an inspector for youth affairs remarked that many youth problems 'are not solved on the state level', while one of the forum organisers and TYC project consultants added the following to her concluding words: 'Thank you that you support our youth more than our state; this is from my heart (*eto ot dushy*).'

[91] Interview, Bishkek, 9 December 2015.

[92] *Gosudarstvennoe agenstvo po delam mkolodezhi, fisicheskoi kultury i sporta pri pravitelstve Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki (GMFKS).*

insufficiency, according to him, was a strategic basis which would 'outline clear indicators according to which we are supposed to reach [goals], … so that we can move, within the next years, towards a goal we are supposed to reach and can allocate all our resources'. Instead of taking over this coordinating and dialogical role, however, the State Agency focused more on concrete projects and thus duplicated the efforts of numerous civil society organisations, making the interviewee wonder: 'Why do we conduct trainings, and then they conduct trainings? We do a forum, they do a forum. It's not clear who is responsible for what. And all the while, they do not finance others, they finance themselves and realise their own events. We don't understand this.'

Apart from this critical stance, however, positive changes were effected in the months after the interview. In a decree from 12 December 2016[93] handed the competency for youth policy to the above-mentioned State Agency, enabling a more coordinated and holistic youth policy.[94] This transfer of competencies also brought the inclusion of the Institute for Youth Development (IYD) and other youth NGOs into an in an expert group to co-determine the conceptualisation and measures in the design of national youth policy.[95] At the same time, the IYD continued to mobilise support and dialogue among youth organisations in a National Forum of Youth Centres and Youth Houses which served as a 'new communication platform for the uniting of all stakeholders in the spheres of youth policy and youth work'[96] and,

---

[93] 'On the optimisation of the structure of the State Agency on Youth Affairs, Physical Culture and Sport under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic', accessed 4 September 2017, http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/98710

[94] Institute for Youth Development, Для совершенствования нормативно-правовой базы образована экспертная рабочая группа по делам молодежи [Expert group on youth affairs formed for the improvement of a legal-normative basis], 17 February 2017, accessed 04 September 2017, http://www.for.kg/news-410136-ru.html

[95] See previous note and IYD new about the first expert group meeting on 14 February 2017: http://dr.kg/ru/news/po-iniciative-instituta-razvitiya-molodezhi-byla-sozdana-ekspertnaya-rabochaya-gruppa-po-delam

[96] Idem, Сегодня в Бишкеке стартовал республиканский форум молодежных центров и домов молодежи [Today an all-republican forum of youth centres and houses of youth

furthermore, in public hearings on a draft law 'On the basics of state youth policy' across the entire country.[97] The Institute has also demonstrated its expertise in training youth work experts: As part of a project funded by the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), its experts are running courses for young leaders to get state certificates enabling them to work as specialist for youth affairs (*spetsialist po delam molodezhy*) and, furthermore, additional qualification courses for civil servants working in the youth sphere at the Academy of State Administration under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic (*AGUPKR*).[98]

The efforts of the network 'Youth policy in action' appear to have borne fruits, perhaps benefitting from the political business cycle which foresees presidential elections in autumn. In August 2017, Prime Minister Jeenbekov signed the 'Programme for the development of youth policy for the years 2017-2020', which, as demanded by the youth NGO representatives, gives the central role for coordinating the design and implementation of this programme to the *GAMFKS* and prescribes a 'systematic approach of state administration organs and their partners'.[99] This appears to be a deserved victory for the youth NGO initiative and a good basis for the development of a more holistic approach in the youth sphere. On the other hand, the fact that NGOs appeared better equipped in terms of know-how and drew on the backing of donors

commenced in Bishkek], 21 September 2016, accessed 04 September 2017, http://dr.kg/ru/news/view/id/466

[97] Idem, Законопроект «Об основах государственной молодежной политики» доработают с активным вовлечением молодежи Кыргызстана [The draft law 'On the basics of the state youth policy' is finalised with the active involvement of the youth of Kyrgyzstan], 25 December 2016, accessed 04 September 2017, http://dr.kg/ru/news/view/id/434

[98] Idem, В Бишкеке начились курсы по повышению квалификации молодых лидеров и специалистов по делам молодежи [Courses for additional qualification of young leaders and spcecialists on youth affairs commenced in Bishkek], 15 August 2017, accessed 04 September 2017, http://dr.kg/ru/news/v-bishkeke-nachalis-kursy-po-povysheniyu-kvalifikacii-molodyh-liderov-i-specialistov-po-delam

[99] State Agency for Youth Affairs, Physical Culture and Sport under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, Подписана программа Развития молодежной политики на 2017-2020 годы [Programme for development of youth policy for the years 2017 – 2020 signed], 27 August 2017, accessed 04 Spetember 2017, http://sport.gov.kg/news/view/idnews/2530

in lobbying the support of the government and *GAMFKS* for their initiatives, the prospects for realising a more holistic youth policy and receiving state budget support in doing so appear limited and dependent on the continuation of these mobilisation practices. The fact that the small successes discussed above were reached with significant societal mobilisation but also against the background of donor support for youth sector projects adds to the perspective of a post-liberal trajectory of politics. Thus, decisions about policy are not made in accordance with voters' and interest groups' initiatives alone but also depend on the political-economic climate and whether and how it favours initiatives in certain sectors with investments.

VI.4   Discussion

This chapter has analysed the Territorial Youth Councils and other actors in the youth sphere as a case study of post-liberal community security and statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan. As I have shown, the different practices of building peace, tolerance and trust and preventing tensions, violence and conflict are embedded in wider societal dynamics, institutional structures and discourses of state- and nation-building. In drawing further links between TYCs and their practices on the one hand and imaginaries and discourses of statebuilding on the other, I will put additional focus on the actors, institutions and structures in the youth sphere to show how it is evolving in a post-liberal trajectory. This means, to reiterate the initial argument (see ch. 3), that the nexus from knowledge to policy and institutional design is not linear but is mediated by the influence of different institutions and actors, as well as by the conditions and trends in the specific sector.

To invoke an alternative scenario, it could be imagined that, taking into account the issues faced by youth – some of which are more specific to youth and some being faced by society at large – new action programmes, policies and institutions can be created to address them. As this would cost considerably more money and political capital, it is understandable

that this approach has not been taken. On the contrary, I have shown that structures for youth work and representation were, and partly still are, absent in wide patches of Kyrgyzstan and thus, together with the incapacitation of state institutions, especially in the education sector, leave young people very much to their own devices. As different analyses have shown, this rendered youth vulnerable to recruitment by business entrepreneurs with links to underground networks and organised crime, often via sports clubs or gangs (e.g. Kirmse 2010). Given the high number of youth – about 40 per cent of the overall population, i.e. 2.4 million people, are under 30 years old – and the precarious political economy of young people's under- or unemployment, it is no wonder that young people get inspired by discourses of self-made success and survival in a market economy, which I have shown to be part of the 'Western liberal peace' imaginary, although rather its downside (IV.2.3 and IV.2.4). These images of success also make young people susceptible to engaging in illicit, criminal and violent actions and practices to achieve the wellbeing and success which may appear unattainable for them in today's Kyrgyzstan (Kirmse 2010) and cast youth as a high-risk group in relation to conflict prevention and peacebuilding (Roche 2014).

As in many other sectors, the year 2010 and the shocking 'June events' marked a turning point in the way youth and the necessity of youth work were regarded in Kyrgyzstan. Youth gangs and large crowds of youth had a clear role in the emergence of the conflict in Osh itself and for the way it evolved throughout several days (Khamidov et al. 2017: 3, Matveeva et al. 2012). As the TYC activists and project consultants and supporters told, youth were especially receptive to the untrue information circulating during the few days in June and in their aftermath, which made concrete efforts to disperse rumours and prevent further conflict the initial main priority of conflict prevention initiatives. The TYCs have since promoted trust, tolerance and peaceful interaction among youth from different communities, ethnic groups and personal backgrounds. Through their mobilisation for large scale festivals, smaller scale events

in courtyards, schools and universities and exchange events with communities in the regions of Osh province and across provinces, the TYCs have established a culture of open-ness and cooperation. They have thus managed to significantly decrease the conflict and violence potential, both in regard to ethnic and cultural difference and in relation to specific problems like racketeering and gang rivalries between different villages or settlements. In this sense, TYCs are a key actor of peacebuilding and conflict prevention, which is acknowledged in the decision of the Osh mayor's office to institutionalise this structure under the Committee of Youth Affairs.

In section VI.1, I have shown how the establishment and institutionalisation of TYCs has been carried out in a way that limits the expenses of the mayor's administration to the salary of the twelve TYC heads, reduced to six since 2016, plus financial support for projects. Financial demands were not extensive up to 2016, when the OSCE still supported the annual capacity-building projects. On the other hand, with TYC heads working directly under the Committee for Youth Affairs, all work and contents of the TYC projects could be shaped and controlled by the mayor's administration and the TYCs practically became an arm of the latter or, as suggested by one interviewee, a mediator between the administration and local youth. TYCs at least partly offered youth the entertainment, attention and care which the heavily strained, downsized and incapacitated state institutions in the educational and social sector could not impart anymore. In this sense, TYCs present the local administration and thus the state by promoting behaviours and attitudes conducive to peaceful and resilient social order. On the other hand, the structure is almost exclusively sustained by the voluntary action of young people and, additionally, by donor money. Therefore, the intensity, outreach and effect of a given project or initiative depended on how these different factors coalesced in a given locality at a certain time. I have shown how most of the activities of the TYCs and youth institutions in other towns had a significant impact. This, and the fact that conflictual or intolerant behaviour

were thus prevented in these places, should not be equated, however, to a situation where the root caused for conflict and inter-communal or inter-ethnic tension are fundamentally tackled or mitigated, let alone overcome. Rather than systematically dealing with material or socio-cultural root causes of conflict, TYCs appear mostly as an institution of conflict management, which successfully promotes non-violence but does not have the mandate or capacity to tackle more fundamental problems.

Thus, although TYCs also tackled the more fundamental problems faced by youth and compounding their conflict potential, their more significant was in uniting young people in a collective effort to build peace and make the best of their situation. This idea had multiple nuances and in this sense reflects Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia which I have proposed as a way to interpret the discursive hybridity of processes of social ordering and statebuilding (see chapter III). As I have shown, engagement in TYCs or single projects was understood by young people in ways as different as developing their community, their city or country, but also developing and improving themselves by organising events, working with municipal structures and being part of a team. While the latter understandings resonate more with discourses of self-making and personal development resonate under the Western 'liberal peace' imaginary (IV.2.2), the former present combinations of 'Western liberal peace' discourses – especially capitalist development'– with discourses from the other two imaginaries.

The 'politics of sovereignty' imaginary was most obvious in the discussions of national ideology and the need for its strengthening in light of the problems faced by youth and the population at large (VI.2.1). While it may be true that a 'right path' needs to be defined for people to walk on in their attempts to navigate the hardships and challenges of post-Socialist neoliberalism, it is questionable to what extent such a path can be defined in reference to national ideology and specifically the cultural and historical heritage of the Kyrgyz alone. In this sense, the undertones and symbolisms of exclusively Kyrgyz (ethno-) national heritage

stand in a tension with the civic nationalist discourse carried forward from the Soviet period (IV.2.2) into present day peacebuilding events and practices which emphasise the diversity and commonalities of different ethnicities and cultural legacies in and around Osh (VI.2.2). I have also shown how these and the traditional values and stories of the Kyrgyz co-exist in a momentary harmony with self-expressions through genres of Western popular culture, as in the hip hop and breakdance performances on large festivals and 'Kids from our courtyard' events, even though they may be perceived as incompatible. These activities demonstrate how TYCs build peace through practiced and lived tolerance and coexistence of diverse interests, values and identities. At the same time, my analysis of the high fluctuation and the fact that interaction with or in TYCs is in many cases a mere stopover in young people's life trajectories, as well as the selective social rather than merely territorial outreach, shows that this positive impact of TYCs can be limited and highly contingent, which in turn points to the importance of addressing conflict factors in a more systematic manner.

After outlining TYCs' attempts and capabilities to tackle the specific issues of religious radicalism and racketeering, I have discussed how youth are affected by the more fundamental issue of poverty and precarity in Kyrgyzstan's neoliberal economy and how they have attempted to tackled the latter. Their impact onto a post-liberal trajectory of statebuilding and state-society relations is perhaps most significant in this area, because they substitute or support formerly state functions and initiative in different ways. I have divided these into the promotion of self-help, -improvement and resilience on the part of young people on the one hand and collective charity and social support initiatives on the other. The former variant is a clear example of the popularity of an entrepreneurial model of personhood in post-Socialist countries (Makovicky 2014) and should be acknowledged, as I have argued, for the empowerment and pride in one's own achievement that it promised to those who will fully adopt a philosophy of self-made success. I have also warranted caution that beyond the motivating young people to

be disciplined, polite and make the best out of their situation, this approach can serve to silence and normalise the general absence of good opportunities and viable livelihoods in Kyrgyzstan. In a more critical vein, it recasts state-society relations into a post-liberal modality, where political subjecthood – which is the basis for shaping and negotiating the way social life is organised and reproduced and the of state institutions and actors therein – is replaced by an entrepreneurial subjecthood, whose purpose it is to optimally use the available resources without contesting the overall framework. While young people's solidarity and charity initiatives mitigate this autonomisation and responsibilisation, they have a similar effect of transferring collective responsibility from the state to society and other actors like donors. In this light, rather than only mobilising young people to help themselves and help each other, I have argued that there also appears to be a need for youth actors to create platforms that lobby a more systematic policy in the youth sector and more effective ways of addressing problems affecting young people.

I have outlined existing initiatives in this direction (VI.3) but concluded that none of them seem to have led to the establishment of such platforms or formulation of a clear and united voice. As further discussed in that section, a programme to discuss and design youth policy on the national level in more systematic ways has been signed into action very recently and upon significant lobbying efforts of the youth NGO network 'Youth policy in action'. This new future perspective appears like a promising success of putting youth matters higher on the political agenda. On the other hand, the implementation of this cooperative approach and realisation of any policies and measures designed in this dialogue remain to be seen. In the following chapter, I will show how the NGO network called Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result' have, in a very similar way, managed to get their 'alternative conception' of police reform acknowledged by law-makers and informed several governmental decrees on police reform. By and large, no further progress was reached when it came to the practical adoption

and implementation of these decrees. Therefore, as I will show in the next chapter, even lobbying and influence on policy making and legislation are tools of potentially limited effect in a post-liberal polity like Kyrgyzstan, where collective, centralised and politicised action is largely replaced by decentral processes of management and autonomisation.

**Chapter VII   Community security as a step towards fundamental change?
The Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result'**

This chapter presents the work of the NGO network Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result' (*Grazhdanskii Soiuz 'Za reformy i rezultat'*) in the area of police reform. Based on the initiative for a petition for an 'Alternative conception for the reform of Internal affairs organs', the network has constituted itself in 2012 and since advocated for the adoption of a complex and human-security focused approach to reforming the Kyrgyzstani police forces. Drawing on ideas about community policing and of public scrutiny and accountability that can broadly be situated in the 'liberal peace' imaginary' the Civic Union activists developed their CoSecurity (*SoBezopasnost*) approach, which advocates the mutual cooperation of local administration, law enforcement and civil society in the provision of public order and crime prevention. In this sense, the 'Civic Union' presents a graduation of the bodies and initiative examined in the two previous chapters: On the one hand, it unites many individuals who work in local administrations, Local Crime Prevention Centres (LCPCs), current and former staff form law enforcement and higher level internal affairs organs and are interested in bringing out a more sustainable and target-oriented reform. On the other hand, the network is also positioned in theoretical and analytical terms as it produces its own research and conceptualisations of methodologies and approaches that can help to reform the police and assess the progress in this reform. Besides fulfilling technocratic criteria of expertise and experience, the network also created potential for a form of social ordering and peacebuilding, which is more sustainable and meaningful in that it takes into account the specific needs, preferences and rights of individuals and groups within the population of a specific community.

As this chapter shows, however, reforming the police and bringing about a holistic approach to policing, crime prevention and social ordering in local communities is not a straightforward process. On the contrary, it is a contingent, slowly progressing and often negotiated and precarious endeavour that absorbs considerable efforts and resources. On the

national level, the Civic Union activists soon met the resistance of policy makers and governing elites, both in obvious, confrontational ways and as materialised in slow progress of legislative reform or insufficient implementation of legislation in practice. As I further show on the basis of participatory observation data from project implementation events in piloting communities, the implementation of the Co-Security approach was not always straightforward and easy, either. Rather, it depended on a multiplicity of factors pertaining to the geographical and political context of the respective municipality, and the actor-constellations and potential to mobilise resources emanating therefrom. I also show how, despite the experience gathered and despite the fact that the appropriateness of the Co-Security approach was proved through the implementation of a community security project in piloting municipalities, reform progress was still sluggish in the years since the end of my fieldwork. This points to the trajectory of post-liberal statebuilding – both in politico-economic, institutional and epistemic terms as I have outlined it in chapter III.

The Civic Union's combination of a widespread movement with the creation of a conceptual approach towards reforming social ordering practices in a specific domain – police reform in this case – presents an extension of the case of Territorial Youth Councils, other youth organisations and Local Crime Prevention Centres (LCPCs) discussed in the previous two chapters. While these entities were effective and, within their own parameters, successful in building peace and tolerance among youth and other groups within their communities, their work was limited by certain issues whose solution was outside of their sphere of influence, e.g. the deterioration and roll-back of the education system, and withdrawal of state support in the social and pedagogical sphere. I have also shown how an initiative to create a more systematic youth policy, which would more effectively design and implement measures for combatting these specific challenges, was in the process of formatting, but that the outcomes of these initiatives by national level NGOs remain to be assessed (VI.3). As extension of this

perspective, the Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result' presents a movement with concrete demands, broad backing in the form of composite NGOs and signatures gathered in support of their petition for an alternative conception towards police reform. The way in which their efforts evolve throughout time and in interaction with state and international actors thus provides a key insight for the possibility of effecting institutional and policy change towards more sustainable forms of social ordering, which can foreground lasting peace in the post-conflict areas and the country as a whole.

The link between the Civic Union's initiative and the idea of post-liberal forms of peace is the community- and in fact human-focussed approach of the network. As I show especially in the part on the network's implementation of their cooperative approach towards security provision in pilot communities (VII.4), the super-ordination of security concerns of communities and their inhabitants over those of state actors on the local and higher levels is reflective of a human security approach. In line with the critical understanding on community security and its governmentality tendencies (see III.4) and the critical and pessimistic stance regarding the practical possibility of human security, the chapter analyses how state-centric security conceptions and practices may be challenged by attempts to create alternative mechanisms of security provision in more or less substantial ways.

Section VII.1 provides both an empirical and conceptual entry into the chapter, as the creation and establishment of the Civic Union as actor in police reform processes is discussed on the basis of content analysis of material and interviews and, subsequently, discussed in conceptual terms that lay out the field of tension between state and non-state actors in the law enforcement and broader security sectors. In section VII.2 I show how this tension and the different socialisations and professional backgrounds of stakeholders played out in the interaction of the Civic Union activists and policy makers in Bishkek, who blocked the reform efforts in different more and less obvious ways. Section VII.3 presents an analysis of the

implications of community level implementation of the Co-Security approach in the framework of a donor funded project. Finally, section VII.4 shows how, despite the generally successful proof that cooperative approach to provision of public security can bring about meaningful and sustainable change to people's security perceptions, the piecemeal and often too superficial reform practices of political elites continued and confined the Civic Union to the role of a constant observer, commentator and expert entity. In section VII.5, I show how this role was maintained and strengthened as the organisation managed to reconcile, combine and hybridise the 'liberal peace' imaginary foregrounding its radical approach with sentiments that can be located in the politics of sovereignty and 'tradition and culture' imaginaries.

VII.1 From national to human security? The establishment of the 'Civic Union'

Reforms of the police, law enforcement organs and the security sector more generally are seen to be a vital part of 'liberal peace' style transition after Socialism or colonial governance (Lewis 2011a, Jackson 2011). Yet, given the diverging levels of cooperation and alignment with democratisation and transition agendas, police reform has become a field in which different Central Asian states have asserted their sovereignty and control over domestic matters by choosing not to cooperate or limit their degree or speed of harmonisation with institutional blueprints proposed by international actors. In a similar way, Kyrgyzstan's police forces can be seen as a domain in which successive governments have shown limited readiness to cooperate, or, at least, to let actions follow their announcements and stated intentions. This reluctance appears somewhat understandable in light of the two recent revolutions in the country: There seems to be a fear that a too open discussion of police reform could be hijacked by domestic or international actors, leading to a re-configuring of the internal affairs architecture that would limit governmental actors' access and control and make implementation and execution of policies less effective. Principles such as the strict hierarchy of command, internal

accountability and confidentiality of internal data and structures have seemed too valuable for Bishkek's policy makers to just give them up and reform has been focused almost solely on capacity building and modernising equipment of the police forces since the first efforts in 1998.

The efforts of civil society actors, especially numerous human rights defending organizations (*pravozashitniki*), have been comprehensive in trying to affect more bold steps towards police reform, law enforcement and judiciary reform. The main desire among both activists but also ordinary people is for the police to become a more trustworthy and conscientious in fulfilling its mandate and complying to laws and regulations itself. The everyday experience of Kyrgyz citizens stands in contrast to this ideal picture. Petty corruption, e.g. in the form of bribe extortion by traffic police, and negligence of duty of officers in recording and investigating crimes have for some people become a normality rather than an exception (see O'Shea 2015). The harsh criticism vis-à-vis the police, especially in regard to human rights abuses as for instance in the aftermath of the Osh events where impunity or the disproportionate persecution of Uzbeks have been admonished, is generally dismissed by Ministry of Interior Affairs or government officials. While civil society has mostly focused on identifying procedural irregularities and human rights abuses and tried to effect their correction through the moral pressure or public campaigns (Tiulegenov 2017), there is little to suggest that non-state actors have substantively tried to propose concrete institutional changes in order to improve the performance of the Kyrgyz police.

In this context, the work of the Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result' (*Grazhdanskii Soiuz 'Za reformy i rezultat'*, hereafter CU) is unique, as the organization has managed to become actively involved in the discussion, design and implementation of police reform. *De jure* a network of 28 NGOs with a central office in Bishkek and member organizations spread across the country, the organisation was first admitted to consultations with top level policy makers in early 2013 and has subsequently both continued to lobby change on the national level

and applied its participatory community security approach in selected localities throughout Kyrgyzstan. Among 28 NGOs united in the CU, main actors in the constitution of the CU are the Liberal Youth Alliance, a student organisation that had been working on police reform already and whose almost entire membership body transferred into the CU's structures. The founding and strategic positioning of the organisation in the years 2011 and 2012 was supported by the UK-based international NGO Saferworld, which continued to play a role in advising and supporting the CU until 2016, both on the basis of concrete project cooperation and funding but also aside from concrete programmes. Thanks to this support, the CU has evolved as a self-sufficient entity with a significant number of projects that generate enough paid work for a small office in the centre of Bishkek.

The Civic Union's formation began in the time of the initiative on the 'Alternative conception of the reform for the law enforcement agencies', explained Timur Shaikhutdinov, programme manager in the Bishkek head office.[1] Back in 2011, he and fellow activists in the Liberal Youth Alliance felt that they did not have enough expertise and a high enough number of activists to continue their work effectively enough. In order to gauge the potential that their agenda had across the country, they made 32 public hearings in different localities all over Kyrgyzstan, during which they became convinced that further steps had to be taken in order to scale up the countrywide efforts.[2] Following a gathering of representatives of the participating NGOs in July 2012, the first crucial step was the collection of signatures in favour of the Alternative conception for the reform of the law enforcement agencies.[3] The 10,950 signatures

---

[1] Conversation, 26 June 2015, Bishkek.

[2] Conversation, 26 June 2015, Bishkek.

[3] Альтернативная концепция реформы МВД (проект Программы реформирования государственной системы обеспечения общественной безопасности) [Alternative conception for the reform of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (draft Programme for the reform of the state system for public security provision)], Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result", October 2012, http://www.reforma.kg/sites/default/files/alternative_concept_oct12.pdf. All links in this chapter accessed 20 October 2017.

they managed to collect and hand over to parliament were a first landmark indicating the force behind the newly established network. In 2013, the then prime minister Jantoro Satybaldiev's invitation to present their 'Alternative conception of the police reform' and suggest ideas how to improve current polices was another sign that the CU might be able to influence the way in which the reforms are planned and carried out.

As will be shown below, the CU's impact on the reforms was still limited given inherent structural constraints in the sphere of regulation and reform of law enforcement in Kyrgyzstan. Rather than straightforwardly enforcing their agenda on the national level, the organisation was forced to refocus efforts and work in communities to recruit new supporters, and to actually conceptualise and develop an approach to community security that would pose an alternative to the understanding of questions of policing and security among many state actors but also international organisations.

In the course of this activism, the CU coined an approach named '*SoBezopasnost*', which emphasises cooperation between the population, municipal authorities and civil society and law enforcement organs. This approach is part of a broader trend towards community based security approaches that emphasise local level cooperation and scope over central, national level reform and policy implementation. More importantly, however, 'SoBezopasnost' is an approach that helps the CU illustrate what the implementation of police reforms could look like on the local level and how it would help to make communities secure and resilient. As one of their reports states, Co-Security:

> … denote[s] [a] philosophy, set of norms and practices directed at promotion of interaction among citizens, law enforcement bodies and other structures for better provision of security with focus on citizens' interests.[4]

---

[4] 'Role of local self-governance (LSG) in security provision in Kyrgyzstan', Civic Union 'For reforms and result', Bishkek, Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result', 17 March 2015, http://www.reforma.kg/sites/default/files/brief-en_1.pdf , p. 3

The fact that 'Co-Security' or *SoBezopasnost*[5] is used interchangeable with the internationally widespread idea of community policing, 'where all relevant stakeholders take part in protection of public order'[6] indicates the tension underlying community security work: While the ultimate goal of this work is security of the individual or society as a whole, the practices performed to provide security are, in this vision of society, of an observing if not restraining or disciplining character. This illustrates the important difference between community policing, an approach and idea that focuses primarily on practices of policing and, on the other hand, community security, where the result, a secure social environment, is of prime importance (see III.4). A point could thus be made that *Co-Security* or community security are not interchangeable with community policing, as both ideas have different primary foci that are not interchangeable.

In practice, law enforcement organs, above all neighbourhood inspectors of the police (*Uchastkovye inspektory militsii*, *UIM*) and juvenile inspectors (*Inspektory po delam nesovershennoletnykh*, *IDN*), are usually the representatives of the state apparatus and represent law and order vis-à-vis communities. Still, as indicated in chapter V, different institutions and actors support and cooperate with law enforcement organs, such as *aksakal* (elder) courts; women's councils; neighbourhood committees (*kvartalnye komitety*); and the Local Crime Prevention Centres (LCPCs) under which the latter bodies are united and managed by the head (or deputy head) of the territorial council (in cities) or *aiyl okmotu* (village administration). These structures do not have any law enforcement mandate, but they play an important role in dispute settlements in cooperation with the police (esp. *aksakal* courts) and focus on crime prevention by raising awareness and educating the population. The Civic Union started cooperating with these actors in different local contexts to implement their Co-Security approach after the institutionalisation of community security approaches from the top down

---

[5] The English term will be used hereafter.

[6] 'Role of local self-governance', see note 4, p. 5.

turned out to be impossible given the resistance within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the law enforcement apparatus and the government.

Apart from creating and strengthening this practical knowledge and experience in community-based projects, the Civic Union also attained an expert status when it came to doing analyses in the area of law enforcement and justice. Using methods and analytical skills of the activists and partners of the network, the Civic Union thus became a knowledge producer and managed to justify the necessity for the advocated 'Co-Security' approach, thus creating a demand for its own activities. With its quarterly report on community security and of monitoring reports on the progress of the police reform, which are based on empirical data gathered by the activists themselves and augmented by other data and sources, the CU also establishes itself as an independent and substantive voice in debates about community security in Kyrgyzstan.[7] The different areas in which the Civic Union published reports, commentary and analysis are tracked in appendix 5.

The overweight of evidence in favour of the Civic Union's approach to police reform did not, however, help to dominate the reform agenda in final consequence. The re-politicisation and democratisation of the national fields of security and law enforcement policy and legislation as brought about by the Civic Union is, quite straightforwardly, subject to negotiation and resistance on the part of political powerholders, experts and established elites in these sectors. Especially in a context of increasing inter- and transnational influence on policy-making in post-Soviet countries, contestations as to the intentions of Western or other donor-supported actors would not be surprising, given the high potential that the utilisation of foreign funding and expertise for developing better conceptualised approaches and more effectively executed ways to bring them about. Analysing an analogous case of non-state actors' efforts to bring about people-centred reform in Mexico City, Markus-Michael Müller (2014,

---

[7] These analyses are available under: http://www.reforma.kg/document/materialy-po-reforme

see also 2016) shows how marginalised intellectual elites deployed 'internationalisation strategies', i.e. dialogue with foundations, experts and civil society actors, to contest the authority of the city administration, the police and Attorney General's Office, to 'define urban security' and the best ways to bring it about (2014: 56 ff.). The bureaucratic apparatus and elites were initially disadvantaged vis-à-vis the 'increasing inflow of external scientific expertise and "best practices"' and the increasing dominance of the 'new security heretics and their vision of legitimate policing practices' (48). Subsequently, however, Müller shows how administrative actors also 'went international' to receive expertise and advice, started to acknowledge the efforts of the local domestic and civil society community, and made changes to policing and law enforcement practices. These, as he demonstrates, rarely went beyond a symbolic and superficial level and eventually served to shield the majority of policy areas, as well as 'the illegal, violent, and corrupt practices of the penal apparatus' from external influence (2014: 50). This research into the attempt to 'demonopolise the bureaucratic field' (2014: 37) illustrates well the limits and pitfalls of attempts to reform state-centric security approaches.

In their article on the role of non-state actors in police reform, Albrecht and Buur (2009) show how both national policy makers and international advisors, despite their awareness of the 'importance to engage communities and develop context-specific programmes, [but] fall back on state-centric approaches' (2009: 390). They point to the ambiguous status of such and other non-state actors, given that '[a]t the core of their authority lies access to political power and resources (ibid.: 397) and explain the constant reverting back to state-centric approaches in police reform with the 'unease within the executive around clearly defining the roles and limitations of an organisation, while also formally establishing its political independence' (400). '[H]ow security at the national and more localised levels are provided is often presented as painstakingly political and context specific', they further argue and predict that '[i]t can therefore safely be assumed as a matter of course that reform efforts will be obstructed, as they

threaten individuals who stand to lose or fear losing access to political or economic resources' (402). While many of these difficulties apply to the case analysed in the following, it is also shown how Kyrgyzstan has moved towards a situation where a 'language for discussing non-state actor inclusion in police reforms on par with state institutions' was being formed, thus presenting an improvement vis-à-vis the West African countries examined (Albrecht and Buur 2009: 401). The next section shows the obstacles met by the Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result' in its efforts to bring about a more fundamental approach to police reform.

VII.2 'Young folks' and 'military people': The Civic Union's role in police reform legislation and policy-making

An alternative approach to police reform: Legislative demands, successes and hold-ups

Influencing national level policy making was initially the main goal and focus of most of the activists of the Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result' and thus put at the top of the agenda when the network was officially founded in July 2012. Together with the 10,950 signatures and the over 32 public hearings held across the whole country, the network signified a strong and determined stance in its petition for a new approach to police reform, announcing: 'We, the citizens of Kyrgyzstan, demand from the leadership [*ot rukovodstva*] of Kyrgyzstan to set into motion major [*kardinalnykh*] reforms of the police without any delay!'[8] In order to push the demand for a proper reform, the activist did not spare their addressees vocal criticism of the hitherto progress of the police reform: 'Matters didn't develop beyond words. Enough with the cheating! [*Khvatit falshi!*] *We ask the authorities to hold their promise and immediately start to transform the old police into a modern police* [nachat preobrazovanie staroi militsii v sovremennuiu politsiiu]'[9] (emphasis in original, in bold). The desired reform is laid out in detail

---

[8] See here for the whole petition: http://reforma.kg/sites/default/files/petition_20.02.12.pdf

[9] The terms *militsiia* and *politsiia* are used synonymously for 'police' in Russian, although *militsiia* is clearly associated with Soviet structures and policing practices.

in the 'Alternative conception for the reform of the Ministry of Interior Affairs', which was submitted to the government, the *Jogorku Kenesh* (parliament) and MIA, alongside the 10, 950 signatures[10]. The conception puts forward the following core aspects:

1) Creation of a normative-legal basis which regulates the activities of Internal Affairs organs in line with the constitution, international human rights standards and the Programme for the reform of the state system of maintenance of security within society and the rule of law in the Kyrgyz Republic;

2) Optimisation of the structure and improvement of the administrative system of the MIA, including redefinition of tasks carried out by the ministerial secretariat and the 'Department for interaction of the law enforcement system';

3) Improvement of the recruitment policy including the unconditional replacement of part of the current staff, while observing principles of depoliticisation and partial demilitarisation;

4) Development and application of new methods and instruments to secure the effective operation, openness and accountability of law enforcement agencies vis-à-vis society;

5) Monitoring and assessment of the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies.[11]

The Civic Union's efforts appear to have been successful in the government's and MIA's approach to the reform in the months and years after the submission of the petition. A major step was the consultation with then prime minister Satybaldiev on 13 February 2012, as result of which the latter promised to take into account the following points suggested by CU members:

---

[10] Alternative conception, see n. 3.

[11] Adapted from the 'Alternative conception'; see n. 3.

- Creation of a Coordination Council under the government of the Kyrgyz Republic to implement the coordination, control and monitoring and assessment of the conducted reforms;
- Strengthening of the role of neighbourhood inspectors and youth affair inspectors under the internal affairs organs;
- New directions in the recruitment policies for law enforcement organs, especially drawing applicants from civil backgrounds and juridical higher education institutions (rather than recruiting primarily graduates of the country's three years long military service);
- Developing new criteria for the assessment of different services and departments or law enforcement organs.[12]

Further steps by the government followed suit, especially in the form of a series of governmental decrees (*postanovlenie*), which can be seen to satisfy to some extent the CU's demand for a normative legal basis for the regulation and reform of law enforcement organs. Of course, this has to be seen in the context that other international and intergovernmental organisations were lobbying the government as much as did the CU, and the decrees serve as tools in the realisation of the 'National sustainable development strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for the years 2013-2017'[13]. The main contribution of the Civic Union can thus be seen in lobbying these changes from a pragmatic point of view that expressed the will of Kyrgyzstani citizens; as well as in the concrete ideas and concepts it proposed to introduce into the reform process.

---

[12] See protocol from the meeting (in Russian): http://reforma.kg/sites/default/files/minutes_of_meeting_with_pm_13.2.2013.pdf

[13] 'Национальная стратегия устойчивого развития Кыргызской Республики на период 2013-2017 годы', http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/61542. Security and law enforcement reform are addresses in section 2.9 of the Strategy, which is titled 'Reform of law enforcement organs, ensuring legal compliance of their operations'.

While not all changes proposed by the CU were taken on by the government, PM Satybaldiev signed decree No 220 on 30 April 2012[14], which tasked the MIA with 'working out an Action plan for the realisation of measures reforming internal affairs organs of the Kyrgyz Republic.' Besides detailing these measures and the different areas of change, the decree announces the aforementioned Council as main mechanism for the implementation of the reform. A good deal of subsequent interaction between the Civic Union and other selected civil society representatives took place mostly in this Council for the Reform and Development of the System of Law and Order in the Kyrgyz Republic[15], which was officially formed in September 2013 and included representatives from the government and its administration both on the national and local levels, as well as advisors from intergovernmental organisations such as the OSCE.

It soon became clear, however, that the Reform Council did not affect the design and implementation of concrete reform measures and, worse, seemed to help the government and MIA delay such processes. CU activists thus admonished this status of a 'dialogue platform without actual administrative tasks' or a mandate to make decisions binding for the MIA and law enforcement organs more generally.[16] The Council had been side-lined and kept out of the public attention, leading to its marginalisation and constitution as a forum where civil society actors could state their opinion and air grievances, but were unlikely to prompt official authorities to act upon them.[17] It also took another one and a half years for the Civic Union to effect an instructive legislative act, again based on a consultation with the prime minister (in

---

[14] Available at: http://mvd.kg/index.php/rus/program-gov/reform

[15] *Sovet po reformirovaniiu i razvitiiu sistemy pravoporiadka v Kyrgyzskoi Respbublike.*

[16] *Monitoring reformy OVD Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki – Navigator reform* [Monitoring of the reform of law enforcement organs of the Kyrgyz Republic – Navigating the reforms]; Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result', October 2014 http://reforma.kg/sites/default/files/final_report_0.pdf, p. 7

[17] Conversation with Timur Shaikhutdinov, Bishkek, 14 August 2015.

this case Otorbaev), who once again vowed to integrate their suggestions as much as possible.[18] The resulting governmental decree No 81 from 24 February 2015 presents a progressive change as it introduces 'Guidelines on the foundations of the complex assessment of the activity of law enforcement organs of the Kyrgyz Republic', including a component of external assessment with a participatory and transparent approach. The Civic Union, however, criticised the configuration of the external assessment component for excluding them and other civil society actors from the development of a methodology and general approach to external assessment.[19] Rather than being able to influence the way in which the MIA goes about assessing the police's performance across the country, the Civic Union was thus relegated to do work in this area on their own.

Another normative legal act worth mentioning is a governmental decree from 30 July 2015 signed by prime minister Temir Sariev and introducing 'Provision on the mechanisms of cooperation of the law enforcement organs of the Kyrgyz Republic with civil society institutions'[20]. Most remarkable about the provision is the creation of (yet another) council that can be translated as 'Public Council of the MIA'. Its functions are mainly communication with civil society actors and consideration of their suggestions and proposals, alongside keeping the general public informed on the Ministry's activities and creating new working groups and

---

[18] Quote from the protocol of the meeting on 20 September 2014; *Obzor No 3 khoda reform OVD KR* [Review No 3 on the progress of the law enforcement organ reforms in the Kyrgyz Republic]; Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result', October 2014, http://reforma.kg/sites/default/files/rev_3_10.14_0.pdf, p. 4

[19] *Reforma militsii v Kyrgyzstane: na puti k bolsheu otkrytosti?* [Police reform in Kyrgyzstan: On the path to more openness?], Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result', 22 March 2015, http://reforma.kg/sites/default/files/rev_5.pdf, p. 13

[20] *Polozhenie o mekhanizmakh vzaimodeistviia organov vnutrennykh del Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki s institutami grazhdanskogo obshestva* [Decree of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic 'On the mechanisms of interaction of internal affairs organs of the Kyrgyz Republic with civil society instiutions], Bishkek, 30 July 2015, No 547

committees that if they are deemed necessary.[21] The text further details the role of neighbourhood inspectors and local crime prevention centres (LCPCs) as main actors and platforms in the interaction between society and law enforcement organs. These legal provisions and their criticism outline the field of contestation between the Civic Union and the MIA, government and law enforcement officials. As indicated and analysed in more detail below, the negotiations with the authorities on the concrete steps of reform and the assessment of the law enforcement organs' activities produced too little results to be pursued on their own. The next sub-section shows how this legislative change was not followed by substantial, 'behavioural change' as ministerial, governmental and law enforcement staff resisted the reform initiative more and more decisively.

'Not the hard way': Friction, resistance and insufficient implementation

Although the above-discussed legislation signifies substantial success of the Civic Union's activism, the time required to achieve the different steps and their insufficient addressing of demands or implementation of solutions indicate clear limits to the Civic Union's effectiveness in bringing about an alternative approach to police reform. It is also reflective of frictions in the interaction between the activists and ministerial and governmental officials. Given the acrimonious rhetoric and explicit criticism put forward by the Civic Union, it is perhaps not entirely surprising that accounts of the reactions of top policy makers and law enforcement staff emphasise how those were surprised and overwhelmed by the demands of the mostly young activists who did not have anything to do with internal affairs and security issues at first sight. This astonishment is best understood in the context of the 2010 revolution and violent clashes

---

[21] This institutional enlargement appears to duplicate the abovementioned Coordination Council's mandate, which already comprised these activities and merely did not carry them out in actual fact. It could still be argued, though, that the newly created body increased prospects for a more level and open playing field as concrete proposals from civil society can be given more consideration and reasons for their rejection can be discussed.

in the South of the country, after which law enforcement and internal affairs organs had tried to consolidate for themselves the role of a guarantor of security and stability despite apparent irregularities. The Civic Union was the first actor daring to tackle the topic of police reform since the Osh 2010 events in such an outspoken manner and with such concrete ambitions for reform.[22]

Another reason for lack of understanding and engagement with the Civic Union can be seen in the generational and professional remoteness of the young activists from the policy-makers and interior affairs staff. The latter are usually civil servants who had started their career and received education during Soviet times and have thus internalised principles such as hierarchy of command, military discipline, and loyalty to the nodes of power within the state system. Their counterparts from the Civic Union were mostly part of a younger generation, who have adopted ideas about liberal democratic reforms and accountable state institutions. This is not to essentialise these different markers or to say that they are completely incompatible – in fact, their combination and hybridisation into cooperative and dialogue-based community security processes has yielded productive practices and actions (see below). It is rather to reflect on the general ramifications of a determined, while not always apparent, resistance that the Civic Union met in realising its agenda. Ravshan Abdukarimov, ex-MIA officer and advisor to the CU stylised the reactions the organisation usually received: 'Don't rush, don't mess things up! Who are you, in the first place? Do you want an office or what [*Vam dolzhnost?*]?' These comments bear testimony of the unrealistic number and scope of the proposed reforms. Furthermore, open hostilities were also part of the initial interactions between state representatives and the CU activists. One illustrative example is a meeting of activists with law

---

[22] This situation is well expressed in Timur Shaikhutdinov's statement: '*Reforma privezet nestabilnost, poetomu ne sdelali posle 2010. Posle Osh pugalis trogat militsiiu*' – 'Reform brings instability, that's why they didn't implement it after 2010. After Osh [the Osh events] people were affairs to touch the police [and reform it]'. Conversation, Bishkek, 26 June 2015.

enforcement officials, including the then head of the Bishkek branch Internal Affairs Administration (*GUVD*) who addressed Timur in Kyrgyz and took advantage of his limited command of the language. 'It turned out later', Timur explained vividly, 'that he had told me to burn [in hell] [Russian: *zhech*], while I was nodding and acting as if I understood and appreciated what he was saying.'[23]

Illustration 7.1: Civic Union activists and national decision-makers
Explanation: Meeting of representatives of the Civic Union 'For Reforms and Results' with (from left to right) prime minister Otorbaev, p.p. Minister for Interior Affairs Turganbaev and vice prime minister Mamataliev, 20 September 2014; Source: Civic Union 'For Reforms and Results', permission obtained.

Such and other animosities were not rare, and while they were never more than verbally expressed, they indicate the divide between the Civic Union and their partners in the government, ministerial and internal affairs organs. The body language of the two activists on the right and PM Otorbaev, p.p. Minister of Interior Affairs Turganbaev on the left captures these attempts at finding a common language quite well.[24] This division is further traceable in

---

[23] Conversation at CU office, Bishkek, 19 August 2015.

[24] For the complete line-up and details of the meeting see: Премьер-министр Кыргызстана Джоомарт Оторбаев поддерживает сотрудничество Правительства с гражданским обществом для продвижения реформы милиции [PM of Kyrgyzstan Joomart Otorbaev supports cooperation of the government with civil society for the promotion of police reform], East-West Management Institute (EWMI) 2 October 2014, http://ewmi-cgp.org/ru/novosti/tekushchie-novosti/118-premer-ministr-kyrgyzstana-dzhoomart-otorbaev-

a discourse on different professional or vocational spheres, which was reproduced by different former security sector employees. Mr Abdukarimov's remarks on how the 'young folks'[25] from the Civic Union were leaving many authority representatives baffled was echoed in many conversations with supporters and activists of the network. One of them explained[26]: 'People were laughing: Why did these young folks want to reform the police? … the higher echelons (leadership; *rukovodstvo*) began to understand step by step [*postepenno*] [what they wanted].' He further described the difference between the vocational spheres of the protagonists: 'Civil society, this is a rather soft [*bolee miakhkoe*] part of society … the police, they just work through orders, they have completely different blood (*u nikh sovsem drugie krovi*).' This gap was partly bridged as the Civic Union incorporated ex police and law enforcement staff into its own network and consultation processes, but it did not entirely mitigate the tensions between the Civic Unions ambitions for reform and the realities in the Kyrgyz police forces on the ground.

Convincing top-level policy makers about the CU's agenda proved hard especially as the bifurcation between a security/law enforcement sphere and the 'civic sphere' seem to underlie a broader claim about expertise and understanding of what is possible and desirable when it comes to reforming the police. Rather than engaging with the content of the Civic Union's reform proposals, some actors thus stressed the fact that the group's expertise was insufficient and the nature and scale of their demands lied beyond what was realistically possible. This is best captured in the quote of an OSCE officer working on police reform:

---

podderzhivaet-sotrudnichestvo-pravitelstva-s-grazhdanskim-obshchestvom-dlya-prodvizheniya-reformy-militsii.html

[25] The Russian term is *rebiata* or *molodye* [young] *rebiata*; it was often used by interview partners when referring to Timur and other activists from the central office in Bishkek.

[26] Conversation with territorial council head, Osh, 14 October 2015.

> I ask the question, what do you want from the Police? Civil society watches and argues without agreeing with each other ... We are former police officers, we understand the best practices. (quoted in Mangham 2015: 33)

As Ravshan Abdukarimov stated in his recollection of the early days of the CU's negotiations with MIA officials, the deputy minister for Internal Affairs remarked towards the activists that they should not try to enforce reforms 'the hard way' (*'ne po plokhomu!'*).[27] International actors seemed to broadly agree with the government's and MIA's approach to reform. With its dominating position in the Reform Council, especially the OSCE is thus part of the barrier that the CU activists understand themselves to be confronted with. The more conservative approach to police reform advocated by former police and military personnel in the government, ministry and international organisations emphasises capacity building in the form of providing new cars and radios[28] as well as money for renovation of police premises and a less transformative measures concerning modes of operation and institutional culture. Shaikhutdinov and other CU members deny that such capacity-building and infrastructural support present a reform in and of themselves: The way things are done, the institutional culture has to change, new cars, radios and buildings are merely a change in the façade.[29]

With time, it became increasingly obvious that actions towards such systematic change were not taken, even if the aforementioned governmental decrees would have necessitated them. The 'Reform Council' had also proved largely ineffective, as it served mainly as a dialogue platform but did not have any concrete mandate to order implementation measures on the ground (see above). Given this blockage on concrete reform policies on the national level, the Civic Union was forced to re-orient to the local level in order to, firstly, recruit more active

---

[27] Conversation, Bishkek, 20 August 2015.

[28] Conversations with Timur Shaikhutdinov and Galina Davletbaeva, 17 and 24 August; 9 December 2016, Bishkek.

[29] Conversations, Bishkek, 9 December 2015.

members and build organizational capital, and secondly, to practically test out the participatory community security approaches advocated on the national level.

VII.3 Community security project implementation in piloting localities

On the community level, the Civic Union worked on a better provision of security through the promotion of interaction between the population and law enforcement organs. The activists had already gathered experience during the public hearings that fed into the drafting of the 'Alternative conception' for the police reform in 2011 (see above), which had also served as the basis for constituting the network. One of the many proves of the network's grounded approach and adaptation to the needs and habits of the semi-urban and rural population is its use of a quarterly newspaper, in which the most recent achievements and important items on the organisation's agenda are presented in both Russian and Kyrgyz language (see appendix 6 for the title page of an issue from 2012). In 2015, the Civic Union won a tender announced as part of the criminal justice programme of the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The project, titled, 'Developing mechanisms of social partnership on questions of the provision of public security and crime prevention', identified twelve piloting communities in which the following steps were implemented (CU 2016: 8):

1) assessment of main community security issues and factors;

2) creation of working groups, including representatives from law enforcement, local administration, civil society and population;

3) discussion of possible measures to be taken to prevent security threats and tackle the identified issues, drawing up of a local community security action plan;

4) integration of the community security action plan into the budget of the local council's (*mestnyi/aiylnyi kenesh*) budget and execution of action plan by local self-governance bodies.

The implementation of these steps was not a straightforward process and involved a lot of prior research, consultations with community representatives and especially persuading local self-governance representatives to welcome the initiative and the recommendations and actions it would propose at the end of the project. It is thus understandable that the degree of project implementation and success varied between communities, and that localities with a support base of the CU network and its new *Co-Security* approach were more effective in realising the project.

While the overall impression from the project's analysis on the basis of participatory fieldwork is positive, the following analysis presents the CU's work in two localities with varying performance.[30] The first two participated in the UNODC-financed project and serve as the examples of the most successful and effective implementation of the project (community 2) and the community where the participation appeared to be valued the least (community 1). While doing the research in these two places I was officially acting as a volunteer to support and facilitate the running of the respective training events and group meetings. This legitimated my presence and the inclusion of the witnessed conversations into my research. The comparison of impressions collected in these two communities to the experience of doing research in one territorial council in the city of Osh (community 3, analysed in appendix 7) illustrates the risk of being rejected and receiving incomplete or potentially biased data, which is especially faced by that foreign researchers (Lottholz and Meyer 2016). Based on these reflections, I point out how, even if newly established cooperation between police and local community workers is presented as a success of the Civic Union's work, it is not always clear to what baseline such a 'success' is compared and how acute community security issues may be despite improved cooperation between the population and the police.

---

[30] Part of this analysis is presented in Lottholz (2017b).

Three key dimensions of the community security working groups' impact on the local security situation guide the analysis. First, I discuss the 'status of the working group' in the local context, which concerns both the relevance and importance conferred to it by its members and stakeholders and its complementarity with other administrative and security bodies and institutions. The second dimension regards the way security problems and solution measures are being understood and constructed. In this respect, the working groups exhibited different degrees of rather simplistic understandings and lack of visible consultation with the population groups affected by issues in question. When it came to economic problems and poverty, the security working groups proved a useful platform for discussing the issue and raising them vis-à-vis other local or regional actors; which stands in some contract to the normalisation of economic precarity and its role as a factor of crime and conflict analysed in V.4. As I show in a third step, analytical practices and epistemic positionings – i.e. individual members' or entire group's stances on what exactly constitutes a problem and why it is hard to solve it – point to the different constellations post-liberal social ordering indicated in chapter III and can be situated within the imaginaries and discourses of statebuilding.

Community 1

Status of working group

In this community, north of Bishkek and bordering Kazakhstan, I attended working group meetings between August and November 2015, during which I accompanied a CU activist Galina – a Bishkek woman in her fifties – and assisted in arranging presentations, taking photos and documenting the conversations. The overall impression from the work in this community was that the significance and potential of the Civic Union's project was either not sufficiently

appreciated, limiting the prospect of implementing a sustainable cooperation between police and the population; or that other bodies such as the Local Crime Prevention Centre (LCPC) and local council (*mestnyi kenesh*) were already working on the issues, making more work on community security seem less important than the mobilisation of support for dealing with socioeconomic issues, for instance. Correspondingly, the analysis of problems and devising concrete of action steps to tackle them was difficult, as it was often not clear what was already being done, or what could be done given the entrenched nature of issues. These difficulties were compounded by the patchy attendance of group members – two of the meetings began with only a handful of group members, which necessitated scheduling new meetings – and reluctance to contribute to discussions on the part of those who did attend.[31]

This difficulty in assembling the group in full number and getting it to produce the concrete results demanded within the project framework seemed to be an issue with both insufficient leadership of the group and the lack of a clear mandate of the group and/or awareness among participants and other shareholders about it. While the focus groups for the initial assessment of local security issues had been conducted with ease, the follow-up meeting to discuss and consolidate the identified priority issues was initially attended by not more than five people. A large part of the group could be called in to start the meeting one hour later, but the lack of organisation and preparation was obvious. The latter seemed to be linked to the extreme busy-ness of the head of the *aiyl okmotu* (local administration), who obviously had difficulty managing her daily work schedule and discharging her role as community security working group leader[32], while her deputy appeared to be insufficiently authorised and resourced to effectively mobilise and lead the group.

---

[31] The best illustration of this is the fact that some older women attending a meeting on 17 August 2015 were reading newspapers and only contributed to discussions when they deemed it appropriate.

[32] This became obvious when the CU's coordinator for this piloting community and I met the head after the working group meeting on 17 August 2015 and talked her through the main

This situation was exacerbated when the *aiyl okmotu* head became re-appointed as head of the Alamedin regional administration, leaving the deputy head to lead the group during the remainder of the project. The lack of leadership and awareness about the purpose and possible value of the community's participation in the project became especially obvious in a training session in November that was attended by representatives of UNODC, the project funder, who did not hesitate to state their concern with the group's low turnout and lack of participation and enthusiasm in discussing ways to tackle local security issues. Towards the end of the meeting, the Kyrgyz programme manager addressed the remaining handful of group members to explain the purpose of the project and the general context of UNODC's work in the community: 'What's the whole point with this [local security] plan?', she rhetorically asked; 'It will be your tool … but how can you make a plan with only three people?'. She further encouraged the attendees to more actively approach the police and ask police staff to participate in light of UNODC's investment of 30,000 USD into building a new local police station (*Poselkovyi otdel militsii* or *POM*): 'Look, we invest 30,000 dollars to improve things here … get in touch with the police so that they attend all of the meetings!'

The less than mediocre performance led the deputy head of the *aiyl okmotu* to endeavour more firmly to invite all group members, including the neighbourhood inspector and local council members. The latter attended the next meeting three weeks later and contributed to a constructive and well-informed discussion on the prioritised security issues and possible actions. This meeting illustrated the situation already indicated in an initial report[33], namely

---

impressions and results of the day. When trying to schedule a date to assemble the group again for finishing the work left over from this session, she said that she would simply not be able to find the time to participate in the gathering herself.

[33] 'Public security. Analysis of the situation and prioritiy problem. Preliminary report [Общественная безопасность. Анализ ситуации и приоритетные проблемы Сводный отчет по исследованиям в пилотных территориях]', Civic Union 'For reforms and result', Bishkek, October 2015, unpublished document.

that the local crime prevention centre (LCPC), women's council and *aksakal* court were actively working on preventing crimes and social tensions. With these efforts already being made – and some of them helping to solve the identified issues in the process, as for instance in the case of insufficient provision of transport between the different villages of the community, it was understandable that the working group was not keen to tackle security issues or unwilling to do so in the framework of the CU's project. Given the absence of financial benefits, the community security project was also much less attractive than infrastructural and other development projects proposed by development agencies from nearby Bishkek (see below). Priority issues and an action plan to tackle them were nevertheless agreed after long and windy discussions.

Understanding of security problems and solutions

In preliminary research and initial group meetings, the following priority issues were determined: 1) traffic security; 2) drug consumption and dealing; 3) vulnerability of children; 4) tensions between different groups and individual dwellers; and 5) grazing of cattle and damage to communal areas and harvest. However, during the meetings I attended the group appeared split in their opinion on different issues and ways to tackle them.

Disagreement was most consistent (although somewhat silent) on the issue of drug trade and consumption in the community. This had initially been identified as prescient by the focus group during the initial community security assessment. However, during subsequent meetings with the security working group different attendees explicitly voiced their doubts that this was an issue significantly pertaining to the community's security, or even was a problem in the first place. 'We don't have such a problem right now', said an elderly Kyrgyz wearing a *kalpak* during the follow-up meeting in August, although he admitted, 'Yes, that's possible', when the CU moderating CU activist said it had been raised during initial focus groups. 'If it is possible

to uncover incidents, then there is a problem', said the local school's head teacher, suggesting that the problem was only of priority if a concrete exposure or evidence could be adduced. Thus, the group eventually removed the item from agenda, and a loose agreement was found that preventive work should be done in schools. This demonstrates how the power of the working group to set the agenda and decide how urgent or even existent a security issue is. Although there was little disagreement within the group as to the minor importance of drug consumption and trading, a more holistic understanding of this would only have been possible by juxtaposing this point of view with the perspectives put forward during the initial focus groups.

In a similar way, 'tensions between different groups, especially between inhabitants and migrants from other regions of the country and [ethnic Kyrgyz] from Tajikistan' was a topic whose relevance for the community security action plan was contested. A mode of living where everyone was for themselves seemed to have been established in the community long ago, and actual tensions and conflicts seemed to be a rare occasion. Thus, the problem seemed to lie more in the disinterest and single-mindedness of the different groups towards each other, which, as some group members suggested on the second meeting for planning concrete action steps, might be overcome by reinvigorating the spirit of national unity and patriotism. The post-Soviet multicultural slogan 'We are all Kyrgyzstanis!' was invoked by several group members alongside the idea that 'people should be taught to love their nation'.[34] The group agreed that educational and prophylactic work, including gatherings between groups, had to be done to

---

[34] The neighbourhood inspector further made clear that, contrary to the dominant 'mentality' among the Kyrgyz, it would be inappropriate to invoke the 'ethnic' category when talking about the different groups. The divide between 'native' dwellers and 'new arrivals' was congruent with an ethnic divide, as the former were quite diverse, with Kurds, Lezgins (a Caucasian ethnicity emanating from southern Dagestan and northern Azerbaijan) and Russians cohabitating with Kyrgyz, while the latter were predominantly Kyrgyz (or Kyrgyz-Kairylmany, i.e. 're-settlers' mostly from Kyrgyz territories in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan). The sentiments and stereotypes put forward in this discussion seemed to primarily be directed at the sense of entitlements and duties (perceived or real) given the respective groups' biographies.

further strengthen the sources of unity within the village and resolve the paradox that, in the words of a local council member 'On Friday [at the Islamic Namaz prayer] all great each other but then go their way and don't care about each other anymore'.

The problem with the overgrazing of communal areas and destruction of arable land and harvest was particularly associated by the group with the 'new arrivals', many of whom had their livestock grazing all over the central village's green, which was technically prohibited and led to the deterioration of the central village area into a plane of soil and decrepit trees. In the early November meeting group members had remarked how this was rooted in the 'new arrivals'' attitude towards the state and social order more generally. 'For the natives, it is a shame to see that for the new arrivals the law doesn't count', one dweller summed up the common sentiment.[35] While this picture went unchallenged in that meeting, in the working group meeting later that month was also attended by an elderly man who listened to the discussions and wanted to add his view on the problem – but seemed to go unnoticed by the rest of the group. While the group was hotly discussing the topic, he got from his seat in one of the last rows, remote from the rest of the group, inhaled hastily to raise his voice, extended his hand to be called to speech and quietly – but audibly for those who paid attention – remarked 'I am a new arrival for instance'. Neither the moderating CU activist nor any group member noticed him, thus missing out on hearing the point of view from the people concerned in this debate.

This clearly indicated the limits to the participation of representatives of all different groups and categories of village dwellers in the working group, as well as the potential of missing out on certain points of view during discussions, especially when they are heated and emotional. What somewhat inevitably resulted from this limited inclusiveness of the group and

---

[35] '*Dla korennykh obidno, chto dlia novykh zakon ne deistvuet*'. The person put forward the example of people cutting trees in the village area. Participatory observation, 6 November 2015.

its bold way of trusting their own opinion and knowledge about the problems in their community is a certain degree of objectification and patronizing vis-à-vis other groups. Rather than a critique, this is to be understood in the context of the generally benevolent intents of the group's members and the logics of provision and care according to which they apparently saw it as their responsibility to provide 'the others' with security or create a secure and peaceful environment.

Another example for the limited inclusivity of the group is the role of youth committee, which seemed to be non-existent beyond a list of members presented on a sheet next to the other local institutions and their staff. One young man who had attended all of the meetings had not made any contribution any of the discussions whatsoever, although they revolved around juvenile delinquency, car races organised by local youth and the problem of drug trade and consumption. When I dared to make one of my very few interventions and asked why the group was not consulting their youngest member when discussing possibilities of keeping young people busy and entertained to distract them from delinquent activities and 'hooliganism', the answer was unbelievable for me but perhaps descriptive of the situation: 'He's sits quite far away [*daleko sidit*],', remarked one attendee in response to the suggestion; another just dismissed my initiative: 'The old people will sort it out for him [*Dla nego pozhilye reshaiut*]' – and on went the discussion. While the working group might generally be representative of the population and have active and competent members, this reluctance to engage with specific groups that play a crucial part in or are affected by the community's security issues and their solution limits the scope of both the analysis of the situation in this community and the potential to effectively tackle them. This partially exclusionary, paternalistic, patronising and sometimes objectifying logic, however, makes sense when its representativeness of the way things are done in Kyrgyzstan is seen through a post-liberal lens.

Community security practice seen through a post-liberal lens

The above-discussed situations serve as suitable examples to understand post-liberal forms of social ordering against their historical background and in the context of the combination and hybridisation of globally dominant and contextually specific ways of doing things; i.e., participatory analysis and planning mechanisms on the one hand and paternalist logics of care and traditional notions of hierarchy, on the other.

What seemed to make these instances of failed dialogue somewhat acceptable to both the ones excluded and those (unwittingly) excluding is a logic of provision of security and caring for someone else or a group. This seems to reflect the Soviet legacy of a paternalistic state and local administration structures whose activists and experts can be trusted to consider the community's and its different groups' needs and problems in enough detail to make informed decisions and take appropriate measures in social organisation and resource allocation.[36] A further explanation for the lack of explicit exchange and inclusion of youth and 'new arrivals' would highlight a cultural reading of the fact that people do not necessarily voice their opinion unless directly asked for it. Age and professional hierarchies might be seen to play a role here in the sense that representatives from groups concerned are more likely to approach personal acquaintances or friends in the local self-governance to suggest their own views, rather than contesting people above their own age or hierarchy level in a public meeting.

This indicates an important mechanism of post-liberal forms of social order: order needs to be understood in terms of the role of the individual and its input into the construction and maintenance of order. That is, rather than assigning each individual a role of its own and assuming that they utter their opinions to inform the decision-making process, a different set of

---

[36] This mode of social organisation is clearly rooted in the Soviet Union's scientific-technological model of social organisation, where social policy and provision were based on group belonging like nationality, ethnicity or professional association and the entitlements derived therefrom. See Reeves (2014: 148), Hirsch (2005) and the discussion in IV.2.2.

social relations needs to be taken into account that transcends this methodological individualism of 'liberal peace' approaches.[37] A first implication for community security seen from a post-liberal vantage point is thus that participation and articulation by every individual and the whole range of actors might not be a desired or viable ingredient of social ordering, contra the liberal orthodoxy.

The complementary to this logic of decreased participation and articulation is a logic of representation, provision and care, according to which certain actors within a community can be tasked with identifying and dealing with issues on behalf of others. As I have shown, this can have the effect of reproducing past forms of social order and cultural production at the expense of designing community engagement activities along the lines of the groups for whom they are made. This is especially apparent in the example of the problem with young people's susceptibility to delinquency and vulnerability to school racketeering – a point that was initially glossed 'vulnerability of kids [*uiazvimost detei*]' but reduced to 'school racketeering' for the final report. When discussing leisure activities that should be organised to offer children attractive alternatives, the most discussed topic (besides sports pitches and tournaments) was the need to re-establish – or at least to offer an equivalent to – the cultural institutions of the past such as a house of culture (*dom kultury*), a youth club, dances and other items that would enable the reinvigoration of the civilisational spirit that characterised the village during Soviet times.[38] This demonstrates how the way that the group members had experienced their own youth now came to be considered as the best way to bring up the current young generation.

---

[37] This is not a statement on whether such a post-liberal condition is desirable or not. At minimum, the empirical significance of these paternalistic and otherwise hierarchical mechanisms of arbitration suggests that it might be worth to search for other ways of securing inclusion than trying to impose liberal methodological individualism on societies; or that a mix between the two may be more viable in practice.

[38] One older teacher underlined this demand with the exclamation: 'We had a civilisation (*'u nas byla tsivilizatsiia'*)!', which clearly alludes to the achievements of Soviet modernism.

This desire to restore past dignity and glory was associated to a broader logic of not only regulating matters of security, but of attempting to attain a basic level of infrastructure and service provision in the community. The discussions on road security, for instance, extended towards the problem that streetlights were not working and the question of how to make them work again.[39] Other discussions revolved around how the new local police station could be provided with living space, the current state and rebuilding plans for the school and kindergarten. Another example is the negotiation of an agreement between *marshrutka* (minibus) drivers and the population to ensure a consistently running transport system for school children. Community security was thus understood in broader terms, as relating to the provision, maintenance or (re-) establishment of services and infrastructure, as a way of securing an environment in which security issues and crime are less likely to occur.

This more contextual and material understanding of security sometimes morphed into a clear, almost cynical preference for infrastructure development and concrete financial investments into the community over wise words on crime prevention and security arrangements. In the planning meeting on 6th of November, instead of proceeding to discuss actions to tackle the identified security issues, some group members exclaimed, in reference to the porous half-dirt-half-asphalt-remnants road leading to the village: 'We need to fix our roads, it is horrible, didn't you see it when you came here?!' 'Why don't you fund some road building or so?', remarked one participant laughingly, though barely noticed by the group and moderator. This behaviour indicated a strategic and wary attitude that some of the village dwellers seem to have developed towards security and development projects. It was most starkly demonstrated when the first security working group meeting that I attended in mid-August was re-located to the local school because the big hall of the *aiyl okmotu* (local

---

[39] This was yet another new issue brought up and discussed broadly with the newly-joining local council member during the working group on 27 November.

administration) was reserved for a project seminar by the infrastructural development agency *Aris*[40], whose help appeared much more attractive and necessary in the village than the less countable outcomes and additional efforts required by the Civic Union's community security project. This shows how the group and its stakeholders in the community were well aware about the different ways to effect change and acquire help from development agencies in Bishkek and higher-level institutions.[41] It also points, however, to an unlevel playing field, where people with good contacts to such institutions and agencies enjoy higher authority, while those lacking such a status can end up in a meaning- and helpless position, such as the co-head of the *aiyl okmotu* whose promotion to the leading position was pending throughout interaction with the Civic Union and put her in an helpless position.

Community 2

Status of working group

In contrast to the somewhat mixed performance of the working group in community 1, community 2 was something like the poster child of the Civic Union's community security project. This was because the local crime prevention centre (LCPC) had received a lot of capacity building support in the form of trainings and the formation of a community security

---

[40] Агентство развития и инвестирования сообществ Кыргызской Республики, http://www.aris.kg/

[41] This also became clear in the case of the topic of road security (*bezopasnost na dorogakh*), the group decided to bring the problem with car races conducted by young people to the attention of the regional road patrol unit. In another case, the relocation of a bus stop was discussed to protect people from possible accidents with the bypassing traffic, which shows how the group held the urban planning and design accountable and fed back into such processes in order to make them take into account the community's inhabitants' security concerns.

working group with the support of Saferworld and the Foundation for Tolerance International.[42] The existence of this working group and the familiarity with and openness to community security work on the part of the local authorities gave the project a decisively positive starting position in this community. A further reason as to why the overall process went along much more smoothly was the town's location along the border with Uzbekistan, because of which it had already been in the focus of attention of the previous security work.[43] The local authorities and especially the LCPC were thus trained and had already proved their ability to inform the population about security issues and conduct preventative work.

Another reason for increased attention both from without the community and on part of the local authorities and community security actors were the significant movements of goods and people in the region as part of the wider transfer routes of the Fergana valley and between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, in particular. The corresponding transnational networks seem to have spurred the rise of what is called 'non-traditional' Islamic practices and denominations, who apparently became more and more popular among the population and even led to a significant number of inhabitants going to Syria. Given this frontier status of the community, local administrators and activists had already gathered experience in cooperating with national level bodies such as the Tenth main administration under the MIA for countering radicalism and extremism[44], or in short 'tenth department' (*desiatyi otdel*); and the State Committee for National Security (*Gosudarstvennyi Komitet Natsionalnoi Bezopasnosti* or *GKNB*). The latter had participated in different events held by the LCPC and consulted local policy makers in their

---

[42] The biggest Kyrgyz national NGO in the area of peacebuilding and community security, see V.4

[43] Conflicts with Kyrgyz border troops over electric energy usage had unsettled the local population; as well as a number of unbeknownst border crossings of Kyrgyz citizens which put them in conflict with Uzbek border guards. Interview with LCPC representatives, 11 July 2015, Saferworld 2016: 25.

[44] *Desiatoe Glavnoe Upravlenie pri MVD po protivodeistviu radikalizma i ekstremizma.*

efforts to implement measures to reduce and prevent the increased recruitment of the population by so-called 'non-traditional' religious groups.[45] This embeddedness of the local working group's efforts in the wider national project of countering radicalisation and religious extremism was as a factor to motivate the group members and make them aware of the importance of their work, but it also increased the pressure onto them to identify root causes, mechanisms of radicalisation and extremism, as well as ways to counter them.

This prior activity and experience made for a mood among the group members and friendships that had apparently developed between some of them, as was palpable in the minutes of preparation before the start of the training session in the local administration building.[46] The female leader of the group, who was also the deputy head of the *aiyl okmotu*, was among the core group of friends who had been running the work in this community for years and had a very positive and encouraging way of talking to people while not lacking the courage and resoluteness to tell them if they were wrong. Another significant observation is the attendance of three members of the police – one youth affairs inspector or *IDN*, one senior and one ordinary neighbourhood inspector – and their active participation in the discussion. The working group further included a range of local council (*mestnyi kenesh*) members, representatives from the different institutions subsumed under the LCPC (i.e. youth committee, elderly or *aksakal* court), the deputy head of local imams, head teachers from the local schools, among others.

Besides the composition of the group, its links to the other institutions seemed very well developed, also thanks to the Civic Union's further efforts, whose activists visited the *aiyl okmotu* head after the event to discuss the result of the training, planned action steps and the

---

[45] Interview with LCPC representatives, 11 July 2015 (see V.4, Saferworld 2016).

[46] The following analysis is based on participatory during a working group training and planning session on 11 November 2015.

necessity to include the group's action plan into the local parliament's annual budget plan. The same relationship-building and maintenance appeared to have been practiced with the head of the local police station (*POM*), which was being renovated with the financial help of the UNODC (as in community 1). In contrast to community 1, the police representatives showed more than just formal presence and commitment vis-à-vis local administration and community security workers in this community, as the *POM* head gave the whole Civic Union team (including myself) a lift to the police station and to the restaurant where the whole group was to have lunch after the training. Working with the Civic Union and receiving their input on how to deal with security issues was thus seen as part and parcel of the wider capacity building process that involved significant investment into the police infrastructure.[47]

The entire working group gathered for lunch after the session and shared different stories and impressions with the Civic Union activists. New plans and perspectives were discussed regarding the work of the community working group and the Civic Union as a whole. This is reflective of the high awareness among the group about their mission and its meaning and purpose. Rather than taking this for granted, Timur, one of two CU activists, made sure at the beginning of the day to re-state both the Civic Union's founding idea and the role that the group in this community played in this mission: 'The main idea of our work is to maintain law and order on the local level … people here can decide themselves who is supposed to decide, whether it is the local leaders, the Regional Internal Affairs Administration, or others.' A further encouraging aspect was the recognition that the CU activists expressed vis-à-vis the local group members, as they mentioned that this group was one of the strongest in the whole project and through the invitation to the forum on the current state in the police reform in the end of

---

[47] By contrast, the group activities in community 1 sometimes appeared like a tick box exercise to discharge the moral duty and expectations raised by the reception of financial and other material benefits such as the building of the new police station with the help of UNODC.

November where the youth affairs inspector received the *Co-Security* prize award for '*IDN* of the year'.

Understanding of security problems and solutions

The increased radicalisation and alignment with 'non-traditional' sects among the population was one of two core issues presenting a particular challenge to the working group. A major factor of the occurring shift in believes and practices of Islam was the activity of missionaries who visited the town from outside, either from elsewhere in Kyrgyzstan or from neighbouring Uzbekistan. Correspondingly, one major concern for some group members was how to block the access of such missionaries or prohibit their apparently illegal practices all along. 'They should be completely prohibited to enter [the town]', posited one NGO activist during the group meeting and visibly captured the group's general fatigue with the issue. The head of the group and deputy *aiyl okmotu* head agreed but urged the members for more modesty: 'Our main goal to maintain public control. I agree [the foreign missionaries need to be controlled] but it has to be according to some rules [*na baze kakikh-to pravil*]'. After a long discussion, the group found that prohibiting missionaries' access appeared unfeasible and that they needed to focus on getting more information and a clearer view on the visitor's movements and activities. Furthermore, the deputy head of the local imams argued against the earlier proposition on the ground that that recruitment of supporters for radical Islamic sects and their inciting to join the fighting in Syria was mostly done via internet. Therefore, tackling the foreign missionaries might not even be the most effective way of reducing radicalisation and extremism in the town, he argued.

Another core problem was the desperate situation among local youth and the wide spread of hooliganism, school racketeering and violence among youth. The discussion on ways of overcoming this situation was in some ways very similar to the one in community 1, as all

group members seemed to see the problem more or less in comparison with their own upbringing and the pride and dignity that had been part of their everyday during the late days of the Soviet Union. The strongest proponent of a re-establishment of long-vanished virtues was the senior neighbourhood inspector of the police, who emphasised his view that a more serious consideration of conscribing a higher number of youth for military service could enhance their '*discipline*'. This was met with exclamations across the meeting room and followed by a controversial discussion. The head teacher of a local school adamantly raised her concern with such a reinvigoration of youth's attitude through a military-based national culture, especially given the connotations this had in terms of excluding different national minorities who would not subscribe to such a national spirit or would simply not qualify for conscription for lack of Kyrgyzstani citizenship. 'Excuse me', she concluded, 'but if Kyrgyzstan is only for the Kyrgyz, then all others will already be afraid [*to drugie uzhe boiatsa*] … if it's only about 'us', 'ours', 'this is for us' … [*esli eto tolko 'my', 'nash', 'eto nam' …*]'.

While there was general agreement that patriotic education and military-based disciplining of young people might be too divisive, the group leader expressed her own observation of the gendered nature of the lack of discipline and esteem among people: 'You know what the problem is all about?', she addressed the Civic Union activists including myself. 'We don't have any men, there are only women in the schools … The racketeering is spreading without any male authorities counteracting it … in any case, a man is a man [*vse ravno, muzhchina – eto muzhchina.*].' While this suggestion that women lack the authority and competence to effectively deal with issues of racketeering and authority might sound patriarchal and misogynistic, it is suggestive of the wider gender implications of the marketisation and political economy of post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, as well as the incapacitation of the education system (DeYoung 2007). The fact that average wages do not enable people to secure a family's livelihood entrenches a situation in which male teachers are by far outnumbered by their female

counterparts. Male breadwinners often depart to work in Russia or other post-Soviet countries to leave their children to be raised by the female partner, grandparents, or more remote kin and even neighbours, with significant implications for emotional and psychological wellbeing (see V.2).[48] While largely clueless which measures might be helpful in tackling the problem without marginalising anyone's interests or needs, the group agreed that organising sports tournaments and 'cultural mass events' – e.g. in the style of KVN[49] – might be useful to further facilitate young people's creative and organisational talents, and planned to devise more specific measures at a later point. Rather than tackling the root causes of violence and raising them with responsible state institutions and higher-level bodies, the working group thus focused on doing all it could to manage the situation on the ground.[50]

Community security practice seen through a post-liberal lens

This way of managing security issues while deferring their more fundamental tackling exemplifies once again the post-liberal problematique of community security, i.e. that that the problems encountered by community security and state-/peacebuilding actors have ramifications that go well beyond the latter's analytical scope and action repertoire. Non-

---

[48] See also the Civic Union's documentary short film 'Lost in their childhood' [*Poteriannye v detsvte*] on this topic, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfSWcPXxX2M

[49] Literally *Klub veselykh i nakhodchivykh* or 'Club of the merry and ingenuous', a format initially pioneering in Soviet state television which combines the genre of quiz shows with comedy, as participants are expected to answer questions and fulfil improvisation tasks in the most possibly humorous and entertaining way. This genre has become entrenched both in Soviet culture and in the entertainment world of post-Soviet states and is practiced by numerous student or youth *KVN* associations.

[50] Further planned measures of 'meeting with parents' and 'joint raids conducted by police and activists from villages in the evening time to prevent criminal behaviour' confirm this pre-emptive logic and focus on behavioural change, rather than on root causes of behaviour.

traditional religious radicalisation and extremism appear to be rooted in the lack of education and knowledge about Islam, which made people susceptible to being recruited to specific sects advertising membership as an especially pure or authentic way of practising faith. Another reason were the financial incentives given by sects with considerable financial means at their disposal, who were thus able to offer help to were struggling to make a living. As community 1 is situated in a structurally weak and poor district, the challenges that the local authorities face when trying to reverse the trend of growing numbers of radicalised inhabitants and extremist Islamists thus seem abundant. As the discussion on the necessity to bar foreign missionaries from accessing the city shows, the tense situation in relation to non-traditional religion in Kyrgyzstan (see IV.4.1) and the need to curb radical and violent extremism appear to generate pressures on community security practitioners and civic and social activists to take draconian measures which can limit different people's and groups' freedom of expression and religion. As with the discussion on preventing violent extremism among youth activists in the previous chapter (VI.2), there appears to be a danger that participatory and bottom-up approaches can be abused for gathering intelligence and justifying overly hard and possibly misguided – as the remarks on online recruitment by the deputy imam indicated – measures.[51] As indicated in section IV.3, this pressure is compounded and moralised by the allusion of a 'politics of sovereignty' perspective to the traditional Kyrgyz Islam, which has to be upheld and defended against foreign influences on an un-level playing field.

Another issue that was easier to solve is the problem of road safety which was prioritised by the local security working group given the high numbers of accidents happening on the

---

[51] Pelkmans (2017: ch. 5) provides an inner perspective of one more modern and pious Islamic movement which is prohibited which is prohibited in Kyrgyzstan. While it is understandable that the movement's practice of visiting other communities and calling people to visit mosques during prayer times may look suspicious, his analysis makes it equally clear that the intentions of the movement are not associated with radical ideas, at all.

national road leading trough the community.[52] The group agreed that more measures had to be taken to ensure the safety especially of school students moving across and alongside the road every day in the danger of high speed traffic. One major point the group brought up and vowed to address with the Regional administration of internal affairs (*ROVD*) was the fact that the whole town was officially appointed only a single traffic police officer[53], which was obviously much too little to deal with the challenge of keeping an eye on the highly frequented road's traffic. Asking for a strengthening of the traffic police's presence in the town was much more viable and effective a measure, a pure measure of distribution and allocation of administrative and personal resources, while attempts to curb radicalisation among the population were a more immediate matter given the ongoing recruitment of Kyrgyz as foreign fighters and the emergence of a discourse of threats to the country's sovereignty and integrity.

Implications and potentials of community level projects

The observations from the implementation of the so far largest community security project of the Civic Union in twelve piloting communities allow some conclusions about the post-liberal condition of this domain and the ways the latter needs to be navigated by the Civic Union and other actors. The project generally presents a great success, given the development and official confirmation by administration and internal affairs organs of the twelve action plans and the allocation of budgetary resources for the realisation of the latter. Still, as the participatory observation from two project communities show, the change brought about by the cooperative 'CoSecurity' approach promoted by the Civic Union is not always fundamental and straightforward. Rather, it is inherently contingent, negotiated and in need of being presented

---

[52] This road connects Osh province and the South-East of the country with the whole of the Fergana valley

[53] Russian *GAIshnik*, derived from the official short name State traffic inspection of the MIA or *Gosavtoinspekciia MVD or GAI.*

through engagement between different actors and with reference to better statistics, e.g. of a lower rate of crimes of a certain kind. In community 3 (see appendix 7, Lottholz and Meyer 2016), interaction between community security workers and police men was presented as a first visible result of the Civic Union's work, for instance, while substantial engagement with the researchers, through which this success could have been empirically substantiated, was politely but consistently rejected by members of the Local Crime Prevention Centre. Thus, as Graef (2015: ch. 8) has pointed out in relation to legal empowerment interventions in Liberia, the relevance, impact and success of the project needed to be constantly negotiated and maintained by the Civic Union while critical reflection on side effects and encountered problems and limitations guided their efforts to make the project as successful as possible.

As the research on the above communities and reporting from other ones has shown, the project had the irrevocable impact of initiating a dialogue between local administrations, law enforcement and populations. It was clear that this dialogue can effect a meaningful consideration of the needs of different population groups and measures to take into account and address such needs. This presents the realisation of a central tenets of the post-liberal approach to peace- and statebuilding, which emphasises empathy and needs and preferences of people, in defiance of the preoccupation with standard templates, formulae and practices of the 'liberal peace' approach (see III.2, Richmond 2011a).

On the other hand, it also became clear how the security working groups tended to occupy a moral and epistemic high ground in analysing issues and making decisions, while often failing to (visibly) engage and consult with groups or people affected by or associated with security or crime issues. This was most ostensible in the case of community 1, whose working group even failed to consult representatives from their community's youth and 'new arrivals' who were present on the group meeting. Similarly, community 2 appeared to be more preoccupied with curbing the activity of missionaries than with understanding the reasons for

missionary activity and whether and how it was actually associated with the reported recruitment of violent extremists in town. These ways in which the working groups related to their communities are reflective of paternalistic understandings of governance and social ordering which, as I have argued, are rooted in the mode of social organisation practiced during Soviet times. They also have clear associations with Kyrgyz traditional conceptions of order and harmony in the community, the maintenance of which is the task of elders in the *aksakal* courts or in women's councils (*zhensovet*) which were institutionalised during the Soviet period. Conceiving of these and the other actors in the working groups as straightforward guardians of order, morality and peace would be an essentialist move, however. A more critical approach is necessary by which the needs and feelings of young people or poor groups within the community are inquired in more depth and explicitness, even if this means to partially challenge the knowledge and competence of the former actors.

This critical point about working groups' representativeness and competence to decide for the rest of the community leads to broader argument about the epistemic dimension of the shift towards post-liberal community security and peace-/statebuilding. As I have shown, the working group and LCPC members had almost a monopoly on deciding which issues in their community were of priority and should thus be worked on, and which were of minor importance or not problematic, at all. In community 1, this meant that drug consumption and trading was eventually taken off the priority list. In community 3, it had the effect of sanitising the conversation vis-à-vis the police and me as foreign researcher from any mentioning of significant problems in the community, even if reporting such ones would have seemed logical given the large-scale violence that had struck the community back in 2010 and the widely-

reported continuation of harassment and marginalization of people in the aftermath of the conflict (Ismailbekova and Karimova 2018, Bennett 2016, Ismailbekova 2013).[54]

It thus seems that that denying the existence or importance of certain issues, including shortcomings in the actions of city administration and law enforcement is perceived as a matter of professionalism and good citizenship. In stating that everything is going well, even if things are not easy to deal with, neighbourhood committee leaders and working group or LCPC members appear to hope to shield the community from scandalising reports and to build a constructive relationship with people in charge. Conversely, explicit criticism was largely absent in community 2, which was perceived as a largely successful case, but would require more scrutiny as to whether there are disagreements between the different actors involved in securing the community. Acts of social ordering and community cooperative security provision are dependent on a suspension of such epistemic ambiguities – e.g. as to where and how recruitment of foreign fighters really takes place, or what would really the best way to keep youth from getting into conflict with one another and the law – in a post-liberal modality characterised by uncertainty instead of fully explicit exchange of opinions and criticisms.

Relatedly, I have indicated how the working groups' activities were geared towards a post-liberal politics of conflict management and peace performance, similar to the LCPCs in V.4 and TYCs in VI.3. On the one hand, this is understandable given the limited scope of the groups and their individual members in terms of resources, time and skills/knowledge. On the other, it is also important to acknowledge how a focus on empirically observable results, e.g. the reduction of fighting or racketeering among youth or number of recruitment of foreign fighters, might make community security practitioners susceptible to disregard possibilities of

---

[54] The scope of my research in this community was not sufficient to further analyse why exactly criticisms were silenced, but it was nevertheless interesting to see how the discussion of daily issues on the planning meeting with police officers and reporting about problem solving activities to me seemed to give the community security workers in this territorial council a sense of normality and being on the right path towards building a more secure environment.

addressing root causes of such issues and extending and strengthening state approaches at crime reduction and conflict management. As indicated in community 2, this would not be a surprise given the history of cooperation with state bodies and the perceived necessity to crack down upon religious radicalism. It thus seems that in this area, the current internationally dominant agenda on counter-terrorism and violent extremism generate resources and a sense of urgency that cannot be matched by knowledge gathering and dialogue on the communal level, thus feeding further pressure into the social system to be absorbed and materialised in social deviance.

Despite these internal ambiguities, the success and effectiveness of the project and its cooperative approach is fairly straightforward, especially when compared to the situation in community 1. Perhaps most important is the signalling effect of the interaction between law enforcement agencies and the population, or local administration and civil society acting on behalf of it. This indicated a rare and in many cases unprecedented, level of interest, accountability and empathy on part of the former. Furthermore, the project created a small audience (the funding organisation, higher level administrative bodies) vis-à-vis whom irregularities or misconduct could potentially be reported, which increased the accountability of local administrations and law enforcement in an informal way.

It can thus be argued that, while reforms on the top level are still slow and cannot be expected to create accountable and accurately operating police force all the way through to the practical level, it is the Civic Union's community work that delivers the results locally which insufficient policies are not able to produce. That is, the creation of community security working groups can be seen to have had a much more immediate effect on the communities themselves, as it signalled a re-configuration of the relations between the population and police, and law enforcement organs more generally. In this sense, the implementation of participatory approaches by the CU has provided the respective communities with a higher potential for

providing community security, if not security from a human perspective. The challenge following from this partial, modest success, was to scale up the experience, knowledge and potential of activist organisation in order to effect a more substantial implementation of reform measures on the national level.

VI.4   Shifting the tide? Further mobilisation and limited results

The Civic Union continued its efforts to bring about a more systematic and people-centred approach to police reform through the two-pronged approach of working with people in the regions and policy makers in the capital. On a forum titled 'Police reform in Kyrgyzstan – Reloaded'[55], the activists presented preliminary results from the above another project for external assessment of the police reform, funded by USAID[56], invited speakers from representing the government and Ministry of Interior Affairs to discuss their reform strategy, and awarded several prizes as part of the 'Co-Security 2015' award to acknowledge the efforts of state employees from different bodies and levels in bringing about social partnership and cooperation to reform law enforcement organs. This effort at positive and constructive interaction – see illustration 7.2 below with the 2015 Co-Security prize winners and a photo from a national level conference in 2016 –   with state actors further materialised in a 'Memorandum on cooperation in the advancement of internal affairs organs in the Kyrgyz Republic', which was concluded with the representative of the Public Council of the MIA.[57]

---

[55] «Реформа милиции в Кыргызстане: перезагрузка», 20 November, Bishkek. See http://www.reforma.kg/news/predstaviteli-0

[56] Пресс-релиз: В Кыргызстане приступили к разработке инструментов внешней оценки работы милиции [Press release: In Kyrgyzstan instruments for external assessment of the police entered into force], Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result', 20 December 2015, http://reforma.kg/news/press-reliz-v-kyrgyzstane

[57] Общественный совет МВД и Гражданский союз «За реформы и результат» планируют сотрудничество по продвижении реформы милиции [The public council of the MIA and Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result' are planning to cooperate on the promotion of police

Although merely declaratory in character, this signified a more positive and cooperative relation with policy makers in the capital, even if the Public Council is merely a civic control organ itself.

Illustration 7.2: The Civic Union's approach to dialogue on the national level

The winners of the Co-Security award, 'Police reform in Kyrgyzstan - Reloaded' conference, 20 November 2015, Bishkek, Author photography

National conference 'Co-Security and crime prevention policy in the Kyrgyz Republic', 7 June 2016, Bishkek, Source: Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result', permission

reform, Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result', 28 November 2015, http://www.reforma.kg/news/obshchestvennyy-sovet-i-grajdnaskiy-soyuz

A decisive step in the internal consolidation and development of a systematic approach in the Civic Union's activities was a conference under the title 'Developing Co-Security on the local level', to which the most activists and community security workers from across the country were invited, alongside a select number of MIA representatives showing sympathy for the alternative approach to police reform promoted by the CU.[58] The work during the conference mainly focused on discussing the establishment of a steady and more official structure for the network that would make its efforts more effective. There was general agreement that a central entity like a secretariat would be useful, while local working groups in different communities should be delivering data and analysis results and thus keep enriching the knowledge and understanding of the organisation as a whole. It was not clear, however, to what extent to make the working groups official, i.e. establish them as officially registered subsidiaries of the CU or, as was also suggested, have local crime prevention centres work as working groups more in terms of a side activity. The discussion on the central body – secretariat or otherwise – revolved around such points as recruitment of members of the secretariat and the possibility of local community workers to become members of the secretariat given their limited ability to personally attend meetings in Bishkek.[59]

Like the deliberations in local community working groups, the discussion was long, windy and not always fully targeted. But this was understandable given the long way the Civic Union had already come towards such an open and participatory discussion of the network's

---

[58] Participatory observation during event, 5 December 2015.

[59] Another frontier of the debate was opened up in regard to the question which sort of expertise and control should be established in relation to the secretariat. An experts council with representatives of the MIA and other former and current security sector staff was suggested as a useful advisory body while another 'Coordination council' was proposed to direct and sanction the secretariat's activities. This discussion was still at an early stage and more of a brainstorming but indicated fruitful avenues for the further development of the network.

future strategy. As the programme manager of Saferworld[60] explained to me in a conversation after the second day of the event, most of the participants of the seminar had already undergone an impressive development and their ability to engage in the discussion that I witnessed, as they needed to work their way in to such questions from their initial expertise that was only concerned with local level administration and community policing. The thing goes for the participants from the side of the MIA and law enforcement organs. As the chair for the department of youth affairs, who had only recently been recruited by the CU to participate in the event, stated during the discussion: 'You need to teach [people], they don't know, they were training me for five years on seminars of international organizations. At some point, I started to understand.' In this case 'understanding' implied that this senior law enforcement official realised that cooperating and engaging in dialogue with civil society organisations was inevitable in attempts to make law enforcement organs' work more accountable to Kyrgyz citizens. While perhaps not representative for the whole security sector, the many years that this person had taken to become convinced of the necessity to cooperate with non-security structures actors indicate how remote many key actors and decision makers might still be from cooperating with the Civic Union. By holding regular forums – such as the one depicted in illustration 7.2 – to gather the network members, stakeholders and national and international experts on police reform, community security and related issues, the Civic Union managed to further fortify its position as a key actor in these domains in Kyrgyzstan.

The end of 2015 appeared to be a time when things seemed to generally work out for the Civic Union. The network managed to forge with an alliance a group of female *Jogorku Kenesh* deputies, who invited the activists to different briefings of their informal parliamentary initiative. When I entered the CU's office for my last interview with Timur Shaikhutdinov and

---

[60] Saferworld supported the event as part of their continuous capacity building and conceptual advice provided to the CU. Conversation, Bishkek, 5 December 2015.

the other activists, they were just in the process of drafting their recommendations on the police reform to send them this group of deputies. On the same day, they received an invitation from this same women deputy group to attend one of its sessions in the city parliament (*gorodskii kenesh*) in the city of Osh. 'There is a reason to hope [*Est osnova nadeiatsa*],' agreed Timur when I asked him about the apparent upswing in the attention that the CU's efforts had been given the last days and weeks. The stated commitment of the then new prime minister Temir Sariev to work on the police reform and the place of this topic on the agenda of the MIA were further reasons to believe that real progress in the law enforcement reform could be made. The fact that the network had been waiting for political actors in the capital to respond to their demands for several months in the run-up to the parliamentary in October 2015, as well as during the post-election coalition negotiations showed, however, that matters were not in the hands of the activists and decisively dependent on the political business cycle in Kyrgyzstan.

Re-monopolisation of the reform process

The following months and years did not bring much progress in national level reform efforts, however and, after a phase of intensification of common efforts between the Civic Union and its partners in Parliament, led to a gradual re-monopolisation of the reform process by the government and MIA.[61] After presenting the *Jogorku Kenesh* with a new petition[62] to encourage systematic and publicly calling for a reform with concrete results, the Civic Union activists saw the scope for their input into the process with the discussion and final execution of an initiative to liquidate the Council for Reform and Development of the System of Law and Order.

---

[61] A systematic overview of the research and commentary publications and other press coverage can be found in appendix 5.

[62] Activists in Zhogorku Kenesh handed over petition with appeal for a police reform, 29 January 2016, Azattyk. For sake of brevity, only English titles, dates and sources (with hyperlinks) will be given hereafter.

Although the Council was also criticised for the little competence it was given, the CU admonished that its liquidation amounted to 'stripping civil society from its right to have a stake in the reform process', a problematique that was not solved by transferring the competencies of this organ to the 'Council for security and public order', which did not include any civil society representatives.[63] Further efforts of the Civic Union included a report presented in parliament[64], another forum in cooperation with MPs under the title 'Co-Security and Crime Prevention policy in the Kyrgyz Republic'[65] on which a new set of recommendations reiterating earlier demands were made, this time affirmed by participating MPs themselves.[66] This led the MIA to pass a set of laws aimed to restructure law enforcement, which the then secretary of the Defence Council qualified as 'fundamental reform'.[67] Given the superficial character of these changes, the Civic Union concluded that no real reform had taken place yet[68] and that, in order to deliver real results, more new legislation would have to be generated.[69]

For this purpose and to ensure the contribution of civil society actors, a working group including many civil society representatives – including the Civic Union's Timur Shaikhutdinov – was created by decree of PM Jeenbekov in September 2016[70] and tasked to write draft laws that help to further advance a more fundamental police reform agenda. Two of

---

[63] Society could be deprived of the right to take part in the police reform, 5 April 2016, reforma.kg

[64] Civic union presented a report on the progress of the police reform in the parliament, 12 April 2016, Azattyk

[65] Civic activists handed over dozens of proposals for police reform in Kyrgyzstan, 24 June 2016, KNews

[66] Djanybek Bakchiev MP: Security should be a key element of modern society, 11 June 2016, KNews

[67] Law enforcement agencies in Kyrgyzstan will be cardinally reformed, 4 June 2016, 24.kg

[68] The police reform and results that society wants are not there, 29 December 2016, Golos.kg

[69] Activists call for speeding up the development of the new legislation on law enforcement agencies, 31 January 2017, Akipress

[70] http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/215383

the draft laws concerned the key reform areas of competitive recruitment and the information and transparency provisions on law enforcement bodies and their operative activities.[71] The draft laws were not introduced into Parliament before its break during the presidential elections and the campaigning period. Although their first reading is to be schedules in the next months, it remains to be seen to what extent they were changed since the submission by the working group.[72] Given this deferral of the more thoroughgoing legislative changes until after the presidential elections, and despite continued calls for better cooperation on the realisation of this legislative and other reform initiatives[73], the MIA's and government's reform efforts were largely limited to the carrying out of the renaming and restructuring of the into six separate services.[74]

The Civic Union admonished that such a 'renaming is not yet a reform' and that the creation of the six new services[75] did not solve the issue that the central leadership of the MIA still had de facto control over these services, and that it consisted of mostly personnel with a military background and was not separated from the political leadership on the ministerial level.[76] 'The experience and history of previous reform attempts', the official announcement argued, 'that there can be no talk of reform'.[77] As already indicated, the limited renaming and

---

[71] See note 66.

[72] Further redactions to the draft laws had been made within the MIA and government apparatus since the draft submission from the working group. Timur Shaikhutdinov, personal interview, Bishkek/Plovdiv, 25 October 2017.

[73] Civic union calls for a dialogue of political forces, 28 March 2017, Kaktus; Timur Shaikhutdinov: There is a huge social potential for maintaining law and order, 20 April 2017, KNews

[74] Six new services have been created in the MIA, Azattyk

[75] Criminal police service, Service for combatting illegal drug trading, Internal investigation service, investigative service, Service for prevention of extremism and illegal migration, service for public security. See previous note.

[76] Renaming does not mean reform, 10 August 2017, reforma.kg

[77] See previous note.

restructuring measures were the last actions of the MIA before the presidential elections in October 2017. At the time of writing, it is not quite clear yet, which role the police reform will play on the agenda of the new president Jeenbekov, his apparatus and the already partly reshuffled *Jogorku Kenesh*. The fact that Jeenbekov had already led the previous government as prime minister and was a leader in the Social Democratic Party associated with president Atambaev, and that he thus oversaw the recent reform policies and described re-monopolisation of the process by the MIA, points to a consolidation of the previous agenda.

While developments on the national level remain largely contingent and progress in a very selective manner, the Civic Union managed to consolidate its role as practice-oriented and knowledge-generating experts in the law enforcement and crime prevention. The achievements of the UNODC-financed project on cooperative security provision in twelve piloting communities was well advertised in preliminary press coverage[78] and the final report.[79] The work in these and other communities was perpetuated through the allocation of small grants on a competitive basis[80] and the Civic Union stayed in touch with most municipalities that participated in the initial project and collected their new action plans.[81] The community-based approach of the project was further applied in one cooperation with authorities[82] in the Sverdlov district of Bishkek, where local residents were given the chance to tell their opinion on the

---

[78] For instance, An active fight against violence and extremism is started in all parts of the country, 29 April 2016, Knews; Police joins forces with the public and the authorities in 12 regions in Kyrgyzstan, 29 April 2016, Azattyk; The Police and the LSG organs developed a plan for crime reduction, 29 April 2016, Akipress

[79] A joint plan allows for the mobilisation of civic efforts and state authorities for crime prevention (final report), 24 August 2016, reforma.kg

[80] 12 projects on security and crime reduction start in Kyrgyzstan, 14 July 2017, Azattyk

[81] Conversation, Timur Shaikhutdinov, Bishkek/Plovdiv, 25 October 2017.

[82] In particular, members from the Bishkek city council, the local administration, the police and civil society representatives.

security situation and any concrete issues in the district via an online survey[83], whose results were subsequently analysed and used to identify priority issues and devise measures to work on them.[84] The experience and routine gathered in the community projects was used as a clear asset to promote the Co-Security approach for piloting and potential future application in all of Bishkek: 'After all, this worked in the countryside, where we have worked. There, the number of cattle theft, car accidents, domestic violence and school racketeering cases in fact decreased.'[85]

These and the well-established role of the Civic Union as commentator reform aspects such as the patrol service[86] restructuring and their production of research on crime victim statistics[87] or school racketeering[88] make this NGO network a key actor in the area of police reform and cooperative community security promotion. The limited success this actor achieved in terms of legislative, institutional and practical success in reforming law enforcement organs, despite the firm positioning in a number of fields pertaining to this domain, illustrate clearly

---

[83] Bishkek citizens are asked to take part in internet voting on law and order issues, 27 March 2017, Golos.kg, see KNews, Kaktus

[84] Joint plan: Bishkekians define the priorities for crime prevention, 2 August 2017, Kaktus

[85] How the neighbour can ensure your safety, 15 August 2017, Azattyk

[86] For instance, Activists: the union between RPS and PPS will not resolve the questions related to the fight against corruption, 2 March 2016, Knews; NGO: The new road authority will stop cars without a reason, 11 March 2016, KNews; The foot patrol will be separated from the patrol police, 25 April 2017, Akipress

[87] Research: teens at school are divided into 'observers' and 'crowd', Zanoza; Report release; Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result': School racketeering adapts to external conditions, 20 July 2016, Azattyk; In Kyrgyzstan, the problem with violence in the school environment remains extremely worrying, 24.kg; Activists: A new form of school racket has emerged - exploitation, KNews, all 20 July 2016.

[88] 'More than 60% of the crime victims do not report to the police', 24 February 2016, Azattyk; Only 30 per cent of the thefts and attacks' victims report crimes in the police, in the case of bribes - only 2-3 percent, 05 March 2016, 24.kg; 'Crime victims': Is the Kyrgyz police managing their job well?, 03 July 2016, KNews; Crime victim documentary, 03 July 2017, Youtube release; Victims of sexual violence are afraid to contact the police in Kyrgyzstan, 08 May 2017, Zanoza

the path-dependent nature of institutional development and the correspondingly limited prospects for sustainable forms of peace in post-liberal Central Asia.

VII.5 Police reform and imaginaries of statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan

As already indicated in the analysis of community level implementation of the Co-Security approach, the police reform and community security agenda of the Civic Union is situated within the imaginaries of social ordering and statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan. The decisive conclusion from viewing the network's actions from this perspective is that, rather than getting caught up in the antagonism between a Western 'liberal peace' imaginary that usually foregrounds democratic reform and criticisms of human rights violations in Kyrgyzstan (see IV.3), the Civic Union managed to reconcile ambitions and benchmarks in this area with ideas social ordering and moral integrity which are situated in the 'politics of sovereignty' and 'culture and tradition' imaginaries.

The high ambition that the activists' demands for transparency and data access to the MIA and law enforcement bodies present can more or less straightforwardly be situated in the Western 'liberal peace' imaginary. The consistent and not rarely biting criticism put forward vis-à-vis ministerial, governmental and law enforcement staff is not rarely reminiscent of the human rights-based criticisms raised by many NGOs which have earned themselves the reputation of so-called human rights defenders or *pravozashitniki*. Criticism vis-à-vis such NGOs is widespread in Kyrgyzstan and usually does not engage with the actual issues they raise but simply dismisses them on the base of their Western funding. Statements like Imanaliev's – that 'in order to justify the money they receive from donors, NGOs have to

'shout' just like that (*obiazany vot tak krichat*)'[89] – present a distorted portrayal of *pravozashitniki* as part of the 'bad West' discourse that I have examined above (IV.3.1).[90]

Apart from the outright and consistent criticism vis-à-vis authorities, the Civic Union and its composite NGOs portray themselves in references and symbolisms that can clearly be situated in the Western 'liberal peace' imaginary. The mission and symbolic representation of some of the NGOs under the roof of the Civic Union speak a very clear language in favour of liberal values, human rights and other concepts that underlie the transformation and democratisation agendas that were introduced in Kyrgyzstan throughout the 1990s.[91] The network is also the legal successor of the 'Liberal Youth Alliance' (*Alians liberalnoi molodezhi*), a political youth organisation founded in 2006 to lobby the interests of young people in constitutional reform and politics more generally.[92] The obvious question is thus as to whether the Civic Union is not seen as a main actor among other 'liberal' forces that are seen to promote democratic political and economic reforms beyond the extent that the country can accommodate and successfully implement them. This puzzle is further compounded by the fact that a lot of support the CU receives comes from the USAID, or as declared in the multiple reports and summaries of the CU, from 'the American people'.

---

[89] Imanaliev, Aman, Поющие песни Запада не откажутся оптом продать Кыргызстан? [Do those singing the songs of the West turn out to sell out Kyrgyzstan wholesale?], translation from newspaper 'De facto' No 39, 23 October 2015, p. 2, http://www.gezitter.org/politic/44646_poyuschie_pesni_zapada_ne_otkajutsya_optom__prod at_kyirgyizstan/

[90] This sentiment is more popularly held than actually expressed in commentators' opinions, but one exemplary publication is a dossier titled 'So whose rights are Kyrgyzstani (human) rights defenders defending?', *Delo Nomer*, 10 October 2014, http://delo.kg/index.php/2011-08-04-18-06-33/7741. A comprehensive overview of human rights defender's criticism is provided in a summary of statement of the Kyrgyz Human Rights Defenders Council: http://www.paruskg.info/2014/07/18/102712

[91] See organisational goals under: http://www.reforma.kg/content/grazhdanskiy-soyuz.

[92] В Киргизии возник Альянс Либеральной Молодежи "Свободное Поколение" [In Kyrgyztsan, the Liberal Youth Alliance 'Free Generation' was created], Centrasia, 20 May 2006, http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1148957400

When I asked him about this, Timur explained that the Civic Union had not faced any criticism in this regard.[93] Yes, their high demands and vocal criticism vis-à-vis the security sector's intransparency and remote positioning vis-à-vis society would regularly meet the resistance of officials, but neither on the national nor on the local levels had CU activists faced charges of being 'foreign agents' or acting in the interest of foreign donors at the expense of their fellow countrymen and –women. The fault lines, as Timur further explained, were rather different ones, as many international, particularly intergovernmental organisations such as the UN and its different agencies, as well as the OSCE, were agreeing on most things with the national policy making elites. The mandate of these international organisations was mostly focused on capacity building and did much less to hold policy makers to account when it came to reforming the police and security sector, as well as in other cases of reform efforts. National elites would have grown accustomed to this lenient position, he further explained. The network between ministries and, on other hand, UN and other big donor and development agencies thus appears more to fortify the current institutional set up and state-society relations in Kyrgyzstan rather than challenging the status quo and work on changing it.

This demonstrates how the Kyrgyz state and its primary political actors are interpellated in a web of responsibilities, treaties and standards limiting its own room for negotiation and transformative action, very much like set out in Chandler's conception of post-liberalism (2010b). It is equally clear, however, how the networks established within this web of governance structures also serve to stabilise and entrench certain institutional structures and practices that require fundamental overhaul. The different international actors active in law enforcement reform and security thus support a more conservative approach and do not endorse the more fundamental and rapid reform advocated by the Civic Union and more resonant with the 'liberal peace'. Even if such consolidation and maintenance may be done in the name of

---

[93] Interview, Bishkek, 11 December 2015.

stability and maintaining the Kyrgyz state's sovereignty, the necessity of doing so is contested on the ground, especially when taking into account citizens' access to security and fair treatment by the law enforcement organs.

As regards the Civic Union's positioning, the organisation did as of recent not face any need to prove its own integrity and that it was acting in the interest of the Kyrgyz people rather than any foreign donors. More than anything else this seems to stem from the fact that the organisation's efforts, often carried out by activists who simultaneously work in community security and administration structures, are clearly geared towards establishing security, stability and transparency on the ground by way of forging cooperation with law enforcement organs. Questioned if this activity can be seen as motivated by patriotic sentiments, Timur stated that CU members and activists see themselves as representatives of the society, which for some of them might also have a patriotic aspect, which is, however, rarely explicated. My analysis of community security practices in section VII.3 has shown that patriotism, national spirit and other sentiments of pride and belonging going back to the days of the Soviet Union are invoked in some cases by local community security working groups. In this sense, the joint community security work presented an opportunity to uphold the ideas of modern and Enlightened citizenship which some residents from the older generation appeared to see as benchmark for a dignified and secure life. In such instances, the liberal imaginary of the Civic Union became hybridised with the Soviet modernity discourse and other more critically inclined discourses from the 'politics of sovereignty' imaginary, while working group members similarly drew on tradition and culture to imbue their actions with meaning.

At times, this productive combination of the different imaginaries and discourses was also strategically used by the Civic Union members. On the session in community 2 which I attended, Timur introduced me and told the group members that I did research on the organisation and this working group in order to write 'about how we are building up a decent

country [*kak stroim normalnuiu stranu*].' This statement also had the purpose of putting participants at ease that the work that I was doing was aimed at presenting the unique effort of the project's implementation of Co-Security in piloting communities, and that therefore, implicitly, no major criticism or inappropriate disclosure of details or shortcomings of the group's work was to be expected. On the other hand, this statement situated the group's work and the Civic Union's work as a whole in a patriotic register of social ordering and statebuilding and thus set the basis for an open and critical discussion among the group, which would only be to the best of the community and the wider context.

It is also necessary to acknowledge, however, that the seeking of cooperation and synergies incurred new limitation and possibilities in the actions of the Civic Union and its partners. For instance, with the limited amount of time and resources allocated to the community security project in the piloting localities, there was only limited scope to discuss the potential and obvious caveats off the working groups' attempts to analyse security issues and devise measures to solve them. A more fundamental reflection on the exclusionary and potentially faulty attempts to analyse and tackle violent extremism in community 2, and the role of state security services in forming this approach and setting the agenda on this front, was deferred into the future cooperation with this community. This demonstrates how ambiguity has to be endured by actors is they wish to forge a more constructive engagement and avoid the confrontation and possible failure of their efforts. It also shows that the fundamental condition of human security still remains an ideal whose realisation is subject to more efforts than are currently underway, at least in the two piloting communities examined. More engagement with different groups and layers of the local population is needed to really solve issues in a way that creates a secure and peaceful environment for all.

Chapter VIII   Conclusion

The last three chapters have provided an in-depth empirical analysis of the production of secure and peaceful environments, the building of peaceful and tolerant relations among youth, and of attempts to reform law enforcement organs, specifically the police, in substantive and people-centered way. Rather than conceiving of these respective processes in technical, institutional and legalistic terms, I have attempted to show how they are embedded in wider trajectories of Kyrgyzstan's post-Socialist neo-liberal transition and corresponding changes in state-society relations. In this conclusion, I briefly reiterate and relate these case studies to one another and weave them back into to the discursive analysis of imaginaries of statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan (ch. IV) and the analytical framework and overall approach of the research. Throughout the conclusion, I re-visit the research objectives I have defined in I.2.

In a first step, I recapitulate the key insight the research offers on community security and peacebuilding practices in Kyrgyzstan and related discussions on peace, conflict, intervention and transition processes and the post-liberal trajectory they are situated in. Second, I draw together the findings on how the examined practices and discourses are situated in or positioned vis-à-vis different imaginaries of social order and discuss how analysing imaginaries of statebuilding can foreground a more substantive understanding of societal processes in post-conflict transitional countries. In a third section, I revisit the concept of post-liberalism in peace and conflict studies and social science more generally, and show its specific materialisations in Kyrgyzstan. Fourthly, I discuss how decoloniality and governmentality provide ways to view the results from the empirical analysis in a more explicitly normative and critical light. I also explain the rationale of the decolonial approach towards this research and the goal to understand issues of security, peace and social ordering in depth rather than drawing a heuristic and functional picture that is geared towards making recommendations to policy-makers or other stakeholders. Based on this reiteration of the guiding approach of the research, I chart out

potential future directions for research on peace, conflict and intervention studies in Central Asia and beyond.

VIII.1 Community security and peacebuilding practices in Kyrgyzstan

As stated in the Introduction, all analytical chapters IV-VII were considering processes of post-liberal statebuilding through practices of peacebuilding and community security. This analysis thus serves to fulfil the research objective of answering the question about **how specific 'local actors'** such as local government, civil society and the population at large **help produce, challenge and re-shape post-liberal forms of statebuilding**. As has become clear throughout the analytical chapters, the post-liberal trajectory in Kyrgyzstan provides less and less room for actors to challenge ongoing changes and restructuring in the country. I have implicitly equalised such 'challenges' to the negative effects of post-liberalism with the idea of producing more sustainable forms of peace and security, which would tackle the underlying root causes of violence, insecurity and crime. As I have shown, the different actors and initiatives examined faced different kinds of barriers and challenges in their attempts to create practices and organisational or institutional arrangements that would enable more sustainable and human-centred forms of peace, security and social order.

To enable an in-depth and thoroughly contextualised understanding of the ways in which community security and peacebuilding 'are done' in semi-urban and rural Kyrgyzstan, I have analysed the conditions and wider socio-economic and political changes that have shaped these processes since the country's independence in 1991, as well as the Soviet roots of such practices and relevant institutions. The contextual analysis of the collapse of Soviet Kyrgyzstan's significant industrial basis and the subsequent plunging of large parts of the population into poverty and uncertainty, as well as the discussion of the moral economy of survival and translocal livelihoods shed important light on the severe living conditions that the majority of

the country's population is grappling with (V.1). Given the prominent role of informal practices and corruption, it is clear that local administration and security provision are not straightforward issues but must depend on the networks and corresponding imperatives it is situated in. The discussion of local administrative and civil society structures has further elucidated this relational understanding, as it showed how historical heritage – by which neighbourhood committees or voluntary squads are conferred the authority to call people to order and obedience – or administrative dependencies – like that of LCPCs vis-à-vis local administrations and Interior Affairs organs for approval of their activities – can create path dependencies and entrench certain selective priorities of some entities over those of some groups in the community or the population at large.

The analysis of 'success stories' in selected LCPCs (Local Crime Prevention Centres) has illustrated how people working in these bodies can successfully mobilise local institutions and the population to solve problems pertaining to infrastructural issues or even effect change in problems such as high number of divorces and early marriages. It was also shown, though, that these successes are often measured in terms of narrow numeric indicators and that underlying causes are often too entrenched and complex to be addressed. The destitution and poverty for instance, because of which people may prefer to marry off under-age daughters and thus feed into the number of insufficiently resourced and potentially abusive marriages, usually remain outside the reach of local community security activists and social workers. LCPCs and their composite structures may often be constrained to basic mediation and conceptualisation of ways forward out of conflict and tension. This was best illustrated by the peacebuilding and dialogue measures in Bazar-Korgon, where, as the LCPC representative stated, a lot of work remains to be done given the entrenched divisions between different mono-ethnic communities. Attempts to instil peaceful coexistence after the Soviet-era idea of 'people's friendship' could

only reach a selective part of the population and perhaps, as an art work at the local school indicated, bears most potential when promoted among the younger generation.

Chapter VI further pursued the thought about building peace and tolerance among the young generation by looking at the establishment and present activities of Territorial Youth Councils (TYC) after the 2010 inter-communal clashes across southern Kyrgyzstan. Another theme continued from the previous chapter was that of volunteer mobilisation, which TYCs relied on even more heavily than LCPCs. I have shown how the TYCs' functioning as mobilisation conduits for young people to take on leadership positions and develop and implement various events and measures put especially high pressure on the TYC leaders to deliver on their positions, even if the salaries they received did not secure their livelihoods.

The key motivation for people to get engaged in TYCs was the idea that through them one could contribute to peace and tolerance, but also to the development of the city and the country in general, a connection expressed in the references to national symbolism and ideology as well as in the contribution of TYCs to celebrations and holidays of national significance. These connections to the Kyrgyzstani nation coexisted in relative harmony with expressions and performances in different sub-cultural genres, such as breakdance or singer-songwriter music. TYCs also made significant contributions to the tackling of security and conflict problems, such as racketeering, and organised mutual visits of largely mono-ethnic communities and inter-regional exchange between youth from the city and rural areas. While this network and its institutional infrastructure expanded further into the country-side, it also confronted issues that lay beyond its capacity to address, such as the incapacitation of social institutions that leave poor families and especially 'social orphans' increasingly helpless. Although TYCs and other youth sector NGOs organised significant efforts of solidarity to such vulnerable groups, it became obvious that these issues can only be effectively tackled through a more systematic youth policy and other sectoral policies. The NGO network 'Youth Policy

in Action' was about to initiate a national level dialogue in this area, but significant results thereof and indications as to whether and how youth vulnerability can be addressed remain to be seen.

In chapter VII, I examined the question about the possibility of a successful national level mobilisation of a progressive policy agenda through the example of the NGO network Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result' (CURR, Ru. *Grazhdanskii Soiuz 'Za reformy i resultat'*). Since its official constitution in 2012 and the successful gathering of over 10,000 signatures for its 'Alternative conception for police reform', the network had successfully seized influence on national level policy-makers and given valuable input that led to the creation of a legal-normative basis for a substantive reform of the way in which law enforcement organs worked. I also showed, however, how key demands for reform remained ignored or rejected – such as competitive staff recruitment mechanisms or the more systematic filling of positions with non-military staff. Given this and other forms of resistance towards a more fundamental reform, the Civic Union activists started developing projects to implement their Co-Security (*SoBezopasnost*) approach in pilot communities across the country.

By analysing the project implementation in two of these communities, I showed how cooperation and open debate between law enforcement, local administration, institutional leaders and population representatives indeed occurred and led to the devising of more appropriate measures for crime prevention and security provision than the police would have come up with on its own. However, I have also shown how the local security working groups were limited in their abilities to include all of their town residents' points of view and thus embraced at times paternalistic, at times objectifying, exclusionary and potentially overzealous approaches towards tackling issues such as juvenile delinquency or violent extremism. This illustrated how 'community policing' is a useful, but not sufficient ingredient for bringing about a situation where security is provided in a holistic manner that prioritises human security over

324

national or particular actors' interests. Both these limitations of local level 'community policing' and the seemingly endless altercations with policy makers about the reasons for not reforming law enforcement organs more fundamentally, got the CU caught up in its position as civil society activist, expert body and knowledge producer who constantly demonstrated its strength if not superiority in terms of arguments and expertise but were never elevated to become a policy-making authority of their own.

These three case studies were chosen as illustrations of different configurations of societal actors, state agendas and institutional affiliations. LCPCs demonstrated how the state attempted to directly create a new institution to coordinate other existing neighbourhood level institutions (*aksakal* courts, women's councils, imams, etc.) and align them under the local administration and internal affairs organs. While LCPCs were often, if not mostly, run and sustained by volunteers with a sincere concern to bring peace and deal with challenges in their communities, and further attracted funding form international organisations such as Saferworld and the Foundation for Tolerance International (FTI), the local administration and internal affairs organs retained the last say on the activities of these bodies. A similar logic underlies the TYCs, which had been initiated by the OSCE and a Kyrgyzstani NGO and were ultimately constituted as part of the Committee for Youth Affairs under the Osh mayor administration and subordinated under each Territorial Council, i.e. mayor administration sub-unit in the respective city districts.

While this was the way for the institution to continue its activity in the most effective and sustainable way, it is important to note that these voluntary and internationally supported acts of building peace, instilling tolerance and peaceful coexistence in fact amount to the reproduction of peace and order according to the agendas of the mayor's administration and associated political actors. Whether a racketeering prevention measures or a 'Kids from our courtyard' event, these activities reproduce the social order of the Kyrgyzstani state and thus

present a connecting element between peace and order, on the one hand, and the state or government and its agendas, on the other. This becomes even more clear in the case of the Civic Union, who are not aligned with the state but from the start of their activity were explicitly situated in a liberal civil society milieu. Although the goal of all three entities examined is obviously the same – sustainable peace in communities throughout Kyrgyzstan – their approaches to reach this goal diverge significantly in that the Civic Union aims to bring about a significant transformation of law enforcement agencies, while both TYCs and LCPCs have the mission to largely work in their local environment as they encounter it. The difference in approaches becomes more clearly understandable through a reflection on how these different entities are situated within or against imaginaries of statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan

VIII.2 Imaginaries of social order as link between practices and wider statebuilding trajectories

To better make sense of the hybrid and often complex processes, practices and discourses of social ordering and peacebuilding feeding into the trajectory of post-liberal statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan, I have proposed the use of 'imaginaries', understood as mental constructs that help to better understand why and how actors make sense of their environment and engage in certain discursive and practical actions. Imaginaries offer a more productive and nuanced way of understanding the hybridisation of different statebuilding discourses and concepts because, as I have argued, they can be understood as a higher order of discourse, as semantic entities that lie above and beneath different discourses and which structure thinking and action in more subtle ways. Hence, I have suggested that different imaginaries can have composite discourses, which add more nuance to the general idea of an imaginary but constitute a coherent system of signifiers in themselves. These composite discourses make it possible to conceive of the overlap, hybridisation and combination of different imaginaries in statebuilding practices or discourses. Based on this basic idea, I set out to answer the research question:

How do imaginaries of statebuilding shape community security practices in Kyrgyzstan?

As I have further argued, the link between imaginaries and practices or discourses of community security is a circular one. Imaginaries are conceived of as nodes that filter certain societal (both nationally and globally circulating) discourses into the domain of community security and peacebuilding and are in turn reproduced and possibly changed in the process.

Imaginaries of social order in Kyrgyzstan

In chapter IV, I have defined the three key imaginaries of statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan on the basis of in-depth analysis of literature – both from the country and beyond – on socio-economic and political change in Kyrgyzstan and other post-Soviet states, as well as on the country's history, culture and traditions, and by drawing on media coverage and my own observations and interviews during fieldwork. To provide more nuance on the reception and roles of the 'liberal peace' in Kyrgyzstan, I have defined a 'Western 'liberal peace' imaginary' which, I propose, structures people's thinking in regards to the perceived features of Western societies and social organisation and possibilities to achieve a similar order and wealth via transition towards a capitalist economy, realisation of entrepreneurial visions of personhood and strategies and practices of coping with the adversities and failures of such societal transformation. I have also shown how this imaginary is historically rooted in what Yurchak calls the 'imaginary West' and thus reproduces the dialectical tension between idealisation of the West as a benchmark for social, political and economic development but, on the other hand, foregrounds criticisms of the Western way of life and its supposed lack of morals, spirituality and equality (Yurchak 2006: 160).

Even if inaccurate or over-interpreted, these criticisms inform observable discourses and positionings of resistance against Western interference and geopolitical dominance – directed mostly at US involvement in the country and wider region. This anti-Westernism is augmented

by other discourses emphasising Soviet modernity and ethno-nationalist ideas of Kyrgyzstan's affairs being a prerogative of ethnic Kyrgyz, and more generally anti-colonial sentiments rejecting the Soviet legacy and other cooperation all along. They form an imaginary which I call 'politics of sovereignty' and which I use, based on Gullette and Heathershaw's proposition (2015), to denote acts of defiance vis-à-vis international influences and interference of political and societal actors domestically. The use of this label captures the fact that such acts of defiance often occur in a discursive and performative register that is situated in historical and more widely-circulating discourses and thus rarely appears to go beyond the instance of a 'political act'. A more substantive sovereignty, not only in the sense of political positioning, would, it appears, rarely if ever reject international cooperation and involvement given the different issues that Kyrgyzstani society is subjected to and dependent on – especially in light of its constitution as a largely raw material producer and net receiver of transfers from Moscow during Soviet times.[94]

'Politics of sovereignty' is thus used as a partial expression of what is conceived of as 'the local' in other peace and conflict research. The other imaginary capturing local positionings is that of 'tradition and culture', which is denotes the different discourses and practices that are understood to carry forward the Kyrgyz historical heritage and customs. As the conceptualisation of this bundle as imaginary and the taking together of two concepts that are highly complex and contested on their own suggests, 'tradition' and 'culture' is here understood in an emic way, as it is expressed, understood and practiced by people in Kyrgyzstan. Is not intended to proclaim any substantial or scientifically accurate notion of these concepts. I have

---

[94] Against this background, substantive sovereignty can only be expected to be generated through anti-colonial positionings and economic nationalism which would lead to the development of a production base and trade networks enabling the country to accumulate capital account surpluses and decrease dependence on migration remittances. This is not to say that such a substantive sovereignty is feasible. The path dependency of Kyrgyzstan's strcutually conditioned dependency and relationality with other economic and political actors rather seems to present a prime case of the post-liberal governance (Chandler 2010b).

shown how composite discourses of this imaginary resonate with the 'politics of sovereignty' imaginary in that they conceive of Kyrgyz 'traditional' Islam as something to be shielded from foreign influences of orthodox and supposedly harmful Islam and in that tradition coexisted with modes of social organisation and administration in the Soviet period and was even instrumentalised for such purposes in the post-Soviet era, as best exemplified by the institutionalisation of *aksakal* courts.

Tradition and culture in Kyrgyzstan are more than that, however. By further exploring research on how traditional practices and understandings permeate life of people in Kyrgyzstan and present a source of meaning and a sense of belonging, I demonstrated that these understandings can have a profoundly existential and individual aspect which traverses into the spiritual domain, where traditional ways of life – derived from Kyrgyz nomadic tradition – sustain the harmonic co-existence between humans and nature, as propagated by the outlined ecosophical worldview. I have indicated how this spirituality and transcendence resonates with the idea of 'deep relation', which Shilliam defines as the 'healing of colonial wounds' and the 'bind[ing] back together [of] peoples, lands, pasts, ancestors and spirits' (Shilliam 2015: 13) after these connections have been disrupted or distorted in imperial modes of modernisation and post-Socialist neo-liberal transformation.

This is not to say that traditions and culture have exclusively positive implications. On the contrary, I have shown how, when subject to large-scale application and instrumentalisation during late Socialist and capitalist eras, traditional financial support schemes spiralled out of proportion and have deepened the indebtedness and destitution of the already badly off (V.1). Furthermore, an uncomfortable tension is underlying the indulging into and promotion of Kyrgyz tradition as the discourse on this topic exhibits an ontological conception of cultural heritage and ethnicity as something that is to be preserved against a supposed threat of extinction in a globalised world – a view that does not serve to mitigate, but may rather

aggravate ethno-nationalist concerns about the rights and prerogatives of the Kyrgyz 'titular' ethnicity. Thus, I have shown how the composite discourses of the three imaginaries of statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan do not only stand in disagreement but can also be complementary and exhibit different emancipatory and problematic tendencies. By exploring the history of anti-colonial discourse and the spiritual and transhumance aspects of tradition, I have also pointed to modes of being, acting and knowing that foreground a more radical approach at social organisation and national development, and, as in the latter case, may even reject or stand in uncomfortable relation to modernity. These discourses thus indicate the boundaries of the practical-discursive field of community security and peacebuilding in Kyrgyzstan, which, in its attempt to build a secure, peaceful and harmonious environment, is unlikely to embrace such radical and post-/anti-modern development stances.

Contestation, synergy, ambiguity

How did these imaginaries shape the way community security and peacebuilding is done in Kyrgyzstan? As I have argued primarily in the discussion sections of chapter V-VII, the practices and discourses in the cases of different actors can be seen as different combinations and iterations of imaginaries and discourses of statebuilding, where the 'politics of sovereignty' imaginary largely retained the upper hand. This is already apparent in the discussion of the different examined entities' existence within and constitution by the state – or in opposition to the government or parts of the state. LCPCs and TYCs can in this sense be seen as a creation or expression of politics of sovereignty, a status inscribed in the laws and decrees ordering their creation and charters detailing their work and goals. Even if these institutions are run and sustained largely by voluntary activists and international capacity building and financial support, the order, peace and security they build is in sync with a state conception of security

and thus subject, even though largely implicitly, to the priorities, agendas and interpretations of deviance, crime and conflict held by governmental, administrative and internal affairs actors.

This promotion of a conception of social order, peace, harmony and crime prevention premised on governmental and other state actors' views is largely an unconscious practice, which, in Bourdieu's words 'goes without saying' given the historical continuity it presents. The habitualisation and normalisation of peacebuilding, community security and crime prevention practices is rooted, it can be argued, in the idea of Soviet modernity which surfaced in the corresponding discourses in all of the three case studies. It is decisive to understand that, while ultimately amounting to an expression of politics of sovereignty, this discourse sits comfortably next to other ones, thus enabling a hybridisation of unlikely composites into post-liberal forms of community security. Most important to mention here is the discourse of the 'imaginary West', which justifies 'liberal peace' style peacebuilding and conflict prevention activities supported by international agencies and donors, which aim to promote good governance, institutional accountability and human rights protection.

The co-existence of such discourses explains how it is possible that one and the same project or set of practices can be seen as realising Western donors' agendas and the ones of national and local powerholders at the same time. As I have demonstrated, such contradictoriness can also imply a lack of effectiveness of projects and can render them more performative and unable to transform entrenched tensions and conflictual relations between different communities or between population and law enforcement, as shown in the analysis of 'people's friendship'-style peacebuilding in chapter V. A similar disagreement of state and administrative perspectives on the one hand and those of civil society and the wider population on the other was apparent in chapter VI, where a more systematic approach at tackling problems faced by youth in Kyrgyzstan was seen to be necessary and demanded in different ways. The contestation of differing conceptions of institutional design and how it can and should maintain

social order was most apparent in the confrontation between the activists of the Civic Union and government/policy-makers in chapter VII.

Given that all three actors examined, and their respective agendas and interests, were situated in the imaginaries of statebuilding, it can be concluded that one way in which these imaginaries shaped the practices and discourses of statebuilding – whether in the form of creation of institutions from scratch, reform or (re-) production of social order after state/government-centric blue prints – was through contestation. The idea of contestation between different actors is not new, but conceiving of this contestation through the lens of the three imaginaries helps to better grasp the complex, hybrid and heteroglossic nature of these contestations. Previous debates on 'post-liberal' and 'hybrid forms of peace' and their critiques have exhibited difficulties of conceiving of the hybrid identities of actors. The proposition of this research is to shift the focus towards implicit mental constructs that inform different actors' positions as to what kind of order, peace or state is to be built. The use of the 'politics of sovereignty' imaginary has allowed me to show how local and national administrators and policy-makers may not categorically deny the idea of reform, policy and practice along Western lines. However, they may disagree about the speed with which such change is to be brought about or the conditions and specific areas under/in which it happens. Rather than dismissing such a stance as regressive 'local resistance', it is important to analyse it in a nuanced way and to capture how it thrives on and becomes part of international structures and flows to fortify selectively and performatively reformed ways of building peaceful and secure communities (see next section).

'Politics of sovereignty' agendas and actors will not only enter pragmatic alliances and cooperation with Western 'liberal peace' actors. Both they and other imaginaries exhibit comprehensive potential for synergy, which the second modality of relation between imaginaries of statebuilding. The most significant example in this vein is the synergy between

'politics of sovereignty' and the 'tradition and culture' imaginary.[95] Unpacking this intertwined relationship and showing how tradition is in many ways instrumentalised by political actors, as was done in Beyer's analysis of the role of *aksakals* in political life (2016), shows how imaginaries of statebuilding can be combined in thoroughly synergetic ways. The institutionalisation of *aksakal* courts, as well as of LCPCs, which act as an umbrella for *aksakals* and other Soviet era social institutions (see chapter V), was also supported by international capacity-building and financial support, showing the high potential for a synergetic hybridisation of 'politics of sovereignty and 'tradition and culture' imaginaries, on the one hand, with the 'Western liberal peace' imaginary of statebuilding, on the other.

In chapter VII, I have demonstrated that even the Civic Union, which had a generally critical and controversial stance vis-à-vis government, internal affairs and administration actors, managed to draw on this synergetic potential by forging constructive dialogue in different communities and by charting an agenda of providing security and preventing crime in sync with both more liberal and human rights-focused perspectives and Soviet, paternalistic understandings. The activists also drew on a patriotic register in saying that actively participating in community security groups ultimately serves to 'build a decent country', an invocation that can be situated in or close to the 'politics of sovereignty' imaginary and explains the appeal of the networks' efforts for law enforcement and local administration staff.

The analysis of local security working groups' activity also exhibited that the synergy of imaginaries of statebuilding thrives on, and is partly even only possible thanks to, the ambiguity of the discussed hybrid practices and discourses of community security, peace- and statebuilding. With the limited amount of time and resources allocated to the community

---

[95] Even though I have shown that 'tradition and culture' are fare more complex and even foreground modalities of life that reject modern statehood and capitalist development, the current regime and form of statehood are so frequently and intensely intertwined with discourses, practices and everyday institutions of Kyrgyz tradition that it may indeed be hard to separate the two, as I have indicated.

security project in the piloting localities, there was only little scope to discuss the potential and obvious caveats of the working groups' attempts to analyse security issues and devise measures to solve them. Thus, while the project fulfilled the purpose of demonstrating that the 'Co-Security' approach can make a decisive difference on the local level, a more fundamental reflection on the exclusionary and potentially faulty attempts to analyse and tackle violent extremism in community 2, and the role of state security services in forming this approach and setting the agenda on this front, was deferred into the future cooperation with this community.

This demonstrates how ambiguity has to be endured by actors if they wish to forge a constructive engagement and avoid the confrontation and possible failure of their efforts. I have also argued, however, that such a pragmatic and more lenient approach also brings about new tension vis-à-vis more radical lines of argument. In the case of the Civic Union, constructive engagement with the MIA also carried an association of being in the 'lion's den' and enabling a popularisation or legitimisation of internal affairs organs' actions in instances when they accepted the activists' recommendations. The irresolvable tension between the unwitting support of the politics of sovereignty of the government and policy-makers in Bishkek, on the one hand, and a more transformative approach situated in the Western 'liberal peace' imaginary, on the other, captures well the dilemma of the Civic Union network and thus shows how the imaginaries of statebuilding provide a useful framework for understanding the condition of post-liberal statebuilding. As a final, overarching answer to the initial research question, How do imaginaries of statebuilding shape community security practices in Kyrgyzstan?, it can be concluded that through the different modalities of contestation and (ambiguous) synergy, imaginaries of statebuilding serve to further entrench community security in a post-liberal trajectory of statebuilding, the implications of which I discuss in turn.

VIII.3 Post-liberal statebuilding in Central Asia

The key contribution of this research is to show how the forms of statebuilding shaped through the interaction of imaginaries of social order and community security practices present a new configuration of the international political economy, international governance institutions and organisations and the dynamics of interaction between national governments, local administrations, civil society and local populations they produce. In chapter II, I have reviewed how this shift is situated primarily in a shift towards post-liberal governance since the end of the Cold War, which denotes the distinct nature of the set of international obligations and expectations faced by countries constituting themselves as independent or emerging from internal conflict or previously 'undemocratic' rule (Chandler 2010b). Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, its successor countries were also confronted with these conditionalities, standards and blue prints for rebuilding their polities and transforming societies down to the way of thinking and living one's life. This integration of post-Soviet states into the liberal world order has produced few success cases in terms of political and economic development and, given the dire conditions and fundamental uncertainty suffered by the majority of people in the post-Soviet space, has led to a very selective and reluctant adoption of liberal-democratic standards in some countries and different degrees of rejection in others.

The past 25 years in Kyrgyzstan present a prime example for the vagaries of transition and how the fatigue with Western-style reforms has led to a hybrid, post-liberal form of governance, social organisation, administration and also peacebuilding and security policies and practices. The first feature of post-liberal politics in the post-Soviet space, I have argued in chapter III, is the widespread technocratic and 'state of emergency' kind of policy-making, which leaves little time for deliberation, dissent or alternative proposals. The resulting top-down mode of governance is justified and normalised as inevitable both in light of the precarious conditions of the global economy, but often also with reference to the cultural

specificities of the respective country or region. In my analysis of the Western 'liberal peace' imaginary, I have shown how this trajectory is foreshadowed by the teleological way of perceiving the national economy and its regional and global integration.

Thus, and based on a routine perception of Soviet-era technocratic policy-making, people focus on how companies and individuals can best adapt to economic conditions instead of publicly engaging in or initiating debate on economic policy-making and regulation. Although a lot of trust in politics has been lost and nowadays people are aware that elites are unlikely to bring about radical change to how their country is positioned, this does not mean that more public debate is occurring. Rather, people try to secure their existence by having the right networks for developing their business or receiving support in hard times and leave engagement with politics to a select few. This makes for harmony among those who are able to make a good living under adverse conditions but, for many smallholders and the gradually increasing unemployed population, inappropriate economic and social policies have entrenched their precarious living conditions.

Community security and peacebuilding actors and practices come into play in situations where the destitution and dependence of people on domestic of international labour migration lead to issues of theft, deviance, violence and mental illness. I have shown how LCPCs and TYCs can often only do little but try to mediate or mobilise help and solidarity in case of domestic and neighbourhood conflicts emanating from 'badly-off families' (*neblagopoluchnye semi*). More systematic action to tackle the reasons for widespread poverty and destitution, beyond promoting better education and better attitudes among youth to shield them from such trajectories, seems to be beyond the scope of these community security institutions. The autonomisation and responsibilisation of local administrations and community security actors in this sense further facilitates the entrenchment of post-liberal technocratic policy-making,

which benefits a select few while community security volunteers call people to be virtuous and perseverant in face of the challenge of survival and social reproduction.

This pattern is further entrenched as calls for more accountability and more equitable policies are rejected as forms of Western or Western-backed intervention or interference through discourses situated in the 'politics of sovereignty' imaginary. These are especially salient – both in Kyrgyzstan and other Central Asian countries and beyond – when justified with cultural and geographical specificity, such as with references to the nomadic tradition which was used to justify a supposedly specifically Kyrgyz variant of 'consultative democracy' (Bakiev, see Omelicheva 2015: 83). On the other hand, critiques of political processes in Kyrgyzstan often appear to be framed in too Western-centric terms such as 'corruption' or 'crime' which, even if technically correct, make it easy for elites to brandish commentators and reassert their dominance.

Put bluntly, the idea of explicit criticism and controversial debate is simply not well established in politics in Kyrgyzstan, a fact well illustrated by the alienation the Civic Union caused with their critiques of the state of law enforcement organs. If criticism (*kritika*) should better be minimised or not be voiced at all, it becomes obvious that different projects and activities as they have been analysed in this research only present one layer of the reality of community security and peacebuilding in Kyrgyzstan. This might be understandable given the first-hand experience of physical violence by people in southern Kyrgyzstan in 2010, and by Bishkek's inhabitants on the occasions of two revolutions in 2005 and 2010. It appears equally clear, however, that the more fundamental social problems underlying tensions and conflict cannot be addressed without allowing an explicit debate about what is going on in the country and what can be done better. In this sense, statebuilding in Kyrgyzstan and the region is post-liberal as ideas of explicit criticism, debate and a multiplicity of interests are usually disfavoured. Rather, both policy-makers and people working in local administrations and

security working groups prefer to stress the adverse conditions they face, the relative success they have achieved, and the difficulty of affecting more fundamental change.

This leads to the third element of post-liberal social ordering as I observed it in my research. Rather than merely rendering the question about the desirability of debate and criticism subject to cultural and national belonging, in some interactions that I have surveyed it became obvious that the status of expertise, knowledge and even facts and 'truth' became contested and viewed differently depending on people's positions. This concerns mostly the altercations between the Civic Union and ministerial and governmental decision makers, in which unclear reasons were given for such decisions as for example the maintenance of the secrecy protection of data on law enforcement bodies. There might indeed be reasonable justifications for such decisions but instead of putting any such forward, the officials in Bishkek not rarely resort to simply defending their line in a rhetoric position battle rather than engaging in a substantive debate. This was also reflected in the responses to the CU that their lack of expertise and experience of working in law enforcement or military organs disqualifies them from understanding, let alone shaping policies in the law enforcement sector. Sluggish or non-reform has persisted despite the over-burdening amount of project activity and the evidence delivered by the CU that more substantive reform is possible and necessary. This interaction thus presents an epistemic shift from the neo-liberal episteme foregrounding discussion and conceptualisation on commonly accepted facts and frameworks to a post-liberal episteme, where knowledge is recognised as relevant or true only insofar as it supports the agendas of a given actor.

A final reflection is necessary in regard to these seemingly tenuous attempts to reject expertise on law enforcement and community security reform or to withstand the idea of using criticism and open debate to bring about more progressive politics and social relations. These forms of resistance appear to emanate from the internationalised condition in which Kyrgyzstan

is constituted since 1991 and which have exposed it to a host of influences and agendas. This has brought about an 'assemblage' state of which different parts of governance, administration, the economy and other domains are outsourced to international actors or internationally supported and funded actors, such as the Civic Union but also LCPCs and TYCs, albeit in different ways. The frontier at which control over decisions and agendas is asserted in this situation now runs through the very activities, projects, practices and discourses of these actors. It is not surprising that they exposed different degrees of subordination to and alignment with governmental, local administrative or internal affairs priorities, as such positioning appeared to potentially be the license for these actors to exist in the first place. Post-liberal statebuilding is thus a condition in which the constellation of actors, practices and discourses that (re-) produces state-sanctioned social order is internationalised and shaped by geographically, culturally and historically specific imaginaries, whose equilibrium informs the degree to which statebuilding can become radical and deviate from a premediated path. In the final section, I critically reflect on the implications of this shift towards post-liberalism through the lenses of governmentality and decoloniality.

VIII.4 Governmentality and decolonial entry points for peace, conflict and intervention analysis

The fourth objective I set in the Introduction was to use the critical normative concepts of **governmentality** and **decoloniality** to evaluate the instantiation and reproduction of regressive forms of social order and hierarchy in the practices and processes examined. The idea behind this is to go beyond a mere theorising of post-liberal statebuilding and related processes in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia. As the critical debates examined in chapter II have indicated, peace, conflict and intervention researchers need to acknowledge that they become complicit with the current global order if they confine themselves to looking at current events and possible future pathways through an academic and theoretical perspective only. Rather, the depth and

entrenchment of inequality, hierarchy, exclusion and violence need to be inquired with as much contextual perspective as possible, so as to identify possible entry points for challenging existing conditions and devising new ways of building peaceful and just societies.

My contribution to this agenda is a tracing of governmentality and decoloniality in the different concepts and approaches through which peace, conflict and intervention can be researched – namely, imaginaries and community security (chapter III); to the imaginaries of discourses of statebuilding that I have identified as key in Kyrgyzstan (chapter IV); to the practices of community security and peacebuilding which were situated in these imaginaries and contributed to their enactment and reproduction (chapters V-VII). In so doing, I have not used these concepts in order to simply criticise as inadequate or distorted the respective imaginaries, discourses and practices. Rather, I have tried to show how the dialectic between governmentality (or, coloniality, see Mignolo 2011) and decoloniality is paramount throughout space – as community security practices exhibited problematic exclusionary and essentialising tendencies in their application in Anglo-America, as well – and time – as governmentality is a modality rooted in the historical modes of social ordering and the habitualisation and normalisation of the violence and injustice they bring about.

In the Kyrgyzstani case, this reproduction of internally established forms of hierarchy, exclusion and inequality was especially apparent in relation to the role of Soviet modernity in structuring civil society and voluntary engagement. Being active in the community and contributing to the solution of its problems is seen – both now and in Soviet days – as a high value in itself and is thus also perceived as moral obligation or expectation towards elderly and/or people who are well-off. The extra labour that voluntary communal workers invest also often puts them in a position of arbiter between the population and the local or higher-level administration, law enforcement and security organs. Especially in the event that potentially problematic residents or groups of residents are hard to access or not ready for conversation, or

when decisions are hard to take and contested, voluntary local groups and social institutions become constituted as the defenders and upholders of government or local administration policy, unless they challenge the latter themselves. The Local Crime Prevention Centres examined in chapter V, territorial youth councils in chapter VI and community security working groups in chapter VII thus become decisive actors in the new governmentalisation of the community, which Rose described as follows:

> Community, rather than the 'social' is the new territorialisation of political thought, the new way in which conduct is collectivised ... in a double movement of autonomisation and responsibilisation. Once responsibilised and entrepreneurialised, they would govern themselves within a state-secured framework of law and order (1999b: 475).

The decisive aspect facilitating this autonomisation, responsibilisation and thus governmentalisation is the work of imaginaries of statebuilding, through which the promotion and implementation of governmental, local administration and other agendas is secured in non-obvious ways and not rarely packaged as that which is, by all measures of appropriateness, the right thing to do. This way, promoting tolerance through the 'people's friendship' approach despite deep cleavages between mono-ethnic communities (V.3), tackling racketeering or devising restrictive measures against religious radicalism (VI.2), and re-creating events and platforms which would introduce local youth with past achievements and civilisational virtues (VII.3) all seemed to be perfectly reasonable solutions to community security problems. At the same time, however, they also served, even if unwittingly, to reproduce the current order, stabilise existing hierarchies and distracted from ways to deal with the more fundamental causes of insecurity, crime and violence.

As a counter-pole to governmentality, and in place of the concepts usually used in peace, conflict and intervention studies to think about progressive change (most frequently 'emancipation' and 'agency'), I have introduced the concept of decoloniality. Being aware that

it is unlikely to come across a decolonial 'political project' or forms of decolonial political 'subjecthood', I approached decoloniality as a diffuse, amorphous form of being, acting and knowing, which is often only faintly present in the narratives and practices observable in people's lifeworlds. Analogously, I have shown how Castoriadis and other theorists could find little indication that radical social and political practice and thinking were possible, at least as long as the 'social imaginary' is embedded and fully conditioned by modernity and Enlightenment worldviews (III.3).

Correspondingly, decoloniality was only sometimes faintly imaginable, let alone observable in the community security and peacebuilding initiatives examined in the empirical chapters. It can be seen to be underlying attempts to bring back together people from different ethnic communities in Bazar-Korgon analysed in chapter V. In chapter VI, young people's efforts to bring together their peers from separate parts of the same town, or across the distance between the urban centres and faraway mountainous areas, and the attempts to organise networks and common efforts to help the needy, present the empathy and readiness to accept others as equal counter-parts which is characteristic of decoloniality. Furthermore, the Civic Union's efforts to help people from rural localities across Kyrgyzstan to form groups and find better ways to provide security in their towns can be seen as inspired by a decolonial sentiment. Ultimately, however, all these initiatives are situated within the institutions, practices and knowledges associated with the Kyrgyzstani nation state and the modern social system, and are thus liable to reproduce the colonial tendencies of ordering, hierarchising, stratification and subjugation, even if indirectly and unintentionally.

Why is decoloniality strictly defined absent from the different community security and peacebuilding practices examined? Why not use a broader definition of decoloniality as extension of the 'emancipatory' or 'empowering' trajectories that other scholars in peace, conflict and intervention studies have tried to uncover in recent years? The point of this

analytical strategy, of defining decoloniality as an extreme, radically critical vantage point from which to look into the processes of social ordering and statebuilding is to acknowledge and enunciate the 'coloniality of being' as it pervades life in the current late capitalist period, as well the historical processes of the production of this coloniality. In the context of Central Asia, this means to acknowledge the historical forms of oppression and governing of people by way of creating hierarchies and divisions between them while providing frameworks that communicate an equality among supposed equals and common future goals, as well as the contemporary materialisations of the epistemic frameworks underlying these governing approaches (Tlostanova 2010, 2012).

Much in the same way as critical criminology and governmentality scholars have examined community safety and crime prevention debates in Western Europe and North America (see III.3), the point of my analysis was to show how local level security and peacebuilding initiatives cannot be seen as more inclusive or potentially emancipatory than their supposedly more top-down, state-sanctioned equivalent. Rather, what this research tried to show is that even people who take the responsibility and investment to define and deal with security concerns in their community are liable to develop constrained and exclusionary perspectives and corresponding security and peacebuilding measures. Once again, the point is not to say that people are necessarily unaware of these shortcomings. It is to show how given the limited possibilities of building peaceful and secure communities available, people choose to engage in these potentially exclusionary and not quite perfect ways of doing something, rather than doing nothing. While this is understandable in the cases examined, it is equally important to point out how the aggregation of the examined initiatives and many more can lead to such levels of exclusion and marginalisation that the overall trajectory this feeds into is one of conflict management and neo-authoritarian governmentality and not peacebuilding and security provision. While decolonial ways of being, acting and knowing might exist in the

interstices of the capitalist-colonial nation-state system in which the examined initiatives operate, it seems that more large-scale, radical forms of decoloniality are only possible in localities that are to an extent 'de-linked' from this system and thus sufficiently independent of its imperatives and modes of operation (Mignolo 2007).

In chapter IV, I indicated how the discourse (and practice) on spirituality and transhumance rooted in Kyrgyz traditions presents ways to approximate decoloniality. The ecosophical worldview, taking unity with and wholesomeness of nature and the connection of practices and life-styles with those of previous generations as central premise resembles, I have argued, Shilliam's concept of 'deep relation' (Shilliam 2015, see above). Both in this chapter and the empirical ones, I have also shown how a realisation of this potential is limited and distorted by the way in which tradition and culture have been instrumentalised – first during the transformation of Central Asia into national Soviet republics and then in the post-Soviet period of independence – to mobilise, order and structure society after the needs of the nation state system and (state) capitalist production. There still is potential of decolonial knowledge and action that my analysis could only point at, such as the existence of spiritual and traditional concepts in domestic and social life, which seems to be escaping the instrumentalisation and commodification problematised above. These potentials need to be explored in future research however, for which I indicate further directions in turn.

VIII.5 Towards a decolnial agenda in peace research in Central Asia and beyond

Three aspects of this research are especially worth pointing out for the future of peace, conflict and intervention research – decolonial or otherwise – in Central Asia but also beyond. They require addressing also for the purpose of indicating possible alternative ways of approaching the research presented here. Throughout the project, I have adapted its scope to the changing circumstances in the field and during the process of interpreting and writing up the data. Various

ways of doing this research otherwise have emerged which I needed to leave unexplored. On the other hand, I also made the choice to leave the scope of this thesis more exploratory and not go down specific avenues of theorisation and analysis in more exclusive manner – a decision which may at times have led to cloud the conclusions for the different bodies of scholarship I seek to contribute to. I have nevertheless decided to maintain the orientation of the thesis as it is because my goal is to connect loose ends of scholarship in peace, conflict and intervention studies, decolonial theory and Central Asian post-Soviet studies.

A first avenue for further inquiry is clearly identifiable in the methodological and general approach to research. As I have explained in the introduction, a multi-sited approach at inquiring a range of organisations and initiatives – through interviews, participatory observation and cooperative research – proved the most practical and comfortable way for me to gather as much data as possible. It also served to establish a relative distance to my research partners, which allowed me (and partners) to reflect on and preliminarily analyse the interactions and data gathered in each case study. On the other hand, it also precluded a more in-depth data gathering and mutual reflection on the process. It also meant that agreeing on my analytical conclusions necessitated tedious exchanges and discussions of drafts via email and Skype; a process that is still underway with research partners in all three areas.

An alternative for this and future research is to establish intense partnership with only one organisation/initiative and work on establishing a common vision of the outcomes of the research already during the field research itself. In this sense, feedback and discussion of research content should ideally be planned as part of field research itself, although this is also difficult given the significant amount of time that it requires on part of the researcher to prepare preliminary drafts. Another pathway in this direction would be more classically anthropological research, which would inquire the ways in which peace, security and social order are produced in people's everyday conduct and communal activism. Such an 'anthropology of security'

(Maguire et al. 2014) could unpack in more depth and nuance the dilemmas and ambiguities faced by people engaging in community security and peacebuilding practices. On the other hand, as I have argued in chapter II (see also Lottholz 2017b), anthropological inquiry into peace, conflict and intervention also requires more critical reflection as to the ways in which it may be complicit in reproducing the categorisations, divisions of labour and epistemic frameworks that underlie the current global order. It seems high time to confront and overcome the – usually implicit – ideas about the neutral ethnographer who can accurately capture things and does not require further dialogue and discussions with their subjects. The practice-based, cooperative and dialogical approach I have developed is intended to mitigate the one-way street, unilateral and often extractive logics of data gathering underlying much anthropological research and ethnographic inquiry into peace, conflict and intervention.

This leads to another concern about capturing dynamics of peace, conflict and intervention more accurately and in depth. Besides questions about data gathering, analysis and the lack of feedback and discussion thereof, there is also a question about the sources and material used by researchers. Given the fact that a lot of research in the field is conducted in the classical cases of post-conflict peacebuilding intervention, such as Timor Leste, Sri Lanka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Liberia, it is questionable to what extent such inquiries can draw on the full range of knowledge available in these countries. An in-depth 'ethnographic preparation' – i.e. getting to know the context by reading material on the context from a range of disciplines and sources, including domestic ones (Millar 2014a: ch. 4) – is not only time-intensive but also requires knowledge of language and area-studies and domestic scholarship which is simply too vast to be fully accessed by the primarily political science and IR scholars in the field.

On a basic level, this indicates the need for a synthesis of peace, conflict and intervention studies with area studies and various disciplinary fields which produce grounded

knowledge on a respective context. The corresponding fiction that better understanding dynamics in a country is merely a matter of accessing the vast library of scholarship on it in different languages is to be avoided, however. Rather, a synthesis is to be forged with ongoing processes of knowledge production in the respective localities, so that research on them is able to capture the contestations around the ways a place, its history, people and ways of life are portrayed by different disciplines and genres. In concrete terms, this means that social inquiry into a specific country has to engage with ongoing debates in academic, political, societal and civil society and activist realms.

This thesis has partly accomplished this by basing the analysis imaginaries of statebuilding and their manifestations (chapters IV, V) on contributions to domestic debates on the role of traditional knowledge in society and everyday life (Botokanova 2015) or the anthropology of late capitalism in Central Asia (Kapalova 2015, see also Botoeva 2015), among others. To further explore the potential for decolonial ways of knowing and acting, especially in the context of the region's Soviet history, discussions about the ways to understand this heritage (Mamedov and Shatalova 2016) and ways of recovering the radical, emancipatory, futuristic and utopian potential of Communism (Mamedov and Shatalova 2015, 2014, Shatalova and Mamedov 2016, Nurulla-Khodjaeva 2016, Abashin 2015) present intellectual engagements that share many concerns with decolonial theory and in fact partly identify its potentials in Central Asia. Other aspects that require further analysis in light of previous contributions are the gender dimensions of peace, security and order in the Central Asian context (Tlostanova 2010, Kamp 2011) and a detailed analysis of the spread and sophistication of decentralisation of governance and security leading to the responsibilisation and autonomisation of community level structures throughout the region (e.g. Sulmon 2017, Nurulla-Khodjaeva 2012, 2011, Sievers 2002).

This research is based on these and other analyses of the historical processes of the creation, consolidation and normalisation of state institutions and the associated ethnic, professional, gender and other identities which foreground dynamics of coexistence, peace, conflict and violence in the contemporary period. Instead of drawing a heuristic and functional picture foregrounding concise conclusions and recommendations as to what is to be done, I have attempted to provide an in-depth study of the complexity and heteroglossia of statebuilding, peacebuilding and community security and the post-liberal trajectory they have embarked on.

Bibliography

Abashin, S. (2015) *Советский кишлак. Между колониализмом и модернизацией [The Soviet village: Between colonialism and modernisation]*, Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie.

Ablezova, M., Nazritdinov, E., Rahimov, R. (2008) *The impact of migration on elderly people Grandparent-headed households in Kyrgyzstan*, Social Research Center of American University of Central Asia.

Abrahamsen, R., Williams, M. C. (2011) *Security beyond the state: Private security in international relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Abraliev, K., Kushchubekova,, J., Musabaeva, A., Giffen, J. (2011) Decentralisation in Kyrgyzstan, International NGO Training and Research Centre Report, accessed 13 November 2017, http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/726/Decentralisation-in-Kyrgyzstan-report-for-Swiss-Development-Cooperation.pdf

Abramzon, S. (1990) *Киргизы и их этногенетические и историко-культурные связи [Kyrgyz people and their ethnic and genetic and historico-cultural ties]*, Frunze: Kyrgyzstan.

Adams, L. (2008) Can we apply postcolonial theory to Central Eurasia?, *Central Eurasian Studies Review*, 7(1): 2-7.

Adler-Nissen, R. (2012) *Bourdieu in international relations: Rethinking key concepts in IR*, London: Routledge.

Agathangelou, A. M., Ling, L. H. (2009) *Transforming world politics: From empire to multiple worlds*, London: Routledge.

Aitmatov, C. (1988 [1980]) *The day lasts more than a hundred years*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Akaev, A. (2002) *Trudnaia doroga k demokratii: Pamiatnoe desiatiletie [Difficult road to democracy: A memorable decade]*, Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniia.

Albrecht, P., Buur, L. (2009) An uneasy marriage: non-state actors and police reform, *Policing & Society* 19(4): 390-405.

Albrecht, P., Kyed, H. M. (2014) *Policing and the politics of order-making*, London: Routledge.

Alexievich, S. (1992) *Zinky boys: Soviet voices from the Afghanistan war*, London: W. W. Norton & Company.

Alexievich, S. (2016 [2013]) *Second-hand time*, London: Fitzcarraldo.

Alisheva, A. R. (ed.) (2015) *Postroenie mira i mezhetnicheskogo soglasia v Kyrgyzstane – Posobie dlya islamskogo dukhovenstva OMSU i aktivistov mestnykh soobshestv [Building peace and interethnic understanding in Kyrgyzstan – A guide for the Islamic clergy, organs of local self-governance and activists of local communities]*, Bishkek: UN Peacebuilding Fund.

Althusser, L. (2008 [1970]) *On ideology*, London: Verso.

Alymkulov, E., Kulatov, M. (2001) Local government in the Kyrgyz Republic, in Munteanu, I., Popa, V. (eds.) *Developing new rules in the old environment*, Budapest: Open Society Institute Europe, 522-600.

Amsler, S. (2007) *The politics of knowledge in Central Asia: Science between Marx and the market*, London: Routledge.

Andersen, L.R. (2012) Statebuilding as tacit trusteeship: The case of Liberia, in Blieseman de Guevara, B. (ed.) *Statebuilding and state-formation: The political sociology of intervention,* London: Routledge, 132-148.

Anderson, B. (1983) *Imagined communities: Reflections on the growth and spread of nationalism*, London: Verso.

Andersson, R. (2016) Here be dragons: Mapping an ethnography of global danger, *Current anthropology* 57(6): 707-731.

Appadurai, A. (2002) Deep democracy: Urban governmentality and the horizon of politics, *Public Culture* 14 (1): 21-47.

Appadurai, A. (1996) *Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Art, D. (2012) What do we know about authoritarianism after ten years?, *Comparative Politics* 44(3): 351-373.

Ashwin, S. (ed.) (2012) *Gender, state, and society in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia*, 2nd ed., London: Routledge.

Aubert, A., Soler, M. (2007) Dialogism: The diagotic turn in the social sciences, in Kincheloe, J.L. Horn, R.A. Jr. (eds.) *The Praeger handbook of education and psychology*, Westport: Praeger, 521–529.

Autesserre, S. (2014) *Peaceland: Conflict resolution and the everyday politics of international intervention*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Azimov, U., Azimov, T. (2009) Discrimination against internal migrants in the Kyrgyz Republic. Analysis and recommendations, Social Research Center, Bishkek: American University of Central Asia.

Babajanian, B. (2015) Promoting empowerment? The World Bank's Village Investment Project in Kyrgyzstan, *Central Asian Survey 34*(4): 499-515.

Bachmann, J., Bell, C., Holmqvist, C. (eds.) (2014) *War, police and assemblages of intervention*, London: Routledge.

Bagdasarova, N., Marchenko, L. (2017) Resurfaced and disappearing past: National heroes in history textbooks of post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, in Zajda, J., Tsyrlina-Spady, T., Lovorn, M. (eds.) *Globalisation and historiography of national leaders: Symbolic representations in school textbooks*, Dordrecht: Springer, 245-260.

Baker, B. (2002) Living with non-state policing in South Africa: the issues and dilemmas, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, *40*(01): 29-53.

Bakhtin, M.M. (1981) *The dialogic imagination: Four essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. Holquist, M., trans. Emerson, C., Holquist, M., Austin: University of Texas Press.

Baktygulov S. (2012) Opportunities for Kyrgyzstan in the modern world, in Nogoibaeva, Ch., Iskakova, Ch., Neubauer, A. (eds.) *20 years of democratic development in Kyrgzystan: Internal and external perspectives*, Bishkek: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Balhorn, L. (2016) Three hours to midnight, Jacobin, 9 July 2016, accessed 17 April 2017, https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/09/germany-die-linke-afd-xenophobia-right-merkel/

Bargués-Pedreny, P. (2016) From promoting to de-emphasizing 'ethnicity': Rethinking the endless supervision of Kosovo, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 10(2): 222-240.

Barkawi, T., Laffey, M. (1999) The imperial peace: democracy, force and globalization., *European Journal of International Relations*, 5(4): 403-434.

Becker, J. (2004) Lessons from Russia: A neo-authoritarian media system, *European Journal of Communication* 19(2): 139-163.

Bedelbek kyzy, V. (2015) XI курултай политической партии "Бутун Кыргызстан – Эмгек" (список) [The 11th *kurultai* of the political party 'Butun Kyrgyzstan – Emgek'], 21 August 2015, accessed 17 April 2017, http://www.gezitter.org/vybory/42784_XI_kurultay_politicheskoy_partii_butun_kyirgyizstan__emgek_spisok/

Behr, H. (2014) *Politics of difference: epistemologies of peace*, London: Routledge.

Beichelt, T. (2013) Forms of rule in the post-Soviet space: hybrid regimes, in Stewart, S., Klein, M., Schmitz, A., Schröder, H.-H. (eds.) *Presidents, oligarchs and bureaucrats: Forms of rule in the post-Soviet space*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 15-28.

Beishenbek kyzy, E. (2014) V Oshe priostanovlena deiatel'nost' Freedom House [Freedom House's work is suspended in Osh], Radio Azattyk, 7 October 2014, accessed 17 April 2017, http://rus.azattyk.org/a/26624129.html

Bekmurzaev, N., Lottholz, P., Meyer, J. (2018) Navigating the security implications of doing research and being researched: Cooperation, networks, framing, *Central Asian Survey*, 37(1): 100-118.

Bellamy, A. J., Williams, P., (eds.) (2005) *Peace operations and global order*, London: Routledge.

Bennett, W. (2016) "Everything can be tolerated – except injustice." Osh: Saferworld, accessed 17 April 2017, http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/1050-ldquoeverything-can-be-tolerated-ndash-except-injusticerdquo

Berdal, M., Zaum, D. (eds.) (2013) *Political economy of statebuilding: Power after peace*, London: Routledge.

Bhabha, H.K. (1994) *The location of culture*, London: Routledge.

Bhambra, G. K. (2016) Postcolonial reflections on sociology, *Sociology* 50 (5): 960-966.

Bhambra, G. K. (2014) *Connected sociologies*, London: Bloomsbury.

Beyer, J., Girke, F. (2015) Practicing harmony ideology. Ethnographic Reflections on Community and Coercion, *Common Knowledge*, 21(2): 196-235.

Beyer, J. (2016) *The force of custom: Law and the ordering of everyday life in Kyrgyzstan*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Beyer, J. (2014) "There is this law...": Performing the state in the Kyrgyz courts of elders, in Reeves, M., Rasanayagam, J., Beyer, J. (eds.) *Ethnographies of the state in Central Asia: performing politics*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 99-123.

Beyer, J. (2013) Ordering ideals: accomplishing well-being in a Kyrgyz cooperative of elders, *Central Asian Survey* 32(4): 432-447.

Beyer, J. (2006) Revitalisation, invention and continued existence of the Kyrgyz aksakal courts: Listening to pluralistic accounts of history, *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law* 38(53-54): 141-176.

Biard, A. (2010) The religious factor in the reification of "neo-ethnic" identities in Kyrgyzstan, *Nationalities Papers* 38(3): 323-335.

Bichsel, C. (2005) In search of harmony: repairing infrastructure and social relations in the Ferghana Valley, *Central Asian Survey* 24(1): 53-66.

Bierschenk, T., Olivier de Sardan, J-P. (eds.) (2014) *States at work. The dynamics of African bureaucracies*, Leiden: Brill.

Bigo, D. (2008) Globalized (in)security: The field and the ban-opticon, in Bigo, D., Tsoukala, A. (eds.) *Terror, insecurity and liberty. Illiberal practices of liberal regimes after 9/11*, Abingdon: Routledge: 10 - 48.

Björkdahl, A., Höglund, K., Millar, G., van der Lijn, J., Verkoren, W. (eds.) (2016) *Peacebuilding and friction: Global and local encounters in post conflict societies*, London: Routledge.

Bliesemann de Guevara, B., Götze, C. (2012) The statebuilding habitus: UN staff and the cultural dimension of liberal intervention in Kosovo, in Bliesemann de Guevara, B. (ed.) *State-building and state-formation – The political Sociology of intervention*, London: Routledge, 198-213.

Bliesemann de Guevara, B., Kostić, R. (2017) Knowledge production in/about conflict and intervention: finding 'facts', telling 'truth', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 11(1): 1-20.

Bliesemann de Guevara, B. (2012) (ed.) *State-building and state-formation: The political Sociology of intervention*, London: Routledge.

Boatcă, M. (2007) The eastern margins of empire: coloniality in 19th century Romania, *Cultural Studies* 21(2-3): 368-384.

Boege V. (2011) Hybrid forms of peace and order on a south sea island: Experiences from Bougainville (Papua New Guinéa), in Richmond, O.P., Mitchell, A. (eds.) *Hybrid forms of peace: From everyday agency to post-liberalism*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 88-106.

Boege, V., Brown, M. A., Clements, K. P. (2009) Hybrid political orders, not fragile states, *Peace Review* 21(1): 13-21.

Bogaards, M. (2009) How to classify hybrid regimes? Defective democracy and electoral authoritarianism, *Democratization* 16(2): 399-423.

Bonacker, T., Daxner, M., Free, J. H., Zürcher, C. (2010) *Interventionskultur: Zur Soziologie von Interventionsgesellschaften [Intervention culture: On the sociology of intervention societies]*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.

Bond, A. R., Koch, N. R. (2010) Kyrgyzstan, interethnic tensions, and relations with Uzbekistan: A political geographic perspective, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 51: 531-562.

Borubashov, B. (2015) *История государства и права Кыргызской Республики [History and laws of the Kyrgyz Republic]*, vol. 1, Bishkek: Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University.

Borubashov, B. (2013) Kurultai – otrazhenie kyrgyzskoi demokratii [The *kurultai* – a reflection of Kyrgyz democracy], *Вестник Академии государственного управления при Президенте Кыргызской Республики [Journal of the Academy of State Administration under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic]* 18: 25-31.

Botokanova, G. (2015) *Traditsionnye znania kyrgyzov [Traditional knowledge of the Kyrgyz]*, Bishkek: Kurt-Ber.

Bourdieu, P. (1979) *La distinction: critique sociale du jugement [Difference: A social critique of judgement]*, Paris: Éditions de Minuit.

Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Outline of a theory of practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brogden, M., Nijhar, P. (2005) *Community policing: National and international models and approaches*, London: Willan.

Broome, A. (2010) *The currency of power: The IMF and monetary reform in Central Asia*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Brubaker, R. (2011) Nationalizing states revisited: projects and processes of nationalization in post-Soviet states, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34(11): 1785-1814.

Brubaker, R. (1994) Nationhood and the national question in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Eurasia: An institutionalist account, *Theory and society* 23(1): 47-78.

Brunner, C. (2016) Gewalt weiter denken in der Kolnialität des Wissens, in: Ziai, A. (ed.) *Postkoloniale Politikwissenschaft [Postcolonial political science]*, Bielefeld: Transcript.

Brunner, C. (2015) Das Konzept epistemische Gewalt als Element einer transdisziplinaeren Friedens- und Konflikttheorie [The concept of espistemic violence in a transdisciplinary theory of peace and conflict], in Wintersteiner, W., Wolf, L. (eds.) *Friedensforschung in Österreich Bilanz und Perspectiven*, Klagenfurt: Drava, 38-53.

Brunner, C. (2014) Kassandras Dilemma–Oder: Was kann Friedens-und Konfliktforschung? Vortrag zur Eröffnung des Studienjahrs 2014/15 des Masterstudiengangs „Sozialwissenschaftliche Konfliktforschung" der Universität Augsburg [Cassandra's dilemma – or: What is peace and conflict research able to do? Inaugural lecture of the 2014/15 study year of the Masters degree 'Social scientific conflict research' of the University of Augsburg], Accessed 20 October 2017, http://www.presse.uni-augsburg.de/publikationen/unireden/unireden_pdfs/UR_70_Brunner_FuKF.pdf

Brusina, O. (2005) Die Transformation der Adat-Gerichte bei den Nomaden Turkestans in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts [The transformation of adat courts among the nomads of Turkestan in the second half of the 19th century], in Kemper, M., Reinkowski, M. (eds.), *Rechtspluralismus in islamischen Ländern. Gewohnheitsrecht zwischen Staat und Gesellschaft [Legal pluralism in Islamic countries. Customary law between state and society]*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 227-253.

Büger, C., Bethke, F. (2014) Actor-networking the 'failed state': an enquiry into the life of concepts, *Journal of International Relations and Development* 17(1): 30-60.

Büger, C., Gadinger, F. (2015) The play of international practice, *International Studies Quarterly 59*(3): 449-460.

Büger, C., Gadinger, F. (2014) *International practice theory: New perspectives*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Büger, C. (2014) From expert communities to epistemic arrangements: Situating expertise in international relations, in Mayer, M., Carpes, M., Knoblich, R. (eds.) *The global politics of science and technology - Vol. 1: concepts from international relations and other disciplines*, Berlin: Springer, 39-54.

Bunce, V. J., Wolchik, S. L. (2011) *Defeating authoritarian leaders in postcommunist countries*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Burrell, K. (2011) The enchantment of western things: children's material encounters in late socialist Poland, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *36*(1): 143-156.

Cameron, A., Palan, R. (2004) *The imagined economies of globalization*, London: Sage.

Campbell, S., Chandler, D., Sabaratnam, M. (eds.) (2011) *A liberal peace? The problems and practices of peacebuilding*, London: Zed Books.

Canning, E. (2014) The two films inside Kyrgyzstan's 'Kurmanjan Datka', RFE/RL, 20 December 2014, accessed 17 April 2017, http://www.rferl.org/a/kurmanjan-datka-queen-of-the-mountains-kyrgyzstan-film/26769501.html

Cárdenas, M. (2016) Mainstreaming decolonialism? Zum Mehrwert einer dekolonialen FuK, *Wissenschaft & Frieden*, 2016(1): 20-23.

Carlson, R. (2013) The failure of democratisation in Kazakhstan the role of international investment and civil society in impending political reform, in Akyildiz, S., Carlson, R. (eds.) *Social and cultural change in Central Asia: The Soviet legacy*, London: Routledge, 127-144.

Carothers, T., Ottaway, M. (2000) Introduction: The burgeoning world of civil society aid, in Carothers, T., Ottaway, M. (eds.) in *Funding virtue: Civil society and democracy promotion*, Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 3–17.

Castoriadis, C. (1989) 'Fait et a faire', *Revue Europeenne des Sciences Sociales*, 86 (December 1989): 457-514; 'Done and to be done' (1997), in *The Castoriadis reader*, trans. & ed. Curtis, D.A., Oxford: Blackwell.

Castoriadis, C. (1987) *The imaginary institution of society*, trans. Blamey, K., Cambridge: Polity Press, originally published in 1975 as *L'institution imaginaire de la société*, Paris: du Seuil.

Castoriadis, C. (1982) The crisis of Western societies, *Telos* 53: 17-28.

Central Asian Survey (2007) Special Issue: Locating the (Post-) Colonial in Soviet History, 26(4): 465-623. (check this doesn't look right)

Chandler, D., Reid, J. (2016) *The neoliberal subject: Resilience, adaptation and vulnerability*, New York: Rowman and Littlefield.

Chandler, D., Richmond, O. (2015) Contesting postliberalism: Governmentality or emancipation?, *Journal of International Relations and Development* 18(1): 1-24.

Chandler, D., Sisk, T.D. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of international statebuilding,* London: Routledge.

Chandler, D. (2014a) Resilience and the 'everyday': Beyond the paradox of 'liberal peace', *Review of International Studies* 1-22.

Chandler, D. (2014b) Beyond neoliberalism: Resilience, the new art of governing complexity, *Resilience* 2(1): 47-63.

Chandler, D. (2014c) *Resilience: The governance of complexity*, London: Routledge.

Chandler, D. (2013) Peacebuilding and the politics of non-linearity: rethinking 'hidden' agency and 'resistance', *Peacebuilding* 1(1): 17-32.

Chandler, D. (2011) The uncritical critique of liberal peace, in Campbell, S., Chandler, D., Sabaratnam, M. (eds.) (2011) *A liberal peace? The problems and practices of peacebuilding*, London: Zed Books, 174-190.

Chandler, D. (2010a) The uncritical critique of 'liberal peace', *Review of international*

studies 36(S1): 137-155, reprinted as Chandler (2011)

Chandler, D. (2010b) *International statebuilding: The rise of post-liberal governance*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Chandler, D. (2009a) Critiquing liberal cosmopolitanism? The limits of the biopolitical approach, *International Political Sociology* 3(1): 53-70.

Chandler, D. (2009b) *Hollow hegemony: rethinking global politics, power and resistance*, London: Pluto Press.

Chandler, D. (2007) The security: development nexus and the rise of 'anti-foreign policy', *Journal of International Relations and Development* 10(4): 362-386.

Chandler, D. (2008) Review essay: Human security: the dog that didn't bark, *Security Dialogue* 39(4): 427-438.

Chandler, D. (2006a) *Empire in denial: the politics of state-building,* London: Pluto.

Chandler, D. (ed.) (2006b) *Peace without politics? Ten years of international state-building in Bosnia*, London: Psychology Press.

Chandler, D. (2004) *Constructing global civil society: Morality and power in international relations*, Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan.

Chandler, D. (2002a) (ed.) *Rethinking human rights: Critical approaches to international politics*, Baskinstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan.

Chandler, D. (2002b) *From Kosovo to Kabul (and beyond): Human rights and international intervention*, London: Pluto Press.

Chandler, D. (2000) *Bosnia: Faking democracy after Dayton*, London: Pluto Press.

Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result' (CURR) (2016) Bezopasnost soobsha - Itogi programmy po razvitiu sotsialnogo partnerstva v podderzhanii pravoporiadka i profilaktike pravonarushenii - finalnyi otchet [Security together – Results of the programme for the development of social partnership in support of the rule of law and crime prevention – Final report], Bishkek: CURR (2016), accessed 13 November 2017, http://reforma.kg/sites/default/files/analytics/crime-prevention-report-web.pdf

Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result' (CURR) (2015) 'Public security. Analysis of the situation and prioritiy problems. Preliminary report [Общественная безопасность. Анализ ситуации и приоритетные проблемы Сводный отчет по исследованиям в пилотных территориях]', Civic Union 'For reforms and result', Bishkek, October 2015, unpublished document.

Clements, K. P., Boege, V., Brown, A., Foley, W., Nolan, A. (2007) State building reconsidered: The role of hybridity in the formation of political order, *Political Science* 59(1): 45-56.

Collier, S. J. (2011) *Post-Soviet social: Neoliberalism, social modernity, biopolitics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Collier, S. J., Ong, A. (eds.) (2005) *Global assemblages: Technology, politics, and ethics as anthropological problems*, London: Sage.

Collins, K. (2006) *Clan politics and regime transition in Central Asia*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Comaroff, J., Comaroff, J. L. (1999) Occult economies and the violence of abstraction: notes from the South African postcolony, *American Ethnologist* 26(2): 279-303.

Comaroff, J., Comaroff, J. L. (1997) Postcolonial politics and discourses of democracy in southern Africa: An anthropological reflection on African political modernities, *Journal of Anthropological Research* 53(2): 123-146.

Comaroff, J., Comaroff, J. L. (1992) *Ethnography and the historical imagination*, Boulder: Westview Press.

Cooley, A., Sharman, J. C. (2015) Blurring the line between licit and illicit: transnational corruption networks in Central Asia and beyond, *Central Asian Survey 34*(1): 11-28.

Cooley, A., Snyder, J. (eds.) *Ranking the world: Grading states as a tool of global governance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cooper, N. (2007) Review article: On the crisis of the liberal peace, *Conflict, Security & Development* 7(4): 605-616.

Cooper, N., Turner, M., Pugh, M. (2011) The end of history and the last liberal peacebuilder: A reply to Roland Paris, *Review of International Studies* 37(04): 1995-2007.

Cornis-Pope, M. (2012) Local and global frames in recent eastern European literatures: Postcommunism, postmodernism, and postcoloniality, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing 48*(2): 143-154.

Cox, R. (1981) Social forces, states and world orders: Beyond international relations theory, *Millennium* 10(2): 126-155.

Crawford, A. (1998) Community safety and the quest for security: holding back the dynamics of social exclusion, *Policy Studies 19*(3-4): 237-253.

Das, V., Poole, D. (eds.) (2004) *Anthropology in the margins of the state*, Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

Das, V. (2015) Corruption and the possibility of life, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, *49*(3): 322-343.

Dauderstädt, M., Schildberg, A. (2006) *Dead ends of transition: Rentier economies and protectorates*, Campus Verlag.

de Certeau, M. (1984) *The practice of everyday life*, trans. Rendall, S., Berkeley: University of California Press.

de Herdt, T., Olivier de Sardan, J-P. (eds.) (2015) *Real governance and practical norms in Sub-Saharan Africa. The game of the rules*, London: Routledge.

de Waal, A. (2014) The political marketplace: Analyzing political entrepreneurs and political bargaining with a business lens, World Peace Foundation (Seminar Memo)*,* 17 October 2014, accessed 17 April 2017, http://sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/files/2014/10/Political-Marketplace_de-Waal.pdf

Denney, L., Jenkins, S. (2013) Securing communities: The what and the how of community policing, Overseas Development Institute Background Paper, accessed 17 April 2017, https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8491.pdf

Denney, L. (2015) Securing communities? Redefining community policing to achieve results, ODI Report March 2015, accessed 17 April 2017, https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9582.pdf

Denskus, T., Kosmatopoulos, N. (2015) Anthropology & peacebuilding: An introduction., *Peacebuilding* 3(3): 219-223.

Denskus, T. (2007) Peacebuilding does not build peace, *Development in Practice* 17(4-5): 656-662.

DeYoung, A. J. (2010) Embracing globalization: university experiences among youth in contemporary Kyrgyzstan, *Central Asian Survey* 29(4): 421-434.

DeYoung, A. J. (2007) The erosion of vospitaniye [social upbringing] in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan: Voices from the schools, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 40(2): 239-256.

Dick, B. (2006) Action research literature 2004-2006: Themes and trends, *Action research* 4(4): 439-458.

Distler, W. (2016) Intervention as a social practice: Knowledge formation and transfer in the everyday of police missions, *International Peacekeeping* 23(2): 326-49.

Donais, T. (2009) Empowerment or imposition? Dilemmas of local ownership in post-conflict peacebuilding processes, *Peace & Change* 34(1): 3-26.

Dostal, W. (1972) Declaration of Barbados, in Dostal, W. (ed.) *The situation of the Indian in South America*, Geneva: World Climate Impact Studies Programme, 376–381.

Doucet, M. G. (2016) Global assemblages of security governance and contemporary international intervention, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 10(1): 116-132.

Doyle, M.W. (1986) Liberalism and world politics, *American Political Science Review* 80(4): 1151-1169.

Doyle, M.W. (1983) Kant, liberal legacies, and foreign affairs, *Philosophy & Public Affairs*: 205-235.

Duffield, M. (2010) Risk-management and the fortified aid compound: Everyday life in post-interventionary society, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 4(4): 453-474.

Duffield, M. (2007) *Development, security and unending war: governing the world of peoples*, Cambridge: Polity.

Duffield, M. (2001) *Global governance and the new wars: the merging of development and security*, London: Zed books.

Dyner, A., Legieć, A., Rękawek, K. (2015) ISIS and its presumed expansion into Central Asia, *PISM Policy Paper*, 19 (121)

Edgar, A. L. (2007) Marriage, modernity, and the 'friendship of nations': interethnic intimacy in post-war Central Asia in comparative perspective, *Central Asian Survey* 26(4): 581-599.

Egnell, R., Haldén, P. (eds.) (2013) *New agendas in statebuilding: Hybridity, contingency and history*, London: Routledge.

Elliott, A. (2002) The social imaginary: A critical assessment of Castoriadis's psychoanalytic social theory, *American Imago* 59(2): 141-170.

Ellison, G., Pino, N. W. (2012) *Globalization, police reform and development: Doing it the Western way?*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Engels, B. (2014) Repräsentationen, Diskurse und Machtfragen:Postkoloniale Theorieansätze in der Friedens- und Konfliktforschung, *Zeitschrift fuer Friedens- und Konfliktforschung*, 3(1): 130-150.

Engvall, J., Laruelle, M. (2015) *Kyrgyzstan beyond "democracy island" and "failing state": Social and political changes in a post-Soviet society*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Engvall, J. (2016) *The State as investment market: Kyrgyzstan in comparative perspective*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Engvall, J. (2011) The state as investment market: An analytical framework for interpreting politics and bureaucracy in Kyrgyzstan, PhD Thesis, University of Uppsala, accessed 12 February 2012, http://www.fergananews.com/archive/2011/kyrg_corruption.pdf

Engvall, J. (2007) Kyrgyzstan: Anatomy of a state, *Problems of Post-Communism 54*(4): 33-45.

Escobar, A. (2006) Post-development, in Clark, D. (ed.) *The Elgar companion to development studies*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 447-451.

Escobar, A. (1995) *Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the Third World*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Etzioni, A. (1998) *The new golden rule: Community and morality in a democratic society*, New York: Basic Books.

Etzioni, A. (1993) *The spirit of community: The reinvention of American society*, New York: Simon and Schuster.

Exo, M. (2015) Indigene Methodologie als Stachel für die Friedens-und Konfliktforschung, in Bös, M., Schmitt, L., Zimmer, K. (eds.) *Konflikte vermitteln? Lehren und Lernen in der Friedens- und Konfliktforschung*, Wiesbaden: Springer, 281-304.

Exo, M. (2009) Die Gewalt der Friedens- und Konfliktforschung und Moeglichkeiten des Widerstands, in Imformationsstelle Militarisierung (IMI), *Krisenmanagement: "Sicherheitsarchitektur" im globalen Ausnahmezustand*, documentation of the 12th IMI congress, Tubingen: self-published, 42-29.

Fairclough, N. (1992) *Discourse and social change*, London: Wiley.

Farnsworth, K., Irving, Z. (2012) Varieties of crisis, varieties of austerity: social policy in challenging times, *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice* 20(2): 133-147.

Féaux de La Croix, J., Ismailbekova, A. (2014) Ethnographies of belonging and the future in Kyrgyzstan. Introduction to themed section of AEER, *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 32(2): 1-16.

Féaux de la Croix, J. (2013a) Grounding mobile ideas: Kyrgyzstani NGO-leaders and the notion of knowledge transfer as a source of social cohesion, *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 138(2): 217-233.

Féaux de la Croix, J. (2013b) How to build a better future? Kyrgyzstani development workers and the 'knowledge transfer' strategy, *Central Asian Survey 32*(4): 448-461.

Féaux de la Croix, J. (2011) Moving metaphors we live by: Water and flow in the social sciences and around hydroelectric dams in Kyrgyzstan, *Central Asian Survey* 30(3-4): 487-502.

Ferreira, B.R. (1996) The use and effectiveness of community policing in a democracy, in M. Pagon (ed.) *Policing in Central and Eastern Europe: Comparing firsthand knowledge with experience from the West*, Ljubljana: College of Police and Security Studies.

FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights) (2016) Kyrgyzstan women and children from Kyrgyzstan affected by migration. An exacerbated vulnerability, Report No 675a,

September 2016, accessed 20 October 2017, https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/rapport_kyrgyzstan_uk-2-web2.pdf

Finlay, A. (2015) Liberal intervention, anthropology and the ethnicity machine, *Peacebuilding* 3(3): 224-37.

Finlay, A. (2010) *Governing ethnic conflict: Consociation, identity and the price of peace,* London: Routledge.

Fischer, M. (2008) Friedenswissenschaftliche Evaluierungs - und Aktionsforschung, *Wissenschaft & Frieden*, 4: 36-38.

Fisher, J. (2017) Reproducing remoteness? States, internationals and the co-constitution of aid 'bunkerization' in the East African periphery, *Journal of intervention and statebuilding* 11(1): 98-119.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2001) *Making social science matter: Why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Foucault, M. (2008) *The birth of biopolitics: Lectures at the Collége De France, 1978-1979*, ed. by Michel Senellart, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M. (2007) *Security, population, territory*: *Lectures at the College de France, 1977-8,* London: Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-77.* London: Pantheon Books.

Franks, J., Richmond, O. P. (2008) Coopting liberal peace-building, *Cooperation & Conflict* 43(1): 81-103.

Fryer, P., Nazritdinov, E., Satybaldieva, E. (2014) Moving toward the brink? Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic, *Central Asian Affairs* 1: 171-198.

Fukuyama, F. (2005) "Stateness" first, *Journal of Democracy 16*(1): 84-88.

Fukuyama, F. (2004) *State-building: governance and world order in the 21st century*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Fukuyama, F. (1992) *The end of history and the last man*, New York: Simon and Schuster.

Gaetz, S. (2004) Safe streets for whom? Homeless youth, social exclusion, and criminal victimization, *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, *46*(4): 423-456.

Galdini, F. (2016) Kyrgyzstan is manipulating the threat of "terrorism" for its own benefit, *Muftah,* 11 February 2016, accessed 17 April 2017, https://muftah.org/kyrgyzstan-manipulating-terrorism-threat/

Ganyeva, N. (2016) Курултай новый - проблемы старые [New *kurultai*, old problems], 12 March 2016, accessed 17 April 2017, http://24.kg/perekrestok/28996_kurultay_novyiy_-_problemyi_staryie/

Garland, D. (2001) *The culture of control: Crime and social order in contemporary society,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gezitter.org (2015) Прошел курултай партии «Кыргызстан» [The party 'Kyrgyzstan' held its *kurultai*], 20 August 2015, accessed 17 April 2017, http://www.gezitter.org/vybory/42726_proshel_kurultay_partii_kyirgyizstan/

Ghani, A. and C. Lockhart (2008) *Fixing failed states,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Goode, J. P., Stroup, D. R. (2015) Everyday nationalism: Constructivism for the masses, *Social Science Quarterly* 96(3): 717-739.

Gook, B. (2015) *Divided subjects, invisible borders: Re-unified Germany after 1989*, London: Rowman & Littlefield.

Gordon, C. (1991) Governmental rationality: An introduction, in Foucault, M., Burchell, G., Gordon, C., Miller, P., *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1-52.

Gordon, P. (1987) Community policing, in Scraton, P. (ed.) *Law, order and the authoritarian state*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Graef, J. (2015) *Practicing Post-liberal peacebuilding: Legal empowerment and emergent hybridity in Liberia*, Baskingstoke: Palgrave.

Grävingholt, J., Doerr, B., Meissner, K., Pletziger, S., Rümker, J. V., Weikert, J. (2006) *Strengthening participation through decentralisation: Findings on local economic development in Kyrgyzstan*, Bonn: German Development Institute.

Grimm, S., Lemay-Hébert, N., Nay, O. (2014) 'Fragile states': introducing a political concept, *Third World Quartlery* 35(2): 197-209.

Jones, B. G. (ed.) (2006) *Decolonising international relations*, New York: Rowman and Littlefield.

Gullette, D., Heathershaw, J. (2015) The affective politics of sovereignty: Reflecting on the 2010 conflict in Kyrgyzstan, *Nationalities Papers* 43(1): 122-139.

Gullette, D. (2010) Institutionalized instability: Factors leading to the April 2010 uprising in Kyrgyzstan, *Eurasian Review* 3: 89-105.

Gullette, D. (2008) A state of passion: The use of ethnogenesis in Kyrgyzstan, *Inner Asia* 10(2): 261-279.

Gunitsky, S, (2015) Lost in the grey Zone: Competing measures of democracy in the former Soviet republics, in Cooley, A., Snyder, J. (eds.) *Ranking the world: Grading states as a tool of global governance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 112-150.

Gunitsky, S. (2014) From shocks to waves: Hegemonic transitions and democratization in the twentieth century, *International Organization* 68(03): 561-597.

Gupta, A. (1995) Blurred boundaries: the discourse of corruption, the culture of politics, and the imagined state, *American Ethnologist* 22(2): 375-402.

Hale, C. R. (ed.) (2008) *Engaging contradictions: Theory, politics, and methods of activist scholarship*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hale, C. R. (2006) Activist research vs. cultural critique: Indigenous land rights and the contradictions of politically engaged anthropology, *Cultural anthropology* 21(1): 96-120.

Hameiri, S. (2010) *Regulating Statehood: State building and the transformation of the global order*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Hameiri, S. (2007) Failed states or a failed paradigm? State capacity and the limits of institutionalism, *Journal of International Relations and Development* 10(2): 122-149.

Hansen, T. B., Stepputat, F. (eds.) (2001) *States of imagination: ethnographic explorations of the postcolonial state*, Durham: Duke University Press.

Hansen, T. B., Stepputat, F. (eds.) (2005) *Sovereign bodies: Citizens, migrants, and states in the postcolonial world*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hardenberg, R. (2017) Introduction. The study of socio-cosmic fields, in Hardenberg, R. (ed.) *Approaching ritual economy: Socio-cosmic fields in globalised contexts*, RessourcenKulturen, vol. 4, Tubingen: Collaborative Research Centre 'ResourceCultures', 7-36.

Harrison, G. (2001) Post-conditionality politics and administrative reform: Reflections on the cases of Uganda and Tanzania, *Development and Change 32*(4): 657-679.

Harrowell, E. (2015) From monuments to mahallas: contrasting memories in the urban landscape of Osh, Kyrgyzstan, *Social & Cultural Geography* 16(2): 203-225.

Haugen, A. (2003) *The establishment of national republics in Soviet Central Asia,* Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Heathershaw, J., Cooley, A. (2015) Offshore Central Asia: An introduction, *Central Asian Survey 34*(1): 1-10.

Heathershaw, J., Herzig, E. (eds.) (2013) *The transformation of Tajikistan: The sources of statehood*, London: Routledge.

Heathershaw, J., Lambach, D. (2008) Introduction: Post-conflict spaces and approaches to statebuilding, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 2(3): 269-289.

Heathershaw, J. (2014) The global performance state: A reconsideration of the Central Asian "weak state", in Reeves, M., Rasanayagam, J. Beyer, J. (eds.) *Ethnographies of the state in Central Asia: Performing politics*, Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 29-54.

Heathershaw, J. (2013) Towards better theories of peacebuilding: beyond the liberal peace debate, *Peacebuilding* 1(2): 275-282.

Heathershaw, J. (2012) Conclusions-neither built nor formed-the transformation of post-conflict states and international intervention, in Blieseman de Guevara, B. (ed.) *Statebuilding and state-formation: The political sociology of intervention,* London: Routledge, 246-259.

Heathershaw, J. (2011) The practical representation of peacebuilding: An (auto) ethnography of programme evaluation in Tajikistan, in Richmond, O. P., Mitchell, A. (eds.) *Hybrid forms of peace: From everyday agency to post-liberalism*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 162-188.

Heathershaw, J. (2010) Central Asian statehood in post-colonial perspective, in Kavalski, E. (ed.) (2010) *Stable outside, fragile inside? Post-Soviet statehood in Central Asia*, Farnham: Ashgate, 71-86.

Heathershaw, J. (2009) *Post-conflict Tajikistan: The politics of peacebuilding and the emergence of legitimate order*, London: Routledge.

Hehir, A. (2011) Hyper-reality and statebuilding: Baudrillard and the unwillingness of international administrations to cede control, *Third World Quarterly* 32(6): 1073-1087.

Hehir, A. (2006) Autonomous province building: identification theory and the failure of UNMIK, *International Peacekeeping 13*(2): 200-213.

Held, D. (2007) *Global inequality: patterns and explanations*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Helman, G. B., Ratner, S. R. (1992) Saving failed states, *Foreign Policy* 3-20.

Hirsch, F. (2005) *Empire of nations: Ethnographic knowledge and the making of the Soviet Union*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Hobsbawm, E. J., Ranger, T. O. (eds.) (1983) *The invention of tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hobson, J. M., Seabrooke, L. (2001) Reimagining Weber: constructing international society and the social balance of power, *European journal of international relations* 7(2): 239-274.

Hobson, J. M. (2012) *The Eurocentric conception of world politics: Western international theory, 1760-2010*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hobson, J. M. (2007) Is critical theory always for the white West and for Western imperialism? Beyond Westphilian towards a post-racist critical IR, *Review of International Studies* 33(1): 91-116.

Hobson, J. M. (2004) *The Eastern origins of Western civilization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Holbraad, M. (2013) Turning a corner: Preamble for "the relative native" by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, transl. Sauma, J., Holbraad, M., *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 3 (3): 469-471.

Hönke, J., Müller, M. M. (2012) Governing (in) security in a postcolonial world: Transnational entanglements and the worldliness of 'local' practice, *Security Dialogue* 43(5): 383-401.

Hönke, J. (2013) *Transnational companies and security governance: Hybrid practices in a postcolonial world*, London: Routledge.

Horkheimer, M. (1972) Traditional and critical theory, in Horkheimer M. (ed.) *Critical theory: Selected essays*, 2nd ed., New York: Seabury Press [1st ed. 1937], 188-243.

Horkheimer, M., Adorno, T. W. (2002) *Dialectic of enlightenment: Philosophical fragments*, Stanford: Stanford University Press; original publication: *Dialektik der Aufklärung, Gesammelte Schriften (Selected writings)*, Frankfurt, Germany; first English publication in 1947, Amsterdam: Querido.

Hughes, C. (2009) *Dependent communities: aid and politics in Cambodia and East Timor*, Studies on Southeast Asia No. 48, New York: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications.

Hughes, G. (2013) Plotting the rise of community safety: critical reflections on research, theory and politics, in Hughes, G., Edwards, A. (eds.) *Crime control and community: The new politics of public safety*, London: Routledge, 20-45.

Hughes, G., McLaughlin, E. (2003) Towards a new paradigm of sovereign power? Community governance, preventative safety and the crime and disorder reduction partnerships, *British Society of Criminology 6*: 1-14.

Hunt, C. T. (2014) *UN peace operations and international policing: negotiating complexity, assessing impact and learning to learn*, London: Routledge.

Ibañez-Tirado, D. (2015) 'How can I be post-Soviet if I was never Soviet?' Rethinking categories of time and social change: a perspective from Kulob, southern Tajikistan, *Central Asian Survey* 34(2): 190-203.

Ibraeva, G.K. (2008) Из опыта посков национальной идентичности и легитимных структур управления в Кыргызстане [On the experience of searching for a national identity and legitimate governance structures in Kyrgyzstan], *Социологические исследования [Sociological Research]* 1: 85-90.

Igamberdiev, B. (2016) *Экономическая политика Кыргызстана 1991-2010: Опыт и Результаты [Economic policy in Kyrgyzstan from 1991 – 2010: Experiences and results]*, Bishkek: n.p.

Igmen, A. (2012) *Speaking Soviet with an accent: Culture and power in Kyrgyzstan*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

IRIN (2015) Hope and fear: Kyrgyz migrants in Russia, 24 April 2015, accessed 17 April 2017, http://www.irinnews.org/report/101398/hope-and-fear-kyrgyz-migrants-russia

Isakov, B., Schoeberlein, J. (2014) Animals, kinship, and the State: Kyrgyz Chabans rebuilding herds and reorienting belonging after the Soviet collapse, *Anthropology of East Europe Review 32*(2): 33-48.

Isakova, Z. (2015) The consolidation of peace in southern Kyrgyzstan: the effectiveness of the strategy after five years, 15 June 2015, accessed 1 April 2017, http://cabar.asia/en/the-consolidation-of-peace-in-southern-kyrgyzstan-the-effectiveness-of-the-strategy-after-five-years/

Isakova, Z. (2013) *Understanding peace processes in the aftermth of ethnic violence in the South of Kyrgyzstan: The Kyrgyz and Uzbeks happily ever after?* MA Dissertation. Bishkek: OSCE Academy, http://osce-academy.net/upload/file/Master_Thesis_Zamira_Isakova.pdf

Ismailbekova, A., Karimova, B. (2018) Ethnic differentiation and conflict dynamics: Uzbeks' marginalization and non-marginalization in southern Kyrgyzstan, in Chappatte, A., Freitag, U., Lafi, N. (eds.) *Understanding the city through its margins: Pluridisciplinary perspectives from case studies in Africa, Asia and the Middle East*, London: Routledge, 161-184.

Ismailbekova, A. (2017) *Blood ties and the native son: poetics of patronage in Kyrgyzstan*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Ismailbekova, A. (2015) Single mothers in Osh: Well-being and coping strategies of women in the aftermath of the 2010 conflict in Kyrgyzstan, *Focaal* 71: 114-127.

Ismailbekova, A. (2013) Coping strategies: public avoidance, migration, and marriage in the aftermath of the Osh conflict, Fergana Valley, *Nationalities Papers* 41(1): 109-127.

Jackson, P., Albrecht, P. (2011) *Reconstructing security after conflict: security sector reform in Sierra Leone*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Jackson, P. (2011a) Security sector reform and state building, *Third World Quarterly* 32(10): 1803-1822.

Jackson, P. (2011b) Decentralised power and traditional authorities: How power determines access to justice in Sierra Leone, *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law* 43(63): 207-230.

Jackson, R. (2015) How resistance can save peace studies, *Journal of Resistance Studies* 1(1): 18-49.

Jahn, B. (2007) The tragedy of liberal diplomacy: democratization, intervention, statebuilding (Part I), *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 1(1): 87-106.

Jenkins, T. (2008) The international institute on peace education: Twenty-six years modelling critical, participatory peace pedagogy, *Journal of Peace Education and Social Justice 2*(2): 166-174.

Jones, L. (2012) Statebuiling versus state-formation in East Timor, in Blieseman de Guevara, B. (ed.) *Statebuilding and State-Formation: The political sociology of intervention,* London:

Routledge, 95-113.

Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding [JISB] (2017) Special issue: Knowledge production in conflict and intervention: Finding "facts", telling "truth", 17(1): 1-139.

Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding [JISB] (2015) Interventionism as practice, Special section, 9(4): 425-518.

Jutila, M., Pehkonen, S., & Väyrynen, T. (2008) Resuscitating a discipline: an agenda for critical peace research, *Millennium-Journal of International Studies 36*(3): 623-640.

Kalinovsky, A. M. (2013) Not some British colony in Africa: the politics of decolonization and modernization in Soviet Central Asia, 1955-1964, *Ab Imperio* (2): 191-222.

Kamp, M. (2011) *The new woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, modernity, and unveiling under communism*, Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Kapalova, A. (2015) Неформальная экономика на службе социальной защищенности [The informal economy the service of social protection], in Shatalova, O., Mamedov, G. (eds.) *Бишкек утопический. Сборник текстов [Utopian Bishkek. Essays]*, Bishkek: ShTAB Press, 252-261.

Kaplan, R. (1994) The coming anarchy: How scarcity, crime, overpopulation and disease are threatening the social fabric of our planet, *Atlantic Monthly* February: 44-74

Kappler, S., Richmond, O. P. (2011) Peacebuilding and culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Resistance or emancipation?, *Security dialogue 42*(3): 261-278.

Kargiannis, E. (2005) Political Islam and social movement theory: The case of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Kyrgyzstan, *Religion, State and Society* 33(2): 137-150.

Kasymov, U., Nikonova, V. (2006) "Made in Kyrgyzstan": Innovative approaches to sustainable industrial development, *Mountain Research and Development* 26(2): 119-123.

Kay, R. (2006) *Men in contemporary Russia: The fallen heroes of post-Soviet change?,* Aldershot: Ashgate.

Kenzheeva, M. (2016) Nekotorye problemy mestnogo samoupravlenia i pluchenia territorialnykh dokhodov v Kyrgyzstane [Some problems of local self-administration and of local revenue generation in Kyrgyzstan]*, Territoria nauki* [Territory of science] 1(2016): 99-105.

Khalid, A. (2007) *Islam after communism: religion and politics in Central Asia*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Khamidov, A., Marat, E. (2011) The danger of ethnic nationalism in Kyrgyzstan. *Central Asia-Caucasus   Institute   Analyst*, http://www.cacianalyst.org/resources/pdf/issues/20110316Analyst.pdf

Khamidov, A., Megoran, N., Heathershaw, J. (2017) Bottom-up peacekeeping in southern Kyrgyzstan: how local actors managed to prevent the spread of violence from Osh/Jalal-Abad to Aravan, June 2010, *Nationalities Papers*, Online First.

Khamidov, A. (2013) The lessons of the 'Nookat events': central government, local officials and religious protests in Kyrgyzstan, *Central Asian Survey* 32(2): 148-160.

Kirmse, S. B. (2010) In the marketplace for styles and identities: globalization and youth culture in southern Kyrgyzstan, *Central Asian Survey* 29(4): 389-403.

Kirmse, S. B. (2009) Leisure, business and fantasy worlds: exploring donor-funded 'youth spaces' in southern Kyrgyzstan, *Central Asian Survey* 28(3): 289-301.

Kleinbach, R., Salimjanova, L. (2007) Kyz ala kachuu and adat: non-consensual bride kidnapping and tradition in Kyrgyzstan, *Central Asian Survey* 26(2): 217-233.

Koddenbrock, K. (2015) *The practice of humanitarian intervention: Aid workers, agencies and institutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, London: Routledge.

Koddenbrock, K. (2012) The international self and the humanitarianization of politics: A case study of Goma, DR Congo, in Bliesemann de Guevara, B. (ed.) *Statebuilding and state-formation: The political sociology of intervention,* London: Routledge, 214-229.

Kozhonaliev, S.K. (2000) *Обычное право кыргызов [The traditional law of the Kyrgyz]*, Bishkek: Soros Foundation Kyrgyzstan.

Kraidy, M. (2005) *Hybridity, or the cultural logic of globalization*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Krause, K. (2005) Human security: An idea whose time has come?, *S&F Sicherheit und Frieden)/Security and Peace*, 23(1): 1-6.

Kudaibergenova, D. T. (2017) *Rewriting the Nation in Modern Kazakh Literature: Elites and Narratives*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Kudaibergenova, D. T. (2016) Eurasian Economic Union integration in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. *European Politics and Society*, 17(sup1): 97-112.

Kuehnast, K., Dudwick, N. (2002) Better a hundred friends than a hundred rubles? Social networks in transition–the Kyrgyz Republic, in Devarajan, S., Rogers, F.S. (ed.) *World Bank Economists' Forum*, Vol. 2, 51-88.

Kühn, F. (2008) Aid, opium, and the state of rents in Afghanistan: Competition, cooperation, or cohabitation?, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 2(3): 309–27.

Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission (2011) Report of the independent international commission into the events in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010, accessed 7 September 2012, http://www.kgzembind.in/Report%20(English)pdf

Laclau, E., Mouffe, C. (1985) *Hegemony and socialist strategy. Towards a radical democratic politics*, London: Verso.

Langford, L. (2015) "There was a case": gender-based violence, property rights, and the data dilemma in Kyrgyzstan, *Central Asia Policy Review* 1(3): 5-10.

Laruelle, M. (2008) The concept of ethnogenesis in Central Asia: Political context and institutional mediators (1940–50), *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 9(1): 169-188.

Laruelle, M. (2012) The paradigm of nationalism in Kyrgyzstan. Evolving narrative, the sovereignty issue, and political agenda, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 45: 39–49.

Laszczkowski, M., Reeves, M. (2015) Affective states: Entanglements, suspensions, suspicions, *Social Analysis* 59(4): 1-14.

Law, D. M. (2005) Human security and security sector reform: Contrasts and commonalities, *Sicherheit und Frieden (S+ F)/Security and Peace*, 23(1): 14-20.

Lemay-Hébert, N., Freedman, R. (2017) Haiti's cholera victims still can't get what they need from the UN, The Conversation, accessed 20 October 2017, https://theconversation.com/haitis-cholera-victims-still-cant-get-what-they-need-from-the-un-75788

Lemay-Hébert, N., Mathieu, X. (2014) The OECD's discourse on fragile states: Expertise and the normalisation of knowledge production, *Third World Quarterly 35*(2): 232-251.

Lemay-Hébert, N., Murshed, S. M. (2016) Rentier statebuilding in a post-conflict economy: The case of Kosovo, *Development and Change 47*(3): 517-541.

Lemay-Hébert, N., Onuf, N., Rakić, V., Bojanić, P. (eds.) (2013) *Semantics of statebuilding: Language, meanings and sovereignty*, London: Routledge.

Lemay-Hebert, N. (2014) A Sisyphean exercise of SSR: Examining the role of the UN in Timor-Leste, in Heiduk, F. (ed.) *Security sector reform in Southeast Asia: From policy to practice*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 201-224.

Lemay-Hebert, N. (2013a) Review essay: Critical debates on peacebuilding, *Civil Wars* 15(2): 242-252.

Lemay-Hebert, N. (2013b) Rethinking Weberian aapproaches to statebuilding, in Chandler, D. and Sisk, T.D. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of international statebuilding,* London: Routledge, 3-14.

Lemay-Hebert, N. (2013c) The semantics of statebuilding and nationbuilding: Looking beyond neo-Weberian approaches, in Lemay-Hébert, N., Onuf, N., Rakić, V., Bojanić, P. (eds.) (2013) *Semantics of statebuilding: Language, meanings and sovereignty*, London: Routledge, 89-105.

Lemay-Hebert, N. (2013d) Everyday legitimacy and international administration: Global governance and local legitimacy in Kosovo, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, *7*(1): 87-104.

Lemay-Hebert, N. (2012) Coerced transitions in Timor-Leste and Kosovo: managing competing objectives of institution-building and local empowerment, *Democratization 19*(3): 465-485.

Lemay-Hebert, N. (2011a) The "empty-shell" approach: The setup process of international administrations in Timor-Leste and Kosovo, its consequences and lessons, *International Studies Perspectives 12*(2): 190-211.

Lemay-Hebert, N. (2011b) The bifurcation of the two worlds: assessing the gap between internationals and locals in state-building processes, *Third World Quarterly 32*(10): 1823-1841.

Lemay-Hebert, N. (2009) State-building without nation building? Legitimacy, state failure and the limits of the institutionalist approach, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 3(1): 21-45.

Lemon, E. J. (2016a) Building resilient secular citizens: Tajikistan's response to the Islamic State, *Caucasus Survey* 4(3): 261-281.

Lemon, E. J. (2016b) *Governing Islam and security in Tajikistan and beyond: The emergence of transnational authoritarian security governance*, PhD Thesis, University of Exeter.

Leonard, P. (2015) Kyrgyzstan joins Eurasian Union, takes leap into the dark, 7 August 2015, accessed 17 April 2017, http://www.eurasianet.org/node/74591

Levitsky, S., Way, L. (2010) *Competitive authoritarianism: Hybrid regimes after the cold war*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lewis, D. (2016) Central Asia: Contested peace, in Richmond, Oliver, Pogodda, S. and J. Ramovic (eds.) *The Palgrave handbook of disciplinary and regional approaches to peace*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 387-397.

Lewis, D. (2015a) 'Illiberal peace?': Authoritarian approaches to conflict management, Working paper, New York: Harriman Institute, https://www.academia.edu/18044370/Illiberal_Peace_Authoritarian_Modes_of_Conflict_Management

Lewis, D. (2015b) Reasserting hegemony in Central Asia: Russian policy in Kyrgyzstan after 2010, *Comillas Journal of International Relations*, 2(3): 58 – 81.

Lewis, D. (2012) Sovereignty after empire: The colonial roots of Central Asian authoritarianism, in Cummings, S., Hinnebusch, R. (ed.) *Sovereignty after empire: Comparing the Middle East and Central Asia: Comparing the Middle East and Central Asia*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 178-197.

Lewis, D. (2011a) Security sector reform in authoritarian regimes: The OSCE experience of police assistance programming in Central Asia, *Security and Human Rights 22*(2): 103-117.

Lewis, D. (2011b) *Reassessing the role of OSCE police assistance programming in Central Asia,* Open Society Foundations.

Lidén, K., Mac Ginty, R., Richmond, O. P. (2009) Introduction: beyond northern epistemologies of peace: peacebuilding reconstructed?, *International Peacekeeping*, *16*(5): 587-598.

Lidén, K. (2011) Peace, self-governance and international engagement: From neo-colonial to post-colonial peace-building, in Tadjbakhsh, S. (ed.) *Rethinking the liberal peace: external models and local alternatives*, London: Taylor & Francis, 57-74.

Lidén, K. (2009) Building peace between global and local politics: the cosmopolitical ethics of liberal peacebuilding, *International Peacekeeping 16*(5): 616-634.

Lipovsky, I. (1996) The awakening of central Asian Islam, *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(3): 1-21.

Liu, M. Y. (2014) Massacre through a kaleidoscope: fragmented moral imaginaries of the state in Central Asia, in Reeves, M., Beyer, J., Rasanayagam, J. (eds.) *Ethnographies of the state in Central Asia: performing politics*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 261-284.

Liu, M. Y. (2012) *Under Solomon's throne: Uzbek visions of renewal in Osh*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Loring, B. (2014) "Colonizers with party cards": Soviet internal colonialism in Central Asia, 1917–39, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 15(1): 77-102.

Lottholz, P., Kluczewska, K. (2017) Ever wondered why practitioners treat researchers like a nuisance? The challenges of accessing expert knowledge, from two perspectives', LSE Field Research Method Lab, accessed 1 November 2017, http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/fieldresearch/2017/10/30/why-practitioners-treat-researchers-like-a-nuisance/

Lottholz, P., Lemay-Hébert, N. (2016) Re-reading Weber, re-conceptualizing state-building: from neo-Weberian to post-Weberian approaches to state, legitimacy and state-building, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 1-18.

Lottholz, P., Marschall, T. (2017) Knowledge transfer, inspiration, (over-)reflection: A discussion of potentials and limits of cooperative research, The CESS Blog, accessed 20 October 2017, https://thecessblog.com/2017/08/18/knowledge-transfer-inspiration-over-reflection-a-discussion-of-potentials-and-limits-of-cooperative-research

Lottholz, P., Meyer, J.R. (2016) "'Friend' or 'Foreign Agent'? On the Limits of Field Research in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan", Exeter Central Asian Studies Network, accessed 1 November 2017, https://blogs.exeter.ac.uk/excas/2016/04/14/friend-or-foreign-agent-on-the-limits-of-field-research-in-post-soviet-kyrgyzstan/

Lottholz, P. (2018) A negative post-liberal peace? Inquiring the embeddedness of everyday forms of peace in Central Asia, in Owen, C., Juraev, S., Lewis, D., Megoran, N., Heathershaw, J. (eds.) *Interrogating illiberal peace in Eurasia: Critical perspectives on peace and conflict*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 97-119.

Lottholz, P. (2017a) Nothing more than a conceptual lens? Situating hybridity in social inquiry, in Lemay-Hébert, N., Freedman, R. (eds.) *Hybridity: Law, culture and development*, Routledge: London, 17-36.

Lottholz, P. (2017b) Critiquing anthropological imagination in peace and conflict studies: From empiricist positivism to a dialogical approach in ethnographic peace research', *International Peacekeeping*, Online First.

Lottholz, P. (2016a) 'Reproducing the Soviet policy paradox? The problem of restrictive approaches to regulating religion and countering violent extremism', *Central Asian Policy Review* 2(1): 22-6.

Lottholz, P. (2016b) Review essay: Exploring the boundaries of knowledge via hybridity, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 10(1): 136-42.

Lottholz, P. (2016c) Polizeireform in Kirgistan: Mechanismen der Gemeindesicherheit als Schritt zum fundamentalen Wandel?, *Zentralasien-Analysen*, No. 99, accessed 10 April 2016, http://www.laender-analysen.de/zentralasien/pdf/ZentralasienAnalysen99.pdf

Lottholz, P. (2016d) Police reform in Kyrgyzstan: Community security mechanisms as a step towards fundamental change?, *Central Asia Policy Review* 3(1): 22-27.

Louw, M. (2013) Even honey may become bitter when there is too much of it: Islam and the struggle for a balanced existence in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, *Central Asian Survey* 32(4): 514-526.

Louw, M. (2012) Being Muslim the ironic way: Secularism, religion and irony in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, in Bubandt, N. O., Van Beek, M. (eds.) *Varieties of secularism in Asia: Anthropological explorations of religion, politics and the spiritual*, London: Routledge, 143-162.

Luckham, R. and Kirk, T. (2012) Security in Hybrid Political Contexts: an enduser approach, Justice and Security Research Programme Paper 2, accessed 10 May 2016, http://www2.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/JSRP/downloads/JSRP2.LuckhamKirk.pdf

Mac Ginty, R., Richmond, O. (2016) The fallacy of constructing hybrid political orders: a reappraisal of the hybrid turn in peacebuilding, *International Peacekeeping* 23(2): 219-239.

Mac Ginty, R., Richmond, O. P. (2013) The local turn in peacebuilding: A critical agenda for peace, *Third World Quarterly* 34(5): 763-783.

Mac Ginty, R., Richmond, O. P. (2009) (eds.) *The liberal peace and post-war reconstruction: Myth or reality?*, London: Routledge.

Mac Ginty, R., Sanghera, G. (2012) Hybridity in peacebuilding and development: An introduction, *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 7(2): 3-8.

Mac Ginty, R. (2014) Why do we think in the ways that we do?, *International Peacekeeping* 21(1): 107-112.

Mac Ginty, R. (2013) Hybrid statebuilding, in Egnell, R., Haldén, P. (eds.) (2013) *New agendas in statebuilding: Hybridity, contingency and history*, London: Routledge, 13-31.

Mac Ginty, R. (2011) *International peacebuilding and local resistance: Hybrid forms of peace*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Mac Ginty, R. (2010) Hybrid peace: The interaction between top-down and bottom-up peace, *Security Dialogue* 41(4): 391-412.

Mac Ginty, R. (2008) Indigenous peace-making versus the liberal peace, *Cooperation and Conflict 43*(2): 139-163.

Maguire, M., Frois, C., Zurawski, N. (eds.) (2014) *Anthropology of security: Perspectives from the frontline of policing, counter-terrorism and border control*, London: Pluto Press.

Makarychev, A., Medvedev, S. (2015) Biopolitics and power in Putin's Russia, *Problems of Post-communism* 62(1): 45-54.

Makovicky, N. (2014) Me, Inc.? Untangling neoliberalism, personhood, and postsocialism, in Makovicky, N. (ed.) *Neoliberalism, personhood, and postsocialism: Enterprising selves in changing economies*, London: Routledge, 1-16.

Mamedov, G., Shatalova, O. (eds.) (2016) *Понятия о советском в Центральной Азии. Альманах ШТАБА № 1 [Understandings of the Soviet in Central Asia. ShTAB Almanac No. 1]*, Bishkek: ShTAB Press.

Mandel, R. Humphrey, C. (eds.) (2002) *Markets and moralities: Ethnographies of postsocialism*, London: Berg.

Manolova, P. (2017) *On the way to the 'imaginary West': Bulgarian migrations, imaginations and disillusionments*, Phd Thesis, University of Birmingham.

Maranhão, T. (1990) Introduction, in Maranhão, T. (ed.) *The interpretation of dialogue*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Marat, E. (2015) Global money laundering and its domestic political consequences in Kyrgyzstan, *Central Asian Survey* 34 (1): 46-56.

Marat, E. (2013) March and after: what has changed? What has stayed the same? in Cummings, S. (ed.) *Domestic and international perspectives on Kyrgyzstan's 'Tulip Revolution': Motives, mobilization and meanings*, London: Routledge, 7-18.

Marat, E. (2008) Imagined past, uncertain future: The creation of national ideologies in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, *Problems of Post-Communism* 55(1): 12-24.

Marat, E. (2006) Prospective joining of HIPC provokes fierce debates in Kyrgyzstan, *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst*, 13.

March, A. F. (2003) State ideology and the legitimation of authoritarianism: The case of post-Soviet Uzbekistan, *Journal of Political Ideologies* 8(2): 209-232.

Marcus, G. E. (1998) *Ethnography through thick and thin*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Marcuse, H. (1964) *One-dimensional man: Studies in the ideology of advanced capitalist society*, Boston: Beacon.

Marquette, H., Beswick, D. (2011) State building, security and development: State building as a new development paradigm?, *Third World Quarterly 32*(10): 1703-1714.

Martin, T. D. (2001) *The affirmative action empire: Nations and nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Maschietto, R. H. (2016) Problematizing the 'local' in Peacebuilding, *International Peacekeeping* 23(3): 505-512.

Matveeva, A. (2009) Legitimising Central Asian authoritarianism: Political manipulation and symbolic power, *Europe-Asia Studies* 61(7): 1095-1121.

Matveeva, A., Savin, I., Faizullaev, B. (2012) Kyrgyzstan: Tragedy in the South, Ethnopolitics Paper No. 17, accessed 7 September 2012, accessed 10 June 2016, http://www.ethnopolitics.org/ethnopolitics-papers/EPP017.pdf

McBrien, J. (2009) Mukadas's struggle: veils and modernity in Kyrgyzstan, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15(s1): 127-144.

McBrien, J., Pelkmans, M. (2008) Turning Marx on his head missionaries 'extremists' and archaic secularists in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, *Critique of Anthropology* 28(1): 87-103.

McLaughlin, E. (2002) The crisis of the social and the political materialisation of community safety, in Hughes, G., McLaughlin, E., Muncie, J. (eds.) *Crime prevention and community safety: new directions*, London: Sage, 77-100.

McNay, L. (1996) *Foucault: A critical introduction*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Megoran, N., Harris, C., Sharapova, S., Kamp, M., Townsend, J., Bagdasarova, N. Tlostanova, M. (2012) Author - critic forum: Decolonial theory and gender research in Central Asia, *Central Asian Survey* 31(3): 355-367

Megoran, N., Satybaldieva, E., Lewis, D., Heathershaw, J. (2014) Peacebuilding and reconciliation projects in Southern Kyrgyzstan, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute and Open Society Foundations Working Paper, June 2014, accessed 10 June 2016, http://www.sipri.org/research/security/afghanistan/central-asia-security/publications/sipri-osf-working-paper-megoran-et-al-june-2014

Megoran N. (2017) *Nationalism in Central Asia: A biography of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan boundary*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Megoran, N. (2013) Shared space, divided space: narrating ethnic histories of Osh, *Environment and Planning A*, 45(4): 892-907.

Megoran, N. (2012) Averting violence in Kyrgyzstan: Understanding and responding to nationalism, *Russia and Eurasia Programme Paper* 3: 971-986.

Mets, S. (2015) Umar Farooq i kirgizskoe "delo pravozashitnikov": glavnoe - iziat' dokumenty i deportirovat [Umar Farooq and the Kyrgyz "case of human rights activists": the main goal - to confiscate documents and deport], Fergana.ru, 30 March 2015, accessed 17 April 2017, http://www.fergananews.com/articles/8471

Migdal, J. S., Schlichte, K. (2005) Rethinking the state, in Schlichte, K. (ed.) *The dynamics of states: the formation and crises of state domination*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1-40.

Mignolo, W. D., Escobar, A. (2013) *Globalization and the decolonial option*, London: Routledge.

Mignolo, W.D. (2012) *Local histories/global designs: Coloniality, subaltern knowledges, and border thinking*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Mignolo, W.D. (2011) *The darker side of western modernity: Global futures, decolonial options*, Durham: Duke University Press.

Mignolo, W. D. (2007) DELINKING: The rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality and the grammar of de-coloniality, *Cultural Studies* 21(2-3): 449-514.

Millar, G. (2014a) *An ethnographic approach to peacebuilding: Understanding local experiences in transitional states*, London: Routledge.

Millar, G. (2014b) Disaggregating hybridity: Why hybrid institutions do not produce predictable experiences of peace, *Journal of Peace Research 51*(4): 501-514.

Montgomery, D.W. (2007) *Namaz*, wishing trees, and vodka: The diversity of everyday religious life in Central Asia, in Sahadeo, J., Zanca, R. (eds.) *Everyday life in Central Asia: Past and present*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 355-370.

Moreiras, A. (1999) Hybridity and double consciousness, *Cultural Studies* 13(3): 373-407.

Morris, J., Polese, A. (eds.) (2015) *Informal economies in post-socialist spaces: Practices, institutions and networks*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Mosse, D. (2006) Anti-social anthropology? Objectivity, objection, and the ethnography of public policy and professional communities, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 12 (4): 935-56.

Mosse, D. (2005) *Cultivating development: An ethnography of aid policy and practice*, London: Pluto.

Mukasov, Y.M. (2010) *Философская мысль в контексте развития кыргызской культуры [Philosophical thought in the context of Kyrgyz cultural development]*, Bishkek: Ilim.

Murzakulova, A., Schoeberlein, J. (2009) The invention of legitimacy: struggles in Kyrgyzstan to craft an effective nation-state ideology, *Europe-Asia Studies* 61(7): 1229-1248.

Müller, M. M. (2016) Penalizing democracy: punitive politics in neoliberal Mexico, *Crime, Law and Social Change* 65(3): 227-249.

Müller, M. M. (2014) De-monopolizing the bureaucratic field: internationalization strategies and the transnationalization of security governance in Mexico City, *Alternatives 39*(1): 37-54.

N.a. (2016) A job at UN HQ? Goodbye principles and philanthropy, hello power and privilege! *The Guardian,* Global Development, 4 June 2016, accessed 13 November 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/jun/04/working-for-the-united-nations-power-privilege-principles-philanthropy

Nachtwey, O. (2016) *Die Abstiegsgesellschaft: Über das Aufbegehren in der regressiven Moderne [Society in decline: The revolt of regressive modernity]*, Berlin: Suhrkamp.

Nader, L. (1990) *Harmony ideology: Justice and control in a Zapotec mountain village*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Nader, L. (2001) Harmony coerced is freedom denied, *The Chronicle of Higher Education 47*, B13-B16.

Nazritdinov, E., Esenamanova, N. (2017) The war of billboards: Hijab, secularism, and public space in Bishkek, *Central Asian Affairs* 4(2): 217-242.

Nazritdinov, E., Schenkkan, N. (2012) *A portrayal of absence: Households of migrants in Kyrgyzstan*, Bishkek: HelpAge International.

Nazritdinov, E., Zhumakadyr kyzy, B., Asanalieva, D. (2015) Myths and realities of Bishkek's novostroikas, in Laruelle, M., Engvall, J. (eds.) *Kyrgyzstan beyond" democracy island" and " failing state": Social and political changes in a Post-Soviet Society*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 143-164.

Newman, E., Paris, R., Richmond, O. (2009) *New perspectives on liberal peacebuilding,* Tokyo: United Nations University Press.

Nicolson, D.J. (2017) *Academic conferences as neoliberal commodities*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Nikolaev, A. (2010) "НГ": "Совещательная демократия" К.Бакиева. Президент Киргизии, похоже, уже задумался о "наследнике по прямой" ["NG": K. Bakiev's "consultative democracy": Kyrgyzstan's president, typically, already thought about a "follower of his own"], Centrasia.ru, 26 March 2010, accessed 17 April 2017, http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1269579840

Nurulla-Khodjaeva N. T. (2016) Деколониальность исторических знаний и межкультурный «дахлез» в Центральной Азии [The decoloniality of historical knowledges and intercultural '*dakhlez*' in Central Asia], *Критические исследования* [Critical inquiry], Moscow: MGIMO, 4(49): 16-25.

Nurulla-Khodjaeva N. T. (2012) Община в мусульманской традиции Центральной Азии, [The community in the Muslim tradition of Central Asia], *Moscow State University for Arts and Culture Bulletin* 4 (48): 67-71.

Nurulla-Khodjaeva N. T. (2011) Община и государство в центральной Азии [Community and state in Central Asia], *Moscow State University for Arts and Culture Bulletin* 2(40): 66-70.

O'Donnell, G., Schmitter, P. C. (2013 [1986]) *Transitions from authoritarian rule: Tentative conclusions about uncertain democracies*, 2nd ed., Baltimore: The Johns Hopinks University Press.

O'Neill Borbieva, N. (2013) Anxiety, order and the other: well-being among ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, *Central Asian Survey* 32(4): 501-513.

O'Shea, L. (2015) Informal economic practices within the Kyrgyz police (militsiia) In Morris, J., Polese, A. (eds.) *Informal economies in post-socialist spaces: Practices, institutions and networks*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 270-293.

Olivier de Sardan J.-P. (2005) *Anthropology and development. Understanding contemporary social change*, London: Zed Books.

Olivier de Sardan J.-P. (2015) *Epistemology, fieldwork and anthropology,* Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Omelicheva, M. Y. (2015) *Democracy in Central Asia: competing perspectives and alternative strategies*, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

Organisation for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE) and El-Pikir (2013) «Инициатива Общественной безопасности» Программы ОБСЕ по реформированию ОВД КР ['Public Security Initiative' Programmes of the OSCE for the reform of Internal Affairs Organs of the Kyrgyz Republic], Bishkek: El Pikir.

Ortmann, S., Heathershaw, J. (2012) Conspiracy theories in the post-Soviet Space, *The Russian Review* 71(4): 551-564.

Owen, C., Juraev, S., Lewis, D., Megoran, N., Heathershaw, J. (eds.) *Interrogating illiberal peace in Eurasia: Critical perspectives on peace and conflict*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Owen, C. (2014) *"Obshchestvennyi kontrol' (Public scrutiny) from discourse to action in contemporary Russia: The Emergence of Authoritarian Neoliberal Governance*, PhD Thesis, University of Exeter.

Owen, T., Martin, M. (2014) *Routledge handbook of human security*, London: Routledge.

Paasi, A. (2015) Hot spots, dark-side dots, tin pots": The uneven internationalism of the global academic market, in Meusburger, P., Gregory, D., Suarsana, L. (eds.) *Geographies of knowledge and power*, London: Springer, 247-262.

Paffenholz, T. (2015) Unpacking the local turn in peacebuilding: A critical assessment towards an agenda for future research, *Third World Quarterly* 36(5): 857-74.

Paffenholz, T., Reychler, L. (2005) Towards better policy and programme work in conflict zones: introducing the 'aid for peace' approach, *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development 2*(2): 6-23.

Pannier, B. (2014) Who was Kurmanjan Datka and what does she mean to the Kyrgyz people? RFE/RL, 31 December 2014, 31 December 2014, accessed 17 April 2017, http://www.rferl.org/a/qishloq-ovozi-who-was-kurmanjan-datka/26770979.html

Paris, R. (2004) *At war's end*, Cambridge: CUP.

Paris, R. (2010) Saving liberal peacebuilding, *Review of International Studies* 36: 337–365.

Paris, R., Sisk, T. D. (eds.) (2009) *The dilemmas of statebuilding: confronting the contradictions of postwar peace operations*, London: Routledge.

Parry, B. (1987) Problems in current theories of colonial discourse, *Oxford Literary Review* 9(1): 27-58.

Patomäki, H. (2001) The challenge of critical theories: peace research at the start of the new century, *Journal of Peace Research* 38(6): 723-737.

Pelkmans, M. (2017) *Fragile conviction: Changing ideological landscapes in urban Kyrgyzstan*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Peshkopia, R. (2010) A ghost from the future: The postsocialist myth of capitalism and the ideological suspension of postmodernity, *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory* 23-53.

Peterson, J. H. (2012) A conceptual unpacking of hybridity: Accounting for notions of power, politics and progress in analyses of aid-driven interfaces, *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 7(2): 9-22.

Pétric, B. M. (2005) Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan or the birth of a globalized protectorate, *Central Asian Survey* 24(3): 319-332.

Petrov, K. (2014) The concept of transition in transition: Comparing the post-communist use of the concept of transition with that found in Soviet ideology, *Baltic Worlds* 7(1): 29–41, 30.

Pfadenhauer, M. (2005) Ethnography of scenes. Towards a sociological life-world analysis of (post-traditional) community-building, *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 6(3): n.p.

Pieterse, J. N. (2001) Hybridity, so what? The anti-hybridity backlash and the riddles of recognition, *Theory, Culture & Society* 18(2-3): 219-245.

Pilkington, H., Omelchenko, E., Flynn, M., Bliudina, U. I., Starkova, E. (2002) *Looking West: Cultural Globalisation and Russian Youth Cultures*, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University.

Pomerantsev, P. (2016) Why we're post-fact, *Granta*, 20 July 2016, accessed 17 April 2017, https://granta.com/why-were-post-fact/

Pouligny, B. (2006) Peace operations seen from below. UN missions and local people, London: Hurst.

Pratt, J. (1986) Diversion from the juvenile court: A history of inflation and a critique of progress, *British Journal of Criminology* 26(3): 212-233.

Prozorov, S. (2016) *The biopolitics of Stalinism: Ideology and life in Soviet socialism*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Pugh, J. (2014) Resilience, complexity and post-liberalism, *Area* 46(3): 313-319.

Pugh, M. (2004) Peacekeeping and critical theory, *International Peacekeeping 11*(1): 39-58.

Pugh, M. (2005) The political economy of peacebuilding: A critical theory perspective, *International Journal of Peace Studies 10*(2): 23.

Pugh, M. (2006) Post-war economies and the New York dissensus, *Conflict, Security & Development 6*(3): 269-289.

Pugh, M. (2011) Local agency and political economies of peacebuilding, *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 11(2): 308-320.

Pugh, M., Cooper, N. and Turner, M. (eds.) *Whose peace? Critical perspectives on the political economy of peacebuilding*, Basingstoke: New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 390-397.

Quijano, A. (2000) Coloniality of power and Eurocentrism in Latin America, *International Sociology 15*(2): 215-232.

Rabikowska, M. (2009) The ghosts of the past: 20 years after the fall of communism in Europe, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies 42*(2): 165-179.

Radnitz, S. (2010) *Weapons of the wealthy: predatory regimes and elite-led protests in Central Asia,* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Randazzo, E. (2016) The paradoxes of the 'everyday': Scrutinising the local turn in peace building, *Third World Quarterly* 37(8): 1351-1370.

Rausing, S. (2002) Re-constructing the 'normal': identity and the consumption of western goods in Estonia, in Mandel, R. Humphrey, C. (eds.) *Markets and moralities: Ethnographies of postsocialism*, London: Berg, 127-142.

Reckwitz, Andreas (2002) Toward a theory of social practices. A development in culturalist theorizing, *European Journal of Social Theory* 5 (2): 243–263.

Reason, P., Bradbury, H. (eds.) (2001) *Handbook of action research: Participative inquiry and practice*, London: Sage.

Reeves, M., Rasanayagam, J., Beyer, J. (eds.) (2014) *Ethnographies of the state in Central Asia: Performing Politics*, Bloomington: University of Indiana Press.

Reeves, M. (2015a) Academic integrity and its limits in Kyrgyzstan, *International Higher Education* 37: n.p.

Reeves, M. (2015b) In Search of *tolerantnost'*: Preventive development and its limits at the Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan border, in Engvall, J., Laruelle, M. (eds.) *Kyrgyzstan beyond*

'democracy island' and 'failing state': Social and political changes in a post-Soviet society, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 79-98.

Reeves, M. (2014) *Border work: Spatial lives of the state in rural Central Asia*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Reeves, M. (2013) Clean fake: Authenticating documents and persons in migrant Moscow, *American Ethnologist 40*(3): 508-524.

Reeves, M. (2011) Staying put? Towards a relational politics of mobility at a time of migration, *Central Asian Survey* 30(3-4): 555-576.

Reeves, M. (2005) Locating danger: konfliktologiia and the search for fixity in the Ferghana Valley borderlands, *Central Asian Survey 24*(1): 67-81.

Region.kg (2015) Kyrk Choro – kyrgyzskie bliustiteli sovesti? [Are "Kyrk Choro" the kyrgyz conscience "custodians"?], 6 February 2015, accessed 17 April 2017, http://www.region.kg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1312:l-r--lr-&catid=5:obshestvo&Itemid=6

Restrepo, E. and Escobar, A. (2005) Other anthropologies and anthropology otherwise. Steps to a world anthropologies framework, *Critique of Anthropology* 25(2): 99-129.

RFE/RL (2016) Kyrgyz migrant women brutally assaulted in 'patriotic' videos, 12 March 2016, accessed 17 April 2017, http://www.rferl.org/content/kyrgyz-migrant-women-brutally-assaulted-in-patriotic-videos/24599390.html

RFE/RL (2012) Kyrgyz women beaten by Kyrgyz men in Russia - How the story became part of one reporters life, 24 August 2012, accessed 17 April 2017, http://www.rferl.mobi/a/24687354.html

Richmond, O. P., Franks, J. (2007) Liberal hubris? Virtual peace in Cambodia, *Security Dialogue 38*(1): 27-48.

Richmond, O. P., Franks, J. (2009) *Liberal peace transitions: between statebuilding and peacebuilding*, Edignburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Richmond, O. P., Mac Ginty, R. (2015) Where now for the critique of the liberal peace?, *Cooperation & Conflict* 50(2): 171-189.

Richmond, O.P., Mitchell, A. (eds.) (2012) *Hybrid forms of peace – From everyday forms of peace to post-Liberalism*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Richmond, O. P. (2014) New approaches to peacebuilding, *International Peacekeeping* 21(5): 696-700.

Richmond, O.P. (2013) Failed statebuilding versus peace formation, *Cooperation and Conflict 48*(3): 378-400.

Richmond, O.P. (2012) A pedagogy of peacebuilding: Infrapolitics, resistance, and liberation1, *International Political Sociology 6*(2): 115-131.

Richmond, O.P. (2011a) *A post-liberal peace*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Richmond, O.P. (2011b) Critical agency, resistance and a post-colonial civil society, *Cooperation and conflict 46*(4): 419-440.

Richmond, O.P. (2011c) De-romanticising the local, de-mystifying the international: hybridity in Timor Leste and the Solomon Islands, *The Pacific Review 24*(1): 115-136.

Richmond, O.P. (2010b) Resistance and the post-liberal peace, *Millennium Journal of International Studies* 38(3):665-692.

Richmond, O.P. (ed.) (2010a) *Palgrave advances in peacebuilding: Critical developments and approaches*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Richmond, O.P. (2009a) The romanticisation of the local: Welfare, culture and peacebuilding, *The International Spectator* 44(1): 149-169.

Richmond, O.P. (2009b) Becoming liberal, unbecoming liberalism: Liberal-local hybridity via the everyday as a response to the paradoxes of liberal peacebuilding, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding 3*(3): 324-344.

Richmond, O.P. (2009c) A post-liberal peace: Eirenism and the everyday, *Review of International Studies 35*(03): 557-580.

Richmond, O.P. (2008) *Peace in international relations*, London: Routledge.

Richmond, O.P. (2005) *The transformation of peace*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Roche, S. (2014) *Domesticating youth: Youth bulges and their socio-political implications in Tajikistan*, New York: Berghahn.

Romanchuk, N. (2002) Bribery in Kyrgyz state universities. Is there anything to worry about?, unpublished research paper, American University of Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Rosaldo, R. (1989) *Culture & truth: The remaking of social analysis*, Boston: Beacon Press.

Rose, N. (2001) The politics of life itself, *Theory, Culture & Society*, 18(6): 1-30.

Rose, N. (2000) Community, citizenship, and the third way, *American Behavioral Scientist 43*(9): 1395-1411.

Rose, N. (1999a) *Governing the soul: The shaping of the private self*, Free Association Books.

Rose, N. (1999) Inventiveness in politics, *Economy and society*, 28(3): 467-493.

Rose, N. (1996) The death of the social? Re-figuring the territory of government.', *International Journal of Human Resource Management* 25(3): 327-356.

Rotberg, R. (2003) Failed states, collapsed states, weak states: Causes and indicators, in Rotberg, R. (ed.) *State failure and state weakness in a time of terro*r, Washington: Brookings Institution Press.

Rotberg, R. (2004) *When states fail: Causes and consequences*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Rothman, J. (1997) Action-evaluation and conflict resolution in theory and practice, *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 15(2): 119-131.

Roy, O. (2007) *The new Central Asia: Geopolitics and the birth of nations*, New York: NYU Press.

Rush, F. (ed.) (2004) *The Cambridge companion to critical theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Russo, A. (2014) Why grounded theory is not for emotional PhD students, Security Praxis, 11 April 2014, accessed 17 April 2017, https://securitypraxis.eu/grounded-theory-emotional-phd-students/

Ruteere, M. and Pommerolle, M.E. (2003) Democratizing security or decentralizing repression? The ambiguities of community policing in Kenya, *African Affairs* 102: 587-604.

Ryan, B. (2011) *Statebuilding, security-sector reform and the liberal peace: the freedom of security*, London: Routlegde.

Sabaratnam, M. (2017) *Decolonising intervention: International statebuilding in Mozambique*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Sabaratnam, M. (2015) Staging a battle, losing the wars? International studies, 'science' and the neoliberalisation of the university, *Millennium-Journal of International Studies 43*(3): 975-979.

Sabaratnam, M. (2013a) Avatars of Eurocentrism in the critique of the liberal peace, *Security Dialogue* 44(3): 259-278.

Sabaratnam, M. (2013b) History repeating? Colonial, socialist and liberal statebuilding in Mozambique, in Chandler, D., Sisk, T.D. (eds.) *Routledge handbook of international statebuilding*, London: Routledge, 106-117.

Sabaratnam, M. (2011a) IR in dialogue… but can we change the subjects? A typology of decolonising strategies for the study of world politics, *Millennium* 39(3): 781-803.

Sabaratnam, M. (2011b) The Liberal Peace? An intellectual history of international conflict management, 1990-2010, in Campbell, S., Chandler, D., Sabaratnam, M. (eds.) (2011) *A liberal peace? the problems and practices of peacebuilding*, London: Zed Books, 13-30.

Sabaratnam, M. (2011c) *Re-thinking the liberal peace: Anti-colonial thought and post-war intervention in Mozambique*, PhD thesis, The London School of Economics and Political Science.

Saferworld (2016) *Success stories. Local crime prevention centres in Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken Provinces*, Osh: Saferworld.

Saferworld (2015a) Enhancing existing security structures in Kyrgyzstan, 9 February 2015, accessed 07 July 2016, http://www.saferworld.org.uk/news-and-views/case-study/57-enhancing-existing-security-structures-in-kyrgyzstan

Saferworld (2015b) *Democratisation, conflict prevention and increased security of local people. Lessons learnt from community security approaches in the Ferghana Valley*, Osh: Saferworld.

Saferworld (2014) *Community security handbook*, London: Saferworld, accessed 07 July 2016, http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/806-community-security-handbook

Saferworld (2007) Philosophy and principles of community-based policing, 3rd ed., London: Saferworld, accessed 07 July 2016, http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/55-philosophy-and-principles-of-community-based-policing

Sahadeo, J. (2007) *Druzhba Narodov* or second-class citizenship? Soviet Asian migrants in a post-colonial world, *Central Asian Survey* 26(4): 559-579.

Sandstrom, K. (2014) Remoteness and "demonitored space" in Afghanistan, *Peacebuilding* 2 (3): 286–302.

Sanghera, B., Ablezova, M., Botoeva, A. (2012) Attachment, emotions and kinship caregiving: An investigation into separation distress and family relatedness in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstani households, *Families, Relationships and Societies* 1(3): 379-396.

Sanghera, B., Ilyasov, A. (2008) The social embeddedness of professions in Kyrgyzstan: an investigation into professionalism, institutions and emotions, *Europe-Asia Studies* 60(4): 643-661.

Sanghera, B., Satybaldieva, E. (2009) Moral sentiments and economic practices in Kyrgyzstan: the internal embeddedness of a moral economy, *Cambridge Journal of Economics 33*(5): 921-935.

Sanghera, B. (2010) Wanted: economic equality to mend Kyrgyzstan, Open Democracy, 27 August 2010, accessed 20 October 2017, https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/balihar-sanghera/wanted-economic-equality-to-mend-kyrgyzstan

Sassen, S. (2006) *Territory, authority, rights: From medieval to global assemblages*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Satybaldieva, E. (2017) Working class subjectivities and neoliberalisation in Kyrgyzstan: Developing alternative moral selves, *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, online first.

Satybaldieva, E. (2015a) Political capital, everyday politics and moral obligations: understanding the political strategies of various elites and the poor in Kyrgyzstan, *Europe-Asia Studies 67*(3): 370-387.

Satybaldieva, E. (2015b) Why class matters in Kyrgyzstan: Everyday experiences, class and moral sentiments, in Engvall, J., Laruelle, M. (eds.) *Kyrgyzstan beyond "democracy island" and "failing state": Social and political changes in a post-Soviet society*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 99-122.

Schatzki, Theodore R., Cetina, K. K. and von Savigny, E. (2001) (eds.) *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, London: Routledge.

Schmidt, M. (2013) *Mensch und Umwelt in Kirgistan: Politische Ökologie im postkolonialen und postsozialistischen Kontext [Humans and the environment in Kyrgyzstan: Political ecology in the post-colonial and post-Socialist context]*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

Schoch, N., Steimann, B., Thieme, S. (2010) Migration and animal husbandry: Competing or complementary livelihood strategies. Evidence from Kyrgyzstan, *Natural Resources Forum*, 34(3): 211-221.

Schröder, P. (2013) Ainuras Amerikanische Karriere – Räumliche und Soziale Mobilität einer jungen Kirgisin [Ainura's American career – Social and spatial mobility of a young female Kyrgyz], *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 138(2): 235-257.

Schröder, P., Stephan-Emmrich, M. (2016) The Institutionalization of mobility: Well-being and social hierarchies in Central Asian translocal livelihoods, *Mobilities* 11(3): 420-443.

Schwartz, C. (2013) The relics of 1991: Memories and phenomenology of the post-Soviet generation in Akyildiz, S., Carlson, R. (eds.) *Social and cultural change in Central Asia: The Soviet legacy*, London: Routledge, 188-200.

Seithel, F. (1990) Action anthropology, in A. Gehling (ed.) *Ethnoreader 1: Jahreshefte für transdisziplinäre Ethnologie [Ethnoreader 1: Annual journal for transdisciplinary ethnology]*, Emsdetten: Andreas Gehling, 47–77.

Shigaeva, J., Kollmair, M., Niederer, P., Maselli, D. (2007) Livelihoods in transition: changing land use strategies and ecological implications in a post-Soviet setting (Kyrgyzstan), *Central Asian Survey* 26(3): 389-406.

Shatalova, O., Mamedov, G. (eds.) (2016) *Квир-коммунизм это этика [Queer communism is ethics]*, Moscow: Free Marxist Publishing House.

Shatalova, O., Mamedov, G. (eds.) (2015) *Бишкек утопический. Сборник текстов [Utopian Bishkek. Essays]*, Bishkek: ShTAB Press.

Shatalova, O., Mamedov, G. (2014) *Вернуть Будущее. Альманах ШТАБА № 1 [Return to the future. ShTAB Almanac No. 2]*, Bishkek: ShTAB Press.

Shilliam, R. (2015) *The black Pacific: Anti-colonial struggles and oceanic connections*, New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Sievers, E. W. (2013) *The post-Soviet decline of Central Asia: sustainable development and comprehensive capital*, London: Routledge.

Sievers, E. W. (2002) Uzbekistan's mahalla: from Soviet to absolutist residential community associations, *Chicago-Kent Journal of International and Comparative Law 2*(1): 91-158.

Simon, G. (1991) *Nationalism and policy toward the nationalities in the Soviet Union*, Boulder: Westview Press.

Sisk, T. (2013) *Statebuilding*, Cambridge: Polity.

Smirl, L. (2008) Building the other, constructing ourselves: spatial dimensions of international humanitarian response, *International Political Sociology 2*(3): 236-253.

Smirl, L. (2012) The state we are(n't) in: Liminal subjectivity in aid worker auto-biographies, in Bliesemann de Guevara, B. (ed.) *State-building and state-formation – The political sociology of intervention*, New York: Palgrave, 230-245.

Smirl, L. (2015) *Spaces of aid: how cars, compounds and hotels shape humanitarianism*, London: Zed books.

Sneath, D., Holbraad, M., Pedersen, M. A. (2009) Technologies of the imagination: An introduction, *Ethnos 74*(1): 5-30.

Sörensen, J.S. (2012) War makers and state makers: on state-formative networks and illiberal political economy in Kosovo, in Bliesemann de Guevara, B. (ed.) *Statebuilding and state-formation*, London: Routledge, 40-56.

Souillac, G., Fry, D. (2016) Anthropology: Implications for peace, in Richmond, O. P., Pogodda, S. and Ramovic, J. (eds) *Palgrave handbook of disciplinary and regional approaches to peace*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 69-81.

Steimann, B. (2011) *Making a living in uncertainty: Agro-pastoral livelihoods and institutional transformations in post-socialist rural Kyrgyzstan*, Zurich: University of Zurich.

Stewart, S., Klein, M., Schmitz, A., Schröder, H.-H. (eds.) (2013) *Presidents, oligarchs and bureaucrats: Forms of rule in the post-Soviet space*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

Stringer, E. T., Agnello, M. F., Baldwin, S. C., Christensen, L. M., Henry, D. L. P. (2014) *Community-based ethnography: Breaking traditional boundaries of research, teaching, and learning*, 2nd ed., London: Psychology Press.

Suárez-Krabbe, J. (2009) Introduction: Coloniality of knowledge and epistemologies of transformation, in Special issue: Epistemologies of transformation: The Latin American decolonial option and its ramifications, *Kult 6*, 1-9.

Sulmon, S. (2017) Махалла – узбекский прототип гражданского общества? [The mahalla – the Uzbek prototype of civil society?], in Laruelle, M., Kurmanova, A. (ed.) *Центральная Азия - 25: Мысли о прошлом, проекция будущего. Сборник эссе из Центральной Азии [Central Asia 25: Thoughts on the past, projections of the future. A collection of essays from Central Asia]*, Washington DC: Central Asia Program, 74-77.

Szostek, J. (2017) Popular geopolitics in Russia and post-Soviet Eastern Europe, *Europe-Asia Studies 69*(2): 195-201.

Tadjbakhsh, S. (2009) Conflicted outcomes and values: (Neo) liberal peace in central Asia and Afghanistan, *International Peacekeeping 16*(5): 635-651.

Tadjbakhsh, S. (ed.) (2011) *Rethinking the liberal peace: external models and local alternatives*, London: Routldedge.

Tadjbakhsh, S., Richmond O.P. (2011) Conclusion: typologies and modifications proposed by critical approaches, in Tadjbakhsh, S. (ed.) (2011) *Rethinking the liberal peace: external models and local alternatives*, London: Routldedge, 221-241.

Tate, S. A. (2007) Foucault, Bakhtin, ethnomethodology: Accounting for hybridity in talk-in-interaction, *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 8(2): n.p.

Taylor, C. (2007) On social imaginaries, in Gratton, P., Manoussakis, J. P., Kearney, R. (eds.) *Traversing the imaginary: Richard Kearney and the postmodern challenge*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 29-47.

Tellidis, I. (2012) The end of the liberal peace? Post-liberal peace vs. post-liberal states, *International Studies Review* 14(3): 429–435.

Thieme, S. (2008) Sustaining livelihoods in multi-local settings: Possible theoretical linkages between transnational migration and livelihood studies, *Mobilities 3*(1): 51-71.

Tietze, S., Dick, P. (2009) Hegemonic practices and knowledge production in the management academy: An English language perspective, *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 25(1): 119-123.

Tilley, N. (ed.) (2005a) *Handbook of crime prevention community safety*, London: Willan Publishing.

Tilley N. (2005b) Introduction, in Tilley, N. (ed.) *Handbook of crime prevention community safety*, London: Willan Publishing, 1-13.

Tishkov, V. (1995) 'Don't kill me, I'm a Kyrgyz!': An anthropological analysis of violence in the Osh ethnic conflict, *Journal of Peace Research* 32(2): 133-149.

Titeca, K., de Herdt, T. (2011) Real governance beyond the 'failed state': Negotiating education in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, *African Affairs 110*(439): 213-231.

Tiulegenov, M. (2017) Contentious engagement of civil society in policy making in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan: Comparing post-2005 and -2010 periods, in Bellak, B., Devdariani, J., Harzl, B., Spieke, N. (eds.) *Governance in conflict. Selected cases in Europe and beyond*, Zurich: LIT, 153-170.

Tlostanova, M. V., Mignolo, W. D. (2012) *Learning to unlearn: Decolonial reflections from Eurasia and the Americas*, Columbus: The Ohio State University Press.

Tlostanova, M. (2012) Postsocialist ≠ postcolonial? On post-Soviet imaginary and global coloniality, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing 48*(2): 130-142.

Tlostanova, M. (2010) *Gender epistemologies and Eurasian borderlands,* Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Tőkés, R.L. (2000) "Transitology": Global dreams and postcommunist realities, *Central Europe Review* 2(10), accessed 7 May 2016, http://www.ce-review.org/00/10/tokes10.html

Toktogulova, M. (2007) Syncretism of religious beliefs (Kyrgyzchylyk and Musulmanchylyk), in Aitpaeva, G. (ed.) *Mazar worship in Kyrgyzstan: Rituals and practitioners in Talas*, Bishkek: Aigine Cultural Research Center.

Toktomushev, K. (2015) Regime security, base politics and rent-seeking: the local and global political economies of the American air base in Kyrgyzstan, 2001–2010, *Central Asian Survey*, *34*(1): 57-77.

Tom, P. (2015) A 'post-liberal peace' via Ubuntu?, *Peacebuilding*, Online First.

Trevisani, T. (2014) The reshaping of cities and citizens in Uzbekistan: The case of Namangan's "New Uzbeks", in Reeves, M., Rasanayagam, J., Beyer, J. (eds.) *Ethnographies of the state in Central Asia: Performing politics*, Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 243-260.

Trifonas, P. P., Wright, B. (Eds.) (2012) *Critical peace education: Difficult dialogues,* Springer Science & Business Media.

Tromble, R. (2014) Securitising Islam, securitising ethnicity: the discourse of Uzbek radicalism in Kyrgyzstan, *East European Politics* 30(4): 526-547.

Tucker, N. (2011) "Ordinary People" and the violence of collapse (Osh, Part III), registan.kg, 26 June 2011, accessed 7 May 2016, http://registan.net/2011/06/26/ordinary-people-and-the-violence-of-collapse-osh-part-iii/

Tulebaeva, B. (2017) In search of the good life. Value conflicts and dilemmas in the practice of Islam in Kochkor, Kyrgyzstan, in Hardenberg, R. (ed.) *Approaching ritual economy: Socio-cosmic fields in globalised contexts*, RessourcenKulturen, vol. 4, Tubingen: Collaborative Research Centre 'ResourceCultures', 71-104.

Turner, M., Kühn, F. P. (eds.) (2016) *The politics of international intervention: The tyranny of peace*, London: Routledge.

Turner, M. Cooper, N., Pugh, M. (2010) Institutionalised and co-opted. Why human security has lost its way, in Chandler, D., Hynek, N. (eds.) (2010) *Critical perspectives on human security: rethinking emancipation and power in international relations*, London: Routledge, 83-96.

UNDP (2009) Community Security and Social Cohesion. Towards a UNDP Approach, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery concept paper, Geneva: UNDP, accessed 7 May 2016, http://www.undp.org/content/dam/thailand/docs/CommSecandSocialCohesion.pdf

Urmanbetova, J. K., Abdrasulov, S.M. (2009) *Истоки и тенденции развития кыргызской культуры [Sources and tendencies of the development of Kyrgyz culture]*, Bishkek: Ilim.

Valaskivi, K., Sumiala, J. (2014) Circulating social imaginaries: Theoretical and methodological reflections, *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 17(3): 229–243.

van der Heide, N. (2015) *Spirited Performance: the Manas epic and society in Kyrgyzstan*, Bremen: EHV Academic.

Väyrynen, T. (2001) *Culture and international conflict resolution*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Veit, A., Schlichte, K. (2012) Three arenas: The conflictive logic of external statebuilding, in Bliesemann de Guevara, B. (ed.) *Statebuilding and State-Formation*, London: Routledge, 167-181.

Verkoren, W. and B. Kamphuis (2013) State building in a rentier state: How development policies fail to produce democracy in Afghanistan, *Development and Change* 44(3): 501–533.

Visoka, G. (2016) *Peace figuration after international intervention: Intentions, events and consequences of liberal peacebuilding*, London: Routledge.

Visoka, G. (2015) Peace/knowledge: The promise of new epistemologies of peace, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding 9*(4): 542-550.

Visoka, G. (2013) Three levels of hybridisation practices in post-conflict Kosovo, *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development 7*(2): 23-36.

Visoka, G. (2012) Three levels of hybridisation practices in post-conflict Kosovo, *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 7(2): 23-36.

Visoka, G. (2011) International governance and local resistance in Kosovo: the thin line between ethical, emancipatory and exclusionary politics, *Irish Studies in International Affairs 22*(1): 99-125.

Visoka, G., Gjevori, E. (2013) Census politics and ethnicity in the Western Balkans, *East European Politics 29*(4): 479-498.

Vrasti, W. (2008) The strange case of ethnography and international relations, *Millennium-Journal of International Studies* 37(2): 279-301.

Way, L. A., Levitsky, S. (2006) The dynamics of autocratic coercion after the Cold War, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 39(3): 387-410.

Weber, Max (2004 [1904]) The 'objectivity' of knowledge in social science and social policy, in Whimster, S. (ed.) *The essential Weber: a reader,* London, United Kingdom: Routledge,359–404.

Whitehead, J., More, N. (2007) Revanchism in Mumbai? Political economy of rent gaps and urban restructuring in a global city, *Economic and Political Weekly* 42(25): 2428-2434.

Wigell, M. (2008) Mapping 'hybrid regimes': Regime types and concepts in comparative politics, *Democratization* 15(2): 230-250.

Wilkinson, C. (2014a) Imagining Kyrgyzstan's nationhood and statehood: reactions to the 2010 Osh violence, *Nationalities Papers* 43(3): 417-436.

Wilkinson, C. (2014b) Kyrgyzstan's anti-gay bill: Just following in Russia's footsteps?, Eurasianet.org, 30 October 2014, accessed 17 April 2017, http://www.eurasianet.org/node/70676

Wilkinson, C. (2011) Giving a state a bad name? Kyrgyzstan and the risk of state failure, *Global Dialogue (Online)* 13(1): 108-119.

Williams, M. (2007) *Culture and security: Symbolic power and the politics of international security*, London: Routledge.

Wisler, D., Onwudiwe, I.D. (eds.) (2009) *Community policing: International patterns and comparative perspectives*, Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

Wolff, J. (2013) Towards post-liberal democracy in Latin America? A conceptual framework applied to Bolivia, *Journal of Latin American Studies* 45(01): 31-59.

Wolters, A. (2014) The state and Islam in Central Asia: Administering the religious threat or engaging Muslim communities? *PFH Forscungspapiere/Research Papers*, No. 2014/03. PFH Private Hochschule Göttingen.

Young, I. M. (1990) The ideal of community and the politics of difference, in. Nicholson, L. (ed.), *Feminism/postmodernism* , New York: Routlegde, 300–323.

Young, J. (1999) *The exclusive society: Social exclusion, crime and difference in late modernity*, London: Sage.

Young, R. J. (2005 [1995]) *Colonial desire: Hybridity in theory, culture and race*, 2nd ed., London: Routledge.

Yurchak, A. (2006) *Everything was forever, until it was no more: The last Soviet generation*, 1st ed., Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Zanca, R. (2013) Asianizing Russia after 'the friendship among peoples', *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 138(2): 285-293.

Zartman, I. W. (1995) *Collapsed states: The disintegration and restoration of legitimate authority*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Zaum, D. (2012) Beyond the "liberal peace", *Global Governance 18*(1): 121-132.

Zaum, D., Cheng, C. (eds.) (2011) *Corruption and post-conflict peacebuilding: Selling the peace?,* London: Routledge.

Jogorku Kenesh (2011) Ob Otchete Mezhdunarodnoi nezavisimoi komissii po issledovaniyu sobytii na iuge Kyrgyzstana v iiune 2010 goda. No. 500-V, 26 May 2011, accessed 11 March 2016, http://www.kenesh.kg/RU/Articles/6310-Ob_Otchete_Mezhdunarodnoj_nezavisimoj _komissii_po_issledovaniyu_sobytij_na_yuge_Kyrgyzstana_v_iyune_2010_goda_500V_ot_2 6052011_goda.aspx

Ziai, A. (ed.) (2016) *Postkoloniale Politikwissenschaft [Postcolonial political science]*, Bielefeld: transcript.
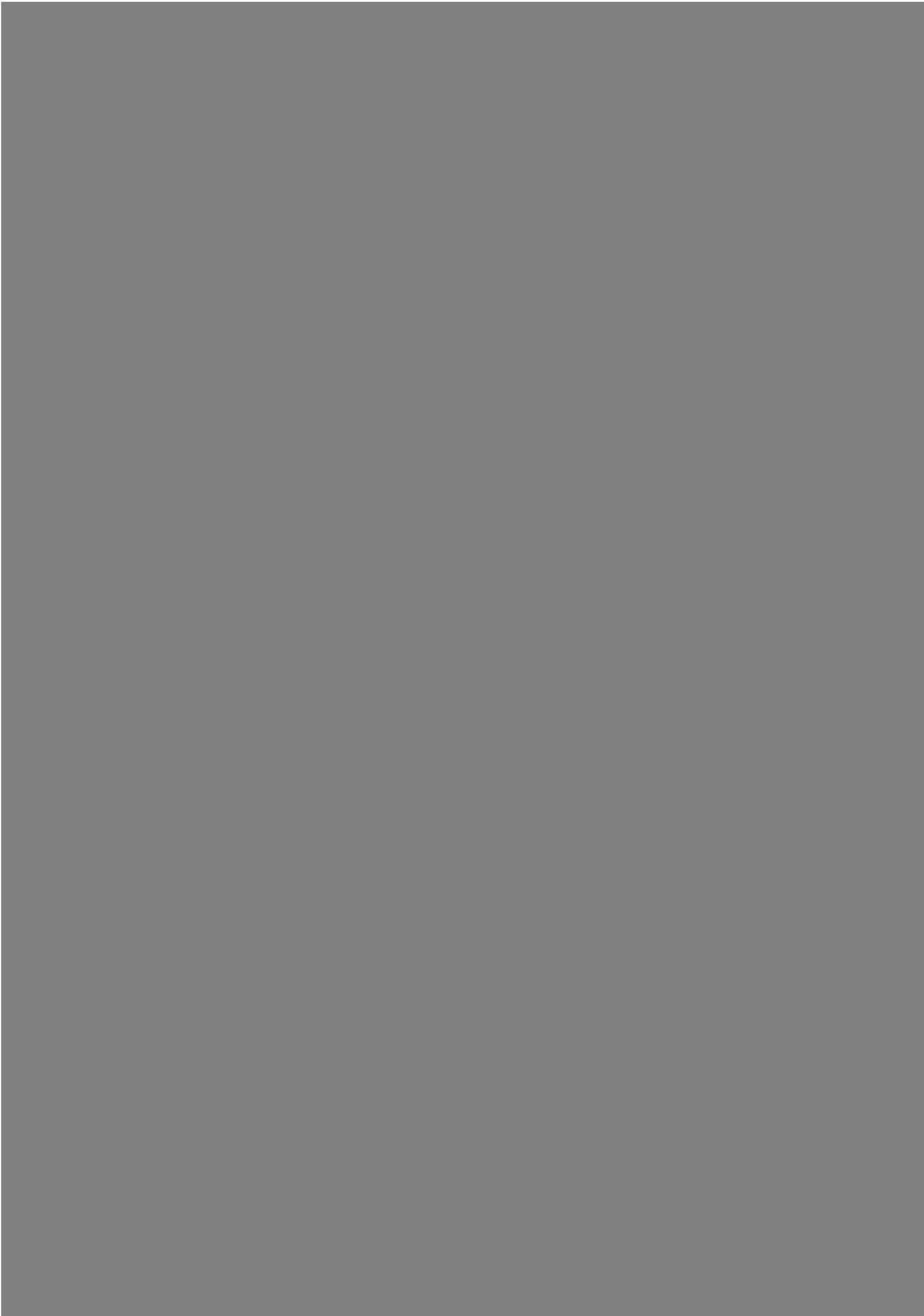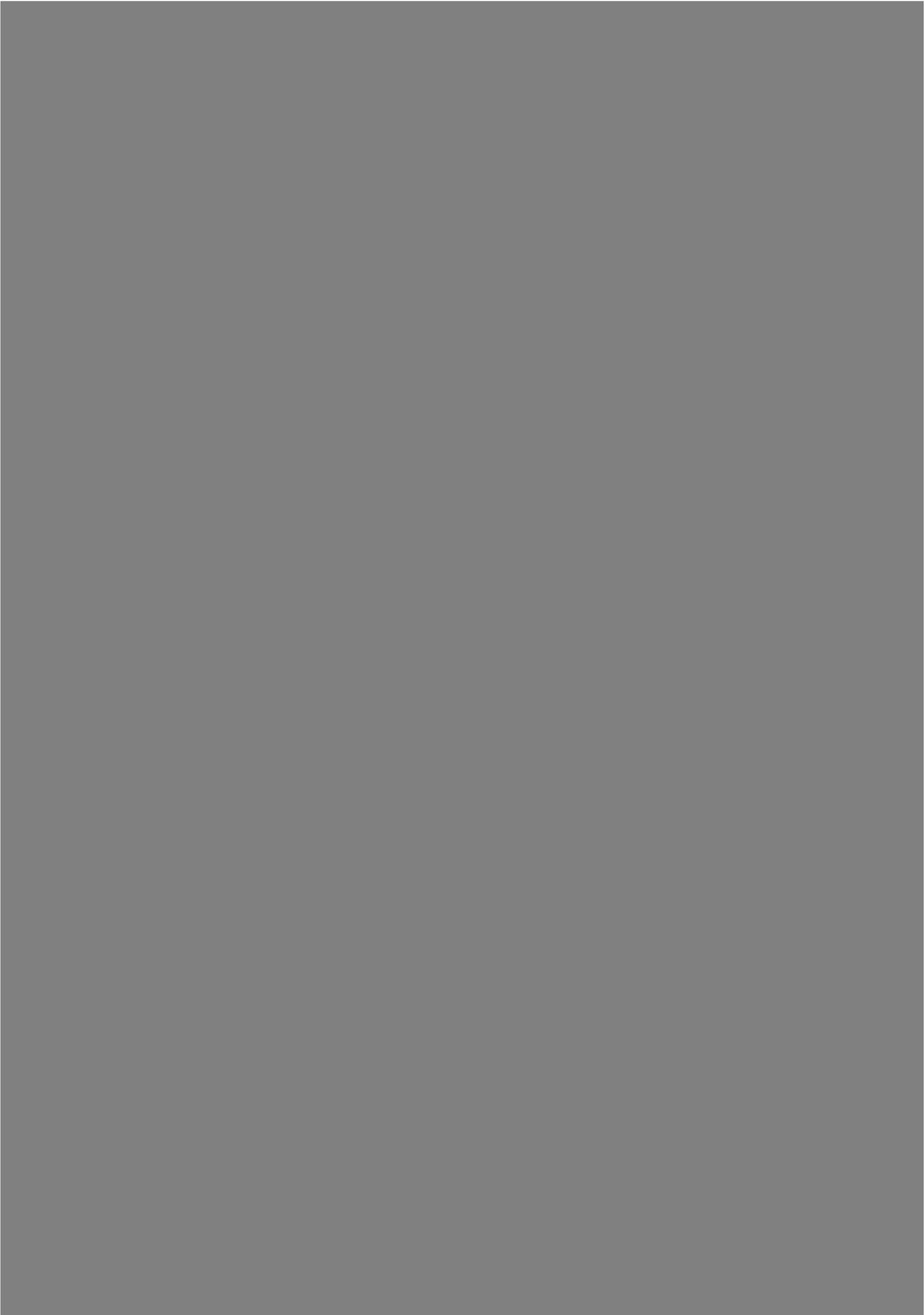
**Geographic map of Kyrgyzstan; research sites indicated (Source: Wikimedia Commons)**

Bazar-Korgon (ch. V) Community 1 (ch. VII) Tokmok (ch. VII)

Community 2 (ch. VII) Community 3 (ch. VII, appendix 8)
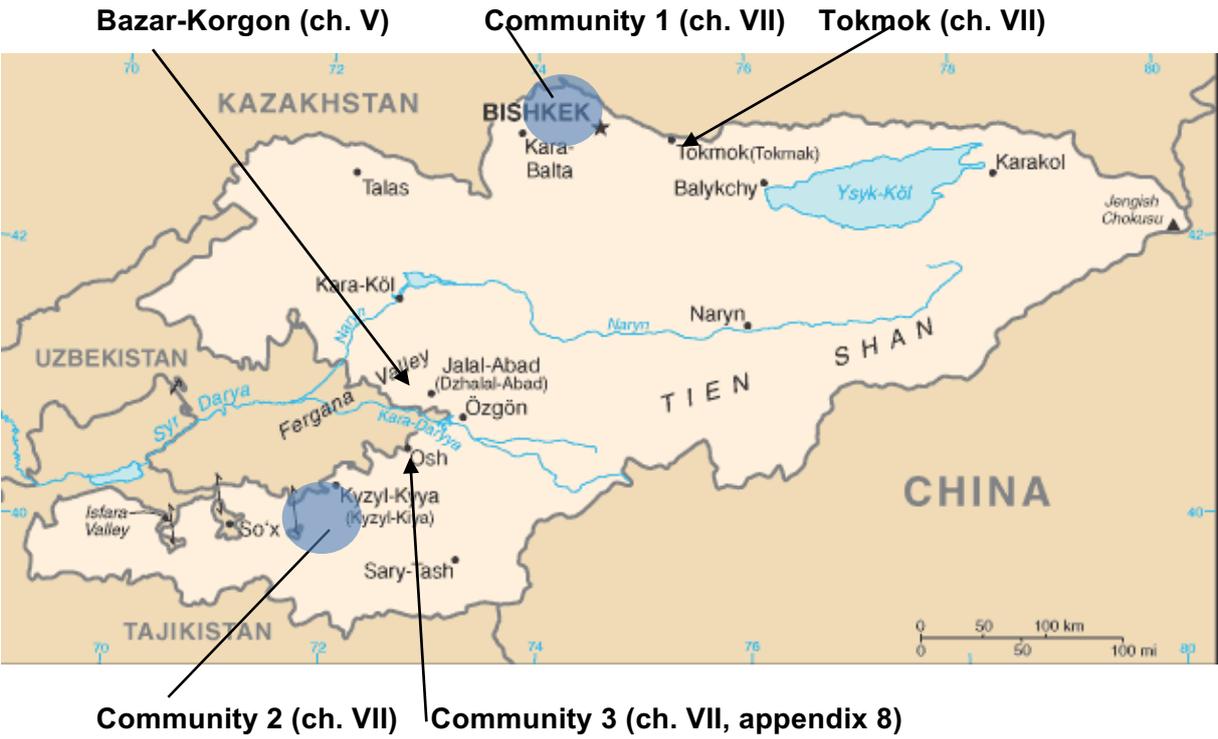
Satellite map of Kyrgyzstan (Source: Wikimedia Commons)
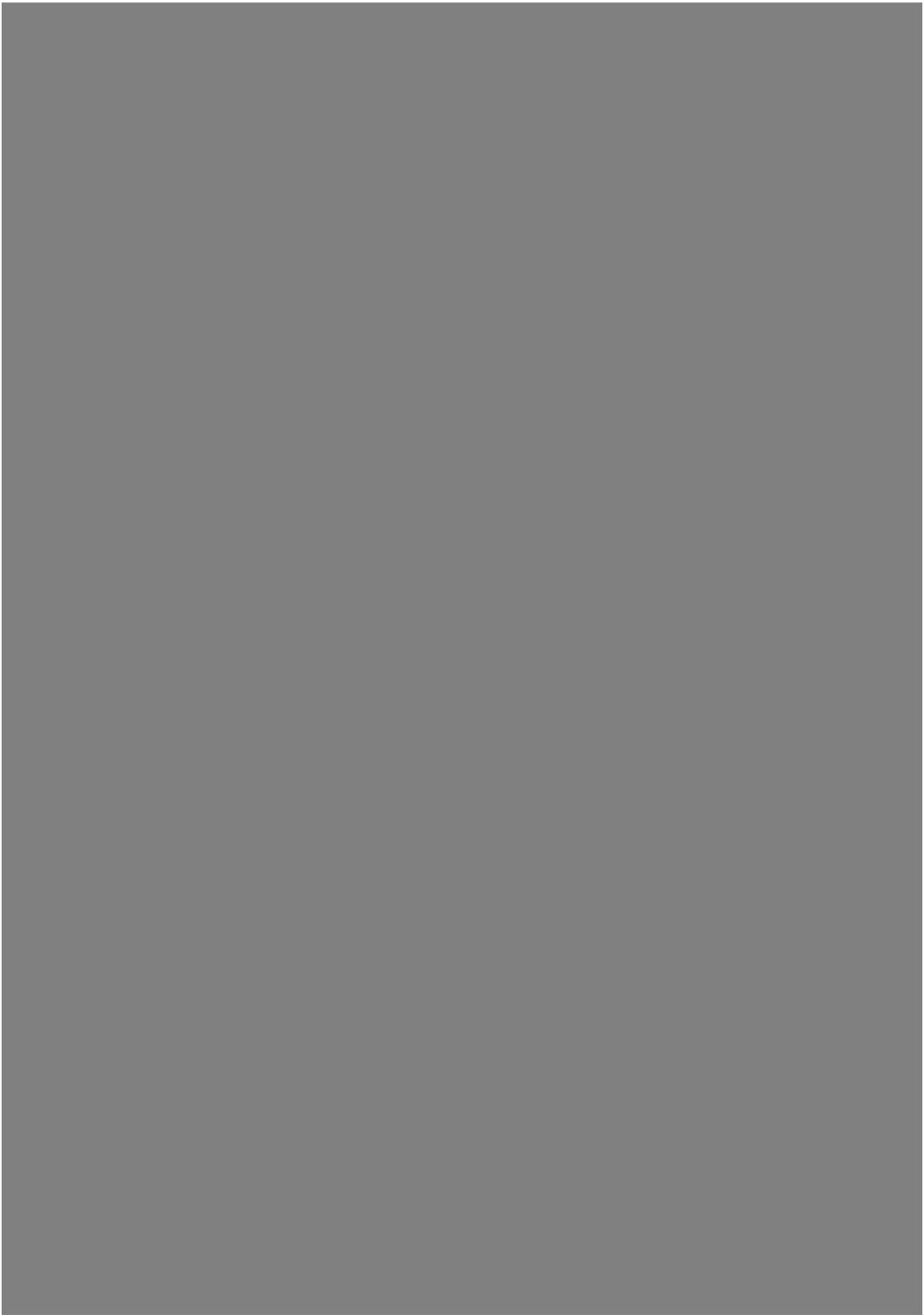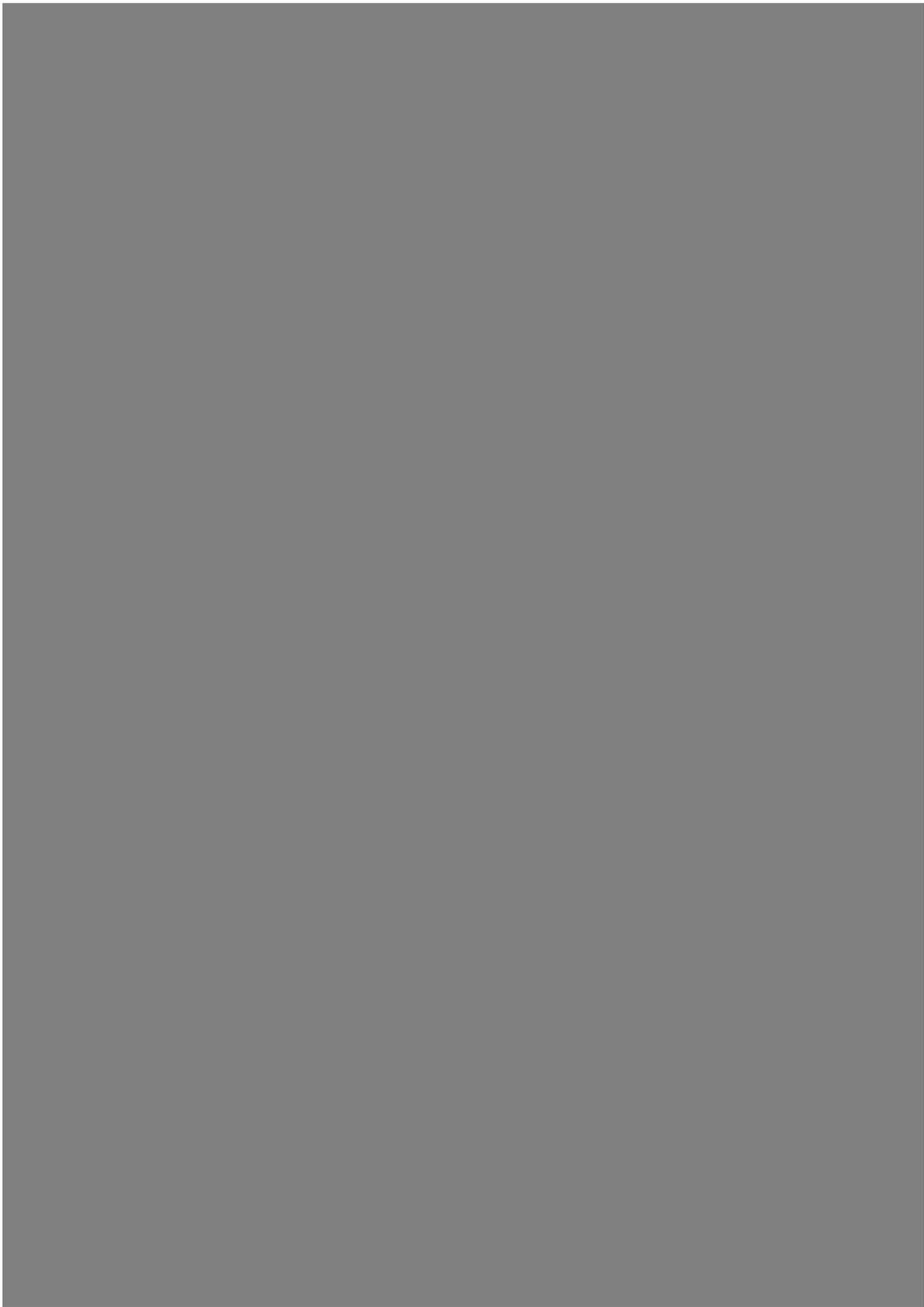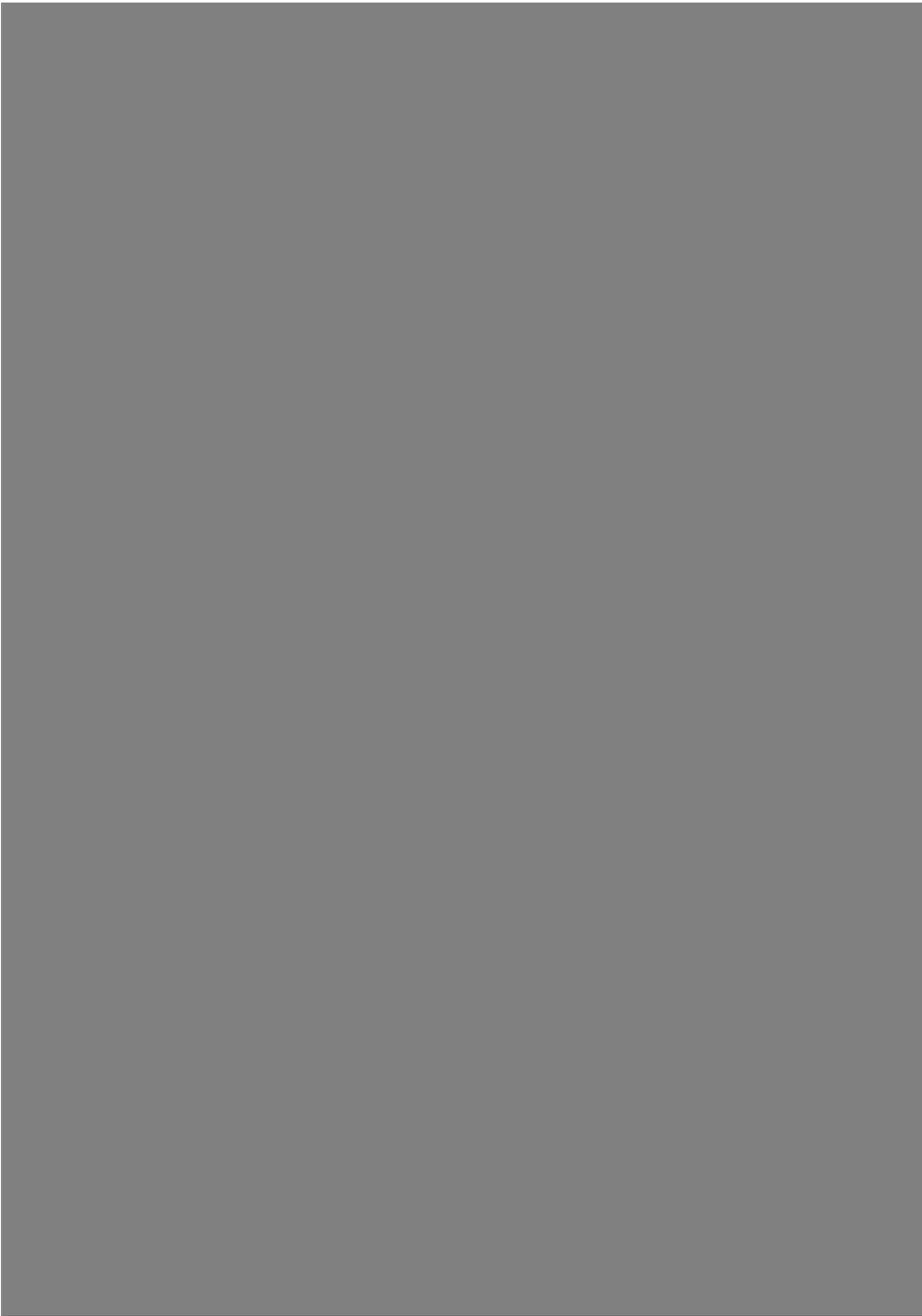
Appendix 4 From positivist to dialogical perspectives on hybridisation

This discussion provides further background on the possibility of unpacking the ambiguous potential of post-liberal statebuilding through a dialogical perspective (III.1) and by conceptualising and analysing the role of social imaginaries therein (III.4). Based on a critical reading of the use of 'hybridity' in democratistaion and transitology scholarship and peace and conflict studies debates, I develop the idea of hybridisation in the conceptual/ideational realm and the analytical endeavour to capture a multiplicity of meanings of language, and their manipulation and slippage. I argue that such inquiry is key for understanding processes of peace-/statebuilding and transition.

Before making its way into debates in peace, conflict and intervention studies, the concept of hybridity informed many conversations within transitology and democratisation literature, which dominated the discourse on post-Cold War political, economic and social changes. Here, the use of the word 'hybrid' arguably implied connotations of negative, impure characteristics, describing different authoritarian or otherwise undemocratic or insufficiently democratic regimes (Levitsky and Way 2010, Way and Levitsky 2006, Stewart et al. 2013, Collins 2006). This scholarship has been focusing on the so-called 'third wave' of democratisation, i.e. mostly countries situated in Latin America and the former Eastern bloc. Apparently convinced of the evolutionary force that would put all countries on the trajectory towards liberal democracy, this strand of inquiry was preoccupied with understanding the emergence, resilience, 'durability' and general nature of authoritarian or otherwise non-democratic political regimes well into the third decade after the collapse of communism (e.g. Bunce and Wolchik 2011; O'Donell and Schmitter (2013 [1986]).

Kristian Petrov captures this Hegelian determinism bz defining this specific kind of research as 'teleological transitology', which he defines as 'transition research in which regime change appears as purposeful, preordained and therefore predictable, virtually unstoppable' (2014: 30). From this position, hybridity is seen as an attribute of regimes which are incompletely democratised or have failed to develop a 'democratic' modus operandi. This approach is limited if not flawed as it is based on the assumption of universal drive towards democratisation and a universal logic according to which such processes occur or can be made to occur (Migdal and Schlichte 2005: 12). In other words, whether they are 'competitive authoritarianism' or other attempts to grapple with the problem of non-democratic, 'hybrid', regimes, this literature applies a universal logic that disregards cultural variations in the

practices of collective decision-making and perceptions of what is a legitimate social or political order. As Stewart and colleagues (2013: 3) have suggested, transitology scholars did not take into account the possibility that hybridity in the sense of incomplete transition towards democracy might indeed be a *hardly*, if at all, *eradicable condition*.

This logic of using hybridity as an in-between state or continuum between authoritarian and democratic political regimes applies to a large litertare on 'hybrid regimes' and transitology scholarship in general (Wigell 2008, Bogaards 2009; Petrov 2014, Tökés 2000). Although in different ways and to different degrees, it is undeniable that these scholars are united by the same ''end of history' thinking' (Egnell and Haldén 2013: 5) that informed the institutionalist statebuilding scholars to claim legitimacy for different recipes for the building up and stabilisation of well-functioning, effective and accountable state institutions (see section II.1). As already stated in the previous chapter, this view that hybrid state institutions would in the long term be transformed into 'proper', Weberian state institutions after a Western model, was criticised both for its Eurocentric and racist undertone (Hobson 2007, Sabaratnam 2013a) and its inherent contradictions and practical failures (Richmond and Mac Ginty 2009, Hameiri 2007, 2010, Lemay-Hébert 2009).

An alternative application of hybridity is offered by a group around the scholars Kevin Clements and Volker Boege. Echoing the critics of neo-institutionalist statebuilding and 'failed state' analysis (Boege et al. 2009), they argue that social order should not be preconceived by an evolutionary logic of graduation to liberal democracy but that, on the contrary, statebuilding should be reconsidered by taking into account the 'strength, resilience and persistence of custom and tradition both as a source of identity and as a means of organising social, economic and political systems' (2007: 46). Such forms of social order (researched in mulple contexts in the South Pacific), they argued, need not be at odds with modern, Weberian state institutions but might be compatible or even work in complementarity with them. This research has created a touchstone – and an 'aura of hope' (Peterson 2012: 16) – for scholars of peace and conflict studies and given rise to the 'hybrid' and 'post-liberal forms of peace' research agendas (Mac Ginty 2010a, 2011, Richmond and Mitchell 2012, Richmond 2011a, see II.1 and next section).

While this scholarship has offered a valuable alternative reading of post-conflict reconstruction and more general political and societal transition processes and appreciate the positive potential that hybrid political orders bear, it has also struggled to address or settle certain questions. Roger Mac Ginty's monograph *International peacebuilding and local*

resistance: Hybrid forms of peace[1], for instance, presents a typology of different modalities of interaction between international and local actors, which produce hybrid forms of peace through the following four main vectors of: 1) The compliance power of the liberal peace; 2) the incentivising power of the liberal peace; 3) the resistance of local actors, or the ability ignore, subvert, and adapt liberal peace interventions; and 4) the ability of local agents, networks, and structures to provide alternatives and modifications to the liberal peace (2011a: 77-78).

While providing some good insight into how local resistance takes place in various, not always identifiable forms and how hybrid forms of peace thus are not only a normatively desirable alternative but also an empirical reality, different shortcomings have been pointed out about this model. First, it has been argued that this research assumes and reifies the distinction between the 'local' and 'international' actors which are usually identified as liberal peace agents (see also Paffenholz 2015: 868, Graef 2015: ch. 1). On the other hand, Richmond and Mac Ginty assert that (2015: 180): 'The non-acceptance of established political categories allows us to reassess boundaries and identify the connections, networks and co-constitutive elements that comprise the context for contemporary peace-support intervention.' This controversy points to the difficulty of discarding well-established categories all along, which would make a discussion unviable, at least in the hitherto dominant frames of political science and IR debates, in which the debate on the 'liberal peace' has largely remained throught the years. Given this apparent impossibility of realising the ambitions for a critical, post-liberal agenda for lack of a language[2] in which this research may be conducted, what remains to be done is to inquire the effects and uses of categories and labels. As I have shown in the review of critical discursive research (e.g. Grimm et al. 2014) as well as practice theory and knowledge production (Büger and Gadinger 2014, Büger and Bethke 2014), a decisive step for peace, conflict and intervention research is to not accept this established language but to further investigate how these categories reproduce governmentality and conflict (Finlay 2015: 225).

Second, and relatedly, the literature on hybrid forms of peace has been criticised for the insufficient conceptualisation and exploration of the spectrum between Western-dominated 'liberal peace' approaches and the different forms and phenomena of resistance countering it. Paffenholz, for instance, argues that research has already shown how 'the local is as divided along power, hierarchy, ethnic and gender lines, and as capable of displaying radical images

---

[1] A similar approach is taken in Oliver Richmond's work (esp. 2011a, 2011c, 2010b, 2009a).

[2] This is further explicated by Mac Ginty's (2014: 107) observation that it seems to be the nature of language, and knowledge itself that urges us to try to map and categorise the world.

and behaviours as is the international' (2015: 862). However, she argues, such complexity and the counter-hegemonic trajectories affected by national/local elites' reistsance against progressive reform and reconstruction 'takes place in all forms all the time but is massively understudied in critical peacebuilding research' (2015: 866). Furthermore, Sabaratnam argues that research on hybrid peace fails to engage in sufficient manner with the voices that seek to empower the 'local' populations, thus 'reinstat[ing] Europe as the implicit subject of world history and historical sociology, and occludes the contemporaneous and necessary involvement of the wider world' (Sabaratnam 2013a: 261). These and other critics (e.g. Graef 2015, Randazzo 2016) agree that such simplification can only be overcome if the complexity and negotiated nature of conetxts of international intervention is engaged with through in-depth and long-term field research as well as through a research agenda that synthesises area studies and other disciplines' knowledges and conceptual approaches (Paffenholz 2015: 868, Brunner 2015).[3]

How then, is it possible to research hybrid and post-liberal forms of peace and overcome the fixation with simplistic categories and labels as well as the tautological focus on the power of the 'liberal peace' versus local resistance? The conceptual entry into hybridity research on peace- statebuilding and development studies most useful at this point is provided by Millar (2014b, see Peterson 2012, Visoka 2013, Pieterse 2001 for similar approaches). He describes a spectrum ranging from structural to the ideational realms, with the four dimensions of 'institutional', 'practical', 'ritual' and 'conceptual', in which hybridity and hybridisation can be analysed. Millar takes this approach to critically interrogate the way in which international peace- and statebuilding processes are to be understood in more nuanced ways than through two-dimensional models of international-local interaction. In particular, he problematises the notion of cultural difference in the concepts and notions with which different actors operate:

> [O]ften unacknowledged is the mediating role that local concepts, beliefs, and ideas about the world play between the administered institutions and the local experiences of those institutions. (Millar 2014b: 502)

---

[3] A third limitation of hybrid and post-liberal approaches is their (somewhat unconscious) operation within the registers of a capitalist international economy. More conversation is needed on ideas of defying neoliberal capitalist transformations of post-conflict and post-Socialist societies and on how sustainable livelihoods can be created outside of this orthodoxy (see Sabaratnam 2011c: ch. 8, Mignolo 2007, 2011).

He further defines his framework for analysing processes of hybridisation in transitional justice and institutional reform processes in Sierra Leone as focusing, 'not on local agency, but on the inherent and unconscious resistance that local concepts place in the path of international planning and administration' (2014b: 504). He further argues that that there are 'some areas of social life in any context that are inherently resistant to purposeful planning – the ritual and the conceptual – but which do not demand willful action on the part of local actors to serve as points of resistance.' (ibid.) In this sense, the conceptual or ideational realm appears to be a prime locus for examining processes of state- and peacebuilding and transition. Inquiry into this realm will not only look at power and resistance, however, but also other occurrences of friction, misunderstandings, ignorance and problems of translation. For instance, Julian Graef's (2015) analysis of a 'legal empowerment' programmes in Liberia applies this approach and thereby manages to shed light on the multiple processes occurring during the translation of concepts into a specific context. Thus, implementers constantly appropriate and re-appropriate concepts, imposing certain meanings and interpretations on them that make them applicable in their specific context (2015: 57).

Focusing on the concepual realm also allows to put the subjectivities or worldviews of people in a specific context into the focus of analysis and inquire the way in which they receive, appropriate and utilise concepts and categories. This also makes it possible to reflect on what kind of inquiry, specifically which research questions and what kind of overarching interest, subjects are open to in the first place. There is a simple problem, for instance, that subject area and terms of engagement of one's research might not be shared by particular people in the focus of this research. This might lead people to turn down requests to participate in research, which can pose a major challenge in the field. More so, however, and more problematically for the researcher, people may also hold completely different understandings of the research topic and the proper way to approach it. This requires a thorough and sustained engagement with people's lifeworlds in order to facilitate conversation in a space of shared understandings. Anthropologist Martin Holbraad captures this problematique of different worldviews, indeed ontologies, in the following phrase:

> [T]he difference between [...] analyst and [...] subject lies not in the different perspectives each may take upon the world (their respective 'world-views' or even 'cultures') but rather in the ways in which either of them may come to define what may count as a world [...] in the first place. (2013: 470)

Analysing hybridisation processes in the conceptual realm makes it possible to explore this complexity of different factors influencing interactions and practices of peace- and statebuilding. This realm can be seen as a filter through which real-world action is mediated with the respective context or what Millar, in Bourdieu's terms, calls a deeply historical, socially embedded and inter-subjectively constructed 'self-evident and natural order which goes without saying' (Millar 2014b: 505, Bourdieu 1979: 166). It is clear that local subjectivities are not only rooted in local history and sociality, but that they will inevitably be affected by processes of global integration, media consumption and political and economic dynamics. I further explore this dynamic aspect of the 'interpellation' and embedding of subjectivities and worldviews in global knowledge regimes in my discussion of the imaginary (section III.3). Crucially, and in contrast to the hybrid and post-liberal peace literature, putting the focus on subjectivities rather than identities makes it possible to show how their 'embeddedness' is concealed through the institutions and frameworks of territorial and political governance, culture and, ultimately, language which are habitually used to 'categorise', 'map' and 'order' the world, both by 'ordinary people' and researchers. This deconstructive perspective enables a more radical and deep-reaching reflection on the depoliticisation, normalisation and continuation of legacies of violence, displacement and social engineering in post-conflict and post-Socialist contexts.

The key aspects of hybridity's relevance for a critical approach to inquiry identified above – i.e. the different degrees of complexity and anti-essentialism; criticality; and the possibility of a dialogical analysis of hybridisation/hybridity in the conceptual/ideational realm – can be traced back into the cultural studies literature. For lack of space for a more in-depth discussion of the works of Bhabha, Young and Kraidy (see Lottholz 2017a), I focus on the conceptualisation of hybridity developed by the Russian philosopher and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin. Attempting to elucidate hybridisation processes in the semantic realm and in communicative interaction, and in a similar way to Foucault and Bourdieu, Bakhtin saw language as an idiom impregnated with ideology and history. He concurred that,

> ... a unitary language gives expression to forces working towards [...] ideological centralization which develop in vital connection with the processes of sociopolitical and cultural centralization. (1981: 271)

The inherent counter-pole to such centralisation, which Bakhtin identified in his seminal work *The diaological imagination* (1981), is *heteroglossia*, a concept emphasising the dialogicality and multiplicity of language, discourse and meaning in general, which implies a profoundly

relativist and pluralist social ontology. Contrary to de Saussure's theory of semantics, heteroglossia emphasises the multiplicity of meanings that one idiom can refer to. This helps to conceptualise the intercultural and non-universalist nature of language in a world inhabited by multiple cultures. Most simply, heteroglossia means the 'prevalence of context over text' (Maranhão 1990: 4). In such a world, any utterance made serves to 'appropriate the words of others and populate them with one's own intention' (Bakhtin 1981: 21). The logical consequence is that, if interaction is not happening in a cultural and semantic vacuum, '[t]he subject is surrounded by a myriad of responses, each of which must be framed in a specific discourse chosen from this available multiplicity' (Tate 2007: 9). Further, and in more precise perspective than offered in Bhabha's work, this multiplicity of meanings offers space for manipulation for all actors participating in dialogic interaction:

> Discourses and meanings are the sites of struggle as hegemonic social relations attempt to fix meanings. ... To resist hegemonic meaning entails the disruption of naturalised forms of discourse and power as productive. Bakhtin's heteroglossia shows us the possibility for such a disruption. (Tate 2007: 11)

This points to a conceptualisation of hybridity that is embedded in an anti-foundationalist ontology that emphasises the multiplicity of meaning and knowledge. Most importantly, it becomes clear that any statement on the potential or vectors of agency, or on effects of hybridity, already comes with a normative or ideological baggage – hybridity can be both complicit with hegemonic global discourses and agencies but may also subvert them (Moreiras 1999). This is especially apparent from a Foucauldian perspective that sees discourse as preceding the subject and its agency and thus foreclosing the possibility of genuine resistance. McNay refers to this as discursive regulation, by which 'discursive subject positions become a priori categories which individuals seem to occupy in an unproblematic fashion' (1996: 77), a situation reminiscent of Bhabha's and other cultural studies scholars' celebration of difference and the fragmentation of grand narratives as the apparent, but equally deceptive, emancipation and revolutionary agency of hybrid actors and spaces (see Kraidy 2005: 149 ff.). A dialogical and heteroglossic conception of meaning also foregrounds the analysis of the hybridisation of meaning and the frictions and different degrees and forms of resistance that can occur in reception and translation processes discussed above. The application of this approach is presented in section III.2, where I argue that particular practices and discourses of peace- and statebuilding have to be seen as embedded in a multiplicity of discourses and imaginaries of

social order, which they reproduce. In the next section, I develop my approach at conceptualising post-liberal statebuilding and its analysis in the Central Asian context.

Appendix 5: Research and commentary publications and press coverage on the Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result', 2016-17

The following table presents coverage on the Civic Union's community security and research projects as well as press coverage on more general issues of police reform. All articles were available online at (accessed 25 November 2017); hyperlinks are provided, where the Russian version of titles can be looked up. Only English translations are provided for sake of brevity. The analysis focuses on the period after the end of my fieldwork (January 2016 onwards). The following themes are analysed: 1) Reform general: General coverage on reform progress and role of CU; 2) Pilot project: Results and further activities of the community security project analysed in section VII.3; 3) Patrol service reform: Commentary and events around this aspect not analysed in the chapter; 4) ICVS research: Research project conducted with the International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS) in cooperation with the Dutch professor of criminology Jan van Dijk ; 5) Racketeering: A research project on racketeering in schools in Kyrgyzstan conducted with project support from various donors and in different communities throughout Kyrgyzstan.

Month	Reform general	Pilot project	Patrol service reform	ICVS research	Racketeering
01/16			United patrol service: Good prospects but it all comes down to the details, reforma.kg		
	Activists handed over petition with appeal for a police reform to the Jogorku Kenesh, Azattyk				
02/16	Timur Shaikhutdinov: Ministry of Interior Affairs (MIA) needs to demonstrate real results, 24.kg				
	PM replies to Civic Union recommendations, Facebook post				
	In Kyrgyzstan, the Council for Reform and Development of the Rule of Law System might be abolished, reforma.kg				
		NGO develops a mechanisms for accountability of state authorities vis-à-vis the population, Zanoza			
		Mechanisms for authorities' accountability towards population will be created in Kyrgyzstan, Vechernii Bishkek			
				'More than 60% of the crime victims do not report to the police', Azattyk	
03/16			Activists: The merging of RPS and Police Patrol Service will not resolve questions related to the fight against corruption, Knews		
				Only 30 percent of victims of theft and assault report to the police – only 2-3 percent report about bribes, 24.kg	
	MPs suggest amendments to the law on internal affairs bodies, Azattyk				Activists: Certain parents contribute to the burgeoning of school racketeering, Knews
04/16	Society could be deprived of the right to take part in the police reform, reforma.kg				

Month	Reform general	Pilot project	Patrol service reform	ICVS research	Racketeering
04/16	Civic Union presented a report on the progress of police reform in the parliament, Azattyk				
		An active fight against violence and extremism is started in all parts of the country, Knews			
		Police joins forces with the public and authorities in 12 districts in Kyrgyzstan, Azattyk			
05/16		The police and local self-governance (LSG) organs developed plans for crime reduction, Akipress			
06/16	Djanybek Bakchiev MP: Security should be a key element of modern society, KNews				
	Civic activists handed over dozens of proposals for police reform in Kyrgyzstan, KNews				
07/16				'Crime victims': Is the Kyrgyz police managing its job well?, KNews	
	Law enforcement reform attempt №…, Azattyk			Crime victim documentary, Youtube release	
	Law enforcement agencies in Kyrgyzstan will be fundamentally reformed, 24.kg				
	The mechanical transfer of the functions of the GSKN to the MIA carries great risks, Akipress				
	Issue 4. Timur Shaikhutdinov on the police reform, ResPublica				Research: Teens at school are divided into 'observers' and 'crowd', Zanoza; Report release
					Civic Union 'For reforms': School racketeering adapts to external conditions, Azattyk
					In Kyrgyzstan, the problem with violence in schools remains extremely worrying, 24.kg
					Activists: A new form of school racketeering has emerged – exploitation, KNews
08/16	International expert: Kyrgyzstan lags behind its neighbours when it comes to police reform, KNews				
		Joint plans made possible the mobilisation of societal and authorities' efforts for crime prevention (final report), reforma.kg			
	Experts: The Minister of the Interior and his apparatus should be civilian, KNews				
	'The authorities' initiative to change the Constitution pushed back the reform of law enforcement agencies', Azattyk				
09/16	According to survey results, 40.4% of people learn about the work of the police from media and the internet, - Civic Union, Akipress				

Month	Reform general	Pilot project	Patrol service reform	ICVS research	Racketeering
09/16	The police draft law might be prepared behind closed doors, KNews				
10/16					No to school racketeering!, ELTR on youtube
12/16	Concerns about crime prevention in Bishkek, KNews				
12/16	The Civic Union 'For Reforms and Result' worked out positions and recommendations on the package of reform measures for the law enforcement system of the Kyrgyz Republic, reforma.kg				
	The police reform that society wants and the results which are not there, Golos.kg				
01/17	Activists call for speeding up the development of new legislation on law enforcement agencies, Akipress				
02/17	Waiting for the reforms of the MIA by Ulan Israilov. How long do we need to wait?, Azattyk				
	Results of the survey 'How do you assess the work of the police?': 52% of the readers believe that the police is doing a terrible job, Akipress				
03/17			NGO: The new road service will stop cars without a reason, KNews		
		In Kyrgyzstan, a model for preventing crime has been developed, KNews			
		Bishkek residents are asked to take part in internet voting on law and order issues, Golog.kg, see KNews, Kaktus			
		In Bishkek, people fight against crime in a joint effort, KNews			
04/17	Civic Union calls for a dialogue of political forces, Kaktus				
				Expert: Victims are more comfortable talking to a policewoman, Akipress	
		Timur Shaikhutdinov: There is a huge social potential for maintaining law and order, KNews			
		Civic Union: Authorities should be responsible for the "Safe city" initiative, Zanoza			
	Parliament urges for implementation of 'Safe city' initiative as soon as possible, KNews				
			The foot patrol will be separated from the patrol police, Akipress		
05/17	Officials should take personal responsibility for 'Safe city' and the police reform as a whole, Akipress				
			One step forward, two steps backward? GUPM [Main Administration for Patrol Police] under the MIA wants to abandon the foot patrol, Akipress		
				In Kyrgyzstan, victims of sexual violence are afraid to contact the police, Zanoza	

Month	Reform general	Pilot project	Patrol service reform	ICVS research	Racketeering
06/17	There are only 5.9 % women among internal affairs organs staff, Akipress				
07/17			12 projects on security and crime reduction start in Kyrgyzstan, Azattyk		
08/17			Joint plan: Bishkekians define priorities for crime prevention, Kaktus		
	Renaming does not mean reform, reforma.kg				
			How the neighbour can ensure your safety, Azattyk		
09/17	The future president has the power to determine the vector of reforms in the law enforcement sphere, reforma.kg				
	Six tips for the president candidate for police reform, Kaktus				
10/17			What needs to be improved in Bishkek? Online survey, Kaktus		

Appendix 6: Civic Union Newspaper (Russian version)
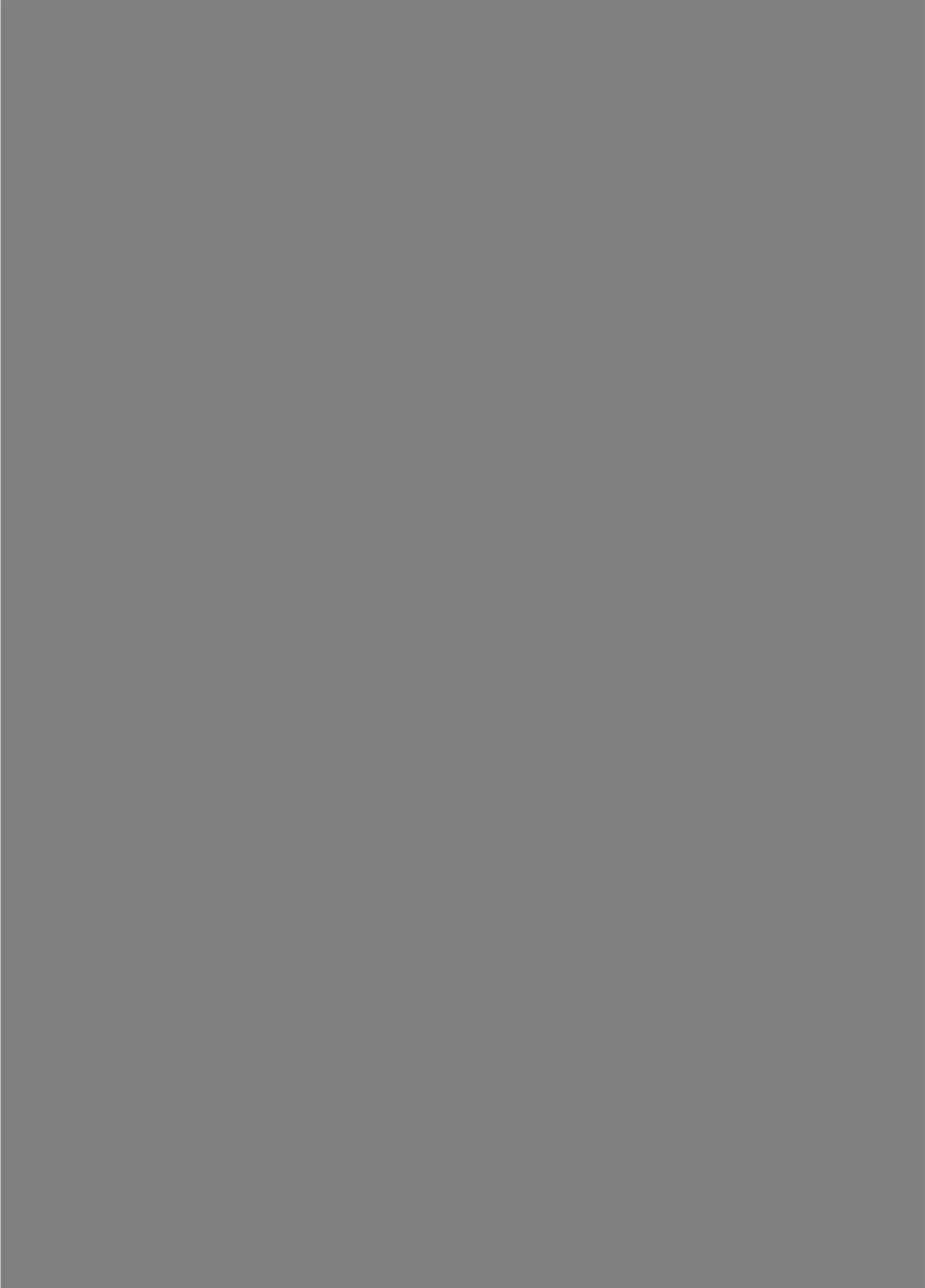
Appendix 7: Analysis of Civic Union involvement in Community 3 (Chapter VII)

Status of working group

This territorial council in the centre of Osh that was not part of the Civic Union's community security project but its chair, an outspoken supporter of the movement's efforts to promote a new approach at police reform, was open about participating in the research project. Comparing the CU's impact in the above communities with this one yields significant insight into the implications of my collaborative approach to research, i.e. the fact that I visited communities as part of the CU team. Secondly, it illustrates the long-term effects of large-scale conflict as it had happened in Osh and the need for trustful personal relations between community leaders and the NGO/researcher to secure open collaboration.

I was initially surprised at how welcoming Akmal[i], the territorial council representative, was about my request to talk to him and include his unit into my project and was equally impressed with the impact that the Civic Union had had according to him. 'We collected more than 10,000 signatures in Osh. The population wanted the police to change [*chtob militsiia stala drugoi*]. We submitted the petition and the signatures to the *Jogorku Kenesh* [Parliament] and they started to talk about the reform. … Now every neighbourhood inspector is accountable to the population.'[ii] He presented this accountability as the most important result of the Civic Union's and other NGOs' efforts in the years after the 2010 clashes, after which the police maintained its notorious reputation of wrongly handling the persecutions and investigations on people's involvement with the interethnic violence.[iii] Akmal offered me to participate in community security briefings between police and local administrators and community security actors to establish a picture for myself.

It turned out, however, that it was not possible to engage with the community security and administration workers, at least not without making investments to build trust which I could not afford time- and funding-wise. When I approached different workers and administrators from the neighbourhood committees after the meeting on which Akmal had introduced me and my research, I was either ignored or met with a combination of polite conversation and unspoken rejection of my request to conduct interviews, focus groups and participatory

---

[i] Name altered.

[ii] Interview, Osh,

[iii] Allegations, which are mostly discussed in international coverage, include extortion and bribery as well as the impunity of perpetrators of violence.

observation. These reactions to my efforts to include this community into my research through interviews and accompanying them in their everyday work allow an interpretation of the standing of the Civic Union within this community. Akmal was not only of the opinion that the Civic Union and other NGOs had reached a major achievement in bringing about a reconfiguration of the relation between law enforcement organs and the population, but was also convinced that I would find unambiguous evidence of this transformed relationship by myself. When he introduced my research and my cooperation with the Civic Union in the local community security meeting, which was attended by ca. fifteen people including police men and other security officers, he did not seem to spur any interest. The demeanour of most attendees remained as tense and cold as during the rest of the meeting. Beyond a performative welcome and small talk, it was obvious how the different *askakals* and district committee heads did not feel as comfortable with my presence as Akmal might have wished, and it sometimes felt as if they would have disagreed with his inviting me if they had been given the chance to. After all, this appeared more like a personal initiative of Akmal himself and the absence of higher-level decision makers' approval made it legitimate for all community workers not to answer my requests.

The official justification for inviting me and giving me a chance to recruit research participants, according to Akmal, was the Civic Union's activity in the community and Akmal's and many other attendees' membership in the organisation. Given the Civic Union's efforts and success in re-negotiating the police's work ethic and accountability towards society, participating in research that aimed to show how this progress was felt on an everyday level seemed only reasonable. Most community workers, however, either ignored or rejected my requests for interviews more or less openly. This suggests that for them this sort of reasoning was not all that straightforward. Some of them confirmed that they were Civic Union members, but they did not tell me any more details or reasons for it, let alone any opinions about the work of the Civic Union in this community. Neither Akmal's role as the head of the territorial council administration nor my own association with the Civic Union could make the local community workers overcome the discomfort or consequences they were associating with an engagement with me.[iv]

[iv] This might also have been due to my own too high expectations or inability to be more convincing in introducing and engaging the people in my research, but interviews with other Civic Union activists have confirmed that the success of the CU's activities in this territorial council and the access to community workers is mainly due to Akmal's own efforts and promotion of the Civic Union.

Normality and professionalism

Instead of discarding the interaction with representatives from this community as worthless, it is possible to draw observations on how they reacted to my requests to participate in research and what they replied to questions I posed. As regards the former, no one explicitly said they did not want to participate or I should leave them alone. The different district committee heads and *aksakals* I spoke to simply made sure not to commit to anything. It seemed that such non-engagement was seen as a way for these local community workers to make sure that their statements would not be abused or misrepresented in media reports or other outputs. Different coverage on the post-2010 human and minority rights situation and, more recently, on the spread of radicalisation and violent extremism in southern Kyrgyzstan has portrayed communities in unfavourable and or inaccurate ways.[v] The corresponding risk of objectification and misrepresentation of the community and abuse of the statements and information that I was asking was thus apparently seen as too high when weighed against the Civic Union and Akmal's vouching for my research. It is also possible that suspicions went well beyond that, as 'many think that international researchers are spies', as Akmal had explained in an earlier conversation.[vi] Foreigners who speak good Russian and are in Kyrgyzstan to conduct research on political and security issues are generally associated with foreign intelligence services and the possibility that I might have had such an association might have seemed realistic for some of the community workers. The consistency with which questions in this direction were directed towards me[vii] suggests that these ideas had at least some purchase and that, while they did not

---

[v] In a recent blog post, Heathershaw and Montgomery challenge the ICG's reports on recruitment of Kyrgyz citizens by radical Islamist organisations, among other things, on the grounds that the core information in its report titled 'Syria calling: Radicalisation in Central Asia' is usually attributed to anonymous and thus unverifiable sources. Available here: http://www.cedarnetwork.org/2015/02/17/who-says-syrias-calling-why-it-is-sometimes-better-to-admit-that-we-just-do-not-know-by-john-heathershaw-and-david-w-montgomery/ See also discussions on the contestations around the 'Osh events' in IV.3.

[vi] Osh, 14 October 2015.

[vii] Whereas such suspicions and conspiracy theories might appear irrational, they are omnipresent in Kyrgyz society and fuelled by footage on the widespread Russian television channels and in popular imaginaries. They were also apparent in people's reaction when meeting me for the first time: I was asked if I was working for the FBI or CIA on multiple occasions by taxi drivers, even research particiapnts, and how I was fending for myself otherwise.

necessarily lead people to distrust me, at least made them think twice.[viii] Therefore, given the more or less paranoid or reasonable concerns as to my real identity and potential connections, not engaging too much with me and giving too much information appeared almost to be a part of a professional habitus or even good citizenship of the community workers present after the planning meeting.

Furthermore, remarkably, all persons involved tried to maintain a picture of normality and of doing their job. One neighbourhood elderly court member agreed to talk to me and let me sit next to him when he and colleagues received district residents who arrived for a dispute settlement session, which eventually was cancelled due to the absence of one of the parties to the conflict. All I got from this man in his 50s was generic information, e.g. how the neighbourhood was preparing for the Day of the city of Osh (see VI.2.1), and after conversation was interrupted he left without saying anything more. Another neighbourhood committee leader was more open, but not less generic in his explanation of current issues including the negative effects of internet clubs on youth, the problem of early marriages which are not registered with the administration (*ZAGS*, see V.4.2).[ix] He agreed to meet up the next day, but he kept postponing our meeting during the following days so I had to give up on trying to meet him. The risk associated with talking to me and opening up their world for me was apparently perceived to be too high for these community workers.

While not ready to engage in more depth, the community security workers were keen to demonstrate that things were on track and that work was being done. This was most apparent in Akmal's explanations of the current agenda and his repeated referral to the fact that the community's dialogue with police and other law enforcement was already an achievement. 'As you can see, we have two neighbourhood inspectors here with us and we deal with the different issues together with them', he pointed when explaining telling me about a few exemplary cases that had been addressed in this joint approach. 'Today we will sort out a drinking action [*pianitsa*], which is going on at one house', he gave an example. 'This man even locked out his 87 years-old mother and it is already cold outside. We will go there and tell him to stop this.'

[viii] Being aware of this general situation, I had made an extra effort to present my research, the processes it included and the foreseeable results in an accessible and understandable was. I had drawn up leaflets explaining the purpose and content of my research in simple words and illustrated possible results with sample prints of book covers and screen shots of online publications. These extra efforts appeared to be completely in vain as they were completely ignored.

[ix] In this light, his opening statement that 'the main thing is that our people are healthy' almost seemed ironic.

If the person did not heed the warning, he further explained, the police inspectors would open an investigation (*sostavit protokol*). This was one of many cases which the territorial council and its Local Crime Prevention Centre (LCPC) were solving on a daily basis. Such cases usually involved minor deviant behaviour and was referred to, as in the meeting I had attended, as *neblagopoluchnye semi*, which means families which are badly-off economically but also implies misfortune, i.e. an uncontrollable component in their predicament. The LCPC with the community security workers and police men served as vehicle to bring the situations springing up in such families into order and settling disputes between residents, which was the main task of *aksakal* courts.

Thus, while there was little scope for me to inquire these activities and processes in depth without a long-term investment into building trust with the community workers, they attempted to present me how things were running smoothly and they were doing their job. Akmal tried to explain my failed to recruit research participants with the lack of mutual understanding. 'For them, I am something like a superintendent [*nachalnik*], they tell me all of this in their own way', he posited. 'Maybe they don't really like to talk to you because of the language, maybe they're a bit embarrassed [to tell things in Russian].' I was not convinced, but had to admit to my inability to gather any meaningful data for the reasons discussed above.

The construction and representation of 'good cooperation'

Even though there was no scope for me to gather data and security practise in community 3, I had been present on the community security briefing and seen how police men, neighbourhood committee leaders and *aksakals* court workers were controversially discussing solutions to problems affecting the security and public order. Indeed, Akmal and other neighbourhood leaders had managed to present me with evidence for their good cooperation with law enforcement. On the other hand, I still harboured doubts about this, especially given the reluctance of the community workers to really engage in discussions. It seemed hard to say if the people I approached were merely uncomfortable to talk to a foreign researcher or if this discomfort might have been based on the fact that more concerning and dangerous security questions were overshadowing the good cooperation with the police.

I met Akmal again on a small conference during which the Civic Union worked out a mechanisms to further consolidate its structures on the local level and mobilise potential for

policy changes on the ministerial and governmental levels.[x] As I reiterated my gratitude towards him in an attempt to emphasise the positive aspect of my engagement in his community – after all I was thankful that he had given me access and that I was able to make the experience – he responded with the same friendliness and assured that my research was important and valuable in promoting the Civic Union's efforts. He also asked what my research was exactly about again. This seemed to point to the fact the engagement with me as a researcher as such mattered much more for its symbolic meaning than for the actual content of my research. Akmal even used this 'cooperation' in his plenary presentation of group work on plans on the establishment steady CU working groups in different communities, including his own territorial council. Towards the end of his input, he added: 'I will already not talk about how our LCPC is working, as Philipp was with us and saw how we are working. He directly participated in a meeting.' In this sense, the mere fact that I was part of one community security briefing and witnessed the interaction between police and community security workers sufficed to classify this community as being open and having progressed to an open and transparent modus operandi. I would not contradict this assessment based on what I could see – the discussion between the different attendees had been open, controversial and meaningful. But as already stated, it would be equally far-fetched to declare all issues as solved based on my very symbolic visit to this community.

This points to the need felt by Akmal, and other colleagues of his, to construct and represent an interaction as cooperation which certifies the progress the CU has reached in a given community; even if the same interaction can be seen as failed attempt at doing meaningful research from the researcher's point of view. Given the dire need to improve things in Osh's densely populated urban districts in the aftermath of the 2010 events and the continued lack of post-conflict justice, the police's willingness to cooperate with local self-governance and to be accountable to the population can legitimately be presented as success of Kyrgyzstan's civil society. Such pragmatic and short-term orientation does not, however, answer questions about the more deep-reaching issues such as post-conflict justice and the feelings of insecurity on the part of individuals who have been affected by the past large-scale clashes. Although addressing such issues may not be in the hands of community security practitioners but be dependent on the readiness of higher-level administrative bodies and the political climate in general, it is

---

[x] Seminar: 'Developing Co-Security on the local level', Ak-Tash, Chui Province, 4-6 December, 2015. See below for more details.

important to draw attention to the pragmatism and mere conflict management, rather than transformation, that LCPCs and community security actors are limited to in this situation.

It can thus be concluded that in this community the practice of and discourse on 'good cooperation' between the community leaders and law enforcement combines and hybridises ideas of participatory and bottom-up approaches, as well as transparency and accountability, with an apolitical and silencing stance regarding the past damage and violence (at least in the situation described above) in order to shield the community but also the wider context (the city, region and ultimately the country as a whole) from misrepresentation and accusations that past injustices have not been addressed. Whether it was the presence of police men after the planning meeting or the sense of professionalism and citizen's duty of the neighbourhood committee members, their choice not to talk openly or even raise criticism about the present situation presents thus an alignment with the 'politics of sovereignty' which have led to a sanitisation of the public discourse since 2010.