

Peace-Building in Political Hybridity

The Influence of Local Actors in Governance in Osh, Kyrgyzstan



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Cover picture: Members of the Uzbek and Kyrgyz community having lunch together in a *samsakana*, which was totally destroyed during the June Events. Picture taken by the author, Osh, on 5 April 2011.

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1 Introduction

'In Kyrgyzstan, the people live on a different planet than their government.' With these words, a local friend from Bishkek, who works for UNICEF, described the current political situation in her homeland.¹ This situation is dominated by a state-citizens relationship in which state structures lack fundamental trust and legitimacy, as the quote illustrates. Through this weak position of the national state, other actors have influence on governance, especially on the local level. These local actors are at the focal point of this thesis.

The political situation in Kyrgyzstan will be assessed with the analytic concept of hybrid political order. This concept, developed by Volker Boege and his colleagues, acknowledges the strength of local actors in governance. Contrariwise to the perception of the mainstream discourse on failed states, local realities in contexts of a weak national state are not seen as a void but as being filled with other institutions, which provide governance on a local level (Boege et al, 2009a: 28). Boege et al. remind us that the "state fragility discourse and state-building policies are oriented towards the western-style Weberian/Westphalian state. Yet this form of statehood hardly exists in reality beyond the OECD world" (2009a: 16). They therefore argue that the concept of hybrid political order, while taking on a more positive outlook on these societies, brings a reconceptualization which enables a focus on new ways of conflict transformation and peace building.

The current situation in southern Kyrgyzstan and especially in Osh is determined by the violent conflict of June 2010 which marked a caesura in all spheres of life. In order to build peace, the root causes of this conflict need to be addressed but also conflict dynamics which emerged once the conflict turned violent.

In the current situation in Osh, we can speak of a negative peace, as Galtung defined it, where overt violence is absent but the structural causes of the conflict are not resolved (Galtung, 1996). In order to reach positive peace, a system needs to be established which is able to manage conflicts in a non-violent way. Within this context Klem and Frerks introduced the metaphor of a social contract. This social contract is defined as: "the generally accepted convention that describes and prescribes the system through which a society strikes a balance between the particular interests of all its members as well as between individual interests and the interest of the society as a whole" (2008: 50).

¹ Author's interview, Osh, on 4 April 2011.

Based on the concept of hybrid political order, this thesis argues that (re-)establishing a social contract, as the fundament for positive peace is essential and that the contract and the process that leads to it needs to be sensitive towards local realities of governance which differ from the western concept of a nation state.

In order to discuss the situation in Osh, while applying the analytic framework as described below, I will pursue the guiding question: How do the different actors and institutions involved in local governance in Osh deal with the manifold problems in the current situation, given that this situation is shaped to a large extent by the violent conflict of last year?

In order to answer this question, I will first present an introduction to the analytic framework and methodology which guided this research (chapter 1.1 and 1.2). Chapter 2 elaborates the conflict and conflict dynamics which determine the current situation in Osh. During my fieldwork, I did not investigate the violent conflict of last year. Several organisations and commissions who availed of more capacity, means and time than I did were already working on this. Therefore, chapter 2 will be based, to a large extent, on their findings. The subsequent chapters explain the role of the different actors involved in local governance, divided into the broad categories of non-state actors (chapter 3), and the local government (4).

1.1 Analytic Framework

In the past few years, the academic and policy oriented debate over peace building and conflict resolution has set an important focus on the nexus between violent conflict and the performance of states. Out of the notion that state fragility strongly correlates with the risk of violent conflict, a state fragility discourse emerged which dominates current international security policy of donors, the World Bank and UN agencies (Fischer and Schmelzle, 2009: 5).

However, this mainstream discourse has also raised criticism from different sides. One of these criticisms was formulated by Volker Boege and his colleagues, working at the University of Queensland in Australia. They argue that the state fragility discourse has too state-centric a view on realities in the global south, where it neglects the cultural context of societies (Boege et al., 2009a: 20). The Weberian/Westphalian state model, which is the point of reference of the state fragility discourse, hardly exists outside the OECD world. While in Europe, state building was a process that took centuries and included years of war, destruction and bloodshed to result in today's states, this model of statehood was implemented in a short period of time in other contexts during the process of colonisation and decolonisation. The result was the emergence, after decolonisation, of a number of states lacking roots in their societies and, as a consequence, were nothing more than

“empty shells” (Boege et al., 2008: 5). As a result, new states emerged after decolonisation which lack legitimacy and capacity, and which are alienated from their society.

Even though Kyrgyzstan was never colonised, being a part of the Soviet Union was a similar experience and since its independence, the country has been searching for a new identity and for a form of governance suitable to Kyrgyzstan’s context. The International Crisis Group warned, after the revolution in 2005 which replaced former President Askar Akayev by Kurmanbek Bakiyev, that Kyrgyzstan was on the edge of becoming a failed state (ICG, 2005). This situation was further destabilized throughout the year 2010, which brought another forceful turnover of the national government, followed by a violent conflict in the south of the country.

The concept of hybrid political order argues that in the absence of a state there is not anarchy. In contrast, these voids of governance are filled with local institutions and actors that give structure to everyday life of citizens. These local realities of governance are far more important for citizens than the concept of a nation state, which is experienced as being remote (Boege et al., 2009a: 23).

As an analytic concept, the strength of hybrid political order is its broad perspective which includes, besides state structures, the role of actors from the realm of customary institutions and civil society in governance. It is not the aim of the authors to fully reject the notion of the state but to limit it to the same level as other actors that contribute to governance (Boege et al., 2009b: 92). This opens the spectrum for analysis which goes beyond state-centrism. In addition, where customary institutions are strong and locally rooted, they can, if widely acknowledged by state authorities, provide them with rooted legitimacy, which is missing in the “empty shells” of states which emerged out of decolonisation. “The stability or instability of the state ... depends on how the state interacts with a wide variety of social and customary institutions” (Boege, 2008b: 10).

As stated above, hybrid political order is an analytic concept, not a normative goal (Boege et al., 2009b: 88). It is not the intention of the authors to display states as negative and hybrid political orders as positive or even as an alternative to the state. Moreover, customary actors and institutions are not seen as better than state institutions. “We acknowledge that they *are there* in many of the so-called fragile states, that they have to be reckoned with, and that external actors should look for constructive and informed ways to engage with them” (Boege et al., 2009b: 90). In this way, hybrid political order is an analytic concept focusing on local realities which exist now and which differ to a large extent from systems of governance in Western states. This enables a researcher to obtain an open perspective on what functioning state structures might look like.

The authors acknowledge that there can be severe problems in hybrid political orders² but there are also situations where hybrid political orders work and provide security and peace (Boege et al., 2009b: 88). It is the aim to analyse hybrid political orders more closely in order to find out why they are working or not. As Boege et al. formulate it: “The basic question is in what direction developments go – whether hybrid political orders ... can constitute a political community that provides security, peace and a framework for the nonviolent conduct of conflicts” (2009b: 88).

In their research, Boege et al. followed a division of actors with potential for local governance in three broad categories: state institutions, civil society and customary institutions (Boege, 2008a: 3). The category of customary institutions includes institutions which are indigenous to a society, in contrast to introduced institutions which can be found in the other two categories of state institutions and civil society (Boege, 2008b: 11). However, boundaries between the three realms are not clear-cut but are instead in a process of constant exchange, adaptation and transformation. This form of interaction between different actors and institutions was also found in the context of Osh. Especially the lines between state structures and informal institutions are ambiguous because the roles of actors which are perceived as being informal are simultaneously regulated by state law or they are even created by the state. In a categorisation of these actors, I follow the local perception and discuss actors seen as being a part of the community under the heading ‘customary institutions’. With the term civil society I refer to institutions emerging out of influences from outside of the indigenous context. These can include women organisations, NGOs, community-based organisations, trade unions, human rights groups or youth groups.

While Boege et al. consider state institutions as one entity it seems to be more meaningful in the context of Osh to divide the state into the realm of the national state and the local government, the Osh municipality. Paying attention to recent historical developments between these two actors, the local government is, to a certain extent, perceived by the local population as an independent actor rather than representing the national state. This aspect of local governments is addressed in a newer body of academic literature. It is recognized that peace-building needs to involve all levels of a society and therefore local layers of state structures have a role independent from the national state (Klem and Frerks, 2008: 50).

Re-establishing a social contract, that exists on national as well as on local level implies that underlying contradictions are resolved. As Galtung argued, conflicts may exist only on a latent level (Galtung, 1996). In such a situation, called negative peace, there are no overt violent actions but nevertheless, structural violence still exists and can rapidly change the situation into open violent

² In the article they refer to the situation of warlordism in Afghanistan and neopatrimonialism in Africa; two situations where hybrid political orders have a clearly negative dimension.

conflict. The opposite, positive peace, is defined as a situation where structural violence is overcome and it implies that structures and institutions are in place which can solve societal problems in a peaceful way. In other words the social contract is re-established. The current situation in Osh can be described as negative peace, as will be elaborated in chapter 2.3.

The social contract regulates not only the interaction of the individual member of a society and the state but also the interaction between all members of a given society. Not only all political actors “need to be bound by the same set of rules, by ‘the only game in town’” (Klem and Frerks, 2008: 51), but also every individual member of the local population. This is given if a social contract not only determines real institutions and rules of interactions but also refers to the trust and expectations of citizens towards these institutions and set of rules. Only the expectation that all other members of the society act upon these rules and that these rules are right will bind the individual to the social contract. “The willingness of people to respect the social contract depends on whether they expect other society members to do the same, and how they perceive the future”, (Klem and Frerks, 2008: 51).

An additional aspect of peace-building is that besides the root causes, also conflict dynamics, which form after a conflict has turned violent, need to be addressed. “Root causes explain how war breaks out but ending violent conflict requires more than addressing the root causes since dynamics, unrelated to the original causes, develop once violence starts” (Klem and Frerks, 2008: 49). A violent conflict is a powerful phenomenon which influences and changes all aspects of social life. Therefore, violent structures can be a result of conflict and lead to further violence.

It is the aim of this work to analyse the role of the different actors involved in local governance in Osh, given that if the national government is not providing governance, other actors can do so. A primary focus lies on the mechanisms which work, while discussing the legitimacy, capacity, efficiency and interactions of the involved actors.

1.2 Methodology

The data presented in this paper were collected during ten weeks of field research in Kyrgyzstan between March and May 2011. The majority of data consists of semi-structured interviews, of which in total fifty-nine were conducted. The vast majority of interviews took place in Osh city but were complemented with interviews in surrounding villages, two additional southern towns (Jalalabad and Uzgen) and in the capital Bishkek.

Sampling was based on the snowballing technique, while I took care to include respondents from different ethnicities, gender, age and areas inside Osh. A special focus lies on the inclusion of the different realms of governance: twelve interviews were conducted with informal leaders, seventeen with representatives of the civil society including four human rights lawyers, and eight with state officials. Additional interviews were conducted with ordinary citizens of Osh (including teachers and journalists) and with international experts working in the field.

Additional data were derived from conversations with local friends, these were not structured or recorded. Nevertheless, these conversations gave additional insight into issues which were not included in the interview guide or did not emerge during the interviews. Observations of daily life situations were also of value in order to assess and triangulate the information given in the interviews.

In general, respondents were very open to discuss all issues raised. Only in some cases did they ask me to keep their identity private and refuse a recording of the conversation, whereupon I took notes. Only four people, of whom three were younger women, refused to talk to me at all. This might be explained by their low social position in society. As will be explained in chapter 3.1 more elaborately, the social position is determined by a hierarchy which favours age over youth and subordinates female to male.

This social hierarchy proved advantageous to my research since I myself belonged to the lowest category. Posing questions from this lower societal position made respondents more open in the way that they tried to educate me and to pass their knowledge on. Additionally, they did not perceive me as a source of potential danger. The fact that I was a foreigner coming from Europe was alleviated, since after the violence many Europeans and Americans came to Osh to work for the UN or other organisations. Therefore, people were used to foreigners and sometimes gave me a great deal of information because they felt I might be able to pass information on to organisations which have the capacity to help them (even though I made it very clear that I am an independent researcher and not in a position to actually influence their situation). As long as I did not speak, and people could not hear from the language that I was a foreigner, I blended in as a local Russian woman and therefore had the possibility to freely observe situations of everyday life.

The vast majority of interviews were conducted with the help of an interpreter. The presence of this third person naturally changed the setting of the interview. I worked with seven different research assistants in the various locations covered and it can be remarked that age and sex of an interpreter influenced the answers of respondents more than his or her ethnicity. In order not to change the social hierarchy I tried to work with young women. I was surprised, when I visited Uzbek

mahallas with an interpreter from Kyrgyz ethnicity, by the openness with which people answered the questions and also the influence this had on my research assistants, who had not heard a description of the current situation from an Uzbek perspective before. Data were also generated out of discussions with my interpreters about the issues being raised during an interview.

The focus of the research was limited to legal mechanisms and legal actors engaged in local governance. Nevertheless, it needs to be acknowledged that criminal networks, most of all the drug cartels, are economically very important and provide structures which might be important and influential also in terms of local governance and the provision of security.³

The findings of this research were in part already presented in a working paper under the title *Peace Building in Osh, Kyrgyzstan: The Role of Local Actors in Context of Political Hybridity*. This working paper was published in the context of a research fellowship with the Social Research Centre of the American University of Central Asia which hosted me in Kyrgyzstan. Parts of texts presented here derive from this working paper, which was published in the beginning of June 2011 on the homepage of the American University.⁴

³ A local researcher told me that during the political events in April 2010 she was working for a local NGO located in Bishkek. Through this work she was in contact with partners in the Issyk Kul region. She was supposed to meet them but because of concerns about the security situations after the turnover in the national government her organisation cancelled the trip to the region. However, her partners assured her that in the region the situation was stable and safe because it was controlled by a criminal network

⁴ Schwarzenbach, C, (2011) *Peace Building in Osh, Kyrgyzstan. The Role of Local Actors in Context of Political Hybridity*, <http://src.auca.kg/images/stories/files/Working%20paper%20endvers.pdf> (accessed at 11 July 2011).

2 Conflict and Conflict Dynamics

The current situation in Osh is determined by the violent conflict of June 2010. This conflict left more than 400 dead and over 400,000 persons displaced, of whom 100,000 crossed into Uzbekistan as refugees. Additionally, houses and businesses were severely damaged throughout southern Kyrgyzstan, especially in the city regions of Osh and Jalalabad (Melvin, 2011: 6). The conflict marked a caesura in all aspects of social life and forcefully changed the local reality, most of all the relations between the two largest ethnic groups, the Kyrgyz and the Uzbeks.

Like the revolution in 2005, also the ousting of the President Bakiyev in 2010 and especially the ensuing events in June can be seen as, what Lupsha called, a “window of opportunity”, which allowed actors to gain (or also lose) political influence (Lupsha, 1996 in Kapatadze, 2008: 283). Hence, for an assessment of the current role of different actors involved in peace-building in Osh, it is first required to understand the root causes of the conflict and the dynamics which were a result of it. This will be presented in this chapter: while the first part provides an overview over the political events of the year 2010, the second provides a discussion of the structural causes of the conflict. Finally, the post-conflict situation will be described while highlighting four issues: the state legitimacy, the ethnic divide as a result of the conflict, power abuse by the law enforcement bodies and the economic situation.

2.1 History of the Political Events of 2010

Klem and Frerks argue that: “violent conflict occurs when the system to moderate and balance the various interests in society has failed to such an extent that a critical number of individuals or groups ignore this system altogether, and resort to violence to further their own interests” (2008: 50). This describes very clearly the social processes which unfolded in Kyrgyzstan in spring 2010. Two violent events took place in this period and were strongly linked to each other: the ousting of then President Kurmanbek Bakiyev on 7 April and the violent conflict in southern Kyrgyzstan between 10 and 14 June.

2.1.1 April Events and Securitization in Southern Kyrgyzstan

In the beginning of the year 2010, President Bakiyev faced growing discontent from the side of the citizens over the way he ruled the country (Melvin, 2011: 15). He himself had come to power through a revolution in 2005 but failed to address the most pressing problems in the country, such as the bad economic situation. Even more, he imposed a system of clan-based patronage with

members of his family in key positions of the government and the economy and large-scale corruption in all spheres of public life (ICG, 2008: 1). As a result of his misgovernment, food prices increased and an energy crisis emerged, with the country's fragile power infrastructure incapable of supplying citizens with heating and electricity during the winter months. At the core of this energy crisis were not international market changes but it was the corrupt system itself which gave rise to the crisis. Besides this, the government was incapable of supplying its citizens with a basic level of public services. (ICG, 2008: 15). Additionally, the Bakiyev government failed to tackle the drug trade which is of considerable importance since Kyrgyzstan lies on the main drug route connecting Afghanistan with markets in Russia and Europe. The Kyrgyz state was incapable of addressing this problem because counter narcotic operations were hampered by corruption and high-ranking state officials were involved in the drug trade.

In this situation of misgovernment which existed over many years, rising utility prices brought people to the streets in protest against their government in 2010 (Quinn-Judge, 2010). Until the beginning of this year, heating and electricity tariffs doubled and only shortly after, the government privatized a major energy-providing company at the scandalously low price of three million US dollars. Many citizens believed the president's son Maxim Bakiyev was the new owner.

In late February, protests started in the country's coldest province, Naryn and continued through to April with a growing number of protesters and rising demands, culminating in the request for Bakiyev to be removed (Quinn-Judge, 2010). After a day of forceful clashes of the protestors with the police, Bakiyev and his relatives fled on 7 April to his hometown Jalalabad in southern Kyrgyzstan, where he was still largely supported. However, he had to resign on 16 April and left to seek exile in Belarus (Matveeva, 2010: 4). Bakiyev was followed by an interim government under the leadership of Rosa Otunbaeva. A constitutional referendum was announced and adopted on the 27 June (Beyer, 2010a: 1) and parliamentary elections were held on 10 October 2010 (Melvin, 2011: 7).

The political downfall of the Bakiyev regime was followed by a situation of perceived lawlessness and uncertainty about Kyrgyzstan's future. *De iure* the old constitution was still in place but in the eyes of the people it did not count any longer since it was seen as Bakiyev's constitution (Beyer, 2010a: 3). As described by Beyer, who researched the meaning of the referendum in the rural area of the Talas region, a large part of the population saw a new constitution as a necessary precondition for peace and stability in the country. In her respondents' words, a new institution was needed for 'life to start again' (Beyer, 2010a: 3). It was in this situation of uncertainty that the events in the south of the country unfolded.

While Bakiyev was still largely supported in the south after the April events, the interim government encouraged leaders of the Uzbek community in southern Kyrgyzstan to support them (Melvin, 2011: 16). The Uzbek leaders followed this call, hoping for more inclusion in the political decisions and more minority rights after the Bakiyev era, when they were excluded from politics. This brought the ethnic factor into the political struggles for power, while the preceding events were essentially an intra-Kyrgyz strife.

On 13 May, Bakiyev's supporters seized the provincial administration building in Jalalabad and some of the protestors called for an independent southern Kyrgyzstan (KIC, 2011: 14). During this event the police did not intervene (Matveeva, 2010: 19). The following day, an ethnically mixed crowd of supporters of the interim government regained the building and dispelled Bakiyev supporters. Subsequently, a group of ethnically mixed people set a house of Bakiyev's family on fire. Even though this group consisted of people from a mixed ethnic background, in the eyes of many Kyrgyz in the south, the event was an attack of Uzbeks against Kyrgyz (Melvin, 2011: 17).

This perception of Uzbeks as the enemies of the Kyrgyz' nation grew through a speech act of the Uzbek leader Kadirjan Batirov. He declared publicly that: "the time when the Uzbeks sat still at home and did not participate in state building has passed" (Melvin, 2011: 17). He added that Uzbeks would actively support the interim government. His speech was broadcast on two local TV channels and was understood by many ethnic Kyrgyz as a call for Uzbek autonomy. In this way, the ethnic question became intermingled with a political power struggle, which started as an intra-Kyrgyz conflict. The build-up of a concept of the enemy was consolidated by the media, of whom members of the Uzbek community saw themselves being portrayed as enemies of the Kyrgyz state.

On 19 May, a Kyrgyz mob attacked the University of Friendship in Jalalabad, an institution which was founded by Batirov. These events in Jalalabad were followed by growing tensions in the south and in the beginning of June, violent incidents between young men from both ethnicities about minor issues occurred in Osh (KIC, 2011: 26). Already at that time, there was a general feeling that the police could not protect the people (Matveeva, 2010: 10). This resulted in people from both communities arming themselves sometimes even through seizing weapons and other equipment from law enforcement agencies (KIC, 2011: 29)

In this build-up of inter-ethnic tensions, the interim government failed completely to take a firm stand against any aggressions against ethnic minorities. Central government officials hardly visited the south in this period, which made local people feel as if they were completely neglected by the interim government (Matveeva, 2010: 19). In this absence of the national government, local politicians in the south further instigated the situation while publicly supporting the Kyrgyz

standpoint. Kamichbek Tashiev, a party leader of Ata-Jurt, said for example that “Uzbeks living in Kyrgyzstan must show greater respect to Kyrgyz history, language and culture, and could not hold leadership positions” (Matveeva, 2010: 17).

In this strained situation, the local population in Osh expected a ‘war to start’, and in contrast to people in Bishkek, they were not surprised when the events unfolded in the evening of 10 June.⁵

2.1.2 The June Events

What exactly happened at the evening of 10 June is currently strongly contested in Osh. For many in Kyrgyzstan, finding out who started the conflict that evening became equivalent with assigning blame for the whole conflict (Melvin, 2011: 25). Therefore, how the events unfolded is a very sensitive topic. There were different reports written about the events, but in the eyes of the local population they all serve the interest of someone and therefore do not portray an objective picture of the events. Gulgaky Mamasalieva, director of the local NGO Interbilim said for example: ‘Every commission prepares a report in the way that is beneficial for their own interests. The national commission protected the interim government, one other commission was created to protect the people who suffered and the international community will believe the international report. It is clear that every commission that made a report followed some orders.’⁶

The report of the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission (KIC), which was published in early May 2011, is the most in-depth investigation in the events with 750 conducted interviews. It was provided by an international independent commission which was created after the Kyrgyz government requested an independent investigation of the violent events (KIC, 2011: 14). Therefore, I will follow here its findings.

The KIC came to the conclusion that violence erupted out of an incident at the casino which then resulted in rioting (KIC, 2011: 27). In this situation the police were unable to restore order. More than 3,000 people were involved in this event. Roads were blocked by this crowd, police officers injured and the casino as well as nearby shops were burnt down.

This incident took place in close proximity to a female student’s dormitory (KIC, 2011: 27). The crowd threw stones at the dormitory’s windows and therefore the students were evacuated. However, the significance of the dormitory for the development of the conflict was that “it featured as the site of an alleged incident of rape and murder of Kyrgyz women by Uzbek men” (KIC, 2011:

⁵ Author’s conversation with the staff of the Social Research Centre at the American University of Central Asia, Bishkek, on 13 March 2011 and author’s interview with a local staff member of UNICEF, Osh, on 4 April 2011.

⁶ Author’s interview, Osh, on 6 May 2011.

28). Even though the KIC could not find any proof of this gender-based violence, the rumour about it was the main factor for Kyrgyz mobilization throughout the following days. “The speed with which the rumour of this incident spread throughout Osh city and Osh province in the very early hours of 11 June was, even in the age of mobile telecommunications, extraordinary. So too was its power to then act as a motivator for subsequent Kyrgyz participation in the events” (KIC, 2011: 28).

In the following four days, the law enforcement bodies failed to restore order in Osh. While in the beginning, violence was characterized as “chaotic clashes”, after the second day the conflict took on an asymmetric pattern with the Uzbek community suffering disproportionately (Melvin, 2011: 26). Additionally, members of the military were involved in attacks on Uzbek communities and the way equipment was seized by law enforcement bodies further raised questions about their complicity in the violence (KIC, 2011: iv).

In conclusion, protests on national level occurred after the misgovernment of Bakiyev peaked in the doubling of utility prices. After the ousting of Bakiyev, the country was in a situation of perceived lawlessness in which a fragile power balance was reshuffled. In this situation, the ethnic factor became linked to the previously solely intra-Kyrgyz struggle for power, when the interim government asked Uzbek leaders for their support and the latter followed this call. In the run-up to the violence the local population saw that the national government and the police were not able to protect them. For these reasons, the governing system was no longer perceived as moderating and balancing interests in the society, and people started to take matters into their own hands.

2.2 Reasons for the Conflict

When the events unfolded, the local and international media as well as academic analysts were quick to call it an interethnic conflict, based on an ancient hatred between the ethnic groups of Kyrgyz and Uzbek. In *The Guardian* for example, the events were described with the words:

“Mobs of Kyrgyz men rampaged through southern Kyrgyzstan today, slaughtering ethnic Uzbeks and burning down houses in a third day of ethnic bloodshed. ... At least 1,100 have been wounded in what are the country's worst ethnic clashes in 20 years. More than 75,000 terrified ethnic Uzbeks, mostly women and children, flooded across the nearby border with Uzbekistan today.” (The Guardian, 13 June 2010)

In such portrayals, the ethnic dimension of the conflict was reified rather than questioned while the full picture of the events was suppressed. Reeves argued in the context of local disputes that “by making ‘ancient inter-ethnic hatred’, at least implicitly, the key explanatory variable, we discursively ‘frame out’ other agents and interests, including those nominally ‘personating’ the

state in border areas – the customs officials, border guards, road police (GAI) and others who are frequently the target of popular protest – as potential parties to, and even instigators of, conflict” (Reeves, 2005: 76). The same holds true for the interpretation of the June events. In this thesis I will argue that ethnicity was not the reason for the outbreak of the conflict, in contrast, the conflict needs to be seen as a result of political struggles in a situation of perceived lawlessness and with a state which failed to guarantee a system that mitigates interests and guarantees rights.

2.2.1 The Role of Ethnicity in National Politics

Social scientists argued for many years that ethnic groups are constructed, that their boundaries change over time and that ethnic difference in itself is no explanation for the outbreak of ethnic violence (see Barth, 1969 or Brubaker, 2004). Ethnic boundaries are a form of social rules and codes of interaction which exist through people acting upon them (Barth, 1969: 16). They are a form of social organization which structures interaction in a way that allows the persistence of cultural differences and hence ethnic diversity. Recognizing that ethnicity and ethnic boundaries linger because of social processes implies that the degree of identification with a group can change over time. Therefore Brubaker introduced the analytic term groupness as something that happens (Brubaker 2004: 38). This opens an analytic focus to distinguish levels of groupness and to ask about actors that influence groupness. In the case of Kyrgyzstan the resulting question is how groupness along ethnic lines happened and who the actors in this process were.

There is a difference between the role of ethnicity in national politics and the way it is experienced in local realities. Given that leaders have the ability to create groupness, I argue that the national political discourse influenced the situation on the ground. Ethnicity played a role in national politics since Kyrgyzstan’s independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 (Melvin, 2011: 8). Kyrgyzstan’s first President Askar Akayev faced the difficult situation of building a new national identity after the collapse of the communist system. The national identity he created was very much linked to the culture and traditions of the titular nation, with names of streets and towns replaced. This discourse resulted in a large-scale emigration of ethnic Russians. Through this outflow of human capital Akayev was forced to introduce a new ideology, which also gave minorities a place in the new state. This new political course was presented under the title: “Kyrgyzstan our common home” (Melvin, 2011: 9). Minority rights were guaranteed and in 2001 Russian became the second official language. Despite the official discourse, Akayev’s policies were however not able to genuinely integrate minorities and specific issues of multiculturalism were still a taboo, such as recognizing the Uzbek language as a national language.

Through a political support system based on clans, Akayev, as a man from the north, faced opposition from Kyrgyz politicians from the south. He was therefore interested in creating an Uzbek support base in the south by providing them with specific rights. Members of the Uzbek community could hold official positions and were at times represented in the national government. However, Akayev made sure that they did not become too powerful or have a singular lead figure. Through this form of political support, “interethnic relations in the south became interlinked with the struggle for power in Kyrgyzstan through an interaction of north-south, rural-urban, patronage (clan) and ethno-political elements.” (Melvin, 2011: 10).

These arrangements between the state government and the Uzbek community collapsed with the Tulip Revolution in 2005 that replaced Akayev with Kurmanbek Bakiyev. Bakiyev himself from the south was not in need of support of the Uzbek community and established a nationalist agenda (Melvin, 2011: 12). During Bakiyev’s time members from ethnic minorities lost their official positions in the government and administration and saw themselves replaced by ethnic Kyrgyz. Moreover, they were excluded from public institutions such as the military and police forces (Beyer, 2010b). Additionally, the history of Kyrgyzstan, as it is learned in schools, was rewritten as the history of ethnic Kyrgyz focusing on the epos of Manas, who is seen as a common ancestor of all Kyrgyz people. The linking of this epos to the national history and the new ideology of Kyrgyzstan excludes all other ethnic groups living in Kyrgyzstan.

Ethnic minorities were not involved in the political turnover in April 2010 (Melvin, 2011: 15p). The interim government that followed Bakiyev failed to clearly define its standpoint towards minorities, leaving these groups in uncertainty about their place in society. The interim government did not clearly protect the rights of minorities and moreover side-lined minorities in public activities as pointed out by Beyer. An example of this was a commemoration of the victims of the April rebellion, which was broadcasted in an entirely Kyrgyz-language ceremony, where the victims were referred to as ““Kyrgyz heroes” who have died for “Kyrgyz people”” (Beyer, 2010a: 3).

2.2.2 Local Realities

While an ethno-nationalistic view is gradually becoming stronger in national politics, ethnic relations are experienced differently in local realities. During the time of my research in Osh, no evidence was found supporting the hypothesis of an ancient hatred which resulted in the violent clashes in June 2010. In contrast, in southern Kyrgyzstan before the events, there was no segregated society and in mixed neighbourhoods both communities lived together peacefully. Interethnic friendships, work relations and family ties outlived the violence and its aftermath. This

relationship was also found by Beyer who described that in daily life, there is no hostile relationship between the two communities (Beyer, 2010b).

In a similar line of argumentation, Reeves described the rural situation in the Ferghana valley which includes southern Kyrgyzstan. The Ferghana valley was described in another work as “a host of crises” where territory, ethnicity and citizenship do not coincide (Slim, 2002 in Reeves, 2005: 74). Reeves argues, however, that the local population does not perceive interethnic relations as a problem but materializations of state structures such as borders. As factors for growing insecurity Reeves listed corruption of officials, water and land shortage and a lack of political access (Reeves, 2005: 76). Reeves illustrated this feeling of insecurity with a quote from the Taxi driver Erkin, who lives in proximity to Tajikistan and who has to cross on his daily way to the urban centre Tajik enclaves. As quoted in Reeves, he said:

“You see, the problem is the border... Look, why is it that when I go to Chorku bazaar [in Tajikistan], if any young Tajik guy had got drunk and started saying ‘what are you, Kyrgyz, doing here?’ the Ak-Sakals [elders], Tajiks, would stop him, we all know that the people don’t need conflicts [elge konfliktter keregi jok]! But when I drive through Chorku, without doubt the road police [GAishchiki] will stop me and say money, money, money, money! Will stop me definitely because I have a Kyrgyz number-plate. Will find some reason, like, ‘you can’t have dark coloured [car] windows here’. Or the militia asking for my passport. Why does he need my passport? Why is it his bloody business [kakoe ego sobachoe delo!] It’s the powers [vlasttar] who create conflicts here! They incite them. How am I supposed to make a living as a taxi-driver when the road police eats half of what I make, when the [Tajik] militia ask me for my documents as though I was a foreigner? Do I look like a foreigner?! This makes me so angry [menin jeenim kelet].” (Reeves, 2005: 77)

This quote not only shows that the local culture has its own mechanisms in dealing with problems in the way that he said *aksakals* would stop any aggression from local people but also that the state and its representatives, here the police and the militia, are perceived as a source of conflict and insecurity. The same feelings were expressed by a staff member of a local NGO in context of a discussion of the June Events. ‘For centuries Kyrgyz and Uzbeks lived in peace. They have no problems with each other. The problem is more in the power system. The conflict is not an interethnic issue but the problem of political instability and the political system in itself.’⁷ Gulgaky Mamasalieva was even clearer in expressing accusations on, who she sees behind the violence: ‘Maybe those men who made this mess, maybe they are sitting now in the White House in Bishkek’.⁸

⁷ Author’s interview, Osh, on 9 April 2011.

⁸ Author’s interview, Osh, on 6 May 2011.

Resultant, I argue that the conflict was not primarily an ethnic conflict but rather a failure in the political system that became blatant during the time of political struggles for power and perceived lawlessness that marked the aftermath of the ousting of former President Bakiyev.⁹ The downfall of the government constituted a “window of opportunity” for people with political and other interests. This correlated with a lack of trust of the local population in the political system, which was not seen as being able to moderate and balance the diverse interests in the society. In this situation political struggles became linked to inter-ethnic issues.

2.3 The Post-Conflict Situation

In the nine months between June 2010 and the beginning of my field research in March 2011, the enormous tensions decreased and the situation normalized to a certain degree with the use of violence largely limited to law enforcement bodies. This process of gradual normalization was accelerated by the constitutional referendum adopted in late June and parliamentary elections held in October 2010. However, root causes of the violent conflict were not addressed and together with conflict dynamics they have a great potential to revert the situation rapidly back to violent conflict. This current situation was described by Toogood as “a post-conflict situation with high levels of distrust between community and local and national government authorities and between Kyrgyz and Uzbek ethnic groups” (Toogood, 2011:2). In other words, the current situation in Osh is one of negative peace.

Consequently, this chapter will shed light on certain issues with high conflict potential that need to be addressed in order to re-establish a local social contract. Following this, the issues of state legitimacy, the ethnic divide, power abuse by law enforcement bodies and the economic situation will be highlighted. While recognising that these four issues are important for peace-building, I do not claim for totality: other problems may exist in the current situation which need to be addressed in order to re-establish a social contract, however, the issues addressed here will later on be used to analyse the potential of the different actors involved in local governance for peace-building.

2.3.1 State Legitimacy

While trust in the Kyrgyz state was very poor to begin with, the violent conflict further eroded its legitimacy. An opinion poll held at the end of June and the beginning of July 2010 demonstrated that after the conflict 80.7 per cent of the respondents “trusted nobody” while only 3.4 per cent

⁹ Based on the analytic framework, this thesis will discuss the system providing the local population with governance, while arguing that a conflict situation can be described as a disruption of a social contract. Therefore, socio-economic reasons of the conflict, such as land and water shortage, unemployment and rising food prices, will not be discussed here. For a discussion of these factors see Bond and Koch (2010) or Goodhand (2001).

trusted the provisional government (Matveeva, 2010: 11).¹⁰ This is explained out of the feeling that the national government proved incapable of protecting its citizens and that it let its citizens down in the moment of crisis.

On many occasions people explained their opinion of the national state in words such as: ‘They [the people in the government] have their problems and deal with their problems and we have our problems and we deal with our problems.’¹¹ This statement shows how alienated the national government is from the people. This perception of the state did not change with the interim government. In contrast, the new government is regarded with considerable scepticism. People do not know what to expect from it and actually feel that corruption on the national level became even worse. The same respondent explained: ‘They work for their own pockets and it is getting worse. The members of the [provisional] government, they know they have to step down in December after the elections, so they try to get as much as they can out of their positions, as long as they still have this position.’¹²

Two Uzbek women, who had lost their house in the conflict, expressed their feeling of being let down by the state. Both women face difficulties to survive this summer because they can barely feed their families and do not see any possibility to generate an income. They feel that the government is not interested in their situation and left them alone in their hardship. They said: ‘At least they should talk to us. The international organisations, people like you, they came and asked about our needs and our life but no one from the mayor’s office or the state. The people who have not lost their houses, who did not suffer, they forgot about us and this is the most harmful part of it. We are nothing to them.’¹³

In this way the conflict eroded state authority and its legitimacy additionally. When the state is perceived as not providing any benefit to the people, it is not only incapable of strengthening a national social contract, but moreover, state structures become a part of the problem itself.

2.3.2 Ethnic Divide

Once the conflict turned violent, the ethnic factor became important. Even though violence was far more complex than this single dynamic and also included elements of opportunistic violence, such as torture, rape and other forms of gender-based violence, and widespread looting that was

¹⁰ That the constitutional referendum was adopted in this timeframe is no contradiction because it was the symbolic meaning of the constitution that needs to be adopted for “life to start again” as explained by Beyer (2010b).

¹¹ Author’s interview, Osh, on 30 April 2011.

¹² Author’s interview, Osh, on 30 April 2011.

¹³ Author’s interview, Osh, on 17 May 2011.

economically motivated, ethnicity became the dominant factor with which the violence was locally and internationally explained (Melvin, 2011: 27). As mentioned above, for many in Kyrgyzstan, finding out who started the conflict became equivalent with assigning blame for the whole conflict (Melvin, 2011: 25). This form of scapegoating is noticeable along ethnic lines, with Uzbeks blaming Kyrgyz and Kyrgyz blaming Uzbeks.

Through this dynamic, the society remained divided along ethnic lines after the conflict. Features of this divide are prejudice and fear of the other community, discrimination of Uzbeks in public life and conflicting portrayals of inter-ethnic relationships in the local media. Through the ethnic underrepresentation of Uzbeks in the police forces and government institutions, a feeling of lawlessness towards the Uzbek community was created. This was made evident in situations where Uzbek businesses faced ethnic aggression when Kyrgyz youth made off with goods without paying for them.¹⁴ This situation improved as an Uzbek trader explained to Reliefweb, in a report about the anniversary of the violent conflict. “For the last few months I haven’t had customers like that, and I’m very glad to be able to work in peace” (Yusupova and Ahmedjanov, 2011)

The police are perceived as incapable of guaranteeing security for all members of the society. Therefore people stay at home at night and try to avoid leaving their neighbourhoods. Even though the situation has normalized, this fear is still present. An Uzbek street-leader explained the situation: ‘For me as an old person I can go to the central bazaar and behave normally. But there is a problem for younger men. For example, if one Uzbek man meets three Kyrgyz they might beat him up or so ... The most important issue is that we are scared. We are not sure when we go out if we are safe. There might be a group of people who take you and beat you up.’¹⁵

The ethnic divide, which was a result of the conflict, was most severe in mono-ethnic communities while in mixed neighbourhoods strong personal relationships which existed between members of the two communities before the violence, outlasted the conflict. In many cases neighbours helped each other and protected each other during the conflict regardless of their ethnicity (Melvin, 2011: 28). While NGOs reported that in the first period after the violence it was very difficult to bring members of the different communities together, with the gradual normalization of the situation this became easier.¹⁶

This normalization of inter-ethnic relations was also described by an Uzbek woman in her forties: ‘Last summer [after the events], if we had to take a *mashrutka* or a bus, young Kyrgyz would not

¹⁴ Author’s interview with a shop keeper in the bazar, Osh, on 3 April 2011.

¹⁵ Author’s interview, Osh, on 9 April 2011.

¹⁶ Author’s interview with a conflict mediator of the local NGO IRET, Osh, on 18 May 2011.

stand up for me and offer their seat. Women like me had to stand. But this has changed; now they do stand up again and me too, I offer my seat to everyone who is older.’¹⁷

2.3.3 Power Abuse by Law Enforcement Bodies

The current dominant conflict is between Uzbek communities and the law enforcement bodies. The circumstances in which members of the Uzbek community were excluded from state institutions such as the law enforcement bodies and that they were disproportionately blamed for the violence in its aftermath, resulted in a situation where law enforcement bodies abused their power towards members of the Uzbek community (Melvin, 2011: 30). While these institutions have always been corrupt, corruption changed with the June events: it took on an ethnic character, increased and reached new levels of power abuse that were not conceivable before the violence.¹⁸

After the June events, arbitrary arrests took place on a daily basis. It was often young Uzbek men who were arrested and accused of having been involved in the June violence. Although the Uzbek community suffered disproportionately, in most cases Uzbeks were brought to court and convicted for crimes in connection with the June events. “In fact, the trials seemed often to serve more as an opportunity for scapegoating and revenge” (Melvin, 2011: 30). After international organisations pointed out this imbalance, trials were postponed by the interim government.

However, during the period of research, arbitrary arrests, especially of Uzbek male youth, continued and still happen on a daily basis. In the current situation, they are not often brought to court but they are detained and have to pay a bribe in order to be released. A street-leader explained this situation: ‘The main process is to gain money. They [the arrested ones] have to pay a bribe and then the police let them go ... If someone cannot pay, they beat them. But the main thing is money.’¹⁹

Arbitrary arrests are not the only form of power abuse. The police also illegally search houses at night time and take individuals away. Such incidents terrify the whole community. Besides this, the abuse of power by police officers is manifold: it starts with corruption of traffic police who started to stop only Uzbek cars after the violence, blackmailing of Uzbek businessmen and arbitrary taxes for Uzbek migrant workers at the customs control of Osh airport. Human rights activists also reported torture in detention centres. An Uzbek street-leader reported that the Uzbek people feel treated ‘like animals’ by the police.²⁰

¹⁷ Author’s interview, Osh, on 17 May 2011.

¹⁸ Author’s interview with a human rights activist, Osh, on 18 May 2011.

¹⁹ Author’s interview, Osh, on 2 April 2011.

²⁰ Author’s interview, Osh, on 9 April 2011.

Evidence of torture was furthermore reported by the KIC: “Of particular concern to the KIC is that such acts of torture are ongoing and that the response of the authorities to allegations of torture has been grossly inadequate” (KIC, 2011: iii). The failure of the judicial and state system to address crimes committed by law enforcement bodies was also reported by a human rights activist. ‘It is really difficult to say or do something against their actions because local government, police system and national state government, they are all one system.’²¹ This situation undermines the legal system in general. A representative of a local NGO told me that ‘in the current situation, no one knows if the ones arrested are guilty or not.’²²

A further dangerous dynamic of this conflict is the attitude of some Kyrgyz citizens towards it. While all Uzbek respondents had at least heard of such forms of power abuse, several Kyrgyz people interviewed denied that these things happen. One respondent, who himself worked for an NGO involved in conflict resolution, became very emotional after this subject was broached. He took the stance that this was a lie spread by Uzbeks and that these things do not happen. In more than one conversation, after addressing these issues, ethnically Kyrgyz respondents felt attacked and blamed the Uzbeks for telling lies. This in itself is a very dangerous dynamic in the current fragile relationship between the two ethnic communities, bringing them further apart.

2.3.4 Economic Situation

The violent conflict hampered the already weak economic situation. Through the conflict large parts of the bazar and many private businesses were destroyed. Only slowly these small businesses started to open again and one year after the violence about seventy per cent of the central bazar was working (Yusupova and Ahmedjanov, 2011). An aspect of the slow recovery of the economic situation is widespread insecurity out of which owners are reluctant to start their business again. They fear to lose their business again in the future. While unemployment was high before the violence, it got even higher in its aftermath. From this bad economic situation, the whole local population suffers.

An additional factor to the economic hardship came with the humanitarian programmes of international actors being closed down in spring 2011.²³ In these programmes also local people found work after the conflict. Moreover, business people who received a tax holiday from the government and who’s bank loans were set back for six months should start paying back by now.²⁴

²¹ Author’s interview, Osh, on 11 April 2011.

²² Author’s interview, Osh, 9 April 2011.

²³ Author’s interview with Buba Jafarli, Team Leader Kyrgyzstan Emergency, Save the Children, Osh, on 14 March 2011.

²⁴ Author’s interview with a staff member of a foreign NGO, Osh, on 30 March 2011.

A direct result of this bad economic situation is the increased seasonal labour migration to Russia. People had worked in Russia before, but now basically everyone who can is leaving. In 2010, migrant workers sent 1,253 million US Dollars back to Kyrgyzstan. These remittances provided a share of twenty-seven per cent of Kyrgyzstan's GDP in 2010 (UNDP, 2011). In Uzbek families an additional factor for migration is the hope to be able to stay in Russia forever because many do not see a future in Osh any longer.

In the following chapter, the role of different actors providing the local population with governance in peace-building will be discussed. This will be linked back to the problems of the current situation, elaborated in this chapter. An additional factor not specifically described here is the physical destruction of residential areas, however, this will be explained at the beginning of chapter 4.3.1, when discussing the reconstruction process.

3 Structures of the Society

Earlier it was elaborated that the Kyrgyz state lacks fundamental trust and legitimacy in the south and therefore the current situation in Osh can be described as a hybrid political order. Given that governance is provided by other structures in the absence of the national state, I will provide an analysis of non-state actors in this chapter. Since the focus of this thesis is on mechanisms which work and have legitimacy, I will first discuss the role of the family, described by many respondents as the strongest entity in Kyrgyz society²⁵.

3.1 The Family

The strongest and most important entity of the Kyrgyz society is the family. Clear codes of reference and interactions of daily life emerged out of the strict roles of the individual family members. While in public life, rules and laws have no fixed meaning because they can be circumvented by corruption, the family provides a powerful framework of social rules. The individual position in this framework is determined by age and sex. This hierarchy in social positions is reflected in many aspects of daily family life: be it the order in which people sit around a table or the role of a daughter-in-law who finds herself at the bottom of the social hierarchy in the family of her husband, with whom she usually lives and for whom she covers her hair out of respect. However, these rules of interaction are also visible in public life, where for example everyone offers his or her seat to an older person in public transport.

The family provides a stronger identity group than the state. As a result, people work preliminary for the development of their families and not for the benefit of the state or society at large. This is reflected in the high level of corruption and the distinct patronage system which dominates politics.²⁶ Successively, politicians are not elected for their political agenda but by the members of their family and clan who have the expectation of receiving personal benefits out of the relationship to a politician.

In the absence of a state and a national welfare system, it is also the family that provides the strongest support system. Almost every family has at least one child who works abroad - in Kazakhstan, Russia, the Ukraine or elsewhere - and financially supports the family at home.

²⁵ With the term 'Kyrgyz society' I refer to the society of Kyrgyzstan (including Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities). If I refer to those aspects of the society which solely apply to ethnic Kyrgyz, I use the term 'Kyrgyz community'.

²⁶ Author's interview with a Kyrgyz student, Bern, on 21 July 2011.

The customary system that determines family life sometimes conflicts with state law. An example of this is the way inheritance is divided: traditionally the youngest son of a family stays in the parental home, supports them when they become old and inherits the house and property once they pass away. His older brothers will be supported by their father during his lifetime in order to build a house. In this way, all sons of a family will have their own house while daughters will receive a house through the family of their husband. However, this system conflicts with the national law. A young woman and head of a local NGO explained this situation to me: 'Of course we have laws according to international standards and human rights, but in good families it is done like this [the customary way]. ... I do not know any family where they dealt with it differently.'²⁷ The quote illustrates the preference of this woman for one system that she sees as the right way: 'good families' follow the rules of the customary system and not the rules as defined by state law.

In conclusion, the family is the most important societal structure in Kyrgyzstan and customary rules, which determine social interactions, are stronger than rules defined by the national state. The family provides the lowest level of societal organisation, a strong support system and a fundament for rules of interactions also in public life. Therefore, the legitimacy and capacity of leaders - be they from the realm of state structures, civil society or customary institutions - are determined by this framework of values.

3.2 Customary Institutions

As argued in the introduction of this thesis, I will discuss in this chapter the role of actors who might not fit into the category 'customary institutions' in its closest definition, but who are nevertheless from a local perspective perceived as being a part of community life. I will reconsider the role of *aksakals* and street-leaders, whose role was highlighted by respondents in providing help with current problems, solving local disputes and facilitating interactions with state institutions. Under the heading 'other informal leaders' I will shortly address the role of religious leaders and sportsmen.

3.2.1 *Aksakals*

Traditionally, it is the responsibility of old and male members of the family to keep peace in the household. Respectfully they are called *aksakals*, what means 'white beard'. An *aksakal*, who enjoys respect and recognition in his community, has influence beyond the scope of his own family. As community leaders, *aksakals* mediate disputes also between families. The strength of *aksakals* as leaders is their personal relationship with the members of the community; they are a part of

²⁷ Author's interview, Osh, on 2 May 2011.

daily life and they have an important role in social and cultural events such as weddings and funerals.²⁸

Besides their communal role, *aksakals* are also recognised as leaders by the state authorities. Government services are more easily accessible for them than for ordinary people. Through their recognition as a leader they can address local authorities in an efficient way while ordinary people usually have to wait six or seven hours before they can speak to someone from the local administration. Therefore, ordinary people address their needs to *aksakals*, who turn to the authorities on their behalf. In this way, *aksakals* function as a bridge between the community and the local authorities.

Yet, *aksakals* additionally have the capacity to address and solve certain issues themselves. For example, in a village that was not connected to the water system, *aksakals* solved this problem: 'There was the problem that there was no water, but we knew one rich man. So we, the *aksakals* talked to this rich man. We offered him a building that is the property of the village in exchange for the water. So this man built a water system of seventeen kilometres. Now, every house has water.'²⁹

In this role as local mediators, *aksakals* work towards peace and social cohesion. They did not only address and help in local disputes but after the conflict also engaged in reconciling the communities through publicly demonstrating unity (KIC, 2011: 24). In addressing the ethnic divide, *aksakals* exchanged their traditional clothes from both ethnic communities as a symbolic gesture, which was portrayed on local television.³⁰ Their unity is a strong symbol for the society and as a role model *aksakals* can influence the behaviour of the members of their communities.

Aksakals have fulfilled the role as local mediators since pre-Soviet times and were also active during the time of the Soviet Union, when they performed their role mostly in concealment (Beyer, 2007: 8). In 1995, during Akayev's time, the Kyrgyz state transferred rights and responsibilities to *aksakal*-courts, which empowered the institution of *aksakals* and assigned tasks to them that had before been carried out by state courts. Except for cases of murder and cases where people are severely injured, *aksakal*-courts are competent to deliver a judgement.³¹ The establishment of the *aksakal*-courts shifted workload from the national state to the realm of the customary and also released the state from financial obligations since the work of *aksakals* is unpaid.

²⁸ *Aksakals* for example decide which and how many animals will be slaughtered in a funeral and give the bridal couple a blessing to conclude their wedding. Author's interview with two *aksakals*, village near Osh, on 6 May 2011.

²⁹ Author's interview with two *aksakals*, village near Osh, on 6 May 2011.

³⁰ Author's interview with a local student, Osh, on 6 May 2011.

³¹ Author's interview with a representative of local self-governance, Nurdor village, on 14 May 2011.

While *aksakals* provide a functioning mechanism of local governance, their decisions are not uncontested. Especially younger members of the local population criticize their decisions as 'backward'. One interviewee stressed that *aksakals* based their decisions on life experiences they gained during other times.³² Therefore, their decisions do not coincide with current forms of life, especially when it comes to gender issues and the role of women. In his opinion, *aksakals* in addition are lacking in knowledge about issues and problems of modern life and can therefore not provide youth with an adequate solution to their problems.

Boege et al. correctly highlighted that customary institutions are constantly influenced and shaped by changes in the society, as a result of internal as well as external processes of development such as globalization and modernization (Boege, 2008b: 11). The changeable nature of customary institutions leads to considerable confusion and discussion over the proper roles of customary leaders and the extent of their influence in a society. Such a discussion was found in Osh about the role of *aksakals*. While some respondents saw a tendency that *aksakals* are losing their influence especially over youth, other respondents highlighted their still strong communal role. In general, most respondents saw the influence as bigger in rural as opposed to urban areas and in Uzbek rather than Kyrgyz communities.

The role of *aksakals* in the violent conflict of June 2010 is currently also a subject of debate. According to some respondents, it is because of the merit of *aksakals*, who exchanged their traditional clothes with *aksakals* from the other community in symbolic gestures and reached out to involve youth that the conflict eventually ended. Others see it as a failure of the institution of *aksakals* that the conflict started in the first place. It is argued that young men listened more to the words of sportsmen and businessmen who had an interest in the mobilization. This is in line with the argumentation found by Matveeva, who sees the conflict as a result of a crisis of traditional authority in the Kyrgyz society as a whole (Matveeva, 2010: 20).

Out of the influence of *aksakals* discussed above I conclude that while there is a debate concerning their influence and role, *aksakals* still provide a form of customary institutions which work. Of a special societal importance is their bridge function between local communities and the state authorities where they successfully negotiate the interests and needs of the population. In terms of peace-building, *aksakals* addressed the ethnic divide in symbolic gestures and therefore worked for social cohesion. They have additional value since they solve local disputes in a more legitimate way than state institutions would be able to. *Aksakals* often show more capacity and efficiency in addressing current problems than state structures and therefore they provide an initial contact

³² Author's interview, Osh, on 30 April 2011.

point for ordinary citizens. Yet, I take the point that their decisions might sometimes be contradictory to human rights and objects the modernization of a community. Nevertheless, due to their legitimacy and capacity, they have an important role to fulfil in establishing a local social contract.

3.2.2 Street-Leaders

Street-leaders³³ are the smallest entity of the Kyrgyz state structures. At its highest level the state consists of seven *oblast*, which are divided into *raion*, followed by the villages called *aiyl*. The biggest cities Bishkek and Osh are excluded from this system of administrative division. They are administratively located above the *oblast* level and are therefore independent entities. Osh itself is divided into ten quarters. On the lowest level, in the city as well as in the country side, one finds street-leaders who are elected by the people but are additionally approved by local authorities. They are perceived by the people as having a better understanding of the local community and its problems than the city or village administration. In other words, they are seen as being a part of the community and not a part of the state structures. While members of the Uzbek community are, to a large extent, excluded from positions of the state structures, they are street and quarter leaders in Uzbek areas. In contrast to the institution of *aksakals*, street-leaders can also include women.

Aksakals and street-leaders provide a similar form of leadership. Like *aksakals*, street-leaders have a close relationship with the people in their community and provide an initial contact point if problems emerge. People do not connect directly with the government but through street-leaders, who therefore play an important role as mediators. They are better informed about new laws, regulations and the rights people have, than ordinary citizens. Like *aksakals*, street-leaders are recognised by the authorities. However, street-leaders have the additional competence to issue a proof of residence for people living in their area.

After the June events, international organisations worked closely with street-leaders in distributing humanitarian aid. They provided the international and local organisations with information about the people who suffered in their communities, necessary for needs assessment and were also involved in the distribution of humanitarian aid. This cooperation enhanced the legitimacy of street-leaders as described by the representative of a local NGO: 'Now after the events, probably everyone knows his leader. They [the street-leaders] were responsible for distributing humanitarian aid and as a result everyone knows his street-leader even if this was different before the events'³⁴.

³³ Street-leaders are so called if they are responsible for an apartment block *domkun*. However, for easier readability, this type of institution will here only be referred to as street-leaders.

³⁴ Author's interview, Osh, on 29 April 2011.

Street-leaders also provided this NGO with contacts of street-leaders in other areas of Osh. This implies a high level of interaction between street-leaders from different communities which was confirmed by a group of ethnically mixed street-leaders, who gave me an interview together.³⁵

Furthermore, street-leaders took on an active role in asking the international community for help with insufficient infrastructure. In situations where the state was not able to provide new resident areas with a minimum level of infrastructure such as streets, gas or water supply and electricity, street-leaders tried to obtain and often received support from international organisations.

For peace-building, an important dimension of the work of street-leaders is also their possibility to interact with the law enforcement bodies. While the police often rely on the help of street-leaders in order to find suspects, the latter are able to influence their interaction with the community. In some communities, street-leaders have agreements with the police that they need to be present in house searches. Such agreements were established during and in the direct aftermath of the June violence. According to a representative of local self-governance in Nurdor village, this agreement, which they imposed on the second day of violence, was implemented and after that no cases of power abuse from the side of the police have been recorded.³⁶

In areas where the community suffered from the power abuse of the police, street-leaders implemented mechanisms on micro level to protect citizens. The main aim was to make situations transparent and to involve leaders, who enjoy a certain degree of recognition from the police. In the village Jim, which belongs to Nariman *raion* and adjoins Osh, a street-leader explained their work: 'If some kind of situation happens, if someone is in trouble and needs help, they call me. So in this way it is transparent and no one can think they are corrupt. In this case I call the representative of the local committee who is higher than me and also the representative of internal affairs of the *raion*. So everybody gathers and we try to deal with it in front of everyone. In this way the police cannot arrest a person and try to get money from him.'³⁷ In his view this mechanism was successful in the sense that the number of arbitrary arrests declined.

However, not all people see the role of street-leaders as solely positive. These leaders are also in a power position, which they can abuse for corruption. During the distribution of humanitarian aid, there were cases where street-leaders were able to take away a share for themselves.³⁸

³⁵ Author's interview, Osh, on 2 April 2011.

³⁶ Author's interview, Nurdor village, on 14 May 2011.

³⁷ Author's interview with a street-leader, Jim village, on 10 April 2011.

³⁸ Author's interview with a representative of a local NGO, Osh, on 29 April 2011.

Summarizing, street-leaders share many aspects of leadership with *aksakals*, and most importantly also provide a bridge between the local population and the state authorities. Through their role, street-leaders are more informed about political developments and citizens' rights than ordinary people. In the case of power abuse of law enforcement bodies, street-leaders, therefore, have the capacity to protect and help citizens. In their connection to other street-leaders of other areas they also provide a framework for social cohesion and through their administrative work they facilitated the distribution of humanitarian aid in communities which suffered from the conflict.

3.2.3 Other Informal Leaders

Of societal importance are also religious leaders, such as imams. Kyrgyzstan is a Muslim country and even though most people follow a moderate form of Islam, religious leaders have an important influence on their communities. In contrast to *aksakals* and street-leaders who can address problems of daily life, the influence of religious leaders is more indirect. In the aftermath of the violence, imams asked for a reunification of the two divided communities in the name of the Islamic belief, which the Uzbek and Kyrgyz communities share. Furthermore, imams warned that if a Muslim kills another Muslim, it is one of the highest sins.³⁹ In their own initiatives, mosques organised festivals of friendship in order to spread the sense of unity. Additionally, the municipality asked imams to speak to the people at events they organised. In this way, religion provided a common ground for the two communities in the early months after the events, when the relationship between them was extremely fragile.

Another factor is the importance and influence of sportsmen. Sports champions in Kyrgyz wrestling, which is exceedingly popular, often train younger men in this sport.⁴⁰ This gives them respect and the character of a role model for young and often unemployed male youth. They have great capacity to influence especially young men and might have played a role in the violent conflict. This matter and the role of informal leaders in general was described by Matveeva:

“Nowadays, elders may be listened to in family matters, but rallying around younger leaders has far more currency when it comes to public action, when youth networks are mobilised. Such leaders are typically businessmen, often with links to the underworld. They understand modern life better and what young people aspire to. Leaders can do things for the youth, such as provide casual employment, organise labour migration, pay for hospitality and run sports clubs. Young men support them sometimes because they need money or favours, sometimes because of genuine respect” (Matveeva, 2010: 20).

³⁹ Author's interview with a Kyrgyz imam, Osh, 2 April 2011.

⁴⁰ Author's interview with a Kyrgyz student, Bern, 21 July 2011.

During field work, sportsmen and businessmen were not mentioned by respondents as providing a form of governance. The only way sportsmen were mentioned was in the case of Uzgen, where they worked as mediators for conflict prevention.⁴¹ However, it seems to be an interesting question to what extent sportsmen, businessmen or even criminal networks can provide governance and furthermore if they can contribute to a local social contract. This question is however beyond the scope of this thesis.

In a discussion about informal leaders in general, it is important to bear in mind that the capacity and legitimacy of individual people differ from these features of institutions. In a post-conflict setting, as it is the case in Osh, legitimacy depends to a large extent on the person and not the institution.⁴² Therefore, individual people can bring legitimacy to an institution and they can do more than the official capacity of the institution would imply.

In general, customary leaders such as *aksakals* and street-leaders provide a form of governance beyond the state. These local leaders have greater capacity and efficiency in addressing problems of daily life and therefore citizens often refer to them in the first place. Street-leaders and *aksakals* have their legitimacy from their connection to the people, accurate representation and their credibility. In the absence of the state, *aksakals* can make legal decisions and rule in cases of local disputes while street-leaders play an important role in protecting citizens from the power abuse of law enforcement bodies. Moreover, *aksakals* and street-leaders provide an important bridge function in connecting the state with its citizens and therefore help make this current state system work.

3.3 Civil Society

Kyrgyzstan has a very active and strong civil society. This is reflected in the large number of civil society organisations which are working in and around Osh. The online information platform provided by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) lists forty-one local organisations (OCHA, 2011). These public foundations and NGOs are working in different fields such as human rights, youth, conflict resolution and infrastructure. Many NGOs changed their programmes after the violence in June 2010 in order to address the immediate needs of the people and the remaining tensions in the society. These programmes, usually funded by international donors, work in and around Osh and contributed essentially to the normalization of the situation.

⁴¹ The situation in Uzgen is described in chapter 5. Author's interview with the deputy mayor of Uzgen, Uzgen, on 19 Mai 2011.

⁴² Author's interview with Tom Hensleigh, Program Manager, Mercy Corps, Osh, on 3 May 2011.

In the following paragraphs I will discuss more elaborately the role of women councils and human rights organisations.

3.3.1 Women Councils

Of special societal importance are women councils which were founded in 1998 and exist in every village in Kyrgyzstan.⁴³ As the name indicates, women councils are concerned with issues related to women. They provide a number of facilities for women such as skills training, education for youth, and in general help for vulnerable people. Women councils also run shelters for victims of human trafficking. Additionally, women councils are engaged in politics where they raise issues and lobby for the interests of women. Important themes they currently work on are bride-kidnapping, marriages at a very young age and marriages without documents.⁴⁴ Lobbying for issues related to women is important since women are underrepresented in most political bodies.

In their work for women's issues, women councils also cooperate with *aksakal*-courts. 'Without them we cannot do anything. The authority of the elderly people's court has a higher rank than the women councils and they are more important in the community'⁴⁵ explained Avazhan Ormonova, director of Women Council of Osh. This reflects the social hierarchy which puts men and age on a higher level. However, women councils recognized that *aksakal*-courts often rule in favour of men and therefore they are working on a new law by which women should be included in *aksakal*-courts. Since the violent conflict, women have become aware that youth is hardly represented in the councils and *aksakal*-courts and they work therefore for their integration into these institutions.

Through their unique role to reach out to women, the women councils also cooperated with the municipality, local NGOs as well as international organisations in their programmes towards peace-building.

3.3.2 Human Rights Organisations

Human rights organisations are active in addressing the conflict between the law enforcement agencies and Uzbek communities. There are a number of human rights organisations and human rights lawyers who advocate the cases of Uzbek victims. In coordination with the OSCE, a booklet was printed which lists ten organisations working on human rights and includes a short description and telephone numbers. The booklet is aimed at people who are looking for help in a specific case. These organisations assist people with information, counselling and mediation with the police and

⁴³ Author's interview with Avazhan Ormonova, director of women council of Osh, Osh, on 12 May 2011.

⁴⁴ Author's interview with Avazhan Ormonova, director of women council of Osh, Osh, on 12 May 2011.

⁴⁵ Author's interview with Avazhan Ormonova, director of women council of Osh, Osh, on 12 May 2011.

other state structures. They also monitor the situation and document the different forms of power abuse. Moreover, people who need help are often afraid to address their problems to the state institutions and therefore turn to NGOs with all kinds of issues in order to obtain information and support.⁴⁶

The strength of local organisations is that they can react and help immediately. They are addressed in cases of severe human rights abuse but also help with minor conflicts with the police. One human rights activist described her role as follows:

‘We are just giving consultation but some people we can help. One woman was pushed by the local police to bring her husband to the police station but her husband has been in Russia for many years. So this woman was afraid of the police and she came to me and asked for help. I told her I would talk to the police. I called them and told them I am the sister of this woman and I asked what had happened. The police officer started to say something wrong; I knew that he was lying. So I asked him for a meeting. One hour later the lady came back and said the police called her again and said ‘We are sorry, we were wrong, it was a mistake.’ In this way we can help.’⁴⁷

The way this lady explained her role clearly shows that the police have more respect once an organisation or a person is involved who is aware of citizens’ rights and is not easily frightened. The problem is that ordinary people are often too afraid to confront the police and insist on their rights. They therefore turn to NGOs and activists who have more capacity to mediate their case with the police.

However, not all situations are solved as easily as the one illustrated above. Human rights activists are also called in cases of illegal house searches, physical abuse and illegal arrests. One activist mentioned being called in a case where a woman was beaten up by the police.⁴⁸ In most of these cases, lawyers and activists can only document cases since the authorities do not respond and the judicial system is in the same way corrupt and discriminates members of the Uzbek community as the police.

In general, international donors often rely on the work of local organisations in the implementation of programmes towards peace-building. Therefore, local organisations have now often a higher capacity than state institutions. International actors prefer to work with civil society organisations, since they are not as corrupt as the state structures and they can easier monitor where the donor money is spent on. However, the cooperation between international and local organisations and between the local organisations themselves is not flawless. Out of the large number of

⁴⁶ Author’s interview with the head of a local human rights NGO, Osh, on 11 April 2011.

⁴⁷ Author’s interview, Osh, on 18 May 2011.

⁴⁸ Author’s interview, Osh, on 9 April 2011.

organisations, their coordination is difficult and their work sometimes overlaps. There are even situations where organisations do not know each other while they are working in the same field and therefore could be useful for each other.⁴⁹

As can be seen above, in the absence of the Kyrgyz state, the civil society is active in many ways and engaged in providing services as well as addressing current problems. Civil society organisations work closely together with *aksakals*, who have more influence in the local community. Besides activities towards peace-building, human rights organisations and activists address the pressing problems of arbitrary arrests and other forms of power abuse by the law enforcement bodies. In these cases they can help with counselling, monitoring, negotiating with the police and in providing ordinary citizens with information regarding their rights. In some cases, they can even resolve the problem.

⁴⁹ This is for example the case between the Central Asian Alliance for Water and the Eurasian Foundation, which both work on irrigation systems and water issues in general and did not know each other.

4 The Local Government

Klem and Frerks highlighted that local governments can contribute to peace-building in a twofold way: they can strengthen the national social contract but they can also support local social cohesion (2008: 61). This twofold contribution to peace-building derives from a genuine dual role of local governments. While they are a part of the state structures and therefore share many attributes that people associate with the national state, they also have their own sphere of political influence and power over decision-making processes independent from decisions made on the level of the central government (Klem and Frerks, 2008: 58).

Klem and Frerks define local governments as: “the legitimate and accountable local layer of government – both the elected politicians and the administration – that represents the local community and provides it with public services” (2008: 58). Through the provision of public services the local government is the part of the state which stands in close contact with the citizens. In this way, the local government is not only representing the local community on national level but also the state on the local level. The performance of the local government is crucial because it can enhance the legitimacy of the national government or it can also undermine it.

Through their close relationship with the people, local governments feel the effects of conflicts more immediate than the national government. This is especially the case in Osh, where the violence was locally confined. Even though the conflict was recognised and important for whole Kyrgyzstan, it is from a different, more distant importance in the capital Bishkek than in the south. This circumstance is illustrated in the names with which people refer to the conflict: while on national level and in the national media it is called ‘Osh Events’, it is locally experienced as a ‘war’.

While the conflict was influenced through dynamics on national level of Kyrgyzstan and grievances existing in the rural areas surrounding Osh resulted in high levels of mobilisation of people living in rural areas, the conflict concentrated in the urban centres of the south. Osh played a special role since the conflict was most severe there and it saw the highest level of mobilisation (KIC, 2011). As a result, there are needs for peace-building in the territory of Osh city.

In the following, the legitimacy and capacity of the local government will be analysed in terms of its contribution towards re-establishing a social contract.

4.1 Legitimacy

Klem and Frerks remind us that local governments need to be legitimate in order to contribute to peace-building (2008: 58). They argue that local governments have two functions which can bring legitimacy: output legitimacy comes through the delivery and provision of public services and input legitimacy comes from the feeling that it is right that the local government is there. This feeling can be enhanced through local representation (Klem and Frerks, 2008: 54).

As pointed out by Klem and Frerks in their definition, local governments include different institutions and actors such as politicians and the administration. These different components of the local government have different levels of capacity and legitimacy. In the case of Osh a special role has the mayor, Melis Myrzakmatov, who is highly respected in the local population. Therefore, I will here first discuss the role of the mayor and later on the legitimacy of other aspects of the local government.

4.1.1 The Mayor

The mayor of Osh, Melis Myrzakmatov, emerged out of the conflict as the strong and uncontested leader of Osh. “The main political winner to emerge from the crisis is without a doubt Melis Myrzakmatov” concluded the International Crisis Group in a report published in August 2010 (2010: 25). Based on interviews with senior government officials in Bishkek, the authors of the report came to the conclusion that the national government had lost its power and influence in Osh in a way that even security forces obey to the mayor instead of the national ministry. Furthermore, Myrzakmatov, who was appointed by former President Bakiyev, was able to demonstrate the limited power of the interim government over the south in late August, when President Rosa Otunbaeva unsuccessfully tried to dismiss him. While the government proved unable to force Myrzakmatov out of office, after he refused to step down voluntarily, a crowd gathered in Osh and supported his return on the 20 August (ICG, 2010: 26). These protestors asked for the president to step down instead.

In the local narrative, it was the mayor and the local government that ‘were with the people’ in the moment of crisis in June 2010.⁵⁰ While the conflict undermined the legitimacy of the national government and showed its inability to protect its citizens, the municipality emerged as the strong actor in Osh.

This local narrative stands in strong contrast with the opinion of international actors about the role of the mayor and the way he is portrayed in international reports. For example, the International

⁵⁰ Author’s interview with Aizhan Toktosheva, Chairman of the local NGO Youth of Osh, Osh, on 15 March 2011.

Crisis Group refers to him as “a quite difficult man” (2010: 6) who “declared himself a “nationalist” and declared “I love my nation and will work exclusively in its interests”” (2010: 26). The International Crisis Group interpreted this statement as referring to ethnic Kyrgyz only. This view on the role of the mayor, who excludes the Uzbek minority from political participation, is shared in a report of the Open Society Foundation: “The mayor’s actions and public comments underscored the limits of President Otunbaeva’s authority, and made clear how hard it would be to restore confidence among Kyrgyzstan’s Uzbek population and rebuild the country’s south” (Melvin, 2011: 34). The particular problem with the mayor is seen that out of his nationalistic convictions, he only works for Kyrgyz citizens while neglecting the rights and needs of the Uzbek community.⁵¹ Along with this narrative, many international experts working in reconstruction and peace-building in Osh, limit their interactions with the mayor to a minimum.

Additionally, rumour has it that the mayor’s wealth and power comes out of his involvement in criminal activities and especially the drug trade. An international expert working for an international organisation in Osh said about this: ‘The Mayor is the leader of the biggest criminal gang here... Most people know it but they wouldn’t say it. He is one of the big ones, and that’s the source of his power as well.’⁵² Obvious links between state representatives and criminal networks are also highlighted in another work (Marat, 2011).

In contrast, he is widely supported by the local population and the local parliament awarded him with title “Hero of the Kyrgyz People” after the violence (Melvin, 2011: 34). This positive reputation comes from his attempts to develop Osh. Reasons repeatedly mentioned by citizens of Osh for their support of the mayor included ‘he cleaned the city’, ‘he built parks and fountains’, ‘he planted flowers’ and ‘he made our Osh more beautiful’. It is a clear form of output legitimacy, where the mayor addresses things that are most visible for the people and gives them in this difficult context a sense of normality. Moreover, it is the plan of the mayor to modernize Osh and this plan finds wide support. The support for the mayor is also based on the cognition that he is the first one in decades who does something for the city.⁵³

In addition, the feeling that the mayor was with the people during the conflict was strengthened by the programmes developed by the mayor to reconcile the communities. Through the organisation of public events, festivals of friendship and the announcement of 2011 as being the Year of Strengthening Interethnic Relations, Unity and Friendship, people see that the mayor is working for stability and the normalization of the situation.

⁵¹ Author’s interview with Askat Dukenbaev, Soros Foundation, Bishkek, on 23 May 2011.

⁵² Author’s interview, Osh, on 30 March 2011.

⁵³ Author’s interview with the representative of a local NGO, Osh, on 29 April 2011.

It is important to recognize that the mayor also finds support by members of the Uzbek community. One ethnic Uzbek street-leader for example said: 'The mayor is good. He does good things for the people. The problems are occurring because of the head government.'⁵⁴ The mayor finds support in the Uzbek community because of the same achievements which were highlighted by ethnically Kyrgyz respondents such as the development of the city and the way the municipality engages in conflict transformation.

An employee of a local NGO in Osh explained that there are two reasons why the mayor is in such a strong position: 'People say that he built fountains, he removed the shops in the street in the centre [so that people have more space to sit] and the municipal services became better. Because of all these things, the residents of Osh city like the mayor and his work. On the other hand, he is a very rich man. He has his own people, his team. He is not a person who can be dismissed by other people.'⁵⁵ This strong grip on power was also confirmed by a local journalist who mentioned that he could not write and publish anything negative about the municipality or the mayor.⁵⁶

However, the local government is not in such a strong position that people would refrain from saying their opinion about things that do not function the way they should. This was especially the case in the open way people reported on arbitrary arrests and human rights violations from the side of the police. They also did not hesitate to speak with me about these issues in public. This shows that these people were not intimidated by the municipality to say their honest opinion. Additionally, respondents lauded the work of the mayor without being asked about it, like an Uzbek imam who repeated several times during the interview that the mayor is a good man and doing everything he can to reconcile the communities.⁵⁷ Therefore, it can be excluded that the support of Uzbek citizens for the mayor was not honest.

However, it is not the aim to deny that there are people who do not feel represented by the mayor or to deny that he has a nationalistic conviction and does not represent and include the Uzbek minority adequately. Yet, while international reports dismiss his ability to positively influence peace-building as he is viewed as a nationalistic person and as being involved in criminal activities, I argue that the role of the mayor in re-establishing a local social contract is more diverse and cannot be dismissed so easily. Out of his strong legitimacy and support in the local population, he can influence social cohesion. This possibility of the mayor to positively influence the local social contract will be analysed throughout this chapter in more detail.

⁵⁴ Author's interview, Osh, on 2 April 2011.

⁵⁵ Author's interview, Osh, on 4 May 2011.

⁵⁶ Author's interview, Osh, on 6 May 2011.

⁵⁷ Author's interview, Osh, on 3 April 2011.

4.1.2 The Local Government

In contrast to the mayor, the local government shares most attributes associated with the national government. In other words, the local parliament is perceived as being corrupt and inefficient, and deputies are seen as working only for their own interests. An important factor of this difference between the cognition of the mayor and the local parliament is that there is no clear ruling system in the state structures and that chains of command are not working properly.⁵⁸ Therefore, power is in the ministries and it depends largely on the role of the office holder as to how much legitimacy or capacity an institution has.

A point of criticism towards the municipality lies also in its links to criminal networks. Street-leaders in an Uzbek *mahalla* formulated criticism since Uzbek business men are blackmailed by criminal networks and they felt no support from the local government in this issue:

‘Criminals are controlling the business and the government is not paying any attention. They catch only small criminals but the bosses are free. Everyone knows who the bosses are but no one talks about it. And if you talked, no one would do anything against it... Only Uzbek people have to pay; monthly or weekly they are forced to pay and the government probably assists the criminal forces.’⁵⁹

Even though these street-leaders accused the local government of working with criminal networks, they still supported the work of the mayor.

In general, the power abuse of the law enforcement bodies and impotence of the police to protect all citizens undermines the legitimacy of the state structures. However, the role of the mayor is seen by many respondents as detached from these developments. Because of his work in other domains which are highly visible to the public, such as his previously mentioned efforts to clean up and modernize the city, citizens have hope that the mayor could also resolve other problems in the society.

4.2 Capacity for Strengthening the National Social Contract

⁵⁸ Author’s interview with an international expert, Osh, on 11 May 2011. I experienced an example of this personally: according to Taalaibek Sabirov, first deputy-mayor of Osh, international journalists and researchers need an accreditation in order to be allowed to conduct interviews with members of the mayor’s office and staff of other institutions belonging to the municipality. Because I did not have such an accreditation he and another person refused to speak to me. However, I was able to visit different other offices inside the municipality and conduct interviews, in one of which I was even allowed to record and one I conducted with one of the other four lower ranking deputy-mayors.

⁵⁹ Author’s interview, Osh, on 2 April 2011.

Theoretically, the role of local governments for strengthening the national social contract is seen in a bridge function between the citizens and the institutions on national level (Klem and Frerks, 2008: 53). While the citizens experience the decisions made on higher levels, they lack the power to influence these decisions and cannot connect their experiences with the broader picture. In contrast, the national level lacks the experience of the consequences of the decisions it takes. In this situation, local governments can facilitate an interaction of these two positions. They can enhance the input legitimacy of the national government through involving citizens in the decision-making process and representing them accurately on national level, and they can increase its output legitimacy through providing services in a peace-sensitive way.

Being aware of the antagonism between the mayor of Osh and the interim government, publicly displayed in August 2010 when the interim government failed to displace the mayor, the question arises as to what extent the municipality is willing to facilitate a bridge between the citizens and the national government. During last August, the local and the national government stood in an open conflict, their relationship normalized until the time of fieldwork in spring 2011. Open antagonism diminished and at least on the surface level they cooperated with each other. There were public events where representatives of the national and local government talked together on how to re-establish peace in Osh.⁶⁰ Such events of publicly demonstrating unity between conflicting parties have a positive effect on peace-building as highlighted by Bush in the context of a study about Tuzla in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2008: 116). A decisive factor in the change of the relation between the national and local government was the parliamentary elections of October 2010, when nationalist Kyrgyz parties, such as the mayor's party *Ata-Jurt*, won a majority in the national parliament (Melvin, 2011: 44).

However, reasonable concerns about their cooperation persist in the local discourse as well as from independent observers. The report on the events of the Open Society Foundation warned of "continuing risks of political fragmentation in the country" (Melvin, 2011: 33) based on the antagonism between the mayor and the interim government. Also local people warned of this fragmentation, as a human rights lawyer, who saw the current lawless behaviour of the law enforcement bodies as a result of a lack of power of the national government which cannot enforce the implementation of its policies. 'The problem is that in the southern parts of Kyrgyzstan, in Osh and Jalalabad, the local governments are refusing to obey the national government. In general, we

⁶⁰ Author's interview with Tom Hensleigh, Program Manager, Mercy Corps, Osh, on 16 March 2011.

had a kind of obedience before the events but now the situation is different. This is the failure; that's why there is so much disorganisation and chaos here.⁶¹

In addition, the municipality is undermining state legitimacy since its service provision is not conflict-sensitive. As in all government structures, also service provision is highly corrupted, which creates grievances. Moreover, members of the Uzbek community are openly discriminated by people working for the state institutions and are sometimes even refused services.⁶² The interaction with state institutions is described by a human rights activist as having to lower one's dignity.⁶³ An ethnic Uzbek woman, coordinator of a women council working outside of Osh described the feeling in her community towards the service provision of the local government in the context of the reconstruction process: 'To live peacefully, these people are not demanding anything more or anything big, they are just asking for help to restore their houses but in order to have these restored, they need first to get some documents. But when they come up to the state system, whatever they ask for, they get refused. And I know the case of one old person who did not get the documents she needed because the lady [working for the municipality] said: "You are Uzbek you should be out of this country"'.⁶⁴

This open discrimination in service provision is at the centre of the conflict, where ethnic Uzbeks are in the first place not discriminated by their neighbours but by representatives of the state structures. Therefore, I argue that service provision on the level of the local government of Osh is not conflict-sensitive and undermines the state legitimacy. As a result, it has a negative effect on the national social contract. The roots of this problem lie in the post-conflict situation in Osh, where members of the Uzbek community are openly discriminated and the municipality does not have the capacity or willingness to engage in conflict transformation in this issue.

In order to enhance the national social contract, a true cooperation is needed between the national and local level of government. The mayor, who is supported, and could play a role through providing good leadership and representing the community has a very ambiguous relationship with the national government. He is not representing the national state in the local context and excludes Uzbek citizens from political participation. While those institutions which provide the people with public services do not act in a conflict-sensitive manner, they undermine the legitimacy of state structures in general and furthermore they work contradictory to establishing a social contract.

⁶¹ Author's interview, Osh, on 11 April 2011.

⁶² Author's interview with an Uzbek street-leader, Osh, on 2 April 2011.

⁶³ Author's interview, Osh, on 18 May 2011.

⁶⁴ Author's interview, Osh, on 10 April 2011.

Therefore, I argue that in the current context, the local government is undermining the national social contract rather than supporting it.

4.3 Capacity towards Local Peace-Building

Klem and Frerks see the contribution of local governments to social cohesion and to strengthening the local social contract as threefold: they can engage in “the peaceful resolution of local conflicts, community building and reconciliation” (2008: 66). Klem and Frerks argue that local governments have a potential to destruct local conflicts, which are sidestepped and ignored in peace agreements that usually end civil wars. In Osh, the violent conflict was not ended by a peace agreement and it was initially local in its character. However, while the reasons for this conflict are linked to the national level of politics, conflict dynamics resulted in local problems and the municipality could play a role in their resolution.

Community building is based on the cognition that social interactions which result in strong relationships between members of different social groups stimulates social cohesion. “Increased social linkages between individuals or sub-groups in local society [can] lead to a mutually reinforcing spiral of information exchange, trust building, participation and co-operation”, (Klem and Frerks, 2008: 67). Local governments can engage in community building through diverse initiatives such as cultural festivals and participatory projects (Klem and Frerks, 2008: 68).

Reconciliation is defined by Klem and Frerks as being more than simple cooperation between former antagonistic parties, for which it is often misleadingly taken (2008: 68). Reconciliation implies that psychological barriers are overcome and former enemies are truly reconciled with each other. The process leading to reconciliation is delicate, difficult and needs a long time. Nevertheless, this process can be stimulated by different institutions and actors.

The municipality and also the mayor showed their willingness to work towards peace in the aftermath of the violent conflict in a manifold way. This will be illustrated below. However, the question remains as to whether the local government has the necessary capacity, efficiency and conflict-sensitivity to positively influence peace-building. “Any activity within a conflict-prone zone can either contribute towards peace-building or increase the likelihood of the conflict escalating: that is activities are rarely peace – or conflict – neutral” (Bush, 2008: 105). With this in mind, the work of the municipality will be discussed towards three issues: the reconstruction process, power abuse by law enforcement bodies and the announced peace-building programme by the municipality; the Year of Peace. The last sub-chapter will address forms of cooperation of the municipality with actors from customary institutions and civil society.

4.3.1 Reconstruction and Urban Planning

During the four days of large scale violence in June 2010 many buildings were partly or completely destroyed. These included private houses as well as businesses, public institutions such as hospitals and schools and official buildings. The UN indicated that throughout the south of Kyrgyzstan 2,677 buildings were destroyed, 1,977 of which in Osh city (ICG, 2010: 18). Uzbek *mahallas*, which are compounds of private living houses were primarily affected by the violence. Most of the *mahallas* suffered from major damage and were in need of total reconstruction. A large number of people, therefore, faced homelessness, which was the most pressing problem of the affected communities after the events.

The municipality showed its willingness to address this issue immediately. Yet its ideas as to how reconstruction should be carried out fundamentally differed from the ideas of the international community. A large number of organisations came to Osh in the aftermath of the violent conflict in order to assist the state in peace-building and the local population with humanitarian aid. It was the aim of these international organisations to assist the victims of the violence with temporary shelters which should be built in the place of their former residence.⁶⁵ However, the municipality had different plans: based on the cognition that the gravity of the conflict correlated with the degree of ethnic homogeneity of residential areas, the municipality took the stance that ‘to mix the people’ would be necessary in order to prevent further conflict.⁶⁶

The mayor’s office treated the reconstruction process as a part of the urban development of the city and therefore linked it to an old urban plan.⁶⁷ This plan includes the construction of multi-storey apartment blocks with the aim to modernize Osh. This plan existed for many years but due to a lack of financial means, it was not carried out. However, after the violent conflict the municipality received funding and revitalised its “Master Plan”.⁶⁸

After this plan was criticized by international experts and concerns about the financing of the redevelopment of Osh through international aid became louder, the mayor eventually softened his plans (Melvin, 2011: 34). Therefore, the reconstruction process was initiated and carried out in the way the international community had planned it. Before winter started, temporary shelters were erected for almost all the affected families. However, the mayor also started with the implementation of the Master Plan. Until the time of field research in spring 2011, the first multi-storey apartment block was built and the construction of at least three others was under way.

⁶⁵ Author’s interview with Buba Jafarli, Team Leader, Kyrgyzstan Emergency from Save the Children, Osh, on 14 March 2011.

⁶⁶ Author’s interview with Nizamiev Gumarovich, Osh city mayor’s office, Osh, on 4 April 2011.

⁶⁷ Author’s interview with Kimairis Toogood, Osh, on 1 April 2011.

⁶⁸ Author’s interview with Nizamiev Gumarovich, Osh city mayor’s office, Osh, on 4 April 2011.

The sensitivity of issues related with urban planning was highlighted in the work of Earle (2011) who studied the connection between the delivery of basic welfare (and she sees a dignified way of living as a part of it) and state fragility and conflict. She pointed out that the “denial of the right to a dignified standard of living can produce social, ethnic and political violence and instability” (Earle, 2011: 12). The strategies of urban planning need to be conflict-sensitive and therefore have to be transparent to the public. “A lack of transparency and political inclusion in city development strategies can ... potentially contribute to the escalation of violent conflict”, (Earle, 2011: 9).

Exactly this transparency is not given in the way the mayor’s office is advancing with the Master Plan.⁶⁹ While there are different documents about this urban plan, none was made public or is approved by the parliament. This lack of transparency created room for rumours which peaked in the allegations that the municipality had initiated the conflict so as to take advantage of the situation and build new multi-storey apartment blocks in already destroyed areas, which are mostly Uzbek *mahallas*.⁷⁰ In the volatile post-conflict situation, such rumours have high potential for further eroding legitimacy and trust in the local government. They can furthermore provide a breeding ground for further unrest.

In the reconstruction process and the implementation of the urban plan, the mayor’s office was assisted by the national government through the newly created State Directorate for Reconstruction and Development (SDRD). In the eyes of an international expert, in this relationship it was the mayor’s office that was in the power position while the SDRD is responsible for implementing the plan.⁷¹ However, in order to work for transparency, the UNDP assisted the SDRD in capacity building. For example, the UNDP help with a communication advisor in terms of how to address the public. “Roundtables were designed with civil society organizations (CSOs) in southern Kyrgyzstan in order to share information with program staff as well as CSO beneficiaries” (Toogood, 2011: 2).

Furthermore, the urban plan includes extortions and resettlements of members of the local community. Such measures are very sensitive issues, and the volatile post-conflict situation is not the right context to carry them out. International experts therefore tried to convince the mayor to postpone his plans. However, he refused to do this.⁷²

Additionally, the mayor upset the international community in January 2011 through a public announcement that some of the temporary shelters funded and built by international organisations

⁶⁹ Author’s interview with Kimairis Toogood, Osh, on 1 April 2011.

⁷⁰ Author’s interview, Osh, on 30 March 2011.

⁷¹ Author’s interview, Osh, on 8 April 2011.

⁷² Author’s interview with Kimairis Toogood, Osh, on 1 April 2011.

might be turned down again because they were not fully legally approved.⁷³ This statement was understood as a back door for the mayor, to tear those houses down which are in conflict with his own urban plan. So far no houses built by the international community have been destroyed, but some other, older houses, have been. No evidence of an immediate fear of extortion in the local population was found during the time of research and to resettle in an apartment block was seen as something voluntary which some people do.

Another issue observers are concerned with is the way the urban plan neglects the cultural and historical way of housing in the Uzbek community. The vertical construction of buildings favoured by the municipality leaves no room for compounds of flat houses which is the way Uzbeks traditionally settle. "Without creating options for additional housing conducive to Uzbek cultural organization, the reconstruction plans for housing complexes leave little room for reconciliatory processes, as Uzbek minorities feel the plans are inadequate to meet their cultural housing needs" (Toogood, 2011: 3). Such reconciliatory processes would be needed, argues Toogood since "basic human needs in post-conflict environments are not limited to shelter, food and water, but include psychological and emotional assistance" (Toogood, 2011: 3).

Initially, the urban plan was seen by the mayor's office as contributing to peace-building through ethnically mixing residential areas. However, there remain not only important questions if this plan is carried out in a conflict-sensitive way, but additionally it is questioned if the goal of ethnically mixing residents will be achieved in the end, given the high level of corruption in government institutions which discriminate the rights of members of the Uzbek community. While the mayor's office confirmed that people of mixed ethnicities live in the first apartment block,⁷⁴ Toogood, said in a personal conversation that ninety-five per cent of the people living there were ethnic Kyrgyz.⁷⁵

The plan of the mayor to ethnically mix residential areas also finds support in the local population. A young Kyrgyz woman who works for a local youth organisation said she approved this plan and applied herself for land which she most likely would be given in an ethnically Uzbek dominated neighbourhood.⁷⁶ Other respondents supported the plans in the context of the general modernization of Osh.⁷⁷

Concluding, the municipality of Osh is willing to engage in the reconstruction process, which became urgent after the June violence and wishes to play a role in this conflict transformation. The point to avoid segregation after the violence which created a gulf between the two largest ethnic

⁷³ Author's interview with international experts, Osh, on 18 March and 30 March 2011.

⁷⁴ Author's interview with Nizamiev Gumarovich, Osh city mayor's office, Osh, on 4 April 2011.

⁷⁵ Author's conversation with Kimairis Toogood, Osh, on 1 April 2011.

⁷⁶ Author's interview, Osh, on 15 March 2011.

⁷⁷ Author's interview, Osh, on 29 April 2011.

groups is understandable and right. Yet, this needs to be carried out in a conflict-sensitive manner with transparency and the inclusion of the public in the plans. As shown above, the municipality lacks knowledge and the willingness to act in a truly conflict-sensitive manner. In contrast, the urban plan neglects the current needs and the cultural way of living of one group of the population. It includes resettlement and the destruction of private property which in itself has conflict potential and the post-conflict setting in Osh is therefore not the right context to start with the implementation of the urban plan.

4.3.2 Power Abuse of Law Enforcement Bodies

The power abuse of law enforcement bodies, described in chapter 2.3.3 which exclusively targets Uzbek communities, is currently the major remaining conflict in Osh. This conflict needs to be seen as a part of a post-conflict situation of lawlessness, where police officers feel that they have “a free hand” aggravates Uzbek communities. In this way the local government failed to address and resolve this conflict.

Moreover, from the side of Uzbek communities, this conflict is perceived as a threat to personal security coming from the state. Even though there is an ethnic character in this conflict - the law enforcement bodies are in the main recruited from the Kyrgyz community and successively only members of the Uzbek minority suffer from the power abuse – it is experienced by targeted communities as a problem between them and the state.

In this situation, the local government is not seen as having interest in supporting or protecting the Uzbek communities. Street-leaders of a targeted *mahalla* explained that they had written a letter to the municipality in which they described and explained the incidents which happened in their community and asked for help. Their letter remained unanswered and moreover, they stated to be afraid to go to the municipality by themselves and to raise this issue publicly. ‘We are afraid to go there and talk to them about these things, because, after some days, the police can come to your house...’⁷⁸

This described fear, that one could become a victim after asking for help, is based on an experience these street-leaders had during the violent conflict in June 2010. There was a group of Kyrgyz youth who looted in the *mahalla*. Some people of their community got hold of them and brought them to the police. But the Kyrgyz youth were not brought to justice for their crime. In contrast, a case was opened against the Uzbeks who brought the Kyrgyz youth to the police for attempted murder. Knowledge of such incidents spreads in the Uzbek community and as a result, people directly affected as well as those not personally involved have no trust in the law enforcement bodies.

⁷⁸ Author’s interview, Osh, on 2 April 2011.

4.3.3 The Year of Peace

In order to re-establish peace in Osh, the municipality announced a programme for the year 2011 called 'Year of Strengthening Interethnic Relations, Unity and Friendship in Osh', hereafter referred to as the Year of Peace. This programme consists of fifty-five activities planned by a working group under the deputy-mayor Taalibek Sabirov which address issues in the areas of reconciliation, youth, infrastructure and community building (see the full programme in appendix 2). According to Nizamiev Gumarovich, chairman of international relations of the mayor's office, they pursue a twofold goal with the programme: the first priority is to build peace and the second to address economic drawbacks.⁷⁹

The full programme was published in a local newspaper and it was also announced on TV. However, not all activities are known by the local population to the same extent. Most famous are the festivals, which were held and are seen by the local population as a good measure to reconcile the two communities. The first important holiday which was celebrated under the umbrella of the Year of Peace was the Persian New Year, *Nooruz*. Traditionally, *Nooruz* is celebrated in the community of a neighbourhood. A traditional dish, *sumolok*, is prepared and because it takes ten to twelve hours to prepare *sumolok*, this is a day-long communal activity.⁸⁰ In this year, the mayor's office financially supported the celebrations of *Nooruz* in the communities. Additionally, celebrations were organised by local NGOs and international organisations.

Community building was also included in activities towards greening of Osh. A park was renamed as a park of friendship and in one other park a public event involving the planting of trees was held on 7 and 9 April 2011.⁸¹ The trees were seen as a symbol of a new beginning; a new life of friendship after the catastrophic events of June 2010. On these two days, deputies planted trees together with citizens. It was organised in the way that every tree was planted by four people representing four different ethnic groups. In total, nine different ethnic groups were represented at the events and on 9 April up to 5000 people were involved according to an involved official of the municipality.⁸² Participants were *aksakals*, students, quarter leaders and ordinary people.

Such festivals and participatory projects are a form of community building and can therefore stimulate the co-operation and social cohesion of a society (Klem and Frerks, 2008: 68). Yet, for a positive influence on social cohesion, such activities need to include all layers of a society.

⁷⁹ Author's interview with Nizamiev Gumarovich, Osh city mayor's office, Osh, on 4 April 2011.

⁸⁰ I was invited by the local NGO 'Central Asian Alliance for Water' to prepare this dish with them and the families of the staff members.

⁸¹ Author's interview, official of the municipality, on 12 April 2011.

⁸² Author's interview, official of the municipality, on 12 April 2011.

According to the municipality, this was warranted and citizens responded very positively to these activities.⁸³

In contrast to this, there is the opinion of a human rights activist who called the festivals ‘a waste of time’ because they do not include the ordinary people:

‘They [the municipality] only waste their time and dance and drink coffee. In this way they are escaping from the solution of this problem ... These festivals should be peace-building festivals, so they should include the people who have suffered in the conflict and ordinary citizens in general, but in fact, these festivals are only being held among the representatives of the government. I am invited because I am an *aksakal*, some quarter leaders are invited too, but the people who suffered in the conflict they do not come to the gatherings because they are busy with their own problems.’⁸⁴

This is a very important point, since without the participation of those groups who suffered from the conflict and ordinary people in general the influence of the events on community building will be very limited. Looking at the activities planned, it needs to be remarked that they often are announced in a manner which excludes the Uzbek culture. While for example there are writing competitions being held, they are about ‘ethic rules in the Kyrgyz language’ (see point 14 in the programme) and in this exclude minorities who do not speak Kyrgyz. In general, many activities include nationalistic elements (see point 18, 19, 20, 25, 28). Given that this nationalism is bound to Kyrgyz culture only (see chapter 2.2.1), these programmes exclude members of minorities and therefore provide no common ground for community building.

A lack of inclusion was also criticised by the international community but on the level of the planning of the programme, which was developed solely by the mayor’s office.⁸⁵ The involvement of civil society organisations would be crucial for the success of the programme in the way that the programme needs to involve all the layers of society and it could get more legitimacy out of the participation and identification of other legitimate actors such as civil society organisations. Local and international organisations were only asked about their opinion on the Year of Peace, once the plan was finished. However, some local NGOs support the Year of Peace and participate in the implementation of activities.⁸⁶

Other activities of the Year of Peace focus on youth, such as sports competitions and different kinds of activities inside schools. These school activities include writing and drawing competitions on the

⁸³ Author’s interview with Nizamiev Gumarovich, Osh city mayor’s office, Osh, on 4 April 2011.

⁸⁴ Author’s interview, Osh, on 11 April 2011.

⁸⁵ Author’s interview, staff member of the UNDP, Osh, 8 April 2011.

⁸⁶ For example, the local NGO FTI organised a public cleaning activity with youth. Author’s interviews with local NGOs, Osh, on 3 May and 4 May 2011.

subject of inter-ethnic friendship and inter-school festivals to celebrate diversity. However, schools in Kyrgyzstan are ethnically divided, where there is a difference in the curriculum of Russian schools, Kyrgyz schools, Uzbek schools and so forth. Children have the freedom to choose a school and in many cases Uzbek children also attend Kyrgyz schools.⁸⁷ However, two teachers from an Uzbek school explained that they organise festivals of cultural diversity, where the children dress up in traditional dresses and prepare food from all over the world.⁸⁸ However, most of their children are from the Uzbek community. Both teachers agreed that bringing the children together with those from other schools and other ethnicities would help more in order to reduce negative feelings of their school children towards other ethnicities.

Another part of the programme was to address the population through posters and advertisements on buses and public places (see appendix 3 for photographs). These advertisements announced Osh as the city of friendship, the Year of Peace in itself and called for inter-ethnic friendship and reconciliation. However, for victims of the violence, these posters sometimes appeared contemptuous on their situation. Two women, who had both lost their houses during the conflict, addressed during an interview a poster they had seen in town calling Kyrgyzstan the country of rights. They asked: 'Where are our rights? Where is the law? 289 houses were burnt in this area. People do not know how to pay for the reconstruction, and the houses we got for the winter are not big enough. Is this a situation of rights?'⁸⁹

This quote illustrates that announcing programmes and festivals in itself are not enough, when other immediate problems of the local population are not addressed. As long as people do not have dignified living conditions and suffer from hunger, the programmes announced are most likely not enough to strengthen a local social contract. Conflict transformation is needed and concrete actions, which can be accompanied by public campaign but the posters alone cannot resolve grievances.

Concluding, this discussion leaves a mixed picture of the Year of Peace. Most respondents approved of the cultural festivals held in town as a way of reconciling the two communities. The head of a local NGO said: 'Most inhabitants in Osh lived during the time of the Soviet Union and during this time we got used to living under such kind of mottos, such as the announcement of the Year of Peace now. So it is a good step to soften the barriers between the two communities'.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Author's interview with a representative of local self-governance, Nurdor village, on 14 May 2011.

⁸⁸ Author's interview, Osh, on 14 May 2011.

⁸⁹ Author's interview, Osh, on 17 May 2011.

⁹⁰ Author's interview, Osh, on 13 May 2011.

However, while festivals can be an effective tool for community building, there remains considerable doubt if all layers of the society are included. Moreover, community building activities alone are not enough for strengthening a local social contract. Measures are needed to address the current problems in the society and a level of basic living conditions needs to be assured.

Moreover, while the mayor's office sees the economic development as a second important goal of the programme, no evidence of an improvement of the situation through the programme could be determined. Additionally, some activities reflect a nationalistic discourse which cannot provide a solution to the integration of the Uzbek community. Activities towards the improvement of service delivery are planned but so far, an improvement of service delivery has not been experienced by respondents from the Uzbek community. Hence, while the Year of Peace is the major programme developed by the mayor's office for addressing the current problems and re-establishing peace in Osh, not all of its activities are conflict-sensitive and its capacity is very limited.

4.3.4 Cooperation with Civil Society and Informal Leaders

Boege et al. argued that resilience of state structures depend on the way the state interacts with social and customary institutions (Boege, 2008b: 10). Klem and Frerks support this notion while referring to a study undertaken by Bohara et al. (2006) about municipalities in Nepal. Bohara et al. found out that "municipalities with strong social linkages and a high level of citizens' participation saw significantly less political violence than municipalities that lacked these" (Klem and Frerks, 2008: 68). Therefore, it is necessary to place a special focus on the interaction between the municipality and actors from the civil society and customary institutions.

Being aware of its own limited legitimacy and capacity, in the aftermath of the conflict the local government strengthened its cooperation with customary leaders and the civil society. As elaborated before, religious leaders were included in public events organised by the municipality in the direct aftermath of the violent conflict in order to speak to the people based on the cognition that religion was a common ground for all conflicting parties. Later on, the municipality enhanced the cooperation with customary leaders and exponents of the civil society through meetings of several hundred people. These meetings are held regularly after the violence up to now.

Participants of these meetings have diverse opinions on its capacity. A quarter leader saw these meetings, where he participates, as the reason for the continuous stabilization of the situation.⁹¹ This stands in contrast to the opinion of a street-leader who said that he attended those meetings

⁹¹ Author's interview, Osh, on 3 April 2011.

only twice. He stopped going there since in his opinion not the right issues are discussed, but only minor problems such as the cleaning of the city.⁹²

Additionally a public council was established in December 2010, including twenty influential persons from the realm of civil society and customary institutions (see appendix 4). As an advisory body to the mayor's office, it is meritorious that also minorities are represented. However, the members of this body work on a voluntary basis which limits its capacity. Additionally, its legislation states that the Public Council has no capacity to take any decisions. In contrast, it is working on the implementation of the ideas of the mayor's office.

The main goal of this body is to facilitate the interaction between the local government and the population. However, no respondent highlighted their role except of people working for the municipality. In general, there is confusion over the role of the different institutions that work together with the mayor's office. It was often difficult to find out, if someone was talking about this Public Council or the larger civil society meetings described above and in many cases respondents had no knowledge about these institutions at all. Out of this lack of transparency and the limited capacity of both institutions it can be questioned if they are able to achieve a connection between the local government and the population and therefore strengthen the local social contract.

Due to this lack of transparency and the limited capacity of both institutions it can be questioned if they are able to achieve a connection between the local government and the population and therefore strengthen the local social contract.

In addition to these forms of cooperation, which were initiated by the local government, the municipality also strengthened the civil society by providing premises to civil society organisations such as women councils. Because it is especially the work of local NGOs which contributes to resilience, the local government facilitates through this the reconciliation process in an indirect way. This link was highlighted by Klem and Frerks based on the cognition that: "generally, however, reconciliation at the local level is best implemented by a neutral, devoted agency such as a domestic NGO" (2008: 69). However, local NGOs sometimes saw their work also constricted by the municipality, as described by a youth organisation, which wanted to organise a demonstration for peace. This demonstration was not approved for security reasons, which was incomprehensible for the staff of this NGO.⁹³

Local NGOs also started to work towards capacity building of the municipality. There is now a department for complaints because of the initiative of a local NGO and they also pushed for a

⁹² Author's interview, Osh, on 9 April 2011.

⁹³ Author's interview with staff members of a local NGO, Osh, on 16 March 2011.

website of the municipality, where people can see which department is responsible for what and what kind of services they provide.⁹⁴ These programmes are an important first step in enhancing the overall capacity of the municipality and show the importance and positive influence of the civil society on the local government.

Looking at the four issues discussed in regard to the ability of the municipality towards strengthening the local social contract, there are some main points that can be concluded: the municipality lacks in the implementation of its policies capacity and conflict sensitivity. Moreover, the mayor did not show willingness to cooperate with the international community in order to make his work more transparent and conflict sensitive. This was seen in the reconstruction process and also in the implementation of the Year of Peace. While the announcement of the Year of Peace showed a general willingness of the local government to play a role in local peace-building, not all of its activities are conflict sensitive in the way that they follow a nationalistic discourse that excludes minorities from public life. Community building is aspired through social and communal activities, which is a valuable step to enhance social cohesion. However, there were criticisms that not all layers of the population are included in these activities and this would be a precondition for community building.

While working on community building, local conflicts such as the situation between law enforcement agencies and the Uzbek community and the general discrimination of a part of the population by state institutions remain unresolved. In this situation the local government is not willing or not able to play a role in conflict transformation. Given that the mayor's office failed to address and resolve this security issue and therefore trust in state structures is very low in affected areas, it can be questioned to what extent the local government is able to enhance community building and resilience.

A local journalist brought this cognition to the point while formulating a criticism of the Year of Peace. He simply said: 'the fish stinks from its head'.⁹⁵ With this he meant that 'if the local government had the right policies, there would be peace, because the people, they do want to live in peace.' In his eyes it is the government, on local and on national level that has an interest in the politicization of the situation. As long as the government is seen as a source of conflict, its capacity towards peace-building is very limited.

Overall, there is a willingness of and possibility for the municipality to contribute to social cohesion on the local level, but it currently lacks the necessary means, knowledge and willingness.

⁹⁴ Author's interview, Osh, on 29 April 2011.

⁹⁵ Author's interview, Osh, on 12 May 2011.

5 Uzgen

Further insight into the understanding of how a hybrid political order can “constitute a political community that provides security, peace and a framework for the nonviolent conduct of conflicts” (Boege et al., 2009b: 88) brings an analysis of the situation in Uzgen, where the conflict did not turn violent in June 2010.

Uzgen is a small town of 50,000 inhabitants, lying between Osh and Jalalabad at the main Osh-Bishkek road in southern Kyrgyzstan. While, during those days in June 2010, violence sparked in Osh, Jalalabad and some other smaller places, the situation in Uzgen town and also in the surrounding areas that belong to Uzgen *raion*, remained stable. This is particularly interesting since Uzgen’s population consists mainly of Uzbeks.

During the violent conflict, it was not the case that Osh and Jalalabad were ‘hot’ and Uzgen was ‘cold’.⁹⁶ In Uzgen itself, an escalation was imminent; however the joint effort of all institutions and leaders of the society was able to prevent violence from breaking out.

After news of the events in Osh reached Uzgen at two a.m. in the night of 10 to 11 June, the city administration gathered all leaders including *aksakals*, quarter leaders, representatives of youth groups, deputies and civil society organisations.⁹⁷ Throughout the night, they established contacts to the village administrations in Uzgen *raion*, and called the officials and other informal leaders, such as sportsmen, to come to Uzgen. In the following meetings they developed different measures in order to respond to the unfolding events.

In a joint effort, the leaders started to patrol the city and the surrounding villages in order to reach out to the people, to explain to them the situation and to advise them to stay at home. As the deputy mayor described it: ‘They worked in parallel. The first group went to the villages and the second group was working in the city. This centre [the city administration] was the resource centre, where we coordinated all the actions, all the information was coming here’⁹⁸. These operations, which were a form of visible presence of the leaders, were carried out for four days and included a special focus on addressing the youth and to quell spreading rumours of possible attacks.

Throughout the conflict, rumours played an important role and provided a main factor for mobilisation. Throughout the south, there was a lack of reliable information. This situation was also

⁹⁶ Author’s interview with the deputy mayor of Uzgen, Uzgen, on 19 Mai 2011.

⁹⁷ Author’s interview with the deputy mayor of Uzgen, Uzgen, on 19 Mai 2011.

⁹⁸ Author’s interview with the deputy mayor of Uzgen, Uzgen, on 19 Mai 2011.

experienced in Uzgen where leaders tried, in cooperation with the police, to address these rumours and provided the people with accurate information.

Furthermore, the administration in Uzgen organised humanitarian aid for Osh. This aid was brought to Osh on 15 June in cars driven by veterans from the Afghan war. They were accompanied by *aksakals*, women and deputies, whose mission it was to see the situation in Osh and successively being able to report about it. *Aksakals*, women and deputies were chosen to do this, because they would be most suitable to spread the information in their communities.⁹⁹

In the context of the events, all the security forces were asked to support their colleagues in Osh. Therefore, the city administration of Uzgen recruited veterans and sportsmen to fill up this gap in the security sector. The volunteers were positioned all over the city and the *raion* in order to deal with possible unrest immediately. There was uncertainty about the situation and existential fear because the bazar was closed down on the 11 June. As a result, there was inflation and people reacted by hoarding. It was the task of the volunteers to talk to the people and ensure that the situation did not escalate. In these groups members of all ethnicities were working together and therefore they were able to reach out to all people.

In 1990, Uzgen experienced an inter-ethnic conflict which broke out over land issues.¹⁰⁰ After that conflict, Uzgen received training on conflict management. For many years, the administration worked together with the OSCE and since 2006 they have in addition been working with the local NGO IRET. As the director of IRET, Dilbarkan Mamadjusupova explained, they worked with a number of different institutions, such as *aksakals* and schools in order to build interethnic relationships, and additionally created mediator groups. In these groups there are not only leaders but also ordinary people who show capacity for the work as a mediator. 'We paid great attention to the choice of leaders. It's not easy to become a mediator. You need to have the right skills such as speaking abilities, interest in this work and good contacts with the people.'¹⁰¹ In the choice of mediators, IRET pays attention that older and younger people are equally represented and that they work in close contact with the local authorities. This is important since the local authorities lack information on the life of ordinary people, their problems and possible solutions for it.

The programme from IRET and the OSCE increased the capacity of local leaders to react in the critical situation in 2010. This was also recognised by people who worked with IRET. One quarter leader explained the influence of the training received by IRET: 'Look at us; we were not afraid of the situation. We went out and talked to the people. Without the training we would have been

⁹⁹ Author's interview with the deputy mayor of Uzgen, Uzgen, on 19 Mai 2011.

¹⁰⁰ Author's interview with the deputy mayor of Uzgen, Uzgen, on 19 Mai 2011.

¹⁰¹ Author's interview with Dilbarkan Mamadjusupova, director of the local NGO IRET, Osh, on 11 May 2011.

afraid and stayed at home. If we sat home, the conflict had just happened. So this is why we were working and did something'¹⁰². This statement shows two important aspects: first that through the training provided by the OSCE and IRET capacity of local leaders to react in a moment of crisis was built and second that these leaders worked very closely with ordinary people. Through this visible presence, their faith in the hybrid system providing them with governance was strengthened.

The importance of confidence of the local population in the system providing them with governance was also highlighted by the deputy mayor. When asked why the conflict did not turn violent in Uzgen, he answered: 'First we think because of God but second because the people in Uzgen, regardless of their nationality, understood the situation... They understood that everything would get better.' A main factor for this positivity, he thought, was that they reopened the bazar at the 13 June since 'this gave the people confidence'¹⁰³.

Concluding, it was a strong cooperation of all actors involved in local governance and representing all layers of the society which consolidated in a system that was able to prevent violent conflict in Uzgen. Such a resilient framework of cooperation is a possible form of how a hybrid political order can provide its community with security and peace. An important aspect of this cooperation is that all social groups are represented through their leaders and therefore every citizen is embedded in this system. As reflected in the metaphor of the social contract, all members of a society need to have confidence in the governing system, its institutions and the expectation that their neighbours feel the same way in order act upon its rules. In this way we can see a social contract as given in Uzgen.

In the moment of crisis, it was good leadership which ensured this social contract. The municipality reacted quickly and brought the different leaders together at one table to plan mechanisms to respond to the crisis. The cooperation included leaders from all social groups; besides the different ethnicities, youth, women and *aksakals* also rural and urban areas were represented. Furthermore, these leaders worked closely with the people, talked to youth in the streets and through this ensured the trust and confidence of the people into the system of governance and the future. A further aspect how they kept the level of confidence in the local population high, was the efficient way how they reacted to needs and sorrows of the people what can be seen in the way they addressed spreading rumours, provided accurate information and the reopening of the bazar.

What can be learned out of the situation in Uzgen is that in order to provide a social contract in a hybrid political order, strong mechanisms of cooperation are needed and they should include

¹⁰² Author's interview, Uzgen, 19 May 2011.

¹⁰³ Author's interview with the deputy mayor of Uzgen, Uzgen, on 19 Mai 2011.

legitimate leaders of all social groups of a society. In the case of Uzgen this cooperation was organised under the leading role of the local government but it is also conceivable that other forms of cooperation provide a resilient hybrid political order.

6 Conclusion

The analytic framework of hybrid political order was of great value in analysing the political situation in Osh; not only does it provide the advantage of placing the focus on local realities which work and provide structures to everyday life of citizens but moreover it does not place the state above other actors. Therefore, it reflects the local reality in Osh, where the national state does not have a primary role in governance. Rules that derive from the customary order which underlie the family are far more important to the local population in regulating the interactions of daily life.

The functioning of the customary institutions discussed here, as well as the functioning of the civil society is based upon these codes of interactions, which are determined by the hierarchy inside a family. This was illustrated for example in the case of women councils which work through *aksakal*-courts in order to achieve their goals. In contrast to this, there is the state apparatus, which is ruled by the power of money. Votes are not seldom bought and through the high level of corruption, it is not qualified and legitimate leaders who are in senior positions of the government of economy, but people with the right connections. This again supports the network of the family but weakens the strength of the state system.

Even though in the theory of hybrid political order, as developed by Volker Boege, local governments are not pointed out as an independent actor providing governance, based on the article of Klem and Frerks (2008) and from the evidence presented here, I argue that local governments need to be included in a discussion about governance in political hybridity. This hybridity results from the sphere of influence of local governments, which is to a certain extent independent of decisions made on the national level, their proximity to citizens and most of all the recognition of the local government as an independent actor by the local population.

Through this thesis it was argued that hybrid political orders can provide a foundation for a social contract, seen as a metaphor for a situation which is resilient and provides mechanisms for peaceful conflict resolution. The strength of the metaphor of a social contract lies in the underlying assumption that it is rooted in the society to a degree that every citizen supports it and moreover feels that he or she is a part of it. This identification of the individual citizen with the system implies that a social contract reflects local realities and is not primarily bound to state structures.

An illuminative example as to what a local social contract based on a hybrid political order can look like is the situation in Uzgen, described in chapter 5. Uzgen, albeit surrounded by violence, remained stable during the violent conflict in June 2010. This was due to the fact that leaders from

all different realms engaged cooperatively in conflict prevention. An important aspect of their work was the close interactions with citizens and their visible presence, symbolising that leaders are there to work for their people.

The crucial point, when a social contract is based on a hybrid political order, is the degree of institutionalized cooperation of leaders coming from all realms of governance. Local governments are most resilient when they engage in a strong cooperation with other legitimate institutions. This is also valid for a social contract, as the case of Uzgen shows. A feeling of 'everyone is pulling in the same direction' is very important in a moment of crisis.

After the violent conflict of June 2010, the municipality of Osh advanced its interactions with customary institutions and actors from the civil society. While they were included inside activities of the Year of Peace, also a public council and larger civil society meetings were established. Both of these institutions were created with the aim of connecting the local government with the local population. However, the interaction of the municipality with these bodies did not show the necessary level of cooperation since they are working as implementing bodies and do not participate in decision-making processes. I argue that these institutions have not, so far, contributed to an interaction between the society and the local government, which was also reflected in their low profile. Nevertheless, they could contribute to such a connection between the local government and the population if their capacity were increased.

The influence of the national government on conflict resolution in Osh is very limited since it lacks power to implement its policies and because it is seen by the people as only working for its own benefits. It was found that in this absence of the national state, customary institutions, civil society and the local government engage in conflict transformation in different ways.

The legitimacy of the three realms providing local governance has two different possible sources: on the one hand the feeling that it is right that these particular institutions are there and on the other hand through delivering benefits to the local population. Klem and Frerks defined these two forms of legitimacy as input and output legitimacy. Input legitimacy is particularly high in customary institutions since it is rooted in the community and members of a community would have the possibility to dispose of it themselves. They also have input legitimacy through providing the community with benefits such as mediating with the state authorities, providing governance through *aksakal*-courts and having the capacity to assist the community in the solution to problems in daily life.

Actors from the realm of civil society gain a lot of legitimacy through delivering benefits to the people. In contrast to state structures, civil society organisations are hardly corrupt. They support the communities in many different aspects and additionally substitute the state in certain areas.

The discussion of legitimacy of the local government is more complex, since the legitimacy of the mayor in his person and the legitimacy of its other institutions differ to a great extent. Generally, the local government shares many attributes that people combine with the national state, and therefore its legitimacy is very poor. However, the mayor in his person has a high level of input as well as output legitimacy. In a discussion about state institutions as well as about informal leaders, it is important to recognize that the capacity and legitimacy of individual people differ from these features of institutions. Individuals can bring through their person legitimacy to an institution. This is especially the case in the local government of Osh, where chains of command are very weak. Recognizing the difference between institutional legitimacy and the legitimacy of an individual person, it can be said that the mayor, through his work of modernizing and cleaning up the city, brought legitimacy to the institution of the local government.

At the beginning of this thesis, the question was posed as to how the different actors and institutions involved in local governance in Osh deal with the problems in the current, post-conflict situation in Osh. In order to answer this question, four issues were highlighted. With the help of these four issues the contribution of the different actors was analysed.

A divide between the two largest ethnic groups in Osh resulted from the violent conflict. All three realms of governance addressed this issue and worked towards reconciliation. However, not all attempts of community building had the same effects. Religion provided a first common ground where people from both communities could meet. Additionally, religious leaders as well as *aksakals* and street-leaders participated in the organisation of festivals of ethnic friendship. Through the cooperation of leaders of different ethnic groups they were a role model for the members of their communities. Having more financial capacity, local NGOs supported the work of these customary institutions and moreover designed their own programmes for bringing members of both communities together. Moreover, NGOs worked with children and schools through activities addressing the psycho-social trauma of the children. Also the municipality organised community building activities, however, since the state is seen as a part of the problem, its capacity to reach out to vulnerable communities is limited.

A second very pressing problem after the violent conflict was the destruction of large parts of residential areas. It was the international community which had most capacity in addressing this immanent need of the people. Their work was assisted by street-leaders who coordinated humanitarian aid and provided the organisation with necessary information about the needs of the people. Also the municipality addressed this issue but the urban plan as well as its implementation lacked capacity and conflict sensitivity. Therefore, it created new insecurities in an already volatile situation.

In regard to the power abuse of law enforcement bodies the municipality is not willing or able to engage in conflict transformation. In contrast, it is the work of civil society institutions and customary leaders to protect the members of the Uzbek community. Even if it is beyond their capacity to resolve the whole conflict, they can help in individual cases and work towards conflict transformation in reporting their knowledge about the situation to international organisations.

In a wider perspective, the economic depression hampers the region's development and provides future ground for conflict. The municipality announced that the Year of Peace should address this situation but so far this has not shown any results. Therefore, the family remains as a support system for those who cannot support themselves any longer.

This discussion shows that all three realms can provide a factor in addressing the current pressing problems in Osh and engage in conflict transformation. I argue that through its legitimacy and capacity the municipality could do more if the mayor engaged in a better cooperation with other actors and especially the international community. Most of all it would be necessary for the mayor's office to be willing to enter into a true cooperation with all other actors including the international community, and to acknowledge peace-building and social cohesion as the highest goals of their work. Its decisions should be based on a greater knowledge about conflict sensitivity which could be provided by local and international experts. In the context of an honest cooperation which works primarily for the people and for addressing their needs, the local government, civil society and customary institutions together could provide a hybrid framework which is the base of a local social contract.

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7.1.2 Photographs

"Let *Nooruz* be wonderful, and let our neighbours be in peace", photograph taken by the author, Osh, on 30 March 2011. (Appendix 3)

"The year of 2011 is the year of strengthening interethnic relations, unity and friendship in Osh", photograph taken by the author, Osh, on 14 May 2011. (Appendix 3)

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Appendix 1: Map of Kyrgyzstan



Source: *Political Map of Kyrgyzstan*, nations online, 1998-2011, available at:
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Appendix 2: Plan of Activities of the Year of Peace

Working group staff was formed to hold the Year of strengthening interethnic relations, unity and friendship in Osh in an organized way. The head of the working group is T.Sabirov, the vice- mayor of Osh City. The following plan of the activities are approved

Supplement 2
to the resolution of Osh City
Mayor's office, January, 2011

The plan of the activities for the Year of strengthening interethnic relations, unity and friendship in Osh City

N	Name of the work	Expectations	Time	Source of finance	Responsible people	Note
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Organizational work

1	To have the first organizational meeting of holding the Year of interethnic relations, unity and friendship in Osh City	The procedures of holding the Year of interethnic relations, unity and friendship	January	Financing is not required	Sabirov T Joldoshaliev A. T. Kaziev A.K. Bekenov I.A.	
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		in Osh will be defined				
2	To hang and to renew the slogans, mottos, banners devoted to "2011- the Year of strengthening interethnic relations, unity and friendship in Osh" (in main streets, in the territorial councils, in Japalak village territorial_council)	People's attention will be directed to the problem of interethnic unity and friendship	From February 10, 2011	Municipal ownership establishment, State language Board (linguistic board)	Ailchiev K.A. Mamatkarimk.E. Kasymov B.T. Rajapov M.P Chairpersons of territorial councils, Japalak village territorial Council	
3	To use all information sources, mass media, Internet sites to inform all layers of population about announcing this year "2011- the year of interethnic relations, unity and friendship"	Public information awareness	Without delay	Financing is not required	Joldoshaliev A.T Kaziev A.K Bekenov I.A Ajimatova G	
4	To form media centre of the public Councils at Osh City Mayor's office	Publication and releasing of all activities connected with interethnic	Within the year	Osh City administration, Public foundation	Joldoshaliev A.T Kaziev A.K Ajimatova G Ormonova A	

		relations, unity and friendship		'Initiative businesswomen' (DIA)		
5	To organize a competition among mass media resources to reflect all the activities under the headline "2011-the Year of strengthening interethnic relations, unity and friendship"	Re3flection of all activities held in the city in newspapers , on TV, radio	Within the year	Osh City administration	Joldoshaliev A.T Baigazakov A.T Kaziev A.K Ajimatova G	
6	To organize television space bridge to strengthen interethnic unity	Improvement of interethnic unity and friendship	Within the year	Osh TV. ELTR	Mamatkerim k. E. Ajimatova G.	
7	In 2011, to pay special attention to the problem of strengthening interethnic relations, unity and friendship in all activities held in Osh	It will assist to the consolidation of unity of people	always	Financing is not required	Vice-mayors, Department chiefs, chairpersons	

Social activities

8	To spend interethnic cultural festival under the headline 'Ethnic unity is our treasure'	Strengthening of interethnic relations and acquaintance with culture and traditions of each	Within the year, final festival is in October	National culture centers, local budget	South department of the people's assembly in Kyrgyzstan, national culture	
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		ethnic groups			centers	
9	To spend competitions in the framework of 'Be Nooruz in my place, be friendship between my people' among the territorial Councils of Osh City under the title 'The cleanest block, the cleanest street, the cleanest territorial Council'	Active participation of citizens and territorial councils in keeping the city clean.	March-May	Local budget	Shevchenko S.A. Askarov I.I Omurzakov M.T. Territorial councils	
10	To allot a land plot for a new park "Dostuk-Friendship' to plant young trees in the park under the motto 'We plant the trees of friendship'	Strengthening of interethnic unity, Osh City will become green and beautiful	March	Osh city planting of greenery management, local budget	Shevchenko S.A. Planting of greenery management, Public Foundation 'For International Tolerance'	
11	To render assistance of Youth interethnic initiative groups to the veterans of the city	Improvement of unity and friendship among the youth	May	Financing is not required	Joldoshaliev S.A. Baltabaev A.J. Rectors of higher educational institutions and directors of schools	

12	To continue song competition 'Let's sing Kyrgyz songs' started in 2010 and to sum up the results of it.	The interest in learning state language will be increased, and it will challenge to respect national culture and traditions	Within the year, result will be in December	Institutions, organizations, State linguistic commission, sponsors	Vice-mayor, heads of departments, Mamatkerim k. E.	
13	To renew the work of free juridical advisory centre	Free consultation and assistance for those who suffered during the events in June,2010	Within the year	Financial sources of Osh state juridical institution	Osh state juridical institution	The centre is already formed and working
14	To announce a competition to write a book about ethic rules in the Kyrgyz language and introduce it as an outside manual in all educational establishments	Improvement of Youth's cultural conduct	To start teaching at secondary schools in from the beginning of the academic year	Local budget, sponsors	Joldoshaliev A.T Sherieva L.J Mamatkerim k.E Educational administration of Osh city, newspaper 'Osh shamy'	
15	To render free medical aid to the	Improving the health	Within the	Osh inter-	Joldoshaliev A.T.	

	participants of Great Patriotic war, the veterans of labour, poor families, those people who were injured during the events in June, 2010 and to organize special group of doctors (cardiologists, endocrinologists and surgeons). According to the possibility to help them with the medicaments.	of people .	year	regional united clinical hospital, Osh city hospital	Erkulova G.K. Osh inter-regional united clinical hospital, Osh city hospital	
16	As this year(2011) is announced the year of Kurmanjan Datka- the Queen of Alai region- the activities devoted to her honour are to be held at secondary schools, at higher educational institutions' scientific-practical conferences. Plays about her lifetime are to run at the theatres and to renew the work of women Councils in the territory of Osh.	It will help to educate the youth as Kurmanjan Datka, who loved Kyrgyz people and motherland very much, who valued the unity of people greatly.	Within the year	Financing is not required	Joldoshaliev A.T. Aitmatova T.B. Erkulova G.K. Sherieva L.J., Coordinating Sector of territorial Councils' work	
17	To organize and to hold methodological-practical courses under the title 'The use of state language in medical care' to raise the qualification of the specialists in Osh inter-regional united clinical	Special classes(8-10) will be held for those who don't know state language and certificates will be awarded	Within the year	Osh inter-regional united clinical hospital, Osh city hospital	Joldoshaliev A.T. Erkulova G.K. Osh State University, Osh inter-regional united clinical	

	hospital, Osh city hospital together with Osh State University				hospital, Osh city hospital	
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Youth issues and sport activities

18	To hold the activities to strengthen and to improve interethnic relations and unity according to the plan in the educational institutions in the territory of the city	Educating the youth to love Motherland and morality	Within the year	Financial resources of Osh city committee of youth work, higher educational institutions, educational schools	Joldoshaliev A.T Erkulova G.K Youth committees in Osh, Youth committees of Higher educational institutions and schools.	
19	To organize Youth forum 'Kyrgyzstan is our Motherland'	Mechanisms will be worked out to glorify friendship and unity of ethnic groups	May	The budget of the committee of Youth in Osh	Joldoshaliev A.T. Erkulova G.K. Youth committee in Osh, Youth committees of higher educational institutions and	

					schools.	
20	To announce a competition (video, advertising, picture drawing, TV programmes) for the theme 'My life is devoted to the development of my country'	Challenging the youth to be patriots of their country	Within the year	Budget of youth committee in Osh, resources of higher educational institutions and schools	Joldoshaliev A.T. Erkulova G.K. Youth committee, committee of physical training and sport in Osh, Educational administration of Osh	
21	To hold a contest among the young people on national sport games	Young people will learn a sound/ healthy life through friendship as well as representatives of other ethnic groups will be involved in playing Kyrgyz national games	April- May	Budget of Osh City committee of physical training and sport	Joldoshaliev A.T Erkulova G.K. Osh city committee of youth affairs, Osh city committee of physical training and sport, Osh City educational administration	
22	To organize running race 'Sport is the bridge of friendship'	Healthy / sound life of young people	October	Budget of Osh City committee of physical	Joldoshaliev A.T. Erkulova G.G. Osh city	

				training and sport	committee of youth affairs, Osh city committee of physical training and sport	
23	To hold a contest on different kinds of sport among the municipal organizations under the motto 'Sport is the ambassador of peace'	Unity between the ethnic groups will be improved	Within the year	City municipal organizations, sponsors	Shevchenko S.A. Osh city department of economy, transport and communications, heads of communal services	
24	To hold a contest in volleyball, basketball among the secondary schools	Involving the youth in sport	September-November	Osh city administration of education , Osh city committee of physical training and sport, Osh city Youth committee	Joldoshaliev A.T. Osh city administration of education, Osh city committee of physical training and sport, Osh city Youth committee , Territorial	

					Councils	
25	To hold an intellectual competition for Mayor's Cup with the participation of representatives of other ethnic groups in History of Kyrgyzstan under the title 'History of Motherland is my History'	Challenging the Youth to love Motherland and improving their knowledge in history	April	Osh city administration, Osh city committee of Youth affairs	Joldoshaliev A.T. Erkulova G.K. Osh city Youth committee of , Higher educational institutions', schools' youth committees	

Activities at schools and at pre-school institutions

26	To hold meetings, activities, special lessons at schools and at pre-school institutions and to organize competitions in writing compositions, in drawing, wall newspapers to reflect interethnic relations, unity and friendship	Reflection of the problem of unity and friendship and improvement of children's creativity	February-may	Financing is not required	Joldoshaliev A.T./ Sherieva L.J. Osh city educational administration	
27	To organize interschool and interclass festivals under the title 'Unity of nations is a great treasure'	Strengthening unity and friendship among the children	September-october	Osh city administration of education	Joldoshaliev A.T. Sherieva L.J. Osh city educational administration	

28	To organize out of class activities about 'Manas Taanuu'(teaching epoc Manas) at secondary schools of the city in order to glorify Great hero of Kyrgyz people- Manas and to educate the youth to love the country	Teenagers will be educated to love Motherland	Within the year	Financing is not required	Joldoshaliev A.T. Sherieva L.J Osh city administration of education	
29	To organize activities for the veterans and disabled soldiers of Great Patriotic War, to go to their houses, help them about the house together-the pupils of different ethnic groups under the motto 'Great Victory is the victory of interethnic unity'	Veterans and disabled soldiers of Great Patriotic war will be grateful, children's friendship will become stronger	April-may	Financing is not required	Joldoshaliev A.T Sherieva L.J. Osh city administration of education	
30	To organize drawing competition among the school children at public places (central square, front areas of theatres) where interethnic relations, unity and friendship are reflected	Improving school childrens opinions about friendship	On the eve of holidays and on some occasions	Osh city administration of education, public foundation 'For international tolerance' (by the agreement)	Joldoshaliev A.T Sherieva L.J. Public Foundation 'For international tolerance'	

Economic Activities

31	To improve the activities in field of strengthening friendship and economic development with fraternal cities	Creating good conditions to strengthen friendship and to develop economy	Within the year	The committee of foreign economic relations and capital investments	Baigazakov A.T. Arakulova D.A. Nizamiev A.G.	
32	To improve the quality of service in the sphere of trading and public insurance, in the state and municipal institutions	Achieving people' gratitude	Within the year	Public Councils, Industry and business developing department, the heads of state and municipal institutions	Vise-mayor, Heads of departments	
33	To organize courses in teaching improvement of public supply	The quality of service will be improved	Within the year	Industry and business developing department, directors of schools, Various resources	Joldoshaliev A.T. Erkulova G.K. Industry and business developing department, directors of schools	
34	To achieve in writing the names of objects in the sphere of trade, service and business, in the state	Widespread use of state and official languages	Within the year	Financed by the businessmen, state and	Mamatkerim k.E Industry and business	

	and municipal offices, organizations in the state and official languages.			municipal services	developing department	
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Constructional activities

35	To start the construction of new multistoreyed houses in the territory of the city and to guarantee the peoples of different nationalities living there.	Improvement of interethnic unity	Within the year	Budget of the republic, local budget, businessmen	The commission formed in the city administration	
36	To repair the cultural objects in order improve their work	Consolidate friendship of people	Within the year	Budget of the republic, local budget, sponsors	Sabirov T.N Baigazakov A.T. Ailchiev K.A. Department of culture	
37	To finish the constructional objects included in the plan (Eastern Gate, Naberejnaya street)	Beautiful infrastructure of the city, better public insurance supply	Within the year	Local budget and other resources	Sabirov T.N. Shevchenko S.A. Ailchiev K.A.	

Activities in the sphere of municipal economy, transport and communication

38	To decorate the visible places of the city (at the entrance of the city, in the central cross-roads, on the New Bridge) with illumination of decorative lights	Beautiful view of the city at night, challenging the people to live in peace	To finish within six months, to be always under the supervision	Osh city lighting establishment or office	Shevchenko S.A. Osh city department of economy, transport and communication, osh city lighting establishment	
39	To decorate the visible part of Sulaqiman mountain with the illumination reflecting some kind of thematic view	Beautiful view of the city at night and challenging people to live in peace	To finish within six months being always under the supervision	Osh city lighting establishment/ office	Shevchenko S.A. Osh municipal department of economy, transport and communication, osh city lighting office	
40	To grow flowers in the flower beds, lawns in the shape/form of some kind of national ornaments	Attracting people's attention	Within the year	City planting of greenery management	Shevchenko S.A. City department of economy, transport, and communications, City planting of greenery management	

41	To prepare thematic videos and to show in the public buses	A visual propaganda	Starting from March up to the end of the year	Osh municipal transport department	Shevchenko S.A. Osh city department of economy, transport and communications, osh municipal transport department	
42	To decorate city public bus , trolley bus sides with thematic labels	Challenging people to be friendly to each other	From March till the end of the year	Osh municipal transport department	Shevchenko S.A. Osh municipal transport department	
43	To hold subbotniks (whole city subbotniks, marathons) with the participation of young people to keep the city clean and to decorate the city	Unity of young people and working together	From March , several times	City administration, Public Foundation “For International Tolerance” (by agreement)	Shevchenko S.A. Municipal department of economy, transport and communications, Public Foundation ‘For international tolerance’	

Activities in the territorial Councils

44	To form 'Senior people's Council' in the territorial councils to keep the unity of multinational population, to spread its importance among the young people	A good chance to young people to live in friendship and unity	First quarter of the year	Volunteer work Volunteer payment	Coordinating sector of territorial council's work, Chairpersons of territorial councils	
45	With the help of Women Councils, Youth committees to display initiatives reflecting handicraft work and to involve the representatives of other ethnic groups in them (shyrdak tiguu –carpet from the wool, saima sayuu-ornamental needlework, oimo oyuu- cutting Kyrgyz ornaments from kyiylz etc.)	Close relationship of women	Within the year	Local budget' business	Coordinating sector of territorial councils' work, the chairpersons of territorial Councils	
46	To organize meetings of the representatives of the administration, the members of public councils, the deputies, politicians and public persons with the citizens from time to time and in the places under the titles 'Friendship leads to peace',	Achieving unity and friendship among the people	Within the year	Financing is not required	Coordinating sector of Territorial councils' work, Public Council, The chairpersons of territorial	

	'Unity is the security of success', 'Peoples' friendship is the beginning of development'				Councils	
47	To organize releasing special programs on TV, publishing the articles, materials of well-known sanjyrachy (persons who recite Kyrgyz national epocs, dastans), experts, experienced persons where unity, friendship between people are glorified and reflected in their works	Close relationship between the ethnic groups , historical importance of friendship	Within the year	Sponsors	Coordinating sector of works of territorial Councils, Chaipersons of territorial Councils	
48	To form the group of mediators out of the active members and leaders of the Territorial Councils and teach them in special courses	Explanatory work about the unity and friendship will be held	Within the year	Public Foundation 'For international tollerance'	Sabirov T.N. Omurzakov M.T. Public foundation 'For international tollerance'	
49	To implement the projects about improving the state of squares, parks, lawns in the territory of the city	The benches will be built, the city will become green and beautiful	Within the year	Municipal office of planting greenery	Shevchenko S.A. Omurzakov M.T Municipal department of planting greenery, Department of	

					park and garden, Municipal property management, Public Foundation 'For international tolerance'	
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Activities in security and law enforcement agency

50	Enforcement bodies, public Council, state and municipal organs must have close contact with the people, exchange opinions and during the meetings they should explain to the people about the law of Kyrgyz Republic connected with the nationalistic views of the people and about the responsibilities of the crime	People's juridical and moral responsibility, duty will be increased	Always	sponsors	Aitmatova T.B. Maasaliev A.K. Public Council, the chiefs of enforcement bodies	
51	To hold explanatory works together with the members of Public Council, with the imams of the mosques about the policy of the country in	Understanding of people	Within the year	Financing is not required	Aitmatova T.B. Maasaliev A.K. Public Council, The chiefs of	

	order to prevent religious extremism and to strengthen interethnic relations				enforcement bodies	
52	To revive the work of voluntary public order squad (eldik koshuun), to point out ways of educating young people to be patriots and implementing their activities	Educating young people their sacred duty -to serve Motherland	Within the year	Voluntary public order squad (eldik iktiyarduu chorolor koshuunu) formed at the administration of Osh city	Aitmatova B.T. Voluntary public order squad , Osh city administration	
53	To reflect / release at mass media (Tv, newspaper) about the heroic actions/deeds of our compatriots during th Great Patriotic war, during the war in Avganistan and Batken, in defencing the security and unity of the country in order to educate young people patriotism	A good influence on the young people	Within the year	Local budget, sponsors	Joldoshaliev A.T Aitmatova B.T. Maasaliev A.K. Ajimatova G.	
54	To hold and to organize lectures, meetings among the employees of Osh administrative department of internal affairs, the workers of the department of passport and visa registration, the department of	Achieving public insurance supply	Within the year	Local budget, sponsors	Aitmatova T.B. Maasaliev A.K. Public Council, The chiefs of enforcement bodies	

	state traffic security inspection of internal affairs and the workers of law enforcement agency					
55	To organize the meetings of school children with the veterans of Great Patriotic war, war in Avganistan and Batken events to educate to be patriots of the Motherland	School children will be taught to love the Motherland	Within the year	Financing is not required	Aitmatova T.B. Maasaliev A.K. The chiefs of law enforcement agencies, Sherieva L.J. Osh city department of education, municipal Council of veterans, Council of the participants of the war in Avganistan	

Mayor's office manager

A. Kaziev

Kaziev, A. (2011) *The plan of the activities for the Year of strengthening interethnic relations, unity and friendship in Osh City*, translated from Russian by the Eurasian Foundation of Central Asia, Osh: the Mayor's Office.

Appendix 3: Photographs of Posters of the Year of Peace



“Let *Nooruz* be wonderful, and let our neighbours be in peace”, photograph taken by the author, Osh, on 30 March 2011.



“The year of 2011 is the year of strengthening interethnic relations, unity and friendship in Osh City”, photograph taken by the author, Osh, on 14 May 2011.

Appendix 4: Legislation of the Public Council

Annex № 1

To the order of the Mayor's Office of the town of Osh

From January 20, 2011 № 9r

Regulation on the Public council for strengthening inter-ethnic harmony, peace and friendship at the Mayor's office (City Hall) of Osh

- I. Common regulations
- II. The main goals
- III. Rights
- IV. Providing the work

I. Common Regulations

1. Present Regulation determines the order of activities of the Public council for strengthening inter-ethnic harmony, peace and friendship at the Mayor's office of Osh (hereafter referred to as the Public council), the main tasks, rights and procedures in organization of its work.
2. Personal membership of the Public council is formed from the public figures; Osh city council members; religious leaders; representatives of national-cultural centers, regional councils, youth, women, veterans' organizations on personal consent. Member of the Public council work on the voluntary basis. They participate in the discussion of the issues of strengthening inter-ethnic understanding in Osh, identifying priority areas for prophylactics of inter-ethnic conflicts, solving problems related to prevention of various anti-social manifestations; formulating proposals and recommendations to the Mayor's office on effective measures to stand against the manifestations of separatism, terrorism and extremism among the population, especially young people.
3. In its work the Public council interacts with the Mayor's Office of the town of Osh, the national-cultural centers of the Assembly of Peoples of Kyrgyzstan at branch office in Osh, non-governmental organizations, socio-prophylactic centers, territorial councils, as well as with other organizations and institutions of the town of Osh. The Public council is guided by

the Constitution and the laws of the Kyrgyz Republic, the acts of the President and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Mayor's Office of the town of Osh, along with the Charter of the community of the town of Osh, and this Regulation.

4. The Public council is an advisory body that works with the Mayor's Office of the town of Osh and has no right to interfere in the activities of governmental and municipal agencies.

II. The Main goals

5. The main objectives of the Public council are:

- 5.1 Assisting Osh City Hall in involving civil society in work to strengthen inter-ethnic understanding/harmony and political stability in the town of Osh, in struggle against separatism, extremism and terrorism.
- 5.2 Close interaction with civil society through national-cultural centers, non-governmental, youth, women and other organizations to study the situation in the sphere of international relations in the town of Osh.
- 5.3 Development of proposals and recommendations for identifying priority areas:
 - To undertake work to prevent the spread of non-traditional Islam, separatism and extremism among population, especially young people;
 - To undertake ideological work to further strengthening of multi-ethnic unity and harmonization of international relations;
 - To assist in organizing the work in counteracting the activities of emissaries, terrorist organizations, banned religious, separatist, and nationalist groups, that recruit young people and socially vulnerable segments of the population;
- 5.4 Assistance in carrying out explanatory work among population in the case of emergencies, involving a threat to public order and inter-ethnic unity in the town of Osh.

III. Authority of the Public council

6. In order to execute listed tasks, the Public council has the right:
 - To request and receive information and data related to the issues contributing to the solution and regulation of various conflicts on ethnic grounds in the prescribed manner from the governmental and municipal institutions and agencies within its competence;
 - To send recommendations and proposals on regulation of inter-ethnic relations, prevention and repression of the spread of ideas of religious and terrorist organizations, separatist and nationalist groups to all institutions and organizations, regional councils and Japalak territorial administration of villages and socio-prophylactic centers under them;

- To inform the mass media about the activities of the Public council;
- To participate in meetings and gatherings of the local community of the town of Osh.

IV. The composition and working procedures of the Public council

7. The Public council consists of a chairman, co-chairman, secretary and members of the Public council, approved by an order of the mayor of Osh.

7.1. The work of the Public council is headed by a chairman of the Public council, and in his absence, by a co-chairman of the Public council.

7.2. Activities of the Public council are carried out on a collective basis; decisions are made by simple majority of votes of the members of the Public council.

7.3. The decisions made are registered in the form of minutes/ protocol of meetings of the Public council. The decisions of the Public council are of advisory character (are advisory in nature).

Kaziev, A. (2011) *Regulation on the Public council for strengthening inter-ethnic harmony, peace and friendship at the Mayor's office (City Hall) of Osh*, translated from Russian by a Kyrgyz student, Osh: the Mayor's Office.