

**PEACE AS COMPLEX LEGITIMACY: POLITICS, SPACE AND DISCOURSE IN
TAJKISTAN'S PEACEBUILDING PROCESS, 2000-2005**

By

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**A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy (International Relations)**

University of London

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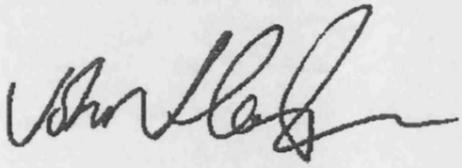
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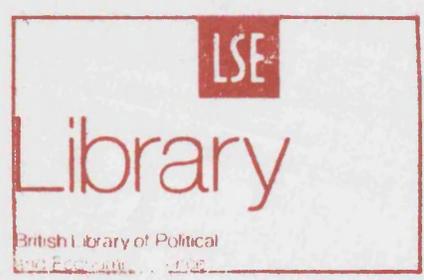
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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Peace as Complex Legitimacy: Politics, Space and Discourse in Tajikistan's Peacebuilding Process, 2000-2005

By

John David Heathershaw

This dissertation explores the process of building peace in terms of the making of complex legitimacy in post-Soviet, post-conflict Tajikistan. Since 2000, Tajikistan's citizens have seen major political violence end, order across the country return and the peace agreement between the parties of the 1990s civil war hold. Superficially, Tajikistan appears to be a case of successful international interventions based on neo-liberal internationalist assumptions. Yet, puzzlingly, the inter-Tajik peace is interpreted in a variety of often contradictory ways and correlates with authoritarian government and the tenure of a new oligarchy.

On closer inspection it is evident that neoliberal international interventions in Tajikistan have largely failed to achieve the aims of peacebuilding. However, I argue they have served to facilitate an increasingly authoritarian peace and have indirectly fostered popular accommodation and avoidance strategies, as well as localised resistance. Moreover, this peace is founded upon complex relations of legitimacy. It is the product of discourse (the formation of community through communication), politics (the acquisition of power and authority in that community), and space (the differentiation of that community from other communities). I study the political relations between three discourse/spaces ('selves') of Tajikistan from 2000 to 2005: those of subordinates, elites, and the international community. In addition to the discourse and spaces of neoliberal international peacebuilding, are those of popular *tinji* (Tajik: 'peacefulness'/ 'wellness') and elite *mirostroytelstvo* (Russian: 'peacebuilding').

In studying the relationships between subordinate, elite and international actors I show how they both accommodate one another via discursive re-interpretation, and avoid each other by retreating into their own 'hidden' spaces and transcripts. These intrinsically political practices have specific material impacts on people's lives. Moreover, I show how they have constituted new forms of authority, livelihoods and sovereignty. In each of these cases, subordinates resign themselves to power and 'peacefulness' and get on with their lives. These practices constitute peace as complex legitimacy.

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PREFACE

I collected data for this study in five languages – English, Russian, and Tajik, and, on a small number of occasions, Uzbek and Kyrgyz (the latter three largely through translation). I use textual examples from Tajik and Russian using the Library of Congress system to transliterate foreign words. In addition, I mark foreign text in *italics*. All words are Russian, except for words followed with [Taj.] which are Tajik. In cases of commonly used words – such as oblast, kolkhoz or mahalla – I do not use italics. These are translated in their first usage and clearly marked in the glossary.

Some informant names have been changed; sometimes at the request of the informant, sometimes at my discretion (on occasions when I feel the way I am using the text – e.g. to indicate dissenting comment – might compromise an informant in their community). Such cases are clearly indicated in a footnote, e.g. ‘Interview with international official, Dushanbe, May 2005’.

Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations are verbatim. Where marked, they are transcribed and translated from recorded interviews. The transcripts and audio recordings of these interviews in their original language are held by the author for reference purposes. A list of interview transcripts can be found in Appendix A. Transcripts are referenced in in-text format with the transcript number indicated by square brackets, e.g. (Alimi[T1]). Other quotes are taken from documentary sheets, questionnaires, or hand-written notes of interviews. These were used when tape-recording was refused by the informant or was impossible due to technical problems or excessive background noise. The original sheets or notes are also available for reference.

Press sources are cited with abbreviated references. A list of sources and abbreviations thereof can be found in Appendix B.

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GLOSSARY OF TAJIK AND RUSSIAN TERMS

<i>aksakal</i> [Taj.]	lit. ‘white beard’, term used for village chief or elder
<i>avlod</i> [Taj.]	patriarchal extended family
<i>avtoritet</i>	‘authority’
<i>biznezmeni</i>	‘businessmen’
<i>brigadir</i>	foreman, brigade-leader of collective farm
<i>choihona</i> [Taj.]	lit. ‘teahouse’, often also functions as a mosque and community centre in Tajik villages
<i>dekon</i> [Taj.]	peasant, farmer
<i>edinstvo</i>	‘unity’
<i>goschinovnik</i>	‘state servant’, civil servant
<i>gosstruktura</i>	‘state structures’, state administration
<i>khashar</i> [Taj.]	communal labour
Hizb-ut Tahrir [Taj.]	Party of Liberation
khukumat [Taj.]	‘executive organ’, local administration of district or province
<i>khukumati rais</i>	head of the local executive
jamoat [Taj.]	first level of local administration, literally ‘community’
<i>jangsollor</i> [Taj.]	‘commanders’, ‘warlords’
<i>kishlak</i> [Taj.]	‘village’, ‘settlement’
kolkhoz	collective farm, originating in the Soviet era
<i>kommandiri</i>	‘commanders’, used to refer to the military commanders of the civil war period
<i>kompromat</i>	‘Compromising materials’ held against another person
<i>krisha</i>	lit. ‘roof’, used to denote cover or protection against punishment
<i>mahalgera</i> ’y [Taj.]	‘regionalism’ (<i>Mestnichestvo</i> [Russ.])
mahalla [Taj.]	used to refer both to the local neighbourhood and its leadership
<i>mahallinski komitet</i>	‘mahalla committee’, term used to describe community leadership
Majlisi Oli [Taj.]	Tajik parliament
<i>mirostitelstvo</i>	‘peacebuilding’ (an elite discourse of ‘peacebuilding’)
<i>mirotvorchestvo</i>	‘peacekeeping’ (lit. ‘peacemaking’)
<i>mullo</i> [Taj.]	‘mullah’, clergyman or graduate of <i>madrassa</i> , usually head of mosque
nomenklatura	the soviet-era elite
oblast	province (<i>Veloyat</i> [Taj.])
<i>pluralizm</i>	‘pluralism’
<i>rais</i> [Taj.]	‘head’, ‘boss’
raiyon	administrative district (<i>Nohiya</i> [Taj.])
<i>raznoglasiye</i>	‘discord’

<i>tinji</i> [Taj.]	‘peacefulness’/‘wellness’ (a popular discourse of ‘peacebuilding’)
<i>sovkhoz</i>	state farm
<i>splochnost</i>	‘cohesion’
<i>spokoystvo</i>	‘peacefulness’, ‘calmness’
<i>stabilnost</i>	‘stability’
<i>vlast</i>	‘power’, ‘government’
<i>zastava</i>	border command post

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AfP.....	<i>Agenda for Peace</i> (1992 UN report)
AKF.....	Aga Khan Foundation
AKDN.....	Aga Khan Development Network (a part of AKF)
BOMCA.....	Border Management in Central Asia (an EU programme administered by UNDP)
CAG.....	Community Action Group (established by Mercy Corps)
CAIP.....	Community Action Investment Programme
CBO.....	Community Based Organisation
CCER.....	Central Committee on Elections and Referenda of the Republic of Tajikistan
CIG.....	Community Initiative Group (established by Mercy Corps)
CIS.....	Commonwealth of Independent States
CNR.....	Commission on National Reconciliation
CPT.....	Communist Party of Tajikistan
CSTO.....	Collective Security Treaty Organisation
DCA.....	Drug Control Agency of the Republic of Tajikistan
DEC.....	District Election Committees
DFID.....	Department for International Development of the UK Government
DDR.....	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DPT.....	Democratic Party of Tajikistan
EOM.....	Election Observation Mission (of ODIHR/OSCE)
GBAO.....	Gorno-Badakhshon Autonomous Oblast
GNR.....	Government of National Reconciliation
GTZ.....	German Agency for Technical Cooperation [<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit</i>]
HSR.....	<i>Human Security Report 2005</i>
ICG.....	International Crisis Group
ICISS.....	International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty
IFES.....	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
ILF.....	<i>In Larger Freedom</i> (2004 UN report)
IMT.....	Islamic Movement of Tajikistan
IMU.....	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
INGO.....	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IOM.....	International Organisation for Migration

IREX.....International Research and Exchanges Board

IRPT.....Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan

IWPR.....Institute for War and Peace Reporting

JDC.....*Jamoat* Development Committee (established by UNDP)

JRC.....*Jamoat* Resource Centre (established by UNDP)

KOGG.....Committee for the Guarding of State Borders of the Government of Tajikistan [*Komitet po Ohrane Gosudarstvennikh Granitz*]

LTO.....OSCE/ODIHR long-term election observer

MC.....Mercy Corps

MCBS.....Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Government of Tajikistan [*Ministerstvo Chrezvychainykh Situatsiyi*]

MDG.....Millennium Development Goals

M&E..... Monitoring and Evaluation exercises

MSDSP..... Mountain Societies Development Support Programme (of AKDN)

MVD.....Ministry of Interior of the Government of Tajikistan [*Ministerstvo Vinutrennikh Del*]

NAPST.....National Association of Political Scientists of Tajikistan

NATO.....North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NDI.....National Democratic Institute

NGO.....Non-Governmental Organisation

ODIHR.....Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (of the OSCE)

OECD.....Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OSCE.....Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

OSI.....Open Society Institute

PA.....Presidential Administration of the Government of Tajikistan

PCI.....Peaceful Communities Initiative (a programme of Mercy Corps)

PDC.....Political Discussion Club, a project of UNTOP

PDPT.....Peoples' Democratic Party of Tajikistan

PFT.....Popular Front of Tajikistan

PSCPolling Station Committees

R2P.....*Responsibility to Protect* (2001 ICISS report)

RBF.....Russian Border Forces in Tajikistan

RFE/RL.....Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty

SALW.....Small Arms and Light Weapons

SAS.....Small Arms Survey

SCO.....Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

SDPT.....Social Democratic Party of Tajikistan
SMART.....Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timed
SPT.....Socialist Party of Tajikistan
SSR.....Security Sector Reform
STO.....OSCE/ODIHR short-term election observer
UN.....United Nations
UNDPA.....United Nations Department of Political Affairs
UNDP.....United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR.....United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMOT.....United Nations Mission of Observers to Tajikistan
UNODC.....United Nations Office for Drug Control
UNSC.....United Nations Security Council
UNTOP.....United Nations Tajikistan Office of Peacebuilding
USAID.....United States Agency for International Development
UTO.....United Tajikistan Opposition
VO.....Village Organisation (established by MSDSP)

INTRODUCTION

Studying Peace, Studying Tajikistan

Just as political science is about two problems – the use of power and the legitimation of the use of power – violence studies are about two problems: the use of violence and the legitimation of that use.

– Johan Galtung (1990: 291)

The relationship between space, identity, ideology and power still largely awaits investigation in the Central Asian context.

– Nick Megoran (2004: 759)

This is a thesis about why peace has held in Tajikistan. As such it seeks to address a question of theory as well as a question of empirical research. I reconcile these two aspects through a grounded theory approach which denies the deductive/inductive dichotomy. Throughout this process of research contextual insights from Tajikistan have informed my understanding of peace, whilst conceptual insights about peace have informed the questions I ask about Tajikistan.

Scope and Significance

This dissertation was inspired by two puzzles – one empirical, one theoretical – which provide the origins to my research questions and served as intellectual motivation in time when the depth or breadth of the endeavour seemed too much. Both puzzles reveal fascinating insights about how knowledge, power and ‘reality’ are produced.

The Tajik Puzzle

Tajikistan is a country at peace. To be more precise it is *post*-conflict; its war, which began in 1992, has ended. However, no one seems to be able to explain with any great conviction or credibility how it got there, and particularly how and why it remains there. There is no single authoritative account on the civil war; there are no open academic or political debates over the whys and wherefores. Most of the military battles, human costs, and social and political implications are unknown or over-looked. Ordinary Tajikistanis are loath to dwell on the events of conflict. Their leaders merely repeat the

mantras of peace and stability. Both leaders and citizens often reduce 'peace' to the June 1997 peace agreement between the government, under President Rahmonov, and the opposition, under Said Abdullo Nuri. Building peace here becomes the process of achieving and adhering to a formal agreement between leaders. Even those more sanguine about the bargains struck behind the scenes are prone to focus on the elite-level process for compromise (Barnes and Abdullaev 2001). As I was told by one Tajik political scientist, 'John, it's all about elites!' This extremely thin description is then posited as an example which the world can learn from (contributions in Seifert and Kraikemayer 2003). However, one must ask: what is the world to learn? Are we to assume that a common interest, between elites and their followers, was attained and maintained throughout? Are we to imagine that a single idea or conception of peace is followed, or at least tolerated, by all? Are Tajiks of all ethnicities and ages bound by a single identity which shapes their consent to the state? The implicit and at times explicit answer to these questions by Tajikistan's political leaders is in the affirmative – that Tajikistan is united, it has overcome, it is sovereign. Such accounts have a tautological quality: we have peace because we have peace.

It is hardly surprising that such discourse seems inauthentic to practitioners and analysts of international peacebuilding who have been sceptical about the durability of Tajikistan's peace (See Schoeberlein 2002; Lynch 2001; Hall 2002; Collins 2003; ICG 2001). Their alternative rendition of the common peace has a distinctly neo-liberal orientation. International, English-language analyses have consistently seen peace (in Tajikistan) in terms of a dichotomy where *the peril of further conflict can only be avoided through the promise of democratisation* (Bertram 1995; Sisk 2001; OSI 1999: 84).¹ Yet Tajikistan's experience with peacebuilding refuses to abide by this peril/promise dichotomy, as its peace has proved durable while its government has become increasingly authoritarian. I characterise this as the *paradox of peacebuilding* (Heathershaw 2005).

Analysts have proposed various partial explanations for this puzzle or paradox. 'War weariness' (Schoeberlein 2002), the effects of labour migration (Olimova and Bosc 2003) and cultural passivity (Olimova and Bowyer 2002) are all suggested as reasons why Tajikistan remains without violence yet authoritarian. There may be some truth to each of these explanations, yet the success of Tajikistan

¹ Both Bertram and Sisk use 'peril' and 'promise' with respect to peacebuilding but in terms of the challenges it faces objectively rather than the dimensions contained within it as a discourse.

in avoiding further war is more than a historical anomaly or a temporary reprieve, and the lack of progress in democratisation more than a matter of impatience with an inevitably long-term process. The paradigms used by internationals, leaders and citizens in Tajikistan are all faulty as they each fail to capture the character of Tajikistan's peace. The approach I offer below is also not without error. However, I have come to realise in the process of doing this research that popular and elite representations cannot merely be cast aside by the social scientist in favour of better explanations based perhaps on economic networks or informal political institutions. Rather, a better explanation should take account of the work that discourses do – their reductions, oversights, affirmations and negations – in producing and reproducing social realities of peace. It is this peace which internationals, elites and subordinates together make and remake. This raises questions of peace which go beyond the case of Tajikistan.

Fig.1: Topographical map of Tajikistan and neighbouring states²



² Available from: http://www.untj.org/files/maps/Overview_CA.jpg , accessed: 15/10/06

The Peace Puzzle

Students of international peacebuilding have become increasingly aware of how actually existing peace departs from the ideal posited in the discourse. A formal peace agreement in itself tells us little about how peacebuilding is practised, by what means it holds, and by what means it fails under conflict and the resumption of widespread violence.³ Indeed, the latter outcome is often the case as Arusha, Oslo, Dayton and countless other examples sadly testify (see Allen 1999). In other cases conflict between elites is merely frozen – as in other post-soviet cases such as Transdnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh and various conflicts in Georgia (Lynch 2004). Even in cases such as Tajikistan where conflict is *transformed* – in the sense that a return to war around similar issues is unthinkable for the foreseeable future – the discourse of peacebuilding, based around a peril/promise dichotomy, seems to provide at best a partial and at times misleading explanation. It remains unconvincing and conceptually disappointing.

The concept of peace has a much longer history. While peacebuilding, including the UN's 'post-conflict peacebuilding' (Boutros-Ghali 1992), only entered policy-making and academic discourse following the end of the Cold War, there is a much longer heritage to the concept of peace. However, peace, like peacebuilding, is essentially both normative and analytic. In these terms Johan Galtung (1969) has made a profound and lasting if problematic contribution to the study of peace with his distinction between 'negative' and 'positive' peace. While negative peace marks the end of physical violence, it is positive peace which signifies the end of structural violence (1969: 183). Galtung's work is replete with demonstrations as to how ostensibly peaceful societies – including those of the liberal-democratic states of the international community which export peacebuilding to post-conflict states – are structurally and culturally violent (esp. 1975: 282-304). Critical analysts have shunned his positivist methods yet retained the radical impulse of his definitions of positive peace extending it to include, for example, the emancipation of humanity from 'interpretative violence against *otherness*' (Patomäki 2001: 723-737), or the practising of 'communicative action' which transcends power relations (Jabri 1996).

³ I will continue to use 'peacebuilding' without quotes to denote *discourse* and ideal-type models. I will continue to use 'building peace' and 'peace building' without quotes to talk about how I understand the *process* of bringing order and ending violence as a product of contending discourse and practices.

However, both traditional and critical conceptions of positive peace seem far removed from the lived experience of 'peace' in post-conflict places such as Tajikistan. At best, this lived experience is proximate to negative peace. Previous studies have argued that the *praxis* of peacebuilding, by any definition, is weak and inconsistent (Lund 2003; Paris 2004; Junne and Verkoren 2005). Sambani and Doyle (2000) found a 43% success rate for the ending of widespread physical violence and just 35% for a second-order but still modest (by peacebuilding's standards) task of establishing an accommodative political process with some degree of 'political openness', but short of the establishment of functioning government, implying that widespread physical violence was more often ended by means alternative to peacebuilding. These messy products of peacebuilding interventions are problematic. Whilst the division between positive and negative peace has come to constitute the last word in both analytical and normative terms, it also seems to have shifted the study of peace away from the 'positive' or productive functions of negative peace: how structural and cultural violence emerges, how it is resisted and accommodated.⁴ These questions remain valid. How does such 'violence' become institutionalised? How do beliefs act to justify it? How does it become legitimate? As Galtung notes in the quote cited above, legitimacy lies at the heart of the study of violence just as it lies at the heart of the study of politics (1975: 185). Surely, the study of peace should address both violence and politics. In such a way, we can study peace in terms of legitimacy.

The distinct lack of progress in the study of the concept of peace (Richmond 2005) is in marked contrast to debates around security prompted by the development of the Copenhagen school of security studies. Peace may benefit from a similar move into social constructivist or post-structuralist analysis (Debrix 1999; Fetherstone 2000; Hansen 2006; Pugh 2003). In the following quote from Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde's *Security: a New Framework for Analysis*, I have replaced 'security' with 'peace' and 'securitisation' with 'peacebuilding' to convey what this might mean for the concept of peace.

⁴ In fact, Galtung explicitly stated he wished to avoid a preference of positive over negative peace, or vice versa, noting that '*both values, both goals are significant, and it is probably a disservice to man to try, in an abstract way, to say that one is more important than the other*' (1969: 185).

Whether an issue is a [peace] issue is not something individuals decide alone. [Peacebuilding] is intersubjective and socially-constructed: does a referent object hold general legitimacy as something that should survive, [...] *and* thereby get others to follow or at least tolerate actions not otherwise legitimate? This quality is not held in subjective or isolated minds; it is a social quality, a part of a discursive, socially constituted, intersubjective realm (Buzan et al 1998: 31).

The study of this kind of peace – inter-subjective peace or, as I frame it, *peace as complex legitimacy* – has been forsaken for too long. With this in mind, in this dissertation I seek to further our understanding of peace by investigating the case of post-conflict Tajikistan.

A Research Process

The focus of this dissertation is peace as *complex legitimacy* – a discursive, political and spatial phenomenon with attributes of livelihoods, authority and sovereignty. In addition to the framework which I have constructed for this analysis, I also make reference to the framework adopted in peacebuilding, in terms of three core themes: the decentralisation of powers; the development and consolidation of political parties and elections; and security sector reform. Thus, I seek to analyse peacebuilding both on its terms and in terms of my contextual analysis of the case of Tajikistan.

Research Questions

I started my research process with the following primary questions:

- Why does neo-liberal peacebuilding cultivate ‘negative peace’– i.e. the absence of violence under authoritarian government?
- Why has third party intervention in Tajikistan coincided with the re-establishment of authoritarian government despite being designed to promote democratic institution-building?

Through the process of research over the last three years these basic questions have remained although they have spawned more specific research questions. These questions have led to the use of fundamental concepts such as ‘discourse’, ‘space’ and ‘politics’ – each of which need some elaboration. Rather than providing a list of questions or definitions at this stage, I will explain the secondary questions,

theoretical concepts and terminology which I use as they are introduced through the dissertation.

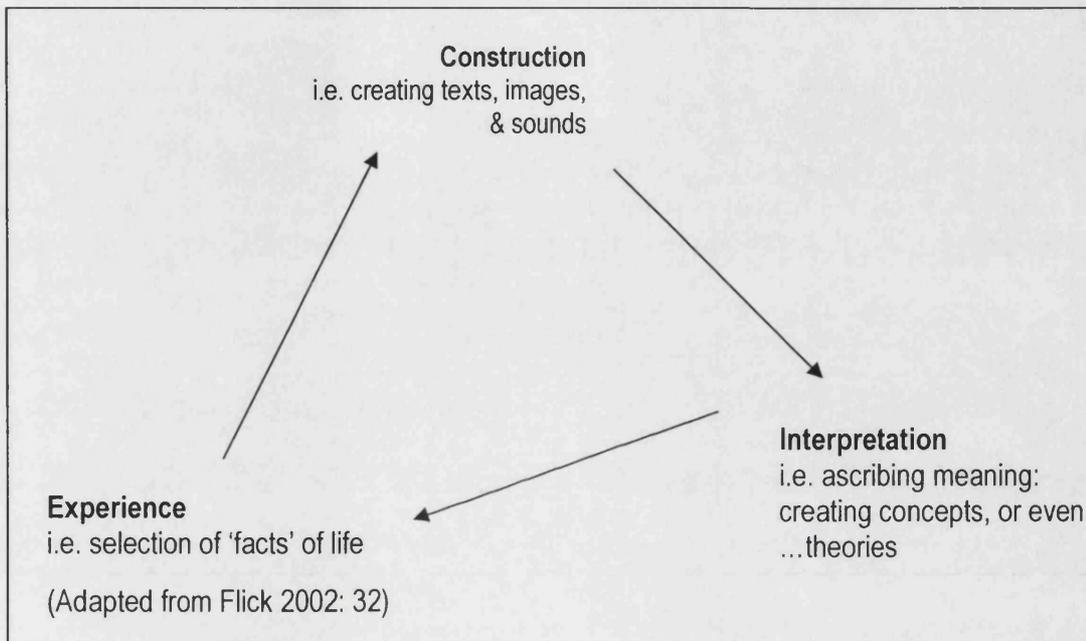
Theoretical Approach

This dissertation is a work based very broadly in social constructivism yet its more precise methodological approach was largely determined by my experience in context. I began my research with a clear focus on the informal institutions of peacebuilding. This approach seemed appropriate as it avoided the formalism of peacebuilding doctrine and, moreover, began the process of linking conflict analysis to political analysis. However, over time I realised that it was the public and private representations of ‘peace’ which were central to any analysis of how it plays out. I became clear that the informal institutions of Tajik politics are endowed with symbolic and normative dimensions which serve to legitimate otherwise querulous practices. Consequently, discourse analysis became central to my work. I understand discourse broadly in terms of Foucault’s ‘discursive formation’ – an order or ‘system of dispersion between objects, types of statement, concepts or thematic choices’ (1974: 38). While this definition demands textual analysis, such analysis must be sensitive to the wider dynamics of social and political order. My approach seeks to grasp the *larger intersubjective context* where, ‘meaning and practice arise out of interaction,’ and ‘within which moves of one kind or another would be seen to be reasonable and therefore justifiable’(Fierke and Jørgensen 2001: 117,125). This requires a study of the mimetic processes whereby ‘the individual assimilates himself or herself’ to the symbolic world (Gebauer and Wulf 1995: 2-3), through the creation and practising of texts in everyday experiences (see figure two). Thus, my approach to discourse involves, where possible, ethnographic explorations of wider private or hidden, often oral, practices. Equally, an understanding of the (global) political context, I argue, is essential to critical research in peace studies.

Little research has been done from a discourse analysis perspective in peace and conflict studies and thus the researcher is advised, even required, to venture to disciplines far and wide whilst trying to make sense of peacebuilding. I have digressed into the literatures of political sociology, social anthropology and critical international relations in an inductive theory-building process. The diverse insights of David Beetham, Lene Hansen, James C. Scott, and Cynthia Weber *inter alia* have

been of central importance in developing my theoretical framework. Thus, my approach is unashamedly eclectic and will not satisfy theoretical purists who prefer thoroughbreds to mongrels.

Fig.2: Mimesis: construction and interpretation of symbolic worlds



Fieldwork Experience

The challenges of designing a research process significantly comprehensive to assess multiple discourses and spaces of a complex political order necessitated investigation of multiple 'selves' in numerous locations across Tajikistan. A gradual process of fieldwork over three years allowed me to spend a significant amount of time comparing and contrasting data which emanates from these different spaces. Primary research was divided into two phases. The first phase involved three extended trips to Tajikistan between June 2003 and March 2005 where I made contacts and tried out certain entry points and data collection methods. This allowed my experiences in the field to feed back to my research design. The second phase from April-September 2005, involved an intense six months of fieldwork across the country.

Depth versus breadth

Having lived and worked in Central Asia for most of the last five years (largely based in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan), I was able to gradually build contacts and a degree of

familiarity with the country and region. Research was divided between the capital city, Dushanbe, and the regions. I did between 4 and 6 weeks of research in each of the three regions I studied. Working in three regions, and many communities, I certainly felt like I was often sacrificing depth in favour of breadth. However, this concern was mitigated by a number of factors. Firstly, I was able to revisit a number of these villages more than once over many months and began to become very familiar with local characters and leaders.⁵ Secondly, as I spread my time across the country I began to appreciate the full extent of both similarities and differences across regions. On the one hand, I may have missed some of this diversity had I not observed differences in lived experience of war and peace between, for example, the Uzbek areas of the North, or the Kulobi districts of the South. On the other hand, I may have been less confident of the common threads of issues such as labour migration and community governance had I not been able to see these diverse parts. Thirdly, I consoled myself that it is the task of the student of international relations, much to the chagrin of our more ethnographic colleagues, to consider breadth over depth – to be ethnographic at the ‘international level’ of foreign diplomats and aid workers, as well as gaining some insight into the ‘local level’ of villagers.

Entry Points

While I took a broad geographical approach, I felt I was able to get into more depth by working and participating with international organisations at work in Tajik villages. As mentioned above, they often provided my entry point to the field but also provided opportunities for an ethnographic analysis of the International Community. As a consultant, I was effectively a full-time member of staff for Mercy Corps for over 3 months, leading a four- to six-person research team in a formal evaluation of a major international programme.⁶ My experience as an election

⁵ For example, in Humdon village in the Rasht Valley, I first met village leaders whilst pushing stranded cars together on a snow-blocked road in February 2005; a few days later I observed the polling station and met the same leaders whilst observing the parliamentary elections with the OSCE. In April, I returned to the village when evaluating a community development programme there. In August 2005, I came back again to look at water management issues in the village with GTZ. All these occasions involved social contacts such as sharing tea or a meal.

⁶ My dual role – as international employee and academic researcher – presented ethical concerns. I was clear to explicate to interviewees my status, and what I would be using the information for, when taking testimony or chatting with them. With regard to the organisation, I gained permission to use the data collected for the organisation. In one case (Mercy Corps) this was written into my contract, in other cases I gained permission informally from a senior person within the organisation.

observer with the OSCE was another extremely rich participatory opportunity. Being given significant autonomy to design the research process in all except one case, I felt I was able to discern both the pervasive effect of international discourses and find the autonomy to undertake my own independent research. Formal periods of participant observation with these organisations are detailed in figure 3 below. Other data collection took place independent of these organizations.

Fig. 3: Work with international organisations

Dates	Organisation	Activity	Theme [Chapter]	Regional Location
June-July 2003	DfID	Research on Small Arms issues and policy vis-à-vis international agreements	Security Sector [Chapter 6]	Dushanbe
Feb. 2005	OSCE (ODIHR)	Election observation – Tajikistan parliamentary	Political parties and elections [5]	Rasht valley
April -June 2005	Mercy Corps	Final Evaluation of Mercy Corps Community Action Investment Programme (CAIP)	Community Development [7]	Khatlon; Rasht valley
June-July 2005	Mercy Corps	Internal Evaluation of Mercy Corps Peaceful Communities Initiative (PCI)	Community Development [7]	Sughd
July-Aug. 2005	AKDN / GTZ	Assessment of Water Usage Associations	Community Development [7]	Rasht valley

Data Sources and Methods of Collection

Most of the data I collected was discursive and oral. Interviews of various kinds, group and individual, were semi-structured in order to achieve a certain amount of focus on the topics in hand. However, I allowed interviewees to speak freely, using their own language and forms of expression, attaching their own interpretations and meanings, and describing examples of their practices in terms they felt comfortable with. Such interviews were conducted at all levels of Tajik society from ministers in the capital to peasants in villages. Textual data was supplemented via observations of international programmes and the use of photographs and a fieldwork diary to record images and observations to provide context to what was said or written. Whilst the analysis of data has focused on qualitative approaches to discourse analysis and participant observation, it has also involved limited quantitative measurements of survey data.

Research Ethics

The issues which I addressed in my research were sensitive and at times this has required that I have used testimonies confidentially to avoid revealing the source (see Preface). The larger ethical issue which I confronted in my work was that of my intrusion into Central Asian cultures – an intervention which was often inseparable from the specific practices of international actors which I describe in this dissertation. As Robben and Nordstrom comment,

We depart for the field bowing under the weight of our own culture, propped up and propelled by Western assumptions we seldom question, shielded from the blaze of complex cultural diversity by a carefully crafted lens of cultural belief that determines as much as clarifies what we see. When we purport to speak for others, we carry the Western enterprise into the mouths of other people. No matter our dedication, we cannot escape the legacy of our culture (Robben and Nordstrom 1995: 11).

I do not wish to claim that I was able to transcend my cultural perspective but rather that I was prepared to acknowledge and seek to better understand this reflexivity. In doing so I have sought to represent the voices of others; but these are still my representations.

Finally, I was fortunate to experience two momentous events in neighbouring countries that helped put Tajikistan's 'stability' in comparative perspective. I witnessed violence, looting and gunshots whilst on fieldwork, but not in Tajikistan. Staying in Kyrgyzstan in March 2005, I witnessed the uprising or 'revolution' which removed the government of Askar Akayev following parliamentary elections which, while fraudulent, were considerably less rehearsed than those I had observed in Tajikistan. Secondly, on 13 May 2005, I was evacuated from the town of Ferghana in Uzbekistan following a prison break-out and uprising in the nearby town of Andijon which was put down by the government to the cost of many hundreds of its citizens' lives. These events served as reminders of the contingent nature of political order, the dynamic nature of legitimation and delegitimation, and the precariousness of peace.

PART ONE

Investigating Peace as Complex Legitimacy: a grounded approach

Introduction

This first half of the thesis interweaves conceptual and contextual insights to derive an approach to peacebuilding in terms of complex legitimacy. *Chapter One* considers the international, English-language literature of international peacebuilding, charting its development as hegemonic discourse in terms of three contending and, at times, conciliating tracks; democratisation peacebuilding, humanitarianism and statebuilding. With reference to a growing critical literature on international interventions, it then argues that these hegemonic models are adapted in context by local actors. It is these adaptations which constitute the nature of peacebuilding in practice. In *Chapter Two*, I introduce the specific peacebuilding case of Tajikistan, via an historical survey of war and peace, and provide a descriptive overview of the major social and political developments between 2000 and 2005. I also review historiographically the more insightful academic literature on Tajikistan – texts which highlight hegemony, legitimacy, and/or spatial complexity. *Chapter Three* elaborates complex legitimacy as an alternative conceptual approach to peacebuilding, in terms of its three dimensions of discourse, politics, and space. I go on to outline a constitutive framework of complex legitimacy with three ‘levels’; global, elite and subordinate. In *Chapter Four*, I identify these spatial and discursive ‘levels’ in the case of Tajikistan: international peacebuilding, elite *mirostroytelstvo*, and popular *tinji* [Taj.]. In this complex material and representational environment, I find that processes of legitimation (building peace) are made in inter-textual relations between discourses.

CHAPTER ONE

Peacebuilding: towards the common peace?

Although Francis Fukuyama's thesis on the 'end of history' quickly fell into disrepute, we still silently assume that the liberal-democratic capitalist global order is somehow the finally found 'natural' social regime; we still implicitly conceive of conflicts in Third World countries as a sub-species of natural catastrophes, as outbursts of quasi-natural violent passions, or as conflicts based on fanatical identification with ethnic roots.

Slavoj Žižek (2000: 10)

How is peace built? Why does a negotiated compromise between parties hold following the formal implementation of a peace agreement? These are demanding questions addressed in this dissertation. The dominant answer to them is provided by the concept of peacebuilding. This chapter seeks to go beyond normative accounts of post-conflict peacebuilding by identifying it as a discourse of problem-solving which represents a neoliberal peace, and via an exploration of the nature of hegemony open up the complexities and contingent possibilities of this process. It seeks to re-examine international peacebuilding as found in the global spaces of the 'international community'⁷ – an emerging identity-group in world politics.

Peacebuilding is an over-worked yet under-developed idea. Lund argues that a unified understanding has emerged which is 'an overarching multidimensional concept of peacebuilding' (2003: 13). Yet the practice remains 'a huge, hopeful experiment whose results are not clear' (ibid: 16). Much verbiage is expended in an attempt to define it in sufficient breadth.⁸ Ball, for example, remarks that peacebuilding 'requires that conflict resolution and consensus-building shape all interactions among citizens and between citizens and the state' (2002: 37). However, despite being used to mobilise significant volumes of resources for increasingly intrusive third-party interventions, peacebuilding as a concept remains little more than a composite of problem-solving strategies – a form of praxis rather than a theory or concept. Surveys of the literature typically shy away from political analysis and often conclude with a re-statement of fundamental questions about peacebuilding's

⁷ Hereafter the idea of 'international community' will be capitalised to International Community to convey its centrality as an identity signifier in peacebuilding discourse.

⁸ See Boutros-Ghali (1992); for a wideners' perspective see Haugerudbraaten (1998); for a reformist perspective see Lund (2003); for a more radical perspective see Bendaña (2003).

practices and effects (See Gawerc 2006). Buzan's critique that peace 'has failed to generate a comprehensive alternative approach to the study of international relations' remains valid (1984: 109-125). Moreover, in Robert Cox's terms, peacebuilding discourses are *problem-solving* discourses. Cox notes,

Problem-solving theory focuses on existing frameworks of institutions, social relations and social meaning, which are often taken for granted, with the goal of sustaining this order to make it work efficiently. Critical theory starts by problematising this given framework or social order with the aim of considering its origins and how it might be changed, clarifying possible alternatives, and providing insights into ways of transforming it (Cox 1996: 88).

Cox's approach was first applied to the study of peace operations by Fetherstone (2000). Her excellent article provides the inspiration for the analysis of peacebuilding as discourse in this chapter.

However, peacebuilding is more than an analytical device; crucially it is a discourse. As a discourse, it is 'expressive', in other words 'a way to stand for and promote certain ideals' (Lund 2003: 22). Therefore, at first sight, peacebuilding seems to be the very opposite of Cox's problem-solving which takes for granted existing frameworks; it is a normative approach to intervention which demands structural changes in post-conflict spaces. This dissertation argues that to go further we must look at the concept as a form of representation. It is variously both idealist and pragmatic, performative yet instrumental, and cannot be understood without reference to how its experiments have been and continue to be variously interpreted across space and time. However, these experiments are conceived in a particularly conservative and normalising fashion, where it is 'the other' of a conflict zone, rather than international structures, which must undergo change. It thus differs from foreign policy and security discourses which exclusively inscribe the 'the other' as enemy (Campbell 1992; Hansen 2006). Peacebuilding discourse simultaneously constructs the 'enemy-other' (of the past, fundamentalist ethics and ethnic identity) and an 'ideal-other' (of the future, rationalist ethics and civic identity). This ideal-other is similarly reproduced via the 'us'/'them' boundary where 'they' should become what 'we' imagine ourselves to be. This act of inscription provides meaning, credibility and even legitimacy to interventions. It constructs both 'us' and 'them' in terms of an ideal-other with ethical, temporal and spatial dimensions (Hansen 2006).

I distinguish three 'basic discourses' which constitute 'the main structural positions' (Hansen 2006) within the debate in the International Community:

- (i) *peacebuilding-as-democratisation* (hereafter referred to as democratic peacebuilding),
- (ii) *peacebuilding-as-humanitarianism* (humanitarianism),
- (iii) *peacebuilding-as-statebuilding* (statebuilding).

This tripartite rendition of peacebuilding is broadly analogous to Banks' three concepts of peace; conflict management, justice and order (1987).⁹ Yet the three discourses do not stand apart but function interdependently of one another. I will chart their 'inter-textuality' (how they constitute each other via their readings and writings of one another [Der Derian & Shapiro, 1989; Hansen, 2006]) and inter-subjectivity (how they constitute and are constituted by the textual and non-textual dynamics of the International Community). These relationships frequently function dialectically to incorporate their differences into holistic strategies and models. I denote such inter-textual product or meta-narrative as *pragmatic peacebuilding* (denoted simply as peacebuilding). Thus, I argue that international 'peacebuilding' is ontologically a trinitarian discourse being three in one. In subsequent chapters I go on to discuss peacebuilding in both as both the sum and its parts. Here I outline the basic discourses which structure debates within the International Community.

The chapter is divided into three parts. Part one introduces the basic discourse of *democratic peacebuilding* which was developed by the United Nations, major donors and analysts in the immediate post-Cold War period. It shows how it is not just a practical model but represents peacebuilding as a process of democratisation. Part two considers its two contending siblings, *humanitarianism* (prominent in the mid-1990s) and *statebuilding* (prominent post-9/11), and shows how they merge with and divide from democratic peacebuilding in contemporary international debates. It illustrates how contending representations are incorporated into a dominant meta-narrative, *pragmatic peacebuilding*. The third part considers critiques of peacebuilding and mulls over the limits of its hegemonic power in a given local setting. It argues, with Debrix, that peace operations simulate a certain form of order, and, via Scott, that this simulation obscures 'hidden' practices of exception. It is

⁹ In actual fact, Banks' (1989) piece outlined four concepts including peace as harmony. This fourth approach has been excluded here as it does not characterise any approaches to peacebuilding within the international community. However, this fourth conception is relevant when the dissertation moves on to discuss local Tajik discourses of peace in chapter three.

these exceptions which must be considered if we are to examine more broadly the social and political realities of peacebuilding.

1.1. Democratic peacebuilding: peace-as-conflict-management

The UN approach to ‘post-conflict peacebuilding’ emerged amid a reawakening of liberal internationalist ideals in the international community in the aftermath of the Cold War. However, the earlier concept of democratisation can be considered its discursive cousin, sharing peacebuilding’s epistemological and ontological roots, and being hugely influential in its own right in informing international engagement with post-Soviet and post-colonial states.¹⁰ This link between peacebuilding and democratisation as well as development is explicit in the policy literature (Aklaev 1999; Bastian and Luckham, 2003; Debiel and Klein 2002). Boutros-Ghali was no less totalising in a 1993 speech:

Without peace there can be no development and there can be no democracy. Without development, the basis for democracy will be lacking and societies will tend to fall into conflict. And without democracy, no sustainable development will occur; without such development, peace cannot long be maintained (1993, no pagination).

Peacebuilding texts reflect the holistic imagination of this approach and have served to broaden its application across dimensions (e.g. from the security sector to psycho-social wellbeing) and deployments (e.g. from Mozambique to Tajikistan). Much of this literature is itself located within the liberal tradition set by Deutsch, Burton, Mitchell, Kriesberg and others (Banks 1987: 271). Reducing these approaches to their simplest and thus most promiscuous form, the discourse of peacebuilding presents a transition from war to peace via conflict managements techniques developed within a liberal-democratic environment.

1.1.i. Ethics: neoliberalism, democratisation and the New Agenda

An ideologically-informed ethical stance lies at the heart of any form of representation, even one which claims to be pragmatic. In the case of democratic peacebuilding the ethics of neo-liberalism configure a particular response to violent conflict. Developing in tandem with George Bush’s hopes for ‘new world order’ and

¹⁰ See, Huntington (1991), O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986), Przeworski (1991).

with Boutros-Ghali's aspirations to a stronger role for the United Nations, it was born amid the latter's *Agenda for Peace* (AfP) in 1992. The 'New Agenda' for the UN emerged from a sense of optimism engendered by the end of the Cold War and its universally accepted 'positives': arms limitation and reduction agreements; the reunification of Germany; the emergence of democratic governments in many countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union; the end of apartheid in South Africa. Furthermore, the UN Security Council sanctioned war against Iraq of 1991 seemed to suggest to some that a new era of liberal relations between members of a genuinely global International Community might be possible for the first time in history.

Inspired by a reductive and teleologically informed reading of these events, the burgeoning optimism of the post-Cold War period was the defining force in the birth of the concept of peacebuilding. In the preface to *Agenda for Peace* Boutros-Ghali exclaimed, 'an opportunity has been regained to achieve the great objectives of the [UN] Charter – a United Nations capable of maintaining international peace and security' (1992: i). A new parlance soon emerged to offer hope of a practicable model for this new-found enthusiasm and optimism. Along with concepts of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace enforcement, was the idea of 'post-conflict peacebuilding'. This involved, in explicitly pragmatic terms:

action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict (1992: 11).

The UN Secretary General suggested a wide range of 'post-conflict peacebuilding' tasks including 'disarming the previously warring parties and the restoration of order, the custody and possible destruction of weapons, repatriating refugees, advisory and training support for security personnel, monitoring elections, advancing efforts to protect human rights, reforming or strengthening governmental institutions, and promoting formal and informal processes of political participation' (1992: 32) Thus, despite its veneer of pragmatism, from its outset, 'post-conflict peacebuilding' was discursively linked to liberal democracy.

I use neoliberalism, in the sense used by Gill (1995), to characterise the ideological and ethical orientation of peacebuilding. Neoliberalism arose as a disciplinary critique of Keynesianism and state socialism and advocates liberal practices of the economy, polity and society modelled on systems most often found in

Western countries. It was born in the field of economics in the work of Milton Friedman and others of the Chicago School of the 1960s. While it was deployed in the 1980s to adjust the management of the global economy and certain Western national economies, a new generation of economists began to advocate that such practices can be fomented in other parts of the world via international interventions and institution-building (Ong 2006). It thus developed from its disciplinary origins to a form of praxis, adjusted and adapted 'pragmatically' in context. Such approaches reflect a liberal-rationalist understanding of human affairs, one which embodies a universalist ethics. This outlook is conveyed paradigmatically by Francis Fukuyama's *End of History* thesis (1992), a crude version of which is implicitly accepted in neoliberal practice. The international community's concepts or 'technologies of governing' (Ong 2006) such as 'structural adjustment', 'good governance' and 'civil society' are born out of these ethics. What I call democratic peacebuilding has variously been associated by Paris with Wilsonian liberal internationalism, the colonial 'mission civilisatrice' and the liberal-democratic peace (Paris 2001 and 2002; Crocker et al 1997: 54-89). Bertram, for example, defines UN peacebuilding in messianic terms.

Designed to address the root causes of conflict, it entails building the political conditions for a sustainable democratic peace, generally in countries long divided by social strife, rather than keeping or enforcing peace between hostile states and armed parties (1995: 388).

Sisk asserts the ethical foundations of this approach in unequivocal terms. 'In sum', he notes, 'there is simply no more just or legitimate way to peacefully manage differences among contending social groups than democracy, however difficult it may seem to move from violent to electoral competition' (2001: 786).

The ethics of peacebuilding have proved remarkably resilient in practice. Despite the difficulties encountered by UN operations in Africa and the former Yugoslavia in the early-1990s, the idea of peacebuilding retained its resonance in the international community. Peace operations, noted Boutros-Ghali in the 1995 supplement to *Agenda for Peace*, require 'a deeper commitment to cooperation and true multilateralism than humanity has ever achieved before.' However, 'progress,' he asserted, had been made with 'no reason for frustration or pessimism' but more 'confidence and courage' on the part of the 'international community' (Boutros-Ghali

1995: 103, 105). Thus, the answer to these critics seemed to be to do more of the same. Consequently, peacebuilding was widened further to incorporate multiple agencies, organisations and agendas. Boutros-Ghali's 'post-conflict peacebuilding tasks' initially focused on formal, structural change through the establishment of democratic institutions, protection of human rights and establishment of the rule of law (1992). Ball's survey goes further in detailing twenty-eight deficits or 'priority' tasks, which are 'simultaneously critically important' in order to establish 'good governance' (Ball 2002: 36-38; Miall et al 1999: 203). But it is simply incoherent to say that 'all' tasks are priorities. Such an approach depoliticises these tasks as universally present in a 'war-torn society', and so overlooks the power relations that underlie them. Those who claim to be pragmatic underestimate the discursive construction of what constitutes 'challenges' and 'solutions'. Such representations postulate an ethical ideal-other which is implicitly understood in liberal-democratic terms.

1.1.ii. Space: universalism and the International Community

Such denials of ethical stances or ideological persuasion, and assertions of pragmatism, seem barely credible unless we consider the claims made about space and time in peacebuilding. Indeed, in discourse, ethics become wedded to space as they are intrinsically connected to who we are and who they are. In some discourses space is understood in terms of territory as in the discourses of the Balkans outlined by Hansen, or at least linked to a sovereign political space as in those of American identity found in US foreign policy by Campbell. However, peacebuilding is different in that it is built around a specifically anti-territorial space and identity; the International Community, a 'boundless political community,' (Hansen 2006: 48) institutionalised most prominently in the UN. The idea of the International Community has been vigorously contested and reproduced among state, intergovernmental and non-governmental actors since the end of the Cold War. Its spaces of reproduction may lie more in a chain of airport lounges, secure compounds and capital city ex-pat social haunts than in any particular territorial configuration. While its neo-liberal ideas may find their origins in 'the West', the international community explicitly seeks cosmopolitan symbols which wed East and West, North

and South – making global space.¹¹ Democratic peacebuilding is deeply connected to this non-territorial identity. As in all forms of identity ‘we’ are reproduced with reference to ‘they’. For the International Community ‘they’ represents the ‘conflict zones’ and ‘warring parties’ which require intervention or mediation to bring them into membership. Thus, although the International Community is non-territorial as such, its representatives have a proselytising zeal to expand to create space in these territories of the other.

However, in tracing International Community practices in the 1990s we find substantial resistance in practice. Peacebuilding was developed in the many UN peace operations of the early post-Cold War years. Issues of state sovereignty were particularly contentious. The post-conflict peacebuilding agenda was institutionalised as the UN Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), a habitual element of UN discourse, and the key legitimating tool for a variety of economic, political and military interventions around the world (Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse 1999). Despite unprecedentedly strong mandates and high hopes, substantial difficulties were encountered in deployments as varied as Bosnia, Cambodia and Rwanda. Somalia perhaps provided the most high profile failure for the new agenda. The United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) had received a revised and robust mandate in 1992 under Operation Restore Hope (Ahmed and Green 1999:122). However, security quickly became the paramount issue for the mission. The US-led United Nations International Taskforce (UNITAF) was charged with peace enforcement and soon identified the priority of subduing warlords, in particular targeting Mohammed Farah Aidid. After eighteen US soldiers and an unknown number of Somali fighters were killed in a 1993 raid against Aidid, the Clinton Administration eventually withdrew and placed strict limits on such multilateral intervention with Presidential Decision Directive 25. This led to the withdrawal of the United States from the position of security guarantor and the eventual expiration of UNOSOM II.

The discursive mediation of these events is illuminating. Despite fundamental problems, peacebuilders were able to reassert universal conceptions of space and statehood over those arguments for the particularities of a given territory

¹¹ The principle of the UN Secretary General being from a developing country, for example, or the policy of ‘equitable geographical distribution’ in the UN are maintained whilst members of the Security Council have a substantial proportion of posts reserved for their representatives, usually seconded from foreign ministries. For a balanced discussion of these issues based on experiences as Under-Secretary-General in charge of Peacekeeping Operations see Goulding (2003: ch.1).

(Heathershaw, 1999). For some analysts, including Ahmed and Green, it was the failure of international actors to engage with 'civil society' that was the problem. 'The central tenets of UN-brokered peacemaking,' they noted, 'are fundamentally different from local peace-making techniques employed in Northern Somalia' (1999: 124). For others, including Virginia Luling, UNOSOM's was a problem of management and tactics: 'a chronicle of muddle, waste of resources, and pointless bloodshed, with the soldiers that had been welcomed as rescuers coming to seem to many of the Somalis as invaders' (1997: 287). Here the failure is characterised by 'us' becoming like 'them' (Heathershaw 1999). However, such conclusions do not question the existence of peaceful pockets of a spatial ideal-other. In both cases the idea of the International Community is reaffirmed, either in terms of efficient state institutions of conflict management (Luling 1997), or 'civil society' (Ahmed & Green 1999).

1.1.iii. Time: peacebuilding and progress

The universalism of peacebuilding inevitably leads to teleological dogma. The discourse constructs a dichotomy where the *peril* of further conflict (the temporal enemy-other of the past) can only be avoided through the *promise* of democratisation (towards the temporal ideal-other of the future). In this sense peacebuilding, clearly inspired by literature on democratic transition (Huntington 1991; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Przeworski 1991), presents a win/lose game with political leaders and their citizens standing at a junction with a choice of two diverging pathways, one of which must ultimately be chosen. With a successful agreement, notes Rupesinghe, 'it is just one small battle that has been won, not the entire war' (1998: 92). By extension, if one battle has been lost this presents no necessary evidence that the war must be too.

While peacebuilding was seen to have an endpoint much further into the future, its starting point was imagined to begin with the entry of the International Community. In the late 1990s, NATO's Peace Implementation Council for Bosnia increasingly assumed sovereign responsibilities, while UN transitional authorities in Kosovo and East Timor took the form of provisional governments.¹² It was assumed, spuriously, that in both cases, 'the UN has stepped into a political and administrative

¹² For discussion of international administration of post-conflict spaces, see Caplan (2002).

vacuum' (Griffin and Jones 2000: 82) – there the spatial enemy-other is conceived in terms of an absence of these rational tasks of government. In consequence the UN has increasingly been called on to take a 'nation-building' or maximalist role – asserting both the right of sovereignty and duty of intervention. While the UN was often far from achieving this in reality, its quest to represent it led to calls for a political and administrative overhaul (ibid).

Importantly, the lengthening of peacebuilding as something which takes place over 'generations' creates greater confusion regarding the measurement of its success. The re-articulation of democratisation to a longer-term perspective makes it increasingly unchallengeable as individual failures are subsumed under a broader meta-narrative of progress. A good example of this is the *Human Security Report* of 2005 which argues for the contribution of the International Community – in particular in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding – to an improving human security environment:

Not one of the peacebuilding and conflict prevention programs *on its own* had much of an impact on global security in this [post-Cold War] period. Taken together, however, their effect has been profound (Mack 2005: 9).

One could argue that it is via ideology of the purest kind that the sum of these rather unpromising parts somehow mystically become a cause of (rather than a correlation with) an overall reduction in the incidence of conflict. A teleologically-informed notion of progress is intrinsic to neo-liberal discourse.

1.2. Variations upon a theme: justice versus order

The ethical, spatial and temporal orientations of democratic peacebuilding are to a large extent shared by two further discourses; those of humanitarianism and statebuilding. Indeed, the inter-textual relations between the three are so voluminous that it is difficult to separate them for the purpose of analysis. Both humanitarian and statebuilding discourse conceive of the temporal ideal-other much further into the future. Dramatic failures in peace operations in the 1990s led to a growing consensus regarding the need to extend the time period required for successful intervention and retain the idea of progress. However, while there is a great deal of overlap between the discourses, statebuilding and humanitarianism offer contrasting emphases in terms

of space, and contending ethical stances of order and justice. While in the 1990s, the international community rushed to 'civil society' as an engine of social justice, in recent years – particularly since the launch of the 'war on terror' – 'statebuilding' has gained new currency among many in the international community, particularly the US Government. In such a way the subject and object of peacebuilding are contested in discourse.

1.2.i. Humanitarianism: peace-as-justice

Peace as justice has traditionally been articulated by radical theorists in contrast to peace as order (Bendana 2003: 18). Galtung's (1975) work on positive peace, as well as other foundational peace studies work such as Azar's concept of 'protracted social conflicts' (1990) and Burton's 'deep-rooted conflicts' and 'basic human needs' (1987) have contributed to the peace as justice tradition. A traditional division in the field between psycho-social and structural peacebuilding work has been ameliorated in recent years as exponents of a justice approach, such as Galtung and Lederach, have incorporated a conception of psycho-social healing into their work (Gawerc 2006: 438). Thus, they have come to focus on 'relationship' (Lederach, 1997) or 'people-to-people' peacebuilding (Gawerc 2006). Two commensurable *peace-as-justice* orientations remain hugely influential in the development of conflict resolution theory and practice; Christian humanism and secular humanitarianism. They are comparable in their presentation of the subject as victim, a largely or essentially benign figure in need of assistance.

Religious groups, including those of a Christian or Gandhian hue, are often among the primary actors in peacebuilding projects (See Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse 1999: 41). Foremost among the exponents of this Christian humanitarian perspective is John Paul Lederach, who acknowledges that his ideas arise from an Anabaptist/Mennonite religious-ethical framework (2003). In his work, Lederach puts at the centre the individual human being in relationship with others (1997: 17). He defines this process as the transformation of 'conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships' (p. 20). Such relationships, according to Lederach, are held together by four 'social energies' – Brother Justice, Sister Truth, Brother Mercy, and Sister Peace. This represents an understanding of peace which he takes directly from

Psalm eighty-five.¹³ Lederach frequently uses biblical verses and references as the inspiration for his writing and reconciliation activities. Rather than advocate grand strategies or institutions, Lederach recommends the creation of social spaces of reconciliation (p. 29). Such spaces are brought about in part by the deliberate action of peacemakers and in part by a divinely inspired meeting of minds which is explored in most detail in his latest work, *The Moral Imagination*. 'Transcending violence,' he contends, 'is forged by the capacity to generate, mobilise, and build the moral imagination' (2005: 5). Moral imagination is defined as, 'the capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not exist' (p. 29). Such Christian humanism conceives of the ideal-other as local communities or the 'grassroots' where transformation towards new, more just and merciful relationships, takes place over generations not years. It has spawned numerous peacemaking interventions at a local level, particularly from Christian peace churches.

The contribution of Christian non-violence is downplayed in contemporary secular practice which takes place across a variety of, often multi-faith, contexts. However, these religious foundations arguably provide the genealogical roots to the values and moral zeal to peacebuilding which, while often unacknowledged by secular practitioners, is reflected in its evangelical character and ethics. Much of both Christian and secular humanitarian writing represents the means of engagement in peacebuilding as being through 'civil society', which is 'glocal' (global and local) in character (Carnegie Commission 1997: 9).¹⁴ The idea of 'global civil society' acts to limit the spatial distance between donor and recipient by simulating the existence of essentially similar groups, with essentially similar problems and motivated by essentially the same values, all over the world. It thus represents diversity in the International Community and actively fosters a cadre of polyglot cosmopolitan peacemakers. Moreover, the concept is imbued with a 'critical' quality, conjuring up an image of the Habermasian public sphere promoting equitable debate and holding government to account. Humanitarianism is most strongly represented by the international NGO community with its centres in London and New York.

¹³ Psalm 85 (King James Version) reads: 'Truth and Mercy have met together, Justice and Peace have kissed'. See Lederach (2001).

¹⁴ The Carnegie Commission (1997) was one of the first major reports to suggest a key role for 'civil society' in conflict prevention, arguing for the strategic advantage of non-governmental actors in becoming aware of and responding to conflict.

Humanitarianism, and its subject of civil society, has proved a popular alternative with donors when state-centred approaches have fallen out of favour. The high-profile failures of the early-1990s in Africa and the Balkans, led to substantial criticism of the UN and third-party intervention more generally (See Barber 1997; Luttwak 1999). Within the International Community such criticism has been absorbed and, for many, led to an increased interest in ‘civil society’ approaches through NGOs. If the danger was that through heavy-handed state-led intervention we may be seen as invaders and thus risk becoming like ‘them’, the solution is found by locating and working with ‘they’ who are like ‘us’. Such people and organisations, it was increasingly imagined, were found among ‘civil society’ rather than ‘states’. Thus, as I have explored elsewhere, the negative experiences and ‘lessons learnt’ of Rwanda and Somali led to attempts to engage more at the ‘grassroots’, with ‘civil society’, and avoid ‘state-centric’ approaches (Heathershaw 1999). Suddenly ‘multi-track diplomacy’¹⁵ and ‘local capacities for peace’ (Andersen 1999)¹⁶ became *en vogue* in international discourse. Much of this literature was pulled together by Kaldor (2001) to make a distinction between ‘new’ and ‘old’ wars.¹⁷ New wars require new approaches, it is argued, at the level of ‘civil society.’

The elasticity of the idea of ‘civil society’ brought humanitarian peacebuilding into the mainstream. This was exhibited in an emphasis on the role of the military in humanitarian operations from the mid-1990s (See Slim 1996), and the massive expansion of the role of international NGOs and their local sub-contracting partners in post-conflict settings (Heathershaw 1999: 13-15). However, the relational character of peacebuilding found in Lederach’s work remains only notionally in much work to build civil society as contextual approaches are usurped with generalisable models focused on SMART targets. Such models deprive civil society of its political potential. The contextual/communitarian versus universalist/cosmopolitan debate was recast in international discourse, in terms of transnational versus international (or, more accurately, inter-state) conceptions of universal space. The spatial ideal-other

¹⁵ For a specific discussion of the need for multi-track approaches in Africa, in the light of Rwanda and Somalia see Cousins (1996). For advocacy for multi-track diplomacy in general see, Crocker et al (1999).

¹⁶ Andersen’s approach became very popular in policy communities and spanned numerous policy papers seeking to operationalise its approach for NGOs. See, European Platform (1999).

¹⁷ For a critique of Kaldor’s dichotomy see Kalyvas (2001).

of ‘global civil society’ underpins the humanitarian conception of transnational space. In its most critical forms humanitarianism demands the taming of power politics for humanitarian ends as in Kaldor’s hope for a ‘robust peacekeeping’ where the key questions become ‘whether the capacity for regulating violence can be reinstated in some way on a transnational basis and whether barbarism can be checked by an alert and active cosmopolitan citizenry’ (Kaldor 1998: 107-109).

The most significant recent text from a secular humanitarian perspective, which has explicitly challenged the mainstream democratisation approach’s ambiguity with regard to state sovereignty, is the Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), *The Responsibility to Protect* (R2P).¹⁸ Like statebuilding, humanitarianism represents sovereignty as conditional, and seeks to push the frequency, duration and extent of intervention beyond that implied by democratisation by including the responsibilities to prevent, react and rebuild (ICISS 2001: xi). However, it places emphasis first on the protection of the individual, rather than the constitution of a system of sovereign states. ‘State sovereignty implies responsibility,’ the report notes in its first basic principle, ‘and the primary responsibility for the protection of people lies with the state itself’ (p. xi). Furthermore, R2P determines the international space as one represented most legitimately by the United Nations rather than a state or states which claim to act on the part of the ‘international community’ (p. 9).¹⁹ It demands a just cause based on the prevention of ‘large scale loss of life’ and ‘large scale “ethnic cleansing”,’ and adapts the principles of Augustinian just war as the basis for military intervention (p.xii). This secular humanitarian thinking differs from the non-violence tradition represented by Lederach. It is an ethical ideal-other conceived of in terms of the pursuit of just ends.

Such assertions echo the approach of international aid agencies and especially the ICRC which lays claims to neutrality and impartiality in its interventions. Criticism of this stance has led humanitarian thinkers to restate ‘neutrality’ in terms

¹⁸ ICISS was established by the Canadian Prime Minister, Jean Chretien, in September 2000 in response to Kofi Annan’s challenge to the UN General Assembly to unite on the question of ‘humanitarian intervention’ following the Kosovo military intervention of 1999. See Chandler (2004: 60).

¹⁹ The commission in fact avoids using the term of ‘humanitarian intervention’ in order to respond to the concern of self-styled humanitarian relief agencies that the term humanitarian is being militarised by such military interventions.

of 'do no harm' (Anderson, 1999). Baron notes that both versions represent a 'humanitarian ideology' which produces a 'nonsensical apolitical discourse' (2004: no pagination). However, he goes on, far from being the antonym of politics, humanitarian neutrality 'oozes politics' in its call for a normative response in the name of the vulnerable (ibid.). Humanitarians, he argues, should be prepared to make a political argument:

Humanitarianism exists because as humans we, or some of us, are not prepared to accept a world where suffering and basic human needs go unheeded – humanitarianism is a normative project. Work intended to bring about a situation of reduced suffering is a political project because philosophically it involves a decision about what the good life ultimately involves (ibid, no pagination)

This problem is indicative of a tendency of humanitarian perspectives to reduce the political to the inter-personal via anthropocentric analogy. The ambiguity of this 'good life' is what gives humanitarianism its fungibility and breadth. However, the focus on justice for the individual sets humanitarian peacebuilding apart from other discourses of intervention. Gawerc, for example, after considering radical and political realist critiques of 'people-to-people' peacebuilding, notes, 'in many ways, it comes down to whether conflict groups trust each other with regard to the purpose of integrative/cross-cutting ties' (Gawerc 2006: 461). Yet this reduction is a discursive move. Humanitarian peacebuilding is thus a (largely unacknowledged) *political* discourse for the protection and restitution of individuals and communities through civil society.

1.2.ii. Statebuilding: peace-as-order

Despite the growing strength of the spatial ideal-other of 'civil society' in the peacebuilding discourse of the mid-1990s, the International Community was reasserted in terms of mutual recognition for state sovereignty. In apparent retreat to a minimalist reading of peacebuilding, Boutros-Ghali reaffirmed, in the supplement to *Agenda for Peace* of 1995, that, 'respect for [the State's] fundamental sovereignty and integrity are crucial to any common international progress' (Boutros-Ghali 1995: 103, 105). Thus, the idea of a space of the International Community remained ambiguous, torn between transnationalising and internationalising trends.

Advocates for state-building insist on the latter track, prioritising the pursuit of the spatial ideal-other of the sovereign state, understood as part of a community of nation-states. This *peace-as-order* approach (Banks, 1987) eschews attempts to prioritise ‘civil society’ via a conservative or realist discourse of politics. Explanations of this kind of incremental political development bear resemblance to those of a further related body of literature – that of modernisation. Modernisation in turn shares significant ground with democratisation and involves many of the same theoreticians. Samuel Huntington in an earlier influential work, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, utilises an explicitly conservative understanding of political development where modernisation is the institutionalisation of power relations. His 1968 study begins,

The most important political distinction among countries concerns not their form of government but their degree of government. The differences between democracy and dictatorship are less than those countries whose politics embodies consensus, community, legitimacy, organisation, effectiveness, and stability, and those countries where politics is deficient in these qualities (Huntington 1968: 1).

Such order-based explanations of change relegate social justice or wider political participation to matters of secondary importance.²⁰ Modernisation as an approach to development is less popular today in the West than it was forty years ago. However, many similar ideas, and some of the same authors are popping up today to advocate an approach for ‘nation-building’ or ‘state-building’.²¹

The enemy-other for this relocation of peacebuilding is the ‘failed state’. A failed state, to state-builders, who are most often so-called political realists, is an environment much like international anarchy. Cohen et al’s influential article argued that the degree of anarchy, or ‘the lower the initial level of state power, the stronger the relationship between *rate* of state expansion and collective violence’ (Cohen et al 1981: 905). Hence ‘peace’ requires a state which is relatively strong and strengthening, illustrating the interdependence between ending violence and making

²⁰ Although the consolidation of democracy (two turnovers) would seem to require wider political participation, democratisation – according to Huntington (1991) – can be considered successful short of such participation.

²¹ The futility of attempts to achieve a single, commonly accepted definition of the concept are illustrated here by the inability to even come to a single, commonly accepted name for it. On this point of the slipperiness of the concepts, thanks are due to Scott Kofmehl of LSE whose draft dissertation chapter, ‘The limits and responsibilities of post-9/11 U.S. foreign policy in post-conflict state-building’, and subsequent discussions have informed this sub-section.

states. The discursive development of 'statebuilding' and its subject of the 'failed state' intensified in the early-1990s. Helman & Ratner (1993) and Zartman (1995) used the notion to explain the crises of this period. In 1994, the CIA funded a multi-year, multi-disciplinary research programme named 'The State Failure Task Force' (see Call 2006). Yet following the failures of the early-1990s, and the retreat of *Supplement to Agenda for Peace*, 'state failure' was cited less in the discourse. However, through the late 1990s it continued to have influence through the introduction of a security sector reform agenda into development, as discussed below (see Chanaa 2002).

In the twenty-first century statebuilding has enjoyed a second wind. As Call observes, it was the 9/11 attacks which, 'drew attention to state failure, bring 'failed states' into the top tier of US security interests' (2006: 20-21). This is an interesting example of how a pre-existing yet somewhat dormant signifier can be seized upon to explain a new and shocking political event and thus rise to underpin a new discourse. As a Republican presidential administration hit by an attack which it interpreted as emanating from a non-state network centred in Afghanistan sought to make sense of what had happened and what might be the objectives of response, the notion of 'failed state' became a convenient and flexible trope in the 'war on terror'. The subsequent 2002 National Security Strategy identified 'failing' states as a source of insecurity and terrorism (USA 2002: 1). Thus the academic idea of the 'failed state' has been incorporated in the grand narratives of policy-makers, and the laboratory tests in Afghanistan and Iraq under the mantra of the 'war on terror' (See Khalilzad 2005; Tripp 2004: 545-558). In this context, statebuilding is often labelled as 'nation-building' (Chesterman 2004: 114).

By 2005, statebuilding and its analytical enemy- and ideal-others of 'failed' and 'sovereign' states had risen to be the dominant theme of peacebuilding discussions and had developed a substantial academic, policy-making and even popular literature. The number of research projects aimed at identifying variables and 'measuring' the capacity of the state or state sovereignty in quantitative and qualitative terms proliferated. Some authors seek direction from literature on democratisation (Call 2006: 20-21). One project measured state sovereignty with a quantitative index in order, to 'allow an overall assessment to be made of whether the multiplicity of interventions by a wide array of international actors is closing or widening the sovereignty gap' (Ghani et al 2005: 5). This notion of 'sovereignty gap'

exhibits an objective understanding of what the state should be. 'As more states converge towards sustainable and enduring state structures,' the authors note, 'the commonality of their goals and practices would also help to build trust among different states' (p. 9). Such 'objective' conceptions of the state bear much resemblance to the Western or neo-liberal model of the sovereign state (p. 9).

The ethical ideal-other of statebuilding is ambiguous. Despite a conservative peace-as-order orientation, the emergence of a contemporary discourse of statebuilding has sought to incorporate much of the liberal ethics of peacebuilding-as-democratisation. This development is best understood in light of the influence of 'neo-conservative' ideas in the United States, particularly after the 9/11 attacks, and the meeting of minds between ostensibly conservative and social-democratic administrations in the US and UK. For example, former US Ambassador to Afghanistan and current Ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad, defines US efforts in Afghanistan under this mantra as the effort to 'establish a legitimate political process and rebuild state institutions' (Khalilzad 2005: 1). Similarly, a recent book by Francis Fukuyama defines the process of statebuilding, defined as, 'the creation of new government institutions and the strengthening of existing ones' (Fukuyama 2004). Military force is seen as intrinsic to this process, as in Dobbins' definition, 'to use military power in the aftermath of a conflict to underpin an enduring transition to democracy' (Dobbins 2003-2004: 87). US government and military representatives have come to use the label 'stabilisation and reconstruction' to describe this process (Scowcroft and Berger 2005). In 2004, the Department of State established a new Office of the Coordinator of Reconstruction and Stabilization to manage these efforts. This was endorsed by Presidential Decision Directive 44 in December 2005. Moreover, despite being a state-centred approach, statebuilding provides a paradox by offering an even stronger challenge to the principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs than that implied by democratisation and humanitarian discourses. Respect for state sovereignty is thus contingent on the maintenance of a political order where 'terrorists' are suppressed. Statebuilding thus remains an extremely problematic discourse whose practices and ethics are constantly questioned by those who draw attention to how it encourages sectarianism and captured resources (Tripp 2004).

1.2.iii. Inter-textuality, 'pragmatism' and peacebuilding

While these three discourses are separable, performing differentiated temporal, spatial and ethical ideal-others, they are in no sense independent from one another. Humanitarianism and statebuilding, whilst articulated against one another, are both strongly interdependent with democratic peacebuilding. They are often explored in the literature on peacebuilding in terms of *bottom-up* and *top-down* dynamics based on, respectively, the concepts of ‘civil society’ and ‘good governance’. For example, Prendergast and Plumb argue that, ‘there needs to be, alongside the top-down implementation of the peace agreement, concurrent bottom-up processes aimed at constructing a new social contract and healing societal divisions’ (2002: 327). Both humanitarianism, most notably through R2P, and statebuilding, through recent American writing on ‘nation-building’, have sought to refocus the subject of peacebuilding. However, in the policy-focused circles of the international community the further clarification of peacebuilding demands the hegemonic incorporation of contrasting orientations into a synthesised concept of peacebuilding.

This process is both inter-textual and dialectical, where substantial differences are reconciled in the hegemonic representations of the international community. Indeed those involved in interventions explicitly disregard any theoretical bias or ideological bent to their work, claiming simply that it is pragmatic; an application of what works. The *Brahimi Report* of 2000, for example, attempted something of a discursive re-joining of military and humanitarian intervention through the notion of interdependent peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Accordingly, ‘force alone cannot create peace; it can only create the space in which peace must be built’ (UN 2000).

A more substantive example of the inter-textuality among basic discourses is found in the debate around Security Sector Reform (SSR). The debate had two stages. The first was the incorporating of the language of security by non-governmental actors into humanitarian discourse; this launched the concept of SSR in the 1990s and made security a humanitarian issue. SSR thus became a conceptually credible representation of the hauling of security issues onto the humanitarian agenda. The German Development Assistance Agency (GTZ), with reference to the UN Development Programme (UNDP), equated SSR with ‘guaranteeing human security’ as well as ‘national security’ – an approach which has also been adopted by the OSCE (Chanaa 2002: 27). Jeong, casts SSR as ‘public security’ – ‘not only to control violence but also to solidify positive peace that centres on the protection of human dignity’ (2005: 74). The merging of security/development was a fleetingly powerful

discourse. ‘Packaged so neatly,’ Chanaa notes, ‘it was easy to present, attracting not only attention, but also considerable material support’ (2002: 27). Moreover, the focus on governance made it an explicit part of a neoliberal agenda on peace and development. The 2000 Disaster Assistance Committee report of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) noted that SSR involves ‘the transformation of this sector so that it is managed and operates in a manner that is more consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of governance’ (p. 28). Since 9/11, however, a second stage has ensued where SSR has been re-understood once more in terms of statebuilding where it can be achieved only via the development of strong central institutions.

Pragmatic peacebuilding: ‘In larger freedom’

Similar attempts to incorporate the three discourses of the International Community are prevalent in major international reports such as the *Human Security Report* (HSR) and R2P. The best example of this is the Report of the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A more secure world: Our shared responsibility* and the complementary ‘In Larger Freedom’ (ILF) agenda.²²

The report places the state as the primary subject of peacebuilding but maintains the ideal of the universal space of the International Community, where a universal model of state sovereignty must be adhered to in order to preclude international intervention.

The case for collective security today rests on three basic pillars. Today’s threats recognise no national boundaries, are connected, and must be addressed at the global and regional as well as national levels. No state, no matter how powerful can by its own efforts alone make itself invulnerable to today’s threats. *And it cannot be assumed that every state will always be able, or willing, to meet its own responsibility to protect its own people and not to harm its neighbours* (UN 2004: 1 emphasis added).

While the report’s agenda included collective security in its broadest sense, one of its headline conclusions was the proposal for a Peacebuilding Commission, ‘whose task’, wrote Kofi Annan in the foreword to the report, ‘would be to help states make a successful transition from the immediate post-conflict phase to longer-term

²² The phrase ‘in larger freedom’ derives from the UN Charter: that the UN was created, ‘to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights’ and ‘to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.’

reconstruction and development' (UN 2004: ix). According to the report this requires member states of the UN, 'to be much more forthcoming in providing and supporting deployable military resources' especially in sending 'peace enforcement' and 'peacekeeping' troops to support peacebuilding (p. 5,70). It also entails a greater focus on the security sector and particularly demobilising combatants, 'the single most important factor determining the success of peace operations' (p. 72).

This text represents an emerging peacebuilding meta-discourse which attempts to reconcile the various ethical, spatial and temporal ideals represented in the three discourses outlined above. As such the report seeks to please everyone – both humanitarians who demand that the sovereignty of the individuals must be placed above the sovereignty of the state, and statebuilders who believe that juridical sovereignty can be overlooked in the case of 'failed states.' It is thus highly interventionist. The Peacebuilding Commission is envisioned as a part of the UN system in order 'to identify countries which are under stress and risk sliding towards state collapse' (p. 83). 'Today,' the report notes, 'we are in an era where dozens of states are under stress or recovering from conflict, there is *a clear international obligation to assist states in developing their capacity to perform their sovereign functions effectively and responsibly*' (emphasis added, p.83). If institutionalised, the Commission would shift the UN further away from principles of sovereign consent and blur the distinctions between peacebuilding and peace enforcement. The report amounts to the clearest case for a two-tier system of sovereign states since nineteenth century advocacy for colonialism.

Such texts represent a discourse of pragmatic peacebuilding. This inter-textual construct obfuscates the distinction between humanitarian and military interventions which was at one time inviolable in the International Community. In this sense interventions such as Kosovo foreshadow pragmatic peacebuilding discourse, as captured in Beck's notion of it as an example of 'militaristic humanitarianism' (Žižek 2000: 56-57). The irony that war is engineered in order for peace to be built is apparently lost on political leaders who are able to declare peace when embarking on war. Since Kosovo, many liberal public intellectuals have come to the defence of such 'humanitarianism'. Michael Ignatieff, for example, defends the use of military intervention and 'imperial policing', which he observed in Afghanistan, in an explicit advocacy of what he calls 'Empire lite' – another idea which relies heavily on processes of inter-textual relations. He argues:

Imperialism used to be the white man's burden. This gave it a bad reputation. But imperialism doesn't stop being necessary just because it becomes politically incorrect. Nations sometimes fail, and when they do outside help – imperial power – can get them back on their feet. Nation-building is the kind of imperialism you get in an human rights era, a time when great powers believe simultaneously in the right of small nations to govern themselves and their own right to rule the world (Ignatieff 2002: 26).

Such interpellation of discourses, where military-led statebuilding comes to be portrayed as humanitarian, and humanitarianism as necessarily requiring military intervention, illustrates the intense inter-textuality of peacebuilding. It also indicates the hegemonic position of the International Community as a legitimate agent of diverse acts of intervention. By early 2006, three years into the Iraq war and 'nation-building' venture, 'peacebuilding' lives on but its essential quality is as hard to distinguish as ever. It retains a trinitarian character, being at times one 'peacebuilding' and at times three (see figure 4).

Fig.4: Summary of discursive development of peacebuilding, 1992-2005

Discourse of peacebuilding	Spatial ideal-other	Ethical ideal-other	Temporal ideal-other	Discursive antecedents	Practical antecedents	High point(s)	Example texts/authors	Low points
<i>Democratic</i>	(State) institutions: 'structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace' (AfP, 1992)	LIBERAL-DEMOCRACY: Human rights, Constitutionalism, Private property	Short-term 'post-conflict' progress	'Wilsonian'/Idealist writing; Democratisation literature (1970s/1980s)	End of cold war	Early-1990s	AfP (1992)	Somalia (1992-1993), Rwanda (1994), Bosnia (1992-1995).
<i>Humanitarianism</i>	'Communities', 'Grassroots', '(Global) civil society',	JUSTICE: Neutrality & Impartiality; Human dignity	'Pre-', during and 'post-conflict' progress	Constitutions and programmes of non-governmental agencies; Christian non-violence literature	Failures of Rwanda, Bosnia and others in early 1990s	Mid- to Late-1990s	Anderson, 'Do No Harm' (1999); Lederach, 'Building Peace' (1997)	911 attacks (2001), rising concern over 'terrorism'
<i>State-building</i>	'Sovereign states'	ORDER: Government, Rule of Law, Anti-Terrorism	Long-term 'post-conflict' progress	Political realist writing; Huntington 'Political Order..' (1968) and early developmentalism.	911 attacks	circa. 2002-2004	US National Security Strategy (2002); Fukuyama, 'State-building' (2004)	Iraq (since 2003); Afghanistan (since 2004)
<i>Pragmatic peacebuilding</i>	Inter-textually-produced: top-down and bottom-up	Inter-textually-produced: neoliberal, technical-rational (denial of contestedness of ethical standpoints)	Inter-textually-produced: derived from inter-textuality: shift to longer-term	Democratic, humanitarian, and statebuilding discourses	Failures of democratic, humanitarian, and statebuilding practices	At moments of increased inter-textuality: circa. 1995; circa. 2000; 2004-	Supplement to AfP (1995); Brahimi Report (2000); Paris, 'At Wars End' (2004); ILF (2004), HSR (2005)	At moments of the domination of one discourse and reduced inter-textuality

1.3 Critical discourses: peacebuilding and the nature of hegemony

Peacebuilding is increasingly challenged by critical discourses emanating largely from the academy. While these discourses have grown in popularity among students and academics they have had limited or no effect on the character of any of the three discourses outlined above. This final section of the chapter briefly outlines these critical discourses before going on to explore the hegemonic character of 'peacebuilding', and the nature of alternatives and resistance. It sets the stage for chapter three where the nature of 'peacebuilding' under hegemony is explored.

1.3.i. Moderates and radicals

Critical discourses on peacebuilding have sought to highlight its liberal bias, but have been divided between moderates and radicals on how to respond.

The Moderate Critique: the liberal bias

It is readily apparent that peacebuilding as an analytical concept is 'elastic' (David 1999: 25-41) or even amorphous. The application of liberalisation of both the economy and political system to post-conflict spaces takes place without substantive empirical evidence of success. In this vein, ten years after Boutros-Ghali's seminal *Agenda for Peace*, Lund argued for an evaluation and consolidation of existing approaches to peacebuilding.

A line needs to be drawn between peacebuilding and maximizing the various levels of social, economic and political development possible in a given society. Otherwise, if the term peacebuilding becomes a synonym for all the positive things we would want to include in development in order to reduce any and all of societies' ills, it becomes useless for guiding knowledge gathering and practical purposes (2003: 28).

Paris, in a widely cited article, 'Wilson's Ghost', argued that peacebuilding is guided by the doctrine of liberal internationalism while 'transplanting western models of social, political, and economic organisation into war-shattered states' (Paris 1997: 56). In a later paper (2002) he portrayed peacebuilding actors as pursuing a 'mission civilisatrice', making an explicit parallel to colonial claims to legitimacy. A standard operating procedure for liberalisation – involving competitive elections and

a reduced role for the state in the economy – was adopted, with very modest success and many setbacks, in all fourteen cases reviewed by Paris in his book, *At War's End* (2004). His work contributes to a weight of evidence suggesting that actual post-conflict cases can rarely be made to fit the criteria for successful peacebuilding (See Doyle and Sambani 2000). He found that interventions had generated 'unforeseen instabilities' and 'destabilising side effects', something that he argues results directly from the rapid liberalisation pursued under peacebuilding (Paris 1997: 73).

While Paris's earlier work was critical of peacebuilding, his actual challenges have been consistently moderate. He calls for an adjustment of peacebuilding practice in terms of 'institutionalisation before liberalisation' (IBL), thus 'avoiding the pathologies of liberalisation, while placing war-shattered states on a long-term path to democracy and market-oriented economics' (Paris 2004: 235). He characterises this as the thought of 'classical liberal theorists' rather than 'Wilsonianism' (p. 235). This approach is remarkably similar to Huntington's developmentalism of the 1960s (Dodson 2006: 246), particularly in its notion of waiting until conditions are ripe for elections, and in this sense it reflects and furthers an overall discursive trend towards statebuilding. At the same time it places the promotion of 'good civil society', 'control hate speech' and 'adopt conflict-reducing economic policies' as priorities, much like humanitarian peacebuilding (2004: 179-211). IBL thus is an attempt at a new synthesis which, in terms of both its content and synthesising function, is comparable to the pragmatic peacebuilding texts reviewed above. Whilst none of these recommendations are new or untried, the overall product does represent a further qualification of neo-liberal temporal and spatial conceptions. This attempt to rescue and reform peacebuilding – rather than dismiss it as irrelevant or thoroughly reconceptualise it – characterises the moderate criticism of many pragmatists who are orientated towards policy prescription and work directly with the international community.

The Radical Critique: a hegemonic discourse, a 'technology of governing'

Moderates continue to argue that a reformed or refined peacebuilding is a legitimate endeavour – that the model can be adjusted. Paris outlines and sensibly refutes a number of objections to his IBL thesis including 'endless-mission', 'culture-of-dependency' and 'excessive-costs' (2004: 207-211). However, there is a bigger

objection to his thesis: the manner in which Paris develops his argument serves to replicate the very hegemonic ideology he seeks to critique and replace. Radical critics argue implicitly or explicitly that even a reformed peacebuilding is a problem-solving exercise which is, in various direct and indirect ways, re-productive of violence. International interventions largely reflect the donor priorities incorporated in the pragmatic peacebuilding meta-narrative outlined above. They advance both hegemonic interests and ideas. Radical analysis raises two fundamental points about peacebuilding: that as a liberal-rational model it has been superseded by 'exceptions' negotiated by power-political decisions; and that it is, thus, fundamentally ineffective at achieving its ostensible, progressive goals.

Radicals explore how power and politics linger behind knowledge and action. Claims to 'universality' mask a particular narrative of the powerful which serves to preclude or make implausible any challenge to their fundamental assumptions and positions of privilege. As a discourse of positivism, peacebuilding is based on assumptions of objectivity, instrumental rationality, and the need to find a parsimonious and 'operationalisable' core. It is an approach which assumes a 'natural' and universal model of the liberal polity – and 'end of history' which is above or beyond ideology. However, Mouffe's work (2000), embarking from Schmitt's critique, has revealed the inherent paradox of such models. With the meeting of the liberal and democratic traditions it requires that the liberty of every individual is contained by the equality of all. Vice-versa, it implies that the equality of all is limited by the freedom of individuals. Accordingly, it necessarily entails an ongoing decision-making process to determine where restrictions on freedom and equality might lie – Schmitt's exception. 'Human rights', 'equality of opportunity', the 'constitution' and other such givens of liberal democracy are constantly subject to negotiation and hence power relations (Mouffe 2000: 5). For Schmitt this tension is the seed of liberal democracy's implosion. He argues in favour of a stronger political executive not hamstrung by over-attentive application of the rule of law; politics is found where the exception forces and thus enables the sovereign to decide. For Mouffe, it means that working democracy must be based on a realisation of its inherently political content; it must be more transparent about decisions which are continuously being made on behalf of the people (p. 5). In terms of international intervention, it is argued, this problem of the exception is accentuated as those subject to intervention are especially lacking in the autonomous organisation that

might allow them to consent to international decisions (See Doucet 2005). In particular, the capacity of global civil society to serve as a vehicle for such autonomy is deeply questionable (Amoore and Langley 2004).

This leads to the second issue. As is shown by Paris and others, in spite of the diverse locations in which they are enacted, international strategies are remarkably similar, and yet often extremely dysfunctional. By Ong's account, neoliberalism produces 'technologies of governing'. International peacebuilding practices are one example of this; they overlook particular and individual features through the imposition of generalities and best practices (2006: 9). They do so because peace builders, in designing and reproducing 'solutions', must take for granted the global political context which constituted the given conflict in the first place. This *inter alia* leads to inefficacy. Anthropological studies of peaceful societies where there has been an absence of physical violence or limited structural violence find almost nothing in common between these 'traditional' societies other than their smallness (Fabbro 1978). Homogenising processes of modernity and globalisation have, to a certain extent, incorporated such communities into larger societies. However, universal politics and policies are, contends Dryzek, 'ineffective when confronted with complex social problems', imposing narrow forms of policy analysis and limiting the insights of social science (1990: 5, 7). In their 'objectivity' and 'rationality', and their faith in universal applicability of programmes, peacebuilders fail in their ostensible aims of making hegemony more stable (statebuilding), liberal-democratic (democratisation) and just (humanitarianism).

1.3.ii. Three critiques of the common peace

Critical theorists of various hues challenge the claim that peacebuilding is and should be an objective process, in the sense that it is something we do to them. In a discussion of critical approaches to conflict resolution, Fetherstone outlines three bases for critical alternatives: firstly, a Gramscian *counter-hegemony*, where alternative visions are articulated for mass opposition to hegemony; secondly, Habermas's *post-hegemony*, an intersubjective dialogue between a community of actors; finally, a Foucauldian understanding of *anti-hegemony* as a diversity of resistances to power, none of which can rule over others (Fetherstone 2000: 190-217). Each of these alternatives to peacebuilding posits different understandings of

hegemony and resistance. However, much like in peacebuilding discourses, it is often difficult to locate texts exclusively in one of these camps. The demarcations below are thus cautionary and for the purposes of clarity.

Counter-hegemony?

Counter-hegemonic theories of peacebuilding would argue that, as a representation of existing power relations, peacebuilding is conservatism in the guise of transformative radicalism. Hegemony, according to Gramsci, is based on 'the spontaneous consent given by the great majority of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the predominant fundamental groups' (Cited in Fetherstone 2000: 210). Counter-hegemonies or resistances are localised around particular agendas of the poor which seek to challenge the status quo. As Fetherstone notes, 'a counter-hegemonic project aims to build a consensus among non-dominant groups which articulates an alternative direction for social life' (p. 210).

Counter-hegemonic approaches are most popular among radical analyses of peacebuilding. Duffield has identified the functions of many political conflicts as arising from market incentives provided by globalisation, and the extra-legal economic activities they encourage (2002). Chandler's work, from a more agent-focused perspective, has also shown how power-holders seek to prevent and repress counter-hegemonies via positive representations (2004:72). Discursive and practical constructions of counter-hegemony may emanate directly from communities of the impoverished and can be promoted in radical discourse. For example, peacebuilding is, to Bendaña, an instrument of repression adopted by multilateral organizations and governments which is challenged by the social movements of the 'South' (2003: 18). However, the extent and character of hegemony is paramount in Bendaña's key question: 'how can multiple, differentiated local discourses across the globe approximate each other in order to achieve some degree of collective counter-hegemonic power?' Such power may be in the form of protest movements for fairer trade or minority rights. However, it is apparent that counter-hegemonies are not always 'emancipatory', and can take the form of, for example, nationalism or religious fundamentalism. If formed, a 'collective counter-hegemonic power' might be the basis for revolution, or a renewal of conflict – a form of conflict

transformation which is unlikely to build peace. Moreover, such approaches again risk replicating hegemony, not countering it.

Post-hegemony?

Post-hegemonic conceptions of peacebuilding oppose the imposition of new dogma. They argue that peacebuilding reasserts and reconstructs hegemonic understanding of identity and society, and in doing so fails to account for the pluralities of political participation and identity. One school of critical thought on peacebuilding which might be characterised as post-hegemonic in orientation is radical feminism. Radical feminism argues that peacebuilding fails to account for built in gender assumptions which reify masculine and feminine roles. Identifying women in conflict, feminist theorists often find them in their given feminine role of victim – as refugees or sufferers of physical and sexual abuse (See Brocke-Utne 1989). In peacebuilding, women, even more so than in broader political life, are *officially* absent from conflict resolution, while *unofficially* they are often local peacemakers and responsible community leaders. This serves to re-empower masculinity and resolves conflict with inbuilt gender-bias.

Thus, radical feminists provide a fundamental but in itself insufficient critique of peacebuilding by opening up one dimension of hegemony and contention – gender. A more comprehensive critique is forwarded by constructivists and critical theorists. Dryzek (1990), from a Habermasian ‘communicative rationality’ perspective, explores the ‘authentic public sphere’ (p.21), something beyond the Popperian open society, where ‘the design of social and political practices can be itself a discursive process in which all relevant subjects can participate’ (p.41). Like many critical theorists he finds ‘real world approximations’ of his discursive designs in the new global social movements such as the environmentalist, feminist, and peace movements (p. 49).

However, others are sceptical about the relevance of groups making universal appeals to processes of democratic institution-building in particular contexts (Pouligny 2000). Such analyses acknowledge that local ‘civil society’ – its social space, rituals and institutions – is created over a period of time which may be significantly longer than that afforded by an international programme, for example. Moreover, civil society does not exist in a vacuum but is subject to politics and is

itself political. The potential for new peace movements, grassroots and ‘civil society’ organisations to carve out for themselves autonomy in the public sphere is severely restricted under the drive for order domestically and internationally. Often ‘critical’ insights and actors are incorporated by the broader peacebuilding framework under the guise of ‘civil society building’, ‘peace education’, ‘gender workshops’, and other such notions currently popular with donors. Arguably, feminist alternatives were mainstreamed in such a way with the passing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of 31 October 2000, which has led to quotas for the proportion of female personnel in peace operations and other such ‘radical’ action. In such ways critical problems are ‘solved’.

Post-hegemonic conceptions of peacebuilding seem to offer most hope for a critical alternative. However, we must ask to what extent egalitarian modes of relationship can be insulated from the political dynamics of hegemonic incorporation. Fetherstone acknowledges this problem of space – of the public sphere – but holds out hope for the recovery of rationalism in peacebuilding:

It is clear that an ‘ideal’ space for communicative action cannot exist, but that does not lessen the validity of opening space for the necessarily incomplete and imperfect possibility of reconstructing the basis for meaningful and peaceful social existence (2000: 213).

In this sense, we may need to look for challenges to hegemonic discourses at the margins.

Anti-Hegemony?

A Foucauldian anti-hegemonic understanding of peacebuilding takes a non-essentialist route out of this impasse. Foucault offers a critical conceptualisation rather than a theory and undertakes an historical analysis of the process by which people are made subjects. As such, ‘while the human is placed in relations of production and signification, he is equally placed in power relations which are very complex’ (Foucault 2000: 9). A Foucauldian analysis involves the exposure of specific rationalities in order to uncover their origins and contingent nature. Foucault notes that the real challenge of our days is, ‘to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualisation which is linked to the state’ (p. 16). The implication of this is to look at both symbolic and material dimensions when

considering how conflict and peacebuilding are (re)produced by power relations in the Foucauldian sense of 'productive power' (Emin Salla 1998).

While this kind of power is productive it is also limited and contingent. Outside of the field of peace and conflict studies, Ong (2006) reflects on the mutations of neoliberalism occurring under this simulacra of universal performance. Her foci are *neoliberalism as exception* (i.e. the numerous, selective, often hidden adaptations made by the executors of interventions) and *exceptions to neoliberalism* (made by those who are made subject to interventions as they accommodate, adapt to and even resist). 'Neoliberalism,' she notes, 'as an ethos of self-governing, encounters and articulates other ethical regimes in particular contexts' (p. 9). This creates a certain inter-subjectivity in the constitution of the political spaces of peacebuilding – 'a constellation of mutually constituting relationships that are not reducible to one or the other [particular modality]' (p.9). In this sense, 'the neoliberal exception in governing constructs political spaces that are differently regulated and linked to global circuits' (ibid.). Similarly, despite the noble efforts of Paris and others to achieve a new model, peacebuilders necessarily make exceptions and meet exceptions to their designs as they encounter others.

To consider how, despite these inconsistencies, a veneer of universality is maintained we must look at discourse and other forms of representation. François Debrix's *Re-Envisioning Peacekeeping*, has followed this Foucauldian tack to demonstrate how peacekeeping's function of 'riot control' is re-presented the International Community. The UN he notes, 'must represent world order in its absence' (1999:16). Debrix thus regards UN peacekeeping practice as simulation where the world body presents a façade, a form without substance, 'that would have to be ideologically filled in order to obtain signification and a sense of purpose' (p. 6). Peacekeeping is not hegemonic in that it achieves or represents its ostensible goals – rather, it is hegemonic because it is able to simulate them. In this sense Debrix argues,

Peacekeeping does not represent (disciplinary) liberal ideology. Once again, it simulates it. Peacekeeping depicts a fantasy space or dream land of international affairs (where peacekeeping operations are successful, governance is realised, etc.) inside which claims to neoliberalism on a global scale can be made (Debrix 1999: 216).

The work of Debrix in particular illustrates that peace operations while failing in any given practical case can, via simulation, reproduce hegemonic ideas and identities of 'disciplinary liberalism'. In its performance it claims legitimate authority for the idea of the International Community, as totemically represented by the UN. As such, despite the good intentions of many at the UN and the pragmatic compromises made by practitioners in the field, the function of simulation is to preclude the practical attainment of neoliberal goals.

Forms of discourse and representation serve to obscure this hegemonic role, portraying peacekeepers as neutral and impartial (Pugh 2004). Their power in achieving this indicates that discourse and representation are central not just in concealing reality but *creating* it. Pugh affirms Debrix's focus on the discourse and 'the appropriation of language' as the means by which policy is shaped, outcomes simulated and interventions legitimised. He adds to this the importance of 'televisual drama, a musical theatre of poverty reduction played loudly in public spaces to mobilise mass support' (Pugh 2006: 8) and visual stimuli which 'lend depth, and thrill' to the construction of neoliberal order (2003: 104-112). 'Peace operations,' he contends,

Contribute to an ideology of world order that reflects and legitimises neoliberal values, state-centrism and the economic structure of the international system. In sum, peace operations are part and parcel of the globalised "liberal peace" (p. 110-111).

Pugh (2006) highlights how different modes of intervention – development, peacekeeping, peacebuilding – are increasingly conflated in discourse. This is the most radical critique of peacebuilding as it claims that peacebuilding does not wish to provide the functions of neoliberal world order but its 'simulacra'. It is productive of objectives, policy, and expressive platitudes but not of a functioning world order along the lines which it imagines and simulates. As such, notes Pugh, peace operations are practised in 'chaos', in the sense of 'a crisis managed context in which development is securitised to facilitate hierarchy and fortune' (2003: 110-111).

1.3.iii. Uncommon peace: the practical limits of hegemony

If neoliberal practices merely serve to simulate peacebuilding, what can we say about how political power is being rearticulated locally and globally under such international interventions? The failure of peacebuilding to achieve its ostensible aims raise serious questions not just about its purpose but about the nature of hegemonic ideology and thus hegemony itself. Moreover, ‘hegemony’ – whether in its realist (Wohlforth 1999: 5-41), liberal (Ikenberry 2004), or various critical guises – needs qualifying with a sense of the limits of hegemonic structures, the constrictions on the power of dominant actors, and finally the extreme objections to neoliberalism, particularly outside the West. To understand the limits of hegemony, we must take an uncommon step beyond authors working on peace and conflict.

James C. Scott (1990) has developed an approach to discourse analysis which compares and contrasts ‘public’ and parallel ‘hidden’ transcripts in order to probe the extent of the hegemony and the character of resistance. He demonstrates that ‘subordinates in such large-scale structures of domination nevertheless have a fairly extensive social existence outside the immediate control of the dominant’ (p. xi). Through the tactics of ‘hidden transcripts’ inaccessible to the powerful, the subordinate disguise their forms of avoidance of domination. He finds in social and political relations not the sincere following of the ideology of the powerful, but a *performance* of the roles inscribed by public discourse, for example, that of peacebuilding. As Scott notes,

The dominant never control the stage absolutely but their wishes normally prevail. In the short run, it is in the interest of the subordinate to produce a more or less credible performance, speaking the lines and making the gestures he knows are expected of him (p. 4).

A hidden, alternative reality – ‘an extensive offstage social existence’ – is sustained by what Scott calls ‘the infrapolitics of subordinate groups’ (p. 21). His later work (1998) highlights how a large array of attempts to impose ‘high-modernist’ ideologies – from Soviet collectivism to Brazilian city-planning – onto various societies which have been defeated by the *mētis* (‘cunning’ and ‘practical knowledge’) of locals who are able to subvert their masters’ grand designs. This argument may be extended to peacebuilding which, while lacking the explicit authoritarianism of many of Scott’s examples, nevertheless exhibits many of the features of high-modernism.

To make this argument against prevailing understandings of hegemony, Scott tackles directly the Gramscian or neo-Marxist argument that it is the 'false consciousness' of subordinates which produces hegemonic incorporation (1990: 73-74).²³ By contrast, he argues, it is often when subordinates and/or elites sincerely believe the (disciplinary) ideology of the regime that they may begin to grasp its falseness, its distortions, deceptions and, in Debrix's terms, simulations. Scott distinguishes between 'thick' and 'thin' versions of false consciousness, the former of which portrays subordinates as enthused by hegemonic ideology.

The thin theory of false conscious, on the other hand, maintains only that the dominant ideology achieves compliance by convincing subordinate groups that the social order in which they live is natural and inevitable. The thick theory claims consent; the thin theory settles for resignation (Scott 1990: 72).

He argues that the thin theory is 'eminently plausible' but 'fundamentally wrong' (p. 72). The falseness of all false consciousness theory is shown, first and foremost, by the fact that it does not diminish social conflict as Gramsci claimed. Scott offers instead a 'paper-thin theory of hegemony' which allows 'limited and stringent conditions under which subordinate groups may come to accept, even to legitimate the arrangements that justify their subordination' (p. 82).

Here Scott may be too dismissive of the prospects for the legitimation of hegemony. According to Lukes' reading of Scott, a paper-thin theory of hegemony requires that the subordinate have at least some opportunity for escape from their lowly position, and that coercion and oppression are 'more covert and less severe.' Yet the cases Scott considers, as he himself acknowledges, being situations of slavery, serfdom and other forms of bondage, do not have these characteristics (Lukes 2005: 129-130). Lukes convincingly argues that Scott provides one strong explanation for quiescence (in cases of illegitimate domination), but this does not mean that in cases where domination is less than total some kind of legitimate consent can exist. 'In short,' he contends,

There is no reason to view Scott's compelling account of the ingenious tactics and strategies of dissembling, ever-watchful slaves, peasants and untouchables and the like as *refuting* either the thick or the thin theory of hegemony. It does not show that

²³ Lukes (2005), in a slightly different way, seeks to account conceptually in terms of a third dimension of power for this false consciousness. This third dimension, is 'the power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things' (p.28).

there is not also widespread consent and resignation, in both pre-modern and modern societies, that is best explained as viewing these as both expressing and resulting from relations of power. The response of the wise Ethiopian peasant, who bows deeply to the great lord and silently farts is, after all, only one of many (p. 131).

Therefore, thick (Gramscian), thin (Habermasian), and so-called paper-thin accounts of hegemony together offer a range of explanations for 'peace' which opens up the possibility that, through discourse analysis, we can assess the degree of hegemony and the nature of legitimacy which a given peace has accrued. These insights, together with the relational focus of Lederach's work (1997; 2005), form the basis for a re-consideration of 'peace' and 'peacebuilding' in chapter three. We must look not for one peace but many.

Conclusions

This chapter has set the stage for this investigation by probing the functions of peacebuilding as a basic discourse which is invoked in terms of the identity of the International Community. As such it represents universalist conceptions of space, progressive notions of time, and individualist ethics. However, further study of the discursive variations of peacebuilding revealed two somewhat contending variations on this theme: humanitarian and statebuilding discourses of peacebuilding. The contrasts between these discourses indicate the essentially contested and shifting nature of the international approach, while their conciliation under grand narratives of pragmatic peacebuilding exhibits the homogenising functions of neoliberal hegemony. However, critical discourses reveal the extent of the ambiguities and uncertainties of the grand narrative, in providing public counter-, post- or anti-hegemonic analyses of peace. This raises the possibility that peacebuilding²⁴ actually entails the simulation of 'peace' and that hegemony is constantly being resisted as it is being resigned to.

Critical understandings may be most helpful in demarcating the hidden assumptions which limit thinking and action in terms of peacebuilding. Moreover, resurrecting a general model is a hopeless task which will only simulate another version of a single common peace. Thus we must move beyond the idea of a single peace and towards theoretical and methodological approaches that allow us to grasp

²⁴ I will use the shorthand 'peacebuilding' to refer to 'pragmatic peacebuilding' and international practice in general in subsequent chapters. This will allow some parsimony and analytical clarity as I seek to contrast international with local and elite discourses.

the diversity of experiences of peace of contesting individuals and groups in post-conflict spaces. This insight paradoxically requires that we reconsider and, to a certain extent, reinscribe an ambiguously constituted 'peacebuilding', in order to improve our understanding of the power relations behind building peace. This kind of finely-drawn analysis can only meaningfully be pursued in context. It is to that task that this dissertation now turns.

CHAPTER TWO

War and Peace in Tajikistan

Every established order tends to produce (to very different degrees and with very different means) the naturalisation of its own arbitrariness.

– Pierre Bourdieu (cited in Scott 1990: 75)

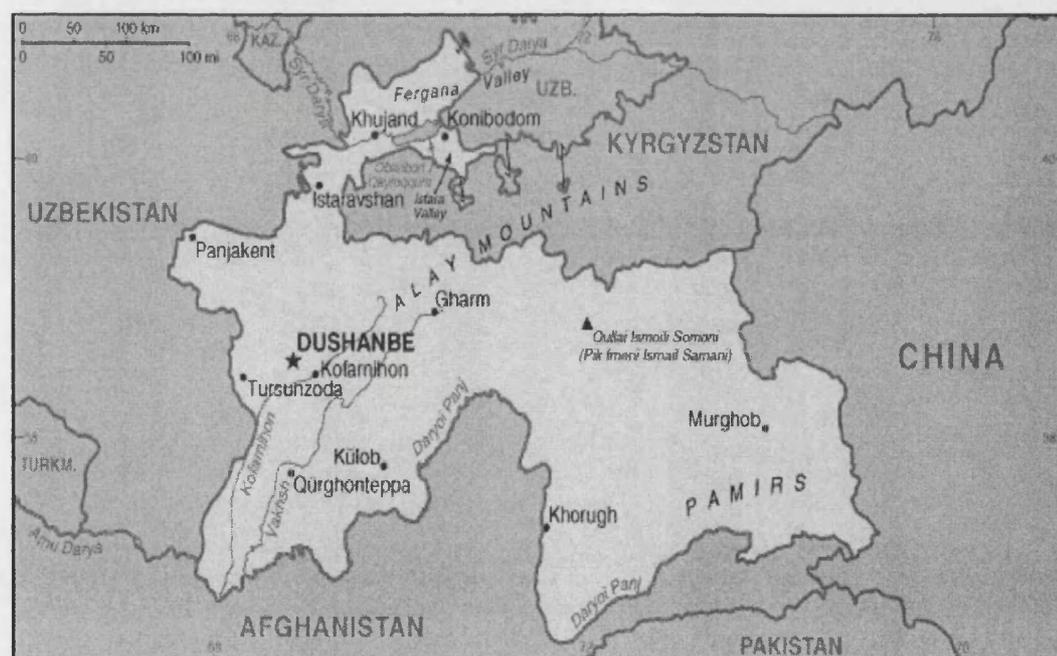
From 1992, not long after the dissolution Soviet Union, the new Central Asian state of Tajikistan was devastated by several years of civil war. While the most intense fighting had ended by 1993, a peace agreement was not signed until 1997, and significant political violence continued sporadically until 2001. The war and its consequences have dominated Tajikistan's short history. The 'Kulobisation' of Tajikistan (Akiner 2001a), where cadres from the southern region of Kulob came to hold most of the key positions in government, notwithstanding the power-sharing mechanism of the General Agreement, was confirmed by Emomali Rahmonov's victory in 1999's fraudulent presidential elections.

This chapter introduces the Tajik case in terms of its historical background and the key academic literature that has sought to explain it. Parts one and two provide an historical sketch with a narrative of the war and peace process, from the Soviet period to today's peacebuilding interventions and evolving peace. It is shown that while violence was not inevitable, these dramatic events evolved in such a way that war inherited 'peace', and vice-versa. Thus, Tajikistan has fundamentally digressed from the path set for it by peacebuilding interventions. Part three engages with literature from the dominant and marginal academic discourses of the social sciences. It argues that rather than viewing the conflict as a particular kind of war and peace we must try to get inside the inter-subjective construction of post-conflict discourse and space, in terms of its multiple dimensions and intrinsic ambiguities. Better analyses of the war and peace process offers ways to understand hegemony, legitimacy and complexity in Tajikistan, and provide signposts on the road of research design.

2.1. The War

The citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan, a poverty-stricken state in Central Asia, have endured much violence and suffering since the state was created on 9 September 1991. During the Soviet Union, as the poorest republic of the USSR, Tajikistan was structurally dependent on Moscow. In 1991, the republic received a higher proportion of its revenue from the Union budget (47%), and maintained a greater inter-republic trade deficit, than any of the other republics (World Bank 1992). The demise of the Soviet Union rapidly and unexpectedly transformed the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic into a sovereign state. The Soviet era had brought relative stability to a country with no history of nation-stateness. However, within months of independence the new state of Tajikistan entered a 'swift and seemingly inexorable descent into a brutal civil war' (Rubin 1994: 207) which led to over 50,000 deaths and more than 250,000 refugees.

Fig.5: Basic Map of Tajikistan²⁵



There is no definitive account of the conflict; many of the details are contested or obscured by the limited or partial records of the events of the time. As such it is particularly difficult to provide a single version of the conflict in its complex and

²⁵ Available from: University of Texas at Austin library (<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/tajikistan.html>), accessed: 15/10/06

varied social and political dimensions. Nevertheless a brief sketch will be attempted here. I explore the links between violence and the political context which serve as background to the more detailed review of interpretations of the conflict in the latter half of the chapter.

2.1.i. The Origins of War

This sub-section constructs a narrative of events leading up to the war through the identification of three key antecedents to conflict. All of these contributed to the nature of opposition to the government.

Antecedents to conflict

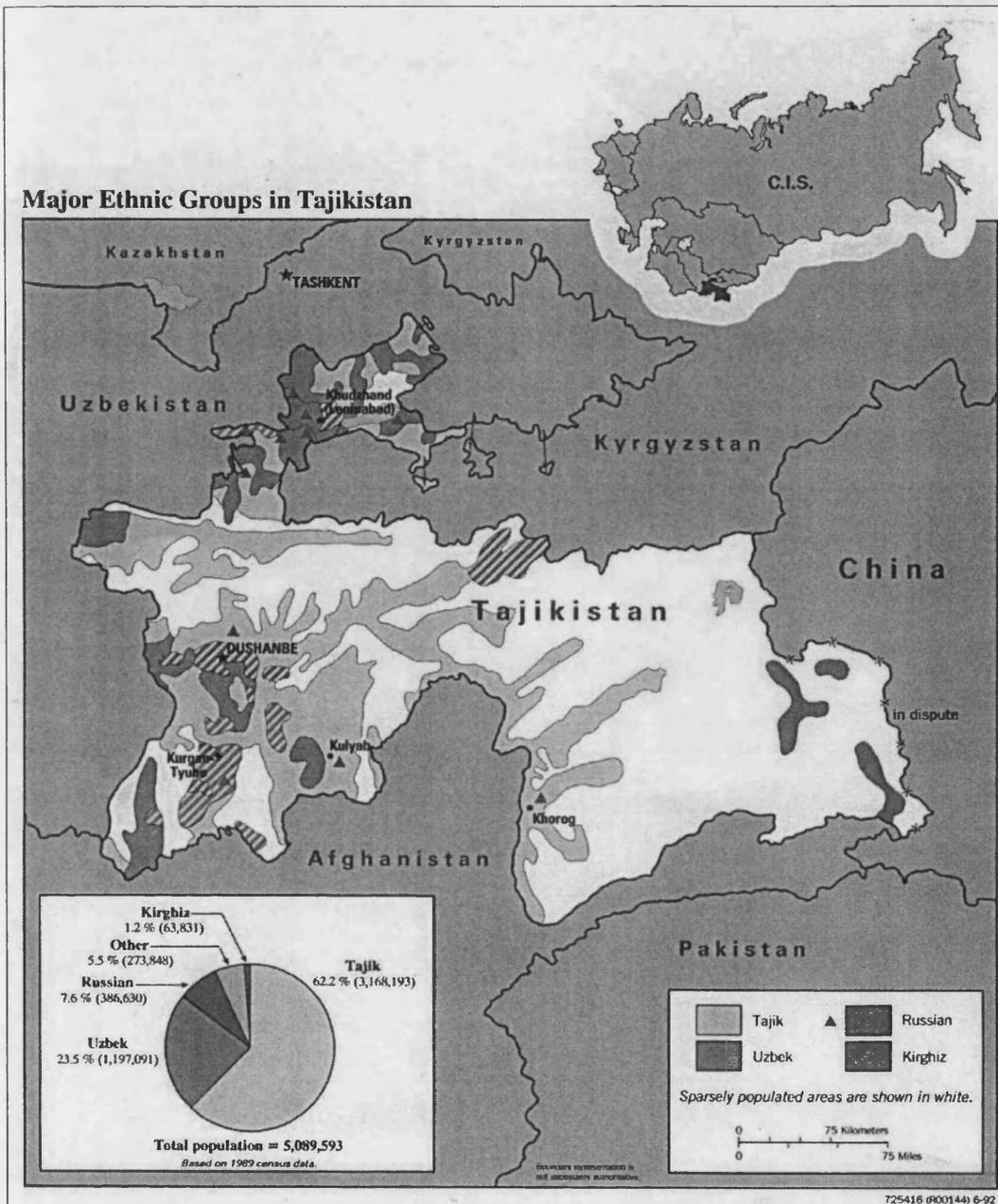
Regional cleavages were hugely important in shaping the republic's politico-administrative development in the Soviet-era and its subsequent descent to violence. Usmon charts how resistance in the mountainous regions to the expansion of Soviet rule in the 1920s and 1930s had led to 'uneven development' in favour of the north, and forced migrations of those from the eastern mountainous regions of Gharm and the Pamirs to the south to provide agricultural labour (Usmon 2004). The map below (figure 6, p.71) hints at the complexity of Tajikistan's demographics at the end of the Soviet Union. Indeed, the actual picture is more complicated than witnessed here with numerous minorities excluded and regional and ethnic diversity obscured. For example, the Tajik areas identified in the eastern part of the country are populated by Pamiri people professing Shi'a Ismaili Islam and speaking various dialects related to, but distinct from, Tajik.

However, it was the political-geographic dynamics of the Republic which shaped the nature of the conflict. Traditional communities were recomposed during the Soviet Union into hybrid regional solidarity groups (Roy 2000). This created a political culture of regionalism (*mahalgaro'y* [Taj.]). Although Dushanbe had become the capital of the Tajik SSR, the northern province (Leninabad oblast, now Sugd), which had developed under Russian imperial power, provided the majority of the governing elite of the republic, including all the first secretaries of the communist party between 1946 and 1992. Moreover, it was its economic and politico-administrative links with the southern cotton-producing region of Kulob which allowed northern elites to maintain their domination of the political life of the

republic. This development was precipitated by a series of population movements that had the effect of crystallizing the regional identities which would be the vehicles for conflict during the civil war. Among the most important of these forced migrations were the relocations of Tajiks from the central mountain ranges of Karategin (Gharm) and Darvaz to Khatlon's cotton-producing valleys between 1925 and 1940, and from the Pamiris between 1947 and 1960.

Along with creating animosity towards the authorities, the organization of these groups into their own *kholkozes* made integration of migrants and indigenous peoples more difficult. Most of these migrants, particularly so-called 'Gharmis', consequently avoided integration and held firm to regional identities; it was from these groups that the opposition drew much support during the conflict (Akiner 2002). Tajikistan went through numerous regional realignments reflecting the ascendancy of the Leninabad-Kulob alliance over politically weak regions such as Gharm and the Pamirs. However, Pamiris, Gharmis, and Russians continued to hold key posts and the idea of Leninabadi domination obscured a more complex set of power relations based on patronage networks both within and between regional elites, and with power-brokers in Moscow. In such an inconsistent form regional identity emerged during the Soviet period and remained the key vehicle for the mobilisation of armed groups during the conflict. The divisions of the conflict between (to generalise) Uzbeks, Khujondi Tajiks, and Kulobi Tajiks on the one side and (to generalise again) Gharmi Tajiks and Pamiris on the other, can be comprehended not by reference to feudal, tribal or ancient antagonisms of any kind, but rather through an analysis of politico-administrative development during the Soviet period (Rubin 1998).

Fig.6: Map of Tajikistan by ethnic groups, 1992²⁶



A second way of viewing the conflict is as a battle of ideas. Many Tajiks consider the pluralism prompted by *glasnost* and *perestroika* as the primary cause of conflict. The reforms initiated by Gorbachev following his election as General Secretary on 11 March, 1985 provoked a variety of reactions within Tajikistan, ranging from hopes for greater autonomy to disappointment at the vagueness of early announcements (Hammer 1998). By the autumn of 1989 it was clear that

²⁶ Available from: United Nations in Tajikistan: (http://www.untj.org/files/maps/tajikistan_ethnic_92.jpeg); accessed: 15/10/06

substantive reform was in process with a new constitution on the cards that offered the possibility of a greater decentralisation of power to the republics. Around this time reformist groups with wide-ranging aims began to be established by journalists and academics. However, as across the region, reformers faced a recalcitrant party elite, detached from both wider elite and popular concerns. *Yavaron i Bozsozi* ('Friends of Reconstruction and Reconciliation'), the first significant group, was established in 1988 demanding the establishment of Tajik as a state language and making vague calls for economic and political liberalisation. It was soon banned by the authorities (Jawad & Tadjbaksh 1995: 11). Nevertheless other movements sprang up, some quickly quashed, others managed to attract reformist cadres from the party and bureaucracy. The media, particularly television, accelerated and intensified the clash between conservatives and reformers, providing a medium of popular dissemination of reformist discourses and other forms of representations (Khodjibaeva 1999). Riots in February 1990, led by criminal gangs and ostensibly triggered by rumours that Armenian migrants were being given preferential access to state housing, led to 25 deaths and 800 injuries (Auten 1996: 199-212; Nourzhanov 2005: 115) and sounded a warning bell that significant dissent could be mobilised against the regime.

A third way of interpreting the conflict is simply as an elite power-political struggle: a ruling faction confronted by an opportunistic opposition (Rubin 1998; Akhmeov 1998). Akiner, for example, comments that over-reliance on a regionalist explanation, 'obscures the fluidity and ambiguities of the situation' and 'underestimates the power of individuals to influence events' (2001a: 21). The opposition eventually incorporated a wide range of ideological positions, and a coalition of different regions, which was later divided between National-democratic and Islamist blocs. The former included the cultural-nationalist grouping *Rastokhez* ('Renaissance'), formed in September 1989, and the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT), founded in August 1990, both of which were led by a nationalist intelligentsia and included elites representing a number of local areas disenfranchised or marginalised in government.²⁷ Added to these groups were the Pamiri organisations, foremost of which was *La'li Badakhshon* ('Ruby of Badakhshon'), also created in 1990, which gained support from their home region in

²⁷ *Rastokhez* was founded by Tohir Abdujabbor from Asht in Northern Tajikistan and the DPT by Shodmon Yusuf from Darvaz.

striving for greater Badakhshoni autonomy and allied with other groups in March 1992. Many of these groups found considerable support from governmental figures, thus blurring the government/opposition dichotomy. For example, during the war the head of the Ministry of the Interior (MVD), Navzhuvanov, a Pamiri and *La'li Badkhshon* supporter, brought the main portion of MVD troops to the 'opposition' camp to fight against the government.

Precursors to conflict

All three of these antecedents were constitutive of opposition and mobilisation against the government. Regionally- and ideologically-based movements, further complicated by family ties, inter-marriage and bitter personal rivalries, embodied a once legitimate power arrangement whose breakdown defies any monocausal explanation. This complexity is witnessed by the case of the most enduring opposition group. After its formation on 6 October 1990 by a number of young clerics, including Said Abdullo Nuri, the future leader of the opposition, *Hezb-e Nahzat-e Islami* ('Islamic Renaissance Party', IRP) became the most significant opposition movement. The party declared itself part of the all-Union IRP which had been formed at a conference in Russia in the summer of that year. Nevertheless the party was rooted locally with its origins in both 'parallel'/unofficial and 'official'/state-sanctioned Islam as they had evolved in Tajikistan through the 1970s and 1980s (Atkin 1995). While many younger members of the official clergy joined the IRP, others – often older – opposed the politicisation of Islam and supported the conservative hard-liners in government. The official Muslim Qazi, Akhbar Turajonzoda, at first straddled the two groups. He did not join the IRP, and sometimes publicly criticised its radicalism, but nevertheless stayed in regular communication with the organisation and moved closer towards it in the face of government intransigence (Gretsky 1994: 17, 19). The IRP aimed to gradually introduce Islamic law into Tajik society rather than pursue an immediate and fundamental overhaul of the state. The Party drew widespread support from so-called 'Garmi' people from the Darvaz and Karategin (now Garm) areas of the Rasht valley, and particularly Garmi migrants who were forcibly moved into the Vakhsh valley area in early Soviet-era migrations.

While the Tajik republic declared its sovereignty (on 25th August 1990) an overwhelming majority of its citizens and leaders favoured the continuance of the Soviet Union as demonstrated by the March 1991 Union-wide referendum.²⁸ However, the political status of the republic was being dictated by events in the Slavic and Baltic republics of the USSR. In the summer of 1991, the coup against Gorbachev (20th August) took events out of the Tajik leadership's hands. Kakhar Makhamov, the First Party Secretary and President of the Republic and a hardliner, openly backed the coup and following mass demonstrations against him in Dushanbe was forced to step down. Amid continuing protests against the republican government, the Supreme Soviet of Tajikistan reluctantly declared independence on 9 September 1991 – the twelfth of fourteen former Soviet republics to do so. Presidential elections were organised for 27 October 1991 and pitted a conservative former First Secretary, Rahmon Nabiev, from the Khujond region, against a joint candidate of opposition parties, Davlat Khudonazarov, a well-known film director from the Pamirs. Nabiev won with 57% of the vote, amid allegations of vote-rigging and much rancour between regional elites, to become the first President of the independent Republic of Tajikistan. The strength of the opposition to Nabiev nevertheless indicated that the new state was divided along regional lines.

At this point, with conflict latent but as yet few deaths, devastating civil war was surely not inevitable. Chatterjee characterised this period as 'the fight for legitimacy' (1995:8), yet the role of key national elites and outside powers during this time served to escalate the situation rapidly towards widespread political violence. Conciliating agents were conspicuous by their absence. Here the role of individuals and contingencies, must be emphasised and serve as a reminder that no theory of war-starting or war-ending provides anything close to a complete account. Firstly, both Nabiev (who had an alcohol problem and is said to have 'vacillated, making concessions to the opposition and then withdrawing them' (Akiner 1998: 36)) and Kenjayev (the speaker of Parliament, who used a televised address to attack Navjuvanov for exceeding his powers) played key roles in the descent to war. Secondly, the extreme turbulence of this period of history meant that many foreign policy miscalculations were made. In February 1992, for example, US Secretary of State, James Baker, visited Tajikistan seeking to assert American influence in the

²⁸ A widely-quoted figure is that 97% across the Central Asian republics voted for the continuation of the USSR (Soucek 2000: 262).

new region. He had a long private meeting with Nabiev where it is thought he offered US support if Tajikistan resisted 'fundamentalism' and Iranian influence. He refused to meet leaders of the opposition (p. 36). These understandable policy choices may have precipitated the descent to violence and represent a failure to grasp the increasing illegitimacy of the government.

2.1.ii. Civil War

The high-intensity period of the conflict itself occurred over a year of tumult, 1992, and, I argue, can be divided into five phases; militarisation, ignition, governmental breakdown, battle for power, and government recapture. The first of these, January-May 1992, the period of *militarisation* and even criminalisation, has inappropriately been called 'the Tajik Spring' (Tadjbakhsh 1993). Nabiyev and Kenjayev, increasingly illegitimate, were recalcitrant against the opposition amid growing protests. Whilst a variety of issues of political and economic reform provided an umbrella for national-democratic and Islamic wings to coalesce in opposition to the government, for many of those attending the demonstrations the immediate motivations were born in livelihoods and the search for sustenance (Whitlock 2003: 156, 160). The demonstrations, taking place in Shahidon square in Dushanbe, continued consistently for 50 straight days and coincided with the rise of the *mujahedin* and the fall of the old Soviet-backed government of Najibullah in Afghanistan. Whitlock claims this parallel was emblematic in the eyes of many opposition demonstrators who saw Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, an ethnic Tajik and the leader of the northern *mujahedin*, as a national hero (p. 158-9). Militant and criminal figures within and without the opposition movements, who were already forming militia, were becoming stronger within both sides. The IRP, for example, formed a militia, *Najot-i Vatan* (Salvation of the Motherland) in late-1991 (Olimova and Olimov 2001, no pagination). The increasingly anxious government made numerous pleas for calm whilst organising pro-government demonstrations at Ozodi square less than two kilometres from Shahidan.

The moment of *ignition* occurred in early May 1992. The Ozodi demonstrators were largely Kulobi and led by Sangak Safarov, a convicted murderer, who would subsequently form the pro-government Popular Front of Tajikistan (PFT) – a coalition of militias based on Kulobi and Uzbek Hissori factions

(Nourzhanov 2005: 116-117). With many thousands on both pro- and anti-government sides matters escalated quickly and dramatically. Thirteen criminal gangs connected with anti-government elites and operating under the collective name of Youth of Dushanbe City (YDC), who had been demonstrating on a third square, Aini, declared war on the government (Akiner 1998: 37). President Nabiev and his advisors consequently took the fatal decision on May 1 to escalate matters by distributing 1,700 Kalashnikovs in Azadi square to Safarov's men; on the very same day, the 14th session of the Supreme Soviet began with a call for the establishment of a tripartite commission composed of leaders from both sides and governmental representatives (Whitlock 2002: 162; Nazriev & Sattorov 2005: 143). In response, opposition leaders mobilised their 'defence groups', which were rapidly-forming in various regions, and secured the support of MVD troops and presidential guards. On 5 May, they launched attacks to take most of the key government sights in Dushanbe and drive the pro-government supporters out of Ozodi square; on the same day the Supreme Soviet was forced to announce a break in its proceedings (Nazriev and Sattorov 2005: 144). With government in chaos, the seizure of the television station may have been most significant as it allowed the opposition to disseminate alternative messages and images, so destroying the last vestiges of state authority (Khodjibaeva 1999: 14). With widespread fighting in the streets, Russian troops, formerly part of the Soviet armed forces, acted to protect Nabiev and mediate a compromise between the two sides. Finally, on May 11, a Government of National Reconciliation (GNR) was announced. Nabiev would remain as President and retain his key ministerial supporters, while a third of posts would go to the opposition.

The Dushanbe violence was the ignition for a period of *governmental breakdown*²⁹ between May and September 1992 as the regime rapidly lost its remaining authority. Very soon the GNR proved unworkable as the regions of Leninabad and Kulob declared they would not take orders from the new government. By July 1992, no security forces remained loyal to the coalition government (Nourzhanov 2005: 114) and fighting spread across the south of the country between

²⁹ 'Governmental' rather than 'state' breakdown is used to capture the removal of one regime without its replacement by another. 'State breakdown' is also a relevant description but this occurred over a much longer period beginning, at least, with independence from the USSR. In 1992 it is more accurate to say that parties were fighting to recapture government than the state as a whole. As part 2 will show, even today the state remains a fractured and inconsistent institution. See also Markowitz (2005, ch.4).

field commanders and their militias (p.112). Such groups pledged their loyalty to a particular region, but ceasefires negotiated between regional leaders were often immediately broken by local commanders. Violence was most intense in and around the town of Qurghanteppa where different regional groups lay side-by-side. By September, Nabiev had lost any remaining support that he had on either pro- or anti-government sides with both the Khujondi-Kulobi dominated parliament and the IRP calling for his resignation (Whitlock 2002: 168-9). On 7 September, while trying to flee from Dushanbe, Nabiev was cornered on his way to the airport by opposition fighters from the YDC and forced to sign his resignation at gunpoint (Nazriev & Sattorov 2005: 345-348).

As Tajikistan was left without a government between September and December 1992, this localised fighting turned into a fourth stage of the war, a fierce *battle for power*. Complete state breakdown was evident across all official fora including television where regional stations ignored Dushanbe and each broadcasted their own contrasting stories of unfolding events, each with their own regional heroes and villains (Khodjibaeva, 1999: 14). Akbarsho Iskandarov, a Pamiri and the Speaker of parliament, formed a new government sympathetic to the opposition but equally unable to end the violence. However, Kulobi and Hissori forces fought back through the PFT and removed the 'opposition' from Qurghanteppa in late September (Akiner 1998: 38). Field commanders loyal to the PFT then began to challenge Pamiri control of Dushanbe, briefly taking the capital on the 24-25 October (Nazriev & Sattorov 2005: 431). While violence continued in the city, the PFT brought much of the south and west under their control. Against these complex developments a form of official politics continued. The 16th session of the Supreme Soviet of Tajikistan opened at the Arbob Kolkhoz near Khujond on 16 November 1992, but was boycotted by many 'opposition' delegates fearful of security (ibid.). Twenty-four of the principal field commanders were present, as were representatives of the governments of Russia and Uzbekistan (Nourzhanov 2005: 118; Whitlock 2002: 177). At the meeting, the GNR was formally removed and Emomali Rahmonov, a Kulobi from the district of Danghara, and former head of a *Sovkhoz* collective farm, was elected Chairman of the parliament and acting head of government. Rahmonov was the candidate of Safarov and the PFT.³⁰ This move reflected not just the

³⁰ Evidence suggests that Rahmonov was initially placed in power to act as a stooge for Safarov's PFT. Rahmonov is from the same mahalla as Safarov in Danghara. He rose from being director of a

political defeat of the ‘opposition’ but a shift in power within the pro-‘government’ coalition from Khujond to Kulob. It was, as Rubin describes, a shift from ‘those who held the factories and party personnel committees’ to ‘those who held the guns’ (Rubin 1998: 129). Despite this, Rahmonov soon received international recognition regionally and internationally, including from the United States, largely due to a fear of Islamic government (Katzman 2002: 59).

The final period of sustained high-intensity conflict, from November-December 1992, was one of *government recapture* as the new faction, only formally led by Rahmonov, established a grip on power. A PFT force of some 8,000 with Uzbek land and air support (Jawad and Tadjbaksh 1995: 16; Horsman 1999: 38-39) stormed Dushanbe driving opposition forces from the city and launching a brutal ‘ethnic cleansing’ campaign against Pamiris and Gharmis (Akiner 1998: 39). The military campaign and its associated persecutions continued down the Vakhsh valley to the south and drove the bulk of the opposition fighters and sympathisers across the border into Afghanistan or eastwards to Badakhshon. The humanitarian situation was exacerbated as over 55,000 houses were burned and tens of thousands of non-combatants (mainly women and children) were forced to flee (Usmon 2004: 245). Chairman Rahmonov meanwhile focused on establishing his political authority in Dushanbe: appointing a cabinet composed of Kulobis, Hissoris and Khujandis; banning opposition parties and much of the media; invalidating laws made by the Government of National Reconciliation; and replacing the Muslim Qaziyat with a new national Muftiat (ibid.). Through its sponsorship by PFT warlords the Rahmonov government had achieved a ‘victory’ but was too weak to comprehensively defeat the opposition (Nourzhanov 2005: 119).³¹ Moreover, despite the deaths of renegade warlords Safarov and Faizali Saidov (in March 1993), Rahmonov was not able to bring PFT warlords – who had supported his candidature – directly under his control (ibid: 118). Outside of the capital intermittent violence continued.

During 1993, the opposition, having been driven out of the country at the end of 1992, re-established itself and challenged the government’s claim to sovereignty.

Sovkhoz to Chairman of the Kulob Soviet in October 1992, after the previous incumbent in the post was killed by Safarov on 28th October. (Nourzhanov 2005: 117)

³¹ Nourzhanov (2005: 119) estimates that the PFT composed warlords and troops to the amount of 20,000.

In Afghanistan, the Islamic opposition regrouped and belatedly consolidated itself politically, forming the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) with Said Abdullo Nuri as Chair and Akbar Turajonzoda as First Deputy and Minister for Foreign Affairs (Nourzhanov 2005: 118). It proceeded to function as a government in exile and by December 1993 had established an official alliance with the national-democratic opposition located in Moscow. For over a year before negotiations began the political conflict was frozen, with large parts of the country outside of government control. From Spring 1993, the UTO launched attacks from Afghanistan, fighting battles with Uzbek-supported government troops in Gorno-Badakhshon (Jawad and Tadjbaksh 1995: 17), and taking significant parts of the Gharm valley. In July 1993, UTO fighters attacked Russian troops guarding the Tajik border, killing twenty-five, and thus signalling that the war would continue (p. 16-17). In addition, ostensibly government-supporting warlords from the Uzbek-dominated region of Hissor and the northern province of Khujond both showed separatist tendencies as the future of not just the Rahmonov government but the Tajik state remained in doubt.

2.2 From War to Peace

Drawing a line between war and peace in Tajikistan proves an impossible task, save for the legal definition that the war ended with the 27 June 1997 General Agreement. However, over twelve years, and three over-lapping periods between 1993 and 2005, one can see the gradual re-acquisition of legitimacy as the new regime was eventually accepted with varying degree of acquiescence at the local, regional and international levels.

2.2.i. Intervention and the Peace Process, 1993-1997

International involvement in the conflict resolution process in Tajikistan involved two at times contending, but more often cooperating approaches: the regional *mirotvorchestvo* ('peacekeeping' or 'peacemaking') approach of regional actors, primarily the Russian Federation, often acting through the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS); and, the 'third party' peace-making and post-conflict peacebuilding of the Western-dominated International Community including, among others, the UN and Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

This thesis affords little space to discuss the pre-agreement period save for the key moments of its beginnings and final success.³²

Russian support was crucial in maintaining Rahmonov in power as Tajikistan fell under Moscow's hegemony. Russia, in some turmoil itself, declared 'neutrality' in the early stages of the conflict. However, its forces provided support for the victories of 'government' forces in November and December 1992, and soon moved into a position of support for the status quo. In addition to the border guards of the Federal Border Service of the Russian Federation (RBF), which were until 2004 maintained along Tajikistan's southern border with Afghanistan, Russia led the way in establishing a small CIS peacekeeping force in 1993. The total CIS/Russian presence at one stage numbered 20,000 troops.³³ Lynch describes how Russian involvement moved from 'unconditional commitment' to 'differentiated peacekeeping' involving, to a limited extent, Central Asian states in a CIS force.³⁴ Both Russia and Uzbekistan also assisted the government in establishing new security forces based largely on PFT remnants (Jawad and Tadjbaksh 1995: 17). The great fear for these governments was that Afghanistan's instability and Islamic militancy could spill over into the CIS region. President Yeltsin declared in 1993 that Tajikistan's southern border was, 'in effect, Russia's,' as he began a policy of consistent support for the Rahmonov government both politically and financially (Cited in Rubin 1998). At this time analysts and some members of the Russian government characterised Tajikistan as a 'protectorate' (Whitlock 2002: 191) or 'Garrison state' (Rubin 1994). But while the colonial analogy became popular, out of the stalemate a conflict resolution process began to develop.

In early 1993 the International Community had become involved on the ground in Tajikistan through the presence of the UN Secretary General's special envoy to Tajikistan. Shortly after, in June 1993, an OSCE centre was set up (See Gorayev 2001). At this time there may have been greater unity between the Moscow and Afghanistan wings of the opposition, who were in regular communication and, argue Jawad and Tadjbaksh, 'worked in uniformity' (1995: 18), than there was

³² For a comprehensive review see the edited volume of Barnes & Abdullaev (2001).

³³ The agreement to create a CIS peacekeeping force was made on 24 September 1993 between the governments of Russia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. See Orr (1996).

³⁴ The Russian government made several unsuccessful attempts to have that force recognised by the UN. Lynch argues that, having become an active party to the conflict, their involvement had 'nothing in common with traditional or contemporary international practice' (Lynch 1999: 171).

within Rahmonov's government which was divided between Khujandi and Kulobi factions. UN-sponsored negotiations in Tajikistan thus began precariously. In the first round of March 1994, a junior minister in the Tajik government met the National-Democratic opposition in Moscow. Both the senior echelons of the Tajik government and the Afghanistan wing of the UTO chose not to take part. Despite a lack of progress in negotiations, Rahmonov – emboldened by the support he received from Russia – chose to push on with elections. On 6 November 1994, in a simulation of democratic consent, the Kulobi Rahmonov defeated the Khujandi Abdullojonov, receiving 60% of the vote in an election which Helsinki Watch (1994) described as 'marred by a climate of fear and flagrant fraud'.

Despite governmental intransigence, crucial signs of movement towards an accord were visible in the background. The beginning of negotiations and the signing of a notional ceasefire had allowed the UN to introduce official observers in December 1994 with a view to 'free and fair elections'.³⁵ Before this, in Moscow, from March 1993, a second-track process of facilitated negotiation, the Inter-Tajik Dialogue, began between junior figures and associates of both sides, and independent representatives of the intelligentsia under the auspices of the non-governmental Dartmouth Conference (Saunders 1999: 9). The dialogue was instrumental in creating some kind of organisational coherence among the opposition and providing the beginnings of consensus across elites (Matveeva 2006; Saunders 1999). However, official negotiations made little progress until developments in Afghanistan provided a sense of urgency for both sides. As the Taliban took Kabul in 1996 both Russia and Iran, who had become significant in the negotiations as a consequence of sponsoring and supporting the IRP, pushed for resolution of the conflict. Breakthrough talks of December 1996 were held in Afghanistan, under Mas'ud's auspices; a ceasefire was agreed and a draft power-sharing arrangement discussed. In addition, by the winter of 1996/97 there was considerable 'war weariness' among Tajiks and the agreement made in Afghanistan had been foreshadowed by the 'Gharm Protocol', a ceasefire between local commanders on 19 September 1996 (See Abdullo 2001; Whitlock 2002: 230-231). The effects of massive unemployment and hyper-inflation (over 2,000% in 1993) meant that

³⁵ The UN Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) was established on 16 December 1994 on renewable 6-month tours of duty as specified by a cease fire signed in Iran on 17 September 1994 and authorised by UN Security Council Resolution 968 (UNSC 1994). UNMOT's mandate was renewed successively until the winding up of the mission in April 2000 and replacement by UNTOP.

underdevelopment and the challenge of 'making ends meet', rather than physical violence, had become the primary threat to survival by this time (Harris 1998: 660-661). While incidents of fighting continued over the winter there was widespread support for the peace agreement among soldiers and civilians.

2.2.ii. Agreement and Implementation, 1997-2000

The package of agreements and protocols constituting the *General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan* was signed on 27 June 1997 in Moscow. A protocol on refugees was to facilitate the return of refugees after 5 years exile in Afghanistan. The military protocol of the agreement provided for a process of Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) of ex-UTO fighters into the armed forces. The political protocol established a basis for power-sharing in national and local government on a 70:30 split between the government and UTO, created a joint Central Election Commission (CEC), and agreed to the lifting of all restrictions on opposition parties following the completion of DDR. The implementation process was to be coordinated by a Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR), composed equally of government and UTO members and chaired by a UTO representative. The CNR would disband after the new parliament was reconvened.

At this stage it is important to assess the impact of the accords on ending violence in Tajikistan. Iji contends that, while the peace agreement was not comprehensive, it did 'put an end to the major armed conflict' (Iji 2005: 189). However, four qualifications need to be made here. Firstly, major military activities continued after the accords, as further significant battles and systematic political violence took place at least until 2001. Secondly, the accords were limited agreements and reached only after heavy international pressure. Hay (2001) notes that the UN mediating team always drafted the initial texts of a protocol, 95% of which was accepted by the parties. According to Abdullaev and Barnes, 'the agreements represented the minimum point of consensus between the negotiators at the time they were drafted and did not attempt to provide a normative blueprint for the future' (2001: no pagination). Thirdly, their content represented an inter-elite 'compromise' which mirrored the dominance of the civil war's victors, the Kulobi factions around Rahmonov. In other words, the winners further institutionalised

their victory by severely restricting the political position of UTO groups, and succeeding in excluding the Khujondi faction. Finally, the peace agreement contained an informal political and economic subtext which divided the (legal and illegal) resources of the country in favour of the Kulobi factions. 'Divvying up the drug smuggling market,' Matveeva remarks, 'was perhaps an unwritten part of the peace agreement, in which both sides had a share' (2006: 20). Nevertheless, while the 1997 General Agreement did not itself resolve the conflict, it became an important symbol of compromise between elites and a crucial foundation for legitimate government. It continues to be affirmed by elites on all sides as the basis for the peace which must continue to be preserved (See Seifert & Kraikemayer 2003).

Implementation of the accords was inconsistent. In keeping with the general agreement, UTO leader Said Abdullo Nuri took charge of the CNR. Strong progress was made on the repatriation of refugees from Afghanistan with the deteriorating condition there and the new optimism in Tajikistan producing both 'carrot and stick' incentives to return. Tens of thousands were repatriated with the assistance of the United Nations (UN Mission of Observers to Tajikistan [UNMOT] and UNHCR) and Russian forces (both border guards and CIS peacekeepers). However, progress was much slower and weaker with respect to the protocol on military issues. The disarmament stage of this process was due to take just two months, with ex-opposition fighters assembling at specified points to deliver their arms to be held in secure depots. In actuality this proved unrealistic. From the early stages of the process the UNMOT officers noticed a 'discrepancy between registered fighters and the weapons returned' (Cited in Conrad 1999: 3). By the end of 1998 the CNR announced the registration of 6,238 opposition fighters and 2,119 weapons handed in; approximately a ratio of 3 fighters for every weapon. In August 1999 the official disarmament process was declared complete, thus allowing for the legalisation of opposition parties, although only a minority of the weapons thought to be held by opposition forces had been handed in. President Rakhmonov stated that, 'no one knows the number of weapons. You [unspecified, probably referring to the Opposition] have hidden them' (Cited in *ibid*: 3). With security limited, pro-governmental commanders remained armed and organised, with areas of Dushanbe divided between them (Chatterjee 2002: 74). Nevertheless the process continued and by March 2000, 4,498 UTO fighters had

been integrated into the armed forces, largely within their own separable units (Abdullo 2001).

Implementing the Political Protocol was an equally troubled process. At a national level the 70:30 split was broadly achieved with *inter alia* Turajonzoda taking the position of first vice-premier and the UTO military commander, Mirzo Ziyoev, appointed to head the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MCHS), a 'power' ministry with its own troops. At the local level, the redistribution of posts was less extensive, heavily complicated by localised loyalties and intra-regional rivalries. Writing in 1999, former US Ambassador to Tajikistan R. Grant Smith noted that,

The government and its strongmen feel they won the civil war and see little need to make more than cosmetic concessions on the power-sharing issue. The UTO field commanders for their part, want to firmly establish their power based in UTO-controlled territory (Smith, RG. 1999: 247).

The process was further complicated by periodic localised outbreaks of violence between warlords and by the re-emergence of a 'third force' which had been explicitly excluded from the official negotiations. Former Prime Minister Abdullojonov, operating from outside the country, established the National Reconciliation Movement with allies from the northern area of Khujond, and predicted the failure of the peace accords due to their lack of support from Khujondis. When the commander of the government's First Rapid Reaction Brigade, Mahmud Khudojberdiev, rebelled against the government and then made an incursion into the north of the country in November 1998, with an attack on Khujond, the country's second city, collusion with Abdullojonov was alleged by the government. Over 1,000 troops briefly occupied the centre of Khujond, the country's second city, before being driven out by a major government offensive involving the troops of Suhrob Qosimov (MVD) and Mirzo Ziyoev (MCHS) who had been on opposing sides before the peace agreement.

Despite numerous crises, momentum in the implementation process was maintained towards presidential and parliamentary elections in November 1999 and February 2000 respectively. Rahmonov's re-election as president with 97% of the vote on a 99% turnout was implausible but was not popularly challenged. Although the IRP had great difficulty in registering its candidate, Davlat Usmon, it was clear that Rahmonov would probably have won anyway by a comfortable margin (Akiner 2001: 59). In parliamentary elections, the President's People's Democratic Party (PDP) won

a clear majority of 36 out of 51 seats, with the IRP – the only opposition party to gain seats – gaining just two (ibid). The elections signified the end of the implementation phase, underscored the dominance of the governing elite, and exhibited a factionalised opposition which was simultaneously ‘included’ within the political system and yet marginalised from real power. A new hegemony was gradually being established under Rahmonov, yet ‘national unity’ remained contingent. As Khodjibaeva noted at the time with respect to national television, ‘the smallest mistake in editorial policy could cause a new explosion’ (1999: 15). This was the situation at the beginning of our period of analysis.

2.2.iii. *Emerging Peace: 2000-2005*

While the 1993-1997 peace process provided a juridical ‘peace’ with the UTO, and the 1997-2000 period extended the empirical ‘peace’ across elite factions (who were now largely either co-opted or controlled by the regime), it was the period 2000-2005 where a greater ‘peace’ was achieved. The year 2000 brought the creation of the UN Tajikistan Office of Peacebuilding (UNTOP) by Security Council mandate, to replace UNMOT, in order ‘to consolidate peace and promote democracy’ (UN Security Council 2000). The OSCE also shifted its focus towards peacebuilding issues such as security sector reform and support for political parties. However, the way that peace has been consolidated is often diametrically opposed to international norms. This brief sketch provides an introduction to the period 2000-2005 which occupies this study.

The period has seen the increasing political dominance of Rahmonov’s Danghara clique, as the 70:30 split of posts between government and opposition was no longer maintained with few former-opposition figures still in position.³⁶ A June 2003 referendum served to change the constitution in fifty areas including most crucially allowing 2 seven-year presidential terms, raising the possibility of Rahmonov staying in office until 2020. However, this shrinking of the circle of power has primarily involved much work behind the scenes, including the use of *kompromat* (‘compromising materials’, for political pressure) to force out dissenters. Targets included both opposition figures from the war, most prominently Mahmudruzi Iskandarov, the leader of the DP and ex-commander from the Tajikobod district of Rasht valley, and some of President Rahmonov’s closest allies, including Ghaffor Mirzoyev, the commander of

³⁶ By 2005, the only prominent oppositionist still in position was Mirzo Ziyoev, Minister of Emergency Situations. A few others held junior posts at central or provincial levels.

the presidential guard. Quantitative data provide further evidence of this trend to increasing authoritarianism. Freedom House's index reports that Tajikistan remained firmly within its 'not free' category for both civil liberties and political rights across the period, 2001-2006 (7 = most unfree; 1 = most free). As shown in fig. 7 below, despite marginal improvements as the peace treaty was implemented after 1997, since 2001 there has been a gradual yet consistent increase in authoritarianism.

Fig. 7: Nations in Transit Democracy Score, Freedom House, 1997- 2006

	1997	1998	1999	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Democracy score [7 = least free; 1 = most free]	6.20	5.95	5.75	5.58	5.63	5.63	5.71	5.71	5.93

The nature of this form of domination by an increasingly exclusive section of elites will be examined in chapter five.

The 2000-2005 period has also seen a notable decline in political violence. In 1999 and 2000, fighters of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) made substantial incursions from temporary bases in Tajikistan into neighbouring Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. At least two districts of the country – Darband and Tavildera – were dominated by warlords, and are thought to have provided support for IMU activities. Violence, largely around criminal activities, was frequent in the Rasht valley as a whole including the kidnapping of foreigners, violence around the trafficking of drugs and rivalries between groups. Across the country during the 2000 elections violence killed a total of 19, including 2 candidates (OSCE/ODIHR 2000). However, these groups cannot be said to have been acting 'independent of the authorities' but rather overlapped with the state as their members often held positions within state structures. Gradually, the Rahmonov regime has further co-opted these groups or has suppressed renegade elements that have become an embarrassment or impediment to their hegemony, for example in the final battles of the conflict against Rakhmon Sanginov and Mullo Abdullo in 2001. The annihilation of these two warlords and their groups represents the re-centralisation of military forces to Dushanbe that has characterised the period. This correlates with far less political or open violence in the Rasht valley which is now firmly under government control. However, as will be discussed in chapter six, this is more a process of the changing dynamics of securitisation than it is one of DDR.

Moreover, despite this reduction in political violence across the country, violence continues in the family and home.³⁷ This is emblematic of Tajikistan's 'peace'.

Tajik society is highly stratified with extreme, apparently increasing, inequality. Over this period the Tajik economy achieved impressive formal rates of economic development and rises in GDP per capita (see fig. 8). However, these figures are hardly representative of the real economy of the country. They do not capture the cotton business and narcotics trafficking through which elites can make huge profits while the poor and children are forced into unpaid labour, nor the combination of subsistence agriculture, labour migration and shuttle-trading through which the poor seek to earn a living. Outward seasonal migration by males, largely to Russia, is highly significant in Tajikistan. Figures gathered by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) estimate that anywhere between 0.6 and 1.2 million left the country for work between 2001 and 2002 (Olimova and Bosc 2003). Significantly, these numbers suggest that perhaps around a half of men of fighting age may be abroad for a significant period over the course of a year. Whitlock notes, 'in the new century far more Tajiks went to Russia than had ever done so during the days of the Soviet Union' (2002: 266). Aid is a huge part of gross national income (GNI) and remains a staple for those Tajiks who remain in the country (see fig. 8). According to Harris, large aid flows into an impoverished and resource-poor economy has meant that by the late-1990s, 'dependence on Moscow has largely been replaced by reliance on the International Community' (1998: 668-669). Despite substantial international assistance, peaking in the period 2000-2002, the evidence of socio-economic progress is equivocal. Figures from the UNDP's human development index after 2000 indicate a decline in Tajikistan's human development in 2003³⁸ which compares with the drop in life expectancy indicated in the table below, and household surveys which indicate a rise in poverty in recent years (Olimova and Bosc 2003; Babajanian 2004). As explored in chapter seven, a reliance on international aid remains a feature but one which can be manipulated locally by those in positions of power.

³⁷ Domestic violence is extremely high in Tajikistan. Empirical studies support these observations, suggesting that around 50% of women in Tajikistan may suffer from domestic violence of some kind. See Haarr (2005).

³⁸ From 2001 to 2003 (the latest available data), Tajikistan's human development index fell from 0.677 to 0.652 (where 1 is highest, 0 is lowest). This equated to a slip in the rankings from 112 to 122 in the world. However, this data should be taken with caution as much of the raw data comes from the state statistical committee (UNDP 2003, 2005).

Fig.8: Basic social and economic data, Tajikistan, 1997-2003 (Source: UNDP 2005)

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	67.2	67.5	67.4	67.6	68.3	68.6	63.6
Population, total (millions)	5.9	6.0	6.0	6.1	6.1	6.2	6.4
GDP growth (annual %)	1.7	5.3	3.7	8.3	10.2	9.1	10.2
GDP per capita, PPP (current international US\$)	630	660	690	760	850	930	1,040
Aid (% of GNI)	9.77	12.71	11.88	13.35	16.79	14.31	9.85

2.3. Reviewing war and peace: academic analyses

Analyses of war and peace often seek to reduce the building of peace to ‘peacebuilding’. Some of this work, which constitutes the primary lens through which Tajikistan is seen by international actors, nevertheless provides useful insights and empirical data. It will be considered in chapter four as part of a constitutive framework for understanding the country’s peace. This final section of this chapter discusses an academic literature on Tajikistan which, in Chatterjee’s characterisation, ‘is no longer scanty but scattered’ (Chatterjee 2002b: 11). Away from the centres of the International Community we find analyses which question these assumptions via alternative problem-solving and critical academic discourses. They offer dissenting opinions on the beginning and ending of the Tajik conflict in terms of hegemony, legitimacy and complexity. Moreover, this literature provides insights regarding how a broader understanding of the Tajik peace can be reconstructed.

2.3.i. *Hegemony: political-realist and institutionalist explanations*

The importance of hegemony in making war and building peace is evinced by accounts of war-starting which emphasise the breakdown of central government, and those of war ending that emphasise its restitution. Rubin argues it is the combination of weak centralising institutions with weak national identity that lies behind the failure to prevent conflict. It was these factors that forced Tajiks to fall back on their local, often *kolkhoz*-based, solidarity groups. ‘Civil peace is not the direct result of social peace,’ he argues, ‘it results from a state apparatus and economy capable of

supplying sufficient incentives and sanctions to manage social tensions' (Rubin 1998: 139). Under the Soviet system, civil peace 'depended on the stable functioning of the administrative-command economy, the monopoly of power by the party, and the latter's ability to coordinate the apparatuses of production, surveillance, and repression' (p. 140). To resolve conflict, Tajikistan requires a 'strong state', which 'can promote civic nationalism by integrating citizens into its institutions and protecting their autonomous activity in civil society' (p. 139). By the late 1990s, according to Rubin, Tajikistan had become a Russian 'garrison state', where stability was a product of an imposed *Leviathan*. He contends that 'only intervention by the International Community, in this case a far from disinterested action by Russia and Uzbekistan,' he contends, 'enabled one faction to consolidate power, which it shows every sign of monopolising' (Rubin 1998: 71).

Institutionalist analyses complement Rubin's account. Jones-Luong's influential analysis of transition in Central Asian states provides a neo-institutionalist explanation for the continuance of regionalism based around Soviet administrative boundaries. Thus, intra- and inter-regional patronage networks are not evidence of post-Soviet regression but the legacy of a system in which, 'the boundary between state and society was purposefully blurred in accordance with the vision of creating a heroic-Leninist state' (2004: 24).³⁹ Her model of the transitional bargaining game outlines a pact-making process where perceptions of power determine the extent of the challenge that regional factions may pose to the regime. In Tajikistan, the opposition saw 'an opportunity to challenge the regional power-sharing system instituted under Soviet rule' (Jones-Luong 2002: 274). She notes, 'the continuation of regionalism, therefore, was crucial to maintaining the power base, and hence, political and economic status' (p.101). The importance of competition among regional patronage networks in Tajikistan's civil has been confirmed by other accounts, including that of Markowitz, also from a neo-institutionalist perspective, which illustrates the importance of economic rivalries between 'strongmen' in the region of Kurghon Teppa (Markowitz 2005).

Collins provides an institutionalist account of inter-clan warfare which at first sight takes culture seriously but ultimately falls back on a rational actor model. She suggests that regionalism in Tajikistan is actually an expression of the informal

³⁹ The reference to 'heroic' state is interesting here as it suggest a role for representation which is de-emphasised elsewhere in Jones-Luong's (2002, 2004) work.

institutions of the clan. Clans, she argues, are institutionally constituted based on the practices of kinship relations and networked ties. Thus, rather than attributing to 'clan' either a primordial or imagined quality, Collins sees the clan as a rational and functional social institution: the clan network. This leads to a regime type which she defines as 'clan hegemony, or government by clan hegemonial regime' (2001: 5, 7). The strength of Collins approach is that by considering the political functions of social and cultural practices and images she is able to look at the positive dimensions, even 'rationality', of politics under the so-called weak state. However, she finds agency resting solely with clan elites who use their manipulation of official resources in the space of the state in order to build legitimacy within clans and make deals with other, well-disposed clan elites. The state, civil society organisations, political parties and other formal structures become façades: 'clan hegemony is concerned less with state as state, than with a governing process in which competing clan networks are kept together, within the state, through a process of division and distribution of resources amongst dominant clans' (p. 141). Academic writing from a 'state failure' perspective here dovetails with policy-prescriptive texts on 'statebuilding' to produce a powerful discourse which comprises the dominant international perspective on post-Soviet conflict and political change at the time of writing (Hughes and Sasse 2001; Beissinger and Crawford 2002; Jones-Luong 2004).

Despite her emphasis on the triumph of informal structures, Collins is ultimately excessively phenomenological herself, failing to acknowledge the expressive or imagined value of the tropes of 'state', 'nation' and even 'civil society' under clan regimes. In her reading, clans remain juxtaposed as traditional alternatives to democratisation, and symptomatic of democracy's absence in Central Asia. This leads to a very bleak reading of Tajik stability. In 2003 she argued that 'a new but related cycle of violence has begun' due largely to the failure of the peace process to integrate clans (Collins 2003: 268). Thus, she contends, the 1997 peace agreement or 'clan pact' is even more contested than the failed pre-conflict arrangements of 1991, and, as a clan hegemony, acts to exclude other clans from a share of the spoils. Having diverged at independence, the dominance of clans in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan will lead them to converge 'towards unconsolidated and unstable hegemonial regimes' – the least stable of which, she argues, is Tajikistan (2001:16, 382-383). Here, Collins rather over-reaches in her

analysis and obscures key differences between these contexts which may be expressed in the character of 'state' and 'nation' that she implies are marginal or irrelevant. Moreover, Tajikistan has stabilised and remains distinct from both Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, both of which have suffered from significant instability and political violence since 2002/2003. Her analysis leaves unanswered the central question of how stable governance may be established in the medium- to long-term under a clan hegemonial regime in context of a weak Tajik state.

These problems reflect assumptions common across neo-institutionalism where meaningful political trends are rational, observable and quantifiable. Thinking more deeply about why a rational actor account provides an inadequate explanation of political power is instructive to a better reading of the Tajik conflict. Both Collins and Jones-Luong disappoint in their instrumentalist narrative of identity formation (Collins: 20003: 48). Here, the clan vs. country dilemma is resolved in the argument that 'clan' or 'region' is the provider of livelihoods, social position and protection. It becomes the basis for identity and the functional unit for political life. Meanwhile, 'state' and 'nation' are irrational or artificial edifices that conceal the real vehicle for furthering political and economic interests: the network, which for Collins is expressed as the 'clan'. However, such neat rationalisations can be problematic. Their relegation of the formal to a facade, and the state to merely an arena for the struggle of networks/clans, seems to neglect the importance of modern, Soviet-era images and identities to the practice of hegemonic formations (Naumkin 2005: 234-235). As Surucu notes, in a review of Jones-Luong's influential work, 'identities are not such neatly demarcated and exclusionary categories in the minds of those who hold them. Our subjects are not trained comparativists and have every right to be non-conformist' (2004: 28-29). Hegemony is not just a material-institutional phenomenon, but one which is reproduced in the way it is imagined, enacted and discursively performed.

2.3.ii. Legitimacy, Culture and the State

Forms of representation in particular are fundamental to the continued existence of any state, and hence an important dynamic in its institutional decay and transformation. Collins' 'clans' and Jones-Luong's 'regions' are not simply institutions but are maintained by shared ideas and ideals among group members.

However, this raises a wider question of how the regime has gained legitimacy both locally and globally.

Lynch uses Holsti's two levels of legitimacy to introduce this concept to Tajikistan (Lynch 2001: 51; Holsti 1996: 84). He argues that the Tajik state in 2001 enjoyed significant legitimacy domestically and internationally. 'The absence of conflict over the fundamental idea of Tajikistan, its territory, Tajik boundaries and citizens,' he argues, 'had created enough common ground between the parties for progress in the peace process' (2001: 51). This crucially brings the state back in as a factor in the making of peace, and, to go further, helps explain how regional rivalries, which so occupy Jones-Luong and Collins, might be contingent upon forms of representation and practices of network formation within the state. While Lynch does not take Tajikistan's weak legitimacy to be an enduring basis for peace – writing in 2001, he feared, curiously, that violent conflict may return at any time (p.51, 69) – his analysis indicates both the constitutive role of legitimation in building peace, and also the different spaces or dimensions of that process. The norms through which the Tajik state is being legitimated among elites and citizens, are quite different to those upon which it is being legitimated internationally. To fully understand the character of these processes of legitimation one must bring culture to the centre of analysis.

Few interpreters of the Tajik peace take culture seriously in their analysis. Nourzhanov's work is an exception. He provides a detailed account of the role of warlords in the weak Tajik state in the course and aftermath of the war. Power, wealth and honour interconnect in the noticeably modern discourses of warlords. Yakubjohn Salimov, a warlord who served as Minister of Interior, from 1993 to 1995, claimed that 'the goal of our enemies was not simply to destroy the statehood of our people, but its honour as well' (cited in Nourzhanov 2005:114). This represents, Nourzhanov notes, 'the transposition of family-related concepts and values on the general body politic' (p.114). Thus, post-war Tajik politics, he argues, function much the same as during the war, where 'commanders continue to be warlords first and foremost, and loyal cogs of the national executive machine a distant second (p.124). It may be wrong to assume that warlordism is declining, he argues, when 'it remains an important mechanism of regime survival on the one hand and an instrument of mass mobilisation by opposition forces on the other hand' (p.126).

However, Nourzhanov points out a peculiar feature among Tajik warlords: their statism – their propensity to be co-opted and controlled by the growing and strengthening Tajik state. He claims that they thus represent, ‘a different category of warlords who do not so much confront or tolerate the state, but work in partnership with it’ (p.111). Moreover, they ‘have been instrumental in restoring the collapsed state in Tajikistan; on many occasions they worked on its behalf propping up centralised government at the national level’ (ibid.). What explains Tajikistan’s statist warlords? According to Nourzhanov, they remain ‘autonomous agents’ whose legitimacy often *coincides* with national elites who represent the same sub-national community (ibid.). This echoes Collins’ assumption that Tajiks are clan members first and citizens of the state second. However, given the course of Tajik political development this argument is problematic. While a small circle has come to control the key power positions and access to resources at the expense of ex-PFT and ex-UTO warlords, this has not led to popular resentment or mass mobilisation of those from other regions behind ‘their’ warlords. It remains unclear why this is the case; perhaps the relationship between state and clan is more ambiguous than Nourzhanov suggests.

2.3.iii. Complexity: the differentiation of space

An explanation for this may begin in the fact that discursive and practical legitimation is necessarily complex, containing multiple discourses at multiple levels.

Three ‘Levels’: local, elite and international

Roy offers a subtle reading of the informal structures of Tajikistan’s local spaces, arguing that the Tajik conflict must be seen as a distinctly post-Soviet conflict reflecting a re-constitution of Soviet-era regionalism.⁴⁰ He points out that Gharimi and Kulobi factions fought together in the *Basmachi* Islamist revolts of the 1920s, and that Mullahs were allied with Soviet-era administrators on both sides of the conflict (Roy 2000: 46-49, 95; Roy 1998: 134-135). Rather collective farm units (kolkhoz and sovkhoz) were ‘tribalised’ as ‘new recompositions of solidarity groups

⁴⁰ That he was the head of the OSCE in Tajikistan between 1995 and 1997 illustrates something of the limits of peacebuilding discourse in the International Community (Roy 2000).

resulting from sedentarism or population transfers' (Roy 2000: 88). Thus tribal identity did not have a primordial value but was given social and political meaning by the migrations. Under the Soviet system, administrative structure provided the vehicles for political advancement and, to some extent, enrichment. Within and between politico-administrative regions, these recomposed tribal groupings fought for power – a process known locally as 'regionalism' (*mestnichestvo* [ru]; *mahalgera'y* [tj]). It is in this sense that Roy labelled Tajikistan, 'the war of the kolkhoz' (p. 94-96). For example, during the 1992 battle in the Vakhsh valley between the Gharmi-dominated Turkmenistan kolkhoz and Kulobi-dominated Moskva kolkhoz, the border between the collective farms was the frontline in the fighting. When the Gharmis were defeated in November 1992 it was minority Kulobis from Turkmenistan kolkhoz, that had fled to ally with Moskva, who then returned with a number of Kulobi allies to lead the kolkhoz, with the Gharmis who remained as their labourers. When Gharmi refugees returned, aided by UNHCR, they similarly took up lowly positions under their new Kulobi masters. 'Thus what one had here,' he notes, 'was the reconstitution of a social differentiation arising out of the combined effects of war, predation and neo-tribalism' (p. 95). This kind of re-continuity raises important questions about the terms under which the defeated came to accept their subordination.

The beginnings of an answer might be found in how the micro-level is linked to a meso-level of hegemony. Roy highlights state-national elite spaces as a crucial dimension, through which localism's dynamics become explicable (p. 98). Long-term political success is only possible through a solidarity group at the national level of the interpersonal network, which extends across tribal and regional divisions. Political status and economic interests were maintained and enhanced by networks 'created around leading public figures or important families', often sealed with intermarriage (p. 99). 'At this level', Roy argues, rather than being seen as an economic grouping, 'the much decried mafia can be seen as another solidarity group orientated towards "business"' (p. 99). Such elite networks can equally be orientated towards politico-administrative control or military action, as was the case during the civil war. As in other Central Asian republics, Roy observes that 'the state machinery manages localism by sharing out important posts or by according a degree of autonomy to the local level' (p. 143). Post-conflict institution-building has been pursued in this fashion according to the emergence of reconstituted post-Soviet

identities. However, it is not just elite cooperation over material resources that constitutes the Tajik peace but also public adherence to a set of common representations. As Khodjibaeva notes, ‘a “television reconciliation” between the two sides is more important than anything else’ (1999: 15).

However, there is a further, *international* dimension to this process. The region of Central Asia, including the dominant role of Russia, is primary here and can be considered a separable sub-system or imagined regional community (see Chapter 4.3.iii). The actors of the global International Community conduct a very different form of international engagement. Given the vagaries of the Tajik state, Weigman notes, the post-conflict process in Tajikistan has produced ‘hybrid institutional arrangements consisting of formal and informal sets of rules’ (Weigman 2004: 2). This ‘statehood-building’ process takes many different forms with local and international actors helping produce the output of state (p. 2). This implies that many of the resources required to render patronage are provided by ‘external’ actors which may play a greater ‘internal’ role than the state itself. By working within this process of the re-institutionalisation of statehood, Western donors, UN agencies and the OSCE also contribute to ‘peacebuilding’ – the restoration of hegemonic politics and statehood. They are producing new rules of the game, new modes of consent, and new spaces for politics. To understand the Tajik ‘peace’ better we must understand how it is differentially legitimated in its local, state-national and international dimensions.

From ambivalence to ambiguity?

Such a complex picture belies any attempt to derive a uni-directional set of factors driving conflict transformation. Dudoignan, more promisingly, considers how political culture has been ambivalently reconstituted via countervailing local and international factors (Dudoignan 1998: 58, 52). This brings us back to question the strict separation of different ‘international’ and ‘domestic’ legitimacies. As international actors became increasingly involved in Tajikistan during the conflict this provided a further set of tropes to practice. The domination and subjection of the Tajik political elite to foreign powers – be they neo-Soviet or neoliberal – has arguably institutionalised contemporary contradictions. In the medium term then it might be that the key characteristic of ‘peacebuilding’ is the journey of Tajikistan’s

political system 'from current ambivalence to future ambiguity' (p. 58, 52). Dudoignan defines ambivalence here as 'an attitude characterised by a special ability to integrate alien ideological mottos, and to play simultaneously different, sometimes openly contradictory registers of discourse if not of thought' (2004: 122). It is this ambivalence which allows the Tajik political elite to simultaneously participate in international peacebuilding and elite *mahalgera'y*, and may account for 'the capacity of the regime born from the Soviet period and the civil war to integrate those alien elements which are estimated [to be] too dynamic to be let out of state structures' (p.134). It is the relationships built where multiple 'levels' of governance meet, we might infer, which reproduces the 'peace'.

This analysis has radical repercussions for our understanding of Tajikistan's 'peace'. Such ambivalence allows for different 'clan' or 'regional' groups to find their own 'niche inside the state apparatus and state-owned economic system' (p.135). If the International Community were to attempt to force through neoliberal reforms – to make the state technically and rationally more effective – such as the reduction of the bloated public sector, it might jeopardise the peace. Dudoignan notes that 'these purely accounting concerns of international organisations rarely take into account the decisive functions of the abundant administrative body: it has permitted the Tajik state to integrate at very low cost, large segments of the society into the overall system of social networking' (p.146). In particular the 'non-coordinated and often redundant' role of overseas aid 'has accentuated the attitude of ambivalence of the Tajik authorities, which had a long habit of dealing with contradictory and unconsequent [sic.] demands from Moscow during the late Soviet period' (p.137). This leads to perestroika-style 'reforms', involving 'a cosmetic commitment to norms enunciated by the international agencies coupled with a total lack of political will for change' (ibid). More fundamental changes are required to achieve reforms but, intimates Dudoignan, it is cosmetic changes that satisfy international actors (p.139-140). His analysis raises the prospect of a 'peace' where reform is simulated internationally whilst corruption is practised among local actors.

Conclusions

If the events of the Tajik conflict themselves are contingent and complex, the writing of them is barely a simpler endeavour. Taken together, the writing of Tajikistan's peace presents a very complicated discursive picture, with dominant peacebuilding discourses (discussed in chapter 4) and disciplinary academic ones building on and reacting to one another. These discourses are inter-textually linked. Moreover, whilst this chapter, for heuristic purposes, has separated the practising of history from its writing, I would argue that they are inherently linked. Influential English-language reports and journalistic accounts, undoubtedly feed back into the practices of international actors, donor priorities and foreign policies decisions – as will be shown in chapters four to seven. The academic analyses discussed above provide a window on political development yet, in themselves, remain only marginal as a constitutive agent of change. Therefore, the focus of chapters three and four will be the identification and location of hegemonic discourses that actually constitute political action among internationals, elites and their subordinates.

The history of the Tajik war and peace process is a highly contingent and complex affair which has been reduced here to a processional narrative. This review of the writing and practising of history has provided insight into the differences and similarities between war and 'peace' in Tajikistan and thus the character of 'peacebuilding'. Regionalism is the most significant feature of this process. It was groups divided on a regional basis that confronted one another during the fall of the Soviet Union and took up arms against one another during the war (section 2.1). It was regionalism that provided the basis for a new hierarchy with cadres from Kulob, particularly Danghara, in the ascendancy during the transition from war to 'peace' (section 2.2). International academic discourse shows that regionalism still provides the primary cleavages in Tajik politics yet it is somehow held in check by an increasingly legitimate state in a complex, multi-level environment (sections 2.3). So a key question becomes: how has the character of regionalism changed from war to 'peace'? Moreover, how has a destructive competitive regionalism transformed to a cooperative one despite the hegemony of a particular regional clique? In beginning to answer these questions we must depart from the assumption of a single, correct mode of peacebuilding and a shift to a consideration of how legitimacy is inter-subjectively composed.

CHAPTER THREE

Complex Legitimacy: dimensions of analysis and evaluation

What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression.

– Michel Foucault (1980: 122)

This thesis addresses both peace and power. Like peace, power is frequently used metaphorically to provide 'a misleadingly narrow approach to understanding modern methods of domination' (Mitchell 1990: 545). Chapters one and two sought to deconstruct international peacebuilding by revealing its discursive dimensions and contrasting it with the actual case of building peace in Tajikistan. Reconsidering peace, as both a concept and a form of praxis in Tajikistan, requires us to go beyond peacebuilding's neoliberal frame of reference and investigate the multiple dimensions of power (Lukes 2005) which this frame obscures.

This chapter builds upon the discussion of discourse and hegemony in chapters one and two to develop a new approach to thinking about peacebuilding as a process of legitimation, which must be understood inter-subjectively in terms of discourse, politics and space. In a case involving international intervention, legitimacy is not simply based on a social contract between the government and the governed, but is constituted alongside international actors, regionally and internationally. These interventions not only disburse material resources but throw into the fray new political ideas and symbols. They have direct and indirect consequences for political dynamics.

I develop peace as complex legitimacy in three stages. Section one explains how discourse analysis can provide a new basis for understanding war-to-peace transitions. Section two insists on political analysis and introduces and qualifies David Beetham's work as a conceptual basis for thinking of peacebuilding as the discursive, inter-textual legitimation of power. The third section develops this further by elaborating three spatial dimensions of legitimacy and consequently reworking Beetham's account of legitimacy and its referent object, the state. It

further develops three 'levels' to understand the building of peace – local (subordinate), elite and global – that were raised at the end of chapter two. Finally, section four reflects on where these three stages leave us in thinking about the state in the building of peace.

3.1. Discourse: peacebuilding as practice

We have established that discourse analysis is a critical tool in deconstructing dominant readings of peace, and exploring the nature of hegemony. This first section extends this line of argument to establish forms of representation, primarily discourse, as constitutive of peace.

3.1.i. The false dichotomy: beyond greed versus grievance

To embark on this process we must begin from the most basic dichotomy of social science: between epistemologies which give primacy to material things and those which privilege the power of ideals. In the case of the former, the theorist can disregard the cultural context in favour of a 'materialist' and 'rationalist' account of what actors 'actually do'. In the study of conflict it is best represented by literature on warlords, known as the *greed* approach. Secondly, and more commonly within the field of peace studies, is the track of identifying a single normative model *for* peace, and lately known as the *grievance* school. This section briefly illustrates the falseness of this dichotomy.

All about greed?

So-called materialist accounts of war and peace constitute a political economy or 'greed' approach to conflict and have been heavily influenced by the neo-institutionalism referred to in chapter two. Reno defines warlordism as existing in societies, under 'shadow states', where, 'political authority and command over resources comes mainly through the decisions of specific individuals who act to serve the private interests, largely without regard for formal government institutions, rules and processes' (Reno 1998: ix). Political economy analyses thus emphasise the market incentives and private interests of actors, focusing on how they use the cover of the state, and often international restructuring programmes, to rape the country's natural resource base for personal profit. The 'economic functions of violence', as

detailed by Keen, include ‘bottom-up’ economic violence such as pillage and the stealing of aid, and ‘top-down’ economic violence such as illicit trade and the redirection of state finances for personal accumulation or sectarian gain (Keen 1998). Some analysts, most notably Collier (2000), have adopted a rational economic actor approach to conflict where entrepreneurs who do well out of war are expected to seek its continuation. Others (Rich 1999; Reno 1998) have taken this further to argue that the public/political sphere is a mere shell for private economic interests. War here is, to innovate on Clausewitz, the continuation of economics by other means (Keen 1998). Chabol and Daloz argue that this makes ideas the servants of interests: ‘Beyond the many changes in ideology exhibited by political leaders of which democratisation is perhaps the latest – what is most noticeable is the unchanging nature of their ties with society’ (Chabol and Daloz 1999: 2). Thus, the Tillyian maxim that states make war and war makes states does not work in the third world (Sørensen 2001).

Greed analyses, particularly the work of Collier, have been increasingly popular in the International Community and have informed recent developments in peacebuilding, particularly statebuilding (Berdal 2005). This at first seems strange as international discourses are highly normative and value-laden, and thus not predisposed to economic analysis. However, their attraction can be explained by at least three factors. Firstly, ‘greed’ has utility: the act of reducing the complex to the simple – in the form of graphs and charts – provided policy-makers and social scientists with a means of prescribing and measuring solutions (Ballentine and Sherman 2003). Secondly, ‘greed’ corresponds with peacebuilding’s universal ethics as it portrays the contestation of war as economic predation and deemphasises particular grievances which may convey alternative ethical positions against neoliberalism, be they religious or secular. Finally, ‘greed’ affirms peacebuilding’s tension with regard to the ideal-/enemy-other – a valueless yet rational figure who may switch from predator to prospector under conditions of democratisation or be declared a self-serving ‘spoiler’ who can justly be destroyed. Greed analysts thus offer a series of recommendations for market regulation to break the predatory networks of warlord groups. The International Community has taken on some of these recommendations in initiatives such as the Kimberly Process to curtail trade in conflict diamonds begun in 2003. While it is still too early to assess the strength of Kimberly it is clear that such approaches are subject to evasion and circumvention

by local operators who resist legalisation and retain their power locally in ways more varied than can be accounted for in international regulations (Pugh and Cooper 2004: 208-210).

All about grievance?

It is readily apparent that market regulation is in itself insufficient both as an explanation and as a prescription for the path from war to peace (Berdal 2005: 689). The work of David Keen has evolved from the political economy school, via Foucauldian insights, to understand conflict's functionality more broadly. His later work on Sierra Leone (2001, 2002) has placed economic functions alongside political, security and, with Richards (1996), culturally-imbued psycho-social functions of conflict. These insights allude to Foucault's 'functions of violence' elaborated in his study of the Soviet gulag (Foucault 1988). What might be 'rational' for economic purposes may be irrational for narrow political purposes; what might be 'rational' for psycho-social imperatives, within a certain cultural context, may be irrational in terms of economic gain or physical security. Accordingly, war becomes a system of collusion in which power relations may play out differently in different aspects of conflict (Keen 2000a: 2). While warring parties may be economic competitors, they may remain political allies, family or friends.

Such work highlights the multiple processes of subjectification inherent in war, particularly ethnic conflict. Materialist approaches of economists and realists, in contrast, rather overlook the fact that in order to end violent conflict over the long term, control and cooption are not enough – power must be legitimated. Beetham argues:

The effectiveness of the powerful, in other words, is not just a matter of resources and organisation, as the 'realists' would contend, but also of their legitimacy. The realists are at this point simply not realistic enough; they do not take people seriously as moral agents, or recognise that what the powerful can get others to do depends upon normative considerations as well as upon the resources and organisational capacities at their command (Beetham 1991: 20).

Human relationships, including those constituted within and between states, are conducted via texts and images as well as material exchange. Material power distribution can promote choices which conciliate as much as confront (which make

states or break them) depending on the ideas, identities and relationships that interpret and give meaning to things.

However, there is a danger of swinging too far in the other direction and over-emphasising the role of 'values' and 'ideas' as something which exist apart from their material significance. Any approach which discounts one in favour of the other, whether it be the materialism of 'greed' or the idealism of 'peacebuilding', distorts the picture of peace. One recent study (Ballentine 2003) examining the greed vs. grievance debate argued that theoretical frameworks must go beyond uni-causal or single paradigm approaches to conflict resolution. The editor concluded that 'to view attempts at state capture simply as an economic agenda would deprive the concept of much of its explanatory utility, while also ignoring the degree to which political and economic agendas may in reality be mutually reinforcing' (Ballentine 2003: 272). Alternatively, I would add, they may contradict and run in parallel. The greed literature at this point hits a dead-end, unable to explain the complexities of political violence. It offers compelling yet reductive descriptions of the context of conflict via a merger of the realist notion of the security dilemma with the economists' idea of market forces (Snyder and Robert 1999). It thus describes and prescribes certain actions within the rules of a wartime environment, but it is much less convincing when faced with the task of theorising the process of moving from war to peace. Thus, we must go beyond greed and grievance. But, to where?

3.1.ii Discourse Analysis and the Study of Peace

Greed/grievance and material/ideal dichotomies are misleading. Moreover, the very dichotomy is 'the very effect of strategies of power' (Mitchell 1990: 546). Discourse analysis denies these dichotomies. It provides not only critical insights but also underscores the way that ideas give meaning to, and are themselves given meaning by, events and their material consequences (Zehfuss 2001: 73). Since early overtures in the 1980s, discourse analysis has expanded as a meaningful approach to the study of international relations, producing a wide variety of accounts particularly in the studies of foreign policy and security.⁴¹ It is a body of work which seeks to expose forms of signification, issues of productivity (including the construction of

⁴¹ See Buzan, Waever and de Wilde (1998), Campbell (1991), Checkel (1998) Der Derian and Shapiro (1989), George (1994), and Shapiro, Bonham and Heradstveit (1988).

'common sense'), and the complexity of practice in the domain of hegemony and resistance (Milliken 1999). This has an under-explored relevance for the study of war and peace. Over recent years academics have begun to use discourse analysis as a means to better understand peace and the related concept of security, following in the footsteps of the empirical studies of David Campbell (1993; 1998a; 1998b) *inter alia*. Foremost amongst this emerging scholarship is the work of Vivienne Jabri and Lene Hansen.

Discourses of Violence: the work of Vivienne Jabri

To prioritise discourse is not to exclude the material dimension but to take a certain approach which interprets structures of justification. One attempt to do this, via Giddens' theory of structuration, is Vivienne Jabri's (1996), *Discourses of Violence*. To Jabri, violent conflict can be deconstructed as 'a deeply embedded continuity reinforced through dominant discursive and institutional frameworks' (p. 75) – a constructed social reality. Discourses of violence, she argues, assert hegemonic understanding of mutually-exclusive and conflicting identities. Jabri thus links discourse to space.

Public space, it could be argued, is a realm of contestation for the production of dominant discourses. Such contestation draws upon the structural continuities of social systems in the reproduction or transformation of such systems. Power and domination cannot therefore be reduced to decisions taken in relation to specified targets. Such overt forms of power must also be seen in relation to more 'hidden' forms which, for example, allow certain discourses and self-definitions while rendering others irreversible and therefore beyond contestation. Such power runs silently through discursive and institutional practices and severely limits the transformative capacity of individuals and collectivities (p.83).

According to Jabri, the 'discourse of war' is situated in relation to 'structures of domination and specifically the state as a social formation centrally implicated in the reproduction of violent political conflict' (p.90). So discourses of violence must be confronted at their root by discourses of peace. Such discourses of peace would foster substantive dialogue and engender relational empathy between groups.

But there is a problem here. War, she argues, is a 'social continuity' which occurs 'within discursive and institutional continuities which are drawn upon by actors in the reproduction of social systems' (p.90). This leads one to wonder whether the differences between 'war' and 'peace' are as marked as many argue.

Exploring the transition from war to peace, Keen has asked with regard to the transition from war to peace, 'how can one thing change into another... unless it has already begun to resemble it?' (2000a: 1) In terms of discourse analysis this can be put another way: how do discourses of war become discourses of peace? In other words, how do discursive complexes in support of 'peace' emerge out of conflict? (Jabri 1996: 95)

Discourses of Security: the work of Lene Hansen

Lene Hansen's recently published *Security as Practice*, explores the relational character of identities and how they produce, and are reproduced by, foreign policies via a study of Western intervention and non-intervention in Bosnia (2006: 21). Hansen, from a post-structuralist perspective, argues that there is 'no extra- or non-discursive realm of explanations from which one might construct competing explanations' (p. 25). Thus representations, in discourse, move to the centre of our analysis and serve to distinguish 'war' from 'peace'. However, while hegemonic discourses through their inter-textual linkages and ideological quality can develop considerable internal stability and resilience to shocks and failure, they are nevertheless related to policies in complex ways. They rarely lead directly to particular policies. Hansen's argument is that policies with respect to security [or peace] are interdependent with widely shared beliefs about who 'we' and 'they' are. Moreover, they 'construct authority and employ forms of knowledge' which maintain certain identities and ideas over others. As such political discourses have ethical, spatial and temporal dimensions – as discussed in the case of peacebuilding in chapter one. Hansen, accordingly brings the discursive production and reproduction of 'self' to the centre of foreign policy analysis. She distinguishes between studies of single and multiple 'selves', where a 'self' is a spatially identified group with a common sense of identity (p.73). While a study of foreign policy (like Hansen's own work) can be a single 'self' study, a study of a peacebuilding process under international intervention (such as this dissertation) must explore relations between multiple 'selves'.

One of the strengths of Hansen's work is its ability to expose the continuities and stabilities of discursive representation not as the result of 'ancient' identities but via the process of political and discursive reproduction. Novels and travel writing

for example with romanticist portrayals of the region are, for example, cited in policy texts on the Balkans in the 1990s (pp. 148-178). In such a way the differences between 'Us' and 'Them' are constantly being re-constituted. Moreover, any individual 'self' is necessarily an aggregation or reduction of a number of overlapping and inter-related identities. The single self which is the subject of Hansen's study, 'the West', is something of a meta-self. While all 'selves' are constructed amid a variety of competing social identities, it seems there is something more complex about a self which is itself composed across multiple political authorities. In Hansen's work, much of the fluidity between Balkan (romanticist), humanitarian and genocide discourses and their positions on intervention to Bosnia derived from US/European divisions (pp. 115-147), to say nothing of the differences between elite and popular perspectives within these two sub-selves. In a study of a peacebuilding process it is particularly urgent to break down a single self and show the numerous 'selves' across which conflict lines are drawn and peace is produced. What is required is an analytical framework to understand the discursive relationships between multiple 'selves', and thus discern shifts towards peace in post-conflict space.

3.1.iii. Scott's hidden transcripts: how many discourses?

The works of Jabri and Hansen illustrate significant steps forward in the use of discourse to understand peace, security and foreign policy-making. However, as works of International Relations, they remain focused on elite discourse. In particular, they find it difficult to account for the micro-level of space and discourse; in other words they lack an anthropological perspective on world politics.

As discussed in chapter one, Scott introduces 'subordinates' as a meaningful category of actor as they have 'a fairly extensive social existence outside the immediate control of the dominant' (1990: xi). Reading Scott alongside Lukes allowed us to consider the different forms and degrees hegemony might take. Here I elaborate on those insights to consider how we might interpret forms of hegemony via discourse analysis. In order to do this we must differentiate in two ways: between subordinates and elites, and between public and hidden transcripts. The subordinate groups that Scott studies offer clear cases of the repressed in situations of 'peace' or stability: peasants, slaves, serfs, 'untouchables'. However, despite such

structural violence, Scott readily agrees that observable public conduct can often seem to affirm conformity and unity. Yet, for Scott, these ‘public transcripts’ offer ‘an indifferent guide to the opinion of subordinates’ (p. 3). Thus he widens the scope of discourse analysis, making it more ethnographic and introducing the idea of the ‘hidden transcript’ which is ‘beyond direct observation by powerholders’ (p. 4). In such a way he uncovers ‘patterns of disguising ideological insubordination’ in the ‘rumours, gossip, folktales, songs, gestures, jokes and theatre of the powerless’ (p. xiii). He thus creates four transcripts for analysis. In figure 9 below I distinguish them in terms of two ‘selves’ (1, a dominant group; and, 2, a subordinate group) and two spaces (A, public; and, B, hidden).

Fig. 9: Scott’s differentiation of discourses

	<i>Dominant</i>	<i>Subordinate</i>
<i>Public</i>	Transcript 1A	Transcript 2A
<i>Hidden</i>	Transcript 1B	Transcript 2B

This has three important ramifications for the study of peace as complex legitimacy. Firstly, it allows us to reveal the *multiplicities of peace*. As Scott makes clear, public and hidden transcripts are dialectically related: ‘the practice of domination, then, *creates* the hidden transcript’ (p. 27).

Power relations are not, alas, so straightforward that we can call what is said in power-laden contexts false and what is said offstage true. Nor can we simplistically describe the former as a realm of necessity and the latter as a realm of freedom. What is certainly the case, however, is that the hidden transcript is produced for a different audience and under different constraints of power than the public transcript. By assessing the discrepancy *between* the hidden transcript and the public transcript we may begin to judge the impact of domination on public discourse (p. 5).

This formulation is controversial in sociological literature. Tilly has noted that Scott’s work takes the hermeneutic tack in insisting on four transcripts, rather than the three supposed in the formulations of Gramsci and Foucault – where a single public transcript is dominant – while in practice seeming to replicate the three transcript model (1991: 593-602). This tension arises from the nature of Scott’s model where both the elite/subordinate and public/hidden divisions are dialectical under conditions of hegemony. In theory then they could be collapsed to a single transcript study (surely an unhelpful route), or equally expanded to include a

proliferation of transcripts. As Tilly asks, who is to say how many there should be. 'Why not,' he asks, 'as many discourses as subordinates?' (p.598) Later in this chapter I argue for a starting point of a minimum of six transcripts in the study of peacebuilding, although ultimately the answer here can only be justified in context. Assessing ambivalence among the elite, both national and international, and resignation among the subordinate, is vital for a fuller interpretation of cases of peacebuilding.

Secondly, Scott's approach allows us to assess the role of representation in building peace, and thus fundamentally reassess the *dimensions of peace* in terms of the affective and representational. He acknowledges that public transcripts are not simply incitements to dissonance but can limit that dissonance to the private, and exclude it from the public. They are themselves productive of order, 'peace', and in certain circumstances legitimacy. Thus practices of 'symbolic display' which extend beyond what Scott calls the 'command performance of consent' (1990: 17, 20) become central to constructing 'a *show of discursive affirmation from below*' (p. 58). The dominant can, 'accommodate a reasonably high level of practical resistance so long as that resistance is not publicly and unambiguously acknowledged. Once it is, however, it requires a public reply if the symbolic status quo is to be restored' (p. 57). An unanswered or unambiguous act of resistance gives confidence to others to be insubordinate and before long authority breaks down. When sincere consent is absent, the dominant demand 'at least the simulacrum of sincere obedience' (p. 58). Such public acts from elites are also functional in the reproduction of their 'we' group. They must act towards subordinates according to a public transcript of (racial, physical, moral, and/or intellectual) superiority and via practices of mutual affirmation, concealment of incompetence, the euphemistic representation of forms of violence, the stigmatisation of subordinates, and public shows of unanimity and togetherness. 'At every occasion,' Scott notes, 'on which the official euphemism is allowed to prevail over other, dissonant versions, the dominant monopoly over public knowledge is publicly conceded by subordinates' (pp. 45-53).

Third, we are able to interpret the *degree of peace*. In comparing the various transcripts of a given context we can assess the 'thickness', durability and productivity of hegemony, and, to go further, the degree of legitimacy. Systems of power and authority which have accrued the least legitimacy, Scott ventures, are those where the differences between private and public discourses are greater, the

latter having ‘a stereotyped, ritualistic cast’ (p. 3). Yet such a society may still be significantly short of conflict formation. Scott distinguishes four varieties of political discourse among subordinate groups: (i), conformism to ‘the flattering self-image of elites’ in the *public transcript*; (ii), the dissonance of the *hidden transcript*; (iii), the ‘politics of disguise and anonymity’ at times of clandestine political mobilisation; and, (iv), ‘the rupture of the cordon sanitaire between the hidden and public transcript’ at moments of political breakthrough (pp. 18-19). These four varieties should not be seen as representing cumulative stages towards war, or reverse steps back to peace. All four can exist at times of either widespread insurgency or increasingly illegitimate authoritarian ‘peace’. However, it is undoubtedly true that if the third variety is widespread, and moments of the fourth more and more frequent, then conflict is forming and peace breaking down.

A final lesson from Scott and the wider sociological-anthropological literature is methodological. It shows that ethnographic participant-observation can enhance discourse analysis as it affords opportunity to interpret how discourse *creates reality* informally and orally in the ‘hidden’ spaces of international intervention. What I have outlined here is the beginnings of a method, based in a post-positivist epistemology, to assess the shift from tentative ceasefire (Scott’s ‘quiescence’) to a more durable peace – a state of resignation (either paper-thin or thin hegemony) to a degree of consensus (thick hegemony). But by what overarching concept are we to evaluate this degree of hegemony, the extent of peacebuilding? In order to advance this method further we must consider the governing concept of this reconsideration of peace, that of political legitimacy.

3.2. Politics: power and its need for legitimacy

Legitimacy is, in general, a forgotten concept in the study of international relations, and a derivative concept in the study of peace. In IR, few studies have adopted legitimacy, particularly in its recent theoretical innovations in political science, as a means of understanding the constitution of order.⁴² In peace studies it is often adopted in tautological terms to pronounce success or failure for international

⁴² One exception, using Beetham’s approach to legitimacy to understand the rise and fall of Yugoslavia, is Williams, J. 1998. Recently the use of the concept has expanded in debates on global governance, and the legitimacy of EU authority. Steffek 2003 provides a good overview of this literature.

intervention. Peacebuilding's normative orientation leads it towards *objective* accounts of legitimacy as derived from structures of justice or democracy. A wide range of policy analyses implicitly retain a crude, objective notion of legitimacy in their advocacy for peace (Chanaa 2002: 34; Fukuyama 2004: 99). Sisk, for example, argues that there's no other show in town:

In sum, there is simply no more just or legitimate way to peacefully manage differences among contending groups than democracy, however difficult it may seem to move from violent to electoral competition (2001: 785).

This illustrates the ideological power of neoliberalism within the International Community. It also leaves peacebuilding at a conceptual dead-end, unable to explain the messy alternatives to 'democracy' which actually constitute a 'peace' in some post-conflict settings.

A more prominent approach in social science literature is largely derived from the Weberian account of a *subjective* condition (See Connolly 1984). In 'Politics as a Vocation', Weber describes his three grounds for legitimacy as the authority of (i) 'custom' (traditional legitimacy), (ii) the 'gift of grace' (charismatic), (iii) 'legal statute' (legal). He notes that actual cases exhibit 'highly complex variations, transitional forms and combinations of these pure types' (2004: 34). David Beetham, however, argues that Weber's reading equates legitimacy to belief, which he argues is an 'almost an unqualified disaster' (1985: 8).⁴³ Beetham notes, 'most social scientists in the twentieth century have followed Max Weber in defining legitimacy as the *belief in legitimacy* on the part of the relevant social agents; and power relations as legitimate where those involved in them, subordinate as well as dominant believe them to be so' (1991: 6). From Weber, other political scientists have reduced the concept to the top-down attempts by governments to convince their populations that their domination is justified – a campaign of legitimation (Beetham 1985: 10), or what might today be considered part of a campaign of statebuilding. Either way, legitimacy then was present to the extent to which subordinates believed the power of the dominant to be legitimate. Thus, legitimacy remained a descriptive category which one can distinguish more or less of, simply in terms of the

⁴³ Barker argues that this failure is Weberian (made by his intellectual followers) rather than Weber's. (Barker 2001: 17-19)

prevalence of beliefs. Similar tendencies are prevalent in analyses of legitimacy among states in international relations (Steffek 2003, 2004: 485-490).

3.2.i Beetham's concept of legitimacy

However, legitimacy is better understood as constitutive of political dynamics. 'Legitimacy,' Beetham remarks, 'is not the icing on the cake of power, which is applied after baking is complete, and leaves the cake itself essentially unchanged. It is more like the yeast that permeates the dough, and makes the bread what it is.' It is thus 'not merely an important topic but the central issue in social and political theory' (1985: 39, 41). He offers an alternative definition of legitimacy which considers it to be the *intersubjective* constitution of political power. This approach provides, according to Barker, 'a bridge or an alliance between is and ought' (2001: 8). It thus becomes the necessary partner to power.

Power can be said to be legitimate to the extent that:

- i. it conforms to established *rules*;
- ii. the rules can be justified by reference to *beliefs* shared by both dominant and subordinate;
- iii. there is evidence of *consent* by the subordinate to the particular power relation. (Beetham 1985: 15-16 Emphasis added)

This definition is conducive to discourse analysis, but, in practice, demands an element of ethnographic study. His three components of legitimacy are interdependent, and he does not argue that one, in general, is primary. 'Obedience,' Beetham notes, 'is therefore to be explained by a complex of reasons, moral as well as prudential, normative as well as self-interested, that legitimate power provides for those who are subject to it' (p.27).

This process of accruing legitimacy, *legitimation*, is particularly relevant to peacebuilding. Beetham's approach has been challenged by Weberians for offering a new tautology. 'Since the claim to legitimacy is one of the characteristics of government,' Barker notes, 'to ask is the government legitimate can be tautologous' (2001: 21). However, legitimacy is not an attribute of a government embroiled in war – or of a state that is contested. Processes of legitimation and delegitimation are crucial here. Legitimacy potentially provides a richer, 'positive' description of a 'peace' such as Tajikistan's than that provided by 'negative peace' or 'war weariness'. 'Enhanced order, stability, effectiveness' – notes Beetham – 'these are

the typical advantages that accrue to a legitimate system of power as a result of the obligations upon the subordinate that derive from its legitimacy' (1985: 33). Unlike the idea of 'negative peace', legitimacy sets limits on power which extend beyond the simple absence of widespread political violence. The concept of legitimacy is not just of descriptive utility to a post-war condition, nor is it merely a claim made by rulers – a process of self-legitimation (Barker 2001). On the other hand, legitimacy does not *cause* peace or order. Rather, it *constitutes* the degree and form of peace in a given context. This is how peace holds in a given context.

The Three Components

Beetham's first component of legitimacy comprises the rules of power. He observes that, 'power relations are almost always constituted by a framework of incentives and sanctions, implicit if not always explicit, which align the behaviour of the subordinate with the wishes of the powerful' (p.27). They do not have to be of a specific type – protecting the individual, guaranteeing social protection, and so forth – but they must be widely known and consistently adhered to. They serve as 'rules of exclusion and access' which regulate who may access resources and under what conditions (p.57). 'Where the rules of power are continually broken,' he notes, 'we could speak of a condition of chronic illegitimacy' (p.16). On the other hand, consistently practised rules serve to legitimate authority. The establishment and affirmation of such rules might be one sign of peacebuilding.

Secondly, Beetham's emphasis on the importance of beliefs is quite different from the Weberian subjective concept of legitimacy. 'A given power relationship is not legitimate because people believe in its legitimacy,' he notes, 'but because it can be *justified in terms* of their beliefs' (1991: 11). Thus, beliefs are produced intersubjectively among the rulers and the ruled. While the content of these beliefs is not circumscribed, they must nevertheless deal with certain key themes, particularly related to authority. Beetham contends:

To be justified, power has to be derived from a valid source of authority (this is particularly true of political power); the rules must provide that those who come to hold power have the qualities appropriate to its exercise; and the structure of power must be seen to serve a recognisable general interest, rather than simply the interests of the powerful (p.17).

This requires not ‘complete uniformity’, but ‘a minimum of the appropriate beliefs [...] being shared between the dominant and the subordinate and indeed among the subordinate themselves’ (p.17). A comparative analysis of public and hidden transcripts might reveal such a minimum consensus, which is vital to why peace holds.

Thirdly, performances of consent are not merely an illustration of people’s belief that something is legitimate but ‘they *confer* legitimacy; they contribute to making power legitimate’ (p.12). Forms of consent, be they ceremonial events, voting in an election, swearing allegiance, are ‘a culturally specific matter, determined by the conventions of a given society, rather than definable absolutely’ (p.19). Such consent has both normative and symbolic power. ‘Actions expressive of consent,’ Beetham notes, ‘even if undertaken purely out of self-interest, will introduce a moral component into a relationship, and create a normative commitment on the part of those engaging in them’ (p.18). In addition, performances of consent, ‘have a publicly symbolic or declaratory force, in that they constitute an express acknowledgement on the part of the subordinate of the position of the powerful’ (p.18). However, as discussed above, such emphasis on consent must not overlook the role of hidden transcripts (Scott 1990) in subverting public discourse, in sustaining the appearance of ‘happy slaves’ (Herzog 1989) while challenging a given political order. In a situation of peacebuilding, the dissonant role of ‘hidden transcripts’ in withdrawing public consent would be limited or at least declining in both their frequency and militancy.

In order to investigate peace as legitimacy the remainder of this chapter will consider how the concepts of discourse and space can be combined with the concept of legitimacy to provide an overall research design. While this will involve taking a post-positivist turn, and thus some departure from the idea of a consistent set of rules, beliefs and forms of consent, I will stay close to these terms of analysis established by Beetham.

3.2.ii. Peacebuilding as legitimation

This brings us to the process where a given political order becomes more or less legitimate; the means by which power is legitimated, or delegitimated. ‘It is in the sense of the public actions of the subordinate,’ Beetham remarks, ‘expressive of

consent, that we can properly talk about the “legitimation” of power, not the propaganda or public relations campaigns, the “legitimations” generated by the powerful themselves’ (p.19). Thus, while the performance of ‘expressed consent’ constitutes *legitimation*, the withdrawal of consent and offering of resistance, constitutes *delegitimation* (pp.19-20). Such consent does not merely involve adherence to a static discourse of power; Scott shows how processes of both legitimation and delegitimation might exist side-by-side. Yet Herzog is surely right to note that ‘any plausible account of legitimacy and obligation must center on whether the state is for the most part responsive to the people’ (1989: 205). ‘Responsiveness’ (p.207) here is used in its most generic sense, derived from relationality. It demands that a state, to be legitimate, must be responsive to ‘what people do want, not what they should’ (p.205). Yet these ‘choices’ take place within power relations.

Beliefs of legitimacy: public and hidden

Such an approach replaces a single *belief in* (the common) peace, with multiple and contrasting *beliefs of* (complex) legitimacy. It insists that there is more than one conception of peace which correlates with any given context of ‘peace’. In periods where legitimacy/peace are in formation, a minimum of shared beliefs and values transmitted in public discourse is of particular importance. These may, however, continue to be disbelieved in hidden transcripts. Beetham himself notes that, to assess the degree of legitimacy in a given political order one must evaluate, ‘the features internal to a system of power that, on the one hand, sustain and reproduce its legitimating beliefs, or, on the other, systematically undermine them over time’ (p.23). Berger and Luckmann (1967) explicated this further in their work on the social production of knowledge. They argue for four levels of legitimation, beginning with an ‘incipient’ stage where a language of authority is inter-subjectively agreed, to the final realisation of a ‘symbolic universe’ which acts to homogenise disparate views (p. 96).

The study of both public and hidden transcripts becomes vital to discover the degree of consent, resignation or rebellion. The making of new, conciliatory hidden transcripts may occur partially and locally whilst rules and performances of consent congruent with an economy and culture of war continue to dominate the observable

practices of politics. Eventually, for these conciliatory beliefs to spread they must produce rules and forms of consent, discursively represented, and enacted in practice. Local and international actors may then attain a bare minimum of ‘consensus’ and mutual tolerance, where these discourses and practices become accepted as the most plausible or credible arrangement.

Degrees of legitimacy, degrees of peacebuilding

Being something you can have more or less of, legitimacy has ‘developmental stages within each [of the three] component[s]’ (Beetham 1991: 98). Weak legitimacy might exist in post-conflict contexts and exhibits certain forms of beliefs, rules and consent to power, as well as certain means by which common interests and differences are determined. Specifically, according to Beetham, it is likely to involve a *paternalist* rather than consultative determination of common interests, an *ascriptive* rather than meritocratic principle of differentiation of access to power, a *traditional* instead of popular source of authority, *conventional* rather than legal regulation, and an *expressive* rather than contractual mode of consent (ibid.). It is such weak legitimacy that one expects to evolve in the emergence of ‘peace (see fig.10)’.

Fig.10: Beetham’s Weak vs. Strong Legitimacy

	Weak Legitimacy	Strong Legitimacy
Common Interest	Paternalist	Consultative
Differentiation	Ascriptive	Meritocratic
Beliefs	Traditional	Popular
Rules	Conventional	Legal
Consent	Expressive	Contractual

This classification is a helpful starting point for studying the degree of legitimacy *in general*, but inevitably some clarification will need to be made of these categories *in context*. This process will take place over subsequent chapters and be summarised in the conclusion. Before empirical investigation can begin in chapter four, I must clarify my broader theoretical positions regarding the object and subjects of legitimacy. Legitimacy, Beetham notes, has two governing principles: of the

differentiation of elites from subordinates, and of the common interest. These will be explored in an analysis which leads us to reconsider the nature of the state as the essential container of power and legitimacy. I will first consider this differentiation in spatial terms (section 3.3) before dwelling on the nature of the ‘common interest’ in the form of the post-conflict state (3.4).

3.3. Space: differentiating and contesting legitimacy

Legitimacy is formed and differentiated by space and identity. Beetham’s first governing dynamic captures this in terms of a *principle of differentiation* which ‘reveals the dominant as specially qualified, suited or deserving’ (1991: 59). The problem of space/identity must be addressed in order to better understand both the centrality and contrariety of the state.

3.3.i. Unbinding the principle of differentiation

Space and identity are both under-explored in Beetham’s approach. His concern is with a ‘principle of differentiation or separation which *distinguishes* the dominant from the subordinate’ (p.76). It is assumed here that the dominant and subordinate exist within the territory of the largely unquestioned state. This state-centrism is problematic in that it fails to contend with how authority often exists at multiple levels beyond and across the bounds of the state, denying a single dominant or single subordinate group. In post-conflict spaces localising and globalising tendencies are both prevalent, as the boundaries of the state may be called into question by irredentist claims. Both elite and subordinate discourses may posit other objects of legitimacy, such as ethnic group or confessional order, alongside ‘the state’.

Faced with such evidence, others argue normatively that the hegemonic state must be transcended in order to achieve peace (Jabri 1996: 120). Jabri thus argues for a counter-discourse which replaces the discourse of the single and homogenous state with a globalist discourse of difference.

The symbolic orders and interpretative schemes upon which identity is based constitute “public” or political space. The transformative capacity of counter-discourses must also be located in *the* public space. It is the domination of *this space* which generates hegemonic discourses based on exclusionist ideologies which are used to legitimate the onset of war and the manipulation of information in time of war. (my emphasis p. 158)

Jabri implies that this space is potentially global, and hence conflict resolution requires the reimagining of global space in terms of inclusive relationships via ‘unhindered communicative action which involves *participation* and *difference*’ (pp. 163, 161). It is thus ‘a zone of peace based on dialogical principles,’ not just mere ‘intersubjective consent’ (pp. 166-7). In such a way Jabri inscribes content into ‘peace’ beyond that provided in legitimacy.

However, Jabri’s analysis obscures the powerful differences between communities of space and identity which tend to persist in post-conflict settings. Thinking in terms of multiple communities, differentiated by space, brings us to the idea of ‘levels’. However, it is difficult to theorise ‘levels’ without reifying them. Classical models of levels of analysis in International Relations, such as those of Singer and Waltz, reiterate the state-centrism of Beetham. They demarcate territorially defined levels and fail to grasp how states and systems can inter-subjectively constitute one another (Singer 1961; Waltz 1959). Thus, rather than adopting a traditional levels of analysis approach, common in IR, ‘levels’, to be of any use, must be understood in their inter-subjectivity and power relations (Buzan 1995); specifically this requires a study of inter-spatial relations.

Therefore, to understand space we must think less in terms of geopolitical, territorially defined entities than in terms of critical geopolitics or Derrida’s ontopolitics. We must study the discourses which reproduce or challenge identities which themselves lie at the base of a legitimate claim to occupy or administer political space (Derrida 1994: 82). Ó Tuathail, for example, charts the ‘ambitious redrafting of space around the principles of empire and state sovereignty’, producing ‘the territorialisation of space.’ The state has become over time the key container of geo-power in a ‘power struggle between different societies over the right to speak sovereignly about geography, space and territory’ (Ó Tuathail 1996: 6, 11).’ This battle over space is inherently linked to the production of *identities*. It is identity which enables space, and space which enables identity (Shapiro 1997). As Ó Tuathail argues:

The struggle over geography is also a conflict over competing images and imaginings, a contest of power and resistance that involves not only struggles to represent the materiality of physical geographic objects and boundaries but also the equally powerful and, in a different manner, the equally material force of discursive

borders between an idealised self and a demonised Other, between “us” and “them” (Ó Tuathail 1996: 15).

The quantity and quality of such discursively-produced spaces which are identified might change depending on the question of analysis. Moreover, what I call *in-between spaces* can be found at the margins of ‘selves’ as will be discussed in part two. Going beyond this is difficult short of context-specific analysis. Nevertheless some theorising is possible at this stage.

Complex legitimacy insists that we consider the relationships between multiple political communities or ‘selves’. Such a study requires an analysis which is sensitive to ‘the power to organise, occupy and administer space’ (Ó Tuathail 1996: 1). Space here is made and remade primarily through discursive relations. Multiple ‘selves’ constitute Tajikistan’s ‘peace’ through three inter-dependent, inter-subjective ‘levels’. But if they are inter-subjective how are they separable? Due to the complexities of spatial differentiation, Beetham’s notion that differentiation is based on either ‘ascription’ or ‘merit’ does not capture the nature of differentiation in settings of post-conflict intervention. Rather than being ascribed or merit-based, differences are inscribed in discourse which provides for the ascendancy of an elite within that given space, whether that be religious, traditional or modern. Thus, as an authoritative leader of a local ‘clan’, a given leader may represent a largely traditional source of power, whereas as a representative of the state he may derive his authority from discourses of nationalism or socialism.

3.3.ii. Three ‘levels’

Of course, any ontological or onto-political framing necessitates a degree of essentialism which imposes a degree of artificial order to inconsistent and contingent processes. Identifying ‘selves’ is no easy task. Both the ‘elite’ and ‘subordinate’ may exist beyond the bounds of the state; moreover, such short-hand categories can conceal more complicated arrangements where authority is differentiated. For elites, there may be several layers of political authority from internationally-instituted power such as those of the Bretton Woods institutions or specific transitional administrations in a given territory, to regional peacekeeping forces, to national government, to sub-national de facto political authorities based around region, ethnicity or religion. For subordinates, resistance, quiescence, resignation or consent

may take place transnationally in non- or anti-state political movements in diaspora communities.

The framework offered here is inspired by, but a significant adaptation of, Joel Migdal's *state in society* approach. It is based on three 'levels' (categories of spaces/'selves'): *local* (subordinates existing 'under' various authorities, local, national and translocal); *elite* (including local, national and regional elites in authority over popular social spaces); and *global* (including 'the International Community', but also radical and moderate transnational movements). It is assumed here that each relational 'level' is produced in the context of multiple spaces, and yet under conditions of hegemony⁴⁴. In the following paragraphs I will briefly introduce these 'levels' and their intra- and inter-relationships. The inter-weaving of 'levels', spaces and discourses allows us to analyse how over-lapping identities (e.g 'Islam' or 'Central Asia') might be contested and reproduced in different spaces and discourses.

Local-subordinate spaces: subnational, national and transnational

For the majority, various local-subordinate spaces provide the basis for social or societal life. The way in which groups and individuals resist the state, and the way social forces are co-opted by the state, can 'change [the state's] social and ideological underpinnings' (Migdal 1994: 12). How might we characterise this kind of 'societal' interaction with the state? In order to conceptualise state-society relations, Migdal shuns categories such as class or ethnic identity which can obfuscate as much as they explain. Rather he uses Greenfield and Martin's minimalist definition that society's 'only definitive characteristic is that it is the outermost social structure for a certain group of individuals who, whatever might be their attitude toward it, view themselves as members and experience their identity as being determined by it' (1998: viii). However, 'society', understood as existing under a given state, is not the only expression of local or subordinate space; local spaces can take subnational or transnational forms. Considerable homogeneity in public transcripts can be produced despite this heterogenous environment, to the

⁴⁴ From his theoretical perspective Migdal (1994, 2001) speaks of domination, which can be integrated or dispersed, rather than hegemony which can be thick or thin. Against Migdal, and to avoid obfuscation, I will continue to use the notion of hegemony to understand relationships of domination.

extent that we can meaningfully speak of a single set of homologous local or subordinate spaces during periods of building peace (producing two transcripts). Alternatively, one or more of these cleavages can provide the vehicles for conflict, mutual stigmatisation and inter-spatial violence – thus pitting ‘selves’ against one another.

Subordinate spaces and discourses have a great deal of autonomy from elite and global actors due to two special features: the particularity of community or ‘self’ and the locality of practice. Particularities of community can serve to bind local actors against elite and global forces, perhaps in terms of class or some other form of identity, or they can form the basis for cleavages in identity. The study of local spaces and discourse can illustrate to what extent contention or cooperation occurs between societal and/or (sub/trans)-national spaces. At times of civil war or political violence we can expect that local-subordinate discourse will be contested between fighting groups. Minor differences would be stigmatised, and popular transcripts would be produced in part in a response to contrasting elite discourses of local ethnic, religious or regional ‘selves’. On the other hand, in cases of peace building, where the nation-state or some other wider-political community remains symbolically and normatively powerful, subordinate transcripts may inscribe both a common interest with, as well as differentiated positions from, elite and global actors.

The second feature for the autonomy of local-subordinate spaces are their specific localities. Scott characterises the special genius of the local as ‘practical knowledge’ or *mētis* (cunning intelligence, the know-how or knack). In his later work, he has illuminated how ‘high modernist ideologies’ of the state, and with them ‘various schemes to improve the human condition’, often fail when they confront *mētis*. Its power, once again, is derived from its space – its ‘localness’ or ‘practical knowledge’ which differentiates it from the state, the region and the world. ‘Any formula,’ Scott notes, ‘that excludes or suppresses the experience, knowledge, and adaptability of *mētis* risks incoherence and failure’. Like language it is best learned by daily practice and experience in context (Scott 1998: 319). ‘An institution, social form or enterprise that takes much of its shape from the evolving *mētis* of the people engaged in it will thereby enhance their range of experience and skills’ (p. 359). The degree to which elite or international interventions become transformed in context constitutes the nature of the subordination of locals in the order of things.

Elite spaces: sub-national, national, regional

A second set of spaces in the greater context of peace are those of the elite: the spaces of the sub-national, national and regional political leaderships which can make some claim to sovereignty over localities. These are elites who are not seen as outside 'interveners' but leaders accepted as 'internal' or 'ours' (those at or near the top of a larger 'we' group). At times of war, as discussed above, one can expect elite discourse to be fractured by the violent articulation of difference, and the contestation of 'inside'/'outside' and 'us'/'them'. For example during the conflict in Tajikistan, the elite (as well as the citizenry) of the new state was partitioned by the stigmatisation of 'Islamic' and 'Gharmi' as forms of identity. Violence, Jabri remarks, is based on a 'discourse of exclusion' between groups with 'exclusionist identities' along the boundaries of highly demarcated spaces. Thus, it invokes 'articulations of separateness, of limitations to access, of strict boundedness' (1996: 130-131). However, a form of discursive boundedness is essential to the functioning of hegemony. Under conditions of building peace we would expect to see a gradual convergence or emerging complementarity between various elite discourses.

The degree of discursive consensus among a state or national elite may remain limited. Dominant groups too can have multiple identities and spatial homes – both 'below' and 'above' the state. Whilst sub-national and nationalist discourses have been investigated in studies of ethnicity and nationalism, inter- or trans-national regional identities are remarkably under explored. The idea of a regional space raises difficult questions of how and where a particular region can be located. Buzan, Jones, & Little (1993) argue that a regional level of analysis is justified, based on the degree of interaction, by which international anarchy can be overcome. This justification for the regional level is imbedded within structural interpretations of international relations but there are grounds to suggest that not only political-diplomatic but 'economic' and 'cultural/symbolic' relationships can create regional communities in world politics. Adler has argued that 'Imagined (Security) Community' are formed as 'cognitive regions' of international relations where elites and even citizens of states, 'imagine sharing a common destiny and *identity*' (1997: 253). Regional space raises the question of how domination becomes enhanced (integrated) or dispersed through international ties. Regional communities may

provide elites with a solidarity group to resist the International Community (as in Central Asia perhaps), or alternatively better facilitate the forces of globalisation (as in Europe perhaps). In the case of ‘peace’, regionalised understandings can provide the basis to oppose liberal peacebuilding in favour of peace operations deemed more ‘traditional’ or ‘culturally appropriate’. Here, the representation of territorial concerns such as state borders in terms of ‘Us’/‘Them’ becomes an important part of the practice of sovereignty in situations of peacebuilding – they can inscribe national and/or regional elite understandings of community.

Global spaces: inter-state and transnational

The significant weakness of Migdal’s analysis of ‘state in society’ (2001) is the lack of an elaborated international dimension.⁴⁵ The post-conflict state is particularly vulnerable to interventions by international and transnational actors which might affect the kinds of domination and resistance taking place. The extent to which international actors are able to alter elite-subordinate relations is the key question for a study of peacebuilding. It is also possible that elites and subordinates may adapt or re-appropriate international interventions. In this respect it is necessary to investigate the effect of global political spaces and actors on the elites and subordinates of a given local context, and vice-versa.

When the inside/outside or domestic/international dichotomy is demythologised, contemporary processes and transformations can be understood as contestations of claims by state actors that politics must exist either within or between states (Walker 1993: 13). These processes can challenge who ‘we’ are and begin to alter or transform ‘Us’/‘Them’ images (1990: 23). While denying absolute cosmopolitanism it is important to recognise that spaces and an identity of the International Community is emerging in contemporary world politics, alongside transnational corporations and pressure groups in the world economy (Ong 2006). Here, where the dominant role is played by ‘the West’, the symbolism of certain defining images and discourses has an ideological quality, as explored in chapter one. While, in the manner of Scott, one can doubt the direct impact of such discourse in terms of ‘peace’ and ‘democracy’, the global space-making implications

⁴⁵ Migdal has (2001: 135-142), however, suggested that constructivist international relations theory is a ‘state in society’ approach writ large into global politics.

of the 'International Community' are profound, opening up new territories for international intervention and the creation of autonomous spaces of the International Community in places such as Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor and others. We must look at how the increasing involvement of international organisations and transnational companies in post-conflict spaces may help produce new forms of power and legitimacy, both locally and globally.

In such a way the spaces of the International Community are increasingly dispersed transnationally. In the hot-spots of the global economy it may be cities or special economic zones that gain a certain sovereignty; in the realm of peacebuilding it can include the transnational inter- and non-governmental organisations of donors and their implementing partners. 'The oscillation between neoliberalism as exception and exception to neoliberalism,' Ong notes, 'has also engendered ethical geographies, emergent spaces of would-be NGO administration' (2006: 21). In some post-conflict spaces it is the International Community that, however ineffective, is often the first port of call in the protection of rights or provision of services; this in turn challenges traditional, state-based patterns of citizenship.

Space – local (subordinate), elite, and global – may or may not be territorialised. Moreover, the same elites and subordinates may find themselves meeting in various territories where state practices are negotiated, where the inscription of that space and their ascendant or lowly position in it may shift accordingly. A given physical territory, such as that of the teahouse (*choihona*) in Tajikistan, may at one time represent local space (for daily tea sessions of patriarchs), at another time an elite space (for occasional meetings between officials), and still another an international space (a temporary office for representatives of the International Community). In this way territories can be the meeting points of multiple spaces in a similar way that a person can have a multi-layered identity. Territory – the physical boundaries of a state or community is thus negotiated inter-spatially and inter-textually.

3.4. The Post-Conflict State: against itself?

Beetham's second governing dynamic is that legitimacy contains a minimum of consensus. This is important as it is the means by which legitimacy's subjects relationally imagine its object to be somehow representative of themselves as a

collective. Beetham conveys this in terms of legitimacy's *principle of common interest*, which is 'shown to serve not merely the interests of the powerful, but those of the subordinate also, or else to make possible the realisation of larger social purposes of which they have concern' (Beetham, 1991: 59). This clearly raises the question of the state. The state is empirically unavoidable in contemporary forms of legitimacy, but it is not essentially given as such. How should we understand the legitimate, post-conflict state?

3.4.i Deconstructing the common interest

First we must question the 'common interest'. Beetham notes that, 'a recurrent feature of the social organisation of power is that general interests *can only be met* in ways that serve the particular interests of the powerful, since the means of realising them are under their control' (emphasis added, 1991: 46-47). In post-conflict settings the potential for contention between the particular and 'the general interest' is especially large. However, Beetham charts how paternalism may arise as the basis for uniting the elite and the subordinate under the common interest. 'A paternalist form of power,' he notes, 'involves a relationship in which the subordinate are defended wholly or partially, temporarily or permanently, incapable of recognising and defending their own interests, and these therefore have to be defined or advanced by the powerful on their behalf' (p.89). Barker goes further in noting that legitimation should be understood in terms of identification; he argues that 'people, not laws and commands' are legitimated (Barker 2001: 31-36). Therefore, endogenous legitimation, among elites, can be as important as the exogenous process of legitimating the regime in the eyes of subordinates. Moreover, we must ask if the authority of the 'common interest' is located with individuals, a regime or the state.

This inevitably raises fundamental questions of the political and the state which cannot be fully considered here. To what extent should we consider the locus of authority to be with the state or the ruling regime acting on behalf of 'the state'? Schmitt and Foucault, in different yet commensurable ways, are deeply concerned with these issues. Schmitt's concept of the political goes beyond the Weberian logic to give the political an overarching potential. Social relations become political when they are represented in terms of the Friend/Enemy dichotomy (Schmitt 1996: 38). Foucault, similarly, charts how hegemonic rationalities are projected onto our lives

through various cultural, social and economic media. The presence of 'economic' and 'cultural/symbolic' hegemonies may indicate 'governmentality', where we are made subjects under 'political' power (Foucault 1991, 2000). Whereas the state remains central for Schmittian analysis in political science, Foucauldians prefer to look at networks of power under the state. As will be shown across chapter five and six, authority can ambiguously be located both with individuals and groups and with the state.

These broad insights demand a reconsideration of the common interest in peacebuilding/legitimation, and the essential role of discourse and ideology in its construction. Beetham argues that 'the political sphere is especially bound up with the ultimate source of normative validity that is acknowledged within the society' (1991: 70). This ultimate source is the basic belief system within a given political space, 'whether it be tradition, divine command, scientific doctrine, popular will, or whatever' (p. 70). This is not to equate discourse with ideology but to insist that discourses correlate with an 'ideological construction' (Jabri 1996: 96) which serves to explain structures of domination or exclusion. Similarly 'common interest' is the product of inter-textual relations which are ideologically informed. However, this inter-textual construction of authority allows for multiple representations thereof. What constitutes authority in post-conflict spaces, and who is able to act on behalf of it, is highly contingent upon discourses of peace. Thus, it is how 'the state' is represented among subordinates, elites and internationals that may determine the nature of authority, what constitutes the 'common interest', and the extent to which the practices of state actors reinforce or attenuate these representations.

'The state' invariably provides the object or focus in contemporary discourses of peace, yet this does not necessitate the state as an exclusive locus of authority. Neither Schmitt's concept of 'the political' nor Beetham's 'common interest' is derived directly from 'the state.' However, Schmitt's understanding of the political seems to limit political activity to that which is actively adversarial and potentially military, whilst Beetham's object of legitimacy is unquestioningly the state. One can see the apparent empirical justification for this yet it is a theoretical misstep if it leads to the reification of the state as a given, rather than the state itself being constituted via a symbolic order (Žižek 1999). Avoiding this misstep, we can explore how contrasting representations of the state compose a multi-layered complex of the political where one 'common interest' remains elusive. Such

political spaces resist any simple application of the friend/enemy dichotomy. This brings us to distinguish between the idea of ‘the state’ as the object of legitimacy (as it often is) and the state as a coherent institutional location of legitimacy (as it rarely is). As Bartelson has noted, this demands ‘an analysis of the contradictory meanings of the state concept, and above all an analysis of its remarkable staying power within political discourse, despite its contradictory nature and recurrent celebrations of its demise’ (2001: 2).

3.4.ii. Representation versus practice

So the state remains something of an enigma in the post-conflict context – at once ever-present and elusive – where practices in the name of ‘the state’, particularly the post-colonial and post-conflict state (Chabl and Daloz 1999), consistently challenge the ideal-type image. However, rumours of the death of the state are greatly exaggerated. The state remains the paramount political idea of our age and it continues to be invoked in law, public performance and informal behaviour (Migdal 2001: 135-172).

The state thus remains the focal point of politics and political violence, and hence the inter-spatial framework outlined above seeks to understand how it is reproduced as such an object. It can act ‘against itself’ (Migdal 2001: 22) in the sense that it provides a place of contest for various, contending actors claiming to represent the state. Nevertheless it is important to recognise that even weak states have a certain autonomy based on the very idea. Thus, in order to escape from reification, we need to de-link, in Abrams’ terms, ‘state-idea’ from ‘state-system’ (1998: 58-89). The salience of the *idea* of the state allows us to comprehend cases where, ‘the state’ sets the parameters of political life – symbolically and normatively – despite its self-evident distortions. Discourses and other forms of representation of the state act to reproduce ‘the state’ when in economic and military terms it pales into insignificance compared to other loci of elite authority and discourse.

The representation of ‘the state’ is especially important when both the control and character of the state are contentious. Foucault argues that since the sixteenth century the state had developed a kind of ‘pastoral power’ much like the church. This power was born out of its ability to justify and institutionalise subordination, firstly (‘horizontally’) among elites incorporated within an expanding state bureaucracy, and secondly (‘vertically’) over ‘society’ and its variety of local spaces

and subordinate actors. However, any notion of absolute hegemony or domination is a myth.

But the state, no more probably today than at any other time in its history, does not have this unity, this individuality, this rigorous functionality, nor to speak frankly, this importance; maybe, after all, the state is no more than a composite reality and a mythicised abstraction, whose importance is a lot more limited than any of us think... It is the tactics of government which make possible the continual definition and redefinition of what is within the competence of the state and what is not, the public versus the private, and so on; thus the state can only be understood in its survival and its limits on the basis of the general tactics of governmentality (Foucault 1991: 103).

Thus one important space is the 'composite reality' of the state defined by its tactics of 'governmentality'. While states may rarely exercise empirical sovereignty across their juridical territory, 'the state', made legitimate via 'tactics of governmentality', becomes the central object of 'peace'. State elites use symbols and images and cultivate discourses in order to create an 'aura of invincibility' around the state that belies its actual dysfunctions and inconsistencies.

However, the study of representation is insufficient to grasp how subordinates, elites and internationals experience the state as an institution. Migdal redefines the state, to take account of these conditions of reflexivity and inconsistency of experiences.

The state is a field of power marked by the use and threat of violence and shaped by (1) *the image of a coherent, controlling organisation in a territory, which is a representation of the people bounded by that territory*, and (2) *the actual practices of its multiple parts*. (2001: 17-18).

This tension is crucial to understanding the evolution of the state, particularly in its post-conflict form where (2) can seem particularly far from (1). 'While the image of the state implies a singular morality, one standard way, indeed *right way*, of doing things,' Migdal notes, 'practices denote multiple types of performance and, possibly, some contention over what is *the right way* to act' (p.19). However, subversive practices are often interpreted problematically in terms which affirm state sovereignty rather than challenge it. If it is widely believed in a given context that elites are necessarily corrupt, and that elites dominate the state, then evidence of corruption is unlikely to provoke resistance. This is particularly salient in the post-Soviet context where state practices reproduce ambivalence towards 'the state'. This

dissertation broadly adheres to Migdal’s definition, while it will qualify the degree to which instrumental manipulation (implied in 2) and various performances, simulations and reproductions of the image (described in 1 and implied as a single image of single elite) are actually contradictory.

Conclusion

The figure below outlines the conceptual framework developed here and in chapter one for the study of peace as complex legitimacy based on politics (hegemony and legitimacy), discourse and space. There is a certain amount of congruence between the two evaluative dimensions. In cases of thick hegemony it is likely that legitimacy is strong; in cases of thin (or paper-thin) hegemony it is likely that legitimacy is weak. In both cases it is necessary to analyse the public and hidden transcripts of actors in local, elite and global spaces. Thus, we move from Scott’s four transcripts to six.

Fig. 11. Evaluative and analytical features of peace as complex legitimacy

DIMENSION	EVALUATIVE CATEGORIES			KEY SOURCES
Legitimacy	Strong		Weak	Beetham
Hegemony	Thick		Thin (or Paper-Thin)	Various
	ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES			
Discourse	Public		Hidden	Scott
Spaces (Level)	Local-Subordinate	Elite	International	Various
State	Image		Practices	Migdal

The approach of *complex legitimacy* that I have outlined above, seeks ambitiously to meet that challenge of theorising the consolidation of peace and re-establishment of legitimate government in the post-conflict context. Here power is both hegemonic and, to the extent that it is more than mere coercion, legitimate. It is discursive and complex (that is spatially differentiated). This ‘temporal and spatial partitioning of the individual’ (Jabri 1996: 132), is a necessary part of institutionalisation and functional to forms of peace – as well as war. In complex legitimacy the state is the primary locus but its authority remains inherently ambiguous; contingent on the practices of its representatives. Building peace, by this definition, is *the process of*

the re-establishment of hegemony and legitimation of power. It takes place among actors and between local-subordinate, elite and global spaces and discourses.

Out of context this definition means little; to be meaningful it must be explored empirically. In any given case, complex legitimacy can entail the continuation of limited political violence, the establishment of imperial, authoritarian, and/or patrimonial governance, ongoing (even worsening) poverty and inequality, and the continuance of a heavily-criminalised war economy which facilitates corruption and the systematic abuse of human rights. On the other hand, it can provide closure to a period of widespread physical violence, establish the basis for physical security and order, provide for the expansion of patron-client networks that provide a minimum of social welfare, and thus provide the basis for 'normalised' politics and social life. It consists of both 'negative' and 'positive' attributes. This provides problems for those engaged in peacebuilding as, 'at best,' Pugh and Cooper note, 'an inability to transform war economies, perpetuates corruption, flawed governance, and tensions generated by competing patrimonies or ethnic groups' (Pugh and Cooper 2004: 3-4). At worst it leads to a return to widespread violence. The concept of legitimacy provides a means to understand why such a 'negative' peace does or does not hold.

This chapter thus constitutes a critical conceptual journey from the idea of common peace to the approach of complex legitimacy. It is not good enough to dismiss such an approach as apologetics for negative peace and structural violence. Herzog provides an excellent justification for maintaining a concept of legitimacy which would allow us to study the building of peace in a world which consistently fails to produce any actual cases of the idealised accounts of peace that exist in the peace studies literature. I have annotated his quote – with some reference back to my reading of Scott on the complexities and forms of peacebuilding – to explicate the nature of legitimacy as the intersubjective construction of political life.

One can call a state legitimate without thinking it perfect or even inspiring. It's legitimate if it's good enough [for those subject to it], if it passes a threshold [for each of them]. Ascriptions of legitimacy are then compatible with spirited opposition [expressed in public or, more likely, hidden transcripts]. A theory of legitimacy could depart from these strands of our intuitions: they're not sacrosanct. In a world blessed with much better states than ours is, we'd have a good case for tightening up our standards, for diagnosing them as historical artefacts that had lagged past the context that made them sensible. But we have good reason to go on drawing a line that will differentiate among states instead of lumping them all together. In this sense, a theory of legitimacy is rightly contingent on facts (Herzog 1989: 205-206).

Complex legitimacy, I argue, provides an analytical lens through which to understand this peace of our time.

CHAPTER FOUR

Constituting Legitimacy: three ‘levels’ of the Tajik peace

Studies of identity formation and inter-ethnic conflict in Central Eurasia must pay serious attention to the moral convictions that motivate individuals and groups to speak as they do. However, it would be a reductionist error of the first order to collapse ethics into politics or economics on the one hand, or, on the other hand, to treat it as a cultural “residue”, representing “traditional mentality”. The subjects we study are sentient beings as complex and fully human as ourselves, and whose moral sensibilities implicate political logics and economic rationalities in multi-layered and complex ways.

– Morgan Liu (2003: 7)

Chapter three argued for the importance of the discursively and spatially differentiated analysis of building peace as a process of constituting complex legitimacy. It identified three spatially defined ‘levels’ of discourse, which are integral to the analysis of complex legitimation within a given context. I expounded on the global-international discourses and spaces of peacebuilding in chapter one. Here I explore the specific practising of these basic discourses of international peacebuilding in Tajikistan in the public pronouncements, acts of programme implementation and diplomatic endeavours of the International Community. However, ‘peacebuilding’ is understood differently in popular and elite spaces in Tajikistan. These perspectives on peace cannot simply be dismissed as mere excuses or diversions from the survival or enrichment strategies of local actors, but must be understood as constitutive of practices. This is reflected in Beetham’s exhortation that a social scientist, in investigating legitimacy, ‘is not imposing extraneous or ahistorical criteria, but employing those internal to the society or system of power itself, against which it requires to be judged; he or she is, as it were, reproducing the reasoning of people within that society, and reconstructing the logic of their own judgements’ (1991: 100). Yet, with Scott, we see how such spaces also produce their own hidden transcripts which disrupt the power to represent reality of the public transcripts.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first takes a discourse analysis and ethnographic approach to the International Community in Tajikistan. The second considers the spaces, ethics and temporal perspectives of *tinji* (‘peacefulness’/‘wellness’ [Taj.]), a local (subordinate) discourse of conflict avoidance and accommodation. It situates *tinji* as an ethos which reflects

subordinate public and ‘hidden’ accounts of peace. Section three considers the spaces, ethics and temporal perspectives of *mirostroyitelstvo* (‘peacebuilding’)⁴⁶, an elite discourse of peace enforcement. Such discourse has, as its basis, a post-Soviet political imaginary that emphasises ‘stability’ and ‘authority’. Moreover, section three concludes by raising issues of the discursive reconstitution of the Tajik state, which will be explored more fully in part two of this thesis.

4.1 The Global: peacebuilding and its discontents

This section introduces the particular features of peacebuilding practice with respect to Tajikistan which provides a qualitatively different subject of discourse compared to paradigmatic cases such as Rwanda or Bosnia. There simply isn’t the level of interest in the country in either the English- or even Russian-speaking world to generate a huge body of literature with extensive inter-textual linkages. The points of contention between democratisation, humanitarianism and statebuilding are less well-rehearsed in the relatively small International Community in Tajikistan. Whilst international discourses function in Tajikistan much like they do in other settings, their production is less politicised and more dispersed than in paradigmatic cases such as Bosnia. The policy-prescriptive accounts of peacebuilding (often commissioned by the International Community) often blur into academic discourses. Moreover, the terms ‘conflict prevention’, ‘peacebuilding’ and ‘conflict transformation’ are often used interchangeably, and merged with goals for the economic development, health and education, and ‘civil society’. Despite this multitude of tasks, international actors deploy ethical, spatial and temporal conceptions of the ‘other’ which are congruent with the three international discourses identified in chapter one. In revealing the particular representations of peacebuilding texts, this section will begin an investigation of the extent to which global political space, identity and ideology extends into Tajik territory. Where, it asks, is the world in Tajikistan?

4.1.i. The International Community and the Tajik Other

The character of the subject – the ‘other’ – in peacebuilding discourse, as argued in chapter one, is determined in comparison with the International Community – the

⁴⁶ ‘Peacebuilding’ can also be translated as *mirostroyennie*.

'self'. Lying on the margins of this space, Tajikistan is subject to certain general readings, intrusions and expectations. In such a way the global boundary line between civilised and uncivilised is drawn. However, regions and localities also acquire their own particular meanings in international discourse as Campbell (1998a; 1998b) and Hansen (2006) have both shown with respect to Bosnia. Peacebuilding perspectives of the Central Asian(s) subject have been shaped through the 'them'/'us' and Peril/Promise dichotomies, where the peril that they may regress to traditional solidarities and conflicts can be offset by the promise that they might become more democratic, like us.

Who they are: the peril in Tajikistan

In international discourse the Central Asian space has often been presented in terms of danger: the perils of re-traditionisation. Myers (2003) has shown how it has been seen through Sovietological and Post-Soviet discourses and has increased in its exotic otherness since the fall of the USSR. Elsewhere, we have identified three 'threats' identified by this 'discourse of danger' in Central Asia (Thompson and Heathershaw 2005): Islamic fundamentalism, resurgent nationalism, or reawakened tribalism (Heathershaw 2005a: 23-25). Often these perils are combined as in one pseudo-historical popular account comparing Tajikistan's 'valley-based clans headed by petty warlords' with those of Afghanistan, whose own war was, 'a protracted civil conflict that radicalised young Tajiks and promoted Islamic fundamentalism' (Meyer 2003: 183-184). Foremost among these threats, to Western eyes, is that of Islam - a perception which has been exacerbated with increased interest in the region from 'outside' after September 11. This had special implications for Tajikistan whose conflict was represented more in Islam versus Secularism terms, as a religiously motivated civil war (Rashid 1994: 159-186). Thus, preventing the peril of radical Islam becomes a key task of international intervention (FS. Hansen 2005: 45-54; Seifert and Kraikemayer 2003). Such analyses serve to downplay international factors such as the role of the US, Russia and Uzbekistan in exacerbating or failing to dissuade the conflict. As such, the UN Secretary-General's representative in Tajikistan, Vladimir Sotirov, argues that the reasons for the war and any future conflict are not about external factors, as often claimed by Tajik political leaders, but by Tajik society's own 'deep problems' (UNTOP/NAPST 2003: 64).

As 'They' are dangerous in these deep-rooted ways, it follows that many policy-based assessments are very sceptical about Tajikistan's 'peace'. For some, this reflects regression across the region (Schoberlein 2002; Olcott 2005). This is reflected in the study of Central Asia in general, a region about which there is very little knowledge in the West; sweeping statements are thus commonplace in international discourses. For others, Tajikistan represents a particular problem. The Open Society Institute (OSI) reported that despite the peace agreement, Tajikistan was ripe to 'erupt into armed conflict' (1999, no pagination); a judgement that was echoed by Lynch (2001: 69) and Collins (2003: 268-269). This continued perception of peril in Tajikistan expresses a widely-held belief that peace will remain elusive while the country remains unreformed (ICG 2001a: ii). For example, Schoberlein, in a guidebook to conflict prevention work in the region, judged that 'current tensions in Tajikistan are far greater than before the war,' and only the 'war-weariness of the population may provide some insurance against any widespread outbreak of violence' (2002: 476-477). Thus, Tajikistan stood as 'the most vulnerable of Central Asian nations' (ICG 2001a: i). From a peacebuilding perspective it is axiomatic that the authoritarian policies of Central Asian states will precipitate future conflict – this is often implied in official discourse and widely accepted privately.

Who we are: the promise in Tajikistan

For peacebuilders, war is born out of a failure of democratic institutions. This reflects a second prism through which Central Asia has been seen in the era of independence, that of nascent, transitional democracy. Democratisation was the principle paradigm through which Central Asia was viewed by international actors in the immediate post-Soviet period. This reflects a sense of 'Us', how we have been able to keep peace in our societies, and thus how 'They' must look a little more like 'Us'. In the Us/Them and peril/promise dichotomies of peacebuilding, the absence of violence and instability does imply that progress is being made.

Public international discourse with respect to Tajikistan consciously reflects this democratisation thinking as well as peacebuilding's positive dimension. This fusing of peace and democracy is indeed institutionalised in the role of the UN in Tajikistan. The UN Tajikistan Office of Peace-building (UNTOP) was established,

according to the Security Council, 'in order to consolidate peace and promote democracy' (2004). Sotirov, who heads UNTOP, remarked in 2002 that, 'there is a wish and will in the leadership of the country to introduce democratic principles of governance and development in the society, in an effort to create a vibrant civil society.' Furthermore he noted,

I am encouraged by the democratic developments so far in this country. I believe if it continues to move in the same direction in the future, it will quickly develop into a pluralistic democracy. However, a lot of difficulties have to be overcome, especially in the field of further separation of powers, mass media, promotion and the protection of human rights, thereby encouraging civil society, reforming power structures, and continuing with a spirit of tolerance and dialogue in the society.⁴⁷

Diplomatic representatives of Western governments – primarily the US, UK, Germany and France – also hold out this promise, bringing up democratic deficits which threaten the peace, whilst being broadly supportive of the government. For example, the US Ambassador to Tajikistan, Richard Hoagland, in March 2004, he remarked that he was 'optimistic about democracy in Tajikistan' and that 'in the first instance, this is because the government has chosen a democratic path'.⁴⁸

The public transcripts of international actors in Tajikistan consistently reproduce the ethical, temporal and spatial ideal-other of the neo-liberal peacebuilding described in chapter one. Abdullaev and Friezer's 2003 study, for the UK Government's Global Conflict Prevention Pool, follows a similar line of argument. Success is attributed to international intervention, 'as the peace building process resolved many of the power sharing tensions between the former warring parties' (p. 7). The 'state-building process, where the central government has struggled to assert control over the entire country,' is also seen as a significant but more precarious process given the centralisation of power and resources this has involved, and the 'network of patron-client relations' which it is based on (p. 7). Moreover, they argue:

⁴⁷ Integrated Regional Information Network [IRIN]. *TAJIKISTAN: Interview with UN Secretary-General's representative*, 27 Nov 2002, available at www.irinnews.org, accessed: 22 May 2004, no pagination.

⁴⁸ Eurasianet Insight, 'US envoy calls for changes to Tajik laws on election, media', Dushanbe, in Russian 0830 gmt, 03/03/04.

While the country has effectively overcome many challenges, it continues to grapple with securing cooperative arrangements with its neighbours, establishing a democratic and decentralised system of governance, and promoting economic development and investment (p. 5).

Such discourses inscribe on the person the desire for 'rights' and the responsibility of citizenship, while inscribing the state with the right of sovereignty and responsibilities for reform. Similarly, an ICG report which warned of the potential for Tajikistan to slip back into conflict made eight recommendations to the Tajik government to further democratisation and power-sharing, none of which have subsequently been fulfilled (2001a: ii).

The resilience of international peacebuilding discourse in Tajikistan raises questions about how its ideal or 'promise' for the country interprets events and local and elite practices which fall far short of this ideal. This jarring contrast reveals the tremendous power of dichotomous discourse to interpret and re-interpret reality. In international accounts, Tajikistan seems to oscillate between the peril of being like 'Them' and the promise of following 'Us' in the discourses of international actors. Such peril/promise characterisations of the Tajik subject may be dismissed by some as rhetorical carrots and sticks, yet underlying such statements are peacebuilding's axioms regarding the sustainable post-conflict state. This basic discourse provides the very foundation of international action, space and identity in Tajikistan. Thus, it implied and at times makes explicit that the current 'peace' in Tajikistan is insufficient and it requires reform and intervention (Sotirov 2004: 63). This intervention must come from 'Us', the International Community. Such discourses may be most significant in terms of how they serve to reproduce the identity of the International Community. While by 2005, few international observers were claiming that outside initiatives could do much to challenge the retrenchment of authoritarianism, this regression had occurred, it was argued, not because of the involvement of the International Community but because of insufficient involvement (Malekzade[T11]: 2).

4.1.ii. From humanitarianism to statebuilding

This is not to say that peacebuilding discourse remained entirely consistent over the 2000-2005 period. Rather, shifts in international discourse may have been produced both by global trends towards statebuilding and experiences working in the Tajik

context. This began to affect the advice being offered to international actors. For example, Abdullaev and Freizer's distinction between 'peacebuilding' and 'statebuilding' (2003: 5, see above) advocates the latter as the new challenge for Tajikistan. The following section explores the interpretations and interventions of international humanitarian discourses, and the impact of the 'war on terror' and the rise of statebuilding discourses.

The 1990s and early 21st century saw a surge of humanitarian interest in Tajikistan. In the case of Tajikistan there has certainly been a huge quantitative growth in such organisations. Between 1994 and 2001, approximately four hundred NGOs were registered with the Tajik government (Akiner 2001: 58). To humanitarians the conflict can be seen as a desperate fight for resources, born out of poverty and the dysfunctional post-Soviet economy. Whitlock (2002) has produced perhaps the most widely read English-language account of the conflict, which provides numerous stories of its humanitarian aspects. However, humanitarian discourse has largely been developed in the analytical and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) reports of international organisations and NGOs in the region. The humanitarian ethics of peacebuilding dovetailed with the norms of the wider development community particularly with the twinning of macro-economic reform to community development and poverty reduction under the strategy to achieve the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for the country (ICG 2003; Babajanian 2004). Both MDG and peacebuilding maxims informed an emphasis on community-based organisations (CBOs) as agents of change (Tabyshalieva 2002: 482). Indeed, around 2000, CBOs as part of 'civil society' were frequently presented as an antidote to an excessive focus on the state. Saunders argues that under the concept of the multilevel peace process such organisations have facilitated, 'crucial processes of post-conflict peacebuilding by citizens in civil society' (1998: 4). Mullojonov suggests that while civil society was 'weakened and fragmented' from the war, in the aftermath of the peace accords the influence of grassroots organisations on local government has 'increased considerably' (2001, no pagination).

The changed international context following 9/11 encouraged a discursive backlash against humanitarianism and re-focusing back towards the state. Zürcher's recent report, commissioned by GTZ, can perhaps be read partly in this light. His work is also inspired by neo-institutionalist analyses of patronage and networks.

While the risk of violent conflict is ‘decreasing’, he argues that ‘poverty, rising inequality, and high dependence on labour migration and donor money,’ combined with ‘uneven access to land’ is exacerbating the dominance of an elite which has seized control of the state (2004). Therefore, he argues, hybrid forms of local governance are emerging which reflect the power of vertical patronage networks but vary greatly from community to community (p. iv). By reasserting the elite as the key providers of order, and exponents of exploitation, Zürcher effectively bridges humanitarian and statebuilding wings of peacebuilding.

Matveeva’s work reflects a further shift in that direction. Her recent, *Central Asia: A Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding*, written after spending a period working for the UN in Tajikistan, reflects and supports the post-9/11 shift towards statebuilding. Peacebuilding she argues, needs to be revised.

There is no reason to hide a preference for programmes that ensure full accountability, good governance at every level and democratic participation by all. But it is not the most effective approach to insist at all times on that full agenda, especially when some parties with which donor governments want to work, including governments in Central Asia, find profound cause for concern in the democratisation agenda. The suggestion here is to focus on local-level transparency, some long-term aspects of statebuilding and the development of national discussions about the future (2006: 12-13).

Moreover, the report notes that Tajikistan has achieved a ‘degree of stability’ primarily through ‘enhanced security – the main plank of the government’s legitimacy’ (p.19). It is in the security dimension that common ground between international actors, and the basis for ‘engaging with Russia’, can be found (p.10, 12). Such work suggests that it is both global discourses and inter-textual relations with elite and local actors which determine shifts in policy advice and analysis.

Nevertheless a debate remains between proponents of order and advocates for liberal democracy. Some statebuilding accounts start from an assumption that Tajikistan is a ‘failed’ or ‘semi-anarchical state’ dominated by warlords, where further war can only be precariously avoided through the presence of foreign troops (Dadmehar 2003: 257). Such analyses of the ‘failed state’ make plausible, indeed necessary, the application of statebuilding programmes to Tajikistan. Since the declaration of the ‘war on terror’, such programmes and platforms have been explored and advocated in the work of contending Washington-based analysts (See Blank 2005; Giragosian 2006, Hill 2002, Mihalka 2006). On the other hand, in the

inter-textually constructed world of peacebuilding, proponents of liberal reform continue to stubbornly affirm the value of democratisation in statebuilding. Hill, for example, writes of statebuilding in these terms:

The primary goal for U.S. policy must also be to enhance Central Asia's development not just its military role. Like Afghanistan, if they are to transform themselves from potential breeding grounds for transnational terrorists into viable, stable states, the Central Asian countries must liberalise economically and democratise politically (2002: 18).

Similarly, ICG noted that Tajikistan's peace depended to a great extent on its progress in democratic reform and that a conservative or gradualist 'peacebuilding' had allowed a legitimate settlement to regress into an increasingly illegitimate and resolutely anti-democratic institution-building process (2004: 19). International public transcripts of the Tajik peace were never homogenous between 2000 and 2005 yet their 'pragmatic' prescriptions stayed within the bounds of the neo-liberal political imaginary of the International Community with its peril/promise and Them/Us dichotomies.

4.1.iii. Peacebuilding's discontents: skepticism, pessimism and consternation

Peacebuilding discourse reflects an irresolvable and unavoidable tension in the International Community about which 'level' should be most emphasised in the work of international organisations. However, as all these texts are drawn from explicitly public fora they reveal just part of the story, a sanitised and rationalised version of events. In countless personal interviews taken between 2003 and 2005 I found many disillusioned and dispassionate members of the International Community. Usually this was expressed off the record. I concluded the regularity of such dissent was more than a representation of the stresses and strains of implementing challenging programmes in a difficult environment. Rather these 'hidden' or private accounts express doubt about the ethical, spatial and temporal parameters of the public transcript. They suggest that particularity and context is considerably more important than the very idea of the International Community supposes. Here, I will introduce three key dimension of these accounts: *scepticism* about the stated success of programmes (including that represented in 'independent' evaluations), *pessimism* regarding the state of the country (as opposed to the

optimism of public transcripts), and *consternation* with one another (as opposed to an outward image of ‘the International Community’).

Representatives often profess *scepticism*, even cynicism, regarding the impact of the programmes they were themselves conducting to further that peace. One NGO officer, for example, conceded that political development in Tajikistan was dominated by the state and there was ‘no role for civil society’ in democratisation. Furthermore he remarked that the role of the International Community in Tajik politics would ‘always’ be very limited.⁴⁹ Another programme manager noted that their work had limited impact in terms of both physical and social infrastructure. He noted that NGOs in his region of Tajikistan had built ‘a million fucked-up water systems.’ Moreover, in terms of his project to build civil society and ‘peaceful communities’ he noted:

My best case analysis is one step at a time. On my worst day I would say: how can we even talk about building civil society in a country which is a million miles away from such a thing as bringing women into everyday processes? How can we do anything in terms of civil society when we are dealing with people who think women are dogs and rats? Can you define civil society with 50% of the population?⁵⁰

Such ‘hidden’ scepticism was common particularly among officials who spoke some local language and/or had been in the country for some time. While negative about the progress of democratisation, they nevertheless were confident that the country would not return to widespread violence.

By contrast, *pessimism* is a second variant in the ‘hidden transcripts’ of the International Community; it abandons all hope of the promise of democracy, in resignation to the peril of authoritarianism. ‘The next revolution will start from this region,’ one international official noted. ‘When people can’t access political life they look for something different, and this something is *Hizb-ut Tahrir*’.⁵¹ This view was echoed by an ex-diplomat in Dushanbe.

What do you do as a young Tajik? There’s labour migration. Then some get jobs in local administration which are paid low and they have some kind of values and don’t pay bribes. [...] The more clever guys, they could probably end up as an office

⁴⁹ Interview, international programme coordinator A, Khujond, July 2004

⁵⁰ Interview, international programme coordinator B, Khujond, July 2004.

⁵¹ Interview, international official, Kulob, June 2005.

manager, programme manager [for an international organization], but this is the very, very top. The problem is the bottom. The bottom is enormous. (Epkenhans [T5]: 2)

In such representations it is assumed that Tajiks might react to the strains of extreme poverty in their country in ultimately the same way as 'we' might, and that their ways out are through 'us', however limited those opportunities might be. This illustrates that many hidden transcripts do not directly contradict their public testimonies but simply express more plainly and acutely some of the trends in public discourse.

Indeed, clashes between true believers (who largely adhere to a public transcript of peacebuilding), sceptics (who question it), and pessimists (who emphasise peril over promise), lead to *consternation* within the 'International Community.' One recent example can be found in an email exchange between an editor of the open-source intelligence agency Oxford Analytica (OA) and the current US Ambassador to Tajikistan, Hoagland. OA pronounced peacebuilding as a failure and portrayed local and international actors as irresponsible to the problems of authoritarianism. President Rahmonov is picked out for particular criticism as his regime is 'too weak and corrupt to cope', while he personally is, 'reported to be unperturbed by the scale and immediacy of the problem' (OA 2006, no pagination). In response to these assertions, Hoagland wrote to OA that,

Frankly, the "State Weakness" analysis was without doubt the worst I have seen in my nearly three years here at the US Embassy in Dushanbe and for the two years previous when I was Director for Caucasus and Central Asia in the State Department. The conclusion, "...the country is set to remain a failed state on the brink of civil war" is so far from reality that if one of my staff had turned this in, I would have responded, "What the hell have you been smoking?" (Johnson's Russia List. 2006, no pagination).

Perhaps, the most revealing aspect of this discussion is the disagreement over basic facts between two expert institutions, OA and the US Embassy. Hoagland rightly questions the OA claim that the UTO still exists as a meaningful alliance⁵² as well as their citation of the Islamic Movement of Tajikistan (IMT), which they describe as, 'the local wing of *Hizb ut-Tahrir*,' which has incorporated Taleban and members of

⁵² The UTO served as an umbrella group to unite opposition factions during the negotiations and peace implementation period, roughly between 1993 and 2000. It was only a temporary alliance and subsequently has ceased to function in any meaningful sense. That OA continue to use 'UTO' as a marker, indicates the need of analysts to reduce complexities to easily understandable categories, and describe loose networks of individuals as formal institutions.

the IMU (OA 2006). Regarding the IMT, he comments that, ‘my folks [at the embassy] who follow such things have only two very sketchy recent reports of something called the Islamic Movement of Tajikistan’ (Johnson’s Russia List. 2006).

To characterise such exchanges as ‘debate’ would miss the revealing absurdities here; that two of the most highly-regarded agents of knowledge about Tajikistan in the International Community – Oxford Analytica and the US State Department – can’t agree on the basic facts. The OA author and editor, whose reply to Hoagland strongly defended the piece (ibid), follow the trends of peacebuilding discourse in portraying Tajikistan as a site of peril which can only be overcome by the promise of democratisation. He/she is not objectively reading facts but interpreting them in light of a deeply embedded and ideologically-imbued discourse of peace. Hoagland, on the other hand, departs from the peace-/state-building mainstream, in questioning this peril and promise as well as the construction of terrorist threat. This is not to say that he himself – like all of us – isn’t influenced by discursive trends and ideologies. Indeed, Hoagland, perceptively makes a point about how discourses are built inter-textually when commenting in his response that, ‘the problem with a truly flawed analytical report like this one is that it gets into the mix of other sources and can influence other analyses’ (ibid). ‘Reality’, he implies, may be influenced by such ‘truly flawed’ analysis. Furthermore, this example shows that hidden transcripts can both affirm and deny public representations. These aspects of ‘inter-textuality’ will be returned to frequently in subsequent chapters.

4.2. The Local-Subordinate: the ethos of *Tinji*

These days the people in power are former communists. The only difference is that now they are members of the President’s party, but their ideology has hardly changed at all

Isroil Ismoilov, pensioner and former university lecturer, February 2005⁵³

Don’t hidden transcripts themselves constrain underdogs’ definitions and awareness of overdogs’ vulnerability?

(Tilly 1991: 599)

When we think in terms of different discourses of ‘peace’ in terms of their space-making qualities, we must chart the points of intersection between these spaces. The practices of peacebuilding have diverged from the ostensible practices of

⁵³Cited in IWPR, *RCA*, No. 347, 08/02/05

peacebuilding not just because of a lack of resources, political will or consensus within the International Community, but because of its practical engagement with local spaces. Scott's (1998) characterisation of when 'high-modernism' meets 'practical knowledge' or *mētis* nicely characterises why various schemes to build peace have failed or turned out quite differently from the intended. This section explores the ethos of *tinji*, and the *mētis* of Tajik localities – the representational resources of local actors to avoid, accommodate and defy the interventions of peacebuilding. While popular discourses are no less subject to ideology than elite or international narratives, they entail much more practical intensity and thus take the forms of ways of life. However, I shall not make a 'culturalist' argument for either the absolute relativism of competing discourses, or the immutability of traditions, cultures and mentalities. Rather, I will show how, despite the differences of religious persuasion, 'clan' or region, a subordinate discourse of inter-regional peace has emerged publicly, alongside evidence of the existence of hidden transcripts of dissent against the new elite.

We must explore the discourse of *tinji* with reference to the ethical, spatial, and temporal dimensions of its public transcript:

- *Ethics*: the idealising of 'unity' and 'patriarchy' where social 'cohesion' ought to be retained
- *Space*: the preservation of the local 'community' (*mahalla*) as a social, apolitical site
- *Time*: the search for post-conflict 'modernisation'

Before embarking on this discussion of contemporary *tinji*, I will provide some historical context to local Tajik spaces. While my analysis characterises elite spaces and discourses as ideologically neo-Soviet, Kandiyoti points out that it is 'at the level of the quotidian that one finds the clearest expression of habits and expectations acquired during the Soviet period, as well as important generational differences in their expression' (2002: 253). After outlining the main tenets of the discourse I will then go on to challenge the public account with the dissent and resignation found in 'hidden transcripts'.

4.2.i. 'Society': the evolution of local spaces

Mann (1998) has noted that to speak of the society, just as to speak of the state, is to cheat. Tajik 'society' can be broken down into regions, sub-regions and various identity groups based on gender, ethnicity, confession, education, professional or social status. Moreover during the civil war these sub-national cleavages predominated. 'The Tajik civil war,' Geiss comments, 'has already indicated how opposed forms of communal commitment and competing interpretations of collective identity might render it difficult to find a common ground for politics' (2003: 246). This is reinforced by the arguments of Roy (discussed in chapter two) that the civil war took the form of 'the war of the kolkhoz.' However, in the post-conflict period, and perhaps starting before the peace settlement, *tinji* has had a pacifying function in producing a common public transcripts across communities and between communities and the state, and thus forms the basis for a renewed common ground. This common ground, paradoxically, seems to entail the apartness of communities from one another and elites via a parochial and patriarchal vision of the village. Thus, the very emergence of *tinji* is in itself a major indicator of peace. This conciliating trend did not emerge from nowhere: it had its roots in historical processes that have created bases for cooperation as they have simultaneously spawned forms of contestation.

Conjoining spaces: the attempted integration of avlod, mahalla and kishlak

Under various empires, power in what is today Tajikistan was always effectively decentralised as 'local rulers established themselves in strategic positions, carving out small, independent principalities' (Akiner 2002b: 10). Despite this, an inconsistent process of the integration of local spaces was taking place before and during the Soviet period. Tajiks do not speak directly about 'clans' or 'tribes' but use alternative terms to express local and familial ties. The *avlod* (extended family group [Taj.]) was the fundamental social unit of pre-Soviet Tajik society but it did not take the dominant position in public or political space at that time. Rather it was the mahalla (community [Taj.]), often including numerous *avloids*, which provided a public space for festivities and the resolution of questions of local governance. Geiss comments,

Although kinship relations played a role within the mahalla, membership of it did not depend on kinship, but on residency. The importance of this principle was most visible in the fact that family feasts did not involve relatives but all residents of the mahalla (2003: 9).

In this respect, pre-Soviet Tajik society differed from the tribal societies of Central Asia (Kyrgyz [Kara Kyrgyz], Kazakh [Kyrgyz], Turkmen) where kinship was more important and perhaps remains more important today. Both Uzbeks and Tajiks of present-day western Tajikistan – whose ethnic distinctions are not very clear now and were even less so in pre-Soviet times – often resided in larger *kishlak* (agricultural settlements [Taj.]) made up of several mahallas.

In practice, to the extent that integration occurred, it was stratified. So-called ‘detrribalisation’ here took place under the influence of the khan who administratively divided subjects on the basis of *kishlak* or mahalla, and took over the traditionally tribal duties of conflict regulation, to erode the political power of the *avlod* or larger clan (p. 92). This residential or spatial unit was the basis for their further political integration into the ‘state’ structures of consecutively the Khanate of Kokand (for northern Tajiks) or Emirate of Bukhara (for southern and eastern Tajiks), the Russian Tsarist empire, and the Soviet Union. However, *avlod* remained the base social unit as the larger units of mahalla and *kishlak* became absorbed into imperial power structures. According to Geiss, this process, where the Khans successively ceded more ground to Russian Tsars, undermined the bases of legitimacy in nineteenth century Central Asia. ‘Thus,’ he remarks, ‘patrimonial state structures in tsarist Central Asia were based on domination rather than authority, due to the lack of shared legal and political community structures’ (p. 239). Multiple, over-lapping claims to political authority continued to exist at this time. ‘Tajik’ politics had a complexity which evolved through the Soviet period as familial cleavages combined with administrative-provincial ones (as discussed in chapter 2.1.i). Thus to speak of a local level of subordinate spaces – under which different sub-groups interact – we must empirically justify this judgement in terms of the discourses of peace emanating from mahallas across Tajik society. The uniting force for Tajik society, which both reflects and produces this ‘unity’, is the discourse of *tinji*.

4.2.ii. Ethics and spaces: harmony and hierarchy

In Tajiki there are numerous words for peace. However, the commonly-used notion of *tinji* (wellness/peacefulness) perhaps best conveys the feelings of many who avoid conflict socially and especially politically. As *tinji* is communicated orally, inter-textual relations are less formalised and more difficult to follow. Here discourse analysis requires an ethnographic approach which reveals not just forms of representations but wider practices which sustain or challenge them. The following analysis of the discourse of *tinji* is based on research conducted in five communities across two sub-regions (Asht and Panjakent raiyons) in Sughd oblast where international organisations had just begun to work in 2005 (Heathershaw 2005c).⁵⁴ These results were also consistent with my experiences and findings from the other three regions of the country.

Peace as harmony: the ethics of conflict denial

The first element of the discourse of *tinji* is the denial or downplaying of conflict in the community. Conflict, ‘tension’ (*naprazheniye*) or disquiet (*bezspokoystvo*, *raznoglasiye*) when it is acknowledged is attributed to brief arguments caused by the lack of resources. Less common is the acknowledgement of tension with the *khukumat* (local government [Taj.]) or with other villages (where the dispute is again over resources). When asked to identify threats again there was significant agreement between community leaders and members – with both identifying the lack of work opportunities and the consequent effects of unemployment and labour migration as the most significant threat to ‘peace’ (*tinji* [Taj.]; *spokoystvo*).⁵⁵ Figure 12 below presents a categorisation of the answers of all sixty respondents in five villages to the open question: ‘What is the greatest threat to peace in the village’. Economic (lack of resources) and social deficits (illiteracy, addictions) were cited as potential threats. Strictly political or military threats to security were not cited at all.

⁵⁴ The communities selected were Navbuned and Tojikokjar (in Asht raiyon) with Koshonar, Margedar and Novabad (all in Panjakent). Responses were in Tajik, Uzbek and Russian. Russian was usually the lingua franca between Mercy Corps staff, local leaders and myself. However conversation often switched between the vernacular and Russian.

⁵⁵ ‘Spokoystvo’ (peace/calmness) was used more than the formal and far-reaching ‘mir’ (peace); equally ‘raznogalsiye’ (discord) was more publicly accepted than the neologism ‘konflikt’ (conflict) which was frequently used by internationals when they spoke Russian to locals.

To probe this perception further it is interesting to look at public testimonies with regard to communal and personal livelihoods. Local elites give the impression that while the situation is still difficult, the material conditions of the community have improved over recent years. Testimonies from villagers (their subordinates) were somewhat more mixed. Attempts to measure personal views of conflict and livelihood were often thwarted by an interpretation of ‘you’ as necessarily meaning ‘the community’ – part of a broader public transcript of community togetherness. Such representations constitute a Tajik ‘harmony ideology’ (Bichsel 2005). Under a harmony ideology, community members refuse to acknowledge any disagreements or even any personal opinions for fear of breaking from the group. The harmony ideology of these communities – in strong contrast to peacebuilding discourses – was, ironically, particularly strongly represented by the nascent Community Initiative Groups (CIG) and Community Action Groups (CAG) which had recently been established by the international organisation Mercy Corps in each community.

Figure 12: Perceived Threats to Mahalla

What is the greatest threat to peace in the village?

Community	Unemployment & Labour Migration	Lack of Water and other resources	Illiteracy/ Alchoholism/ Drug Addiction	There are no threats	Grand Total
Koshonar	7	2		3	12
Margedar	11	1			12
Novabad	6		6		12
Navbuned	2	6		4	12
Tojikokjar	1		1	10	12
Grand Total	27	9	7	17	60

Unity and Patriarchy: gender, age and societal space

While a harmony ideology indicates a denial of conflict, in Tajikistan it is accompanied by affirmations of community unity. Perhaps, the most revealing demonstration of this worldview in my research was provided during the bilingual Russian/Tajik SWOT analysis conducted with the CIG in Novabad. When asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the village, and the opportunities and threats that they face, the CIG identified the aspects detailed in figure 13. Their responses inscribed ‘unity’ (*edinstvo*) and ‘cohesion’ (*splochnost*) onto the village. Strengths and opportunities relate to the achievement of unity, weaknesses and

threats relate to insufficient unity. Whilst a harmony ideology might only represent public avoidance or even denial of the actual existence of conflict, it is important to recognise that such ideologies can be, to a certain extent, productive. They do not end perceptions of inequality, or stifle all tensions and arguments, but they can to some extent reproduce self-censorship and hence become self-fulfilling prophecies.

The overall theme of unity carries over into patriarchal understandings of community management and leadership. The gendered and ageist preconceptions of this discourse are immediately reflected in the public silence of women and the young when around an older, male elite. This reflects a local self where female roles are subordinated below those of men. The two most common words attributed to community problem-solving are ‘cohesion’ and ‘activeness’ (*aktivnost*). Often they are used together to imply that an active community is one that coheres, and a coherent community is one that is active. When asked, ‘do people listen to your voice?’ the head of Koshenar community committee (*raisi mahalla* [Taj.]) noted, ‘Yes, of course. The village represents one family, from one root [*koren*].’⁵⁶ The community leader in Margedar, who served forty-five years as a brigadir from the first day the community was opened until 1997, described his leadership role: ‘because I worked with them from the first day. All men and women grew up under my eyes. The people trust me and would not be able to deceive me.’⁵⁷ Community leaders in all five villages cited numerous examples of the mobilisation of people for collective voluntary labour (*khashar* [Taj.]) prior to the involvement of Mercy Corps. ‘Mobilisation’ here is understood as calling on people to provide free labour for a community goal which has been decided by the rais and other ‘respected’ (*uvazhaemye*) community members or even local government. However, while decision-making may not be exclusively top-down, it is clear that certain sections of the community may be listened to more than others. A majority of men, particularly older men, cite that they feel listened to, while just two out of fifteen younger women felt that their voice was heard in the community. However, for many people there is little sense that this is a problem. The Koshenar CIG leader was quite open

⁵⁶ Interview, mahalla head, Koshenar, 26/06/05

⁵⁷ Interview, *aksakal*, Margedar, 27/06/05

that ‘the voice of women has no kind of meaning’. The women in his group vociferously agreed.⁵⁸

Figure 13: SWOT Analysis, Novabad, Panjikent district

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <p>Respectful culture (<i>Izati Ehtiom.</i> [Taj.]/ <i>Uvazhaemaya kultura</i>)</p> <p>Unity (<i>Yagonay.</i> [Taj.]/ <i>Edinstvo</i>)</p> <p>Mutual Understanding (<i>Yakdigarfahmī</i> [Taj.]/ <i>Vzaimoponimaniye</i>)</p> <p>Friendship (<i>Dusti</i> [Taj.]/ <i>Druzhba</i>)</p>	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <p>Provocative or insubordinate behaviour (<i>Ighvo</i> [Taj.]/ <i>Provokatsiya</i>) – incl. People who do not follow the leadership. ‘People who know head of the police and report lies to them about our community, because they are jealous of projects’. ‘People who dig up our pipes before’.</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>To teach the youth and direct them on the right path</p> <p>Solving problems with mutual understanding and without quarrels</p>	<p>THREATS</p> <p>Not being able to agree</p> <p>Belittling one another</p> <p>Some people don’t obey the head of the community</p>

In these villages mahalla was often used interchangeably to denote both the community as a whole and its leadership.⁵⁹ Often the title *aksakal* (literally ‘white beard’ [Taj.]) was used for older men in the community who have special status as decision-makers and conflict-enders. In any of these variants a group of, usually, older men meet daily in the ‘teahouse’ (*choihona*) and discuss the life of the village. The young and, especially, women are rarely present at these times. While in other parts of Central Asia attempts have been made to formalise the mahalla committee or equivalent body by making it an organ of local government (Uzbekistan) or advisory council (Kyrgyzstan), in Tajikistan the mahalla has remained entirely informal notwithstanding the attempts of international organisations to formalise it through the establishment of community-based organisations.

4.2.iii. Time: Islam, the post-conflict and modernisation

This study has, thus far, conspicuously omitted direct discussion of Islam as a social or political force. This small sub-section will look at Islam particularly in terms of

⁵⁸ Interview, CIG, Koshenar, 26/06/05.

⁵⁹ Sometimes the term *mahallinski komitet* (community committee) is used to denote the leadership of the community, at other times simply *raisi mahalla* or *raisi kishlok* (head of the community or head of the village).

the temporal dimension of *tinji*, a post-conflict anti-politics, considering the extent to which Islamic symbols and norms might reflect the temporal ideal-other of *tinji*. In this sense, my findings indicate that in Tajikistan's subordinate spaces Islam is not a primary political force, and coheres with those accounts which show the limits of political Islam in Tajikistan (Hiro 1994: 203, 217; Atkin 1995: 254).

Post-conflict anti-politics

Unified and patriarchal local spaces, despite evidence of inequality, are buttressed by a further aspect of Tajiki *tinji*: a strong aversion to the political sphere, an anti-political outlook. This is temporally juxtaposed to memories of the divisive pre-war election, particularly the 1991 presidential elections. Community leaders in Margedar provided a particularly strong example of this. 'In our village', one man noted, 'peace (*spokoystvo*) is one of our strengths'. Another man added, 'there are no tensions, no kind of political parties.'⁶⁰ At this point he was quietly chided by fellow group members for mentioning politics. Another leader (the *raisi mahalla*) in a later interview agreed that there was no political tension. However, he acknowledged that 'there are political parties'⁶¹ but contended that 'there are no contentious (*sporni*) questions between them.' More generally, citizens strongly express deference to and respect for the state – both the idea of it and its representatives. But, this deference seems to be rooted in a rendering of time as post-conflict where conflict is a period of the past associated with political activity. The remembering of the past produces parameters for contemporary social and political behaviour. The above example offers a glimpse of the retreat from active political participation which has taken place in Tajik society since the numerous popular political movements of *perestroika*, prior to the civil war. The association of plural and competitive politics with war is extremely strong. Accordingly, the political becomes a place for elites, represented by the state. This anti-political discourse envisages the political as an attribute of an 'other' and thus tames the political as something which can be avoided or forgotten. Ironically, this gives the

⁶⁰ Interview, CIG, Margedar, 27/06/05

⁶¹ We later discovered that the three political parties represented in the village are the President's own National Democratic Party of Tajikistan, as well as the Communist Party of Tajikistan and the Socialist Party of Tajikistan – neither of which are effectively oppositional.

discourse of *tinji* enormous political impact as an essential element in the maintenance of Tajikistan's peace.

Modernising Islam

Given this context, it is hardly surprising that 'Islam' is frequently read in terms of *tinji* in the public pronouncements of both worshippers and religious leaders (*mullos*). Indeed, Islam is often woven in with discourse of modernisation and a position on women which reflects the patriarchy outlined above rather than the norms of *shari'a*. This serves as an acceptance of the inequities of development in the public space but also some enthusiasm for the smaller, but not insignificant, piece of the cake which can be gained through participation in international programmes. CAG members in Komsomol were particularly enthused by the prospect for modernisation through Mercy Corps' Community Action Investment Programme (CAIP) as answers to the following question show:

JH⁶²: In what ways has the community changed because of CAIP?

- 'We want to organise an NGO.'
- 'We want to be developed. To turn into a "little New York".'
- 'Have learnt how to do projects.'
- 'We don't want anymore war. We want a modern country.'⁶³

The group's plans for their activities in the coming years amounted to a programme of cottage industrialisation including 'a sewing factory [for 25 girls]', a 'mini-factory [for processing fruit and vegetables]' and a 'workshop' to bring employment, as well as a 'pumping station' to deal with water shortages.⁶⁴ Other CAGs similarly associated conflict resolution with the development of core economic and social infrastructure including bridges, electrical transformers, school improvements, and health clinics.

Interestingly there is a certain amount of ambivalence with respect to this process of post-conflict, post-Soviet change: both hope and fear. On the one hand,

⁶² I indicate myself in this way as interviewer and interlocutor.

⁶³ Interview, CAG, Komsomol, 15/04/05

⁶⁴ Ibid.

infrastructural improvement is not merely seen as a palliative but as part of a process of modernisation which cures societal ills. On the other hand, many community leaders emphasise continuity in lifestyles and values under modernisation. A *mullo* who was a CAG member in Shule cited as an example of improved outlook, that ‘women became more skillful after a sewing competition.’⁶⁵ ‘Modernisation’ is reconciled with ‘Islam’ in this transcript. Modernity is associated with peace and stability conveying a sense of temporal progress from ‘backwardness’ to ‘modernity’. In such a way, Islam has a modernising force and is itself modernised by the lives and practices of Tajik believers.

4.2.iv. Dissent and disharmony: resistance or avoidance?

Such ethical, temporal and spatial understandings of ‘self’ and locality are clearly indebted to experiences of the Soviet Union. In Humphrey’s terms, they constitute, ‘some combination of previous ways, beliefs, and habits of mind, many of which could be characterised as Soviet or Post-Soviet forms repertoires by means of which people can make sense of their activities’ (2002: xxi). Moreover, in a no less post-Soviet fashion, the public ideals they profess provoke substantial ‘hidden’ disquiet especially from women and the young.

Avoidance: focus on livelihoods and employment

In many of the communities I visited in 2004 and 2005, those who were not involved in village leadership were particularly preoccupied with the difficult process of scratching out a living and coping with poverty. The young – both male and female – testified that they increasingly feel the burden of making a living locally, going on labour migration to Russia (for men), and coping as head of the household without their husbands (for women). During street interviews, I asked the question: ‘What changes would make your life easier?’ Fifty-three out of sixty interviewees named ‘work places’ as one of, or the only, change that would make a difference. A selection of answers is below:

⁶⁵ Interview, Mullo, Shule, 27/04/05

JH: What changes would make your life easier?

24-year-old, female, housewife: 'First, there's no work places. Second, there's no libraries for us to be able to study. I can read but there's no books. I want to study but there's no possibilities. We need to raise the level of education.'

18-year-old, female, housewife: 'There's no work places for us, for women. If they opened a sewing shop for us, we'd be able to make our lives easier.'

28-year-old, male, unemployed: 'Work places. I want to work.'⁶⁶

Such testimonies, which are extremely common across Tajikistan, do not represent hidden transcripts of dissent or disquiet. They do, however, depart from the harmony ideology of the developing community that is typically portrayed to internationals and outsiders.

Dissent yet resignation: anger and hopelessness among women and the young

In line with the above, dissenting voices are more likely to occur among the young and the women of the village, two groups which are particularly excluded in a patriarchal system. When asked to assess whether the livelihood of the village has improved over the last year, an overall majority felt it had, reflecting a public transcript of harmony promoted by village leaders. However, the minority who answered 'no' (16 out of 60) were composed of just one man but half of all women (15 out of 30).⁶⁷ While publicly women claim that they accept their lot as second-class citizens, a small minority are ready to speak out. As a male researcher, I found enough cynicism behind closed doors, towards the regime in particular and men in general, to believe that 'hidden transcripts' of dissent exist to a greater or lesser degree across the country. They may exist among groups of female cotton-workers, peasant farmers, male labour migrants, or within the extended family, mahalla or ex-kolkhoz. However, as will be explored throughout this thesis, such dissent largely remains hidden and limited.

There seem to be two directions of hidden transcripts or 'resistances': anger over poverty; and hopelessness with the local community. For example, female cotton workers in the village of Kizil Ketmen, near Sharituz, in the south reported to my wife that they hadn't been paid in 6 months and that the community priority was

⁶⁶ Street interviews, Panjakent and Asht raiyons, June 2005

⁶⁷ Ibid.

not that officially decreed by the community leadership during Mercy Corps planning workshops but, simply, to ‘get paid’. ‘The head [of the village, a member of the MC group] promised,’ one claimed, ‘but it hasn’t yet come.’ The women noted bitterly that they had simply received left-over cotton stalks to sell in the bazaar.⁶⁸ In Shahrinav, the Rasht valley, some young male peasant farmers noted how the actual arrangements for ‘water management’ were less equitable and harmonious than the village leadership claimed. One noted that the member of the *dekon* farm which was attached to the Sovkhoz got priority access to water and when they used it there were shortages for poorer members of the community who had their own plots. Moreover, one remarked, ‘if you want to irrigate your land you have to monitor it’, in order to stop others redirecting the water.⁶⁹ A lack of trust in the local elite contrasts strongly with the ‘unity’ and ‘harmony’ maxims of *tinji*. In a very few cases it is also contributing to increased support for radical Islamic movements, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir in both the South and North.

4.3. The Elite: *mirostitelstvo* and neo-Sovietism

The Tajik people have entered the new millennium firmly convinced that peace, unity and creative work, a formula for advancement – which was instigated by President Rahmonov and which became the quintessence of the previous ten years of independence – will give a powerful impetus to our further movement towards democratic, secular and legitimate statehood and towards integration into the world community

– Fatoev, *Tajikistan: Ten Years of Independence* (2001: 104)

Elite discourse and practices of *mirostitelstvo* (‘peacebuilding’) in Tajikistan are indebted to the ideologically-saturated post-Soviet space. The translation of UN Security Council decisions and international doctrines of peacebuilding and peacekeeping means that more than the original English is lost in translation. While Russian-language doctrine borrows much from UN language, its practical interpretation both in Moscow and on the ground bears little resemblance to liberal ideals of the ‘International Community’. This is less a technical matter of translation than an issue of a ‘travelling concept’ which takes on a new meaning in a different political context. Thus, unlike liberal notions of peacekeeping as humanitarian intervention, it has come to represent a distinctly authoritarian approach to conflict

⁶⁸ Street interviews, Sharituz, June 2005

⁶⁹ Interview with villager, Shahrinav, 11/08/05

resolution (MacKinlay and Cross 2003; Heathershaw 2004). We must explore *mirostroitelstvo*, based in what I label ‘an ideology of neo-Sovietism’ (Heathershaw 2006) with reference to the temporal, ethical and spatial dimensions of discourse:

- *Time*: the remembering of *perestroika* as the cause of war, and a discourse of national progress or ‘democratisation’
- *Ethics*: the idealising of a common interest in ‘stability’ and political ‘authority’
- *Space*: the locating of elite networks around the basic idea of ‘the state’, locally, nationally, and regionally (and across ‘Central Asia’)

In this sense, neo-Sovietism is much like Liu’s conception of a postsocialist political imagination, that ‘envisioned eventual economic and political liberalisation within solidly Soviet assumptions about the role of the state’ (2002: 192). Thus, I read *mirostroitelstvo* in terms of its neo-Soviet spatial, temporal and ethical ideals.

4.3.i. Times: from Soviet to neo-Soviet

The notion of progress is clearly important to neo-Soviet elites. However, their sense of time is imbued with a different set of meanings and signifiers than one might find in neo-liberal peacebuilding. This sub-section looks at how neo-Sovietism may derive its ‘newness’ and its ‘sovietism’ from the evolutionary hollowing-out of Soviet ideas, before looking particularly at the temporal dimensions of *mirostroitelstvo*’s peace.

From sovietism to post-/neo-Sovietism

‘In the Soviet system,’ Sakwa notes, ‘power and ideology were explicitly linked.’ The doctrine of Sovietism began as an archetypal form of what Scott calls *authoritarian high modernism* that lay behind the collectivisation of the early-Soviet period. Scott observes,

At its centre was a supreme self-confidence about continued linear progress, the development of scientific and technical knowledge, the expansion of production, the rational design of social order, the growing satisfaction of human needs, and, not least, an increasing control over nature (including human nature) commensurate with a scientific understanding of natural laws (1998: p.89).

The disillusionment with such grand narratives was apparent well before the traumatic fall of the Soviet Union. During Stalin's reign Sovietism was 'gutted of living content and reduced to mere instruments of power' (Sakwa 1998: 170). 'Over the years,' Sakwa remarks, 'Soviet ideology became transformed into the ethos of the system, and by the same token lost some of the characteristics of philosophy' (p.174). Ideology continued to be at the centre of the Soviet Union but was never properly remade – and the final attempt to do so played a large part in the system's collapse (Sakwa 1998). Late-Sovietism retained, however, the elitism and the dependency of the political on the economic of Lenin's adaptation of Marx without its theory of progress. It is apparent that the even thinner ideology – such that it is – sketched below bares an impoverished resemblance to its parent, its representatives being much less involved with the accumulation of knowledge, scientific and human progress.

Today's neo-Sovietism takes the form of an ideologically indebted form of praxis. Sakwa draws similar conclusions regarding the political make-up of Putin whose politics are 'imbued with a post-Soviet face whilst often taking on a neo-Soviet aspect' (2004: 47). Putin's 'success' in stabilising Russia is admired by many leaders across the region, particularly those holding positions within the place of the state (*gosstruktura*), including both so-called reformers and hardliner members of the nomenklatura. Moreover, like 'peacebuilding', the neo-Soviet discourse of *mirostitelstvo* is not simply analytic but also expressive and performative. As such, it can both shape the assessments of 'interest' by decision-makers and it endows hard-line actions with legitimacy both for an inner circle of decision-makers and a wider public.

Neo-Soviet memories: from perestroika to war, with the President to peace

President Rahmonov's public testimonies, rarely mention the war. However, in his few pronouncements on the topic, he has associated the war with *perestroika*, which created 'a vacuum, which was formed as a result of the break-up (*raspad*) of the old state [the Soviet Union]'. This breakdown of power was followed by 'attempts to fill in [the old state] with all possible kinds of extremism at the beginning of the 1990s' (Rahmonov 1999). Tajik elites allude to particularly negative memories of the formal end of the USSR and the 'anarchy' it is thought to have brought about.

Such readings serve powerful political functions as they inscribe war as an exception to authoritarian rule, rather than a product of it. Similarly, this allows Rahmonov to portray himself as a saviour rather than a placeman for the country's powerful and brutal warlords. Elite accounts of the war, to the extent that they detail political violence, do not link this violence to the process by which the current elite became ascendant, but rather associate it with non-state factions.

In public life, elites talk about war to the extent that they talk about 'peace' – specifically the 'progress' being achieved under the present government. This kind of narrative is even found in texts whose publication is funded and supported by the International Community. For example, the second volume of *The Republic of Tajikistan: History of Independence*, which covers 1992 when tens of thousands of Tajiks died due to the conflict, portrays the collection as a contribution to the study of peace (Nazriev and Sattorov 2005). It is,

an attempt to reconstruct the history of the making of Tajikistan as an independent sovereign state, to analyse and generalise the unique experience of peacekeeping work [*mirosvorcheskoi deyatelnosti*] of the leadership and all fruitful [*zdorovykh*] forces of the country in the search for a way out of the political crisis, upon the resolution of which the existence of the Tajik state itself depended (p. 3).

In other transcripts the narrative is inscribed with a stronger 'positive' dimension, emphasising 'democratisation'. Lavrakas, for example, contends that the war, 'revealed the core strength that has allowed Tajikistan's people to survive for so long.' Moreover, the people understand that 'national priorities can only be achieved by reference to values such as democracy and political, cultural, spiritual and economic revival' (Lavrakas 2004: 6).

This positing of a managed 'democracy' as an accepted goal and war as overcome situates the Tajik people under the leadership of an elite guiding it on the track to prosperity. Readings of the civil war are regularly accompanied by accounts of recovery and progress under the person of the president. The official book, *Tajikistan: Ten Years of Independence*, remarks:

These years which saw civil war followed by long-awaited peace, the implementation of economical and social reforms unprecedented for such a complicated period, these years which symbolised the tragedy and triumph of our Tajik people will be forever linked with the thoughts, hopes and work of one man whose name has become widely known all over the world – Emomali Rahmonov (Fatoev 2001: 95).

It is noted that ‘the government [at the start of the war] could not prevent the bloodshed and maintain proper state order’ (p. 96). It is widely accepted that Rahmonov was able to harmonise national interest by stepping in as an arbiter and overcoming the disorderly struggle among the parties (Olimov 2003: 120-121). Thus, elite accounts differ from international portrayals by remembering government as above the conflict rather than as an active player in the civil war. Such accounts reflect not only the temporal dimension of elite discourse but ethical and spatial dimensions of the Tajik elite ‘self’.

4.3.ii. Ethics: ‘stability’ and ‘authority’

The concepts of ‘stability’ and ‘authority’ found in official discourse of regional elites are central to the ideology of Neo-Sovietism. They are inherently linked. This is an authoritarian state-as-guardian view where the elite are not only responsible for political stability and economic growth but quiescence in social relations and the maintenance of a moral society.

Firstly the notion of ‘stability’ (*stabilnost*) is typically used to explain the priority of economic development over democratisation. It denotes a state which is achieved via prosperity and where regime change is considered necessarily ‘destabilising’, and liberalising reform is considered a secondary or subsequent concern.⁷⁰ Here ‘democratisation’ becomes a gradual process which can only happen after significant economic development has been achieved (Usmonov 2003). According to Ubaidulloyev, the ex-commander, mayor of Dushanbe and Chairman of the upper house of parliament, this is reflected in ‘the important fact, that the basic aim of every citizen of our country and society as a whole consists of the acquisition of the fruits of a peaceful life, the strengthening of activities in the economic sphere’ (2003: 66). Moreover, ‘the perfecting of a political system for society, in our view, must be planned [...] and must not bear spasmodic character, but be smooth, consistent (*posledovatel’nym*) and expedient’ (p.63).

Secondly, the term ‘authority’ (*avtoritet*) is often used to signify a person who has power and influence over his peers.⁷¹ In political discourse, it is inscribed as primarily residing with official elites, firstly the President, and those appointed or

⁷⁰ Interview, Abduhalim Gaffurov, Chairman, official Socialist Party of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, 5/08/05.

⁷¹ Also to indicate the girth of a man of some rotundity.

supported by the President, to the exclusion of non-governmental actors (Fatoev 2001: 95). Within his own party, Rahmonov's personal 'authority' is explicitly homologous with the authority of the party. In answer to the question why does the PDP have such a strong position in the politics of Tajikistan, Asozoda proclaimed that this was a question of 'authority'.

Firstly, this is something that everyone accepts. The position of the party became so strong when [President] Emomali Sharipovich Rahmonov – a person who has colossal *avtoritet* – became our Chairman. Why? First, he promised the Nation that he would end the war. Second, he at once said that all political migrants and forced evacuees should return to the homeland. Third, he said, that he'd resolve the problem of hunger. That's how the *avtoritet* of this person came about! Our party did not increase his *avtoritet*. He gave this *avtoritet* to the party (Asozoda [T1]: 3).

Faced with such public deference, Rahmonov has at times had to step in himself to deny a cult of personality which he may have found embarrassing.⁷² Ironically, of course, only he is able to place limits on the veneration of his authority; for others to publicly challenge him would be (career) suicide.

The concepts of 'stability' and 'authority' are also twinned to provide an account of the Tajik subject – at once savage and submissive – where the strength of the state is required to control the public sphere and to gain prosperity and stability. Civil society organisations emphasise their non-political nature even when they are being funded by international organisations to support programmes which are apparently political such as voter education, gender issues or conflict resolution. This elite model of control assumes individuals are legible; that they can be counted, measured and thus controlled. The state, furthermore, is portrayed as possessing a common, even unitary, interest with the people (Fatoev 2001: 96). However, roles are differentially inscribed where 'We' are invoked with the qualities to lead 'Them', who lack the said qualities. The invocation of the noun for 'government' (*vlast*) or 'authority' carries a notion of 'self' as an elite and head (*rais*) of the people. The head of the *raiyn* of Vose, for example, explained the character of the cadres who are needed.

A great deal depends on the heads of districts and *Jamoats* themselves, and on how they work. They are all state servants (*gosudarstvennye sluzhashchie*). They must know their powers (*polnomochiya*) and know how to call on them. Heads of *raiyns*

⁷² Asia-Plus Blitz, #158 (1067), 20/08/02, and #311 (903) 20/12/01.

don't have the right to take for themselves all power. Only those [political] parties must exist which are committed to the country (*predan stranye*) and work from their heart (UNTOP/NAPST 2002b: 32).

Such ethics inscribe a subject people in need of being controlled and limited by an authoritative elite. The Soviet-era idea of a people of 'low self-consciousness and high respect'⁷³ is widely held among elites and, in a modified sense, among ordinary people. These testimonies of an ideal of 'authority' correlate significantly with Liu's findings regarding 'good authority' among ethnic Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan. Such a person was 'a strong and ruthless but benevolent and wise paternal figure whose influence would hold sway over neighbourhood, city, and state' (Liu 2002: 1).

4.3.iii. Spaces in 'the state'

In *mirostroytelstvo*, political spaces are also inscribed in neo-Soviet terms. The state, ethically and temporally conceived, is considered the spatial locus of the elite. Moreover, as it is embodied by its representatives, it becomes a social and personal actor (Liu 2002). In the case of Tajikistan, the person of authority is habitually referred to as the Rais (head), and exists at all levels of government from the unofficial authority of the mahalla to the presidency. However, while 'the state' provides a degree of identity for a collection of Rais who constitute the regime or political elite, 'nation' is a peculiarly ambiguous trope in elite discourse. It remains so because of the multiple layers of identity and political community in the Tajik context, not least regional formations which served as vehicles for the war. Here, I look at statist conceptions of community, before looking at how regionalism is barely concealed in hidden transcripts.

The state-nation

Nationality (*natsionalnost*) has remained an, at best, secondary signifier throughout Tajik history. In accordance with Stalin's nationalities policy the Soviet government of the Tajik SSR undertook a grand project to create the historical legitimacy for the Republic's borders. Scholars Sadriddin Aini and Bobojon Gafurov (re)discovered a

⁷³ (Tajik: '*hudshinosi pastu, ehtirom baland*'; Russian: '*nizkoye samosoznaniye, visokoye uvazheniye*') This phrase is often seen as a stereotype and determined by the people themselves rather than practised in governance. See UNTOP/NAPST (2002a: 26).

Tajik literature and cultural history which from the 1930s were incorporated into educational and political discourse (Akiner 2002b: 15). However, this grand project was limited in scope. 'Collective identity linked to nationality did not matter,' Geiss remarks, 'as Soviet power obviated its politicisation and limited the range of possible public representations and interpretations of this identity' (Geiss 2003: 246). Thus, at the time of the war, the Tajik state had acquired a territorial basis within the Soviet borders but was spatially fractured by regional identities recreated under the Soviet system.

Since the war, the ruling elite has sought to garner legitimacy and remake formal ideology through reference to the 'national idea'. Following the 1997 peace agreement it renewed and furthered the Soviet-era campaign, representing the Samanid dynasty of the eight and ninth centuries as the historical basis for the modern-day nation-state.⁷⁴ Monuments to national icons such as Ismoil Somoni were constructed, including a very large arch and memorial complex in the centre of Dushanbe to mark the supposed 1100th anniversary of the Samanid state in 1999. In such symbols and discourse it is the benevolence and authority of the *state* which is celebrated (Chatterjee 2002: 21-25). To this extent, the Tajik elite compose a 'nationalising regime' (Smith et al. 1998: 139-164). However, ethno-nationalism remains problematic given the large number of ethnic minority groups (see figure 6).⁷⁵ Consequently, nationalist discourse has taken two contrasting directions. The first of these consists of catering to ethno-nationalist histories of Tajik intellectuals. These narratives are most common among intellectuals from the south – particularly the Vaksh and Kulob regions, from where Rahmonov hails. Some scholars argue that such discourse was politically powerful in the 1990s for a government that in denigrating the domestic and foreign 'other' appealed first to natives in its regional homeland (Chatterjee 2002; Nourzhanov 2001). Despite the limited inter-textual reach of such ethnic nationalism, it continues to be represented in rituals and rhetoric such as 2006's 'Year of Aryan Civilisation' (Shozimov 2005; also Nourzhanov 2001).

⁷⁴ Samanid power existed under the Sunni Islamic empire and the suzerainty of Arab Baghdad while Islamic civilisation established itself in Central Asia under local governorship. The Samanid-controlled region centred on Bukhara and included much of current Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. It peaked in size in the ninth century. See Soucek (2000: 73-76).

⁷⁵ According to the 2000 census 15.3% of the population is Uzbek of a total 20.1% which is non-Tajik. See, CIA World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ti.html> ; accessed: 04/12/06

Secondly, and more importantly, elites practise statism or nation-statism – a political project to identify a national community under the state. In this sense, nation-building across Central Asia, Smith contends, is based ‘on the notion that only through strong political leadership that both material prosperity and geopolitical stability will be secured’ (Nourzhanov 2001). The 1994 constitution, written whilst the government was at war with the opposition, alongside the laws of the state, is frequently referred to as the key text of the country and the basis for peace (Ubaidulloyev 2003: 63). Following 2000, Rahmonov has often referred to a ‘new stage of statehood’. For example, in his 2000 address to parliament, he noted:

Tajikistan is at a new stage of statehood. The irreversible process of peace and national accord has reached its final stage. Measures for the democratisation of the country's political life are continuing.⁷⁶

Such discourse, with its rediscovery of the Samanids, Nourzhanov (2001) notes, has formed the foundation of the new official history of Tajikistan. He picks out six axioms in Rahmonov’s account found in the President’s 1996 article, ‘The Tajiks in the Mirror of History’. To paraphrase, these include: the Tajiks have a civilising mission to Central Asia; ‘Tajik’ and ‘Aryan’ are synonymous; Tajik wars were defensive against outside invaders; Tajiks acquired sovereign statehood before the Mongol invasion; Soviet rule reawakened Tajik statehood, despite the injustice of border delimitation; independence in 1991 was a good which was attacked by enemies of the state (ibid, no pagination).

Such spatial imaginaries serve specific political ends. An independent Tajikistan was hijacked, in Rahmonov’s words, by ‘power hungry political adventurers, demagogues and careerists supported by *external* forces that detested the existence of an *independent* and *sovereign* Tajikistan’ (*emphasis added*, cited in Nourzhanov 2001, no pagination). Such texts represent ‘Tajikistan’ as a modern state-nation rather than a primordial ethno-nation, yet they clearly allude to oppositionists from other regions of the country, and at the same time overlook the fact that the most significant external intervention came from Russia and Uzbekistan in support of the Rahmonov regime. This trend has continued in elite discourse. A recent work by Deputy Minister of Culture, Ibrohim Usmonov (2005), *Treatise on*

⁷⁶ ‘Tajik president addresses joint parliament session: full version,’ Source: Tajik Radio first programme, Dushanbe, in Tajik, 0525 gmt, 27/04/00

the State, is a prescription for a strong state based on the personage of a 'just ruler'. It is through such discourse that elite actors make sovereign space.

Central Asia: a regional community of states and statesmen

Tajikistan's elite networks today are primarily 'domestic' regional and state-based formations. However, their ties also extend beyond national boundaries. Such networks during the Soviet Union crossed republican boundaries and provide a unique historical basis for Central Asia's new regionalism – networked elites across the region who share similar experiences, spaces and discourse. Adler's analysis of 'imagined (security) communities' (1997) is primarily relevant to processes of integration between liberal-democratic states – with the obvious inspiration being the European Union – rather than regions of authoritarian states which have recently been through disintegration. However, as an imagined rather than a territorially-based community, it can be argued that regional-international discourses and spaces, in places such as Central Asia, can be created around illiberal norms of 'authority' and 'stability' (Heathershaw 2006). The continuance of a cadre of Soviet-era elites and bureaucrats in the region, and the almost complete marginalisation of liberal reformers in all of the five new states except for Kyrgyzstan, provided the human foundation for this. Indeed the announcements of the dissolution of the Soviet Union were not readily believed in Central Asia (Brill-Olcott 1996: 39). Elite discourses reflect this post-Soviet predicament. Indeed, Central Asia as a sub-region of the former Soviet Union cannot be fully comprehended without regard to both domestic regional divisions and the emergence of an international, regional political identity of 'Central Asia'.

As space, the boundaries of the region are fluid not fixed. Adler and Barnett remark that 'regions themselves are socially constructed and susceptible to redefinition' (1996: 77). Locating 'Central Asia' provides a particular challenge. Regional leaders have often been ambivalent about Russia's role in the region, at times calling on the Kremlin for leadership, at other times resisting arrangements which create an exclusive relationship with Moscow (Allison 2004). Furthermore, Central Asia's imagined community is accompanied by apparently contradictory national independence discourses in the new republics (Prazaukas 1997; Rumer 2002; Vasiliev 2001). However, one must ask whether this necessarily represents a

contradiction to regionalism. The existence of multiple and contending identities should not be a surprise in a region where political elites were practised at playing both national and regional cards (Brill-Olcott 1996: 40-41). Such ambivalences are very much a part of neo-Soviet ideology and post-Soviet politics. Elsewhere, I have argued that the prevalence of multiple signifiers of regional space – from ‘Middle Asia and Kazakhstan’ (*Srednaya Aziya i Kazakhstan*, the term commonly used during the Soviet Union) to ‘Eurasia’ (*Evrozaziya*, which has a particularly complex genealogy [Smith 1999b]), from ‘the New Great Game’ to ‘the Heartland’ – indicates a space-making as well as space-contesting function for ‘Central Asia’ (Heathershaw 2006). Whilst territory may provide a bone of contention between elites, and border clashes remain frequent, in their similar spatial, ethical and temporal imaginaries they often find common ground.

These imaginaries are reproduced discursively, and in the formal institutions of regional international relations. Discernible post-Soviet discourses of *mirostroytelstvo*, *mirotvorchestvo* (Lynch 1999; Smith-Serrano 2003), and *konfliktologiya* (Reeves 2005), communicated primarily in Russian and under an ideology of neo-Sovietism, establish the norms and beliefs which divide ‘Us’ from ‘Them’ regionally as well as nationally. Regional governments seek to de-legitimize terrorists by portraying them as an external and nihilistic challenge to the legitimate authority of the state, and a threat to the prospects for economic development and social stability (Horsman 2005; Liu 2006). In this sense it is common thinking on the importance of state territorial independence that paradoxically constitutes common regional space. Numerous CIS, SCO, Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), and Central Asian Cooperation Organisation (CACO) summit meetings often do little more than express one another’s membership and the ethics of ‘Central Asia’. Joint military exercises and military cooperation agreements frequently performed between Central Asian states and Russia are usually conducted under the auspices of the CIS or CSTO.⁷⁷ They perform a continuing sense of ‘Us’ and a degree of cooperation against domestic opposition and transnational foes, and

⁷⁷ Initially CIS cooperation was based on the collective security treaty and later, after it was set up in 2002, independently under the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO). For example, the 2000 operation ‘Southern Shield of the Commonwealth’ was an important act of regional theatre. See, *Asia-Plus Blitz* # 58, 29/03/00; The most recent military exercise among CSTO members was ‘Border-2005’ held in Tajikistan in 2005.

facilitate substantial economic investment by Russia and China into the region.⁷⁸ The USSR's disintegration served to *de-territorialise* and *de-spatialise* one regional identity but *re-spatialise* imagined communities of 'Tajikistan' and 'Central Asia', at the heart of both of which is the strong state.

4.3.iv. *Cracks in the marble: statesmen versus 'the state'*

Heads of state and other leading figures (*drugie glavnye litsa*)... want to show that they want [democracy]... They never announce that "I come in order to rob from my people. I came in order to wage war. I came in order to bring hunger." No one ever made such an announcement. The worst *tsar*, the worst king, never announced that, and neither do they now. In actual fact it is their actions which should show what they want. *What they say is not what they do.*

– Ibrohim Usmonov, Deputy Minister of Culture ([T20]: 11, *emphasis added*)

In Tajikistan, nationalism is diluted by representations and practices at sub- and supra-national identities across 'Central Asia'. This quote from Ibrohim Usmonov, a member of the Tajik government himself, illustrates a number of challenges to the idea of elite discourse. Firstly, and most fundamentally, this is a challenge to the idea of objective legitimacy and norm transfer from international organisations to elites through processes of 'democratisation' or 'statebuilding'. Secondly, it is a challenge to discourse analysts who see nothing beyond text: words – even when both public and hidden transcripts are taken into account – are not the totality of action. Representations can be undermined by unspoken or unwritten acts of political manipulation and personal enrichment. While they are profoundly important conveyers of meaning and shapers of expectation, public discourses are inconsistently powerful as reproducers of actions and thus, in and of themselves, 'thin simplifications' of (the totality of) reality. However, in some contrast to Usmonov, I would argue that politically what they say is a very large part of what they do; textual representation – while not the totality – is the primary means by which actors make sense of their positions, possessions and relationships. A study of public transcripts must be complemented with an ethnographic account of hidden transcripts.

⁷⁸ During the Batken incursions in 2000 there were attempts at military cooperation between Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. See, *Asia-Plus Blitz* # 154, 15/08/00.

Corruption and the state

The state is not just an ideal but provides cover (*krisha*) for networks of corruption; these networks constitute 'the state' itself. Their practices exist in 'hidden' spaces and are represented in 'hidden' transcripts. Here, in advance of the main body of empirical work in chapters 5 to 7 which explores in detail such practices and testimonies, the general effect on the state of this post-Soviet, post-conflict corruption will be introduced.

Corruption makes state actions highly contingent on regional alliances and personal networks; this effects the degree of control which elites expect. Moreover, this loss of functional consistency coincides with the institutional changes and material losses that have taken place since independence. Elites have lost their formal home – the communist party – that they inhabited during the Soviet Union. Local government heads are not necessarily required to be members of the dominant party. Even where parties are ostensibly significant and dominant – such as President Rahmonov's Peoples' Democratic Party of Tajikistan – the real basis of power is networks based around individuals and families. However, the extent of this shift from the party to individuals is not as great as often implied. As indicated above, both the ideology of the Soviet Union and the cadres of the party have proved remarkably resilient. Even during the Soviet Union informal networks within and between 'clan'-based solidarity groups formed the basis for party nomenklatura (Roy 2000). Thus, while there are genuine believers in Neo-Sovietism within post-Soviet power structures, among others the ideology is often quite ambivalently practised (Dudoignan 2004). 'Stability' and 'authority' may remain ideals embodied in the past (during the Soviet Union) or in other spaces (e.g., Russia under Putin), their elusiveness in practice serves to continually undermine the productive power of the *mirostitelstvo* public transcript.

Numerous examples of how corruption constitutes the state and deconstitutes the ideal of 'the state' are found in post-Soviet privatisations. Such processes take place as an indirect consequence of international interventions. In the later stages of the war significant macro-economic assistance, including IMF credits and a World Bank-assisted privatisation programme had begun to stabilise the economy (Akiner 2001: 60). However, it was state elites that benefited from a process of privatisation where state industries were transferred from the public hands of the ministry to the

'private' hands of the minister, his family and supporters. For example, the Tajik Khizmat company, run by ex-minister Sayfuddin Turayev, came into existence simply by the privatisation of the ministry 'with the profits being pocketed by the minister in question' (Roy 2000: 184). In other cases, Roy describes, an industry is kept in 'public' hands but the income goes to a particularly elite grouping that runs the particular state body. He notes:

The state is thus effectively leased to networks of power. In Tajikistan, a deputy-minister is in a position to resell for convertible currency cotton that he has bought from the *kolkhoz* in roubles, and banks his profits in a foreign account. As in the case of privatisation, state control can be equally illusory. Here the maintenance of the statist structure does not necessarily mean control by the state, but the use of that structure in order to better satisfy private interests (p.184).

Here despite the tenets of the discourse of *mirostroyitelstvo*, the public transcript is denied in hidden spaces and discourses. However, these practices, which challenge the very idea of 'the state', depend on the maintenance of the idea of the state as the essential container of political power. It is the paradox of the strong/weak state (McMann 2004), at once omnipotent and impotent, that will be returned to in subsequent chapters.

Figure 14: Summary table of discourses of 'peacebuilding' in Tajikistan

Level	PUBLIC TRANSCRIPT	Typical actors, spaces	Spatial self	Ethics	Temporal self	HIDDEN TRANSCRIPTS & PRACTICES	Typical actors, spaces	Overall Approach (Political imaginary)
GLOBAL (See also fig. 4)	Peacebuilding	Senior representatives of international governmental and non-governmental organisations; diplomatic and donor community	International Community (with reference to states and global civil society)	- Neoliberal - Technical-rational (with reference to justice, liberal-democracy & order)	Modern and future-orientated (with reference to idea of post-conflict progress)	- Scepticism - Pessimism - Consternation	Junior representatives of international governmental and non-governmental organisations; diplomatic and donor community	Combinations of democratisation, humanitarianism and statebuilding (Neo-Liberal)
ELITE	<i>Mirostroitelstvo</i> (Russian: peacebuilding)	Senior officials, of provincial and national administrations; representatives of local NGOs and political parties	The State	- 'authority' - 'stability'	Modern and future-orientated; national progress and 'democratisation'	- Familial loyalties; corruption	Officials, of provincial and national administrations; representatives of local NGOs and political parties	Peace Enforcement (Neo-Soviet)
LOCAL	<i>Tinji</i> (Tajik: peacefulness/wellness)	Subordinates – primarily male and older – in public meetings and ceremonies	Mahalla (neighbourhood, community)	- Conflict denial and anti-politics - 'unity' - 'patriarchy' - 'cohesion'	Traditional and Modern; for 'modernisation'	- Resignation (seeking livelihoods & employment) - Resistance (via radical organisations) - Corruption	Subordinates – often female and younger – in 'hidden' spaces (family homes, private conversations)	Conflict Avoidance and Accommodation (Local knowledge, ethos)

Conclusions: the discursive politics of in-between spaces

This chapter has illustrated the complex discursive constitution of the process of peacebuilding, 2000-2005 (as summarised in figure 14). *Mirostroitelstvo* and *tinji* cannot simply be dismissed as superficial or illegitimate as they are productive of ideologies, identities and spaces which have had a far longer tenure in Central Asian societies than have those of peacebuilding. Indeed, their coexistence with one another is based on inter-textual relations which have been practised and have evolved over a considerable period of time not withstanding ruptures such as that of the Tajik civil war. The discourse of peacebuilding as a global or 'external' phenomenon contrasts sharply with the two 'internal' discourses in the in-between spaces of intervention where all three types of actors relate to one another politically. On the other hand, as inter-textual productions, peacebuilding shares with them a very minimum of consensus in the public transcript which sustain interactions among internationals, elites and subordinates: ideal temporal-others couched in terms of 'progress' or '-isation'; ideal-spatial others which retains, to some extent, a respect for 'state sovereignty'; ideal ethical-others which avoid overt ethnic discrimination. Thus, we can chart the reproductions and adaptations in representations across three discourses during post-conflict international intervention. Such an approach avoids the absolute relativism and inflexibility of simply contrasting discourses, but insists that any international intervention can only contribute to the intersubjective constitution of reality.

This intersubjectivity creates an ever-shifting and ambiguous complex legitimacy. Occasionally true believers bring the distinction between peacebuilding and *mirostroitelstvo*, for example, into sharp focus. However, actors at each level are also subject to the discourses of the other levels and find their ideas and identities a product of the fluid interaction of these discourses. Very often this produces ambivalence and self-seeking opportunism by well-positioned individuals, across all three 'levels' delineated above. This is perhaps best conveyed in Žižek's rendering of Sloterdijk's 'cynical subjects' who 'know that, in their activity, they are following an illusion, but still, they are doing it.'⁷⁹ In the following thematic chapters the points of intersection of contending discourses and spaces will be the focal point of my analysis as I seek to chart how discourses have accommodated each others' contrasting

⁷⁹ For a discussion of Žižek and Sloterdijk's reworking of Marx's formula for ideology, see Myers (2003: 63-77)

representations. For example, an expatriate working for an international NGO on a community self-governance project may find his ostensible role as a peacebuilder compromised by the *mirostroitelstvo* of local government leaders, and the disengagement from public life of community members operating in terms of *tinji*. Similarly, a local government leader wishing to conduct an ‘election’ which affirms the ruling elite may find he has to adjust his behaviour at times to satisfy the OSCE observers, and simultaneously mobilise a disengaged population to do their ‘duty’. A member of an internationally-organised CBO might testify to ‘progress’ and even ‘change’ in their mahalla to represent the contrasting ideals of ‘democratisation’ of elite and international actors. In such a way inter-textual political practice is spatially differentiated and politically contingent.

Larger stories of the state of Tajikistan will be revealed in coming chapters. The particular challenge will be to show how the public and hidden transcripts of the three basic discourses interact to legitimate ‘peace’ and ‘the state’ in ambiguous ways. They thus bring about complex forms of authority, livelihoods and sovereignty. It is to a thorough analysis of these ambiguities of peacebuilding – in the areas of decentralisation, security sector reform, and political parties and elections that this dissertation now turns.

PART TWO

International Intervention and the Making of Peace in Tajikistan, 2000-2005

Introduction

The re-conceptualisation of peace as complex legitimacy and the development of a methodological framework to study its working out in Tajikistan that I pursued in part one represents a contribution to a growing body of literature which is reconsidering peace and peacebuilding (Richmond 2005). Another promising effort is found in a recent special issue of *Security Dialogue*, where contributors developed a three dimensional understanding composing representation, welfare and security. Reflecting discursive trends, Schwarz invokes 'state-building' but notes the limitations of analyses which measure the distance between a 'failed state' and an 'ideal-type'. What is needed, he argues, is a '*functional* understanding of the state' (2005: 433). However, despite these nods to the contextual nature of peace, 'post-conflict peacebuilding' remains something that *we* directly do to *them*: 'the creation of a post-conflict order that aims at all three elements: security, welfare and representation' (Ibid: 444). The focus remains on public goods which can be provided to, or facilitated for, the people, by local political authorities or international organisations. Such an approach inscribes to the participants in this process of 'post-conflict peacebuilding' many of the desires, rights and responsibilities of a functioning liberal- or social-democratic state. However, as Rubenstein notes in the same volume 'intervention involves claims about legitimacy, standing and authority that are socially constructed and culturally constituted' (2005: 528). Thus, peace is inter-subjectively produced. Any new approach which attempts to objectify the *a priori* nature of peace has misunderstood the relational character of politics, space and discourse.

This thesis has pursued a more critical approach by bringing in post-positivist ontologies and methodologies to the study of peacebuilding. As such, parts one and two are separated not by a theoretical/empirical dichotomy, but by a change of focus from the de-/re-construction of a concept to the (re-)interpretation of a case. The latter contributed to the former, and the former directly informs the latter. Thus, part two adopts the radical take on peacebuilding developed in part one to show how

power in context lies with the legitimating functions of inter-textual and broader inter-subjective relations. It does not seek to look *either* at international ‘peacebuilding’ initiatives *or* at the practices of local politics, but the relationship between the two. Chapters five to seven will emphasise the consequences of international interventions in terms of how normative stances and material allocations are reinterpreted and reappropriated in context. Similar to Schwarz and his fellow contributors (2005), I consider the building of peace in terms of three attributes: authority, livelihoods and sovereignty. Unlike such scholars, I do not consider these three attributes as having fixed ethical, temporal and spatial parameters but look at how their very essence is ontologically or ontopolitically constituted in context. In considering a particular case, I develop our understanding of how such ‘general’ attributes are contextually generated. Moreover, I implicate international assistance in the ‘negative’ as well as ‘positive’ consequences of this process, including state violence and corruption.

The three attributes are identified through the study of a number of practical areas of peacebuilding whose selection was determined by the foci of the international community peacebuilding in Tajikistan. *Chapter five* looks at support to political parties and democratic elections and considers how this has indirectly reproduced increasingly narrow space for political *authority*. In *chapter six*, explores how support to the security sector has contributed to the simulation and concomitant dissimulation of Tajik *sovereignty*. *Chapter seven* we see how interventions for community development in fact serve the re-territorialisation of *livelihoods* (under the state) and, in turn, encourage their de-territorialisation through labour migration. In each case, the accumulation of greater legitimacy to the elite under ‘the state’ (in terms of recentralisation, reterritorialisation and simulation) dialectically produces ‘hidden’ practices of popular avoidance and elite corruption (in ‘decentralisation’, deterritorialisation and dissimulation). Translocal or transnational space supplants local or national territory. Finally, in *chapter eight* I draw some conclusions and implications of my analysis for our understanding of contemporary Tajikistan, for the study of peace, and for actors who want to build peace.

CHAPTER FIVE

Political Parties and Elections: Performance, Authority, and 'Opposition'

I'm not sure a bad election is good for peacebuilding

– Peter Eicher, Head of OSCE Election Observation Mission ⁸⁰

Chapter four laid out a multi-level complex of three discourses that constitutes a process of legitimating power and building peace in Tajikistan. I now consider the specific case of international intervention in support of multiparty politics. Free and fair elections conducted under a multi-party system are seen as the essential symbol of peacebuilding's success. 'Indeed,' Jeong notes, 'conducting *elections needed to establish a legitimate government* has been the overriding objective under which all other international activities are generally subsumed' (2003: 103, emphasis added). This goal reflects deeply-held ideas about the objective character of legitimacy as a product of a pluralist political system. Moreover, the goal derives from two assumptions about the structure and susceptibility to intervention of the ideal-other: that governmental legitimacy is an objective condition derived from popular representation and participation, and that it can be increased in partnership with the International Community. These ideals lie at the heart of peacebuilding.

In Tajikistan, between 2000 and 2005, the International Community invested considerable time and resources to improving electoral law, increasing civic engagement and the monitoring of national elections. Such investments reflect policy priorities set by donor-funded research that in turn adopts the generic priorities of peacebuilding discourse. For example, the 2003 'peacebuilding framework' for Tajikistan identified people's opportunities to '*non-violently express their dissatisfaction* with government, ruling elite policies and programmes *through the democratic process*' as one of five priorities. Its recommendations included support for opposition parties and 'a democratic multiparty system', the 'creation of open spaces for dialogue', assistance for 'holding free and fair elections' and, in particular, 'technical assistance and training to improve election procedures' (Abdullaev &

⁸⁰ Personal communication, Dushanbe, 03/03/05.

Freizer, 2003: 54-55). However, while the ideal of electoral multi-partyism stands almost without dissent in the International Community, it works out quite differently in context. Indeed, the Tajik government has consciously incorporated the language of democracy into its legal framework and public pronouncements, yet is largely unconstrained by democratic institutions or norms.

This chapter seeks to explain how and why the actual practices of political parties and elections diverge from the normative framework of peacebuilding. It reveals the role of international assistance in the *performance of authority*. The idea of the performative act (Austin 1962; 1970) links discourse to wider experience, enactment and embodiment. I argue that these performances constitute the very nature of 'political parties' and 'elections' in a way which produces a peculiarly inconsistent form of authority.

The chapter is divided into four sections. Section one introduces the role of the International Community and the parties themselves through a consideration of the 2000 elections and the subsequent attempts to reform the law on parliamentary elections. Section two considers the function of the 2005 parliamentary elections in this hybrid system; how, as a 'spectacle of consent', they perform the authorising of elections and the electing of authority. Section three looks at the attempts to generate multipartyism and provide an outlet for opposition via dialogue between the state, political parties and civil society. It shows how 'opposition' exists in in-between spaces, which concomitantly re-inscribe the state as a preserve of a publicly unified and dominant elite. Finally, section four outlines ongoing post-conflict processes of the re-centralisation and 'de-centralisation' of authority, and raises the question of what role international assistance plays in generating these processes.

5.1 Political Transition: from single-party rule to multi-party rules?

International intervention to support and develop political parties and elections in Tajikistan takes place in a political context of party structures that barely conceal significant elite networks. This section briefly introduces these parties and networks in their fluidity and complexity, and highlights the limits of both institutional analyses of these dynamics, and institution-building interventions by the International Community.

5.1.i. The 2000 Parliamentary Elections

Post-conflict multi-party politics faced difficulties from the beginning. In August 1999, following the UTO's declaration that its armed units had disbanded, the ban on political parties was lifted. However, pressure increased on political parties with six of the eleven parties registered since 1998 being suspended, banned or deregistered (OSCE 2000: 3-4).⁸¹ It was not until 26 September 1999, that an amendment was passed to the constitution which extended the presidential term to seven years and created a two-chamber parliament (*Majlisi Oli*).⁸² A last minute deal between President Rahmonov and UTO leader Nuri introduced the parliamentary election law on the eve of the presidential elections less than three months before Tajikistan's first democratic parliamentary elections.⁸³ Rahmonov was duly re-elected with 97% of the vote in fraudulent presidential elections where he was effectively the only candidate standing.⁸⁴ Subsequent to his victory the election law was adjusted to give opposition parties a more reasonable chance of entering parliament and legally guarantee them 20% representation on district election committees (DEC) and polling station committees (PSC). Despite some significant violence, the 2000 elections passed off without serious political conflict and with the overwhelming number of seats going to the President's party. The new parliament included the presidential People's Democratic Party (36 deputies), the pro-governmental Communist Party (13 deputies), and non-affiliated 'independent' candidates who were largely staunch allies

⁸¹ This group included most parties who were not formally part of the UTO nor strongly linked to the government. The outlawed parties were: Party of Political and Economic Revival (suspended in April 1999), *Jumbish* – National Movement of Tajikistan (denied registration, April 1999), *Ittikhod* - Civil Patriotic Party of Tajikistan Unity (banned, April 1999), Agrarian Party (suspended in April 1999, banned in September 1999), Party of Justice and Progress (registration cancelled, September 1999), Democratic Party/ Tehran Platform (deregistered, November 1999, due to having a name similar to another party).

⁸² Parliament consists of an upper house, the National Assembly (*Majlisi Milli*), and a lower house, the Assembly of Representatives (*Majlisi Namoyandagon*). The upper house is composed of eight presidential appointees and twenty-five elected by secret voting in each of the four oblast assemblies and the Dushanbe city assembly. The lower house is elected on a mixed system with 41 single-mandate seats where one candidate is elected on a simple majority system and 22 proportionally-elected party seats with a 5% threshold.

⁸³ It is widely assumed in Tajikistan that the deal further guaranteed some representation in parliament for the IRPT in return for acquiescence to the results of the presidential elections.

⁸⁴ For most of the campaign there was only one candidate and much political uncertainty. Two of the three opposition party candidates – Saifiddin Turaev from the Party of Justice and Sulton Quvvatov from the Democratic Party (Tehran platform) – were denied registration by the supreme court. Davlat Usmon from the Islamic Renaissance Party was granted last minute registration, allowing him very little time to launch a campaign.

of the government (10 deputies). The IRPT won two seats, both via the party list (OSCE 2000: 24).

The mere fact of the presence of 'multi-party politics' led most outside observers to praise the elections as a great advance in pluralism. 'It is absolutely certain,' Lavrakas, for the OSCE, notes, 'that the possibility of electing deputies by party lists played an important role in the development of pluralism in Tajikistan and meant an increase in the role of the multi-party system in society' (OSCE 2004: 20). For the International Community, the headline conclusion related to the explicit goals of peacebuilding. 'The most significant accomplishment in this peacebuilding process,' the official OSCE report noted, 'was the inclusion of the former warring parties and others in the electoral process' (2000: 1). Although international observers also noted deficiencies in terms of both the legislative framework, campaign, and election-day irregularities (pp. 1-2), it is understandable that the international community would emphasise positives over negatives in Tajikistan's first post-conflict parliamentary elections.

However, the inclusion of opposition elites within a 'multi-party system' does not necessarily constitute democratisation. Elections can be a symbol of unity and homogeneity through cooperation and subordination and thus produce the reverse of pluralism. They can also allow for the inclusion of new elites, the rotation of old ones, and provide for the exclusion of parties deemed to be a threat. These alternative representations and practices can serve to exclude popular participation and inhibit diversity, yet this does not necessarily mean they are illegitimate. This raises the question of the extent of the differences between a single party system and one which is formally multi-party.

5.1.ii. The Parties in 2000

To reduce Tajikistan's politics to its formally existing parties and elections does not begin to capture underlying political dynamics, of which parties are merely a superficial representation. Such parties are formed from elite networks which deploy 'authority' and 'stability' in public testimonies and practices. Thus any exploration of political parties needs to consider the constitutive role of *mirostroytelstvo*'s precepts in their origins, the regional basis of their members, and their public pronouncements and practices.

The Winners

The Peoples' Democratic Party (PDPT) is the youngest of Tajikistan's parties which gained seats in 2000. The history of its development is one of the formation of a regional elite centred around victorious Kulobi warlords and apparatchiks. Formed in 1993 as the People's Party of Tajikistan, and registered in 1994, it was initially a party of the Kurghon Teppa regional elite and headed by Abdumadzid Dostiev. As Rahmonov worked to consolidate his power, Kurghon Teppa elites found their power diminishing and Rahmonov's network moved to use the party as a vehicle for their power. After President Rahmonov became a member in March 1998, he was elected party leader with Dostiev his deputy at the 4th Party Congress of 18 April, 1998 (Olimova and Bowyer 2002: 16). The party was renamed the PDPT and political elites at all bureaucratic levels (province, district and local) were instructed to join it. This process, shadowing the growth in Rahmonov's personal power, constituted the widening of his patronage network to include new and old allies which were placed in governmental positions across the country. The testimony of one party leader in Garm district illustrates how this process worked with respect to formerly opposition-held areas.

Kadirah Juryaev: I became a member after I was given the position of chief of the Dekon farm. That is I became a member in 2000.

JH: How did you find out about the party?

KJ: In meetings of the district Khukumat we were often told about the party. The head of the Hukumat explained that this is the party in power now and only this party can change things.⁸⁵

However, as the PDPT functions as merely the formal face of the ruling elite, as an institution it suffers from many of the weaknesses of other political parties in terms of organisational limitations and financial shortages.

If the PDPT came to be the new representative of the party-state, the Communist Party (CPT) was the previous version in decline. The party still intertwines strongly with government providing a number of the present regime's leading figures including Prime Minister Akil Akilov. In parliament, the thirteen-strong communist faction, sitting between 2000 and 2005, was openly pro-governmental. Some CPT officials themselves present this as a constructive

⁸⁵ Interview, Kadirah Jurayev, Deputy Head, PDPT, Garm, 11/08/05.

relationship where they are in support of the government on most issues but can quietly dissent on others (CPT [T3]: 3). However, this role within the government has taken place alongside a haemorrhaging of party membership to the PDPT. In Kulob, for example, cadres had retained their membership of the CPT whilst joining the PDPT to gain favour with local authorities and maintain their positions in the local administration.⁸⁶ The CPT officially supported the local PDPT candidate in 2005 in return for places in the local assembly (Dinkayev [T4]: 3). Such close relations between the PDPT and CPT are part of normal multi-party politics in Tajikistan.

The Losers

As discussed in chapter two, the *Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan* (IRPT) grew out of the revival of political Islam across the Muslim world in the late-twentieth century. The party maintained a moderate public platform and describes its members as ‘Muslim-citizens’ of Tajikistan (Himmatzoda 2003a). Although the IRPT won two seats in the 2000 elections, this was significantly below what it had hoped for. It is traditionally strongest in rural areas particularly in the Rasht valley (esp. Tavildara raiyon), as well as in various pockets of Khatlon (eg. Vakhsh) and Soghd (e.g. Isfara) oblasts. However, it has lost support in both directions from those who have been co-opted by government and from those who are turning their back on the party in favour of more radical Islamic groups.

The Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT) was also founded during *perestroika*. It has since undergone a gradual decline, being riddled by internal splits and tensions. It lost its ethnic Russian faction (from the city of Chkalovsk) and the conservative group of Akil Akilov (Olimova and Bowyer 2002: 20-21) to become an ethno-regional party of elites of the Rasht valley, united with the IRPT. In 1995, after overtures from the government to return to Tajikistan and isolate the IRPT, it split once again between Almaty and Tehran platforms. The Almaty platform, with the election of Makhmadruzi Iskandarov, reconciled with Rahmonov and continued to fill a number of state positions under the terms of the peace agreement. Despite this relationship with the government, they failed to gain any seats in the 2000 elections (receiving only 3.5% of the votes). As a consequence of these splits, the DPT has now lost the regional power bases it once had. It has subsequently, in 2004, lost its

⁸⁶ *Asia-Plus Blitz* #059 (1218), 31/03/03.

leader, Mahmadrusi Iskandarov, who was arrested, tried and convicted on terrorist charges.

The Socialist Party (SPT) was founded towards the end of the peace negotiations. It served as a vehicle for Safarali Kenjayev, a leading figure of the nomenklatura, between its genesis in 1996 and his assassination in 1999. The party grew in popularity in Kenjayev's home region of the Zerafshon valley and influenced other areas of Soghd oblast and Dushanbe. However, following Kenjayev's death, and his son Sherali Kenjayev's ascent to the leadership, the party descended into what one prominent leader labeled as 'some kind of crisis' (Horisova [T8]: 2) and began to suffer from what Asadulaev calls 'a lack of prominent people' (p. 21). While the new leadership supported Rahmonov in the presidential elections of 1999, the membership preferred to support the candidate of *Adolatkoh* (Party of Justice), Saiffidin Turaev.⁸⁷ The party split again in 2004 as Mirhussein Narziev was removed from the leadership by party members ostensibly unhappy about the party's entering into coalition with other parties for the 2005 elections.⁸⁸

Underlying these shifts in power networks are informal processes of cooptation (into the ruling elite and its systems of patronage) and control (the repression of those who attempt to develop an independent political force). However, the extreme fluidity of political formations in Tajikistan challenges the idea that either parties or the informal networks which underlie them are the exclusive mediums through which to view the constitution of a new ruling elite. In reality both ruling and 'opposition' networks are constantly in flux with the cooptation of 'opposition' figures and expulsion of 'governmental' representatives. For example, Akil Akilov, the current Prime Minister and senior member of the CPT, was once a leader of the DPT, while similarly, Qadi Turajonzoda sided with the IRPT during perestroika before returning to the ruling elite as Deputy Prime Minister.⁸⁹ Elites on both sides shift between parties and factions. While this chapter will investigate cases of personnel and institutional change, its focus will be on the beliefs, norms and forms of consent which determine insider representations and practices and outsider

⁸⁷ *Adolatkoh* emanated from the Northern district of Konibodom in 1995. After its unsuccessful moving of Turaev's candidature against Rahmonov, its registration was suspended in February 2001 and banned in August 2001, ostensibly due to 'administrative violations.' *Asia-Plus Blitz* #125 (787) 04/07/01; #149 (811), 07/08/01.

⁸⁸ *Jumhuriyat*. August 20, 2004. No. 93 20/08/59.

⁸⁹ Turajonzoda was given the position as an opposition figure as part of the 1997 peace accords, yet quickly allied himself closely with the Rahmonov and the regime.

representations and practices. It is these dimensions of legitimacy which demarcate authority, 'opposition' and resistance.

5.1.iii. Reforming elections, 2002-2005

Tajikistan's elections were considered by the International Community to be a 'first step' on the road to multi-party democracy. Therefore, certain democratic deficits were identified which might be addressed before the next elections in 2005. Human Rights Watch, for example, noted:

People have not seen candidates express diverging views [...]. I mean, I speak to people every day in the streets, in the stores, and I ask them: 'Who will you vote for?' 'What party will you vote for?' And they say: 'We don't really understand the difference between the parties...and we don't know many of the people presenting themselves because they haven't been exposed to us.' [...] They should be able to say, 'I vote for this person' in an unrestricted manner--without intimidation, without pressure and without reprisal (cited in Martin 2000, no pagination).

This analysis not only presupposes that Tajiks desire a more plural political environment, it also implies that this is a reasonable goal of international intervention. Motivated by similar interpretations, from 2002 to 2005 the International Community worked with state and societal groups to improve the country's electoral laws, the training of officials and the awareness and engagement of voters.

International initiatives for electoral law reform

The OSCE led attempts to reform the electoral law following the deficiencies identified by their Office for Democratic Institutions and Human rights' (ODIHR) report on the 2000 elections.⁹⁰ In late 2002, it began a process of informal consultation and in April 2003 convened a formal conference for opposition parties and the government under the project, 'In preparation for the 2005 elections'.⁹¹ The OSCE Centre in Dushanbe created a working group to consider such amendments which was formed of a deputy and a vice-chairman from three parties (CPT, IRPT and DPT). The more marginal opposition parties – the SPT and a new party, the Social Democratic Party of Tajikistan (SDPT) – were excluded from this group and

⁹⁰ The following material is based on a narrative of the progress of this attempt told to me by a senior OSCE official in Dushanbe.

⁹¹ *Asia-Plus Blitz* #063 (1222) 04/04/03.

confined to formulating amendments, involvement in relevant seminars organised by OSCE, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) (Lavrakas 2004: 35). ODIHR reviewed the draft and advised the group to strengthen it to address issues such as the increase of the number of seats in the lower house, independence of the electoral commissions, financing of campaigns, and the inclusion of non-partisan domestic observers.

At this point, as the draft was to be discussed formally by parliament, the initiative began to hit difficulties. Fearful, the working group refused to sign the draft. Moreover, as the group worked outside of parliament, it was ridiculed as illegitimate by some deputies and PDPT representatives were instructed to oppose it. As the OSCE official described, ‘well, you know, there was a lot of trouble. They said “how can you challenge the authority of parliament?”, “this is a matter of national sovereignty”.’ By late-February 2004 two drafts appeared in parliament: a CPT/IRPT draft with some similarities to the OSCE-supported text and a PDPT draft which appeared 10 days later. ODIHR analysed the drafts and found them both to be deficient. Marti Ahtisaari, personal envoy to Central Asia of the OSCE president-in-office, passed the comments directly/officially to Speaker of the lower house. Both Ahtisaari and then Bulgarian president-in-office, ‘pressed the government and conveyed the message of importance.’ Following these interventions President Rahmonov stepped into the breach in the manner of an arbiter and announced that parliament should invite opposition parties to discuss the amendments. On 10-12 June 2004 they held public consultations for three days which were attended by OSCE, UNTOP, a number of NGOs and representatives of the Presidential Administration. However, the protocol drafted by parliament largely reflected the PDPT draft. The law was passed by the lower (16 June 2004) and upper (8 July 2004) chambers of parliament. While opposition parties appealed to the President to veto the law in two letters signed by five parties (all except PDPT), Rahmonov labeled it a ‘compromise solution’ and he subsequently signed it into law.⁹²

For the International Community this law contained some small improvements and some significant new problems (OSCE 2005g: 4). Prohibiting governmental interference, for example, was meaningless as so many government officials ‘double-hatted’ as election officials (p. 4). Asadullaev in a CIMERA-edited elections guide

⁹² Interview, Terry McGinty, NDI, Dushanbe, 13/07/04.

noted that Article 32 of the new law had ‘the most anti-democratic character’ in that it required a pledge or deposit per candidate of the equivalent of 200 minimum monthly wages (equivalent to 1,400 USD in 2005), which made it difficult for anyone outside the most wealthy to stand for parliament (Asadullaev 2004: 36). One government official privately noted that this change made the law less democratic than its predecessor (Usmonov [T20]: 5-6).

The limits of international intervention: the importance of space

This outcome raises two major themes which will structure the rest of this chapter: the simulation of ‘democratisation’, ‘opposition’ and ‘multi-party politics’; and the performance of authority. Democratisation is simulated in the public transcripts of the International Community. Despite some limited public and more extensive private criticism of the new law (see also ICG 2004), senior international officials often caveated their criticism with the promise of peacebuilding. Hoagland, the US Ambassador, in a 3 March 2004 speech remarked:

Although not all political parties have been registered, there is a multiparty system, including the only legal Islamic party in the whole Central Asia. What is more inspiring is that the government is adhering to the democratic practice of decreasing the central government control over local affairs. I am confident that democracy will prosper in Tajikistan.⁹³

These kinds of divisions in the International Community reflect somewhat the statebuilding versus humanitarian differences in the democratisation-plus approach to peacebuilding, as well as the differences between public testimonies and less-public or ‘hidden’ transcripts. What’s important here is how the ideal-other of peacebuilding survives in the public transcripts of elites despite negative feedback from the local context.

Secondly, the performance of authority is witnessed by the regime’s occlusion of international criticism. The right of the state to consent to elections, formally and informally, and interpret laws consistent with the interest of ruling authorities is intrinsic to the ‘stable’ and ‘authoritative’ politics imagined in elite discourses. This state-as-guardian approach does not only provide the right of state intervention but the

⁹³ *Eurasianet Insight*, ‘US envoy calls for changes to Tajik laws on election, media’, Dushanbe, in Russian 0830 gmt, 03/03/04.

state responsibility of ensuring safe elections occurring without incident.⁹⁴ The idea of NGOs providing independent advice or monitoring is unacceptable to the regime. The International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), IFES and NDI have all had experiences with this elite discourse. One IFES seminar on election law reform in spring 2004, including representatives from the Presidential Administration (PA) as well as the Central Committee on Elections and Referenda (CCER), discussed the question of non-partisan observers. One PA representative questioned, ‘even if we passed a law for this what kind of people will you put on there? What do they know?’⁹⁵

Such conversations illustrate the very nature of the dialectical relationship between performed authority and simulated democracy. The hostility of government towards ‘political’ actions by NGOs, according to one programme coordinator, can be reduced to the maxim: ‘get government permission in advance, always invite the *Khukumat* [local administration]’.⁹⁶ When the local administration is unwilling to give permission, even for very small events, it is often necessary to involve the PA. In one meeting regarding an IFES publication, ‘The Journal of Democracy’, a PA official gave a forty-minute lecture: ‘Tajikistan is not America’, ‘we’re not ready for this’, ‘demonstrations in the street are not appropriate for Tajikistan’.⁹⁷ Working in such an environment, the goals of international organisations can become much more modest. One example from the testimony of the same programme officer noted:

We organised a workshop with 70 participants and asked the local government to participate in order to work with them – you know the idea was to increase the role of citizens in taking about issues in their area, to have roundtables on priority issues to feed into local government who normally don’t listen at all. In actuality the *Khukumat* had the say in who is invited and who speaks, but I think you can say that it was a step in the right direction – to get anyone to participate is a positive thing.⁹⁸

A ‘step in the right direction’ is all that remains of peacebuilding in this case. However, it is an important remainder; it simulates a process of peacebuilding.

⁹⁴ *Asia-Plus Blitz* #035 (944), 19/02/02.

⁹⁵ Interview, Stephanie Wheeler, IREX, Dushanbe, 23/02/05.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

5.2 The 2005 Parliamentary Elections: the spectacle of consent

[The elections] were a show (*spektakl*) where our government and the poor played the leading roles

– Dilbar Samadova, representative of the Social Democratic Party of Tajikistan [T18]: 5)

On 27 February 2005, Tajikistan held its second post-war parliamentary elections. Unlike the 2000 elections, where eleven people – including one prominent candidate – were killed in pre-election violence, both the campaign and election-day itself passed off peacefully. International Community representatives saw the elections as a crucial stage of peacebuilding. A UN Needs Assessment Mission in April 2004 thus recommended ‘the provision of electoral assistance within the peace-building strategy of UNTOP’ (UNDPA 2004: 2). The hope was to keep state manipulation of the elections to a minimum, to increase the role of opposition parties, the media and the general public, and to see the beginnings of a strong opposition bloc emerging in parliament.⁹⁹ However, similar to 2000, the PDPT won an overwhelming victory, actually increasing its share of the vote from 64.9% to 74.9%.¹⁰⁰ There was a great deal of continuity between 2000 and 2005, reflecting two general trends in Tajik politics: a decrease in violence and instability, and a further consolidation of presidential power. This section of the chapter considers the role of elections in the Tajik ‘peace’ as a non-democratic spectacle of consent.

5.2.i. Authorising Elections

This sub-section investigates two areas in which the structure of elections was *authorised* by elites: inclusion on the ballot and the nature of media coverage.

⁹⁹ The international community provided over 1.9 million US dollars in assistance prior to the elections. These funds were distributed to the CCER to train officials (\$0.125 mil.), to political parties to train and facilitate polling observation (\$0.88 mil.), to NGOs for civic and voter education (\$0.61 mil.), and for media training (\$0.31 mil.). The major donor was the US government with the State Department providing 1.1 million directly and another 0.5 million funneled through USAID-contracting NGOs: IFES, IREX and NDI. A further 900,000 US dollars was provided by the OSCE and its member states in in-kind assistance for the monitoring of elections. See UNTOP (2004).

¹⁰⁰ Power was further consolidated with the PDPT of President Rahmonov (who won 52 seats compared to 36 in 2000) with a decline in the number of ‘independent’ (from 10 to 5) and CPT deputies (from 13 to 4). The IRPT again achieved two seats on the party list with a slightly increased proportion of the vote (8.9% compared to 7.3% in 2000). See OSCE (2005g)

Getting on the ballot: authorising candidates

Candidature for the elections was authorised by reference to two broad techniques, familiar to Tajik politics: control and cooptation. Control can include the barring of candidates as well as direct pressure on candidates to withdraw.¹⁰¹ More pervasive was the deterrent provided by the expensive electoral deposit which could be returned if the candidate withdrew before the election. All three self-nominated candidates in one constituency where I observed with the OSCE, Vakhdat (DEC 10), withdrew on 17 February, just 10 days before the election (2005f: 1). These practices suggest that such candidatures may not be *bona fide* but are submitted in order to give the impression of competitive elections (2005g: 10).

The role of 'authority' is clearly apparent in these practices of cooptation; its performance is more important than party membership as a marker of inclusion in the elite. While most opposition party candidates were directly excluded, many self-nominated, CPT and SPT candidates were co-opted by the ruling elite (2005b: 2-3). Self-nominated candidate Dustov in Faizabad (DEC 11) was de-registered by the CCER on the 19 February and put his support behind the official PDPT candidate. He had previously stated on 5 February that he was 'affiliated' to the PDPT. During the campaign he regularly appeared together with the official PDPT candidate, and his posters were prominently displayed alongside those of the PDPT (2005d: 3). In Rasht (DEC 12), the candidate for the PDPT, Saidullo Khairulloyev, was not a member of the party, but his nomination was supported by them. As Chair of the lower chamber of parliament, he, like many senior elites, played the role of a leader whose authority exceeds that of the party. Together these intra-elite, anti-democratic practices exhibit a variety of different forms of cooptation; this constitutes a form of consent to authority within the elite. Performing loyalty to the party in an ultimately unfulfilled candidacy asserts membership of the 'authoritative' elite, and offers the prospect of position or privilege in the future. It would be misleading to dismiss these as purely economic relationships of patronage as they exhibit elite norms and affirm the privileged space of 'the state'.

¹⁰¹ Interview, Hurriniso Gaffurzoda, Regional Head, SDPT, Garm, 11/08/05; OSCE 2005g: 22.

Public information: authorising news and precluding debate

State control of information was a pronounced feature of the election, and became a challenge for numerous international projects. Over half a million dollars was funneled through the American NGOs IFES, NDI and IREX, in an election-related grants program particularly targeted at women and first-time voters. One such IREX-supported NGO was *Elim* in the Kulob region which administered a small grant to educate women voters through project entitled 'Vote and Win!' (Rahmonova [T15]: 5). It is revealing to hear the testimony of the head of *Elim*, Latifahon Rahmonova.

The events that we organised were political events. Moreover, our organisation was non-governmental. That's why we faced many problems. In the first instance this seems to be a very simple thing, but as one gets involved many difficulties come along. For this reason during these four months that I was occupied in this field – firstly because it was my field and secondly because it was a political field – it was a little hard to work with the *Jamoats* [local administration]. The residents of *Shahrvand* village know that while we were waiting to receive letters from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and IREX, this created opposition between us and the *Khukumat* [local government]. However, after receiving the letter we came to a consensus and together with the *Khukumat* and the chair of the [governmental] women's committee of this community could gather all the women and explain to them their voting rights. Until this moment not only the housewives but also women with qualifications did not know the essence of elections. [...] I am glad that I came across lots of literature that was made available for us from the American organisations, that we are living in a democratic society, that our community is following this path, and we have to support it (Ibid: 5).

What's interesting here is how tension between local government and an NGO working on 'political events' in a small number of rural villages were overcome by a letter of permission from central government and a subsequent 'consensus' where the *Hukumat* (local administration) acquires a leading role in implementing this ostensibly non-governmental project. There is a clear acceptance of patriarchy here: that women need to be taught to participate (p. 6). Thus, the voter education material of IREX is presented in essentially conservative and disempowering terms – 'that our community is following this path, and we have to support it' – rather than as empowering personal choice and highlighting democratic deficits of Tajikistan.

This affirmation of elite authority was also apparent in media coverage of the elections. In many rural areas, such as *Rasht*, there are no newspapers and (if the power is on) only a few Russian TV channels and state-owned *Televizioni Tojikiston* (the only nationwide TV station). Significantly, there was a complete lack of debate or critical programmes in the media and many reports of 'self-censorship' across the

country. In the month before the elections *Televizioni Tojikiston* devoted just 25 minutes in total to the elections.¹⁰² The coverage that was provided was either technical, with significant time given to the CCER to explain the election process, or focused on senior governmental elites. For example, a documentary crew followed the candidate for Rasht and Chair of the lower chamber of parliament, Saidullo Khairulloyev, during his campaign (OSCE 2005d: 4). OSCE monitoring found that 63% of total state TV news coverage before the election was devoted to the President while only 6% covered the elections and candidates (2005e: 10).

5.2.ii. Electing Authority

The elections themselves were extremely subdued. This performance indicated subordinate resignation and elite consent to the ruling order.

The Campaign: authorising political space

The campaign (*agitatsiya*) involved the public performance of quiescence. Control and cooptation practices marshaled the line between the politically included and excluded. At times this bordered on the absurd. For example, fellow OSCE observers in the Rasht Valley documented the ‘cow case’ which involved one IRPT candidate who was questioned three times by the head of Faisobod district (*Kkhukumati rais*) over 19 and 20 February 2005 concerning a cow he was alleged to have stolen in 1994 during the civil war. The rais noted that new evidence had been found and the case re-opened. The candidate was threatened with being beaten and an attempt was made to force him to sign a confession. Intimidation tactics also included the removal of campaign leaflets and posters¹⁰³, the withholding of permission for meetings (OSCE 2005d: 2-3), and direct threats to candidates and parties. In such cases local political rivalries often drive clashes between ‘the state’ and ‘the opposition’ which originate from the time of the civil war. However, to reduce these actions purely to the pursuit of interests may be misleading. They also construct party politics as a ‘threat’

¹⁰² Whilst each opposition party was allowed 30 minutes free TV airtime under the 2004 amendments to the election law, state TV refused to air a number of paid advertisements by opposition parties and censored or altered some opposition party broadcasts (OSCE 2005g: 13-14).

¹⁰³ Reported directly to author by DPT in Dushanbe and CPT in Garm.

The public performances of elites also performed the opposite of threat: ‘authority’. The use of ‘administrative resources’, government vehicles and official spaces by the PDPT and some favoured self-nominated candidates was a dominant feature of the campaign¹⁰⁴. For example, a meeting on 10 February in the cultural centre of Garm was organised jointly by the DEC and the Khukumat. It was packed with 750 people who had been told to attend by their bosses or the local authorities. After a short speech by the IRPT candidate, the PDPT candidate, Khairuloyev, gave a speech of 75 minutes with reference to Tajik history and literature and the importance of patriotism. After this speech, five members of the audience ‘spontaneously’ entered the stage to praise the work of the PDPT and encouraged people to vote for the ruling party. After a speech of about 15 minutes by the CPT candidate (cut short by Khairuloyev), the head of the Khukumat entered the stage to praise the PDPT and once again urged people to vote for them (OSCE 2005b: 2-3). The meeting contained no debate or questioning of candidates. Similar events were common across the country (OSCE 2005d).

As a consequence of this performance of unity, consensus and legitimate rule, opposition candidates abandoned the more public and prominent spaces of towns and cities to authorised ‘governmental’ candidates and retreated into their ‘hidden’ spaces. They held meetings in people’s homes, choihonas and mahalla premises. ‘Some candidates expressed a preference for this kind of low-key activity,’ the OSCE report notes, ‘which they believe guaranteed them a greater level of security and freedom of speech than official meetings’ (2005g: 11). Whilst democratic elections require that state actors stay neutral during an election campaign, this axiom is not accepted by political elites in Tajikistan. In an environment where all public space is political, a different and more long-standing dichotomy is more salient: that between the public/official and the private/unofficial. The latter is the acceptable space of ‘opposition’: a space which extends to the private homes of sympathisers and a few local choihonas and mahalla premises out of the eyes of the governing elite.

Election Day: authorising voting

In an environment where a single political space is subsumed under ‘the state’ – where the ruling elite authorises candidates, information and campaigning – the day

¹⁰⁴ RFE/RL *CAR*, Vol. 5, No. 6, 16/02/05.

of polling itself is reduced to the mere simulation of popular decision. However, this simulation remains an important part of elite legitimacy, in performing consent among the ruling elite and the resignation of subordinates. As an OSCE short-term observer (STO), I witnessed elections where elites from the President down to the members of Polling Station Committees (PSC) enacted a normative preference for the status quo: an election seemingly scripted as a *spectacle of consent*, yet constituted by thousands of autonomous acts by elites, voters and international observers.

Figure 15: The physical challenges to election observation, Rasht valley – our STO team digging out the vehicle on polling day, 27/02/05



In a TV broadcast before polling day, the President remarked that he had given ‘appropriate instructions’ to the electoral commissioners who must now ‘set an excellent example of patriotism.’¹⁰⁵ There were many huge hurdles to overcome in conducting an election in a high-mountainous country in the middle of winter. I put this to the head of DEC in Rasht who nevertheless assured me there would be absolutely no problems with the elections despite the extreme weather conditions (see

¹⁰⁵ Personal observation 20/02/05.

Figure 15) and the fact that many PSCs were cut off from the main road.¹⁰⁶ Sure enough on the morning of 28 February – twelve hours after polling stations were due to close – almost all results were in. However, as the DEC had closed down by this time, we visited the Khukumat where the deputy head (who should not legally have been involved in the elections) gave us a district turnout figure of 92%. In this act, as on election day itself, ‘authority’ trumped legality.

The performances themselves contained many elements which were familiar from the 2000 elections. In terms of the voting itself these included:

- *Orchestrated voting*, where voters had been instructed to turn up early to do their duty;
- *Group voting*, where groups – often women – enter the ballot box together and make a collective decision;
- *Proxy voting*, where one person votes for others;
- *Family voting*, a specific form of proxy voting where the patriarch votes for the whole family.

I observed all of the above directly in the Rasht valley area and all were recorded by the OSCE across the country (2005g). The practice of group voting, in particular, indicates the fine line between resignation and consent. It had a strong gender dimension. Men would often tell women that they should chose this man or that man because he is from the Khukumat. Such practices gave a ‘communal’ feel to the polling station which reproduced *tinji* principles of unity and patriarchy. In figure 16 below we see a number of features of this with a man in the foreground distributing ballots to the female members of his family and a large number of people to the rear identifying together who they should vote for before entering the booth in groups. We frequently heard certain male voices naming the candidate of the PDPT as the correct choice. While power and influence are at work here it would be an oversimplification to attribute such practice solely to elite manipulation. Resignation was an active process. It was constituted via *tinji* public transcripts and practiced on entering the elite/official spaces of the polling station.

¹⁰⁶ The electoral district was one of the largest. In winter it is almost impossible to travel on side roads. We met groups who had taken twenty-four hours to travel from Jirgatal to Rasht, about half the length of the constituency.

Election Day: authorising counting

However, active elite manipulation did play an important role. In terms of the administration of polling the major trends were:

- *Direct participation by local authorities* in polling station commissions
- *Exclusion of opposition observers* from the counting and tabulation process
- *Simulated counts* where the concern is for making the paperwork look correct rather than actually counting the votes. Here overall figures are made equivalent to the number of signatures – this often led to the direct manipulation of results
- *Polling stations closing early*, completing the count and then bringing the result to the DEC ahead of schedule

Figure 16: Group voting, Rasht valley, 27/02/05



One example of early closing which we witnessed in polling station number 75 in the Faizabad constituency is particularly illustrative. When we arrived at 2.45pm, the polling station had already closed (at 2pm, six hours before the scheduled closure of 8pm). Counting was ongoing with the PDPT ‘observer’ directing the PSC members who were separating the votes into piles (see figure 17). At this point the number of people on the voting list, the ballots received, ballots used, valid ballots and ballots spoiled had been entered into the protocol. Astonishingly, the numbers of

voters, received ballots, used ballots and valid ballots were exactly the same: 276. This supposed that there were no excess, unused or spoiled ballots on a 100% turnout. In our presence, the PSC then began counting the ballots for each party and candidate and found it impossible to make the votes add up to the number of 276. The PDPT observer who was still orchestrating the process jovially blamed this on the ‘Chinese calculator’ he was using. After several recounts (requested by my partner on our STO team) the figures were adjusted to reflect the actual number of votes the candidates had received which had the effect of reducing the number of votes for the PDPT candidate, increasing slightly the number of votes for the IRPT, and reducing the 100% turnout. However, a ‘fair’ calculation of the vote still meant that over 80% of the votes were for the PDPT. After the count had finished, the IRPT observer stood up and, without a trace of irony, thanked the PSC for doing a professional job.

Figure 17: The count at Polling Station 75, Rasht valley – the search for the magic 276



This may or may not be an extreme case of a simulated count; according to the OSCE, ‘ballots were not properly controlled or accounted for’ (2005e: 2) in most polling stations. However, it illustrates a variety of ways in which ‘authority’ and subordination were performed. Many local PSCs simulated counts to show their

adherence to the discourse of the ruling local and national elites for a well-organised election which supported the status quo. A prime example was the prevalence of closed polling stations in the afternoon of election day; their inactivity symbolised the deafening silence of continuity which the elections performed (see figure 18). Such violations did not determine overall results in themselves. They were affective rather than effective. The PDPT was genuinely popular in the sense that local people had resigned to ‘authority’ and cast their votes accordingly. Moreover, given the temporally idealised ‘anti-politics’ of *tinji*, there was perceived to be no credible alternative. In such a way, authority was performed and produced in the 2005 elections.

Figure 18: Closed polling station, Rasht valley, 6.04pm, 27/02/05. (Due to close at 8pm but closed since 2pm)



5.2.iii. *Contrasting international and subordinate representations*

The argument I have made in this section is that authorised non-democratic elections have a ‘positive’ as well as negative function in that they allow intra-elite personnel changes and, more importantly, allow that elite to accrue a degree of legitimacy

among subordinates, among itself and even in the International Community. Local and global testimonies about the elections indicate these functions.

International discourses: finding a measure of pluralism

Privately, international observers were disdainful of the Tajik elections of 2005, expressing a widespread view that they were a product of elite manipulation. For one OSCE observer in Garm, it was a ‘Brezhnev election’, whereas for another it was ‘just how things work here.’¹⁰⁷ A senior member of the OSCE/ODIHR EOM, commented, shortly after having had his requests to publish the EOM’s preliminary findings in a paid-for advertisement in a Dushanbe newspaper declined, ‘I’ve never seen an election which was to such an extent managed by elites.’¹⁰⁸

By contrast, in public transcripts international discourses represented an attempt to rescue a ‘promise’ of democracy from this morass. The final report of the organisation was somewhat less critical than these private discourses, using routine language to state that the elections ‘failed to meet many OSCE commitments and other international standards on democratic elections,’ and listing a number of ‘large-scale irregularities’ and ‘serious shortcomings’ (OSCE 2005a: 1). The elections were qualified as, ‘the first major test of Tajikistan’s progress in consolidating democratic processes in the post-war years’ (2005c: 3). Via the deployment of this temporal ideal-other, the promise of democracy was rescued from the peril of authoritarianism in the ‘measure of pluralism’ (p. 1) provided by six registered political parties (2005a: 1-2). In such texts, international discourse serves to reduce the political context to the technical, legislative and physical environment. It was a ‘lack of implementation’ of electoral law which was the problem (2005c: 1). As a consequence, any criticism remained constrained by peacebuilding’s hope of long-term progress towards a reformed state.

Subordinate discourses: resigning to authority

The requirement of participation in parliamentary elections would at first sight seem to provide something of a challenge to *tinji* discourse. However, the extraordinary predictability of results reaffirmed its anti-politics and conflict avoidance ethics. This

¹⁰⁷ Personal communications, 27/02/05.

¹⁰⁸ Personal communication, 03/03/05.

predictability has been a constant feature of Tajik elections in the country's short history (Ghani 2001) but the widespread acceptance of these (predictable) results is a much more recent phenomenon that perhaps began with the December 1999 presidential elections. Subordinate testimonies reflected widespread apathy and dismissal of the process as something which had little bearing on their lives. They departed substantially from the OSCE's peril/promise dichotomy, its ethical and ontological individualism, and its optimism in the universal validity and linear progress of democracy. Indeed, 'democracy' becomes something quite different in the Tajik context. Unlike in the neighbouring country of Kyrgyzstan where fraudulent elections prompted a popular coup or 'revolution', elite manipulation of elections was almost universally accepted in *tinji* public transcripts.

Practices and representations of communal voting were marked by collectivist notions of duty and obligation. Rahmonova, for example, who administered the 'Vote and Win!' project, considers the goal of the project to be the 'participation' of women, i.e. simply being present and going through the process, often for the first time, and thus reducing the amount of family voting. 'Groups of girls and women came to vote themselves,' she remarked, 'which was one of our goals. They participated directly, in person. This was exactly our purpose' ([T15], 6). But both men and women were seemingly voting for the status quo. One Taxi driver noted to me why and how he was voting.

JH: Will you vote?

Taxi driver: Yes, of course, it's the duty of the citizen. I'll tell you: I'll vote for democracy, for the democratic party.

JH: For the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT)?

TD: Yes, for the President, the head of democracy (*glava demokratii*).

[NB. The president is the Chair of the NDPT while the DPT is an opposition party that was part of the UTO during the war.]

This conversation is not necessarily typical but the lack of knowledge and interest which it reveals was widespread. In other cases, a preference for political continuity was presented in terms of disdain for the President, more often total disinterest in 'democracy'. I was told in several conversations that those in power are better candidates because they have good connections and thus are more likely to be able to

do things for people.¹⁰⁹ For some, family or group connections offer the hope that a local elite can provide some assistance to ease their difficulties. For others, having experienced a relatively effective single party during the Soviet Union, there is simply a preference for such a unified system (Olimova and Bowyer 2002: 10).

These subordinate representations of process and uniformity – a performance of powerlessness – differ somewhat from the public transcript of elites, yet they resign to *mirostroytelstvo* in that they affirm, in terms of *tinji*, that peace requires ‘unity’. One explanation for this resignation is that Tajiks are ‘happy slaves’ who are resigned to structures of domination because they offer no meaningful alternative. Opposition elites present such people in terms of an ‘uneducated’ population which is ‘easy to manipulate’ who are thus open to ‘threats’ and ‘false information’ about candidates.¹¹⁰ From this perspective, there is a complete lack of consent or even resignation in the Tajik polity as citizens are totally disempowered and have their choices made for them. However, this does not seem to be a fair description of either the enactment of the elections or the range of public attitudes in post-Soviet Tajikistan. For the majority, there is an observable ambivalence where it becomes normal, justifiable and even a moral requirement not to know or care about politics. One young woman in Kulob remarked,

I don't know anything about the elections [...]. There is no gas, no television and no radio. In circumstances like these, how are you supposed to know what the election is about and who the candidates are?¹¹¹

Indeed, disinterest and disdain for politics all become more understandable when one grasps that most Tajiks have little frame of reference for ‘democracy’ outside of their experiences since the fall of the Soviet Union. In particular, the country’s rancorous first presidential elections in 1991 are remembered in such a way as to associate ‘elections’ with ‘civil war’.¹¹²

Via analysis of international and local discourses and practices we can see how the elections simultaneously constitute a ‘spectacle of consent’ and a non-event. This was acutely illustrated in an election fair organised by IFES in Dushanbe (see

¹⁰⁹ See also RFE/RL *CAR*, Vol. 5, No. 7, 23/02/05.

¹¹⁰ Personal communication, OSCE LTO, 3/03/05.

¹¹¹ RFE/RL, *CAR*, Vol. 5, No. 7, 23/02/05

¹¹² See chapter 2.1.i, chapter 4.2.ii and chapter 7.1.iii.

figure 19). The event took place in a fanfare of traditional Tajik trumpets, following welcome speeches by senior representatives from CCER and IFES. Inside, representatives of international organisations mulled around while young locals took bundles of flyers and information leaflets from the various party desks. Surprised by this enthusiasm, I asked a group of young people outside why they had taken so many leaflets. They reported that the leaflets could be used to make *stakanchiki* – paper cones used to sell popcorn. The story echoes the findings here that elections were functional for elites in the inclusion and exclusion from power of certain individuals, and in maintaining a relationship with international donors and allies, but they had little discernible effect on the lives of the vast majority.

Figure 19: Fanfare at the IFES election fair, Dushanbe, 25/02/05



5.3. Dialogue with the ‘Opposition’: discourse in an in-between space

We knew that the PDPT would win [the 2005 parliamentary elections.] They would've won even if they hadn't so impudently utilised 'administrative resources'. Because the situation today is such that our only trump card is that we, practically of all secular states, are the only one who has an Islamic Revival Party. With this we are playing our trump card. In other words, when they say that we don't have democracy, we say emphatically that we have the IRPT.

Turko Dinkayev, journalist, Kulob ([T4]: 4)

The previous section illustrated the limits of international interventions to address the issue of consent – the relationship between elite and popular spaces – in the 2005 parliamentary elections. This section looks at international attempts to create new rules and beliefs between government and opposition through various dialogue projects. It will be argued that in Tajikistan, this ‘opposition’ constitutes an evanescent in-between space found between international intervention and the amorphous political space of the official elite.

In peacebuilding terms dialogue is a fundamental element of peace and a necessary dimension of any peace process from the start. The Dartmouth Conference project under Hal Saunders introduced the idea of the ‘multi-level peace process’ to Tajikistan in 1993, initially meeting in Moscow for a track two mediation process and eventually trying to link civil society to intra-elite dialogue (Matveeva 2006). In 2000 and 2001, inspired by the Dartmouth process, UNTOP and the OSCE began dialogue projects. UNTOP’s Political Discussion Club (PDC), in partnership with the National Association of Tajik Political Scientists, held around ten roundtable meetings each year in towns and cities across the country involving heads of local government, political party representatives, civil society and the media. Each year had a theme which was cognate to UNTOP’s peacebuilding aims.¹¹³ The OSCE meanwhile began a high-level dialogue supported by the German and Swiss governments and the Centre for OSCE Research (CORE) in Hamburg discussing the role of Islam in Tajik politics leading to a document of confidence-building measures and two publications.¹¹⁴ In addition to this major project, regional OSCE centres conducted occasional dialogue forums between political parties, known as ‘Political Plov’.¹¹⁵ Such projects have been lauded by one practitioner as ‘substitutes [for] the lack of open political discussion in the parliament’, whilst simultaneously relying ‘on the good will of the

¹¹³ Themes included: ‘The peace-building process in Tajikistan: problems and ways to resolve them’ (2001); ‘The cooperation of local self government, local authorities, NGOs, the mass media, political parties and private businesses in the development of democracy and the free market in Tajikistan’ (2002); ‘The broadening of pluralism in Tajikistan: political parties, elections and the national parliament’ (2003), See UNTOP/NAPST 2001a, 2001b, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2002d, and 2003. In 2003 there were 11 meetings and 1,350 participants (UNTOP 2003: 58)

¹¹⁴ The project was entitled, ‘The creation of confidence-building dialogue on the existence and cooperation of cultures and civilizations in the OSCE region’. In October 2002 the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs and the Programme for the Study of International Organisations of the Graduate Institute for International Studies (HEI) in Geneva joined the project. (Kraikemaijer and Zeifert 2003; Bitter et al 2004)

¹¹⁵ The meetings involved a local dish of plov alongside the discussions.

government to continue the dialogue that they started through the peace process' (Malekzade [T11]: 1). This tension raises questions about the limits of international intervention when faced with local discourses and spaces. If they truly allow 'open discussion' surely we should see some of the testimonies of hidden transcripts begin to penetrate the public spaces of dialogue.

5.3.i. Opposition Discourses

At first sight Tajikistan's opposition discourses can appear to be a critique of the ruling elite. However, a closer look at the publications produced by internationally-supported dialogue projects illustrates the points of inter-textuality between them, as well as the points of contrast. Opposition discourses oscillate between radical yet 'hidden' dissent from *mirostroitelstvo* and conformity with the statements of the ruling elite.

From 'hidden' radicalism to public conformism

The 'hidden transcripts' of opposition figures often provide stronger criticism and, in some cases, appear to reflect sincerely held commitments to pluralism (Narziev [T12]: 8). Political party leaders will openly criticise the statements and policies of the government but only outside of public spaces. For example, one noted

Now there's no stability (*stabilnost*). It's just that people are afraid of the ruling regime – and indeed they stop at nothing! On television they constantly repeat the recordings of the events of 1992, and through the mass media they give the appearance that the opposition is about war and instability (*nistabilnost*).¹¹⁶

Such accounts explicitly respond to both ruling elite and international accounts. In another example, opposition activist Mohinisso Horisova noted how the dependency of the Tajik press on the government made the idea of independent election broadcasts – which, she noted, were praised by the OSCE in their report – a myth (Horisova [T8]: 8). While such views may be common in private, public statements against exploitation and domination are few and far between. These transcripts remain hidden due to the hegemonic role of neo-soviet *mirostroitelstvo*, as the legitimating tool of the official elite, within public space.

¹¹⁶ Interview, political party leader, Dushanbe, August 2005

In consequence, opposition figures, including some of those who might otherwise hold 'radical' views, take on more conformist elite perspectives. This is reflected in the conclusions of dialogue exercises, which represent a 'compromise' between ruling and opposition elites, and can be so bland as to be almost absent of meaning. For example, the headline conclusion of the German-Swiss dialogue exercise between 2001 and 2004, involving some very senior elites from government and opposition, noted:

The harmonisation of the correlation of state and religion is the important prerequisite for the protection of national consolidation, of the political and moral wholeness of the young Tajik state, and also of the stability of the process of its further formation (Bitter et al. 2004: 41).

It went on to emphasise the separation of religious organisations from the state (as guaranteed by article 8 of Tajikistan's constitution) and opaquely describes Islam as 'the organic ingredient of Tajik society and national culture and has a real influence on social-political processes' (p. 42). It highlighted the importance of overcoming 'disunity between Islam and secularism' through 'unifying factors' (p. 42). This, it argues, involves taking a common front against external threats principally emanating from Afghanistan (pp. 42-3). It is extraordinary how closely these findings echo official pronouncements.

Exponents of dialogue exercises argue that it is the process rather than the results which are important here (Saunders 1999). However, this process occurs in a highly politicised environment which does not allow challenges to 'authority'. The conclusions of dialogues function as shifting signifiers that can be accorded different meanings in different spaces. To international officials, this might require fundamental political as well as economic reform. To elites, an evolutionary process of elite-led economic development in an ordered society can overcome poverty and the conditions for radicalisation (See also Olimova 2003 and Usmonov 2003a). Many in the ostensible opposition as well as civil society representatives express similar viewpoints (Himmatzoda 2003b; Gafforov [T6]: 4; Kamullodinov [T10]: 4; Zoirov 2003: 224-5). Rahmatullo Valiev, the deputy chair of the DPT, for example, argues that 'there should be rotation in government (*rotatsiya vo vlasti*)' for the elections to count as 'free' and 'democratic' [T21]. By such an account it is the failure of the state to provide places in government for the opposition which is the weakness of democracy. The paucity of alternative viewpoints to the public transcript of

mirostroytelstvo indicates the homogenous nature of Tajikistan's elite public transcripts.

IRPT discourses of peace

IRPT testimonies mirror this oscillation between public conformism and a degree of hidden dissent. While many party members have become disenchanted with the peace process, the leadership, many of whom have gained financially from the peace agreement and their relationships with international donors, has stayed committed to the 'peace'. IRPT leaders' accounts seek to overcome elite representations of political parties and political Islam with the war and justify their own profits from the peace. The leader of the party until 2006, Nuri¹¹⁷, emphasised the compromises that were made for 'people's general interests' and 'unity and mutual understanding'.¹¹⁸ Underpinning this perspective were elite beliefs of the Tajik subject as backward and politically unaware ('they used to live like slaves in Soviet times and, in fact, did not have any political views')¹¹⁹, and that Tajik space has its own political conditions ('Tajikistan is not Europe and does not yet have developed democratic traditions').¹²⁰ Nuri was frequently complimentary about President Rahmonov, never entered into harsh criticism of governmental elites, and had even suggested that an IRPT-PDPT coalition would be possible.¹²¹

Given such public conformism, the IRPT has lost members to radical groups (Olimova and Bowyer 2002: 29). Moreover, in an authoritarian environment, its ability to represent political Islam to a wider audience is extremely limited. However, with both 'conservative' and 'liberal' orientations in the party, IRPT discourses should not be characterised monolithically. These wings are to some extent represented by the vice-chairs of the party, Muhammadsharif Himatzoda and Muhiddin Kabiri. Himmatzoda presses for an increased role of Islam in politics, questions the separation of church and state as a Western idea inappropriate for Islamic societies, and objects to the interpretation of article 8 (on the secular state) of

¹¹⁷ Nuri died in August 2006 and was replaced by Kabiri.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Said Abdullo Nuri, Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mashhad, in Persian 0100 gmt 07 Apr 00, available at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/tajikistan/hypermail/200004/0010.html>, accessed: 10/02/05.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ IWPR, RCA, No. 437, 24/02/06.

¹²¹ Ibid.

the constitution in these terms (2003a). Kabiri, however, tends towards a more liberal Islam which is popular with the International Community. His writings and public comments have particularly accentuated the differences between the IRPT and radical groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir (Kabiri 2003a), and emphasised cooperation with international organisations (2003b). Indeed, as an English speaker who often travels to Europe, Kabiri has been involved in many international programmes and is a frequent interviewee of visiting international journalists.

Despite these differences, both 'liberal' and 'conservative' wings of the IRPT have remained moderate in the face of increased pressure by the government and shrinking space for political action. The party has largely kept the rules of 'authority' and consequently has weakened vis-à-vis the regime. Some have argued that this constitutes a 'de-Islamicisation' of the IRPT which has created increased support for radical organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir (Karagiannis 2006). In this sense the possibility for new conflict may be produced by Tajikistan's process of peacebuilding. However, investigating these nascent hidden spaces of radicalism would require substantial ethnographic research beyond the scope of this inquiry.

5.3.ii. In-between spaces and the International Community

Both the opposition in general and the IRPT in particular gravitate between a 'hidden' critique of Tajikistan's post-war authoritarianism and public conformity with the state. That the radical discourses, often deployed by the same individuals, found in an internationalised 'opposition' space are silenced in public spaces by discourses of conformity indicates the importance of space for discourse. Thus the function of elite space is such that 'opposition' parties exist outside political space. Where then do they exist?

'Opposition' space: between UNTOP and a hard place

The programmes of the International Community are predicated under the assumption of a public sphere that somehow exists *a priori* to government restrictions; if only this space can be opened up then democratic politics can emerge. The OSCE reported, for example, a political party environment which is 'to some extent restricted' (2005g: 10-11). In such a way, it is assumed that if specific institutional and observable impediments are removed, a pluralistic political culture can take root. The

International Community seeks to support this process through dialogue programmes and events where ‘political parties sit round one table and listen to one another and more or less tolerate the opinions of each other’ (Shoiev [T19]: 5-6). Many political party representatives praise the space they are given to speak out in such low profile events out of the public eye and the opportunities and insights afforded by overseas visits and seminars. ‘You know,’ Horisova remarked regarding an NDI-organised trip to observe elections in Poland, ‘for a Tajik, when traveling overseas the most important and best thing is the freedom. For me it was very interesting to see how people vote. No one forces them, they simply go and vote for the party that they want’ ([T8]: 7).

Such international events, whether those of the Polish elections or seminars in OSCE or UNTOP buildings, represent an *in-between space* where a debate can take place. They exist tenuously, in contrast to the official elite space of government, rather than representing the opening up of government to other voices. In Tajikistan, they create ‘opposition’ (a simulated alternative to opposition) rather than opposition as it is understood in peacebuilding discourse (a real alternative to government). This affirms Liu’s argument that ‘space is complicit with exercises of authority’ (2002: 8). These in-between spaces produce their own institutions and practices that exist apart from government and leave its authority unchallenged. They thus *simulate* democracy among Tajiks rather than actually democratising elite and popular spaces of Tajikistan. This apartness of the ‘opposition’ is maintained through their role as recipients of international aid and as functionaries of international programmes. Many of the senior representatives of political parties which I interviewed also ran their own NGOs to provide a sideline income. In addition, before the elections they received grants to support their activities around the elections and provide personal incomes for party representatives – almost \$1 million was dispersed in total in 2004-2005 (UNTOP 2004). Supported by international programmes, political parties can seem even more detached from local realities; their *raison d’etre* becomes the simulation of practices predicated on international discourses, rather than attending to local concerns. As a consequence of such simulation they are able to continue to exist.

This simulated, evanescent context of the internationalised ‘opposition’ is most apparent where international spaces touch elite spaces. I received numerous complaints over 2004 and 2005 from opposition figures about the OSCE and UN’s

failure to speak out regarding, among other things, the spurious constitutional referendum of 2003, and the violations in the 2005 elections. Ishonov, the CPT Head for Garm district, for example, noted that international training seminars produced ‘general comments’ (*obshchie frazi*) but ‘very little of substance’.¹²² When such internationally-supported events gain any kind of profile they become politicised and are controlled by the regime. For example, in Khujond in 2004 the PDC was dominated by governmental elites who used it as an opportunity to perform their loyalty to the state. The meeting was held in government buildings while initially opposition representatives were shut outside as the head of UNTOP and senior members of the OSCE sat inside. A series of governmental speakers praised the regime in front of an audience of hundreds of state servants (*goschinnovniki*) who applauded every speech. When the opposition parties were allowed in they had to stand at the sides. After they were eventually given a few minutes to speak they were met with silence.¹²³

The SDPT as internationalised political party

The SDPT, as the youngest opposition party and a party of the intelligentsia, rather than a regionally-based party, is a particularly strong example of a party which exists in an in-between space. It oscillates between internationalised ‘opposition’ and the control and cooptation strategies of the regime. The SDPT began after a meeting between various opposition party representatives who were excluded from the 2000 elections including Ramatillo Zoirov, leader of *Adolat va Taraqqiyot* (‘Justice and Progress’) and Shokirjon Hakimov, a member of the Congress of Popular Unity of Tajikistan.¹²⁴ By this time Zoirov had also become a senior advisor to the President and this facilitated the eventual registration of the party in 2002.¹²⁵ However, he was quick to assert his independence from Rahmonov. He resigned from his position in response to the 2003 referendum which allowed the President to be elected for two

¹²² Interview, Dilovar Ishonov, CPT, Garm raiyon, 09/08/05

¹²³ Accounts of OSCE, UNTOP and party representatives, June 2005.

¹²⁴ RFE/RL, CAR, 09/06/00; *Asia-Plus Blitz* #021 (930) 30/01/02, #022 (931) 31/01/02, #051 (960) 15/03/0.

¹²⁵ *Asia-Plus Blitz* #220 (1131), 20/11/02.

further terms in office and publicly argued that, as the referendum was illegal, Rahmonov's term in office ended in late-2004.¹²⁶

After this falling out with Rahmonov, the SDPT found itself in the in-between space of the internationalised 'opposition'. Deputy chair Hakimov characterises the party as 'intelligent, secular, democratic opposition' (Hakimov [T7]: 2). It has gained supporters in this mold, having a few thousand registered members, professionals and NGO administrators, from Dushanbe, Sugd and Badakhshon. Hakimov notes that because when people become members they face 'pressure' from the authorities and may lose their job, the party tries to recruit those who 'in economic terms are relatively independent' (p. 4). Its membership has stayed relatively small and it stays afloat partly because many of its' leaders run NGOs which subcontract for international organisations. Zoirov, for example, has often worked as a consultant for the International Community including for the PDC (UNTOP 2001: 16). Hakimov observes, 'as for us all avenues [to government] are closed, we are able to participate in the projects of international community' (p. 6). Here, international programmes serve as an alternative to, not a conduit for, real politics.

On the other hand, this involvement with international actors has entailed the further exclusion of the SDPT from the corridors of power. Dilbar Samadova who joined the party following a personal meeting with Zoirov cited how the party in Khujond has been increasingly marginalised:

When we talk and criticise this doesn't mean that we hate our homeland and we wish for something [bad] to happen to the state. But nevertheless [the government] doesn't want to understand this and doesn't want to cooperate, I think then we need to work more with international organisations to find some kind of way. For example, you know the Political [Discussion] Club, the first time I participated I was glad and was thinking that this was of use (*v polzu*). But after I participated, you know, that everything stayed the same. There was no response on the part of the Khukumat. It's as if 'the dog barks but the caravan goes on' (*kak budto sobaka layet, a karavan idiot*)¹²⁷. Our opinions don't interest them. They don't consider us. For example, they never invite our party anywhere. (Samdova [T18]: 6)

Such testimonies affirm the importance of the performance of state/elite authority. Those who do not perform according to 'authority' and 'stability' face sanction. SDPT members have been pressured to resign from the parties by their bosses (being

¹²⁶ *Asia-Plus Blitz* #048 (1207) 12/03/03.

¹²⁷ Literal translation. Figurative sense: 'it's as if everyone carries on regardless.'

asked ‘Why do we need more than one party?’), and two candidates in the 2005 elections for the Jabor Rasulov district were jailed after insulting a judge who turned down their candidacy (Ibid.: 13).¹²⁸

The SDPT is one case among many which illustrate how discourse functions to create political space, and vice-versa. Zubaidulloev, a Tajik political analyst, interprets SDPT’s difficulties in terms of ‘the crossing of a line’ set by the authorities. ‘People know that the judge was not correct [in the Jabor rasulov case],’ he noted, ‘but you do not challenge the judge – he’s a state servant (*goschinovnik*).’ Furthermore, the SDPT ‘may have been able to win one or two seats’ had they not made a couple of errors: entering a coalition with other political parties and offering places on their party list to the Tarraqiyot party of Sulton Quvatov who had ‘fallen out of favour’ with Rahmonov.¹²⁹ We might characterise such ‘crossing a line’ as the spatially enacted and discursively practised boundary between simulated ‘opposition’ of the in-between space of the international community and the public spaces of contemporary Tajik politics.

5.4 Legitimacy and Authority: Re-/de-centralisation under international intervention

The trials of the SDPT illustrate that in Tajikistan political authority is inscribed exclusively to the spaces of the ruling elite. It is primarily according to *mirostroytelstvo* with its ethics of ‘stability’ and ‘authority’ that ‘lines’ or rules are accommodated and ritualised consent to authority performed. However, as discussed in chapter four, the location of this authority with ‘the state’ obscures a process of the ‘state against itself’ where under the cover of ‘the state,’ statesmen are able to steal state resources (Solnick 1998). The experience of Tajikistan’s ‘multi-party politics’ shows that rather than precipitating an inevitable collapse of the system, personalised patronage politics becomes a part of normalised post-conflict politics and correlates with the inter-subjective, inter-textual legitimation of power at the centre.

¹²⁸ Nasimjon Shukurov (candidate to local assembly) and Nizomiddin Begmatov (candidate to the national parliament) were jailed for terms of 18 and 12 months by a court in Sugd 22/06/05.

¹²⁹ Interview, Mukhibullo Zubaidulloev, UK Embassy, Dushanbe, 06/08/05. The Coalition for Free and Fair Elections included the SDPT, DPT and IRTT. It was set up in May 2004 as a tactical alliance. The SDPT initially included Sulton Quvvatov and five other Tarraqiyot members on their list of candidates in December 2004 before they were forced to withdraw his name by the security ministry because he was suspected of committing the crime of ‘insulting the honour and dignity of the President’, see IWPR, *RCA*, No. 342, 21/02/05

International and local actors accept and adapt to it. This sub-section considers how, in the midst of international intervention, authority is simultaneously and dialectically *re-centralised* (under ‘the state’) and *de-centralised* (by statesmen and their associates for personal gain).

5.4.i. Re-centralisation under ‘the state’: inter-textual relations

Elite discourse has proven resilient, ambiguously incorporating the vocabulary of ‘peacebuilding’ and that of *tinji* within its public transcripts. ‘Pluralism’ (*pluralizm*) and ‘democracy’ (*demokratiya*) have become frequently cited norms in Tajikistan. In his speech before the PDC, for example, Ubaidulloev emphasised ‘the political pluralism of political parties enabling the formation and expression of the will of the people’ with the existence of six parties which ‘are not “departments” of the state, nor its “branches” of government, but independent links of the political system’ (2003: 63, 65). However, there are qualifications to this reflection of peacebuilding ethics. Even within the public fora of dialogue projects, we can look a little deeper and acquire a ‘thicker’ sense of the variety of meanings of ‘pluralism’ in context. Ubaidulloev, accepts the need for ‘criticism’ (*kritika*) but this must be ‘based on facts’. ‘However,’ he goes on, ‘criticism for the sake of criticism, criticism from an irrecoverable, dated point of view, criticism in order to wound people, is not fruitful since it leads [...] not to the resolution of problems, but to a mirage or to the idea “to grab and to divide” which is not acceptable’ (p. 64-5). These caveats are not merely cynical ploys but are made sense of in wider elite public transcripts.

Elites also reflect subordinate discourses of ‘anti-politics’ and reproduce the ‘threat’ of the political. For governmental elites, the 2005 parliamentary elections and the 2006 presidential elections raised the fear that foreign governments may back opposition movements and led to further restrictions being placed on the work of international organisations. This fear, accentuated by memories of the civil war, makes the threat of ‘democratic revolution’ a powerful limit to the meaning of ‘pluralism’ in Tajikistan (Lavrakas 2004: 25). This conveys a temporal self which invalidates political parties and encourages the continued discursive linking of ‘democracy’ with ‘stability’ and ‘authority’. Ubaidulloev, for example, remarks:

I at once want to note that it must not weaken the ability of all branches of government (*vlast*) to command and regulate the situation as it takes shape, and it must not set one group or party against another, and in such a way as to divert it from the fundamental work of supplying rapid economic growth and the reduction of poverty. (2003: 62)

Such ‘fundamental work’ reduces ‘democracy’ to the provision of basic physical wellbeing, and prioritises ‘stability’ over openness. Such viewpoints lead PDPT leaders to idealise their party as the exceptional party which is ‘post-conflict’, ‘non-ideological’ and beyond ‘political struggle’ (Safarov 2003: 129-130). They represent both the values and interests of the consolidated political elite, and reflect subordinate concerns.

This inter-textual constitution of threat is evidenced in discourses and practical responses to the phenomenon of ‘coloured revolution’. Following successful uprisings in Georgia and Ukraine in 2003 and 2004 respectively, elites feared that the 2005 elections could provide a kickstart for popular rebellion against the government. The discourse of ‘coloured revolution’ gained momentum among authoritarian elites across Central Asia in 2004 and 2005, and was given a further boost after the ousting of President Akayev in Kyrgyzstan in March 2005 and the Andijon uprising in May 2005 (Heathershaw 2006). Tajik elite responses reflected neo-Soviet political thinking that sees public protest as necessarily violent and disorderly and justifies rules against even peaceful expressions of public dissent. These rules were deployed widely in Tajikistan during the 2005 elections and immediate aftermath, with elites forbidding even minor demonstrations (Hakimov [T7]: 5), and placing restrictions the work of international organisations with civil society. ‘Everything that’s happening with them,’ Asozoda comments, raising the events in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, ‘we have seen with our own eyes.’

God forbid that they have what we had [referring to the civil war]. We’re watching everything very carefully. Indeed we’ve already seen. But they – Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Azerbaijan – they haven’t seen all this. The first democratic transformations in the USSR began in Tajikistan, already in 1989. But when we announced independence, the USSR was still strong. We now watch all these events carefully, not interfering. And we give our opinion: no problems can be resolved with violence (*putyami krovi*). ([T2]: 9)¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Events in Ukraine, November-December 2004, may be reasonably characterised as ‘popular’ and Western-supported, however, in Kyrgyzstan, March 2005, mobilisation was based on clientelism, in support of regional patrons. No broad-based opposition movement emerged and Western support for ‘opposition’ groups was insignificant. In Andijon, Uzbekistan, May 2005, unlike in the other cases, there was significant violence (between the government and militants) – although the exact events are extremely unclear. In Azerbaijan there was no significant opposition movement, but there was an elite

Elites found an audience among both themselves and subordinates for these hyperbolic visions of instability. Even opposition and civil society representations implicitly and at times explicitly adopted these assumptions of the dangers propagated by political competition (Pochoyev 2005[T]: 4). Such inter-textual relations reinscribe the ‘threat’ of pluralism.

Figure 20: Billboard of President Rahmonov, Khujond. It reads ‘The health of the nation is a priceless wealth’; the structure blocks the light to numerous occupied residential apartments.



This example reveals a final and important locus of the inter-textual relations of the re-centralisation of authority: the elite itself. Whilst elites are able to interpret popular resignation to such ‘authority’ as an acceptable level of consent (Asozoda [T2]: 6), performed occasionally at elections and ceremonies, they demand more from within their own circles. Explicit action of recognition and acceptance is required as elites are expected to reaffirm the untouchable position of the President. Thus, the

fear of ‘democratic revolution’ occurring there around the elections in 2004. This linking of profoundly dissimilar events is a particular example of the importance of discursive practice in remembering history and imagining political reality. See Heathershaw (2006).

2005 parliamentary elections were perhaps more important for the consent performed by local elites who managed the elections, returned the re-continuity of ‘stability’ and ‘authority’, and thus renewed their places in the positions of power. Moreover, from day to day, iconography put in place by officials reconfirms their acceptance of presidential power. The huge increase in the number of portraits and sayings of Rahmonov hanging from public and non-public buildings often alongside other Tajik ‘national heroes’ is a feature of the period since 2000.¹³¹ For example, the hanging of the three-storey high portrait shown hanging on an apartment bloc in Khujond (figure 20) represents consent by regional elites to the ‘colossal authority’ of the President. Similarly, invitations to public ceremonies and the celebration of national holidays, and the acceptance of these invitations, are day-to-day spectacles of consent which perform and reproduce authority.

5.4.ii. ‘De-centralisation’ to statesmen: making sense of the state-against-itself

Under the cover of this reformation of authority, dissenting practices continue as state actors re-appropriate official resources to local networks. Yet the state loses authority as these practices are made sense of in hidden transcripts. This process can be considered a form of ‘de-centralisation’ where the authority of the state is made highly contingent on the practices of regional factions and individuals. This raises the question of who is being legitimated: the regime or the state?

Power-holders in Tajikistan are increasingly representative of a regime based around President Rahmonov, where both former civil war allies and opponents are gradually being excluded. Thus, we see the strengthening of the regime but not the strengthening of the state. The litmus test offered as proof for this assertion is the transfer of power from Rahmonov to another President. How, it is asked, could such a transition take place? If the President fell ill or was killed by an assassin’s bullet what mechanism exists to bring a new government to power short of descending into another civil war? Such questions invite speculation but, like all counterfactuals, offer little prospect of resolution. The problem here is demarcating the state from the regime. In elite public transcripts ‘the state’ and ‘state officials’ are inscribed as

¹³¹ However, it has at times reached an extreme where the President on several occasions has publicly called on state bodies not to engage in a ‘cult of personality’ or the ‘eulogisation’ of his personality, particularly around his fiftieth birthday in 2002. The truism about ‘authority’ here of course is contained in the reality that only the President could call for such portraits to be taken down. See: *Asia-Plus Blitz*, #311 (903), 20/12/01; #158 (1067), 20/08/02.

being synonymous. State ‘authority’ and ‘stability’ constitute the powerful ethics which legitimate the rise of the PDPT (in this chapter), the subordination of ‘communities’ (in chapter 7) and the re-integration of warlords (in chapter 6). As a consequence, institutionalist analysis may be of limited utility in terms of differentiating regime from state. The de-centralisation of state roles to networks and individuals continues alongside re-centralisation of authority and the idea of ‘the state’.

Moreover, and crucially, de-centralisation may be dialectically produced by re-centralisation, and vice-versa. As Scott notes (1990), the public transcripts of the dominant demand that the elite perform the particular role that has been inscribed for them. Thus, as possessors of authority, statesmen can act above the law and break their own laws. An emphasis on personal ‘authority’ necessitates that practices that are *de jure* codified are *de facto* dependent on the elite who implement it. In such a situation, the observation of the law consistently and universally, would be deeply delegitimising for the ruling elite. The ‘authority’ of ‘the state’ rests on the elite’s ability to monopolise official spaces *not* make them work effectively for the general good. Indeed, such monopoly would unavoidably be weakened if statesmen stopped being corrupt and functioned according to the democratic ideals of peacebuilding or even the more technocratic goals of statebuilding. The ethic of ‘authority’ demands that information and law are used and abused to maintain control, rather than are in themselves regulative of social control. Senior officials are said to hold ‘black files’ containing such of evidence of formal rule violation (which isn’t in itself a problem) but can be used on those below them if they violate the informal rules and modes of consent of ‘authority’¹³². Where information becomes a weapon of ‘authority’ it is unsurprising that it is reduced to the provision of bland statistics, or is completely withheld. One journalist in Kulob notes that officials, ‘are afraid of information. Not simply negatively but positively afraid. That’s why access is shut everywhere. I work, as a spy, in order to find some kind of information’ (Dinkayev [T4]: 7). Such inconsistent observation of law and absence of public information paralyses the general functioning of the state. Thus, the very nature of such a system means that the President is unable to get things done without his personal networks of power. It is

¹³² Unnamed senior government official quoted in, IWPR, *RCA*, No. 333, 10/12/04.

this built-in tension which explains the particular way in which the state fails to live up to its image.

Thus, although there are genuine believers in *mirostroitelstvo* within post-Soviet power structures, as noted in the previous chapter, the ideology is often practised by ‘cynical subjects’ aware of the tension between representations and actual practices. However, such ‘cynicism’ is often justified as elites negotiate their re-centralising and de-centralising practices, and refer to public performances in their hidden transcripts. Shoyev, a political analyst, notes that the expansion of the PDPT mirrors the communist party in this way:

That’s why it’s very similar to the communist system, which was also like that. The communist party led but its members were largely people which themselves didn’t believe in communist ideals. They were members of this party so that they could occupy certain posts and to move on in their work (*prodvigalis po sluzhbe*), but in their hearts they know that its not correct, that the policy of the party is probably not correct. That’s why I even know such people who, although members of the PDPT voted for other parties at the elections. I asked them why they did that and they answered, that of course the idea of their party isn’t correct. Simply they are members for the sake of employment (*dlya sluzhbe*), in order to occupy a good post, but in the election, they say, “I will be voting honestly and with my heart.” ([T19]: 3-4)

The public/private dichotomy here represents the kind of elite ambivalence analysed by Scott (1990) where the dishonesty of the public discourse produces a desire for honesty, a need to negate the lie, as well as a functional adherence to public ‘authority’ and the private stealing of state resources.

This picture of ambivalent elites as ‘cynical subjects’ calls to question whether even a regime is being ‘built’ in Tajikistan, never mind a state. However, therein may be the rub. As Foucault has noted, the state may be ‘no more than a composite reality and a mythicised abstraction’ (1991: 103). This is the character of the weak state of Tajikistan, where the idea of ‘the state’ has been mobilised concomitantly in popular, elite and international discourses as the means by which war can end and order be re-established. It is this idea, this myth, which is vital. It is thus a strangely ambivalent form of authority that has been legitimated in post-conflict, postsocialist Tajikistan. Authority is (re)produced in similar ways across the region. As I have argued elsewhere (2006), political practices in Central Asia, ‘may be better understood as what anthropologists call “myths” – stories which are told to reproduce the identity, boundaries and values of a (political) community’. My findings are analogous with March’s contentions with respect to Uzbekistan. ‘Authoritarian legitimation must not

be seen,' he notes, 'as primarily a set of explicit arguments against democracy, but rather a consistent rejection of the existence of conceivable ideological alternatives to the substantive orientation of the regime' (2003: 210). Authority in such settings remains based on what Alexander calls 'formless political culture' (2000: 40-41). The myth of the Tajik state continues to be told and simultaneously continues to be betrayed. The consequence of this is a 'state' which, despite being emboldened by the re-centralisation of authority, is corrupted systematically by statesmen, avoided where possible by citizens, and resigned to by both. How people go about carving out livelihoods and scratching out a living both with and despite the state will be addressed in the chapter seven.

5.4.iii. What difference has 'peacebuilding' made?

A final question remains: how do international interventions perform the 'authority' of the regime and thus legitimate it? Based on the findings above, I would argue that such assistance have had three over-riding functions.

Firstly, these programmes *performed the authority of the dominant regime (and its representation of 'the state') among the wider elite*. The decision to monitor the 2005 elections illustrates how international actors adapt their discourse in context, and how this then serves to perform governmental authority. For example, before the 2005 elections, the OSCE Needs Assessment Mission noted that 'some independent journalists advised [the Mission] not to send election observers as the OSCE/ODIHR observation efforts may increase the perception of integrity to a potentially flawed process,' while political parties noted 'that staying away might send a negative signal regarding the political process in Tajikistan' (OSCE 2004: 6). The OSCE ultimately concurred with the parties rather than the more radical journalists. By working with local authorities and limiting its criticism of them it performed their authority and enhanced their legitimacy.

Secondly, 'peacebuilding' discourse *performed Tajikistan's existence in the 'international community'*. The continued existence of the IRPT in particular, as noted by Dinkayev (this chapter, p.196), allows Tajikistan to credibly defend itself as a 'democracy' or at least maintain the appearance of being 'on the road to democracy.' This representation is vital to continued donor support for Tajikistan across a variety of areas which helps legitimise the government in the eyes of both the

wider international community and the Tajik people. The International Community and even many 'opposition' parties are sensitive and adaptive to this, but it is the government itself which is perhaps most aware of the danger of appearing too authoritarian. 'It is in our interests,' Rahmonov announced on TV a week before the 2005 elections, 'to ensure that elections are free and transparent, and that they conform to international standards... so that this important political event promotes Tajikistan's image in the international arena.'¹³³ However, against Schatz (2006a: 263-284), I argue that the Tajik government's occasional and cosmetic concessions to the international actors have not led it to substantially emulate the role, inscribed for it by the International Community, of an agent of democratisation. Rather, the emulation has primarily occurred on the part of subcontracting partners and the International Community itself who must always 'invite the Hukumat'.

Finally, following from the above and most importantly of all, these international interventions *performed the increasing dominance of the authoritarian Tajik regime to its people*. Internationally-supported 'elections' and 'opposition' in Tajikistan are habitually greeted with disdain or apathy by subordinates who see them as irrelevant to their daily lives. International interventions embolden the authority of the ruling elite in providing a forum for their own expressions of 'authority' over the people and 'opposition'. The degree of domination by the elite, and consolidation of that elite into government, differs region by region. However, as acknowledged by Malekzade ([T11]: 7), wherever it went the PDC reproduced these power dynamics rather than challenged them. To this extent this analysis accords with Matveeva's conclusion that dialogue programmes in Tajikistan lost whatever agency they had after 2000 and served to 'reflect' the political process (2007, forthcoming: 29-30). Moreover, the 'consensus' they did achieve prior to 2000 may also have been a product of the broader, evolving political context of the reconstitution of hegemony. The realities of discourse and space dictate that the International Community acts through the regime. While in none of the cases of intervention cited above does the regime have a direct material interest in international assistance, such interventions accrue greater legitimacy for 'the state', which constitutes the regime's benign representation of itself. Thus, democratisation through Huntington's processes of 'replacement' or 'transplacement' (Schatz 2006a: 279) cannot be said to be either at a

¹³³ Personal observation 20/02/05.

first step or near completion in post-conflict Tajikistan. The government's 'soft' authoritarianism (p. 279) is increasingly hardening.

Conclusions

While peacebuilding purports to support elections and facilitate dialogue as the first steps towards pluralism and democracy, representatives of the International Community are divided about how effective such interventions are. One international officer privately noted that the projects themselves were 'crap,' noting that Islamic-secular struggle 'was never the essence of the conflict.' Moreover, he argued,

Dialogue is cheap. You can send some persons to Germany, show them around. The Tajik mafia guys can do some shopping. Everybody's happy. The government's not too heavily involved. It's not too expensive (Epkenhans [T5]: 4).

On the other hand, an UNTOP official contends that there is 'a need to maintain a political dialogue and not to give away the achievements of the peace process' (Malekzade [T11]: 3). Assistance to political parties and elections, particularly through dialogue projects, continues to be popular. This simulation of 'opposition' is not without its own functions for the marginalised groups involved.¹³⁴ Moreover, it is doubtful whether without international support, opposition parties such as the DPT and SDPT could continue to exist. Similarly, without these 'partners' it is questionable whether organisations such as NDI could justify much of their work in Tajikistan. In this sense the International Community and its sub-contractors develop interdependent interests which give them a vested interest in maintaining the myth of democratisation despite evidence to the contrary. In such a way the ideas of 'free and fair elections' and 'inter-Tajik dialogue' live on; they are rescued in peacebuilding discourse through the temporal ideal-other of post-conflict Tajikistan which serves to justify the disbursement of substantial international assistance and employment of international programme staff and consultants.¹³⁵ The reasons why the discourse of peacebuilding adapts and survives in international practice will be explored further in subsequent chapters.

¹³⁴ Some of these are direct. For example, the NDI trip to Poland, according to ex-head of the SPT Mirhusseino Narziev, served as the catalyst for the formation with other parties of the Coalition for Free and Fair Elections to fight the 2005 parliamentary ballot. (Narziev [T12]: 7)

¹³⁵ For example, after much hesitation, and despite the fact that the elections were clearly going to be non-competitive, the OSCE decided to monitor the Tajik presidential elections of November 2006.

This chapter has argued that the process that such interventions facilitate is not that of democratisation but of the legitimisation of authoritarianism – those of the re-/de-centralisation of authority. Peacebuilding discourse facilitates an alternative to real political contention, and international assistance to the ‘opposition’ continues its marginalisation outside the spaces of power. To reflect on the Head of the OSCE EOM’s comments headlined at the outset of this chapter, it is evident that whilst a ‘bad election’ may not be good for ‘peacebuilding’, it was functional in the kind of peace building taking place in Tajikistan – the reconstitution of authority and legitimacy to an authoritarian regime.

CHAPTER SIX

Security: Simulation, Sovereignty and ‘Border Management’

‘The subject of security is the *subject* of security’

– R.B.J. Walker (1997: 78)

Security constitutes the second category of interventions under the name of peacebuilding considered in this dissertation. In previous chapters, I have explored the discursive invocation of security alongside international peacebuilding in general (chapter 1) and specifically in Tajikistan (chapter 4). Security practices in the post-implementation period most often involve leftover tasks under the rubric of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) as well as a new agenda of tasks under the title of Security Sector Reform (SSR) (Chanaa 2002). Before beginning the empirical work of this chapter, I would like to explore what it is about the nature of security that makes its subject, the sovereign state, not an a priori given but a work forever in progress and thus the subject of our analysis.

In studying security we must address questions of political community and identity. Barker reminds us that legitimacy is ‘sustained to a greater or lesser degree by the depiction of enemies’ (Barker 2001: 138). The Copenhagen School of security studies (Buzan et al. 1998) and more radical critical security studies (Lipschultz 1995; Krause & Williams 1997; Walker 1997; Der Derian 1995) literature both see the presence or absence of security as a product of discursive practice. Rather security is discursively practiced as a ‘speech act’ (Wæver 1995: 50) or ‘a performative discourse constitutive of political order’ (Der Derian 1995: 78). Thus, ‘security’ is generated through ‘*processes* of securitisation and desecuritisation’ (Wæver 1995: 57) as ‘extreme form[s] of politicisation’ where ‘the state’ demands the right to take extreme measures, ostensibly in the name of protecting its citizens (Buzan et al. 1998: 241). The invocation of ‘national security’ and the specifications of ‘threat’ and ‘enemy’ serve a political purpose for the accumulation of authority locally or ‘internally’ to the state. For political elites this makes the construction of enemies a process vital to one’s own identity and existence as a political entity (Lipschultz 1995: 217).

The centrality placed on the subjects of security by securitisation theory brings state sovereignty to the foreground. If security discourses lose all plausibility among

elites, subordinates or internationals this can delegitmate the subject itself; similarly, it is via these discourses that sovereignty and authority can be reconstructed – as with Tajikistan’s peacebuilding. For many established or ‘strong’ states these discourses can become ‘sedimented’ or relatively static so that largely material considerations of the balance of power seem to predominate (Buzan 1991; Wæver 1995). Walker comments that, ‘to speak of security is to engage in a discourse of repetitions, to affirm over and over again the dangers that legitimate sovereign authority that is constituted precisely as a solution to dangers’ (Walker 1997: 73). Thus the (re)construction of sovereignty in ‘strong’ states is often ignored. However, in the case of a ‘weak’ state such as Tajikistan, which is only now undergoing a period of independence, of state- and nation-building, free from political crisis, the repetitive invocation of ‘security’ is vital to the constitution of sovereignty via performance or simulation. Like security, sovereignty is, ‘a practice of legitimation that serves to render other ways of being human, other ways of being both one and many, of relating self to other, of articulating space/time – almost unimaginable’ (Walker 1997: 321-322). However, whilst in chapter five such performances were seen to be highly successful at determining the spatial boundaries (of state authority) ‘inside’ Tajikistan, this chapter shows how they face contrasting representations (of state sovereignty) ‘outside’ of Tajik space. Authority is performed; sovereignty is simulated.

This chapter explores two areas of security that have been of considerable interest to elite and international actors: the reintegration of warlords, and the reform of border management. Section one, looks at the reintegration of ‘commanders’ as co-constituted with processes of securitisation in the country. Section two, turns our attention to an increasingly securitised aspect of the security sector in Tajikistan: the state border. It dwells on the contrasting nature of three performances (resecuritisations) of sovereignty – national, regional and international – during the handover of the Tajik-Afghan border from regional to national responsibility from 2004-2005. Section three extends this argument to consider attempts to reform border management. It show how the state border, and by extension sovereignty, as an attribute of post-conflict peace, seems at once both ever-present (in ideal-type form in contending discourse and representations) and strangely absent (in the rent-seeking actions of ‘state’ actors and the struggles of daily life). This paradox can only be resolved analytically through the acceptance of contrariety. Ontologically,

sovereignty is neither present nor absent, but in a constant process of construction and de-construction. In other words, it is concomitantly simulated and dissimulated.

6.1 DDR and Securitisation: from ‘warlords’ to ‘statesmen’

In an earlier study of international interventions to tackle small arms and light weapons (SALW) in Tajikistan I explored a ‘paradox of peacebuilding’, broadened in the introduction here, where an absence of substantive disarmament has been accompanied by a puzzling lack of proliferation (2005a). While in other conflict zones across the world small arms proliferation is a major post-conflict problem, Tajikistan has been able to bring SALW under the control of the state relatively quickly and coercively (ibid.). This comprises a challenge to the precepts of peacebuilding and suggests we must rethink the assumptions of SSR and the nature of security in ‘peacebuilding’. The practices of the security sector depart considerably from international and elite representations. In Tajikistan ‘disarmament’ has been usurped by the recycling of small arms by the regime under the authority of ‘the state’, and ‘demobilisation’ has been precluded by a process where commanders who seek to retain their independence as political actors are destroyed. What has been paramount is a process of ‘reintegration’ where those who are prepared to sacrifice their political and military independence are incorporated into the elite networks existing under the name of the state (see also, Torjesen and MacFarlane 2007).

6.1.i. Forced demobilisation, 2000-2002: the legitimisation of violence

The implementation of the peace agreement between 1997 and 2000 began a process of integrating or excluding commanders from political authority through the distribution of positions in the state. However, this form of consolidation must be seen as a qualitative as well as quantitative change: warlords continue to exercise influence to the extent that they are ‘statesmanlike’. Most studies of Tajik warlords draw a unambiguous distinction between warlords and the state, and have thus failed to grasp the nature of this change (Lezhnev 2005). Evidence indicates that after expanding networks of patronage to accommodate the opposition from 1997-2000, since 2000 Rahmonov has increasingly consolidated economic power around his Danghari sub-regional ‘clan’ to the exclusion of other Kulobis as well as ex-opposition commanders. Yet this contraction of patronage networks has not been accompanied by substantive ‘spoiler’ activity. The means by

which independent military commanders (*komandiri*) have lost popularity and power in the period from 2000 to 2005 warrants particular attention in this study. While many of these have been killed, jailed or fled overseas, others have been incorporated within the burgeoning 'state' either formally as state officials or informally and more commonly as 'businessmen' (*biznezmeni*). These people could easily have been powerful 'spoilers' (Stedman 1997; Torjesen and MacFarlane 2007) but in fact are part of the consolidation of an authoritarian peace.

As the proliferation of SALW required extraordinary measures by the state (in the form of presidential decrees) to achieve 'disarmament' (Heathershaw 2005a: 28-29; Heathershaw et al 2004: 15-16), so too did the continuing presence of independent military commanders (primarily around Dushanbe and in parts of the Rasht valley). Over the period of 2000 and 2001 they were securitised as a 'threat' which required their 'neutralisation.'¹³⁶ By this time any local support commanders had for operating independently was waning as their ability to command powers of patronage and protection declined. A number of high-profile assassinations and hostage-takings in 2000 and 2001 were represented as nihilistic 'terrorist acts.'¹³⁷ However, it seems likely that these acts had significant economic dimensions and governmental representatives continued to negotiations with the groups over their economic and political aims.¹³⁸ Such commanders were forced to bring their violence within 'the state' or face elimination.

Mirzo Ziyoev, the MCHS and the commanders

It is difficult to categorise these remaining independent commanders as either criminal leaders or Islamic militants – by their very nature they were all implicated in criminal networks and some were heavily involved in the drugs trade, but not all expressed a radical Islamic agenda and many were ardently secular. What is more important is what they did not represent: 'the state'. In 2000 and 2001, officials targeted primarily those connected with the UTO, in particular those who were associates of the powerful Minister of Emergency Situations (*Ministerstvo Cherezvichaynikh Del* [MCHS]), Mirzo Ziyoev. Ziyoev's involvement in these

¹³⁶ *Asia-Plus Blitz* # 212 (625), 07/11/00.

¹³⁷ *Asia-Plus Blitz* # 171 (833), 10/09/01

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

operations, as a senior representative of the state and at the request of Rahmonov, highlights the growing credibility of 'the state' as a uniting force for commanders who were previously in conflict.¹³⁹ At a representational level, 'the state' thus constitutes much more than the elite networks centred around Rahmonov and his Danghari allies.

Mullo Abdullo was one prominent commander, based in Darband, who had rejected offers of formal reintegration in 1997. It was, however, not until 2000 that the government felt able to take action against Abdullo; a move prompted by his killing of the head of Garm regional administration (*raiyon*) in June 2000.¹⁴⁰ Following the assassination, Ziyoev was called on to negotiate and in July an MCHS official announced a successful conclusion to the negotiations with seventy of Abdullo's followers being incorporated within MCHS structures. Abdullo himself had two options which the official outlined as: '1) the former UTO commander may be appointed chairman of one of the dekhon farms of the Darband district or 2) he will return to his permanent place of residence in the Kofarnihon district.'¹⁴¹ However, other representatives of the state portrayed Abdullo as refusing reintegration as he wanted to continue drugs trafficking and was said to 'share the same religious convictions as the Taliban.'¹⁴² The 'truth' about the interests and ideas of Abdullo may never be known. However, the representation of Abdullo as a terrorist opposed to the right authority of the state was a *fait accompli* after the group itself was destroyed by government forces. In September 2000, in an attack on his militia, twenty-eight fighters were killed and a further forty apprehended (ICG 2001: 17). Abdullo fled to Afghanistan and was reportedly killed in fighting in February 2002 (Torjesen et al 2005: 111). The destruction of Abdullo's group was important as it weakened the position of independent commanders further vis-à-vis those in government. One apparent consequence was that the government was able to force the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), numbering about 250 fighters, out of the country and into Afghanistan.

¹³⁹ The first powerful sign of the binding performance of the state was in the joint action against Mahmud Khudoberdiev taken by Suhrob Qosimov (MVD) and Mirzo Ziyoev (MCHS) who had been on opposing sides before the peace agreement. See, section 2.2.ii

¹⁴⁰ *Asia-Plus Blitz* # 132 (545), 14/07/00.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Cited in Torjesen and MacFarlane (2007, no pagination).

Rahmon Sanginov (known as ‘Hitler’) was another commander in whose clash with the government Ziyoev became the key negotiator. While Sanginov had been portrayed as a criminal, he clearly had some religious convictions and political interests (Nourzhanov 2005: 127). He had been briefly reintegrated into the Ministry of Defence after the war but was later dismissed for refusing to implement orders (Torjesen and MacFarlane 2007). He subsequently formed a militant group with Mansur Muaqqalov, another ex-UTO commander, and relocated to the village of Rohaty outside of Dushanbe.¹⁴³ In April 2001, a number of their men who were already integrated into the state – as part of the MCHS in Tavildara – were arrested for the assassination of the Deputy Minister of the Interior. Sanginov and Muaqqalov responded with two apparently coordinated hostage-takings, one in Teppai Samarkandi village near Dushanbe on June 11 in which several MVD officers were apprehended, and a second shortly after where fifteen workers from the INGO German Agro-Action were taken captive in the village of Sabzikharv, near Tavildara.¹⁴⁴ The Tavildara incident had been led by the Head of the District MCHS for Tavildara, Hasan Saidmahmadov, a former UTO combatant who had been reintegrated into state structures. The personal intervention of Ziyoev was required to secure their release on June 18.¹⁴⁵ Following this embarrassing incident, forces of the MVD under ex-warlord Suhrob Kosimov, launched an assault against Sanginov’s group on June 22. Over the coming days and weeks he and many of his supporters were killed or captured, and a number of Kosimov’s troops and civilians lost their lives.¹⁴⁶

Fixing the shifting boundaries of ‘terrorist’ and ‘state’

The cases of Abullo and Sanginov are indicative of a broader process of securitising and ‘neutralising’ commanders to fix ‘the state’ as the unchallengeable basis of political power in the country. They illustrate the fine line between ‘state’ and ‘terrorist’/ ‘warlord’ – where representatives of the former can be portrayed as the latter if they step out from under the authority of the senior representatives of the state. Moreover, these cases show the particular dynamics of state consolidation

¹⁴³ *Asia-Plus Blitz* # 118 (780) 22/06/01.

¹⁴⁴ *Asia-Plus Blitz*, # 114 (776), 18/06/01.

¹⁴⁵ Personal communication, former hostage, Khujond, July 2004.

¹⁴⁶ *Asia-Plus Blitz* # 118 (780) 22/06/01, # 126 (788), 06/07/01, # 128 (790) 09/07/01, # 145 (807) 01/08/05, # 159 (821) 21/08/01.

where, as Torjesen and MacFarlane (2007) point out, ‘reintegration’ precedes ‘demobilisation’ – where armed bands are formally integrated into the state *without* submitting fully to its authority. Thus, the elimination of these commanders served broader political functions beyond the elimination of forces hostile to the regime. Moreover, the legitimacy of the state increased. Political elites represented these crackdowns not in terms of turf wars between trafficking groups, or even a campaign against radical Islam. Rather Abdullo and Sanginov were portrayed as a monolithic, illegitimate threat to ‘peace’ in the sense that they refuse to commit to the authority of the state.¹⁴⁷

These representations were largely well-received among elite and subordinate audiences of post-conflict Tajikistan. They constitute specific and successful securitisations of ‘the state’ against non-state groups. Sanginov’s group for example was portrayed by Isamova, for the national Asia-Plus news outlet, as an ‘uncontrollable group’ which was one of ‘the forces in Tajikistan, which try to destabilise the peace-building process in the country, and rattle the sabre.’ Such forces, she notes, cannot be negotiated with; ‘the terrorists needed not so much satisfaction to their demands as showing that they still have power’ (Isamova 2001, no pagination). The terms of the 1997 peace agreement were used in this text as the grounds for their criminality in an echo of government accounts of the Sanginov’s crimes. Whilst they had been given amnesty in 1997, Isamova notes, they continued ‘committing crimes. [Thus] persecutions by [the government for] political motives are out of the question,’ and they can be regarded as ‘criminals, who must appear to court’ (ibid.). This writing of commanders as criminals is a constructive act in the resecuritisation of the state. A further step is to call on others in the international community to affirm Tajik sovereignty against non-state threats. Noting that ‘the Tajik power structures’ need the cooperation of regional neighbours who have ‘signed appropriate agreements on [the] fight against terrorism, and religious extremism,’ Isamova is explicit about the importance of ‘Central Asia’ as a community of like-minded statesmen. ‘These agreements would be of declarative nature,’ she comments, ‘but they must show a consolidation of neighbors in fighting this evil, which face them too’ (ibid.).

¹⁴⁷ *Asia-Plus Blitz* # 159 (821) 21/08/01.

This characterisation was increasingly credible, in different ways, to both elites and subordinates. The ruling faction hid behind the performance of ‘the state’, ‘stability’ and ‘authority’ to conceal its own wartime origins in pro-government militias, and claim legitimacy for its present actions. While securitisation of ‘the state’ is typical in international relations, for so-called ‘failed states’ or conflict zones where the state itself is contested such securitisations are often usurped by claims to securitize particular confessions, ethnicities or nations. Thus, the securitisation of the state as guardian constitutes Tajikistan’s return to ‘normal’ post-Soviet politics. This process is not only inscribed in terms of the ethics of ‘authority’ and ‘stability’ but is temporally situated as a post-war stage of development: locating the commanders in the wartime past (Usmonov 2003b). It is a security campaign, Lavrakos notes, ‘aiming at preserving all past stages of the transitional period of the country’s development’ (2005: 22). Understood in these terms, the neutralisation of the commanders cannot simply be interpreted as renewed conflict between government and opposition – not least because errant pro-government commanders have also been neutralised since 2000. The divisions which are now important in Tajikistan are no longer ‘pro-government’ and ‘opposition’, but ‘state’ and ‘terrorist’.

6.1.ii. ‘Reintegration’: performance and profit

Nourzhanov (2005) has argued for the continued importance of commanders or, as he calls them, ‘warlords’ (*jangsollor* [Taj.]) in politics and society. However, more detailed contemporary studies and accounts indicate that the incorporation of commanders into the state and economy has been so comprehensive as to make the continuing use of the term ‘warlord’ inappropriate. One study includes several ‘where are they now?’ tables for former field commanders of both government and opposition (Torjesen et al 2005: 77-85). This data indicates limited career options for ex-commanders with 14 out of a total of 25 surveyed being employed by the state while the remaining 11 are either dead or incapacitated, have left Tajikistan, are imprisoned, or have abandoned military activity and their whereabouts is unknown (Ibid.). Ex-commanders now hold senior positions in the military formations of the MCHS, Ministry of Interior (MVD), or the Committee for the Guarding of State Borders (KOGG). Tajikistan’s most experienced and effective military forces are spread primarily across these organisations rather than in the army. This has dispersed military power between several commanders, rather than providing a single

power base which might mobilise against the President.¹⁴⁸ Rather than repeat this kind of comprehensive survey this sub-section will analyse the economic and representational trends of this process in general before looking at the re-/de-integration of one particular commander, Ghaffor Mirzoyev.

Profit: the political functions of corruption

As was noted in chapter two, the official reintegration process between 1997 and 2000 was accompanied by something of an unofficial process where the Committee for State Property, via a post-Soviet process of privatisation, distributed various ‘public’ and ‘private’ good between commanders who re-styled themselves as ‘businessmen’ (*biznezmeni*). The new business of the commanders can be either ‘public’ or ‘private’ – yet the distinction is blurred.¹⁴⁹ Hoji Akhbar Turajonzoda, for example, a former UTO leader and leading member of the Islamic clergy, acquired the cotton processing plant and department store in the town of Vakhdat, and two flats in Dushanbe.¹⁵⁰ Others register their assets in the name of relatives or associates. Suhrob Kosimov, a powerful ‘governmental’ commander during the war, is thought to control the ‘Sadbarg’ shopping centre, ‘Bordjuma’ factory and holiday resorts in the Varzob area.¹⁵¹ Perhaps more important than these initial transfers is the cover or ‘roof’ (*krisha*) that ‘the state’, and membership of its elite networks, provide for such commanders to continue and expand their businesses and dispense positions and commodities to their associates through powers of patronage.

While ‘private’ business may require state protection, equally state enterprises can be indirectly run as profit-making businesses. According to Torjesen and MacFarlane, this is exacerbated by ‘a choice on the part of the president not to prevent corrupt practices and or abuse of government position for personal enrichment’ (2007: no pagination). For lower level commanders and fighters, ‘business’ can simply mean the extraction of fees for permits, or the issuance of fines for ‘traffic violations’ on the road. Policemen in Tajikistan will frequently hire out their services in a private

¹⁴⁸ However, equally the influence of former armed groups in state structures seems to be declining. The MCHS for example receives conscripts from the national draft and ratio of former fighters to all employees is likely dropping gradually. (Torjesen et al 2005: 12)

¹⁴⁹ Such information is not publicly available and is difficult to obtain. The following details comes from confidential information made available to Torjesen published in Torjesen et al, 2005

¹⁵⁰ Interview, political analyst, Dushanbe, July 2004.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

security capacity. Business people who are not ex-commanders with networks of former fighters must hire MVD protection (Torjesen et al 2005: 30). At the lowest level of all, fighters who would previously have shown up to bazaars at any time and used their weapons and status to demand goods without payment, may now be policemen who receive in-kind contributions from stall-holders to supplement their legal income (p. 33).

While this process of 'reintegration' may at first appear as a simple reappropriation of the 'public' to the 'private', the reality may be more complex. Property and protection are practiced politically and socially. Such private networks are less devolved than they first appear and the *krisha* of official position is vital to their functioning. Private security provision of MVD officers and the collection of fees from business people are usually run through an MVD colonel or senior official, with everyone getting their cut. The sign of the state is vital among elites. With their formal integration into state structures, commanders, even the most powerful ones such as Ziyoev, have been unable to remain entirely independent and have had to accept strict limits on what they can do militarily, and even economically (Torjesen et al 2005: 13). One reason for this might be the gradual nationalisation of their patronage networks due to the fact that these economic networks are legitimated by the idea of 'the state'. Ziyoev's MCHS soldiers, formerly overwhelmingly from Tavildara, are now drawn from across the country by the national draft and the employment opportunities he can offer to local youngsters are thus diminished (p. 112, fn 19). While state economic resources may have been 'privatised'/outsourced to commanders, the military and political power of commanders has been 'nationalised'/brought in to the state.

The De-Integration of Ghaffor Mirzoyev

The story of Ghaffor Mirzoyev, head of the presidential guard and a key ally of Rahmonov, demonstrates the statist dynamics of inclusion/exclusion. Mirzoyev, from Kulob, became head of the presidential guard in 1995 and through his position was able to acquire for himself or his family a meat processing factory, the 'Olimp' bank, 'Jomi Jamshed' casino and over 30 apartments in Dushanbe.¹⁵² He was removed from his position on 26 January 2004 whilst rumours circled Dushanbe that he was

¹⁵² *Asia Plus* newspaper, no.17, 18/08/05.

planning a coup against Rahmonov. Rahmonov's action may have been prompted by Mirzoyev's close ties with Ubaidulloev, the mayor of Dushanbe and second most powerful figure in the Tajik government (Arman 2004b). Unlike many more minor officials, when usurped Mirzoyev took a stand against Rahmonov. He publicly denounced the President and, for a day, at his instruction, his guardsmen refused to step down and accept their patron's dismissal (Pannier 2004). Behind the scenes he called a meeting of ex-commanders which involved ex-opposition figures as well as former Popular Front warlords.¹⁵³ Mirzoyev was soon assuaged with the position of head of the Drugs Control Agency (DCA), an organisation set up under the initiative of Western donors, to the chagrin of the International Community who saw him as especially corrupt.¹⁵⁴

However, this public negation of Rahmonov's 'authority' – a rare rupture in the public transcript – and Mirzoyev's subsequent announcement of his intention to run for the presidency in 2006, meant that this move was only temporary. On 6 August 2004, he was removed as head of the DCA and charged with numerous offences including the 1998 murder of a police official, embezzlement, and the illegal possession of arms. The latter included a cache of 3,000 heavy weapons discovered in the basement of the DCA, and two government helicopters leased privately to contractors in Afghanistan (Gulomov 2004; Torjesen et al 2005: 74-76).¹⁵⁵ Mirzoyev was ultimately tried behind closed doors and sentenced to life imprisonment on 11 August 2006.¹⁵⁶ This selective application of the 'state law' to one of its representatives was clearly triggered by the public affront to Rahmonov's 'authority' (Gulomov 2004; Matveeva, 2005: 141). It affirms Scott's assertion that challenges to the public transcript of the dominant, dissimulations of the 'simulacrum of sincere obedience', must not remain unanswered given their 'political electricity' and potential to incite wider rebellion (Scott 1990: 45-69). Mirzoyev is one of several ex-commanders, including ex-head of the DPT Mahmadrusi Iskandarov, from both of the formerly warring sides whose narrative illustrates the dynamics of re-integration or de-integration. All these cases involved (former) senior representatives of the state in public acts of insubordination. Together they illustrate an intrinsically ambiguous

¹⁵³ IWPR, *RCA* No. 262, 03/02/04

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ IWPR, *RCA*, No. 306 (amended story), 11/08/04; RFE/RL CAR 4(31), 17/08/04.

¹⁵⁶ RFE/RL *Newsline*, 14/08/06 10(148).

Tajik modality of ‘re-integration’ which demands adherence to ‘the state’ under the President via a neo-soviet elite transcript of *mirostroitelstvo*. On the other hand, it allows ‘hidden’ practices which are directly contradictory; the reappropriation of state resources via patronage networks.

6.1.iii. Desecuritisation and the politics of forgetting

Mirzoyev’s predicament indicates that even the most powerful commanders have become subsumed under not just the personal power of the President, but the performance of state authority. This indicates a re-securitisation of ‘the state’ as both an object of, and protector from, fear. However, there is also a ‘positive’ side to this ‘fear’ found in the demilitarisation and desecuritisation of day-to-day routines of both elites and subordinates.

Operation Order: elite discourse and action

Elsewhere I have discussed how presidential decrees on small arms collection and ‘amnesty’ were important to small arms non-proliferation (2005a). A further presidential decree was issued in 2000 banning the public possession of weapons by all – including those with certificates and state representatives – except the security services within their military units. This included the direction to the state security services, ‘to prohibit commanders and servicemen from using private guards,’ and was part of a move after 2000 to demilitarize the streets of the country, particularly the capital.¹⁵⁷ Operation Order was launched in Dushanbe by Ubaidulloyev, who, following his narrow escape from an attempt on his life in early 2000, sought to implement the 2000 decree against the illegal carrying of guns, as well as the use of vehicles by state representatives. Weapons, uniforms and civilian cars with darkened windows were confiscated from officers of the MVD, MCHS, KOGG, Ministry of Defence and even from soldiers of Russian Federation forces.¹⁵⁸ In September 2000, President Rahmonov issued a further

¹⁵⁷ Interestingly, this presidential decree was preceded by a joint UTO-Government protocol on 17/06/99. *Khovar*, ‘Tajik president decree banning carrying of arms outside units,’ 18/05/00, [Text of report by the Tajik news agency *Khovar* on 16th May], available at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/tajikistan/hypermail/200005/0013.html>

¹⁵⁸ *Asia-Plus Blitz* #53 (466), 20/03/00; SAS 2005: 97)

order to remove illegal checkpoints from roads heading east from the capital to Jirgatal and Khorog, areas formerly occupied by opposition commanders.¹⁵⁹

What is most striking about these initiatives is that they constitute the state against the state; where both groups of statesmen battle for authority of 'the state'. This is not simply a request for certain actors to target other actors, both of whom happen to be part of the state, but for the very state actors who are violating procedures in the first place to police themselves. In such circumstances where it is quite clear that the principle providers of security are also one of the principle sources of violence, it may be assumed that the image of the *leviathan* state, the preventor of anarchy, especially among elites, might be undermined. However, this is not reflected in elite discourses and wider practices. Despite several high profile assassinations in 2000 and 2001, opposition leaders and state representatives continued to speak uniformly of the threat to the state and 'stability' from 'terrorism'.¹⁶⁰ For example, following the killing of a presidential advisor in July 2001, Shodi Shabdolov, head of the CPT, commented,

those forces that committed the terrorist act evidently are not aware of [the] political and social situation in Tajikistan. It is not Tajikistan of 1990-1991, when one newspaper or slogan could bring disturbances in the country, now it is not that Tajikistan, which could be easily brought to civil confrontation. [The] self-consciousness of Tajiks, having learnt a bitter experience of a civil war, will not allow the recurrence of such events. Therefore I think that these terrorists acts are useless – no force is capable to destabilise [sic.] the social and political situation in Tajikistan.¹⁶¹

IRPT leaders made similar statements.¹⁶² Few people in Tajikistan may know why the advisor was killed; personal dispute, criminal rivalries, or something more directly political are all possibilities. However, this reiteration of a public transcript of *mirostitelstvo* indicates the discursive reconstruction of 'the state' as a solidarity group and imagined community of elites.

Popular memories: everyone will forget, everything is forgotten

Popular discourses from 2000-2005 also largely conform to this desecuritisising trend of downplaying 'threat' and speaking against war. Often, this resignation to an unjust

¹⁵⁹ *Asia-Plus Blitz* #180 (593), 21/09/00.

¹⁶⁰ This included the Minister of Culture, Deputy Minister of the Interior and the State Adviser to the President for International Issues.

¹⁶¹ *Asia-Plus Blitz* #135 (797), 18/07/01.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

'peace' is labeled 'war weariness'. To those who don't take discourse seriously 'war weariness' can be a trope which serves as an excuse not to further explore popular testimonies. However, I would argue that 'war weariness', represented differentially in *mirostroytelstvo* and *tinji*, and constituted intertextually, is productive of the desecuritisation of (public) space in terms of 'unity', and based on an ethic of forgetting. Elites and subordinates make frequent proclamations of the stability and calmness of Tajikistan¹⁶³ and often object to the association of Tajikistan with conflict.¹⁶⁴ There is an empirical basis for these claims. Since 2002, public violence has decreased substantially, the after-dark curfew has been lifted and more people are seen to walk in the streets and travel from one part of the country to another. Public opinion surveys show both a low perception of threat from guns and an increased sense of security (Torjesen et al 2005: 28, 32).

Such an increased sense of safety seems to be facilitated by a popular politics of forgetting where people are disinclined to talk about the events of the war – events which are in the memories but not in the lives of the increasing proportion of Tajiks born after 1990. Moreover, there is a pervasive social ethic against public discussion of the conflict. This forgetting has been actively encouraged by elites who see the political functions of such collective 'forgetting'. Rahmonov, in 1998, for example, asserted that Tajikistan must 'bid farewell to the past' (cited in Safarov 2003: 131). The country has not been through a process of post-conflict justice or truth and reconciliation commissions, there is no authoritative history of the war available in a local language, and anniversaries of the peace agreement are marked by choreographed displays of unity, rather than discussions of the causes and consequences of the conflict. Tajik TV shows film of the horrific events of 1992 without elaboration or discussion to serve as a warning against the return to that time – a time which must be associated with the past, 'opposition' and 'political parties' leaving little room for discord or even discussion from this public transcript.

Once again then, Tajikistan provides the counter-example to peacebuilding as communal forgetting usurps the very idea of any initiative for post-conflict justice or truth and reconciliation. In a fascinating contrast, in 2005 the country, along with most of the rest of the former Soviet Union, remembered the sixtieth anniversary of

¹⁶³ 'Nothing poses threat to security of Tajikistan,' *Asia-Plus Blitz* #179 (841), 20/09/01.

¹⁶⁴ Tajikistan's Foreign Ministry noted that the association of Tajikistan with civil strife is 'politically incorrect.' See RFE/RL, CAR, 5(17), 10/05/05.

May 9 Victory Day with the familiar Soviet pledge, ‘no one will forget, nothing is forgotten’ (*‘nikto ni zabit, nichego ni zabito’*). Posters, such as the one above, went up in many towns across the country in exhortation to remember the events and the sacrifices made by the citizens of the Soviet Union (see figure 21).

Fig. 21: Second world war anniversary billboard, Khujond, June 2005



Not long after this event, was the eighth anniversary of the 27 June 1997 peace accords. They were remembered in quite different terms, with the solemn and uniform public pledges of ‘no return’ by elites and extremely muted public ceremonies. The public transcript of ‘peace and friendship’ (see figure 22) remains static. This mantra to forget the war is axiomatic of elite-popular relations in Tajikistan. ‘War weariness’ and its political functions are reproduced by a collective discourse of silence about the war itself. Further research would be required to probe popular discourses of desecuritisation. To what extent, for example, is war weariness a product of fear and fantasy? Clearly ‘desecuritisation’ is symbiotic with re-securitisation and, to a degree, generated by a discourse of danger. Such discourses are deeply linked to the identity of the peaceful Tajik citizen – a ‘nation of poets’ it is

often said by leaders and citizens alike. Yet this peaceful poet is overshadowed by a gargantuan concept of ‘the state’.

Fig. 22: ‘Peace and Friendship’: a peace memorial, Khorog, July 2005



6.2 Re-securing the Tajik-Afghan Border: three representations

The above findings, along with those from chapters four and five, indicate that the Tajik government has been remarkably successful in having its representation and performance of ‘authority’ affirmed by subordinates, elites and, to a lesser extent, internationals, however precarious ‘the state’ might be made by hidden decentralising practices. However, authoritarian elites generally face a much more difficulty controlling representations of their state *sovereignty* – the international image of the authority of them and their governments. Often the primary site for claims about security and community is the border and the nature of trans-border dynamics. If a piece of its territory (e.g. Kosovo, Iraqi Kurdistan) is represented as a political community of its own, beyond the control of the state, then the state may lose representational and, ultimately, physical control of that territory. As we have seen, some observers in the 1990s feared that Tajikistan might break up, perhaps losing control of the Northern province of Leninobod (now Sughd) or the Pamiri

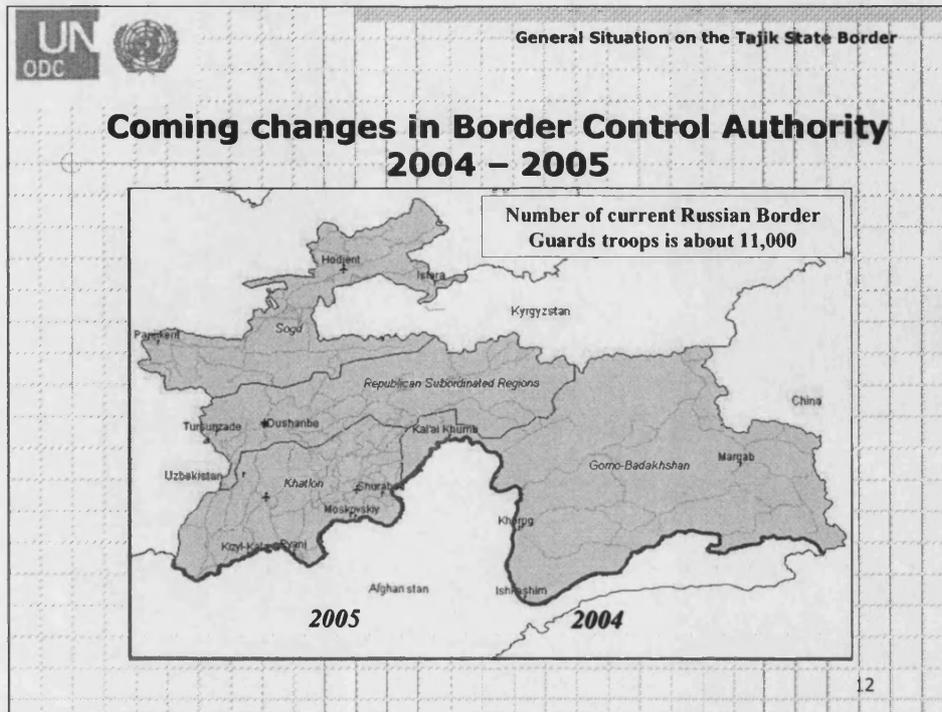
autonomous region of GBAO. In fact, irredentism has failed to materialize despite continued corruption and a lack of devolution of powers from central government. The idea of a single Tajik political community survived and even strengthened over the 2000-2005 period. This section charts how by 2004-2005, both elite and international representations of Tajikistan community/security affirmed Tajikistan's territorial boundaries and the claim of its government to police them. On the other hand they offer contrasting accounts of how this is and should be done.

In 2004, an agreement was reached with the government of the Russian Federation to transfer responsibility for, and control of, the Tajik-Afghan border to the government of Tajikistan. Following a friendship treaty signed in 1993, Russian troops had continued to patrol almost the entire length of the 1,344-kilometre frontier, with just 70km guarded by the Tajik troops.¹⁶⁵ By 2004, Russia had approximately 11,000 troops in Tajikistan and while article 9 of the 1993 agreement had always envisioned a gradual handover to local control, this had never been seen as feasible given the weakness of the Tajik state. While border management was supposed to be financed jointly and equally, in 2003 Dushanbe made only 2.4% of its installment and never made more than 5% in any year (Matveeva 2005: 146). Despite these unpromising circumstances, the hand-over began in late-2004, with the transfer of the 900-kilometre GBAO section of the border to be phased in over two years¹⁶⁶ (see fig.7 below). The agreement allowed for the presence of Russian advisors, who were envisaged to have substantial authority, and the training of Tajik officers in Russia (Matveeva 2005: 145-147). Yet the hand-over was clearly about something other than ensuring efficient border management. Many of the personnel guarding the border up to 2004 were Tajik citizens; yet they wore the uniform of the Russian state. After 2005 they would wear and fly the Tajik flag. The transfer implicated political discourses which inscribed the sovereignty of the Tajik government, its authority over its territory and people, its place in the region, and its status in the international community. In the context of Tajikistan, we see three distinct but intersecting representations of the border: as a frontier of national, regional or international community/security.

¹⁶⁵ IWPR, *RCA*, No.284, 15/03/04.

¹⁶⁶ RFE/RL, *CAR*, Vol.4, No.42, 16/11/04.

Fig. 23: UN slide showing border handover from Russian to Tajik control, 2004-2005 (UNODC 2004: 12)



6.2.i. International Security/Community

‘International security’ is the first transcript through which the Tajik-Afghan border was represented. The picture of a sovereign Tajikistan is performed through its representation in the International Community, particularly the US, under the maxims of ‘statebuilding’ and the ‘War on Terror’. This is shown in the writings of a Washington-based community of security analysts who are part of, or act as consultants for, US defence establishments.

The ‘global war on terror’: internationalising Tajikistan as a security object

Tajikistan’s significance for international security derives from spatial imagination and territorial reasoning where Central Asia is on the ‘frontline’ with Afghanistan, and even part of the same region (MacFarlane 2004; Hill 2002: 17; Wishnick 2004: 1). International security discourse on Tajikistan thus inscribes it with two features: danger and contiguous spatiality. By such accounts, it is part of ‘Central Asia’, an especially perilous and porous region of the world. Central Asia has been described by the head of the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College as a ‘key theatre in the war on terror’ (Lovelace 2004: iii) which according to Giragosian, ‘has

acquired a new strategic relevance' (2006: 133). In the US Secretary of Defence's 2002 report to Congress it was identified as part of an 'arc of instability' from the Middle East to North East Asia (Cited in Wishnick 2004: 6). Wishnick, familiarly, adds that it is part of the 'Great Game' (p. 29). Such representations of the danger of collapsed or weak states can lead to hyperbolic analyses of Tajikistan's political dynamics. Plater-Zyberk, for example, speculates that a breakdown in the relationship with Russia is possible and this might lead to state failure (Plater-Zyberk 2004). For one US diplomat in Dushanbe, there are 'shallow roots to stability' in Tajikistan and the country remains a 'tinderbox.' As such it is at risk of 'violent Islamisation' or the danger that 'narco-traffickers could take the government out.'¹⁶⁷ Under discourses of the 'failed state'/statebuilding, such societal forces are set up as both 'strong' and in opposition to a government which is 'weak'. That organized criminals might be constitutive or supportive of many Central Asian regimes is rarely discussed (ICG 2003, Marat 2006), and is not part of the testimonies of diplomats and international officials.

This spatial imaginary has had a dramatic effect on foreign policy approaches to the region. According to Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs Elizabeth Jones, 'since 9/11 US strategic interests in the region have focused on anti-terrorism, especially the elimination of terrorist and other destabilising groups.'¹⁶⁸ This has led to a massive increase in US strategic involvement following 9/11 in the establishment of the Ganci and Kharshi-Khanabad military bases, and overflight rights across Tajikistan. Hill notes,

The primary American interest is in security, in preventing the "Afghanicisation" of Central Asia and the spawning of more terrorist groups with transnational reach that can threaten the stability of the interlocking regions and strike the United States (p. 18).

Such thinking has even contributed to an internal re-organisation of the US state department. By late-2005, Jones' department of European and Eurasian affairs had lost responsibility for the region which had been incorporated into a South and Central Asian section. In itself this bureaucratic change reflects US thinking about Central Asia as a region apart from other Former Soviet Slavic states. The move is a particularly fascinating one which reveals much about how discourse shapes even the

¹⁶⁷ Interview, Amanda Cranmer, 2nd Secretary, US Embassy, Dushanbe, 01/03/05

¹⁶⁸ A paraphrasing of the testimony in Wishnick (2004: 4).

structure of foreign policy-making institutions. It is easier, for example, to understand why US analysts may believe Russia's role in the region is decreasing and peripheral if they see Central Asian states as cognate with Pakistan and Afghanistan. As we shall see below, however, such spatial imaginaries are vehemently opposed within the region by elites who often present themselves as more European than Asian.

Statebuilding: policies of international community/security

As a part of a 'Central Asia' or 'South and Central Asia', Tajikistan is inscribed as a state which requires building. Before 9/11, Tajikistan committed to joining NATO's Partnership for Peace programme and received a visit from the Commander of the US Central Command (CENTCOM) Tommy Franks.¹⁶⁹ In the months following 9/11, some confusion ensued as to whether Tajikistan would provide the US with basing rights as its neighbours had done. The US went through Russia to negotiate but in the end settled on over-flight rights, perhaps partly because of the lack of appropriate facilities. Tajikistan instead hosted a small French air force detachment of around 20 men which provided logistical support to operations in Afghanistan¹⁷⁰

In a performative sense, Tajikistan is both represented and policy-practised in terms of statebuilding. Inter-textual relations between democratic peacebuilding (for liberalising reform) and 'statebuilding' (for institutional order) shape policy-making. For Hill, Central Asian states are challenged by 'extreme domestic fragility' (2002: 19). Mihalka, a US Army War College professor, laments the lack of political will in Central Asia to introduce the necessary reforms 'to counter insurgency and terrorism' (2006: 150). 'The sustained exercise of arbitrary power by the government,' he notes, 'reflects the state's weakness, not its strength' (p. 133). For Giragosian, the central problem is 'the vulnerability of illegitimate governance' (2006: 150). These reasonable but thin analyses feed into official announcements and policy statements. Richard Boucher, the Assistant Secretary of State for the new bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, remarked in his 2006 testimony to Congress:

Central Asia faces numerous threats to its stability, including Islamic extremism, a population that remains poor and has little economic opportunity, the post-Soviet legacy of authoritarianism, public perceptions of injustice, and high levels of corruption (cited in Mihalka 2006: 133).

¹⁶⁹ *Asia-Plus Blitz* No. 754, 17/05/01.

¹⁷⁰ Personal communication with French military attaché in Dushanbe, July 2003

Discursively underwriting such outlooks is the assumption that ‘they’ ought to be more like ‘us’ – that is more like who we imagine ourselves to be. Therefore, while the initiatives of regional governments are assumed to be ineffective, US officials and analysts furthermore imagine their own government to provide the solutions. Giragosian notes, ‘what is essential for Central Asia is a continued and even greater US commitment’, and specifically argues against regional coalitions such as the SCO (2006: 152).

6.2.ii Tajikistan’s National Security/Community

Such overtures elicit enthusiastic responses from a Tajik government eager to be accepted into the International Community. Elites seized on the increased anti-terror discourse as an invitation to assert its sovereignty and crack down on transnational dissident groups whilst representing themselves as a part of the International Community in ‘the war on terror’. The government banned *Hizb-ut-Tahrir* in 2001 (before 9/11) and was quick to associate them with the ‘war on terror’ following the attacks. As early as October 2001, Minister of Security, Khayriddin Abdurahimov, noted that *Hizb-ut-Tahrir* was ‘undoubtedly connected with those terrorist centers being prosecuted by world community.’¹⁷¹ While up to 2001, Tajikistan had arrested just 120 members, far fewer than its neighbours in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, the suppression of the organisation intensified following the launch of the ‘war on terror.’

¹⁷² Such actions are frequently cited to international researchers and policymakers in terms of working together against Islamic extremism and drugs. For example, Asozoda reminded me of these ‘common’ problems:

Indeed, we mustn’t forget that in Tajikistan 90% of the population is Muslim, and this is the only state where there is an Islamic Party. And their only aim is the creation of an Islamic state. But we say that religion is separated from the state. We accepted a unified constitution, and whoever comes to power must observe this. But we need help: from the USA, China, Russia – our strategic partners. If they support us, this will be good for them and for us. We were the first to speak at the UN and say that we need to create an anti-terrorist ring around the Talibs. Emomoli Rahmonov called to everyone from the platform of the UN. But they didn’t listen to us and as a result they got September 11th. Now we say that in Afghanistan 90% of agriculture is narcotics. We say, “let’s create a belt around Afghanistan,” so that they don’t produce opium or drugs

¹⁷¹ *Asia-Plus Blitz* #188 (850) 03/10/01.

¹⁷² IWPR, RCA, No. 271, 17/03/04

but something else. If they listen to us this time then we will do everything possible to keep out the drugs. ([T2]: 10)

Here, the definition of threat widens to potentially include legal political parties within the country, and the identification of proportionate response expands to a suggested blockade of the country. In this manner, with its particular contrasts to international discourse, Tajikistan articulates its sovereign position in the International Community under the ‘war on terror’.

The first prism through which the Tajik elite read international security is their conception of ‘national security’ and an imagined national community. They explicitly represented the takeover of the southern border from 2004 as a triumph of national sovereignty. Official discourse exhibits four representational strategies which serve to reinscribe ‘us’ and ‘them’ onto the border:

1. The imperative of ‘national security’ for a unitary Tajik state-nation
2. The specific location of authority over the border with President Rahmonov
3. A broad definition of a transnational ‘terrorist’ threat
4. The specific location of the threat of drugs and terrorism in Afghanistan

The first two of these relate to the representation of ‘inside’, while the second two concern the ‘outside’.

‘Inside’/‘Us’

An elite performance of sovereignty in terms of the imperative of state ‘authority’ and ‘stability’ led to the economically costly and strategically dubious shift to exclusively national border protection. The move was predicated in discursive trends leading up to the handover. Rahmonov, for example, stated that ‘the border is one of the most important symbols of a state, and its defence is [the] honourable debt of every citizen of the state.’¹⁷³ The national press provided extensive coverage of the various stages of the handover which largely supported this version of events. Prior to 2004, it was frequently emphasised that ‘2,912 of 4,183 kilometres of the Tajik border is being defended by Tajik border guards’ and that ‘80% of Russian border guards are Tajik

¹⁷³ *Jumhuriyat* 53, 14/05/05. [transl. Otabek Sindarov]

citizens.’¹⁷⁴ Following the 2004 decision, it was often repeated that ‘from the beginning of 2006 the Tajik flag will be waving along the whole Tajik border of 4183 km’, thus showing that the Tajik guards are ‘ready to defend their border themselves.’¹⁷⁵ A report by the state newspaper, *Jumhuriyat*, of 28 May 2005, official Border Guards Day, entitled ‘We are able to defend our border’ [*Mo sorhadoti hudro hifz karda metavonem* (Taj.)], nicely summarises the official discourse on the border handover.

The Tajik state and government is always concerned about strengthening the border. The passing of the law, “Border Military Forces of Tajikistan” increases the responsibility of Tajik border guards. Until taking over the defence of the border with Afghanistan, the border forces of Tajikistan were second behind Russian border guards. Now they have taken the first place, i.e. they took the defence of the state border upon them. It is right that the challenges of state border defence are plenty, but it is our motherland. Every independent state should defend its borders itself.¹⁷⁶

Such understandings unite the Tajik people under the state, as in Zuhurov’s interpretation that according to the Law on the State Border of the Republic, ‘all citizens of Tajikistan are obliged to participate in border security.’¹⁷⁷

Secondly, discourse highlights the personal authority of the President over the national border. President Rahmonov performs his own authority over Tajikistan by making frequent speeches on and sometimes at the border.¹⁷⁸ In a 2000 speech, he argued that ‘half-measures’ and ‘not enough orderliness’ on the Central Asian continent are ‘inadmissible.’¹⁷⁹ The concept of ‘authority’ which underlies such statements is one which suggests maximum credit to, and minimum debit from, the President’s personal power. This is affirmed by Rahmonov’s inferiors. The Chairman of KOGG, Colonel-General Saidamir Zuhurov tied the integrity of the national border to the personal authority of the President. He noted at an international conference on the border in February 2005 that ‘the President personally checks on the status of

¹⁷⁴ *Jumhuriyat*, 113, 05/10/04. [transl. Otabek Sindarov]

¹⁷⁵ See *Jumhuriyat* 136, 02/12/04. [transl. Otabek Sindarov]

¹⁷⁶ *Jumhuriyat* 59, 28/05/05. [transl. Otabek Sindarov]

¹⁷⁷ Official transcript of conference, ‘Response of the international community to assist the Government of Tajikistan on the Tajik-Afghan Border,’ 15-16 February 2005.

¹⁷⁸ *Asia-Plus Blitz* # 172 (585), 08/09/00.

¹⁷⁹ *Asia-Plus Blitz* # 170 (583), 06/09/00.

achievements.’¹⁸⁰ The President thus has the authority to identify those responsible for violations of the border, rather than take personal responsibility for any failings. For example, the President has threatened to forcibly relocate border residents who are ‘involved in drugs trafficking.’¹⁸¹ Moreover, he will occasionally purge the Tajik border forces (KOGG) not just to distribute patronage but to illustrate his authority as head of state.¹⁸² Such practices may not constitute an effective counter-narcotics strategy but they do serve purposes for Rahmonov who is able to practice intra-elite rotations in terms of the ideal of state ‘authority’.

‘Outside’/‘Them’

The third representational strategy of elite discourse is the creation of a transnational terrorist other, which encompasses both criminal and political groups. The construction of the unresolved transnationalism of ‘them’ is the mirror image of ‘us’ who are peacefully united under the Tajik state, where all citizens are enclosed within their respective states. Thus, the threat is ‘located as both ‘foreign’ and refusing to abide by state boundaries which, it is implied, are natural. Commenting on joint CIS military exercises in April 2000, the President noted that, ‘we must remember that international terrorism, extremism and national separatism do not recognise borders and act at their [sic.] will. Therefore [the] armed forces must be ready to resist any threat to our security, no matter where it originates from.’¹⁸³ This invocation of ‘terrorism, separatism and extremism’ discursively links all oppositional, criminal and militant activity. It is commonly deployed across post-Soviet Central Asia.¹⁸⁴ The definition is invoked particularly against *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, a militant group with no confirmed record of violence.¹⁸⁵ Such discursive strategies create space between ‘the state’ and criminal and militant groups which in practice are very closely linked to state officials (Marat 2006: 103-108).

¹⁸⁰ Official transcript the conference, ‘Response of the international community to assist the Government of Tajikistan on the Tajik-Afghan Border,’ 15-16 February 2005.

¹⁸¹ See *Jumhuriyat* 99, 21/08/02. [transl. Otabek Sindarov]

¹⁸² One such purge of KOGG occurred in January-February 2002. See *Asia-Plus Blitz* #014 (923), 21/01/02; *Asia-Plus Blitz* # 039 (948), 26/02/02.

¹⁸³ See *Asia-Plus Blitz* # 61 (474), 03/04/00.

¹⁸⁴ See for example, SCO statement on first anniversary of 9/11. See *Asia-Plus Blitz* # 174 (1083), 12/09/02

¹⁸⁵ See for example, *Asia-Plus Blitz* #188, (850) 03/10/01.

Fourthly, in elite discourse the threat especially emanates from Afghanistan. Tajikistan has typically been portrayed by Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan as the haven for the IMU, for example;¹⁸⁶ in turn, Tajikistan has sought to locate that threat in Afghanistan.¹⁸⁷ The specific threat of Afghanistan as ‘the source of international terrorism’ and an ‘outpost of extremism’¹⁸⁸ and of Taliban incursions into Central Asia was articulated by Rahmonov both before and after September 11th. In May 2001, in an interview with the Russian newspaper *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, Rahmonov remarked that ‘not all realise the threat coming from the situation in Afghanistan and they try to make do “economically” with small means.’¹⁸⁹ Moreover, Afghanistan is inscribed as a backward and primitive place – a place which post-conflict Tajikistan must leave in the past.¹⁹⁰ Drugs trafficking and extremism are thus the ‘Afghan problem’, a problem *for* Tajikistan, the region and the international community rather than a problem which deeply implicates Tajikistan’s elite themselves. For example, a Security Council statement noted that ‘many foreign mass media portray Tajikistan as a drug-trafficking country. However, they fail to mention that the drugs come from Afghanistan that Tajikistan has common borders with.’ These drugs, the Security Council noted, are trafficked across the CIS and Europe. Thus, ‘the international community should not view Afghan drugs as solely a problem for Tajikistan.’¹⁹¹

6.2.iii. Central Asia’s Regional Community/Security

A third representation of Tajik sovereignty, which disaggregates a regional space of the elite level, is that ‘Tajikistan’ is a part of ‘Central Asia’, a regional which includes a leading role for Russia. This is perhaps the most significant of the three performances in the border handover. It would have been implausible for Tajikistan to present national control of the southern border without articulating a continuing and strong role for Russia whose troops have remained in the country throughout

¹⁸⁶ Eurasianet, ‘Tajik minister tells Iranian radio Uzbek militants agreed to leave Tajikistan,’ Source: Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mashhad, in Persian 1600 gmt, 25/04/00; *Asia-Plus Blitz* # 85 (498) 06/05/00.

¹⁸⁷ At times the government has also sought to portray the threat as emanating from Uzbekistan. See *Asia-Plus Blitz* #149 (562), 08/08/00; *Asia-Plus Blitz* #104 (1013), 04/06/02; RFE/RL, ‘Central Asia: Is the IMU still a threat to regional security?’, 24/01/04.

¹⁸⁸ See, *Asia-Plus Blitz* #27 (440) 09/02/00, #170 (583) 06/09/00.

¹⁸⁹ *Asia-Plus Blitz* #102 (764) 31/05/01.

¹⁹⁰ See *Asia-Plus Blitz* #18 (431), 27/01/00, #170 (1079), 05/09/02.

¹⁹¹ *Jumhuriyat* 20, 25/02/00. [transl. Otabek Sindarov]

independence. However, this is not merely instrumental but highlights a certain and irresolvable ambiguity in the representations of sovereignty. For example, the state newspaper *Jumhuriyat* in December 2004, tells the audience that ‘we longed for many years [for the Russian border control] to come to an end’, whilst simultaneously being told that Russian guards ‘made a great contribution to protecting the region,’¹⁹² and in a subsequent edition that ‘the beginning of activity of the Russian military base on the territory of Tajikistan provides for regional security.’¹⁹³ In earlier accounts too the Russian border forces themselves were cast as ‘necessary’ for regional security.¹⁹⁴ Moreover, testimonies of national independence in border management are habitually supplemented with the caveat that Russians will remain as advisors and trainers of Tajik guards.¹⁹⁵

In chapter four and elsewhere (Heathershaw 2006), I have made the argument for an imagined community of ‘Central Asia’, not as an institutional basis for regional integration but as an imagined basis for ad hoc events of cooperation which are primarily expressive rather than institutional. This Central Asia is quite different to that of the US state department’s ‘South and Central Asia.’ The basic discourse of Tajik national security and border control shares much in common with articulations found among its neighbours (Horsmann 2005; Karagulova and Megoran 2006), and I would argue represents a regional neo-Soviet political imaginary. In particular, Central Asian states share a common fear of the *Hizb-ut-Tahrir* ‘threat’, and act together and in parallel to construct it. Over the period from 2000, Tajikistan has increasingly been cast among leaders less as regional bogeyman and more as a sovereign member of ‘Central Asia.’ Thus, the handover was one event of numerous acts which re-inscribe and relocate the region onto the political landscape. Such events involve the mutual recognition of one another as authoritative political leaders, for example, in the Rahmonov’s 2000 nomination of Putin – who had just taken the presidency in Russia several weeks before – as Chairman of Council of Heads of CIS states.¹⁹⁶ They also witness a degree of shared ethics, temporal and spatial understandings, postulated a ‘modern’ and ‘stable’ future for the region.

¹⁹² *Jumhuriyat* 138, 07/12/04. [transl. Otabek Sindarov]

¹⁹³ *Jumhuriyat* 121, 2/10/04. [transl. Otabek Sindarov]

¹⁹⁴ *Asia-Plus Blitz* #170, 06/09/01.

¹⁹⁵ *Jumhuriyat* 126, 03/12/05.

¹⁹⁶ *Asia-Plus Blitz* # 16 (429), 25/01/00.

The shared political ethics and spatial imaginaries of Rahmonov and Putin underpinned the 2004 Tajik-Russian agreement. While the beginning of the hand-over was announced in March, sparking local and international concern, it became clear that the exact terms were linked to other negotiations between the two governments related to the establishment of a permanent Russian base to house the 5,000 troops of the 201st Motorised Rifle Division, the status of the Nurek space facility, Russian investment into hydro-power, and relief of Tajikistan's bi-lateral debt. After a meeting between Rahmonov and Putin in Sochi on 4 July, an agreement was signed on 17 October 2004 (Arman 2004). Moreover, following the establishment of US bases in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan following September 11th, the news of the permanent Russian base in Tajikistan was greeted as an example of the renewal of Russian influence by its national press. For example, the Moscow daily *Komsomolskaya Pravda* wrote that the base will act as 'a firm fist to protect Russian interests abroad' (cited in Arman 2004). Initially the negotiations over the base had been held up by Tajikistan's demand that the President be able to take over command of Russian troops 'under extraordinary circumstances'.¹⁹⁷ However, as an alternative, the agreement eventually reached included an informal security guarantee from Putin to Rahmonov (Epkenhans [T5]; Matveeva 2006: 142). Here 'hard' power issues of military cooperation are interdependent with 'soft' power issues of trust, prestige and performance.

6.3. 'Border Management': Simulating and Dissimulating Sovereignty

'[A state] depends not only on political representation but also upon symbolic representation'.

– Cynthia Weber (1995: 124-125)

The three performances above show how discourse generates the security policies of national, international and regional actors in Tajikistan. Linking security practices to community via securitisation clearly raises the bigger question of sovereignty. *Sovereignty* is the supreme form of authority; in modern times it has been increasingly attributed to the state. Succinctly, and in Schmittian terms, the sovereign decides on the exception. This implies that, unlike authority, sovereignty cannot be multiple, ambiguous or dispersed. It is either absent or present. However, the contrasting

¹⁹⁷ IWPR, *RCA*, No. 270, 12/03/04.

representations of the Tajik-Afghan border outlined above indicate that a myriad of actors in national, regional and international spaces together negotiate exceptions and, in doing so, draw the line of sovereignty/intervention. There are clear overlaps in the three performances of security/community outlined above which provide the basis for the Tajik elite's sovereignty, yet their fundamental differences indicate that, unlike authority, sovereignty is not singularly performed but is ultimately simulated and dissimulated.

6.3.i. International Assistance to Border Management

International assistance to the security sector in Tajikistan continued to expand to pursue the goals of statebuilding following the announcement of the Russian withdrawal. As one former German diplomat noted, news of the shift to Tajik control meant, 'the western community in Dushanbe was all turned upside down for a couple of days' (Epkenhans [T5]). Similarly, a US diplomat acknowledged that they were 'caught off guard' by the Russian border guards withdrawal and that it was 'not in our interests for them not to be there.'¹⁹⁸ Thus, events accelerated a shift towards a statebuilding following disappointment with democratisation initiatives. According to Epkenhans,

the attention of the International Community shifted from this intra-Tajikistan dialogue, peace and reconciliation of the Civil War and [with the] IRP, to other problems in the country, mainly drug trafficking – definitely for the Americans, the Germans, the British, they are all focused on this right now. (Epkenhans [T5]: 3)

Matveeva contends that it was Rahmonov's visit to Washington in January 2002, shortly after the launching of the 'war on terror', which 'provided impetus for development of a relationship in the security field' (2005: 149). Such a shift reflects inter-textual international relations (the post-9/11 global trends towards statebuilding, as discussed in chapter one), as well as a certain degree of responsiveness to context (the need to find 'common ground' with local elites).

However, the shift to security and statebuilding issues did not signal conformity with *mirostroytelstvo* discourse. International initiatives mixed, to varying degrees, a liberal-reformist plank with capacity-building. Two very large EU regional programmes, initiated by Austria, including Border Management in Central Asia

¹⁹⁸ Interview, Amanda Cranmer, 2nd Secretary, US Embassy, Dushanbe, 01/03/05

(BOMCA), had been launched and funded prior to the announcement of the Russian withdrawal in March 2004.¹⁹⁹ Subsequent to this, the International Community found US\$4 million of new funding specifically for projects at the Tajik-Afghan border.²⁰⁰ As shown in figure 24, the new project emphasised capacity rather than reform (UNODC 2005: 28-33). A large international assessment mission in August 2004 highlighted primarily the technical deficiencies of the border posts (EC 2004). For donors and programme managers this reformist element was not, however, completely absent but more indirect. European donors in particular publicly reiterated 'multilateral cooperation' and 'integrated border management' with the international community in order to introduce 'legal and institutional reforms'.²⁰¹ Such programmes aimed not just at building the government's capacity but socialising it into better practices.

However, for the Tajik elite, border management is not about reform but retrenchment. This is reflected in the maxim that, according to a DCA official, 'Tajikistan is the main barrier to prevent [Afghan] drugs reaching markets' and 'that only joint efforts can be effective.'²⁰² It is in the inseparability of action from cooperation where Tajik authorities and international donors find a very limited common ground. Yet through such 'thin simplification' Tajikistan becomes an increasingly important member of the International Community for the first time in its history as an independent state. The Tajik authorities have responded in kind with performances of sovereignty which feign international standards. KOGG, the border guards, make monthly and annual reports on drug seizures (despite their seizure rates being much lower than other countries neighbouring Afghanistan) and comments on

¹⁹⁹ The latter was worth €23.5mln, 5 million of which was earmarked for Tajikistan, over 2003 to 2008. BOMCA worked in legal assistance, staff development, infrastructure and social integration with the following objectives: to increase effectiveness of border management systems; to improve cross-border cooperation; to facilitate the movement of people and goods; to ensure border protection while easing border tension. Two smaller projects in 2004 were by IOM (worth USD 400,000 and aimed at improving legislative and technical facilities for migrants) and UNHCR (worth USD 350,000 and aimed at making asylum procedures more efficient). (UNODC 2005; UNDP 2005a).

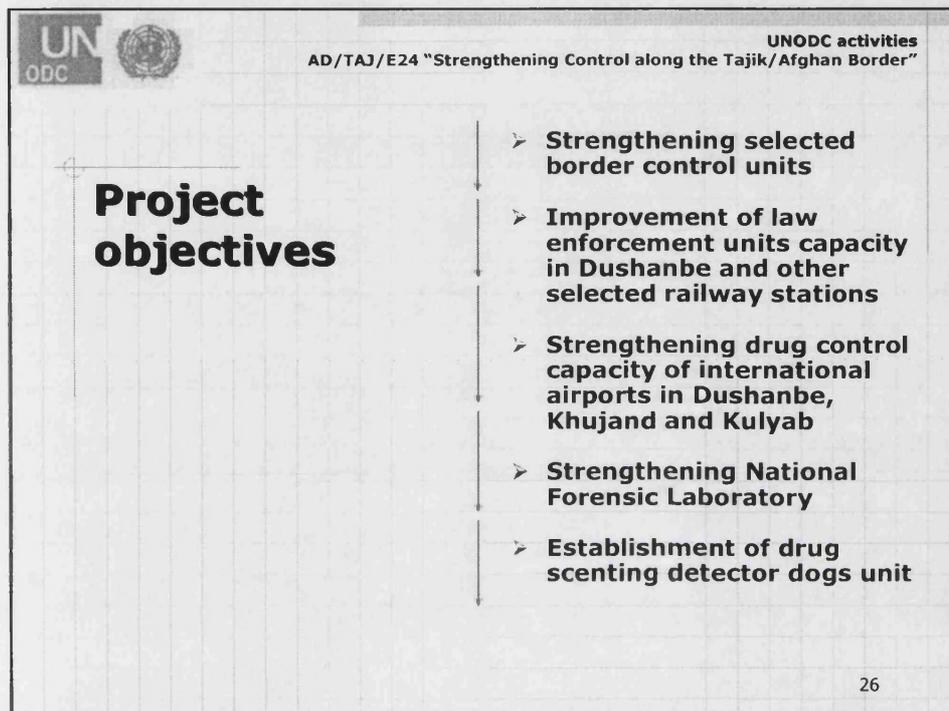
²⁰⁰ Hoagland, US Ambassador to Tajikistan, noted that the US was interested in establishing air surveillance of the border and even salary support to Tajik border guards, although this would require 'anticorruption programmes'. This included an increase from USD6.87 to 9.5mil in funding from 2004 to 2005, the majority of which was for 'strengthening border posts'. Financed primarily by new US funding, UNODC added the project AD/TAJ/E24, 'Strengthening Control along the Tajik-Afghan Border' to BOMCA in April 2004 (EC 2005).

²⁰¹ Comments by Pierre Cleostrat (European Commission), Stephen Lysaght (UK), and Harold Loeschner (Germany) in, EC 2005, meeting minutes. See also, Odyssey Migration Control 2005.

²⁰² See speech by Faizullo Abdulloev, First Deputy Director, Drug Control Agency of Tajikistan, in EC 2005.

the nature of the trafficking threat.²⁰³ The most common reports in state newspapers relate to successful interdiction of drugs and terrorists from across the Afghan border. In these reports Tajikistan is presented as an ‘obstacle’ or ‘barrier’ to Afghan terrorism and drugs.²⁰⁴

Fig.24: UN slide showing objectives of SSR project, ‘Strengthening Control Along the Tajik Afghan Border’, April 2004 (UNODC 2004: 26)



Such reports create a public transcript of state border protection which denies hidden practices of collusion with drugs traffickers. In the press conference following a major international meeting in February 2005, General Zuhurov, via a public transcript of *mirostroitelstvo*, summarised the two days of talks:

I have been talking about the projects and wishes of the country donors that are interested to equip the Tajik-Afghan border. Everybody is interested about how this border will be equipped and secured and this depends not only on the security of Tajikistan but other neighbouring countries.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ See for example, *Asia-Plus Blitz* # 12 (425), 19/01/00.

²⁰⁴ All copies of the state newspaper *Jumhuriyat* which I reviewed from 2002 to 2003 contained one account of the arrest or killing of border violators. See *Jumhuriyat*: 21, 19/02/02; 56, 18/05/02; 99, 21/08/02; 20, 18/05/03; 54, 17/05/03. For a more recent account see, ‘We are able to defend our border,’ [*Mo sorhadoti hudro hifz karda metavonem*], *Jumhuriyat* 59, 28/05/05.

²⁰⁵ See ‘press conference’ and speech by Col-Gen. Saidamir Zuhurov, Director, Drug Control Agency of Tajikistan, in EC (2005).

In the same press conference Zuhurov departed from the international consensus in defending Tajikistan's right to fixed border outposts (*zastava*), in the face of donor calls for mobile units which would be better equipped to interdict highly mobile smuggling gangs. 'I know better the status on the border than regional reps of UNODC,' he noted, adding that effective border posts in Tajikistan 'must be physical.'²⁰⁶ This dispute gets to the heart of the different conceptions of Tajikistan as a barrier and the different notions of Tajik sovereignty being performed. While Zuhurov is widely respected in the International Community for being an 'honest guy', it is also acknowledged that *zastava* are integral for institutionalised corruption as fixed outposts provide points for the collection of bribes from legal as well as illegal travelers and traders.²⁰⁷ Moreover, because of its inability to intervene without the support of the government, the International Community must tolerate this.

Here, the state-led territorialisation of space proves resilient. Matveeva argues that the Tajik regime was able to play international actors off against each other in order 'to gain institutional resources without seriously committing themselves to or implementing necessary political reforms' (2006: 145). However, there is little alternative for the International Community but to work within the local system. 'People who are corrupt are experienced in dealing with border management,' one international representative working on BOMCA privately noted. 'If we remove them there will be none left.'²⁰⁸ An OSCE officer admitted that corruption was too deeply ingrained.

Tajiks know who the donors are. It's an excellent idea [BOMCA] but how can it be executed because it doesn't work to just give money. The main problem is the mentality of the people. They are already used to many years of corruption. The people do not expect anything different from the border guards. They know that by letting traffickers through they can get money for their family.²⁰⁹

Thus, for internationals, a public solution (reformed border management) is found in the problem (corrupt border management). 'Hidden transcripts' reverse this logic: the

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Interview, Suhrob Kaharov, Country Manager for Tajikistan (BOMCA), UNDP, Dushanbe, 02/08/05

²⁰⁸ Interview, international programme officer, Dushanbe, March 2005

²⁰⁹ Interview, international programme officer, Kulob, June 2005

problem is found in the solution. They reveal the inauthentic character of such SSR programmes; they are often practised not because of real belief that they will work but because the programme is justified discursively (it makes sense to international donors whose priorities are 'statebuilding') and there is an institutional interest in seeing it through for its own sake.

6.3.ii. Simulating Sovereignty

Thus whilst programmes such as BOMCA may largely fail to reform border management, they demand that Tajik border management is shared with the international community. In doing so they simulate Tajik sovereignty. From the analysis provided above we can summarise two primary functions of sovereignty simulation (under international intervention). Firstly, as argued by Matveeva, with the financing, infrastructure and training for border security and anti-drugs operations being 'outsourced to external powers', the ruling elite is able 'to concentrate on the challenges it considers important' (2005: 134). These include suppressing internal dissent, in particular that of *Hizb-ut-Tahrir*. Secondly, and more importantly, such international intervention in the name of Tajikistan's borders provides powerful demonstrations of its sovereignty. Asadulloev, a Tajik political scientist, describes this as,

the transition from declared to real independence, which is continuing to this day. The transition of Tajikistan to a full international standing [sic.] in relation to other Central Asian countries as well as in relation to regional and international organisations such as UNTOP, OSCE, and OIC [Organisation of the Islamic Conference] (2004: 7).

Achieving respect and recognition regionally and internationally is particularly valued by Tajik elites.

Yet 'real independence' here must be understood to be contingent upon wider regional and international acceptance of the government's performance in terms of anti-terrorism and drugs control. To this extent, rather than sovereignty being cooperatively shared (singly represented) or competed for (contradictorily represented), contrasting representations are, to a limited extent, complementary as they allow representations (and, by extension, different communities) to exist in parallel. Sovereignty over the state border is *simulated* (as opposed to singly represented) as a consequence of the contrasting, yet not contradicting, performances

outlined in 6.2. Simulation is a product of this ambiguity: the persistence of multiple interpretations over a single interpretation (Weber 1995: xii). Sovereignty carries different meanings nationally (where it supposes self-sufficiency) compared to regionally and internationally (where, in different ways, it requires intervention). Such judgements about the nature of sovereignty in this empirical case are based upon a substantial shift in theoretical thinking.

Traditional international relations theory, particularly realism and neo-realism, takes the sovereignty of the state as an essential given, axiomatic to the field itself (Krasner 1992: 39). However, there is now a well-developed theoretical literature to overcome this dead-end. Walker, for example, notes:

State sovereignty works because it has come to seem to be simply there, out in the world, demarcating the national orders of here and there. But the lessons that theorists of international relations have consistently refused to learn since Hobbes is that sovereignty is never simply there. And what was never simply there can never simply disappear. (Walker 1995: 322)

It is not simply some tendency towards stasis or tradition that reproduces this centrality of the state, but continuous processes of representation. If a government is represented as fostering conflict in other countries, or failing to prevent such 'spillover' of extremism, then it can find itself subject to the beginnings of a discourse of intervention and the loss of a constructed image of sovereignty. If a state is unable politically or symbolically to represent its people, then it risks losing its source of sovereign authority. It therefore risks losing the legitimacy attached to its claim to speak for its source of sovereign authority in international affairs. Only by maintaining control over the depiction of its people can the state authoritatively claim to be the agent of its people (Weber 1995: 28). However, today sovereignty in 'weak' and 'failed' states seems to be under siege by both discourses of statebuilding and humanitarianism. What explains the survival of state sovereignty as the political ideal despite its practical incoherence and unevenness?

The answer for Weber (1995) is found via Baudrillard's 'simulation'. She argues that it is no longer possible to fix sovereignty according to a single representation of an ideal-type. Sovereignty and intervention, for example in the case of border management in Tajikistan, have been so saturated by multiple and contrasting representations that as signifiers they have lost all meaning. The world has simply become so complex that the principles of international law that may have

made it easier to 'fix' or 'mark' the sovereign state are no longer widely accepted. Moreover, when 'sovereignty' and 'intervention' are used interchangeably, a state can lose control of its claim to legitimacy (p. 41). Weber argues that such competing and co-existing representations of sovereignty displace a 'logic or representation' with a 'logic of simulation' (p.xi-xii). In cases of simulation, discourses constantly shift in their use of referent objects, where any of *inter alia* 'the people', 'the state', 'the region' or 'the International Community' may be inscribed as sovereign. These shifting sets of norms and symbols comprise a 'code' (p. 127) of norms and symbols for statesmen to adopt in their representations to various audiences. Yet despite this lack, Der Derian with Baudrillard, argues that such simulations are affective: they 'produce real symptoms, hyper-real effects' (2001: 214). It is an 'order of simulation' which 'marks the legitimate range of its legitimate powers and competencies' (Weber 1995: 129). Via this 'common ground', international actors are able to simulate border management whilst elites simulate their own sovereignty over the border. A regime which is the object of statebuilding may be simulated among local, elite and global actors who, in different ways, contend that the regime represents 'a state' and thus can claim sovereignty, an authority to speak internationally on behalf of those within a given territory.

Yet while these public practices are intrinsic to peace/legitimacy, as simulcra they are simultaneously deconstructed by hidden practices. As sovereignty is simulated it is concomitantly dissimulated by elite and popular practices (as will be shown below). Under simulation it is the indirect affects of interventions for the power and authority of the ruling elite which are important. Simulation allows the elite to manipulate international assistance for their own ends, such as in the case of border assistance under the 'war on terror'. Often agents are able to avoid the functional fulfillment of agreements, but simultaneously adhere to contrasting 'codes' of sovereignty and intervention. Tajik elites are well practised in this, having signed dozens of international agreements which remain unfulfilled (Lavrakas: 2004: 18). However, elite actors will increasingly seek to gain control for themselves of these representations of sovereign authority. Strong states are thus able to effect, and to a greater degree than others 'fix' the representations of their 'source' of authority, and the location of their boundaries (what's 'inside' and 'outside'). The ability to shape these representations and make them conform to one's own sense of 'self' is for the leaders of a state intrinsic to their agency and their authority, locally and globally.

Indeed, it relates to the very ability to control what is local ('domestic', 'internal', 'national', 'inside') and what is global ('external', 'international', 'outside'). By 2005, with its increasing acceptance as an equal by regional partners and the increased emphasis on statebuilding by the International Community, Tajikistan regained some ability to perform a sovereignty/intervention boundary to determine how the country is represented in regional and international relations.

Therefore, rather than a technical process of state-building via security sector reform, where the referent object of the state is objectively given, 'security' entails the discursive simulation of sovereignty as a product of the contrasting representations of national, regional and international community. This justifies and makes hegemonic the use of state violence by one group (the regime representing the 'the state') over everyone else (the 'citizens'). In Tajikistan, between 2000 and 2005 'security' has been recast as external threats to the state are identified, demonised and – to a certain extent – suppressed. But security has been practised in different ways with different partners: national, regional and international. Thus, 'security' and sovereignty remains essentially ambiguous and simulated: their referent object – 'the state' – and its 'threat' shifting across popular, elite, regional and international 'selves'. Herewith the state is imagined as a security provider for various wider constituencies while the iterative reproduction of such an image justifies the unassailable position of an elite who service themselves from the rent garnered via their position of hegemony.

6.3.iii. Dissimulating Sovereignty

Discussion at the representational level of analysis inevitably raise questions about the reception of discourse, and the reaction to it via dissenting practices by both elites and subordinates. We must go beyond simulation to dissimulation. What does simulation allow agents to do? How does it beget dissimulation? Moreover, what do both processes of simulation and dissimulation do for the state and for peace?

Dissimulation is concomitant to simulation. In Baudrillard's terms, cited by Der Derian, 'dissimulation is to feign not to have what one has' (1992: 214). If what one has is not real in an objective sense but publicly simulated, it is almost inevitable that it will be dissimulated in hidden spaces. Agents who are attentive to the ambiguities of their claims to sovereignty or intervention, can begin to adapt and work around these representations. They can also easily become cynical or sceptical.

Weber argues that sovereignty and intervention as concepts of international relations 'no longer produce meaning' (p. 121). The two are frequently invoked in the same sentence.

If in the same discursive locale where one finds a "legitimate" claim to sovereignty, one finds a "legitimate" example of intervention, sovereignty and intervention cannot be opposed to one another. Rather they can be substituted for one another. Sovereignty is intervention, and intervention is sovereignty. (1995: 121)

In such a way, sovereignty loses its meaning. It becomes a thin representation, a trope used to convey its very antonym. Elite acts of dissimulation allow hegemony to act illegally under the shadow of the state. Popular dissimulations challenge state sovereignty by highlighting the continual failure of the elite to represent national or public interests. However, as Baudrillard notes, to dissimulate something 'implies a presence' (Cited in Der Derian 1992: 213). As will be discussed in the conclusion, one dynamic of the practices of dissimulation is inherently conservative: the reproduction of the (artificial) reality – state sovereignty.

Trafficking and the corruption of the state

The Tajik-Afghan border as a site which is manipulated by state actors (both elite, senior officers and subordinate foot soldiers) as it is guarded as the boundary of 'the state'. Tajikistan is a key transit country for Afghan opium on its way to be processed as heroin and shipped to the markets of Europe. In the mid-1990s, Khorog in GBAO was a major entry point of drugs, which were then shipped on to Osh in southern Kyrgyzstan; more recently Panj and Moskovskii in Khatlon province have become key entry points (International Crisis Group 2001b: 2, 6). Production of opiates has risen since the defeat of the Taleban in Afghanistan in 2001, with the subsequent weakening of central control, despite international intervention – 2004, in particular, was a bumper year. Both Tajik and Afghan state representatives are deeply bound up in the trade. Much of the violence in the latter stages of the civil war and the post-war period can be linked to drugs trafficking²¹⁰. Moreover, the extent of drugs trafficking networks challenges the very notion of a separation of public and private spheres

²¹⁰ For example, incursions into Khujond, November 1998 were allegedly linked to a failed drugs deal. See Akiner (2001: 72-74).

(McDermott 2002: 12). Testimony from traffickers and drugs control officers indicates that both Russian and Tajik efforts at interdiction are less than comprehensive.²¹¹ Organised crime groupings are very powerful in Tajikistan, include high-level government officials and therefore retain significant political influence (Marat 2006: 107-108; Akiner 2001: 72-76). High-level officials carry 'virtual immunity' from prosecution and thus there are few public examples of their complicity. One exception concerns the Tajik Ambassador to Kazakhstan, twice caught for trafficking (ICG 2001: 15-16). Occasionally 'turf wars' between official actors simmer to the surface with recriminations and accusations of trafficking between elites.²¹²

Such analyses suggest that border management in Tajikistan cannot be insulated from organised crime and may in fact be inseparable from the dynamics of the black economy. Representatives of the International Community do not question the degree of organised crime in the country but they would question its inseparability from border management. International programmes are premised upon the possibility of demarcating a non-corrupt or at least considerably less corrupt space. It assumes that newly trained units of guards, or new institutions such as the Drug Control Agency (DCA) under Zuhurov, can operate relatively honestly and effectively within an extremely dishonest system. However, the sheer extent and nature of the trade suggests that this is overly optimistic. The drugs trade (see figure 25) produces massive profits whilst border guards, even internationally funded ones, earn very little. The direct profits of trafficking are so great as to make such institutionalised corruption a comfortable business cost. UNODC estimated in 2003 that drugs smuggling was worth USD2.27bn to Central Asian gangs, the majority of which are Tajik. By these statistics, it is possible that the profits from drugs trafficking to Tajik gangs exceed the country's official GDP of USD1.64bn in 2003 (UNODC 2003: 167).²¹³ Unsurprisingly then interdiction rates are low. Traffickers report that it is relatively easy to pass checkpoints with bribes (Torjesen et al 2005: 43). One study reports how little resistance traffickers face noting, 'it is striking how little violence is associated with the multibillion dollar drugs business in Tajikistan'

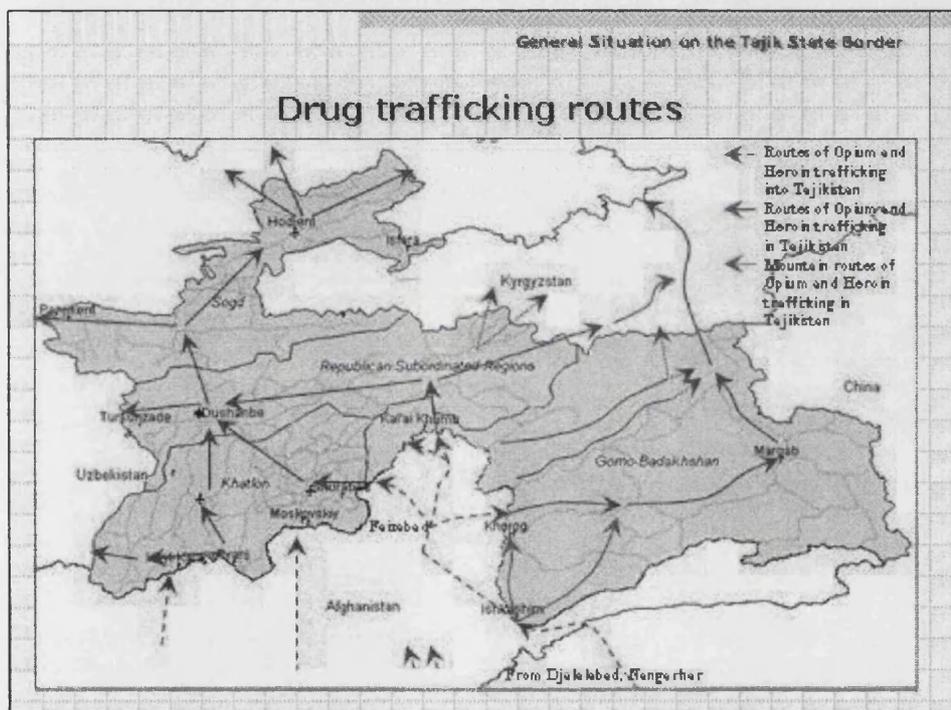
²¹¹ IWPR, RCA, No. 374, 07/05/05.

²¹² For example, in 2005, in Moskovskiy district, Tajik and Russian guards publicly accused each other of drugs trafficking. Interview, Bojidor Dmitrov, regional representative, OSCE, Kulob, 02/06/05.

²¹³ For GDP figures see USAID data sheet, available at: http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/pdfs/tajprofile.pdf.

(ibid: 29). UNODC figures suggest that Tajikistan, despite a dramatic increase from the mid-1990s when it did not seize any narcotics, is doing less than it could in comparison with neighbouring countries. While they estimate that 23% of Afghan heroine and morphine transit through Tajikistan, only 16% of all seizures were made there (2003: 161, 167). In short, despite increasing international assistance, traffickers and state officials continue to transport drugs through Tajikistan on a grand scale, thus dissimulating the sovereignty that contributes to the latter's privileged position.

Fig. 25: UN slide showing drug trafficking routes through Tajikistan (UNODC 2004: 6)



Daily life at the border

Everyday life at the border also serves to dissimulate the sovereign authority of a state elite who claim to be protecting Tajikistan's territory and people. Consequent to the high volumes of drugs trafficked through the country, drug abuse in Tajikistan is on the rise, although exact figures are hard to determine.²¹⁴ Moreover, hidden testimonies of life at the border represent this murky picture, with concerns about

²¹⁴ UNODC cites 1.1% of Central Asia aged 15 and above as 'problem users' (2003: 168).

poverty, the reappropriation of the state for personal enrichment, and accounts of state violence against communities.

The reaction in borderlands to the Russian withdrawal was couched primarily in terms of livelihoods, both the wages that Tajik contract soldiers received directly from their Russian paymasters, and the benefits to the economy of the extra consumption of soldiers. In 2004, most 'Russian' troops were contract soldiers (*kontraktniki*) recruited locally. They typically earned USD200-300 per month whilst the head of the Tajik border forces earned USD42 a month. 'Where can you find a salary like that in Tajikistan?' one *kontraktnik* complained to reporters from the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR). 'Tajik soldiers get 30 somoni [USD10], which is laughable - one person can't even live on this money, let alone feed five children.'²¹⁵ Among soldiers themselves, it is widely believed that poverty wages, poor quality equipment and training will mean that Tajik soldiers are even less likely to interdict drugs than the 'Russian' troops were. IWPR quotes a former soldier with the RBF,

I have lost my job, but I don't intend to join the Committee for State Border Protection of Tajikistan - and not just because of the low salary. Our poorly-off officers will probably not be averse to cooperating with the drug traffickers, so the war on drugs will be nothing but words [..]. As an experienced border guard, I can say for certain that the Tajik armed forces do not have the experience or the equipment necessary for effective border protection.²¹⁶

Thus, a further concern was that the handover to Tajik control would increase the flow of drugs across the border. 'If the Russian border guards leave for good, it's hard to imagine the amount of drugs that will arrive here,' commented one villager from Buni, near Khorog. 'A lot of young people here have become addicts, and it's terrible to think of what will happen. Our politicians should think about this when making decisions.'²¹⁷

State violence in Tajikistan can be physical but it is often economic or 'structural'. With contract soldiers unlikely to sign up to vastly reduced salaries, the Tajik government has had to rely on rounding up conscripts to patrol the border. At a GBAO checkpoint, one young man from Dushanbe, without the requisite stamp in his

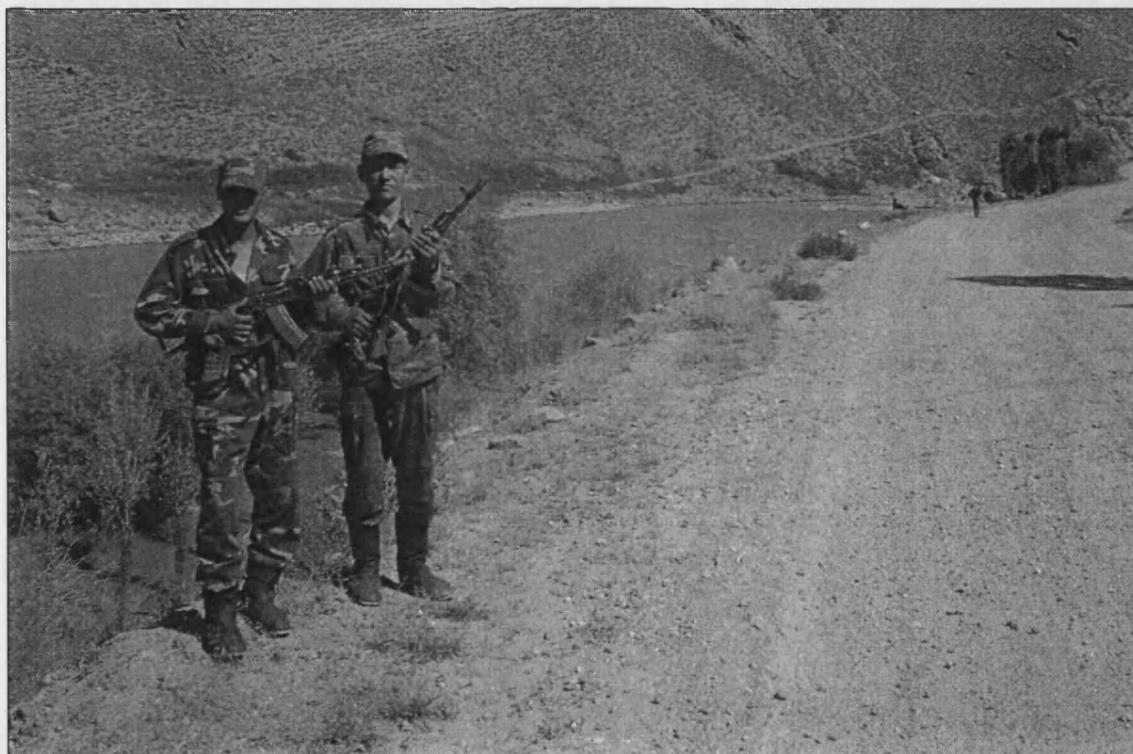
²¹⁵ IWPR, *RCA*, 316, 28/09/04.

²¹⁶ Cited in, IWPR, *RCA*, 374, 07/05/05

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

passport to show completion of military service, was removed from our *marshrutka* (mini-bus taxi) as it made its way on the 20-hour journey from Khorog to Dushanbe.²¹⁸ However, those recruited into the armed forces are not necessarily bound to be used exclusively in public service. Families complain that their sons are being used as free labour by officers to renovate houses and other construction jobs.²¹⁹ These proceeds go straight into the pockets of an elite which claims to represent the state. Traveling along the remote Badakhshoni stretch of the border in 2005, I talked to numerous conscripts, mainly teenagers from Khatlon province, who were walking along the road with only their weapons (see figure 26). They complained of not having enough to eat and asked for food and cigarettes from us.

Fig. 26: Teenage conscripts patrolling the Tajik-Afghan border between Khorog and Ishkashim, July 2005



Such ‘dissimulation’ of sovereignty creates subordinate hidden transcripts of skepticism and cynicism, and hidden practices of avoidance. IWPR reports one informant who was shocked by the poor conditions that his grandson suffered at his base.

²¹⁸ He was arrested after his passport revealed that he had not completed military service.

²¹⁹ Cited in, IWPR, *RCA*, 374, 07/05/05

When I visited my grandson at his military unit, I saw soldiers who could hardly walk from hunger and were wearing threadbare uniforms [...]. I thought, how can an army like this protect Tajikistan?²²⁰

Poor food and living conditions and widespread bullying are reported and lead to resistance or evasion by families during government conscription campaigns.²²¹ The authorities, in turn, sometimes use extreme tactics to conscript young people. Such popular testimonies indicate that the boundary between security providers and ‘threats’ is a largely a constructed one.²²² International discourses of the Tajik ‘other’ and national elite ideals of ‘us’ maintain this ideal of state protection, whilst acts of state violence against its own people continue without redress. Such practices dissimulate sovereignty and make the divide between ‘state’ and ‘terrorist’ which state actors are seeking to re-inscribe extremely thin indeed; maintained by inconsistent and limited adherence to multiple public transcripts (or simulated ‘code’) of sovereignty.

However, simulation and dissimulation are more than parallel processes. I argue they are concomitant. Simulating sovereignty through ‘border management’ and ‘reintegration’ allows sovereignty to be dissimulated by state actors’ complicity in trafficking and the looting of official resources. Such conclusions are supported by more detailed studies of the Tajik security sector. For example, the process of border guarding in Tajikistan provides a means of extraction for guards and officials, as described by Matveeva:

Presently, corrupt networks of border guards/policemen/customs officials are firmly entrenched and are interested in the preservation of a *status quo* of closed borders. They also have a lobbying capacity in the capital to argue the case for ‘better security’ which in reality means more barriers to the movement of goods and people, and more extraction opportunities. (2005: 138)

To another former international officer, security assistance by the International Community has, ‘helped the government to tighten control and to react more

²²⁰ See, IWPR, *RCA*, 324 part 2, 05/11/04

²²¹ See, IWPR, *RCA*, 324 part 2, 05/11/04

²²² Locals report that when IMU fighters camping in the Tavildara region between 1999 and 2001 were well-behaved and even paid for goods, unlike some government troops stationed nearby in Garm (Matveeva 2005: 141).

repressively' (Epkenhans[T5]: 3). Thus, in broad terms, it seems a matter of interpretation as to whether 'the state' should be seen as part of the problem or part of the solution for 'porous' borders in Tajikistan. It illustrates the limited power and political imagination of the International Community if international actors cannot find alternative allies in combating trafficking in Tajikistan to the very people who are benefiting from the illegal trade.

Conclusions

If we see both security and sovereignty as fixed, objectively existing phenomena, we lose the ability to see how they constitute the very things they seek to protect (the state and its community). If we recognise security in terms of processes of (de-/re-) securitisation, and sovereignty (and the state itself) as simulated, then we begin to grasp how practices of security can simulate or dissimulate peace/legitimacy. The unintended or indirect consequences of international assistance (in terms of sovereignty) are more significant than cosmetic changes that may be achieved in border management. In addition to (re-/de-centralised) authority, this chapter has introduced (dis/simulated) sovereignty as a second attribute of complex legitimacy.

The varying discourses of security inscribed on Tajikistan act to legitimate statehood and sovereignty with differentiated accounts of whom and what the Tajik state represents. But importantly the degree of contradiction between these discourses remains low. In neighbouring Kyrgyzstan, by contrast, representations of the border have been the subject of significant political dispute as powerful opposition discourses have emerged against the government while defending the ideal of 'the state'. The Tajik government gave more land away to China in the demarcation and delimitation negotiations than did Kyrgyzstan. Whereas in Kyrgyzstan 'the border' became a hotly contested site where the government's representations of its sovereignty were openly challenged in numerous opposition newspapers (Megoran 2002: 112-167), in Tajikistan articles in the infrequently published opposition paper *Ruzi Nav* did not impact public discourse. Even opposition representatives were unsure of the details of what had happened and whether the government had 'sold' land to China.²²³ This comparative lack of dissent illustrates the powerful

²²³ SDPT representative Samadova comments that people did not believe the news: 'You know that last year in the newspaper 'Ruzi Nav' they printed about our parliament selling a portion of land to China. But when we were speaking about this to the common folk (*prostomu narodu*), no one believed us! Is

performance of state authority in Tajikistan which makes its elite better placed to mediate the simulation of sovereignty.

Practices of dissimulation are begotten by the 'logic of simulation' but do not supercede it. As Reeves has perceptively claimed (Reeves 2006), it is this intrinsic ambiguity of (Central Asian) state formation which produces paradoxes such as McMann's (2004) 'strong-weak' states in Central Asia, and Migdal's (2001) 'states against themselves'. 'These paradoxes and puzzles arise,' Reeves argues, 'from an initial assumption that *the* state "ought", in both a normative and descriptive sense, to be a singular rather than multiple entity' (2006: 11, emphasis added). However, Reeves goes further, via extensive ethnographic study and notes that these multiplicitous acts – what I call practices of dissimulation – are themselves reproductive of state sovereignty. 'What initially appears,' she notes, 'as a violation of a pre-existing boundary between "state" and "society", "legal" and "illegal" can rather be understood as *constitutive* acts' (p. 12). They constitute the state but not one that exists in an ideal form. Thus, both simulation (of its 'presence') and dissimulation (in its 'absence') make the state appear as if it is real, in *both* the daily life of subordinates and discursive and representational practices of elites and internationals. This, once again, points to the inherently ambiguous and precarious nature of statehood and peacefulness in post-conflict Tajikistan.

This thesis has thus far focused on the conceptualisation of an ontology of peace through an empirical inquiry into its practice in Tajikistan. However, there is a deeper, epistemological tension underlying the steps I have taken in my analysis. Chapters three and four developed a representational analysis of peace. Chapter five explored this empirically, showing how such representation produce performances of authority/peace. However, this chapter has sought to take the argument beyond representation to show how multiple performances or securitisations beget processes of simulation and dissimulation. As representational constructs break down so wider hidden practices which undermine public performances become more important. This sets the scene for the final empirical chapter, on community development, which weaves both discourse analysis and ethnography to consider how practices of physical and structural violence, and acts of departing from Tajikistan, are concealed by performances of peace.

there actually that policy?' ([T18]: 5)

CHAPTER SEVEN

Development and Decentralisation: Livelihoods and ‘Community’

In each case, the necessarily thin, schematic model of social organisation and production animating the planning was inadequate as a set of instructions for creating a successful social order. By themselves the simplified rules can never generate a functioning community, city, or economy. Formal order, to be more explicit, is always and to some considerable degree parasitic on informal processes, which the formal scheme does not recognise, without which it could not exist, and which it alone cannot create or maintain.

– James C. Scott (1998: 310)

This chapter considers the efforts of the International Community to facilitate decentralisation and community development, particularly by the means of establishing community based organisations (CBOs). It moves the debate on from the elite levels of national and international politics to political relationships in local spaces. Furthermore, it seeks to emphasise the extra-representational (economic and physical) practices of elites, subordinates and internationals which create an interest in territory and livelihoods as well as those acts which undermine this ideal. I show how *livelihoods* are *re-/de-territorialised*, where elite networks are increasingly regaining dominance of the land and subordinate actors are increasingly relying on labour migration. Moreover, not only are peacebuilding actors not facilitating ‘self-government’ and indirectly supporting increased dependency on networked elites, but – at a senior level – they are intrinsically unready to learn from these failings.

Tajik livelihoods must be examined in the context of the dynamics of authority and sovereignty discussed in chapters five and six. In particular, the re-centralisation of authority is most visible at a local level. This has formal, informal and performative dimensions. Tajik laws determine that the expenditures and administrative functions of local government, including staffing levels and wages, are set by the centre (Urban Institute 2003). One of the most direct is the President’s power to summarily dismiss and appoint heads of oblasts and raiyons. This constitutionally enshrined function of the presidential office was used frequently throughout the period from 2000 to 2005.²²⁴ Regular turnovers keep appointees strictly loyal to their patrons and prevent too much power from being accumulated by any particular local fief (Weigman 2004: 14-16). Moreover, given the indivisibility of

²²⁴ See, for example: Asia-Plus Blitz, #188 (601), 03/10/00; Burke 2005b.

political and economic power in Tajikistan, central control over the general functioning of local government serves to bolster control by elite networks over economic goods, foremost of which is cotton. New raiyon and oblast heads quickly gain a piece of the pie as state structures are deeply intertwined with the cotton business in the south and parts of the north of the country (ICG 2004: 14). Production targets, as during Soviet times, are set centrally but it is localised coalitions of future companies and local authorities which lock local farmers into producing cotton at below market rates. Finally, there is also a strong performative element to re-centralisation. Both appointments and dismissals are enacted on national television with each act of dismissal and appointment followed by the speaking of the name of the President, embodying the power of the state (See Burke 2005a). National or religious festivals and special anniversaries are also public performances of re-centralisation. According to a governmental resolution, the celebration of cultural festivals and the anniversaries of significant events must be conducted only with the permission of central government.²²⁵ For example, the preparations for the 2006 celebration of 2,700 years of the city of Kulob, which began in 2003, have been directed as an all-Republic celebration under a steering committee established in Dushanbe, presided over by the Prime Minister Akilov.

It was these strong ‘centralising’ trends which the International Community sought to address via community development and decentralisation programmes. In 2004 and 2005, I conducted research in communities and centres located in three of Tajikistan’s four administrative regions (see figure 27): Sugd oblast (*Veloyati Sughd*, formerly *Veloyati Leninobod* [Taj.])²²⁶, in both Asht and Panjikent raiyons; Khatlon oblast (*Veloyati Khatlon*), particularly districts around the south-western town of Sharituz²²⁷; and in the centrally-controlled raiyons (*Nohyiahoi Tobei Jumhuri* [Taj.]), including the Rasht Valley²²⁸ districts of Nurabad, Garm and Jirgatal.²²⁹ I visited

²²⁵ Asia-Plus Blitz, #118 (531) 23/06/00.

²²⁶ Sugd oblast (formerly Leninabad) includes the Zerafshon and Ferghana valley areas, including Tajikistan’s second city of Khujond, and contains around 2 million people. It is the most industrialised region and provided most political leaders during the Soviet era.

²²⁷ Khatlon oblast was created in 1992 when the regions of Kurghonteppa (where most of the intense fighting took place during the civil war) and Kulob were merged to form a giant region with just over 2 million people under the control of Kulobi elites. It is the primary cotton-growing region of the country.

²²⁸ The opposition established remote bases in the mountainous Rasht Valley between late-1992 and the 1997 peace treaty. Indeed, ‘warlords’ operated independent of the authorities in the region until late-2001, especially in the district of Tavildara. See chapter 6.1.

each of these areas several times during this period spending around six weeks in each of the three oblasts, sometimes as an employee of an international organisation, sometimes as an independent researcher accompanying internal organisations – although this distinction was of little significance to locals. I conducted research in a total of nineteen ‘communities,’²³⁰ visiting most of them several times (see figure 28).

Fig. 27: Map of Tajikistan by administrative region



²²⁹ The fourth is the eastern Mountainous Badakhshon Autonomous Oblast (GBAO [*Veloyati Avtonomii Badakhshoni Koni* (Taj.)]), the largest and most sparsely populated region, including Pamiri groups speaking different local dialects in the valleys and ethnic Kyrgyz communities on the mountain plains.

²³⁰ International organisations refer to their target locations as ‘communities’. Tajik people rarely define the boundaries of their community unambiguously. ‘Community’ can denote a single neighbourhood (*mahalla*), the area served by a particular mosque/teahouse (*choihona*), or a village (*kishlak*). For example, in Garm which has one Jamoat and several mahalla committees, Mercy Corps created two ‘communities’, Garm-1 and Garm-2. The division created two clusters of mahallas with no basis in local practice. Local government officials had requested the two ‘communities’.

Fig. 28: Communities in which I conducted research, 2004-2005

Organisation (Programme: Donor)	CBO Concepts	Region	Districts	Villages/Towns
Mercy Corps (CAIP: USAID)	Community Action Group (CAG)	DRC	Nurabad Garm Jirgatal	Humdon Bedak, Shule, Garm Jailghan, Dombachi
		Khatlon	Sharituz Beshkent Kabodiyon	Sharituz Komsomol, Kizil Ketmen Pakala
Mercy Corps (PCI-2: USAID)	Community Initiative Group (CIG)	Sughd	Asht Panjakent	Navbuned, Tajikokjar Novabad, Koshonar, Margedar
Aga Khan Foundation (MSDSP: GTZ)	Village Organisation (VO); Water Usage Association (WUA)	DRC	Garm	Rasht Sovkhoz

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first investigates the practical impact of the international decentralisation programmes of Mercy Corps in this wider context. It explores the resilience of local spaces, the avoidance and accommodation strategies of subordinates, and the hybrid forms of local governance that, ironically, have strengthened the discursive and informal institutional structures of an authoritarian elite. Section two outlines the importance of livelihoods in the actual practising of building peace, looking specifically at the case of Rasht state farm. Building on the argument from chapter five, it shows how livelihoods are being de-/re-territorialised. The final section of the chapter looks at how ‘community development’ and ‘self-government’ are simulated by the (mis)representations of INGOs and the discursive mediation of their local staff and subcontractors.

7.1 Democratising the Mahalla or Mahallising Democracy?

I think [the Community Action Groups] will not last.. actually it's not that I think, I know, because when I came back to some communities a month after the end of the programme they did not exist, they were not meeting.

- Programme coordinator, Mercy Corps, Rasht valley, May 2005

On the face of it, Tajikistan seems ripe for decentralisation. As the country lacks an abundance of natural resources, it has not succumbed to the resource conflicts that

have beset other developing states and complicate decentralisation initiatives. Furthermore decentralisation seems necessary to attenuate the country's regional divisions. However, Tajik communities relate to elite and international practices in their own communities in light of the discourse of *tinji*. This section provides an analysis of local practices in response to the goals and stages envisioned in international programmes in order to assess their impact on what local people are actually doing. Put somewhat crudely, is the international community democratising the mahalla, or are locals acting to 'mahallise' democracy?

7.1.i. Development, 'Decentralisation' and Peacebuilding

International actors invoke decentralisation to convey a fundamentally different meaning to that of the 'de-centralisation' of authority that I deployed in chapter five. The international concept of the CBO has emerged partly as an antidote to the centralising demands of the post-conflict state and the corruption of elites (Ball 2002: 37). Decentralisation entails the distribution of decision-making and budgetary control from local government to local or regional level actors, including CBOs (Debiel 2002: 9). Abdullaev and Freizer's 'peace building framework' for Tajikistan, identified people's opportunities to 'participate in local decision making and policy formulation through reform of local self governance bodies and the development of more efficient community development institutions' (2003: 53). Promoting community-based development must – it seems – be a priority goal of the International Community (DeMartino 2004). Such exhortations express the ethical priorities of both democratic peacebuilding and humanitarianism, while the emphasis on 'grassroots' and 'bottom-up' development performs their spatial imaginaries (Jeong 2005).

Donors, Contractors and CBO Concepts

Donors including USAID and GTZ have prioritised community-based development since the formal end of peace implementation in 2000. By Spring 2004 the rapid expansion in the volume of 'peacebuilding' programmes conducted in Tajikistan via the capacity-building of CBOs encouraged the UNDP to bring the various agencies together to share information about 'community-linked development' and coordinate activities to 'promote decentralisation and provide a stronger framework for

governance at the municipal level' (UNDP 2004). CBOs, as idealised in the programme proposals and 'success stories' or international organisations, represent the first steps of a nascent democracy. Indeed, in rural Central Asia, they seem to offer unparalleled opportunities for devolving power whilst respecting local customs.

USAID is the largest donor in support of local self-government and has several major INGO contractors in Tajikistan. Its Community Action Investment Program (CAIP) is the largest ever community-based programme in Tajikistan and is imbued with specific peacebuilding objectives.²³¹ CAIP's stated goal was to 'help prevent conflicts and promote broad based-citizen dialogue and participation', to achieve 'improved standards of living, more active and engaged citizens and more open, accountable local government' (MCCAR 2005: 1). The methodology of CAIP, as implemented by Mercy Corps, entailed 'the democratic election of Community Action Groups (CAG), transparent, sustainable, and accountable management of projects, and advocacy for support from local government and community residents.'²³² USAID was also one of the financiers of the Village Organisation (VO). Aga Khan Foundation's Mountain Societies Development Support Programme (MSDSP)²³³, which set up and oversees VOs defines them as, 'a body of representatives from households in a given rural geographic locality', which is 'transparent', 'autonomous' and 'self-directed' (MSDSP 2001: 4).²³⁴

²³¹ CAIP, running from 2002-2005 was a three-year, USD27mil regional reconstruction programme which also worked in other perceived 'conflict-prone' areas in the Ferghana valley of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

²³² Mercy Corps, as one of four contractors for CAIP, established a community action group (CAG) in thirty-five communities in Khatlon and Rasht regions. The CAG model was based on the community initiative group (CIG) employed by Mercy Corps under another USAID programme, the Peaceful Communities Initiative (PCI) in Sugd oblast. Phase one of PCI ran from 2001-2004 in thirty-six communities in Tajikistan while a two-year follow-up began in thirty-one new communities from 2004 to 2006. Both CAIP and PCI were also employed in the Ferghana Valley of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, also considered 'conflict prone' according to the International Community.

²³³ The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) is the charitable movement of His Highness the Aga Khan, the spiritual leader of the Ismaili Shia Muslims who, in Tajikistan, are largely located in the Pamirs, GBAO. As an autonomous entity of AKF, MSDSP it is the largest International NGO in Tajikistan. It has an overwhelmingly national staff of 450 nationwide.

²³⁴ The VO model is more conservative and contextually-rooted than Mercy Corps' variant. MSDSP accepts a VO as a 'development partner' when it includes as members over 80% of households in the village (MSDSP 2001). VOs began in GBAO eight years ago; every village there now has one and many are into their ninth year. In 2004, MSDSP had a \$6 million budget and ran 800 VOs. VOs are envisioned as standing bodies which 'enhance social unity in the village' and 'become internalised to the social reality of the village, to truly become an indigenous institution (not to be just 'oil on water') (Tetlay 2001). They are seen as complementary to government, in that they are called to 'maintain relationships' with government and 'lobby and access resources' from it (MSDSP 2001). Former MSDSP General Manager, and now AKF Head for Tajikistan, Yogdor Faizov, boasts 'We made the VO stronger than local government.' See, Interview, Yogdor Faizov, General Manager, MSDSP,

The vital links between the INGO and the CBO are local NGO contracting partners. With multiple organisations and models working in Tajik communities in recent years, numerous partnerships and collaborations have been launched. Literally dozens of local NGOs have sprung up to work as subcontractors for international NGOs in implementing donor-funded programmes. They undertake trainings in conflict resolution, project management and a myriad of other general and specialist areas of community mobilisation. *Ittifok*, for example, in Sugd province, is one of the largest and gains significant business from Mercy Corps and UNDP amongst others. Over time, these institutions develop off-the-shelf packages which they can adapt to offer what is essentially the same product for ostensibly distinct programmes. Thus, while their relationship with donors and INGOs is subservient they are able to operate as efficient businesses based on economies of scale.

Levels of engagement: adapting civil society to the state

Despite conceptual and operational similarities among different international programmes, international NGOs are keen to develop and protect their distinctive approach. In Tajikistan such rivalries have primarily been played out with regard to 'level' of engagement. The UNDP alone has sought to work at the Jamoat-level²³⁵ with their Jamoat Development Committee (JDC).²³⁶ The PA has supported the JDC drive and directed heads of Khukumats to facilitate the UNDP's efforts. Similarly, the UNDP emphasises that JDCs must support government and not be an alternative to it. In some cases funding goes straight to Jamoats and there is deemed to be no need to set up a JDC.²³⁷ By contrast, international NGOs, given their mandates and identities as representatives of 'civil society', have taken a different tack, preferring to work directly in villages. They adopt a humanitarian discourse of peacebuilding with its emphasis on the 'grassroots'. Local social organisation in Tajikistan begins with

13/07/04. See also, Interview, Khaleel Tetlay, Social Development Advisor, MSDSP, 13/07/04.

²³⁵ 401 Jamoats, each representing approximately 10-15,000 citizens, constitute the foundational level of government in Tajikistan. (Ilolov & Hudoyev 2002: 608-9)

²³⁶ The Jamoat Development Committee (JDC; in 2005 renamed Jamoat Resource Centre, JRC) was launched in 2002 as a public association involving governmental and non-governmental representatives elected by communities (usually indirectly, by representatives of communities) to select and administer projects using revolving funds. In 2004 there were 90 JDCs (covering approximately 23% of Jamoats) and it was hoped there would be 300 by 2007 (with 75% coverage). Interview, Igor Bosc, Programme Manager, Communities Programme, UNDP, 13/07/04.

²³⁷ Interview, Mia Seppo, Deputy Regional Representative, UNDP, 13/07/04.

the mahalla, a local neighbourhood group of which there may be several per *kishlak* (village). Freizer articulates the idealised image of the mahalla which is widely shared by many international actors in Tajikistan:

Mahallas brought people living on the same territory together on a voluntary basis, along interest lines based on profession or good neighbourliness. They created a forum where local values, rules of behaviour, and common interests were defined, through which group interests were protected and joint actions organised (2004: 18).

This notion of the benign and voluntary nature of action under the mahalla is strikingly depoliticised in that it does not question who wins and loses in ‘group interests’ and ‘joint actions’. In such a way, this ideal of the mahalla needed rescuing from its post-conflict, post-Soviet predicament, with Freizer arguing that ‘they are increasingly passive and risk withering away’ (ibid: 19).

This raises a much greater issue which will be explored through the rest of this chapter: how the boundary between ‘state’ and ‘society’ gets lost in the ambiguities of ‘community’ and the material necessities of scratching out a living. On the one hand, this is an aspect which is present in Tajik communities regardless of international intervention due to the dual societal and state roles of local elites. This is evidenced in the ambiguous nature of the mahalla committee which was surprisingly absent from Tajikistan’s foundational local government legislation of 1994 (Urban Institute 2003), despite being an important part of the state apparatus during the Soviet Union. On the other hand, international NGOs explicitly blur the boundary in their discourses in order to express positive engagement between ‘state’ and ‘civil society’ – the dual subjects of peacebuilding. Mercy Corps, for example, includes state civilian bodies (presumably including the Presidential Administration) in its definition of civil society. Country Director for Mercy Corps Tajikistan Gary Burniske remarked, ‘you may ask “well, what isn’t civil society?” Well, I’d answer that the military isn’t civil society and, in some countries, they are a large part of the state.’²³⁸ In reality both the merging and dividing of ‘civil society’ and ‘state’ is problematic. When the same individual represents both the ‘state’, as a member of the district administration, and ‘civil society’, as a member of the CAG, we have to question to what extent state and civil society are actually institutionally separable in the first place. At the same time

²³⁸ Personal communication, Gary Burniske, Country Director, Mercy Corps, Dushanbe, April 2005.

their discursive separation is vital for the practice of international community development.

The rest of this section comprises a (re)interpretation of the impact of CBO's on communities, particularly those of Mercy Corps' CAIP. Below I investigate its three principal phases: establishing and training the CBO; community decision-making; and, conducting social and infrastructure projects. I contrast the claims of the official Mercy Corps (MCCAR 2005) evaluation of the programme (of which I was part) with local practices, which were indirectly affected by international intervention. These indirect effects will be considered in more depth in section three in terms of the re-/de-territorialisation of livelihoods. This raises an interesting question of evaluation – how we got it so wrong? – that I will discuss in the final section of this chapter.

7.1.ii. Establishing self-government: pre-existing beliefs and re-formation of leadership

The methodology of CAIP called for the establishment of the CAG via an election. Towards the end of the three-year programme the CAG was encouraged to continue its activities by continuing to act and seek registration as an NGO. The final evaluation argued that CAIP was 'moderately successful in institutionalising the organisational arrangements' of the CAG.²³⁹

However, underlying both the programme methodology and the evaluation is a particular approach to community development which considers context to be a matter of secondary consideration. As Giffen and Earle note, while rhetorical recognition of 'local culture' is standard, assumptions about post-war and traditional society mean that in practice a methodological assumption of *carte blanche* is dominant (2005: 37).²⁴⁰ The problem with this analytical step is that one cannot necessarily expect it to be shared by community members who may let their 'non-

²³⁹ The Final Evaluation noted that the level of awareness of the CAG – as measured by a survey conducted in CAIP communities – was 'much lower' in Tajikistan than in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (where the programme also operated), and, in terms of 'sustainability', only about half of the CAGs had clear plans to continue their work (MCU 2005: 15-16, 26-27).

²⁴⁰ This type of approach is common among NGOs and sometimes even publicly acknowledged. MSDSP, which also administered the CAIP programme, prides itself on its ability to 'indigenise' the VO and argues that '[our] analysis of the institutional framework at the village level showed that there was a "vacuum".' MSDSP argues that pre-existing institutions could be disregarded given that they 'were not particularly development oriented and were not what could be called "participatory".' (Tetlay 2001: 3)

participatory' practices into the 'vacuum' that is the 'institutional framework' of the community. This is confirmed by the private testimonies of programme staff. One CAIP manager reflected after the end of the programme,

Is it really sustainable to create new groups rather than work with existing structures, like these elders committees? The problem is that the relationship between the two was not planned for in the programme.²⁴¹

Thus, in effect, Mercy Corps tried to introduce formal institutions into Tajik communities in which informal institutions of self-governance were already quite well established. This meant that the processes of forming CBOs were distorted by those institutions and ideas to the extent that Mercy Corps' intervention served to *re-form* pre-existing institutions.

In the ten CAIP communities which I studied there was considerable evidence in each to indicate that the CAG was in fact the re-formation of the local mahalla committee or groups of elders (*aksakals* [Taj.]). For example, in the village of Shule, in Garm district, CAG members noted that 'the *raisi mahalla* is the head of the CAG. When he wants to do something for the village he can go through the CAG to achieve it.' While they cited that they were 'elected', when asked about term limits and future elections they noted, 'for now there's no need for change.' Moreover, they added they were selected on the basis of ability and that, while they didn't have formal rules, they had 'mutual understanding'.²⁴² The CAIP women's committee in the village of Dombrachi, Jirgatal district, shed more light on how the process of re-forming takes place. 'In a general meeting,' one woman noted, 'the community voted on previously nominated candidates. We nominated each other ourselves.' Another commented that 'we have an informal selection process and are accepting new members.'²⁴³

In addition to such pre-existing local institutions, international interventions were often faced with numerous pre-existing donor-supported formations. This was especially true in the Rasht valley which is sparsely populated with people yet densely populated with international agencies. Consequently, within communities the practice of 'double-hatting' is common. Under double-hatting the same group of people serve as the members of several 'institutions', the VO and the CAG, and perhaps also the

²⁴¹ Interview, Programme Officer, Mercy Corps, 31/05/05.

²⁴² Group interview, CAG, Shule, 27/04/05.

²⁴³ Group interview, Women's Committee, Dombrachi, 21/04/05.

JDC. In the town of Garm, 'CAG members', for example, noted that the VO predated the CAG, so that the group simply took on the institutional identity of the CAG as well. They deal with VO and CAG business in the same meetings and see no difference between the two organisations. When asked how they decide through which institutional identity they do projects the group replied that, 'we go to whichever will support what we want to do: if Aga Khan says no then we go to Mercy Corps.'²⁴⁴ This testimony indicates the possibility that the process of intervention can be reversed: rather than the utilisation of a particular donor-supported methodology into numerous communities, there is the use of a single community methodology in relationship to multiple donor-funded projects.

Thus, the formation of CBOs over the course of 2002-2005 was often conducted on top of both pre-existing local and international structures – beset by both 'mahallisation' and 'double-hatting'. This meant that while local pre-existing values and norms remained salient, a direct translation of the *mahalla* committee en masse to the CAG is rare. The key qualification for membership of the group is less the formal membership of another group but the qualities of being 'respected' and having 'authority' in the community. The CAG in Bedak, for example, was formed out of a collaboration of six mahallas which were present in the 'community' which Mercy Corps had selected. Members of the group were quite open about their institutional ambiguities and how they sought to manage them. Bedak hosted a CAG, VO and JDC – although the CAG had arrived first – from which they had formed a single committee. The head of the village (*raisi kishlak*) was made leader because he is 'our leader.' While, in principle, the committee could be reelected this had yet to happen. 'Every two years we could have an election for the one committee,' they noted. 'If people are not happy we will do this.' Under this arrangement the rais 'works directly' with Mercy Corps and the other international organisations.²⁴⁵ Such a harmonisation and consolidation of the CAG chimes with subordinate ethics of 'unity' and 'cohesion', and with elite discourses of the 'necessity to have a uniform situation (*tipovoye polozheniye*) in order to define the status of mahalla committees'²⁴⁶ and 'unification of these territorial organs of self-government'.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ Group Interview, CAG, Garm, 26/04/05.

²⁴⁵ Group interview, CAG, Bedak, 28/04/05.

²⁴⁶ UNTOP/NAPST, 2002: Dushanbe (1): 2.

²⁴⁷ UNTOP/NAPST, 2002: Dushanbe (1): 23.

7.1.iii. Community decision-making: mahalla rules

The imperative to homogenise the CAG under mahalla leadership derives from a mode of elite dominance over subordinates which has been re-established in peripheral regions of Tajikistan following the peace agreement. This process has reconstituted hegemonic authority in the regions and has been inadvertently advanced by international assistance. In the Bedak case, group members note that 100% of the attendees to formal community meetings are generally male heads of households; occasionally a small group of women would come and sit apart from the men in their own group. The Rais, emboldened by his access to foreign funding, receives requests for support direct from heads of households and then discusses it with the group.²⁴⁸

This kind of re-formation in communities challenges the idea that interventions can institutionalise new procedures of decision-making in communities. CAIP's methodology entailed conducting social and infrastructure projects using 'participatory cycles of problem identification, project selection, planning, and implementation' (MCU 2005: 3). Hence, the process of decision-making was deemed to be more important than the conducting of projects itself. Programme managers repeatedly referred to the maxim that 'the means are more important than the ends' and 'it's not so much what is achieved but how.'²⁴⁹ In particular, communities were to gain new beliefs and rules via a training process, 'using a curriculum including modules on development principles, transparency and accountability, the value of public meetings, community participation and mobilisation, conflict resolution skills, creating sustainable communities, project management and related topics depending on circumstances' (MCU 2005: 3). Overall, the programme evaluation gave a positive conclusion regarding the inculcation of new decision-making rules. CAIP was, it argued, 'highly successful in engaging the local population in participatory and democratic change processes at the community level' (p.26), but was 'less successful in transferring a "CAIP methodology" and ensuring the sustainability of program approaches and processes (p.26). My independent findings indicate that this moderate criticism is not nearly radical enough.

CAIP decision-making ostensibly begins with community meetings to identify problems and select projects. However, participation in these meetings is not on an equal basis; from my own observation of such meetings it is clear that some voices

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Personal communication, Kevin Grubb, Mercy Corps, Khujond, 20/06/05

are dominant whilst others are unheard. Meetings are often directed by a head who makes proposals to the community to receive their approval. Moreover, such a formal setting may be superseded by prior informal agreements made in the community meeting place or *choihona*. Groups of men informally discuss community and family matters. As one CAG member in the village of Humdon noted, when asked how they receive requests from the community, 'of course since we live in the village and talk to people, and meet in the *choihona* every evening we know what the problems are.' Another said, 'we meet each other five times a day for prayers (*namaz*) – people know.'²⁵⁰ In such conditions the formal meetings can simply serve to validate pre-ordained, informal decisions. '[The meetings],' one group member in Sharituz admitted, 'are for the purpose of asking in the community for contribution and mobilizing them for voluntary work (*subbotnik*).'²⁵¹ Sometimes this leads to resentment from those who feel excluded from the process, and are thus not willing to take part in the meetings. In the village of Jailghan one group member explained that in one case, 'the poor did not want to make community contributions. Some did not want to come to community meetings. We told them it was obligatory to be at the meeting for the sake of the project.'²⁵² In this case, 'participation' in formal meetings can become something orchestrated from above.

The inequities of community 'participation' are evident from the responses of community members during the survey that was conducted as part of the CAIP evaluation. Ninety-two people were interviewed to form a statistically valid sample.²⁵³ Of the remaining 60 interviewees, 35 (58%) had heard of the 'CAG' and 36 (60%) were aware of the 'Transparency Board' which is placed in a prominent position in the village and which CAGs used to advertise the programme and their activities. However, these figures decline when people are asked more about what it actually does. For example,

²⁵⁰ Group interview, CAG, Humdon, 27/04/05

²⁵¹ In Soviet times *subotnik* was mass voluntary service on Saturdays which mobilised many workers and students. This group which used the term was quite 'russified' and 'urbanised', located in a regional centre. Group interview, CAG, Sharituz, 12/04/05.

²⁵² Group interview, CAG, Humdon, 19/04/05.

²⁵³ Results are based on 60 respondents in eight communities across the Rasht valley and Shartuz areas. Answers were open and have been grouped into categories by the author. A total of 92 people were surveyed but the 32 respondents from the large town of Shartuz were excluded as their answers distorted results. Overall, Shartuz residents had an extremely low awareness of the programme which was attributed by Mercy Corps staff to the size of the town and the number of organisations working there.

- Question 1. What is the purpose of the Board? **42% could describe**
- Question 2. What kind of information is on it? **25% could describe**
- Question 3. Do you know the cost of any single project? **13% could describe**

This poor level of knowledge is extraordinary since most of the communities are extremely poor, very small and close-knit (less than 1,000 residents) and that CAIP represented the largest modernisation project conducted in these villages in their history (an investment of up to USD 75,000 in material and in-kind resources per community). However, knowledge is mediated by power relations. Gender differences indicate that level of awareness is quite closely correlated to one's influence on the re-formed power structures. Figure 29 below shows the answers of respondents to a question about how the CAG was formed. While the most popular answer for women was that they did not know (20 or two-thirds of respondents), less than one-fifth of men (6 respondents) said this. This indicates both actual levels of knowledge and inscribed roles of masculine-leader and feminine-follower.

Figure 29: 'How was the CAG formed?' Responses by gender²⁵⁴

	Don't know	Through an election	Mercy Corps selected community leaders	Other	Grand Total
Female	20	9	2	0	31
Male	6	10	12	1	29
Grand Total	26	19	13	1	60

7.1.iv. Conducting projects: performing consent

Whilst the processes of forming and decision-making were superseded by the re-forming process and pre-existing beliefs and rules, the conducting of projects made a powerful impact of the physical infrastructure on communities, at least in the short-term. The thirty-five CAIP communities in Tajikistan conducted 231 infrastructure and 23 social projects during the three years of the programme and contributed an average of 45% of the costs of these projects through the in-kind provision of labour. They conducted far more projects (especially in infrastructure) and made greater community contribution (mostly in-kind in the form of labour) than the communities in the more urbanised Ferghana valley of Uzbekistan which also underwent the CAIP

²⁵⁴ See fn. 252

programme (MCU 2005: 16). However, for international peacebuilding the preponderance of project implementation over processes is understood as a real difficulty. One programme manager noted that it is ‘very difficult to separate the idea of a complete infrastructure project to the process it takes to get there.’²⁵⁵

Local elites were more instrumentalist with respect to infrastructure projects. Elite-led projects serve purposes beyond whatever social and economic legacy they may or may not bring. Such projects also serve to perform ‘authority’ as getting projects done requires the support of local informal authorities. One representative of a sub-contracted NGO working on Mercy Corps’ PCI programme in Sugd province noted that it was crucial to find leaders with ‘their own authority (*sobstvennyi avtoritet*)’. ‘In principle,’ she noted,

when such people come with us and begin to work with us it’s not difficult [to conduct projects]. But there were also naturally such incidents when we weren’t able to find such people. These were difficult incidents. [These leaders have] this authority from the population. They respect and trust these people and are attentive to the opinions of these people (Safarova [T16]: 3).

When local elites are brought on side they can organise *khashar* – a ‘traditional’ institution of community mobilisation – in order to provide a labour force. However, two quite contradictory misunderstandings of *khashar* are often held by foreign observers.

Firstly, *khashar* can be romanticised as an entirely voluntary, kinship-based institution which can simply be ‘harnessed’ by NGOs. However, my findings indicate it is led by those with ‘authority’. In the town of Garm, CAG leaders explained how they mobilise the people for non-CAIP social projects using Mercy Corps methodology: ‘for example, we say we are having a wrestling match and tell people they must come to *khashar*.’²⁵⁶ The deputy chair of the Jamoat in the same community noted that the aim of the programme was to ‘direct (*napraviti*) the young people for the development of the community’ and that the role of the chair of the CAG is as the ‘main organiser of people’.²⁵⁷ Such conceptions belie the idea of consensus-based mobilisation found in international discourses. Giffen and Earle have characterised this as a form of ‘obligatory voluntarism’ found commonly in

²⁵⁵ Interview, Kevin Grubb, Programme Manager PCI, Mercy Corps, KKhujond.

²⁵⁶ Group interview, CAG, Garm, 26/04/05.

²⁵⁷ Interview, Jamoat Deputy Head, Garm, 26/04/05.

khashar across Central Asia. ‘Donors may be able to report, quite truthfully,’ they note, ‘that projects achieved close to “full participation” since, from our research, it would appear there is still considerable social pressure for everyone in a particular community to contribute to *khashar* in some way’ (2005: 85).

Secondly, and somewhat in tension with the first assumption, it is often assumed that it is exclusively led by ‘traditional’ leaders – those possessing charismatic authority (such as a mullah) or age (an *aksakal*). Yet my research indicated that ‘authority’ is not exclusively ‘charismatic’ or traditional but can be very modern, understood in terms of the control and administration of resources. In the village of Margedar, where a PCI group had recently been established, the group noted the importance of having the head of the local farm on the group. While the explanation of the leader of the group as to why the group is listened to began with a testimony to authority for authority’s sake it quickly evolved to link this authority to resources. ‘They respect us because we are respected,’ one man noted,

but they don’t listen often because they know we have no financial means to build a new sportsground or new classrooms. It depends on what we can provide. If, for example, a donor buys pipes for a water system all the people will listen to us as they will see we’ve been able to do this.²⁵⁸

While economic power often accords with social status, particularly with respect to land ownership, Tajik society is fluid and contingent as wealth is accumulated by a small minority of labour migrants (usually in their twenties and thirties). As a consequence, social and political hierarchies can change in a village.²⁵⁹

In practice the mobilisation of communities through CAIP meant that hegemonic local elites, whatever their precise sources of authority, were handed an opportunity to perform. One NGO representative described how he hit a dead-end in a community where they could not get the local leadership on side and explained how the problem was resolved with the help of a relatively wealthy migrant:

When we decided that we will conduct a meeting behind closed doors, that we would no longer work here, and would make this known to people, there was one person who participated [in that meeting], who had for a long time been working in Russia. He said: “guys, I am sitting over here listening and am not able to understand what’s been going on here.” And when we told him he said: “okay, so here there’s such people.”

²⁵⁸ Group interview, CIG, Margedar, 27/06/05

²⁵⁹ This will be explored further in section 7.3.

Everyone still closed their eyes and didn't understand this but in the course of literally two weeks this person organised everything. He organised everything and in the course of a year they were outstripping other communities. All depends on the authorities (*avtoritetov*) and the person who takes responsibility for others (*vedyot za soboi drugikh*). (Safarova [T16]: 3)

In this sense, international interventions reproduce power relations in post-conflict communities. Local leaderships re-produce their evolving authority through *khashar*'s renaissance. In the village of Dombrachi, this was particularly evident. One CAG member noted, that prior to the projects *khashar* 'just had spiritual power'.²⁶⁰ Local elites in control of the CAG are, in effect, the conduit through which international assistance is administered. One youth committee member noted that 'the realisation of projects is based on CAG telling us a time and a place for us to come to undertake physical labour.'²⁶¹ The secretary of the local Jamoat remarked that through CAIP, 'we realise how *khashar* can be combined with international funding to complete a project.'²⁶² This conception of CAIP by leaders who now felt themselves more authoritative in their communities was common across communities.

These testimonies support my general findings that elite hegemony and patriarchal leadership were reinforced by international interventions. The graph compares communities (see figure 30) at the beginning of PCI with those at the end of CAG and shows two main response categories to the open question 'How are decisions made in the community?' The first category, 'together' includes those answers which emphasise the community as a whole, or the community with its leaders making decisions (in accordance with *tinji* discourse). The second category of answer, 'by leaders', includes those answers which emphasise an independent decision being made by leaders (including 'by the mahalla committee', 'by the men', 'by aksakals', 'by local authorities', or some combination of these groups, in accordance with *mirostroytelstvo*). Research conducted at the beginning of the PCI programme showed an overwhelming majority of villagers (47 out of 60) answering 'together' and affirming the maxim of 'unity' of the *tinji* discourse. Research conducted at the end of the CAIP programme, however, showed many fewer respondents giving this response (31 out of 60) and many more saying they were taken by 'leaders' (25 out of 60). There are many context-specific factors which

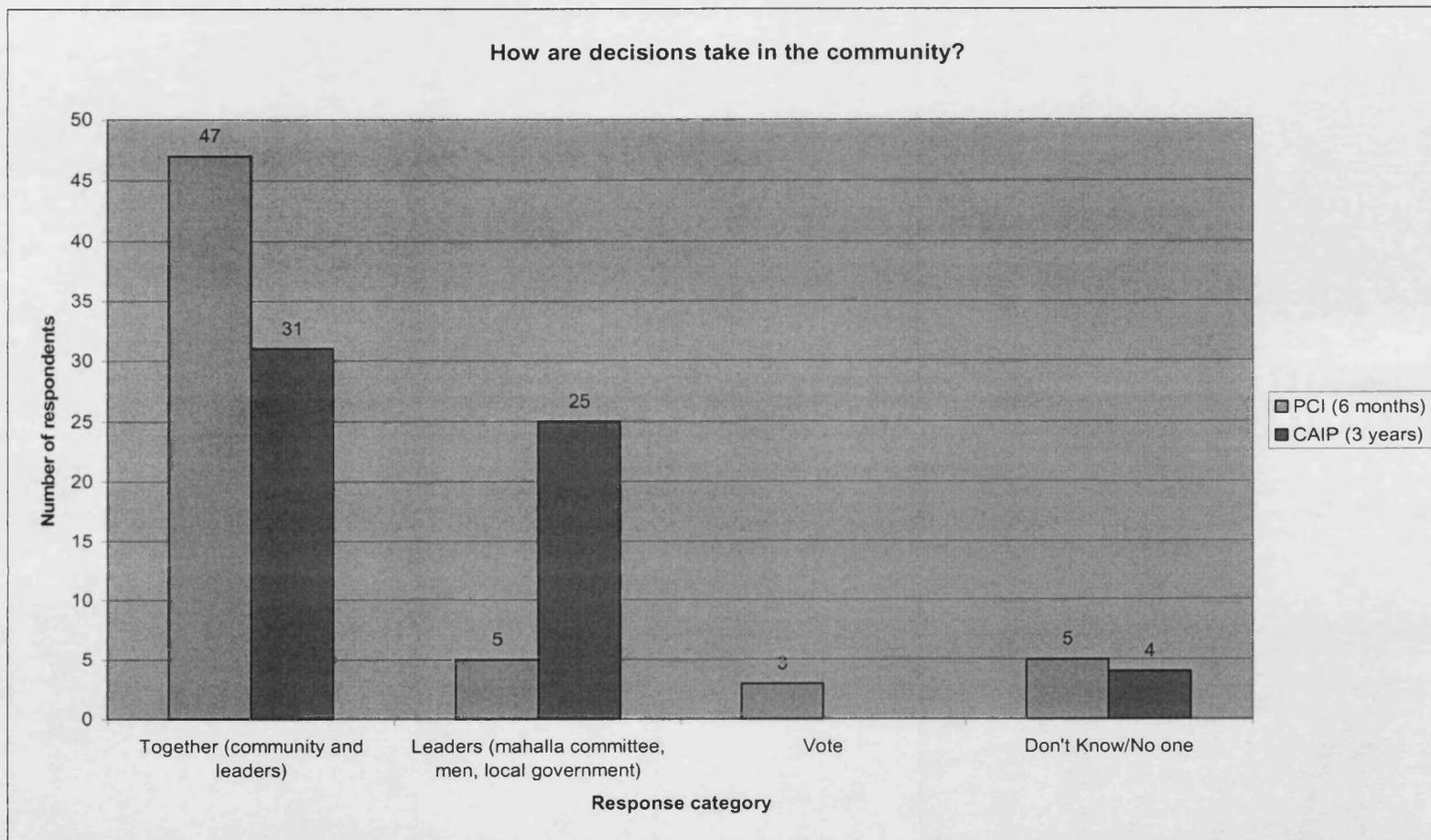
²⁶⁰ Interview, CAG, Dombrachi, 21/04/05.

²⁶¹ Interview, Youth group, Dombrachi, 22/04/05.

²⁶² Interview, Jamoat Secretary, Dombrachi, 22/04/05.

might explain this contrast – PCI and CAIP are different programmes, with different staff, working in different regions – however, the findings for CAIP mark a significant shift in perceptions of authority from the norms of *tinji* described in chapter 4.3 towards the renewal of elite hegemony and the acceptance of *mirostroitelstvo*.

Fig. 30: Graph: 'How are decisions taken in the community? A comparison between the beginning and end of international programmes²⁶³



²⁶³ CAIP findings from a survey of 60 vilalges in April/May 2005, at the end of the three-year programme. See footnote x (figure 23); PCI findings from a survey of the same number of respondents across five villages in Asht and Panjakent rayons in June 2005, six months into the programme.

7.2. Peasants, Migrants and Elites: Re-/De-territorialising Livelihoods

Anything that people do in life may cause conflict, but as I was saying things are going in such a way that if you point this out to someone it means that you are against national unity and accord (*natsionalnovo edinstva i soglasiya*). That's how everyone holds each other in check. Well, look, there's no work, however no one demands work, because if 3 million people demand work then we may go off our heads. [...] That's why everyone knows that you shouldn't demand work but you need to go to Russia, Kazakhstan, and it's not important if [there] they kill you or they don't.

– Turko Dinkayev ([T4]: 10)

To make more sense of the indirect effects of international programmes for community self-governance and decentralisation we must broaden our analysis to consider both elite-subordinate local dynamics (discussed in 7.1) and intra-elite regional dynamics in the context of local livelihoods. More prosaically put we must investigate how the poor scratch out a living. Livelihoods, as I consider them, are thus products of 'everyday economies' rather than referring to any specific mode of accumulation (Humphrey 2002). Discursively, the primacy of livelihoods is expressed in demands for modernisation, industrialisation and employment. Yet discourse analysis alone is insufficient here. In the post-conflict era the link between livelihoods and territory is at once being re-established (among the rural peasantry) and disestablished (through the making of 'translocal' spaces of labour migration). Through ethnographic research we can observe opposing forces of both *re-territorialisation* and *de-territorialisation*.

7.2.i. *Re-territorialising peasants: water and 'the state' in Abdulhanon*

The livelihoods of rural Tajiks have suffered at the hands of inequitable land reform and an exploitative cotton sector. Many communities have only been able to rehabilitate the subsistence economy and begin to produce saleable crops due to international assistance. However, as interventions are made through local authorities they serve to embolden forms of domination and exploitation. Zürcher finds particular cause for concern in the Rasht valley where,

a rural elite that consists of an amalgam of former fighters, religious leaders and state officials has emerged. This elite has been successful in gaining control over a large percentage of the available land. The actual mode of governance protects an unfair, illegal and even informal control over land (2004: iv).

By injecting material and symbolic resources into this context international actors are in specific indirect ways facilitating such processes.

The example of the new water usage association (WUA) of Abdulhanon in the Rasht valley witnesses to the formal and informal re-territorialisation of livelihoods under the state, and how this process is affected by international assistance.²⁶⁴ WUAs are an increasingly important aspect of community development and local-level peacebuilding by the International Community. MSDSP and GTZ in the Abdulhanon area of Rasht valley followed a model similar to that found in GTZ interventions elsewhere as they established their pilot WUAs in 2005²⁶⁵. Their vision was for WUAs to serve as an NGO to lobby for the interests of community members against the state, and seek to redress some of the inequities of post-Soviet privatisation and land reform.²⁶⁶ However, the WUA is in no sense independent of the informal and patriarchal management processes of the community. Informal processes were also, commonly, cited as the means by which people resolved any conflicts between them over water. More common is informal agreements between neighbours, and even villages.²⁶⁷ Much like in the case of other CBOs, the leadership of the community regards the WUA as a tool to undertake projects which require outside funding. For example, a fifty-five-year-old male teacher in the village of Kalanak described how decisions were made by the village:

We meet in the choihona every evening and discuss upcoming issues. For some issues we must go to the Jamoat. Other questions we can ask to an international organisation like the VO. For example, for drinking water, we identify responsible people in the choihona and address the VO.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁴ For an overview of water management in Rasht valley, see Heathershaw (2005c) and Zürcher (2004).

²⁶⁵ In the case of the Abdulhanon association, the WUA was built on a pre-existing informal group set up to manage the canal after its redevelopment and collect money from users whenever further maintenance was needed. The association manages irrigation water for 5 villages (including the villages of Kadara and Kalai Surkh), including around 400 households and 3,000 people. For each village there is a water users group, which consists of members of the VO, and a *mirob* (water manager) who is responsible for basic maintenance and, crucially, collecting the money from users. So far 800 US dollars has been collected and invested with a 'local businessman'. The WUA collected 0.3 *somoni* (10 US cents) per month per *sotka* (0.01 hectare) of irrigated land, as established by law, for the five months of the 'irrigation season', roughly April-August.

²⁶⁶ Interview, Hukumatsho Sharipov, MSDSP, Dushanbe, 04/08/05

²⁶⁷ Street interviews, Abdulhanon sovkhov, August 2005.

²⁶⁸ Interview, Kalanak, 11/08/05.

What's interesting here is the specific way in which the state is supplanted by 'an international organisation' as the source of economic assistance, but not in terms of political authority. WUA members do not expect the state to assist in the provision and maintenance of water systems, but they do require its political backing. This is very much reflective of the post-conflict and post-Soviet condition of Tajik agriculture. During the Soviet Union, the authorities pumped water up the hillside at considerable expense in order to irrigate the state farm. Today communities are criss-crossed by a dilapidated water infrastructure which has not worked since the end of the Soviet Union – a powerful symbol of state economic weakness and public squalor. However, in another sense 'the state' is deemed essential to the management of livelihoods and the suppression of economic disputes. The role of local government is thus largely confined to watching over, approving and granting permission for the activities of subordinates. If water disputes escalate, authoritative figures linked to the state will intervene. According to one farmer, the aksakals can solve the problem and 'even kick this person out of the village.'²⁶⁹ The head of the *sovkhos* (state farm) in the Abdulhanon region noted that he solved a dispute over the rights to pasture land between two villages by declaring it owned by the *sovkhos* and whoever wanted to use it must pay rent.²⁷⁰ Thus, re-territorialisation occurs as international economic resources are utilised according to elites who constitute local state organs and they have the political resources to veto subordinate and international actions.

'The state' here is used as the legitimating idea for the re-territorialisation of political and economic space, as well as an alliance of elite networks whose membership is constantly shifting. The question of the registration of WUAs illustrates this role of 'the state'. While communities do not pay local government directly for the provision of water – and the government does nothing to provide it – members must pay a USD 300 registration fee to the ministry of justice in Dushanbe in order to legally establish a WUA with the power to collect revenue. It is highly likely that 'additional payments' will be required to facilitate registration.²⁷¹ Such forms of hegemony require that WUAs become part of the elite/state if they are to function. Members of WUA/VOs reported that it was necessary to have status in their

²⁶⁹ Interview, Shahrinav, 10/08/05.

²⁷⁰ Ownership was actually unclear and neither party had previously paid any rent.

²⁷¹ Interview, *mirob*, Kadara, 12/08/05.

relations with local government, as well as to demand compliance from community members and ‘punish’ those who do not pay. The head of the WUA in Shulonak noted:

Now, I am the head, but not according to the law. Anyone in the village can reject me if we are not legally-established. ... In such a case we would have power to punish people who do not pay and even cut them off. If the association is voluntary they can just ignore us.²⁷²

Here ‘the law’ and ‘the state’ become the essential signifiers of ‘authority’. What’s interesting here is how this move has been backed by GTZ’s local partner in their attempts at developing of ‘civil society’. It is MSDSP practice to recommend that WUAs attain such status to achieve legal backing for their rules and procedures, and in order for them to undertake some of the functions of the Soviet-era water committee (*vodkhoz*).²⁷³

MSDSP is not unaware of some of these difficulties and claims to support WUAs only in areas where land reform is taking place.²⁷⁴ However, reform has been extremely weak: territories are not privately owned, nor are they truly independently managed, as ‘privatisation’ has involved the leasing of land to individuals who are connected to state-based elite networks (Porteous 2003; Zürcher 2004: 16-24). Abdulhanon *sovkhos* is a state-owned collective farm. In other areas a smaller, quasi-state collective *dekon* (‘peasant’ [Taj.]) farm has been established, alongside several ‘private’ *dekon* farms (of several hectares each). Private *dekon* farm plots were sold off in a late-1990s land-reform when few could afford land. Buyers tended to have influence and foresight. Thus, even private farmers legally manage, not own, their land and the amount of their control varies.²⁷⁵ ‘The state’ (the legitimating signifier of a local hegemonic elite) plays a largely opportunistic, rent-seeking role in terms of

²⁷² Interview, WUA, Shulonak, 10/08/05.

²⁷³ Email communication, Hukumasho Sharipov (MSDSP) and Daniel Passon (GTZ), September 2005.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Discussions with farmers suggested that they felt that they had considerable freedom over what to grow yet they understood that the government could, at any time, repossess the land. ‘Private’ *dekon* farmers do not own their land but rather have it on a long-term lease from the state. This is complicated by unclear leasehold rights to land. Many farmers said that they discuss with the *Jamoat* or VO head what they should grow, which can lead to a collective village decision that it is not possible to grow thirstier crops in certain years. See also, Zürcher, 2004:16-25

water management in the Rasht valley. Elite practices – strengthened by international programmes – act to re-territorialise Tajik livelihoods under ‘the state’.

These findings confirm earlier research which has shown that there is a demand for more state in the Rasht valley in the post-conflict period (Zürcher 2004: iii). But this demand needs unpacking. It is clear that WUAs feel they are unable to influence local government on water issues, or solve problems completely alone, without becoming part of the state itself. However, Humphrey’s judgement of Soviet-era Siberian collective farms (*kolkhoz*), that ‘the private is not as “private” as it may seem, nor is the “public” as public’ (1998: 1), holds true for contemporary Tajikistan. Those who constitute the state trade in ‘manipulable resources’ of products (including access to irrigation water and land) and money (p. 435). Although these resources are greatly diminished, it is to be expected that both elites and subordinates would seek to ape a hierarchical and kinship-based model of the rural economy which, to a degree, ‘worked’ for both. As Humphrey notes with respect to post-Soviet Siberia, returning to the region twenty years after her original research, ‘the collective often still acts as the substitute for the state, and where it does not, it is felt that it should do’ (p. 503). Similarly in Tajikistan, ‘the state’ is the essential signifier of a hegemonic process of re-territorialisation which unites local elites who might, as they did during the state breakdown of the early- and mid-1990s, have battled for resources.

7.2.ii. De-territorialising migrants: from the local to the translocal

As Humphrey notes, of particular importance in the everyday economies of post-socialist spaces is the creation of new ‘localities’ which challenge territorial notions of community (2002; see also Humphrey and Mandel 2002). Thus, one cannot fully comprehend re-territorialisation without grasping how Tajik livelihoods are undergoing de-territorialisation. This takes the form of labour migration which breaks the link between livelihoods and the land, particularly the exploitation of a given territory. It constitutes the re-location of livelihoods to the ‘shadow’ or ‘hidden’ spaces of the grey economy. There has been a huge rise in migration since the late-1990s to the extent that by 2003 somewhere between a quarter and a half of working age men spent part of the year working overseas (see chapter 2.2.iii, also Olimova and Bosc 2003).

Migration is not merely an economic practice but is socially and discursively constituted. International and popular discourses affirm the importance of labour migration (*zarabotka*). It is a 'safety valve' which delays a return to civil war, according to peacebuilding (Malekzade [T11]: 7), and is simply a consequence of the lack of employment opportunities, in *tinji* (Rahmonova [T15]: 7). However, migrants themselves are located on the margins of local spaces. Their transcripts often express a mixture of hope and lament, dissenting from the public transcript of harmony. In answer to the question of what would make life easier, young people often referred to migration. In Kizil Ketmen testimonies oscillated between disenchantment with the effects of migration and desire for a better life:

JH: What changes would make your life easier?

18-year-old, male, unemployed: 'For it to be fun in the village, for all my friends to live in the community and not in Russia. For young people to be listened to and helped to find work.'

20-year-old, female, housewife: 'If there were work places in our community that would make our life easier. I would undertake any work as a migrant and with this earn myself something to live off.'

26-year-old, male, unemployed: 'A way out (*vyezd*) to Russia'

Such responses express a sense of powerlessness within the community that can be somewhat alleviated by employment abroad and imply that the village leadership is unable to do anything about this. The first respondent laments this social reality.

In such a way, the practical realities of scratching out a living and avoiding domination practised by many Tajiks undermine the efforts of central authority to re-territorialise the economy, to discipline it to become a system which can be controlled by government and a wealthy network of elites. New, cross-border spaces are reproduced in everyday life through migration, shuttle-trading and other business links which provide links, typically, between a Tajik village and a Russian provincial city. Labour migration can be characterised as a process of making 'translocal' spaces. Kaiser defines *translocalism* in terms of the linking of local spaces across borders that provides an alternative community to that provided by the territory and identity in the nation-state. He argues that,

new nationalist endeavours have to coexist, if not compete, with the trans-border, translocal patterns of sociation. There are undeniable tensions: on the one hand, social reality contradicts the efforts at national separation, and on the other, the organisation of the national state is constantly influenced by (translocally structured) groups in the national state context that operate successfully across borders. (Kaiser 2003: 317)

He remarks that ‘a common world beyond borders and differences is being created’ which represents a ‘removing of the spatial component from the social’ (p. 327, 315). However, I would argue that it represents not a ‘despatialisation’ but a deterritorialisation of identity. Identity is thus increasingly heterogenous – where multiple translocal spaces may constitute local, national and regional identities.

Moreover, despite the increased opportunities which migration offers, the process is nevertheless governed by translocal authority structures extending from home village to destination workplace. Bosc and Olimova note that familial *avlod* structures determine the character of migration as it is the collective unit in which decisions about who will migrate are made, and it provides a space to stay and work whilst in Russia. A foreman of a work brigade in Russia – a senior member of the *avlod* – may ‘play the role’ of head of the *avlod* in Russia and thus ‘exercises undisputed authority over the brigade’ (Bosc and Olimova 2003: 58). The normalising effects of these discourses and networks are conveyed by one NGO worker in Sugd who told me:

You know, people used to say that all the men are at the front fighting, now they say that all the men are ‘in town’ (*v gorode*) – they mean Russia, but they say it as if it’s just nearby. (Kurbankhojaev [T9]: 10)

Labour migration is thus ‘part of the normal life of society’ (Bosc and Olimova 2003: 100). According to Bosc and Olimova it is, thus, ‘impossible to exaggerate the role of ethno-regional solidarity (*mahalgaro’y* [Taj.]) in Tajik political and social life’ (p. 58). However, what’s interesting here is how labour migration discursively and spatially practices avoidance and apartness, from the state and from other regions, as opposed to a form of regionalism which would lead to violent competition. By such social processes, regionalism in Tajikistan has been reconstituted in a non-violent and, to the extent that it has been translocalised, relatively non-competitive manner. In this sense, processes of de-territorialisation, though exploitative, are dialectically produced by re-territorialisation and are intrinsic to the Tajik peace.

7.2.iii. The inter-dependence of territory and space

The consequences of the above analysis for peace/complex legitimacy in Tajikistan need unpacking further. It is difficult to find consent or resistance to this process of de-/re-territorialisation. Rather strategies of avoidance and accommodation constitute a resignation to hegemony. Both localised (re-territorialised) peasants and translocalised (de-territorialised) migrants remain preoccupied with survival strategies which prove able to accommodate the territorialising demands of the elite, and avoid them through de-territorialising practices of migration. It is tempting to view these two sets of practices in dichotomous terms: that an individual is forced to choose between accommodating local hegemony or avoiding them and subjecting oneself to the forms of hegemony and exploitation constructed at state borders. However, as individuals whose potential choices are socially constituted by their location in groups, peasants and migrants find that their role is determined relationally. A migrant's income-generating potential is strongly connected to his support from his *avlod* who finance the migration, provide accommodation and a first job. Moreover, the 'choice' to be a migrant is often out of the hands of young men and women; each *avlod* unit exists both in local and translocal spaces, and it is often its patriarchy who send migrants (Olimova and Bosc 2003: 58-61). Labour migration is thus a vital part of the Tajik peace. Moreover, if it were inhibited or prevented by the elite, this might jeopardise the precarious legitimacy which they have garnered.

This conclusion is increasingly made by international actors in Tajikistan who consequently attempt to reconcile and manage these economic processes through international programmes aimed at agricultural reform locally (often unsuccessfully, as shown above) and migration management transnationally and translocally. While there is no single grand strategy of the International Community there is considerable consensus regarding the need to incorporate both a reformed agriculture and managed migration to facilitate Tajikistan's transition into the world economy (EBRD 2005: 23-27; Porteous 2003; UNDP 2003: 60-61). The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) holds out hope that the state should not simply be avoided but can itself accommodate the needs of migrants. In other words, they attempt to resolve the dialectic of re-/de-territorialisation generated by the Tajik peace. The IOM argues against government efforts to curtail the export of manpower and for a proactive government policy of assisting migrants through information provision and its diplomatic offices and introducing a system of guarantees for money transfers of

remittances (Olimova and Bosc 2003: 125). There is some evidence to suggest that the Tajik government is aware of the importance of labour migration to the peace and has made some policy adjustments accordingly (Usmonov [T20]: 15). Neoliberal thinking, however, would go further and suggest that such marketisation is natural and might lead to poverty alleviation locally as migrants can invest remittances in agriculture back home. Labour migrants who have expanded the livelihoods of their avlod through de-territorialised migration might be expected to feed such income back into processes of re-territorialisation and buy land in ongoing land reform.

However, there are at least two problems with such thinking. Firstly, the nature of hegemony and authority in Tajikistan precludes the realisation of a law-based free market. Research on the Rasht valley indicates that future distribution of land is likely to remain highly ‘politicised’ in that it depends on connections to local networks and on having the means to work through them (Zürcher 2004: 16-25). The wealthier rent a few hectares of land from the *sovkhos* or collective *dekon* farm. All those who rent, ‘own’ or manage (in the case of the *Sovkhoz*)²⁷⁶ such ‘irrigated’ land must pay an expensive ‘unified tax’ of around 120 *somoni* (38 US dollars) per hectare, per year.²⁷⁷ Secondly, the International Community, whilst idealised as a cooperative and coordinated group of actors, in fact acts extremely inconsistently and contentiously. Actors working for statebuilding can often undermine humanitarian projects. Anti-drugs projects and anti-terror initiatives advocate and fund a stiffening of defences against informal economic activity, and thus embolden elite/state actors who control borders and take a part in the illegal economy, as discussed in chapter 6. Even humanitarian projects, as shown above, can achieve the opposite of their intended effects. Under these dynamics of national and international hegemony it is difficult to see how de-/re-territorialisation can be reconciled in a ‘free market’ which allows de-territorialised migrants to be reterritorialised agricultural entrepreneurs. Today, the overwhelming majority of both migrants and peasants remain in poverty, maintaining a precarious existence where they are subject to exploitation and domination by elites within and beyond the borders of Tajikistan.

These conclusions about re-/de-territorialised livelihoods have conceptual implications for ‘peace’. Whilst not a headline element of Beetham’s ‘legitimacy’,

²⁷⁶ Like tenants and ‘private’ *dekon* farmers, the *Sovkhoz* – although a state institution – must also pay the ‘unified tax’ to local government.

²⁷⁷ Interviews with farmers, Abdulhanon, August 2005

livelihoods are deemed central to the social life of subordinates in his work. In a relationship of landlords and peasants, he notes, where the latter depend on the former, 'it is the failure to guarantee subsistence and the *means of livelihood* that is destructive to legitimacy, rather than the extent of any exactions made, since it infringes the basic interests that are presupposed in the relationship' (p. 84). Scott, similarly argues that it is the existence of absolute poverty rather than inequality that is crucial to the perception of exploitation:

If the balance of exchange is deteriorating but the material situation of the cultivator's family is stable or even improving, discontent may be evident, but it is unlikely to provoke massive unrest. It is when a worsening balance of exchange menaces crucial elements of subsistence routines, when it stretches existing subsistence patterns to breaking point, that we expect explosions of rage or anger (1976: 177).

Similarly, in Tajikistan, while peasants remain impoverished, they testify that post-conflict order and increased opportunities for migration have improved their livelihoods.²⁷⁸ This reaffirms the conclusion that peace can be constituted by economic exploitation and political domination.

7.3. Mediating 'Community': Monitoring and Evaluation Stories

Politics is equally theatrical, and progressive politics in particular requires a certain kind of rhetoric. It deploys a willing suspension of disbelief of citizens in their own accumulated experience... What's missing in the hope for progressive change is an understanding of the profoundly *enervating* role that illusion plays in modern society. I mean here to propound a paradox, that people can actively enter their own passivity.

– Richard Sennett (2006: 161)

We have seen how international analyses of 'community self-government' (this chapter), 'border management' (chapter 6) and 'elections' (chapter 5) contradict with realities for elites and subordinates. These contrasts raise questions about how peacebuilding's ambiguity is sustained and whether the various representations can either be reconciled into a single discourse or come into conflict with one another. This is particularly important as it is this differentiation which constitutes the nature of peace as a contrastingly represented and performed social reality. To speculate somewhat, community peacebuilding programmes such as CAIP would not get

²⁷⁸ Villagers frequently commented how material conditions have improved since the 1990s. Street interviews, Rasht valley, April-August 2005.

funded if they were believed to be part of the re-constitution of elite domination and manipulated by elites in the ways argued here. For the international Community, such discourses are functional to their legitimacy and, by extension, their very existence in Tajikistan. It would be tempting to argue that some privileged agent, a grand master of discourse, must be consciously reproducing such representations. This would be an overly agential explanation and lacks evidence. In my explanation, agency remains, but in a much more interdependent form. To remain discursively differentiated international representations must be discursively mediated. This final section looks at the nature of programme evaluation, the role of discursive mediators and how they both act to simulate 'community'.

7.3.i. Quantifying success

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is an integral component of any major, donor-funded programme. International staff spend a considerable proportion of their time producing various images and texts to represent their programme in terms which will be appreciated by an audience in Washington, London or Berlin. It is these practices which explain how an intervention which has had very little impact on the pre-existing practices of communities can plausibly be considered to have transformed a community and be worth millions of dollars of assistance. This also gets to the heart of complex legitimacy and the central place of ambiguity in it: how multiple, contrasting representations of the same object can co-exist.

I was part of the final evaluation of the multi-million dollar CAIP programme which assessed sixteen communities (out of a total of seventy-five) across three countries²⁷⁹ in terms of the measurable objectives of the programme.²⁸⁰ The final report, which we produced, inscribed CAIP as a qualified success using neutral language which is not obviously neoliberal. 'Among the most significant changes brought about by CAIP,' it argues, 'are increased trust and cooperation in the communities, changed outlook and increased capacity to solve problems' (MCCAR

²⁷⁹ Nine of these communities were in Tajikistan. The other seven were in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. This reflected the overall distribution of the sixty-five CAIP communities managed by Mercy Corps. I led the research team which studied the nine Tajik cases.

²⁸⁰ The evaluation looked at six 'perspectives' of community mobilisation: (i) Awareness by the community at large, and (ii) Level of community contribution to the projects; (iii) Level of training and human resource development; (iv) Level of activity; (v) Level of collaboration with cluster communities, and (vi) Perceptions of government officials (MCCAR 2005: 12-27).

2005: 14). The report acknowledges that impact on Tajik communities was less than anticipated. However, the reasons for the lack of complete success in this area were deemed to be internal programmatic issues where Mercy Corps had not paid sufficient heed to institutionalising the CBO after it was up and running. Thus it argues a 'much higher level of achievement' could have been reached by 'a clearer articulation of the process of capacity building' (p. 39).

In such a way a considerable degree of success was rescued success for the programme and, more importantly, for the idea of the CBO and the identity of the International Community as a whole. Interventionism, we are told, largely works and, where it fails to achieve its objectives, it can be improved through endogenous factors such as 'articulation of the process' by international actors. The report does not even consider exogenous factors arising from the context. Community development, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, is thus written as something which can be made intelligible and managed by the International Community. In this sense, the report depoliticises and objectifies the highly political and relational processes of change taking place in Tajik communities. This account mirrors that provided by peacebuilding: a post-conflict process which is non-ideological and apolitical, driven by the objective requirements of peace. In cases where international agencies are examining themselves – as was the case with CAIP²⁸¹ – quantitative analysis is all the more subjective. However, it is not a mere reflection of discourse, but constitutes peacebuilding by providing certain kinds of facts which reproduce the ethical, spatial and temporal maxims of the International Community. How is such knowledge produced? I argue that two processes of power-knowledge are at work here: quantification (discussed in this sub-section) and narration (sub-section 7.3.ii).

The reduction and distortion of local practice is particularly acute in quantitative analyses. In accordance with the principles of new public management (NPM) thinking common to the International Community, CAIP was designed with SMART objectives.²⁸² SMART objectives are the foundational act of reducing a complex social and political environment to a set of quantifiable indicators in order to achieve objectivity, transparency and accountability for the programme. In the final

²⁸¹ All three 'external' evaluators, including myself, became Mercy Corps employees and over the course of the evaluation worked very closely with mercy corps staff.

²⁸² SMART objectives are those which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timed. They are a standard element of project management in Western countries.

evaluation we conducted a social survey according to a statistically valid sample of respondents as well as focus groups and elite interviews according to standard interview forms. Many of the questions asked required closed answers which could be numerically represented. The evaluation was designed this way in order to make our data quantifiable according to the requirements of the donor, USAID, who kept an index to rank communities across the region according to their degree of success in terms of programme objectives. Quantification can thus provide standardisation where the same attributes can be measures across the world. Moreover, it demands a method and model which is universal and can be applied to any context. An M&E consultancy business has mushroomed to meet this demand, where individuals who know a model can ‘parachute’ in to conduct a programme in a region which they have never visited before. This was the case in our evaluation where the lead consultant had not previously visited Central Asia and did not visit Tajikistan – where 60% of the programme resources were invested – at all during the exercise.

The problem with such a standard or ‘objective’ approach is that it requires numerous ‘subjective’ judgements by the researcher. As a member of the evaluation team I was very much a participant in this process of categorising and re-categorising data in terms of types, and then into larger categories. There are many degrees of separation from the original collection of data. Quantitative analysis requires that meaning be transposed across several media:

- (i) original speech in vernacular by respondent²⁸³
- (ii) written record of this by researcher
- (iii) translation into English by translator
- (iv) classification by data type by researchers, and
- (v) aggregation into data category by researchers.

Accordingly much is left open to interpretation at all stages. Data can be shaped by considerations such as how the respondent views the researcher (and vice-versa). Responses reflect a particularly positive public transcript of their experience of the programme given by members of CAGs, and CAIP youth and women’s group; the questions asked reflect certain assumptions about local people.

²⁸³ In the evaluation we collected data in four different languages: Tajik, Uzbek, Russian, and Kyrgyz.

For example, ‘how have you changed during the programme?’ assumed that the respondent would interpret ‘you’ as ‘I’ the individual (rarely the case), that they would accept ‘change’ and not find this idea unsettling (often not the case). Demanding a written answer to such a question also assumed that (often semi-literate) respondents would be comfortable answering alone without consulting their colleagues. This was never the case (see figure 31).

Fig.31: Respondents completing ‘individual’ questionnaires, Jirgatol district, April 2005



Questions often received collective and defensive answers. A closer look at original completed questionnaires indicates an interesting usage of the maxims of both the discourse of subordinate *tinji* (among all respondents) and that of elite *mirostroytelstvo* (more common among older men). The categorisation of data was also shaped by how the reader viewed the data. I observed in numerous meetings of the research team and programme staff how those who worked on the programme would understandably try and represent it in the best possible terms. To a certain extent this inter-subjectivity of findings is a feature common to all social research but it is a particular problem with quantitative M&E exercises.

An illustration of the differences this inter-subjective, inter-personal process can make is shown in two attempts to classify data on community ‘change’ graphed in figures 32 and 33.²⁸⁴ Version one of that chart shows a version done by my colleague, according to the instructions of the lead consultant. It finds 39% of respondents say ‘I am ‘committed to work with community using democratic principles’. Version two shows my version, composed – in a more discretionary and less ‘scientific’ manner – having seen chart one and found it to be a distortion of what I had heard from community members. It finds 42% of respondents saying ‘we’ are ‘more united [in our] approach to development in the community.’ It is not clear how we judge which of these representations is more valid. Both charts necessarily reduce a huge range of data, gathered in and translated from four languages, to just five categories. For example, my category of ‘Increased Ability to Manage Projects’ (fig. 33) is a category around three times more common among (overwhelmingly male) local government leaders than women’s group members. It includes both statements about authority (e.g. ‘I think that my authority has been increased among people’) and those implying acquired skills (e.g. ‘project selection’). While our research sought to account for these validity questions by conducting several exercises of classification and re-classification, the social conditions of inter-subjectivity can never be circumvented.²⁸⁵ Moreover, while the two charts give very different pictures, neither shed much light on what actually happened in communities and why. In short, much is left to the eye of the beholder. He/she may discern from fig. 32 that 39% of community leaders in CAIP communities are ‘democratic’. It is via this kind of inter-subjectivity and inter-textuality that (mis)representative international norms and symbols are reproduced.

²⁸⁴ Data was based on 331 completed questionnaires filled out by CAG, Youth and Womens’ group members in Tajikistan Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Around 60% of the data is from Tajikistan (MCU 2005: 7).

²⁸⁵ Following my involvement in this evaluation I worked to try and develop my own methodology to M&E using the qualitative techniques of ethnography and discourse analysis similar to what has been used throughout this research. I subsequently conducted mini-evaluations for Mercy Corps and GTZ during the midway point of their programmes. See Heathershaw (2005c, 2005d).

Fig.32: 'How have you changed?' chart version one

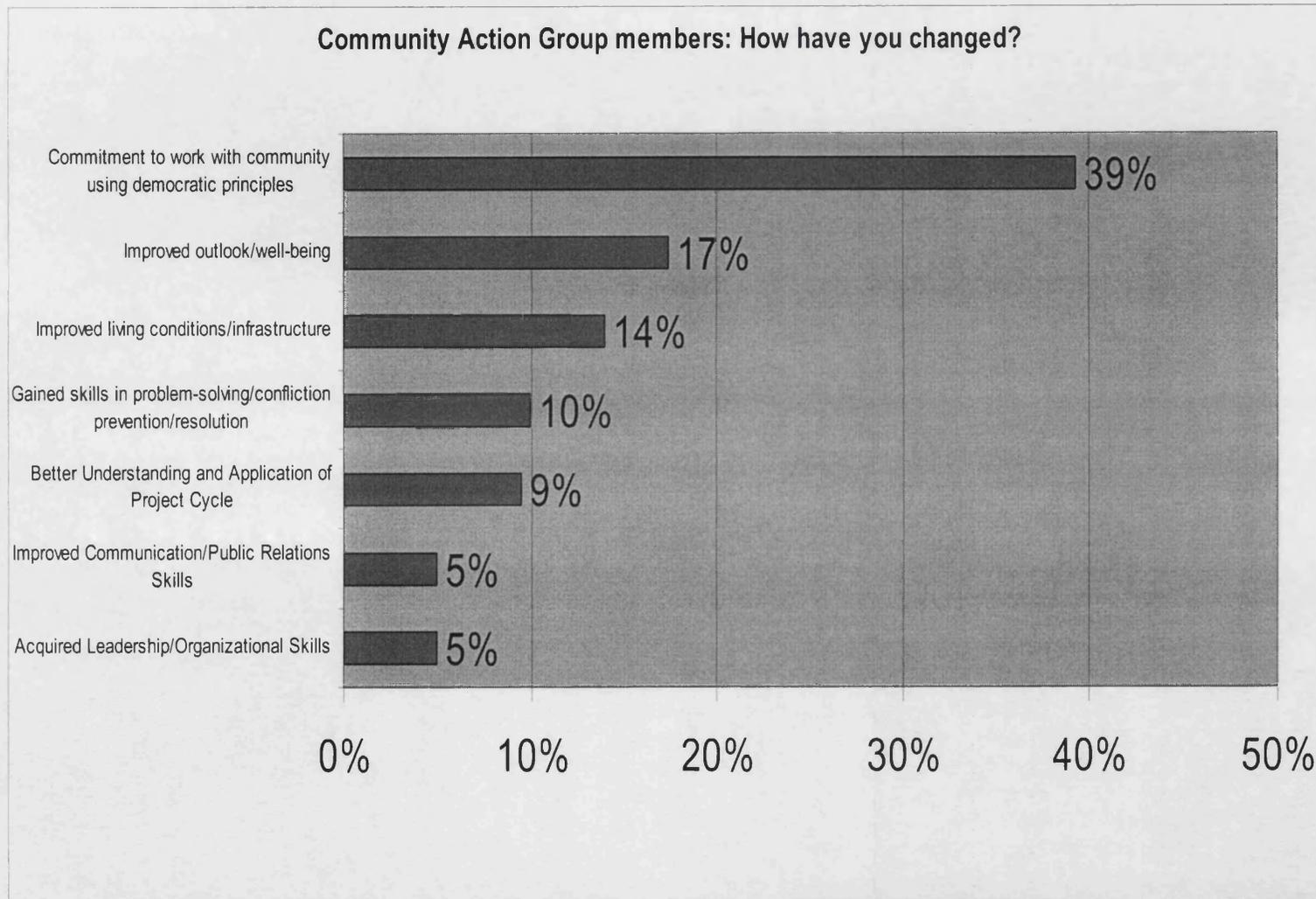
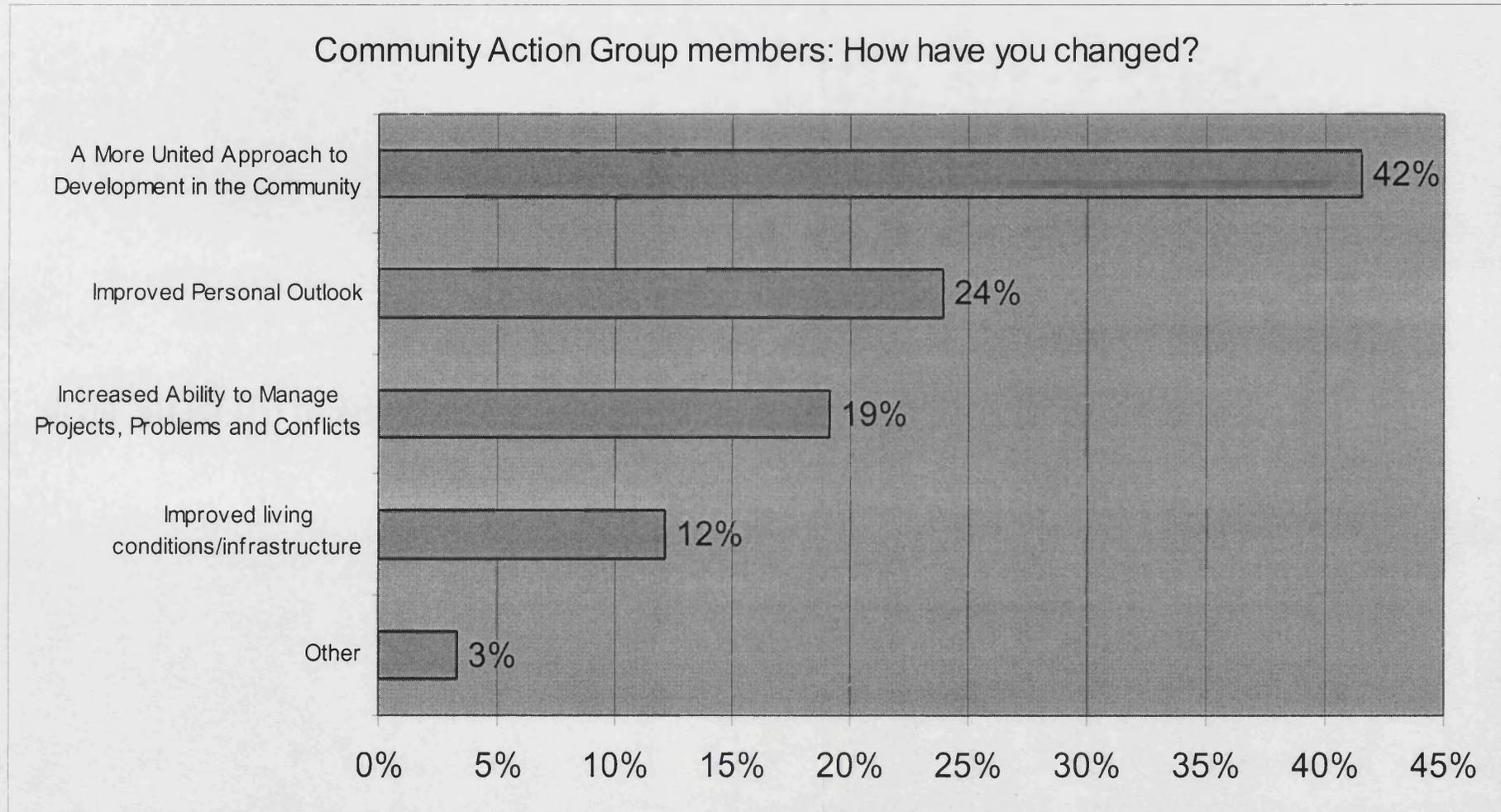


Fig.33: 'How have you changed?' chart version two



7.3.ii. Narrating 'success stories'

Reproducing 'community development' in 'peacebuilding' involves more than just numbers. Stories and images from CAIP communities were a hugely important part of Mercy Corps' narration of the programme. Photographs and 'success stories' were crucial accompaniments of quarterly reports to donors. They are particularly important as the decision-makers of donor agencies are unlikely to spend much time reading formal M&E reports. Photos and anecdotes then make a significant contribution to the perception of the programme by donors. 'Success stories' are told in such a way which inscribes a clear distinction between 'state' or 'government' and 'civil society' or 'community'. One 'success story' from the village of Jailghan in the Rasht valley (MCT 2005) recounted the case of the covering of an open-top, fast-running irrigation canal which had been responsible for the drowning of several children in recent years. 'During the project's implementation,' the Mercy Corps version notes, 'Jailghan's Community Action Group mobilised extensive support from the local government and community members' (MCT 2005, no pagination). This discursive separation of 'government' from 'community' reinforces a state/society dichotomy which does not exist in Tajikistan. This is justifiable only when one considers that by Mercy Corps' definition the civilian organs of the state are part of civil society. Under such discourse, the dual subject, which is integral to the justification for a community development programme, is inscribed even if, paradoxically, the 'state' must be subsumed into 'civil society'.

During my fieldwork I had personal experience of this phenomenon. In June of 2005, I was asked by Mercy Corps to study one of the cases considered most successful from the thirty-five CAIP communities in order to provide a 'success story' for the programme's final report. I chose the community of Kizil Ketmen, near Sharituz, close to the Afghan border, and opted to spend a week there conducting research and living with the head of the CAG.²⁸⁶ Compared to previous CAIP communities where I had conducted research, Kizil Ketmen was, indeed, a flagship case where a large number of projects had been completed over the course

²⁸⁶ My living arrangements in the community were somewhat unavoidable as living with a poorer family would have offended the local leadership. My experience of the village was partly shaped by CAG head. However, my position offered me privileged insights into how leadership worked in the village.

of the programme.²⁸⁷ Thus, I wrote and photographed a story of success, ‘The Village of Kizil Ketmen: on an Upward Trend’ (Heathershaw 2005b). In the account I tried to explore this story of success with quotes and examples which showed how local leaders had to work amid a corrupt government and exploitative economy. Nevertheless I wrote for an audience. My account introduced Kizil Ketmen in terms such as ‘progress’, ‘challenges’ and ‘change’, and was illustrated with pleasing photographs (such as the one in figure 34).

Fig. 34: Girl and child, Kizil Ketmen



According to my portrayal, as was the case in peacebuilding discourse, the CAG was written as an institution independent of ‘the state’ that functioned as an agent of change. I gave stories of the CAG deputy chair – also the Director of the School where the group met – who worked busily for the community. I profiled the

²⁸⁷ In particular, a major project to clear out an irrigation canal had allowed villagers to grow fruit and vegetables in their gardens and land-plots around the village for the first time in several years, making a substantial difference to their livelihoods.

members of the women's group and recounted their public testimonies: 'We have our rights and we know them. When we have different meetings we find that we have the ability to analyze and solve problems.' I explained the CAG's flagship project of clearing out an irrigation canal. The case study concluded:

Like many other grassroots leaders and community members, they have been begun to see that change for the better can really impact their own lives and that of their fellow community members. Hope, like water, is beginning to flow through Kizil Ketmen again.

The point here is not that I deliberately misrepresented the village. Rather, I did not tell the whole story. Indeed it is not possible to tell the whole story. Knowledge is not produced in laboratory conditions but a social space.

As a consequence, M&E might tell us more about us, the evaluators, than about them, the evaluated. As an evaluator I was in a certain sense 'trapped' by peacebuilding discourse. This 'entrapment' took place due to the broader context of the International Community: I understood that I was paid to produce a story which would show-case the successes of CAIP to an audience of paymasters; I was part of a team of dedicated international and local staff many of whom believed in the programme (albeit for different reasons); I myself had developed a personal perspective that CAIP had achieved some socio-economic good for poor communities (despite failing to achieve its peacebuilding objectives) and did not want to denigrate its achievements. Thus, M&E tells us a considerable amount about the social and political relationships between evaluator and evaluated. In this sense, as a form of (mis)representation, it serves a very important function: it keeps international cash coming for 'community development' in the sincere hope that such programmes are benefiting communities. Whilst the discursive practices of M&E do not necessarily constitute direct manipulation or fabrication by agents (although at times they can), programme coordinators are often quite ambivalent about their work in private. In conversation with one Mercy Corps programme coordinator I remarked that such programmes might work better if they had more realistic aims. He/she noted that 'if you wrote a realistic proposal the donors are not interested – so you have to write something that interests them and then you end up with a programme which is really hard to implement.'²⁸⁸ Such testimonies

²⁸⁸ Interview, programme officer, Mercy Corps, Dushanbe, 31/05/05

exhibit a certain amount of cynicism and scepticism in private, but do not constitute the widespread public disclosure that would challenge the whole idea of 'community self-government'. This in itself witnesses to the power of discourse to shape how 'community' is written, imagined and read.

7.3.iii. The discursive mediators: negotiating 'community' and 'authority'

The way monitoring and evaluation is practised reveals a great deal about the character of international interventions: their unquestioned maxim to develop or transform their subject forces them to disregard or downplay those local practices which may be inconsistent with their model, despite claiming to be capacity building or facilitating that subject. This raises questions of agency. In many contexts where governance is based on broadly authoritarian practices, international organisations can find their intervention is not welcome as it seeks to directly challenge the authority of the government. However, in Tajikistan the International Community has maintained good relations with the government and has continued to put substantial resources into communities. I argue that this requires discursive mediation and, moreover, agents which function as *discursive mediators*.

In the context of community development and decentralisation programmes the local staff and sub-contractors of INGOs fulfill the role of discursive mediators. They work for the International Community but grew up and exist in a Tajik social and political context. During 2005 I spent considerable time with these people, conducting individual and group interviews, and making ethnographic interpretations of their testimonies; local staff discourses became an important part of two mini-evaluation exercises (Heathershaw 2005c, 2005d). I became increasingly aware of how elite practices of domination and subordinate practices of avoidance and accommodation are often explained in different terms to ex-pat international NGO officers as positive aspects for the completion of projects. Equally, they represent international de-centralising interventions in terms of re-centralisation and re-territorialisation for a local elite audience. Thus peacebuilding is re-written through the ethical, spatial and temporal assumptions of *tinji* and *mirostroytelstvo*; 'community' is practised in order to perform 'authority'. I will highlight three discursive strategies which bring 'peacebuilding' into local spaces; the process, it should be remembered, also works in reverse.

Firstly, the risk of conflict is reduced to an absolute lack of resources. Democratisation, conflict resolution, and other transformational interventions are transposed into economic development initiatives. Mercy Corps PCI local teams in Sughd oblast cited the stated conflict resolution aims of the programme when communicating with community leaders whilst at the same time, like community leaders, denying that conflicts exist and citing economic ‘threats’ such as unemployment. One noted that tension comes from ‘the lack of general resources’. Another staff member noted that lack of finances is the most important weakness of communities (see fig. 35 below). Thus, local staff represented community problems in terms similar to local elites. Unlike ex-pat programme managers, local staff did not acknowledge an inequality of access to resources (either between villages or between groups within a village) as part of the problem but rather cited an absolute insufficiency. This is an important difference as it indicates a de-politicisation of the nature of conflict.

Fig. 35: SWOT Analysis, Teams 4 and 5, Panjakent, 28/06/05

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hard-workingness ▪ Work experience ▪ Desire to work ▪ Tolerance to each other ▪ Ability to work in a team 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distrust and misunderstandings ▪ Lack of skills ▪ Absence of financial means – the main thing. ▪ Absence of work places ▪ Absence of technical equipment
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge which they received in trainings ▪ To mobilize to address needs ▪ An improvement in the conditions for living and welfare 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Labour migration (<i>zarabotka</i>) ▪ Drug addiction ▪ Extreme poverty ▪ Increase in various diseases ▪ Illiteracy of youth

Secondly, interventions are represented to local audiences largely in terms of conducting infrastructure projects. The following conversation between team members in Asht is revealing:

One team member: What are we doing setting up women’s groups, youth groups, mixed-sex groups or whatever? We should just set up one good group with the power to get things done in the community. After the projects are finished the groups just close down. They’re only there when the projects are going. I think we should set up one group with one fund to keep working after the program – some contribution would come from the community, some from Mercy Corps.

Another team member: But we have different groups because different groups have different views. There are various views. Some may want to renovate the water system, others may want to do the school – that’s why we need different groups.²⁸⁹

While one team member may be slightly more aware of heterogeneity than the other, as the conversation continued they both failed to acknowledge that certain sections of the community may be marginalised, partly due to the actions of the other. This was apparent to some international programme managers and a source of frustration for them.

Thirdly, the unquestionable authority of elites is explicitly affirmed. According to one member of the Asht team, the CIG is a group of ‘respected people who are heeded.’ While program staff share managers’ concerns regarding cross-border problems, they were very positive about the permission-granting role of local government. One told me that, ‘the role of local government is positive. Without the permission of local government it’s not possible to work in communities. They are the masters of their territory [*hozayeva svoikh territori*]’. Moreover, ‘we coordinate our work together’.²⁹⁰ Following from this representation of ‘authority’, women and youth were re-interpreted as passive, needing to be led. This was by contrast to international managers who, in accordance with the aims of the PCI program, saw such marginalization, particularly of women, as a social problem (this volume, p.139). One member of the Asht team disagreed that the lack of female participation was a real concern in the communities. For another – the only woman on the team – the problem was the ‘inactivity’ for which ‘training of women’ was needed to attract and mobilise them. A male team member added that the problem was that local women conform to stereotypes. During many hours of discussion, inequality was never mentioned as an issue. In response to the question of what’s best about the program, the Asht team replied: ‘what’s best about the program is the coming together of the team with the community, ‘to become kindred spirits (*rodstvenni dushi*) and one family.’ In contrast, it is often argued by international staff that if development is about change some tension in communities is desirable and inevitable.²⁹¹

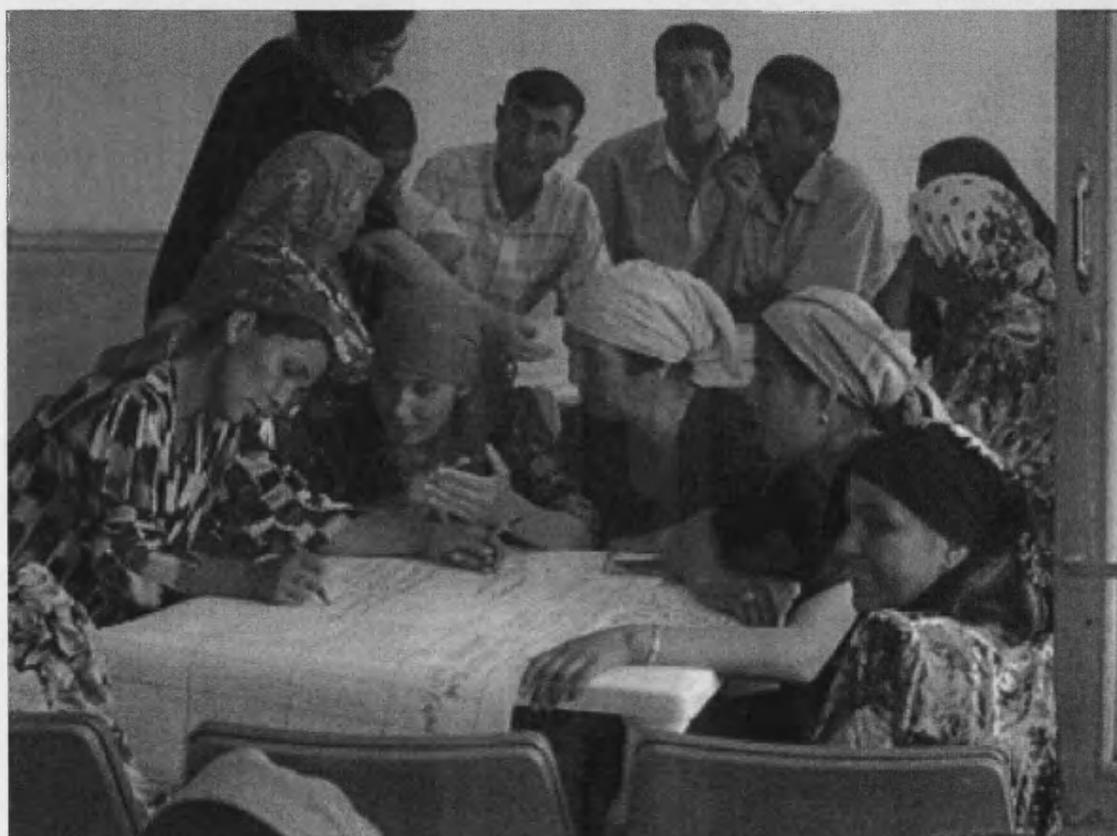
²⁸⁹ Personal communication, Mercy Corps staff, Asht, 22/06/05

²⁹⁰ Personal communications, Mercy Corps staff, Asht, 22/06/05

²⁹¹ Group interview, Mercy Corps staff, Panjakent, 28/06/05

In summary, local staff discourse translates peacebuilding programmes through an ethics of *mirostroitelstvo* to a *tinji* audience. The local NGO programme staff reinterpret peacebuilding programmes in terms of a technocratic, modernisation approach to development, as illustrated by a SWOT analysis conducted with Mercy Corps staff in Panjakent (see figure 35). It bears significant similarity to that shown in figure 13 for the discourses of village leaders. This has far-reaching consequences for international assistance. Regardless of what is written in programme documents, it is these staff who know the context and speak the relevant languages who represent what the programme means to the target community (see figure 36).²⁹²

Fig. 36: Community meeting, Kizil Ketmen: mixed small group in the background with facilitator from a local NGO, a sub-contractor for Mercy Corps.



In reverse, skilful staff can explain local practices in ways which make international staff modify their expectations of what constitutes ‘peacebuilding’ and ‘success’ in

²⁹² This is not true in all cases. I have worked with russified, urbanized NGO staff who struggle to speak the vernacular and, as I was, were received as an ‘other’, in the local spaces where we were working.

context. They thus stabilise basic discourse, minimising or avoiding the points of conflict between them. With such *discursive mediation* the inter-textual relations between basic, contrasting discourses are reduced and a kind of parallel universes is created. This has the overall effect of moderating international programmes and gutting them of their ‘otherness’ – which for international peacebuilding represents their transformative quality.

Some critical analyses of peacebuilding have argued that international interventions impose ‘democracy’ and the ‘free market’ on post-conflict politics, and then ‘fake’ their practical existence (Chandler 1999). This may be true in some cases where international intervention has been far greater, such as Bosnia. In Tajikistan, as chapters five and six suggest, it is the local context which is imposed on peacebuilding: that through the discursive mediation of local staff discourses and elite practices of *mirostroytelstvo* international programmes are gutted of their transformative content. Moreover, via public and hidden transcripts of *tinji*, subordinate actors avoid and accommodate both elite and international interventions. In Tsing’s terms they reinforce their ‘marginality’; they ‘respond, reinterpret, and challenge even as they accept and are shaped by these forms of knowledge’ (1993: 8).

Conclusions

The findings above are consistent with a growing body of literature which provides a critical perspective on the ‘business’ of civil society (Strathern 2000), especially its practising by donors in Central Asia. Many NGOs are concerned with educational and women’s issues, which are considered less politically sensitive issues. They are often dependent on donors, yet have ‘very limited’ or ‘inadequate’ impact in terms of their transformative goals (Akiner 2001: 58). Furthermore, Liu and Megoran *inter alia* have argued that ‘civil society’ in Central Asia expresses local and international power relations (Bichsel 2005, Earle 2005, Liu 2003, Megoran 2005). The ‘donor-organised NGO’ model, Liu notes, is fundamentally disempowering to micro-level reform and may indeed be subverted by local clients. As such, ‘attempts to encourage “grassroots” initiatives may end up reinforcing such illiberal institutions as patriarchy and clientelism’ (Liu 2003: 3-4). Such

programmes do not run parallel but themselves contribute to the remaking of hegemony and legitimacy in local spaces.

In such a way, as argued in this chapter, the simulation of 'community' has consequences for the re-/de-territorialising of livelihoods. As long as 'community development' still seems a plausible goal or endpoint, international assistance to local spaces in this form will keep coming. Such assistance creates meeting points of international, elite and popular discourse through which legitimacy is remade. Whilst international programmes have sought to form new groups, introduce new norms, and perform this decentralised governance, in intersubjective practice their interventions have in fact served to re-form pre-existing institutions, renew evolving local norms and perform the power of hegemonic local elites. As governmental representatives have sought to increase central control over local governments using administrative resources, donor interventions have facilitated this by providing the resources for greater material interaction between elites and subordinates. Together they have recrafted local political space, reinforced patriarchal rule and legitimated a new elite. To focus on the ambiguous practising of sovereignty, livelihoods and authority is to look radically at what 'security' and 'peace' mean in a post-conflict environment. I now seek to bring together the findings inductively derived through chapters five to seven to reflect upon the nature of peace as complex legitimacy.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusions and Implications

Politics, economics and global structures have become so inauthentic that few of us truly believe in them. We live in this paradox: the things most omnipresent that govern our lives are the very things from which we feel distant. We hold fast to myths that what we have created to govern our lives is responsive to whom we are as human beings and to our communities. Yet at the same time these creations seem to have lives of their own independent of us, foreign to us, and distant from us. An inquiry that seeks to understand how cycles of violence can be broken and transcended is precisely one that must infuse politics, political discourse and governing structures with a capacity for responsiveness to our human community.

– John Paul Lederach (2005: 28-29)

Official elite accounts of Tajikistan's peace seek to present a government which is not just legitimate, but destined to lead national progress (Fatoev 2001: 104). International testimonies, by contrast, increasingly losing hope in Tajikistan, present a government which is 'weak', illegitimate and maintained largely by the 'war weariness' of the population²⁹³. As this thesis has shown, the reality is both more complex and more ambiguous. The puzzle with which we started this thesis is not a paradox but can be understood if we avoid the temptation to discipline peace to a single account, representation, performance, or even a single logic of simulation. It can at times appear that the public transcript of the powerful is being endorsed without reservation or re-presentation. Indeed, it can appear to subordinates and internationals that their understandings too are being validated by events. However, this dissertation has refuted such a univocal account. Tajikistan's peace is neither an objective condition of order, nor the subjective self-image of the government of 'authority' and 'stability'. Rather, it is built on an inter-subjective process of complex legitimacy. This process produces hybrid forms where order is never complete, and multiple transcripts and diverse practices constitute a complex peace. The Tajik government is legitimate but its legitimacy is ambiguous – producing contrasting registers of discursive resignation among elites, subordinates and internationals. Its legitimacy is contingent upon practices beyond its control, but subject to its mediation.

²⁹³ US embassy official Amanda Cranmer notes, for example, that '[stability is] based on war-weariness – people just trying to live', adding 'it won't go on forever – there's an undercurrent of anger.' Interview, Dushanbe, 01/03/05.

In this final chapter I will clarify the conclusions and implications of my analysis for peacebuilding in Tajikistan. I believe this analysis can contribute to a greater understanding of peacebuilding in theory and speak to a wide range of cases beyond Tajikistan. However, this dissertation does not afford the space to situate my findings within broader comparative and theoretical contexts. Section one considers possible objections and qualifications to my radical reinterpretation of the international discourse of peacebuilding in Tajikistan, its deceptions and indirect effects. Section two clarifies the nature of peace as complex legitimacy via inductive insights from part two of this thesis. It holds that what is taking place in the country is a process of legitimation, differentiated by dynamics of space and discourse, and constitutive of dialectics of authority, livelihoods, and sovereignty. It is neither positive or negative peace. Section three considers the ramifications of the argument for politics and ethics. What, it asks, should agents do?

8.1. On Tajikistan's Peace: objections and qualifications

This dissertation argued that the ascriptions and prescriptions of international post-conflict peacebuilding produce a peril/promise dichotomy which is refuted by the messy cases of peacebuilding. From this point I could have dismissed peacebuilding as mere normative theory (the ought) and picked out better tools of analysis (the is). However, convinced that the ought is an important part of the is, I argued that peacebuilding, as the hegemonic international discourse of post-conflict intervention, was an important part of the picture. This led to the theoretical exploration of peace as complex legitimacy (chapters 1-4) grounded in the case of Tajikistan. By such an account peace is mediated through the dynamics of politics (how power is centralised and legitimated in the form of authority), space (how such hegemony is differentiated by the constructed boundaries of community) and discourse (the relatively stable, ideologically-informed means by which communities interpret the world through language). I then furthered this argument through detailed contextual argument focusing on its application to Tajikistan (chapters 4-7).

This approach to peace building is a substantial departure ontologically, epistemologically and methodologically from international peacebuilding. It is likely to face objections from those pragmatists and reformers who eschew radical

critiques of the international community. In this section I will consider some of the possible reservations to my argument that might emanate from practitioners and academics within the mainstream of peace studies.

The 'first steps' of peacebuilding?

A standard refrain from practitioners is that we are merely at the beginning of a long-term process of democratisation and the limited 'progress' which can be seen represents a 'first step'. One variation of this argument suggests that the process takes place over decades. Another contends that if peacebuilders had committed more money and resources to Tajikistan, and if the International Community had been more united in its approach, the country's reform might take place more quickly and more substantively. The deputy head of UNTOP, Jan Malekzade, articulated the reasons why the office had achieved less than it could have.

There would have been a lot more room, a lot more possibilities. But I don't think UNTOP as such could have initiated this. One of the issues is that peacebuilding is a very comprehensive process. It affects government institutions, security agencies, parliament, and the local administration, the whole public sector. If you want to address this in a credible way you need resources to do this. There's less than 5 internationals and an office with about 1.5 million dollars per year. It's a task which is not adequate to the resources. It's a task which has not received enough attention (Malekzade [T11]: 3)

The relative lack of resources for peacebuilding in Tajikistan is not an unimportant consideration. However, the idea of a 'first step' is based upon illusory teleological notions of progress contained within liberal peacebuilding discourse. If this point seems overly abstract, let us put it more prosaically: there's just no evidence in the specific case of Tajikistan to support the idea that it is going in this 'direction'. Factoring space and politics into our analysis reveals the biases of such discourse. Scott's work (1998), in particular, illustrates the pitfalls of such grandiose modern projects and how such projects are forced to adapt to the local context, rather than the other way around. This is illustrated in a number of examples from this study where resource allocations from the International Community were not inconsiderable; for reforming the legal framework and conducting of elections (sections 5.1 and 5.2), support to political parties (5.3), the guarding of borders (6.3), and community development (chapter 7.1). In such a case, it is more credible

to argue that 'peace' is moving towards Tajikistan, rather than Tajikistan moving towards 'peace'.

Is such weak legitimacy sustainable?

By contrast to the promise rescued above, pessimists or cynics, from a peacebuilding perspective, assume while it may have held together this long, 'peril' is just around the corner for Tajikistan. Abdullaev, for example, provides a plausible portrayal of why peace will not hold:

Born in crisis and chaos, the current system assimilated deep seated traditional political loyalties, Soviet standards and recent rational-legal requirements. Beyond the façade of Western patterned legal arrangements in Tajikistan hides a remarkable blend of secular and traditional features that can poorly connect civil and political society, promote the perceived interests of individuals and different solidarity groups. Quasi-democratic rule is being built on a highly fragmented society with yet declared, but unabled [sic.] protection of civil liberties. This foundation feeds growing violence, and corruption in society and government (2004: 8).

This account has much more merit to it than that in the 'promise' view above. This dissertation has argued that while a certain legitimacy is present in Tajikistan, it is contingent. Tajiks resign to authoritarian government not because they appreciate it but because they see no meaningful alternative. Some analysts speculate that as the new generation which does not remember the war grows up, they will be less bound to *tinji* discourse. Moreover, the country is dependent on international assistance and, should that be withdrawn, social and political order would break down. However, the content of peacebuilding's performances and hidden practices disputes such conclusions. Subordinate discourses contain very strong ethical, spatial and temporal dimensions which mitigate against future violence, understanding it to be wholly implausible and self-defeating. If such discourses continue to be reproduced, militancy and political violence are likely to remain the preserve of marginal groups which can be suppressed by the elite.

Correlation does not equal causation!

The arguments of the social scientist, about method and how knowledge is produced, provide the most important objections and qualifications. In short, the correlations that I have described do not equal a causal explanation. There are

indeed weaknesses to my methodology and things I have been simply unable or unprepared to do. My Tajik is not fluent and, had I been able to live in the country for several years and develop the language better, I may have had access to a hidden world of radical discourses which reveal a militant and [ripe] Islamic ‘threat’ to the state, which some claim (Karagiannis 2006) but I consider over-blown. Moreover, while migration (section 7.3) and drug-trafficking (6.2), in particular, seem to be dynamics potentially corrosive to public transcripts of central authority, state sovereignty and territorial livelihoods, I was unable to undertake substantial original research in these areas. They both involve enormous material resources which sustain livelihoods in Tajikistan and could potentially challenge the authority and sovereignty of the elite. One of these factors may be overwhelmingly important in creating the complex legitimacy which Tajikistan experiences today. If, we might wonder counterfactually, Tajikistan’s borders were ‘sealed’ – although it is difficult to imagine the circumstances under which this would be possible – the whole symbolic and material order of complex legitimacy might quickly erode. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine areas such as these two in great depth.

Despite the quite understandable frailties of this or any other study, I am confident that I have not misrepresented the nature of peace in Tajikistan from 2000 to 2005. It is space which explains why political order in Tajikistan is played out differently in the International Community, between elites and amongst subordinates. It is discourse which assures that these spaces will not collapse in the foreseeable future but will remain subject to one another. The gradual move from a military conflict to political order, which began in 1993 and went through significant moments of crystallisation between 1996 and 2000, has matured from 2000 to 2005. It represents the legitimisation of power and the recreation of authority, livelihoods, and sovereignty. I call this complex legitimacy.

8.2. On Complex Legitimacy: inductive insights

David Beetham’s inter-subjective approach to legitimacy served as the basis to launch the reconceptualisation of ‘peace’ in chapter three. His three dimensions (beliefs, rules and forms of consent) made me aware of the contextual practices which legitimate and delegitmate power in Tajikistan. However, attentive to Scott’s

public and hidden transcripts, I became increasingly sensitive to the irresolvable ambiguity of Tajikistan's peace/legitimacy. Its sheer complexity refuses any single model of 'peace' and insists on a summary of Tajikistan which takes account of its countervailing yet concomitant elements. In investigating the Tajik case in some depth, part two of this dissertation has sought not just to apply but to develop the constitutive analytical framework developed in part one. This has done this in two respects; in terms of both the (i) dialectical and productive *processes* and, (ii) constitutive *attributes* of building peace. Therefore, peace as complex legitimacy, or peace building as 'legitimation', has been broadened to include the re-/de-centralisation of authority (section 5.4), the (dis-)simulation of sovereignty (6.3), and the re-/de-territorialisation of livelihoods (7.2).

The constitution of peace: three attributes and processes

The three processes/attributes which were deduced from key theoretical insights from Beetham, Scott and Weber *inter alia*, as well as induced from the empirical work of chapters five to seven.

Authority, the differentiation of the dominant from the subordinate, is both re-centralised and de-centralised under the process of peacebuilding. The principal triumph of 'peacebuilding' for the Tajik elite has been its ability to recentralise the legitimate terrain of political authority – *to become the state*. In this process certain individuals have fallen by the way side due to their unwillingness to accept the 'authority' of the ruling clique around Rahmonov. Thus, among elites, the power of the regime – however parasitic on the rule of law – has been justified by widespread beliefs, made plausible by dominant rules, and performed in modes of consent. However, the Tajik elite should not be credited directly with this achievement. It has been done by means of complex legitimacy; elite power has become legitimated in a process where international actors and subordinates have at times been complicit, and at others times implicit in their resignation and acquiescence. Moreover, elite practices might themselves provide the greatest threat to central authority. Hidden transcripts, of both the elite and subordinate, express a discontent and avoidance of authority through concomitant processes of decentralisation, where a singular authority can be subverted through localised practices of clientelism or familial ties.

Such processes are mirrored in the second attribute: simulated and dissimulated *sovereignty*. Here, the idea of Beetham's 'common interest' or Max Weber's 'source' of authority risks conflating 'common interest with 'sovereignty'. Simulated state sovereignty is produced by the competing representations of sovereignty in the international system. Chapter 6.3 considered how dissimulations are necessarily simulated as sovereignty, and how a singular image of the state is necessarily dissimulated by hidden practices which favour private or familial interests.

Finally, in Tajikistan today, *livelihoods* are re-territorialised (to local authorities) and de-territorialised (through parallel, illegal practices, especially migrant networks). They produce a minimum of subsistence and are weakly legitimate. In local and translocal spaces, Tajik citizens have been able to survive and, indeed, seen their standard of living improve, despite the centralisation of authority by the state. As the economy has been re-territorialised under the elite through processes of privatisation and land reform, labour migration across translocal spaces has produced alternative incomes for peasants and migrants respectively. This constitutes the re-/de-territorialisation of livelihoods for Tajikistan's poor who survive on a combination of subsistence from their private gardens and remittances from migrant relatives.

Interventions, such as those described in chapters 5 to 7, act 'in the production and re-stabilisation of concepts like the state and sovereignty' (Weber 1995: 125). Simulated, 'elections' and an 'opposition' (5.2 and 5.3), 'border management' (6.3), and 'community self-government' (7.2) feign the existence of a sovereign and legitimate state to the International Community, however 'weak'. While these representations hold in international public spaces, in hidden spaces they are often admitted to be implausible by sceptical or cynical international actors. However, the failure to challenge the public transcripts serves to reproduce peacebuilding in the International Community – a thin representation of reality but a very real influence on donor decisions and practices.

However, as discussed above, my focus is on what these interventions do to the local contexts in which they operate, affectively and indirectly. In short, Tajikistan would not have the particular extent and form of labour migration it does today without the exploitation of land and water by a small elite, which in turn would not be had to the same extent without international assistance for

‘community development’. It would not have corruption the way it is today without simulated sovereignty and internationally-assisted ‘border management’. Tajikistan would not have the particular de-centralised patronage system which it has today without the dominant conception of ‘authority’ that exists in Tajik politics or without internationally-supported ‘political parties’ and ‘elections’. In the chapters above, I explicitly linked political party building and election monitoring to the authority, community development to livelihoods, and SSR and DDR to sovereignty. Yet, in practice, the processes also work in reverse and sideways; this is the nature of an inter-subjective order. All these interventions have effects and affects on all three attributes: authority, livelihoods, and sovereignty. Equally, the practices associated with all three attributes help simulate all international interventions. This is the co-constitutive nature of building peace, and the dialectical character of hegemony. It is schematically represented in figure 37 below.

Fig. 37: Complex legitimacy in practice

International Representation of Intervention	ATTRIBUTE OF PEACE	Public performance of peacebuilding	Hidden practices of peacebuilding
‘Political parties’, ‘Elections’	Authority	Re-centralising (by dominant discursive practice)	De-centralising (by self-serving acts of manipulation of elites)
‘Community Development’, ‘Decentralisation’	Livelihoods	Re-territorialising (to local authorities)	De-territorialising (through labour migration)
‘DDR’, ‘SSR’	Sovereignty	Simulating (a single authority from multiple performances)	Dissimulating (a single authority from multiple practices)

The degree of peace: neither positive or negative

Tajikistan may be one of the most stable and legitimate post-conflict spaces found anywhere in the world today. Yet this is not much of a claim. Part of the purpose of this thesis is to challenge the dichotomous portrayal of war/peace and note that the latter looks a lot like the former, even in best-case scenarios. Moreover, it also wishes to challenge the notion that peace is *either positive or negative*. Normatively it can be both; analytical neither approach provides a convincing

paradigm for the study of peace. Such a dichotomy provides a neat normative distinction but is analytically of little use. Cases where large-scale physical (political) violence has been vastly reduced, yet structural and cultural violence continues, belie the idea that they are illegitimate. This assumption can only be supposed via an objective conception of legitimacy. Yet I have argued that legitimacy is inter-subjective. Negative peace over the longer-term is never just 'peace as order'. Rather it requires that authorities be legitimated. Legitimacy constitutes the quantitative reduction of physical violence, and the qualitative transformation of cultural and physical violence. Order is never simply order. In its discursive, political and spatial dimensions it is constituted as more or less legitimate.

8.3. Peacebuilding, Politics and Ethics

The kind of radical analysis I have proposed demands some reflection on what might constitute responsible action. However, analytical and normative theory, as well as politics and ethics are extremely uneasy bedfellows. Moreover, we live in a time where ethics are being deployed to serve politics, and vice-versa, in extremely spurious ways. Recent trends in peacebuilding continue in the direction of Boutros-Ghali's call to 'redouble our efforts' (Boutros-Ghali [UN] 1995). Thus, we find calls by liberal thinkers for 'empire-lite' in Afghanistan and Iraq (Ignatieff 2002), and the advice of the most recent UN High-Level panel for a 'peacebuilding commission' (2004). Such accounts mirror colonial-era arguments for systematic intervention into weak states. However, a radical orientation questions the very basis for these claims.

How to act?

Having spent close to 100,000-words insisting on the complexities of peacebuilding, I will now, only slightly ironically, simplify my response in just three: *do less better*. As indicated by the discursive trends charted in 'peacebuilding', such a maxim would seem counter-intuitive to most in the International Community. To clarify, this exhortation refers to that post-agreement, post-implementation period where the high-intensity period of the conflict has ended. Even in cases where significant episodes of violence continue

intermittently, limited and targeted action may be much better than a major peacekeeping or humanitarian intervention whose resources can be reappropriated for violence by 'statesmen' or 'warlords'.

'Less' here requires a more humble programme which might work in 5 communities over 20 years, rather than 50 over 2 years. 'Better' means a contextual approach led by individuals who are ethnographic in outlook, prepared to accept that not everyone thinks the same way and that 'human rights', if indeed they are some how transcendental, are at least not interpreted in the same terms all over the world. This involves a readiness to be humble and to listen. It requires a greater appreciation of discursive mediation (chapter 7.3); of thinking in terms of relationships rather than objects. Interventions which do less better would seek to mediate discursively and understand ambiguity but not discipline. It could involve agents in attempting to adjust the boundaries of space, the assumptions of discourse and the practices of politics at any place or time relevant to a given post-conflict context. Lederach (2005) has attempted to theorise this in terms of strategic peacebuilding. I would argue that Lederach's peacebuilding practices are far too contextual, contingent, sublime and reflexive to really be 'strategic'. As he describes them, they are more subtle and nuanced than that; more of an art than a science.

What does this mean in practice? *Complex peacebuilding* in Tajikistan would involve all kinds of actions that cannot necessarily be knitted into a single, logical whole. For example, it would insist that pressure be applied to the state to relax border controls and facilitate migration. The IOM has led the way on this in Dushanbe (Bosc and Olimova 2003). Beyond these highly contingent acts, it would insist upon radical changes to the way projects and programmes are designed, implemented and evaluated. In reverse order, it would require much improved evaluation techniques which involve discourse analysis and ethnography in addition to quantitative surveys. This would allow for a greater understanding of a programmes' direct and indirect consequences for the legitimacy of certain practices, the authority of certain individuals. Implementation must be genuinely reflexive and, thus, time-consuming, involving the building of intimate relationships with members of target communities. Moreover, programmes could be designed with objectives set by target beneficiaries. I have suggested the use of

Consistent, Realistic and Participant-planned (CRAP) objectives to replace SMART ones (2005e).

The ramifications of such evaluations for the way projects are designed and implemented would be radical, perhaps too radical for most in the international community. Many donors pay lip service to this, but few actually make meaningful attempts at participatory planning. I made an attempt to design a qualitative study of community peacebuilding programmes whilst working with Mercy Corps and GTZ in Tajikistan (2005c; 2005d). My analysis showed that, for example, despite a formal emphasis on gender and age in the programme, the women's and youth groups had been de facto marginalised in communities (ibid). Thus, participatory planning even where it formally includes women and youth might find that, due to the powerful dynamics of age and gender, programmes are characterised by patriarchal practices which contrast sharply with the rhetoric of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. The response of the international community to this seems, unwittingly, to simulate 'women in peacebuilding' and carry on regardless. A discursive mediation approach under complex peacebuilding might set more realistic goals of identifying a small number of female leaders – in post-conflict contexts which are highly patriarchal – who have the talents to ameliorate patriarchal structures. It would raise the issue for discussion and seek to perform the powers of female leaders who were truly worthy of the name. I believe I saw such leaders in the exceptional CAIP community of Kizil Ketmen (Heathershaw 2005b).

However, these are exceptions to the rule and indicate the role that hegemonic discourse, space and politics plays in producing more of the same. Thus, such exhortations to act contextually presuppose genuinely exceptional individuals with the ability to make a difference who are few and far between. In contrast to anti-foundationalist approaches to humanitarian action (Campbell 1998), such individuals are invariably motivated by a profound sense that they must act for some idea or identity which has more authentic and meaningful than 'alterity'. I would argue that the localised and contextualised practices of such positive peace offer the most meaningful examples of social and political life in post-conflict settings. They offer a strident challenge to the inauthenticities of peacebuilding as propounded by the International Community. They do not disavow discursive

foundations, in fact they insist upon them. But they demand that each voice is heard and negotiated.

Final remarks

The objective of this thesis has been to understand what has made peace hold, in Tajikistan, and contribute to a conceptual debate about what 'peace' is. It has been argued, that this requires an approach of complex legitimacy: the inter-textual, inter-spatial and political relations of authority, livelihoods, and sovereignty. This constitutes an inter-subjective approach where we must make relationships of 'peace' the subject of peace.

Studying peace thus requires a critical orientation; yet practising peace – its unavoidable partner – demands a commitment to a point of reference. This final chapter has insisted on a moral imperative to retain the practice of building peace alongside the study of building peace. The project is thus situated in that broader quest to challenge the forms of domination which popular, elite and international practices together reproduce. The results of international peacebuilding are an increasingly familiar mix of 'poverty reduction strategies' and high-level corruption, 'multiparty elections' and increasingly authoritarian government, 'border management' and state violence. Ideals of peace and practices of structural and physical violence are intersubjective of one another.

Thus, this thesis ends with a call to humility on the part of the international community. As the events of 2006 in Afghanistan, Darfur, Iraq, Lebanon, Tajikistan, and countless other cases of conflict and 'peace' show, international actors are highly reliant on others in their ability to support livelihoods, rebuild authority, and reconstitute sovereignty let alone achieve the ambitious goals of peace operations. Failing to grasp the governing dynamics of discourse, politics, and space, they are often seduced by their own power and think of local dynamics as mere responses to their actions. This thesis has sought to reveal the reductions, seductions and deceptions of subordinate, elite and international discourses; and what such representations can and cannot produce. The better we comprehend how peace is grounded in both complexity and legitimacy, the better we can imagine the limits of international intervention and the possibilities for alternative communities.

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Appendix A

TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEWS²⁹⁴

- T1. Jumahon Alimi, Chair of the General Council [*Predsedatel Obshevo Sobraniya*], NGO 'Parallax', Kulob, 2 June 2005
- T2. Muso Asozoda, Head of the Apparatus, Peoples' Democratic Party of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, 17 August 2005
- T3. Representative of Communist Party (CPT), Hujond, 20 June 2005
- T4. Turko Dinkayev, Regional Correspondent, Asia-Plus, Kulob, 31 May 2005
- T5. Tim Epkenhans, German Embassy – Dushanbe, 2002-2004, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 2 February 2005 [Eng.]
- T6. Abduhalim Gaffurov, Chair, Socialist Party of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, 5 August 2005
- T7. Shokirjohn Hakimov, Deputy Chair of the Social Democratic Party of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, 4 August 2005
- T8. Mohinisso Horisova, ex-Deputy Chair, Socialist Party of Tajikistan, Khujond, 24 June 2005
- T9. Yusuf Kurbonkhojayev, Executive Director, Public Association 'Ittifok', Hujond, 22 June 2005
- T10. Parviz Kamollidinov, Program Assistant, National Democratic Institute, Dushanbe, 17 August 2005
- T11. Jan Malekzade, Deputy Head of Mission, United Nations Tajikistan Office of Peacebuilding, 10 May 2005 [Eng.]
- T12. Mirhussein Narziev, ex-Chair, Socialist Party of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, 5 August 2005
- T13. Muhammadsharif Nabiev, Regional Head, Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, Kulob, 1 June 2005
- T14. Gulbahor Nematova, Deputy Area Manager, United Nations Development Programme, Kulob, 31 May 2005
- T15. Latifanon Rahmonova, Chair, NGO 'Elim', Kulob, 2 June 2005 [Taj.]
- T16. Marina Safarova, Acting Director, Institute of Cultural Affairs in Tajikistan (ICA:EHIO), Hujond, 21 June 2005
- T17. Hikmatullo Saifullozoda, Head of the Apparatus, the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, 17 August 2005
- T18. Dilbar Samadova, Regional Head, Social Democratic Party of Tajikistan, Khujond, June 2005
- T19. Suhrob Shoyev, Assistant on Human Rights, OSCE, Khujond, 31 May 2005

²⁹⁴ Interviews took place in Russian [Russ.], unless otherwise indicated as English [Eng.] or Tajik [Taj.]

- T20. Ibrohim Usmonov, Deputy Minister of Culture, Government of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, 18 August 2005
- T21. Rahmatullo Valiev, Deputy Chair, Democratic Party of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, 4 August 2005
- T22. Jeff Whitbeck, Programme Coordinator, Mercy Corps, May 2005 [Eng.]

Appendix B

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