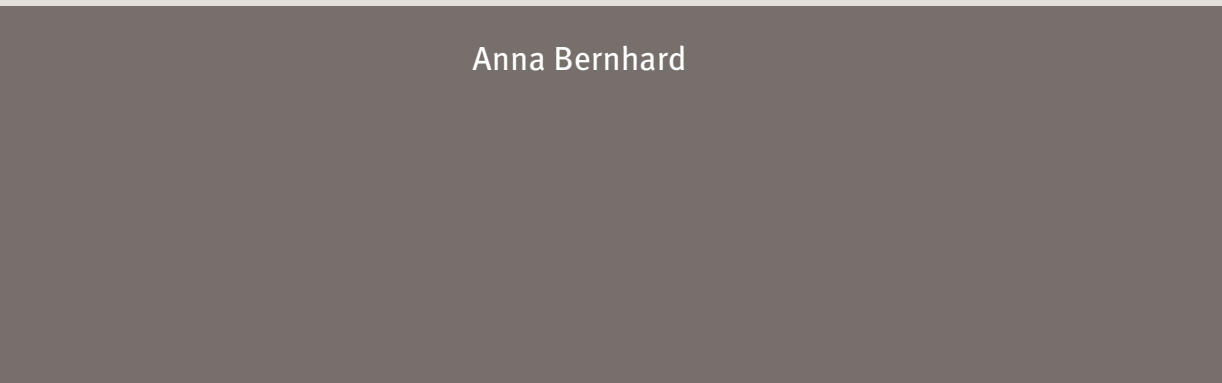


Dynamics of Relations between different Actors when Building Peace

The Role of Hybridity and Culture



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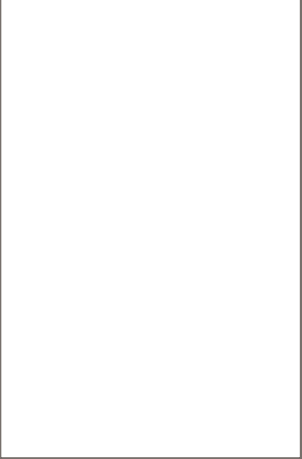
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This report was originally submitted to the European Commission in March 2013 within the framework of Theme C of Workpackage 4 of the CORE project entitled “The Dynamics of Relations between different Actors when Building Peace: The Role of Hybridity and Culture”. This report contains the analysis of much of the research carried out during 2011-2012 in the case studies for the CORE project. The field research in each case was carried out by different partners in the CORE project. Therefore, the actors involved and the cultural aspects examined vary from case to case, which is reflected in the report.



Theoretical Analysis

Part I

1 Introduction

Subsequent to formalised peace agreements between parties and decreases in violence, numerous institutions, organisations and civic movements typically converge with the intention and purpose of bringing relief and building a lasting peace, with the result that domestic and international organisations throughout the world are continuously confronted with each other. The manner in which relations among these diverse actors are developed, for the purpose of creating a framework for peace, can significantly influence the peacebuilding process. The nature of these relationships defines the way actors interact with each other within the (post-)conflict context. These interactions, institutionalised or not, along with structural aspects (e.g. procedures, personnel and resources), shape the process of peacebuilding initiatives and, as a result, largely affect their outcome. Whether a relationship between actors is constructed as top-down or dialogical in nature can have tremendous implications for the motivation and quality of the collaboration and, thus, for the result of the peacebuilding process.

Today, the individual examples of successful initiatives notwithstanding, numerous peacebuilding initiatives are criticised and disapproved of because they consider neither advised requirements for mediation (such as acceptance, empathy, etc.), nor the affected peoples' aims, needs, interests and identities. They are conducted via a top-down approach and take no account of cultural, social, material, and power aspects. This lays the framework for investigating culture and identity as key dimensions of relations in peacebuilding. How do culture and identity influence and shape relations of different actors in peacebuilding? Do culture and identity have a prominent role in the collaboration between different actors? These issues will be addressed in the analysis of the field research data gathered by our partners. Field research has been carried out in India – Bihar and Jharkhand, Jammu and Kashmir, and Northeast India – and in Europe – in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Cyprus, and in Georgia, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia.

Culture is a vaguely defined term, which for different people has different meanings that change continuously over time (Brigg 2010, 329; Williams, 1985). Moreover, culture is a term that becomes politicised for different purposes. Historically, the orientalist debates that took place in India in the mid-nineteenth century – when ‘differences’ between European and Indian culture were viewed as crucial in formulating administrative and other government policies – are still in our memories.¹ Postcolonial theorists later emphasised the powerful purpose of the use of culture (as well as ethnicity and race) as a tool of separation, exclusion, and discrimination (Said 1978, Bhabha 2004). On the other hand, anthropologists, as well as a large number of peacebuilders, believe that we are all part of several cultures and that every institution and organisation, and every approach is based on a certain culture developed for the purpose of identity or guidance. The CORE project members have also had extensive discussions about culture and its influence, and the outcomes were – not surprisingly – as diverse as the members themselves. For this report, we deem it essential to include the different understandings of culture in a loosely, yet defined framework in order to carry out the analysis of the field research data. Generally speaking, the CORE project consciously seeks to go beyond those who argue that peacebuilding is a problematic of the ‘governance of cultures’ – with all the essentialisms of ‘their’ problems and ‘our’ solutions involved in this. In fact, the project consciously reverses the terminology to consider the ‘cultures of governance’.²

In Chapter 2, the concept of formation of relations and interactions in the field of peacebuilding is introduced. To be more specific, dialogical and hybrid forms of peacebuilding relations are elaborated. Here, the concept of hybridity receives prominent space. Chapter 3 gives an insight into the concepts of ‘identity’ and ‘culture’. After that, the connection between culture and peacebuilding is discussed, and academic perspectives on this connection that are relevant for the theme of this report are outlined. Together, this will provide a basis from which the research question on whether and how culture and identity influence and shape relations between different actors in peacebuilding can be addressed. Part 2 of this report leads into the analysis of the field research data.

2 Relations in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation

Relations in peacebuilding refer to the diverse relationships that emerge and are built between the people, different actors and their movements, organisations, and institutions involved in or affected by a peacebuilding process. Usually, in a (post-)conflict setting, numerous actors are present who implement initiatives that aim to build stability and peace, with a frequent bias towards stability and an emphasis on a peculiar version of peace, namely a liberal version of peace. They furthermore aim to set up a (new) government structure and to rebuild social relationships and between the conflicting parties. In order to be able to work and implement the initiatives, actors have no option but to build relations and interact with other actors and institutions, organisations or individuals who are present and part of the peacebuilding process and conflict setting. Before I go into further detail about peacebuilding relations, I will first give a few words about the actors who relate and interact with each other in peacebuilding processes.

¹ Interview with Ranabir Samaddar, MCRG, May 14, 2012.

² Interview with David Chandler, Advisory Board, October 29, 2012.

2.1 Local and External Actors

In the field of international peacebuilding and conflict transformation where actors from other countries intervene, actors are usually categorised as ‘locals’ and ‘internationals’, or ‘externals’. In the cases of the CORE project, this is true in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Cyprus, where there is a strong involvement by the EU and UN organisations. For the cases in India, where there is rather marginal involvement by international organisations, it is about the national government and the local domestic institutions, organisations and movements. The categorisation of ‘local’ and ‘international’ is a simplification and in most cases far from adequate. It can be offensive in the sense that it creates difference or antagonism between ‘us’ and ‘them’, which in reality do not exist as clear-cut divisions, but rather as blurred or hybrid attributions. The term ‘local’ is misleading because it does not refer to a geographic area but rather to a person’s or organisation’s closeness and vulnerability to the conflict (Anderson 2003, 36), or the impact of a peacebuilding initiative (Reich 2006, 21). It is about the actor’s relation to the conflict and its transformation process. In practice, ‘local’ actors who are directly affected by and have a stake in the conflict and the impact of the conflict resolution initiatives are therefore often referred to as ‘insiders’ to the conflict and the conflict transformation initiative. They either live in the conflict area and are thus vulnerable to the conflict, or experience the conflict from a distance and must “live with its consequences personally” (Anderson 2003, 36). Insiders who actively work in peacebuilding may, for example, be “activists and agencies from the area, local NGOs, governments, church groups, and local staff of outside or foreign NGOs and agencies” (ibid.). While the insiders cannot escape the conflict setting and its consequences, the ‘outsiders’ – ranging from foreign staff of organisations, members of the diaspora, and co-nationals from areas of a country not directly affected by violence (e.g. government officials in India) – have the opportunity to choose whether and to what extent they want to be involved in the conflict and its resolution process. “Though they may feel a great sense of engagement and attachment, they have little to lose personally. They may live in the setting for extended periods of time, but they can leave and work elsewhere” (ibid. 2003, 36). Defining an actor is usually only possible in grades of insiderness or outsiderness by referring to one as being more or less of an insider or outsider compared to others (ibid.). However, these ascriptions of insiderness and outsiderness have to do with how actors are perceived and how they perceive themselves. Depending on a person’s position, an actor might be an insider, while from another person’s perspective he or she might be seen as an outsider. For the person him/herself it might be a different reality in all. As in the case of identities, the perceptions can change depending on the context, position and perspective.³ Some actors can simultaneously hold insider and outsider positions. For example, national governments sometimes take up the role of a mediator between international and local actors. By doing so, they might also represent different and deviant positions when talking to the international actors and to the local actors.

Apart from differentiating the wide array of actors in international peacebuilding according to their position as local/insider or external/outsider actors, there are also other ways of differentiating them, for example on the basis of their modalities of action or their fields of activities. In any case, an actor’s role is always dependent on a certain context. Therefore there is a need to “problematise the category ‘local’ itself by persistently defining the particular meanings of the ‘local’ and ‘external’ in each research setting” (Jacobsen and Lidén 2012, 29). In addition, the context-specific meaning of the relationship between the different involved actors has to be understood, for example the history of the relationship to the ‘external world’, or the different interests towards the ‘external world’.

³ See chapter on identity and culture in this report.

2.2 Formation and Qualities of Peacebuilding Relations

Relations are formed and nurtured through interactions. Social interactions provide the foundation for social relations. Interaction is a dynamic process of exchange in which one or more subjects and objects have influence and effect upon each other. Interaction always has a reciprocal effect. The effect is usually a change in behaviour, direction, approach, shape, or the removal of obstacles and the decision to follow new paths. Interaction happens in the form of communication and feedback, as well as in active participation, collaboration and cooperation, but also by finding compromise, by complementing, counter-balancing, resisting, or corrupting one another (Richmond 2010, 26). Interactions occur accidentally, repeatedly, or in a regulated way, and either intentionally or unintentionally.

The concept of peacebuilding encompasses an interactive process between different actors within which material resources and social capital are exchanged and shared (or contested) objectives are negotiated for the purpose of building peace. It is based on relations between different actors, and shaped by their interactions. The quality of the relations and interactions between the different actors and stakeholders is central to the effectiveness and sustainability of the peacebuilding process. Peacebuilding aims to change those social constellations and structures that enable or encourage organised violence. It also focuses on creating, supporting, and strengthening peaceful relations between conflicting parties and other stakeholders and affected people (Berghof Foundation 2012, 62-64). The approach known as ‘conflict transformation’ is specifically aimed at the constructive change of relations between conflicting actors. The attitudes, behaviours, interests and discourses of the related actors, as well as the “underlying structures, cultures and institutions that encourage and condition violent political and social conflict” are the target of change (ibid. 2012, 23). The social change that conflict transformation and peacebuilding are supposed to bring into (post-) conflict societies is informed by the interaction between the involved actors (Zürcher 2010, 20).

In an international peacebuilding environment, a wide range of actors interact – usually there are the national elites, the sub-national elites and other actors from a conflict area, and outsider actors (e.g. international organisations).⁴ When interacting with each other, these actors may share the same goal, namely building peace. However, peace can mean different things to the different actors and might be loosely defined. Coming from different backgrounds with different levels of (personal) involvement in the conflict, these actors have different needs and social (e.g. identity and cultural) and material interests that underpin their aim to build peace and define how much effort and resources they invest into the interaction. In this regard, peacebuilding becomes a constant negotiation of the involved actors’ aims, interests and benefits.

Into this negotiation, the parties bring different material resources and social capital, and are in different positions from which they debate. For example, an initiative’s donors usually claim that they have the authority to direct the initiative’s objectives and implementation. An initiative from a well-financed organisation or government institution that additionally offers incentives such as support in areas like security, aid, education or health can be attractive and even outbid other initiatives (Mac Ginty 2010a, 398ff). The knowledge about a certain activity’s content and “overwhelming technical superiority” (Richmond 2011, 116), but also the infrastructure to access the project site play a role. However, many of these project agencies have to stick to strict modalities and structures of implementation, and therefore have no scope to modify and adjust the projects to make them effective. The insiders’ familiarity with the local area, legitimacy, credibility, and authority are essential advantages that can play into the negotiation

⁴ In addition to the actors mentioned, there is a whole range of informal actors who have a stake in the peacebuilding process. These are, for example, people whose daily lives are affected by certain peacebuilding initiatives and therefore directly interact with them and thus also affect them in return. Although involved in the peacebuilding process, they do not necessarily have a particular peace-related objective. Interactions that are not directly aimed at peace or resolution can also have an important impact on the peacebuilding process. Much intercommunal dialogue, for example, is a by-product of another goal – such as shared economic endeavour. In sum, actors can unconsciously be part of the peacebuilding process, and still influence it with their (intentional or unintentional) resistance (Richmond 2010) or non-participation (Mac Ginty 2012). For more information on these actors and their local agency, please refer to the Report on Theme B by Janel B. Galvanek.

process. The actors' relationship with other actors also plays an important role. For example, if a civil society organisation is linked with a major donor, the organisation might be in a better negotiating position with the government than an organisation without relations to donors. Furthermore, the specific preconditions, principles, values, norms, regulations and laws of every organisation, institution or community demarcate the scope of action. Norms and regulations of a community's or organisation's social hierarchy can influence the actors' work. Moreover, political pressure by local or state authorities or by tax payers can play a role here. These social and material resources and positions are culturally induced and influenced.

On the one hand, these resources and positions the actors possess reveal the inequality between the different actors in the process of negotiation. Some dominate over others; their relationship is asymmetric and unequal. It depends on how both actors handle this asymmetry. As an example, if an unequal relationship between outsiders and insiders is well managed and designed, it can lead to a more effective and sustainable peace, since conflicts usually have both national and international scope. Through the collaboration of actors from both 'sides', they are able to address different issues and make sure, for example, that outcomes on the local level are not damaged at the intermediary or national level (Anderson 2003, 35-37).

On the other hand, this outline of resources and positions also gives evidence of the interdependencies between the interacting parties. In order to achieve their objective, actors depend on each other's strategies and behaviour. No single actor has the capacity to build peace alone nor are they able to achieve their goals alone. Let's for example take the outsider actors, the national- and sub-national elites. Outsider actors who aim to introduce stability and liberalisation need the elites' cooperation; otherwise, they cannot maintain stability and implement their initiative. The national elites who want to keep their power need the sub-national elites in order to do so. The sub-national elites, whose aim is to achieve autonomy from the state and want to keep their power in the local area, need the outsiders' resources (Barnett et al. 2009, 24).

As part of the negotiation, and in order to achieve their objectives, the actors are willing to modify their strategies to a certain degree. They adjust and adapt them so that their preferences and interests remain secured (Barnett et al. 2009, 24). The reason for such modifications of strategies might be the realisation and knowledge that peace will only be sustainable if it is locally led. A militant group or local elite's reasoning might be that they do not want to lose their power gained during the conflict. Outsiders on the other hand very often choose pragmatic steps. In order not to provoke a re-escalation of the conflict they cut down their aim from introducing democracy to building stability, which might play into the local elite's hands (Zürcher 2010, 20-25). Whatever reason guides the process of adjustment and adaptation of aims, this process eventually leads towards hybridisation, or localisation of peacebuilding strategies and initiatives. The same is true of initiatives that are organised by insiders from within and then gain outsiders' support. This will be examined in the next chapter.

2.3 Dialogical and Hybrid Relations in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation

Depending on the actors and circumstances, there are different types of relations that are built and sustained between actors in the peacebuilding process. Barnett and Zürcher (2009) suggest four types of relations: In the *cooperative* peacebuilding relation(ship), local elites accept the peacebuilding programme and cooperate with the outsider organisation. The *compromised* relation is characterised by the negotiation of a peacebuilding programme that reflects the desires of all the involved actors. In a *captured* relation, local elites redirect the distribution of assistance so that it fits their interests. Finally, in the *conflictive* peacebuilding relation, one of the actor groups threatens the others or uses coercive tools in order to achieve its goals (ibid. 2009, 24-25). According to Barnett and Zürcher, the most likely outcome is the *compromised* relation where the outsider actors acknowledge the local elites' interests, power and authority even though it might not match with their aims of a liberal peace. Local elites recognise the legitimacy of the reforms

suggested by the outsiders while keeping their interests alive as long as possible. This is what they refer to as the “peacebuilder’s contract” (ibid. 2009, 25). The negative part of this contract is that it “enforces the status quo” and usually supports the local elites’ interests without acknowledging the affected people’s voice (ibid. 2009, 35).

For the purpose of this report, we will analyse the relations in our case studies regarding dialogical principles such as mutual learning and understanding, as well as considering hybrid character, or a mixture of actors’ different components of approaches, which are combined in an initiative. While ‘dialogical’ refers to the principles relations are based on, ‘hybrid’ refers to the elements relations are composed of. If in a relationship the communication and exchange of ideas and aims occur in a dialogue, and the actors adopt parts of the other actor’s approach, the outcome is a hybrid form of an approach. Dialogue or dialogical principles can therefore facilitate hybrid relations, but not all hybrid relations are necessarily based on dialogical principles. As discussed below, some hybridisation processes are forced or imply co-option. Therefore, *compromised* relations can be both dialogical and hybrid, if the compromise is made through dialogue and the end product contains a combination of all the involved actors’ ideas and approaches. *Captured* and *conflictive* relations can be hybrid if they display any kind of mixture of the involved actors’ ideas and approaches, even though they are not dialogical. *Cooperative* relations can be dialogical, though, if the cooperation is based on dialogical principles.

2.3.1 Dialogical Relations

‘Dialogical’ refers to the manner of how relations or relationships between different actors are built and shaped and the principles that they are based on. Dialogical, in general terms, means continually and mutually informing and transforming. It implies encounter, communication, interaction, exchange, understanding, and transformation. Dialogue is a process-oriented method that puts the focus on relational thinking and no longer accepts one person’s own viewpoint as final (Isaacs 1999, 19). The ultimate goal of dialogue is not necessarily to achieve an agreement between the parties in dialogue, as is the case in negotiations (ibid., 1999, 19). Rather, dialogue aims to build a relationship between actors with different views, ideas, interests, etc. and reach “a new understanding” as a basis from which one can start a collaboration (ibid., 1999, 19). By taking out the energy and polarisation of different views, dialogue aims to retrieve “the intelligence and coordinated power of groups of people” (ibid., 1999, 19). This positive experience between actors in dialogue has led to many further dialogues in different fields.⁵

For relations in peacebuilding, practically, a dialogical mode can imply that all the involved actors truly collaborate and actively contribute and help to shape the agendas of projects and strategies in a participatory manner. It implies that there is space for direct encounter, exchange, mutual empathy, interest, openness, understanding, flexibility, transformation and joint activities. From experience of peace dialogues, it is known that learning about each other’s (different) perceptions of issues and each other’s (different) reasons for thinking and behaviour, while being aware of one’s own biases and stereotypes, leads to a deeper understanding of all the participant actors. This means that each would be aware of the other’s needs, objectives and reasons behind actions, and thus the ability to address them more accurately. Dialogue can help to clarify misunderstood issues, which can dissolve a blockade in a process, and thereby simplify and accelerate the process. Similarly, better understanding between parties or actors can help to create ways of bridging differences and build trust in the relationship (Mangat 2011, 7, 8).

Clearly, such a relationship cannot be developed overnight. To build trust and open up towards each other takes time and requires positive experience of mutual reliance. This is particularly challenging when the actors in the relationship only have short-term assignments and short periods of funding. Another

⁵ Dialogues are held in diplomacy at different levels, in conflict resolution and transformation. For detailed information see Ropers 2004. Isaacs (1999) refers to dialogues held in corporations, schools, communities and prisons (20, 21).

challenge is that very often, there are power asymmetries between the related actors. In a dialogical relation(ship), these asymmetries have to be addressed. If not addressed, such asymmetries can easily antagonise the dialogical nature of a relation.

2.3.2 Hybrid Relations

A 'hybrid' form of relations in peacebuilding means that the related actors' different ideas, approaches and activities have, to a certain degree, been mixed and combined to form a new peacebuilding approach. A hybrid form of an initiative results from interactions between individuals, groups, or organisations coming from different backgrounds.

The concept of 'hybridity' was prominently discussed regarding cultural influence and mixture in the framework of post-colonialism and globalisation. It was a way of describing how individuals react to alien influences triggered by colonisation and globalisation. Individuals attain a 'hybrid' cultural identity if they (partly) adopt new forms and practices and integrate them into their own behaviour repertoire. The process of 'hybridising' is defined as "forms becom[ing] separated from existing practices and recombine[ing] with new forms in new practices" (Rowe and Schelling 1991, 231 quoted in Nederveen Pieterse 1994, 165). As an example, second-generation migrants separate and mix, depending on the situation, a 'home' culture and language (matching the culture of origin) with an 'outside' culture and language (matching the culture of residence) (Nederveen Pieterse 1994, 56).

Acquiring new cultural forms and practices is by no means uncommon and is not a new development. In fact, from a hybridity point of view, every cultural form or experience is hybrid since people have interacted, and cultural forms have become hybridised all along. For example, an employee behaves differently and thinks from another perspective at work than at home. S/he separates and mixes home and office culture, depending on the situation. Thus, hybridity can be seen as a characteristic of every culture (Bhabha 2004, 2, 3, 10; Kraidy 2005, 148; see also Said 1994). Hybridity has become a bigger issue through globalisation since the cultural forms and practices that were confronted and mixed in international encounters were much more diverse than home and office culture. Thus, the mixing is not new; only the differences (already hybrid) that become mixed and the pace in which the mixing happens is new, and is referred to as globalisation (Nederveen Pieterse 2001, 231). In Kraidy's words, hybridity is "the cultural logic of globalization" as it "entails that traces of other cultures exist in every culture" (2005, 148). That said, we do not mean that hybridity is an empty notion of everything or nothing. We believe that a combination or mixture of different views and practices adds value to a cultural identity or a peacebuilding initiative. It nevertheless becomes clear that hybridity is a conceptual device – a way of seeing the world.

For this analysis, we differentiate between four meanings of 'hybridity': hybridity as result of dialogical relations, hybridity as a result of resistance and acceptance, hybridity as an analytical claim that it enhances the chances of effective and sustainable peace, and hybridity as a benchmark to assess the legitimacy or the extent to which peace is co-owned by different actors.

a) Hybridity as result of dialogical relations

As explained above, dialogical relations often lead to a hybrid outcome, because dialogue, *per se*, implies that the involved actors open up to mutual and new understanding, stepping out of their own thought pattern into the other's. In doing so, each party is enriched by the other's thoughts and ideas, widening their own boundaries and integrating new thoughts and perspectives into them. This process of open communication and safe exchange, allowing new thoughts and ideas to enter existing thought patterns and transform them, is in itself a process of hybridisation. Whenever there are ideas, approaches, and processes discussed and implemented in dialogue, they are likely to become hybridised. Hybridity thus manifests in the acceptance, adoption and mixture of the involved actors' different viewpoints, objectives, interests and norms.

b) Hybridity as a result of resistance and acceptance

The grade of mixing or hybridising can vary and range between two extremes. At the one end of extremes, there is the “assimilationist hybridity” which “adopts the canon and mimics the hegemony”. At the other end, there is the “destabilising hybridity” which “blurs the canon, reverses the current, subverts the centre” (Nederveen Pieterse 1994, 172). In other words, on the one hand there is acceptance; on the other hand, there is resistance, with blurring the canon as passive resistance and with destabilising the canon and its categories as active resistance (ibid. 173). By referring to Bhabha’s understanding of hybridity as a subversion of political and cultural domination (2004), Richmond applies it in the theory of international relations and peacebuilding. He thus understands hybridity not merely as a mixture of different ideas and approaches of how to build peace, but as a tool to resist dominant peacebuilding approaches. Drawing on the peacebuilding process in Timor and the Solomon Islands, he describes how local actors have resisted a full adaptation of a liberal model. By “modifying the liberal model and expressing its own different praxes”, they have “challenged liberal values systems and norms, and institutional arrangements” (Richmond 2011, 117, 133). The act of modification gives evidence of the local actors’ important influence and power. The hybrid form containing partly accepted and partly resisted aspects of liberal and local peacebuilding gives them the opportunity to undermine a liberal co-option.

c) Hybridity as adaptation

The process of hybridisation can occur in different ways, at or through different levels, and in different directions. Locally manifested aspects can be transferred to the national, regional or global level, and be adapted and institutionalised there in a modified or mixed way. This is what is referred to as ‘glocalisation’. The opposite, namely the adaptation and integration of foreign elements and practices into the local context, is referred to as ‘localisation’. In a localisation process, aspects are transformed and adjusted to the local context. According to Acharya (2004), who has investigated the localisation of external norms, local actors borrow those ideas that have the potential to enhance their prestige and strengthen their existing institutions or beliefs. By localising them, they do not change the hierarchy of their own normative order. They fit the modified norms right in while their normative order is maintained. They do not seek to replace their beliefs with external ones (Acharya 2004, 245-6, 253). A localised or hybrid form keeps components of its distinct origin identities (Richmond 2011, 133). Once emerged or created, a hybrid form is not permanent but rather “in constant flux, as different actors and processes cooperate and compete on different issue agendas” (Mac Ginty 2010a, 397).

The assumption behind hybridity is that the components that are mixed are different. However, in the very moment of hybridising, difference becomes relative, “and with a slight shift of perspective, the relationship can also be described in terms of an affirmation of similarity” (Nederveen Pieterse 1994, 176). Also in Acharya’s cases, the actors usually chose only those ideas and norms that were compatible with their beliefs and practices (Acharya 245-6, 253). A precondition for a successful hybridisation, in his view, is therefore a certain degree of similarity and compatibility between the different viewpoints and approaches. Only then can they be adjusted to the local context (ibid. 245-6, 253).

*d) Hybridity as an analytical claim that it enhances the chances of effective and sustainable peace
(hybrid peace is better peace)*

In the field of peacebuilding, the concept of ‘hybrid peace’ or ‘post-liberal peace’ (Richmond 2010, 2011; Mac Ginty 2010a) came up with regard to the critique of the liberal peacebuilding (and state building) framework.⁶ Peace and conflict researchers are investigating new ways of building peace that address the shortcomings of the liberal approach and increase the effectiveness of building peace in war-torn, post-conflict contexts.

⁶ See Richmond 2009, 2010, 2011, etc.; Mac Ginty 2010a, Boege 2010, Donais 2009, etc.

The central critique of the liberal approach relates to its blindness towards local cultural and social contexts, needs, and existing peacebuilding structures on which sustainable peace could be built. There is the analytical claim that hybridity enhances the chances of effective and sustainable peace because it makes liberal peace resonate better with local cultural and other conditions. The idea is that a hybrid form of local and liberal peacebuilding could be a more adequate and effective approach “whereby the liberal and the local meet each other on the ground, react and modify each other” (Richmond 2011, 117). The liberal and the local transform each other but keep their uniqueness and their localities. Hybridity can be in the form of “a coexistence of difference, rather than assimilation and internationalisation” (Richmond 2010, 687). The ideal outcome is a hybrid peacebuilding approach that combines “local and international resources in ways that maximize the long-term possibilities for sustainable peace” and foresees a “division of authority between international and domestic actors” (Donais 2009, 22). It could be a collaboration of the local and the liberal where, for example, local customs dominate the practices while international norms lead the set-up of the economic structures. An example of a hybrid peacebuilding initiative in Timor-Leste is the inclusion of a local customary mediation process in the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation. In this mediation process, a village elder mediates a dispute between the conflicting parties in front of the public audience. An example from Afghanistan is the integration of the warlords and militia commanders into the Afghan army, after it was recognised that the liberal idea of violence-monopoly with the state, and the association of the new state with transparency and accountability, had not succeeded (Mac Ginty 2010a, 405).

e) Hybridity as a benchmark to assess legitimacy

Hybridisation can occur in many different ways and the hybridisation process is not devoid of power relations. The hybrid character of an initiative does not provide information whether the initiative emerged from a dialogue and is co-owned by or legitimate to the involved actors. Since hybridisation can happen by imposing new ideas in a coercive way, it is not necessarily and always a process led by equality between the involved actors. Additionally, if, for example in peacebuilding, the combined aspects of two or several initiatives are feeding into the conflict instead of transforming the conflict by peaceful means, such a hybrid result is not desirable. If the parts of the mixed peacebuilding initiatives are supporting autocratic and exclusive forms of peace, then the resulting hybrid form of peace is not necessarily desirable. “The liberal-local hybrid can represent a combination of very negative political practices (for example, rigorously determined liberal institutionalism and market development solutions with patriarchal, feudal, communal or sexist practices). (...) It can connect both negative and positive practices” (Richmond 2010, 689).

In the following section, a compilation of advantages and disadvantages when working with a hybridity approach is discussed.

2.3.3 Advantages of the Concept of Hybridity in Peacebuilding

Hybridity is a conceptual device through which one sees things not in categories but in mixed, grey areas. Working with hybridity means focusing on the grey area between categories and their interface (Mac Ginty 2011a, 212). This is an area which is often left out by the dualistic world view. But dualism runs the risk of oversimplifying a very complex reality which mainly contains grey, mixing or overlapping areas and moments. Binary combinations often strengthen “hegemonised meanings, thus setting in stone the privileged positions of Western perspectives” (Mac Ginty 2010a, 397; see also Mallett 2010, 67, 79). The concept of hybridity helps to overcome this oppositional dualistic and essentialist view (Nederveen Pieterse, 1994, 171, 180) and to focus instead on the process, the grey areas, and the actual point of interaction of different actors and their ideas. It destabilises categories and reveals gaps, genealogies, and exclusions. It opens up a new way of looking at things, and may therefore detect areas that were not addressed before.

When working with a hybrid form of peacebuilding which includes liberal and local perspectives, useful liberal and local peacebuilding measures can become valorised and combined. Hybridity makes us aware or reminds us of the importance of local agency and underscores that no actor is able to set and maintain a unilateral course (Mac Ginty 2011a, 210-216; *ibid.* 2011b). The focus on hybridity enables us also to detect the capability of change and of managing change by the different actors. Such discoveries could challenge the widely established (liberal) perspective of traditional/indigenous agency as negative, old-fashioned, conservative and inflexible towards change, and therefore not useful (Mac Ginty 2010a, 407, 408).

Hybrid forms of peace could be a combination of the most effective elements of all the different approaches and strands that interact. While the liberal form brings along material power, skills in technocratic top-down management and good connections to the government and international organisations, the local form brings along a locally-anchored bottom-up position which contains knowledge of cultural expectations, legitimacy and tolerance by the community, and knowledge of peaceful co-existence (Mac Ginty 2010a, 408). Collaboration among these actors could lead to the combination of these skills and therefore to a comprehensive approach to building peace which is legitimate for all the people involved.

2.3.4 Disadvantages and Limits of the Concept of Hybridity in Peacebuilding

A major challenge in the concept of hybridity in peacebuilding is to define the actors and norms that interact in a conflict context. In the literature on hybrid peacebuilding, very often, it is about hybrid forms between the liberal and the local peacebuilding initiatives. Hybrid forms between approaches and ideas or objectives of the national government with those of local organisations or communities, for example, are seldom mentioned. The staff of peacebuilding organisations are often mixed groups of people, coming from different countries (e.g. in the UN), from different areas of the country, or from different institutions (governmental or non-governmental), thus, in itself a 'hybrid' constellation of actors. Many local NGOs are not easily categorised either. This also implies the question of who is meant by 'local' and 'liberal', since there are also liberal-thinking locals, and liberalism can be seen as the West's own 'local' (Richmond 2010, 689). This can also have implications for the legitimacy and acceptance of activities and norms, for example, if international actors support local patriarchal structures and thereby undermine the local women's group, which may work with liberal principles. Furthermore, there is a tendency and risk that different actors will romanticise or over-emphasise other actors and their activities and capacities as well as their own.⁷ These stereotypical perceptions by the various actors towards each other could lead to a twisted hybrid outcome or a 'negative' hybrid form of peace. For example, if an outsider actor adopts a local structure which he or she thinks is locally legitimate but in reality is only legitimate for the local elite, the hybrid outcome is a combination of aspects that actually are not desirable for the outsider (and the local non-elite) actor. However, desirability is relative and not the same for every actor and thus has to be negotiated, and the most likely outcome is a compromise from both sides.

Probably the strongest critique against the concept of hybridity is that it does not lead anywhere because everything is 'hybrid'. It is not tangible, too loose and seems to describe a rather static condition which in reality it is not. Therefore, some scholars and practitioners prefer to work with alternative concepts to hybridity. One of these is 'localisation', where foreign ideas or norms "are re-formulated and modified, and components of a chosen ... norm will be combined with the local socio-cultural background in order

⁷ Richmond elaborates in detail how these romanticisations and stereotypes may look. The (neo) liberal peacebuilders for example, romanticise the local in an orientalist way as exotic, informal, and unknowable, unable to play a constructive role because they lack 'capacity' in building a formal liberal order (Richmond 2009b, 153). On the other hand, the local actors tend to romanticise the international actors regarding their power, capacities, and technologies. The actors also "romanticise themselves" in the sense that they over- or underestimate their ability and capacity in doing peace work (Richmond 2011, 116). Other peacebuilders who strive for a bottom-up approach tend to romanticise the local in the opposite way, by equalising 'local' and 'good'.

to be suitable to the local context” (Bernhard 2012, 8). Acharya’s perspective on localisation is interesting because it puts the focus on the active part of local actors when localising an idea or norm (Acharya, 2004; 245). Very similar to localisation is the concept of ‘vernacularisation’. It refers to “the ways in which values and practices (...) become embedded in particular cultural and social practices, and in the process become entrenched in the consciousness of ordinary people” (Michelutti 2007). The concept of ‘blurred boundaries’ has been used by many scholars for a variety of analyses. Recently, the concept has been applied to both the state-market and state-civil society relationships, as well as to state-society relationships. Some scholars prefer blurred boundaries over hybridity because it is a more open and flexible concept and indicates the fuzziness of certain situations or relationships (Gupta 1995, Tandler 1995, Musolf et.al., 1980). Another concept is ‘empathetic peacebuilding’ whereby an empathetic understanding, relations and cooperation between the local and the international is the guiding principle of the peacebuilding process (Sylvester 1994). ‘Multistakeholder partnerships’ are an additional alternative to hybridity whereby different stakeholders enter voluntary and collaborative relationships and as such contribute to peacebuilding and human security.⁸ Anthropologists use the concept of ‘transculturation’ in order to delineate “processes whereby members of subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted by a dominant or metropolitan culture” (Pratt 1991, 1). Depending on the context and research, and according to one’s own preferences, one of these concepts might be more applicable than another.

2.4 Concluding Remarks

As this section shows, the concept of hybridity can be helpful in analysing peacebuilding processes in which different actors are involved. Hybridity can be seen as an ‘honest’ concept because it questions boundaries and categories (Nederveen Pieterse 2001, 220) which are often over-simplistic and not in touch with reality. It focuses on the grey, blurry in-between area of interactions. It allows the borders between the own and the alien to blur (Nederveen Pieterse 1994, 171, 180; Mac Ginty 2010a, 397). However, hybridity involves explicit difficulties, such as determining whether the hybrid form really comprises aspects from all the involved parties (is it *really* a hybrid form?). It is also obvious that such an ideal result of a positive hybrid form can only be achieved if the process of hybridisation is performed in an equal and just manner. And this is where the application of the concept often stumbles. The process of mutual influence and transformation is more often than not led by power relations and issues. Numerous hybridisation processes are led by imposition and forceful adaptation. Therefore, when analysing the field research data, we will investigate how this hybridisation process is accomplished, what its relational and interactional aspects are, and whether the process is guided by dialogical principles. Bhabha’s insight of hybridity as a tool to subvert political and cultural domination (Bhabha 2004; see chapter on postcolonial theory) can be helpful in detecting power constellations in the analysed relations of peacebuilding.

Furthermore, we will investigate how culture and identity have an influence on these hybrid forms of relations and the process of hybridisation. A hybrid relation contains – in its ideal form – culturally important views and aims of *all* the involved actors, not just of one. Hence, hybrid relations are meant to be open and responsive towards different approaches and ideas, not blind towards cultural and identity differences. In order to explain what we understand by the concept of identity and culture and its potential influence, the following section will give a detailed insight into the use of identity and culture in peacebuilding.

⁸ See for example the EU supported The MultiPart project: http://www.multi-part.eu/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1

3 Culture and Identity as Key Dimensions of Relations in Peacebuilding

Social relations are the 'location' where identity and cultural aspects are created, shaped and confirmed. This happens when people interact and exchange their thoughts, views, norms and practices. The meaning of a cultural aspect or an identity is represented, negotiated, disputed and reinforced in relations and interactions between people. It is a process that involves internal and external viewpoints and perceptions. Both sides contribute in a dialectical way to the construction and transformation of cultures and identities. In praxis, for the creation of identity, this means that as an individual or group travels through everyday life, its identity can change depending on the situations it is in and the audiences it interacts with. Each individual thus "carries a portfolio of (...) identities that are more or less salient in various situations and vis-à-vis various audiences. As audiences change, the socially-defined array of (...) [identity] choices open to the individual changes. (...) Which of these identities a[n] (...) individual employs in social interaction depends partly on where and with whom the interaction occurs" (Nagel 1994, 154, 155). For culture, the reconstruction of historical culture (e.g. the revival of native languages or rituals) and the revision or construction of new culture (e.g. the incorporation of traditional rituals into the mainstream religion) are products that come out of certain social relations (ibid., 162, 163), like the relation between the oppressive government and a tribal group. For the analysis of the CORE field research data, these dynamics of creation, reconstruction or revision of culture and identity in relations are of interest.

Conversely, the question how culture and identity influence and shape relations that affect the building of sustainable and just peace is of central interest here. Relations are based on principles and norms, a specific language and way of communication, and follow certain structures. Since these principles, norms, structures and languages are built on assumptions that are informed by context-related experiences and discourses, the author understands them as culture or as culturally informed and shaped. When actors interrelate, these are aspects that have to be negotiated and decided upon separately from the goals, aims and activities of building peace. The specific principles, the structure and the language chosen and decided upon by the actors can shape and inform the relations between the different actors.

In Western peace studies literature, a widely supported opinion is that culture and identity do influence peacebuilding relations (Lederach 1995, Avruch 1998, Brigg 2010, Richmond 2011, MacGinty 2008, 2010). It is assumed that the way people perceive, think about, and make meaning of their reality and how they decide to behave in or react towards this reality is influenced by their (socio-) cultural background. In this line of thinking, culture has an influence on and shapes to a certain extent people's perceptions of a conflict and their response to it. This means, in other words, that people from different backgrounds have different views and understandings of a conflict and how it should be managed, resolved or transformed.

A different perspective represents the opinion that it is not only culture that shapes our relations, perceptions, thinking and understanding. There are other components that have an influence, such as the context as a whole, which includes not only culture, but also politics, economic aspects and available resources, etc.⁹ and the ensuing interests, aims and preferences. Additionally, there is a risk, when using a culture lens, that we impose "top-down understandings on what might be otherwise situational, context-driven occurrences that influence (or seek to influence) the conflict and perhaps its ultimate transformation,

⁹ Interview with Amit Prakash, April 6, 2012. See also: Sen 2006, 112.

but do not necessarily augur the use of the term culture.”¹⁰

How culture and identity influence peacebuilding relations, and what happens with cultural aspects and identities when different people get together in these processes, will be investigated in detail in the examples from the cases later in this report. Before that, the terminologies of identity and culture will be investigated in more detail.

3.1 Culture and Identity

Culture and identity are closely related concepts with similar meanings. For this report and analysis, identity is understood as the arrangement of certain differences and commonalities that an individual, a group, or an institution chooses or creates for itself (Appadurai 1996, 14, 15). These differences are usually categorised as culture, ethnicity, gender, class, role, nation, etc. The linked differences/commonalities result in an “image” which is reshaped and recreated by the individual, group, or institution in relations, and is projected upon them by others. Identity is about self and external perception and can be understood as “the way(s) in which a person is, or wishes to be, known by certain others” (Cohen 1993, 195).

Identity, deriving from the Latin adjective “idem” meaning “the same”, refers to the shared categories and their characteristics (e.g. a common experience, history, place of origin, goals, etc.). Sharing the same characteristics makes people feel a sense of belonging to or identifying with each other; it strengthens one’s feeling of identity. Simultaneously, this sameness or shared identity demarcates one from people or groups who exhibit different characteristics. Identity is comparative in nature, since it accentuates a level of sameness or oneness with others in a specific field. Defining a person’s or group’s identity is therefore only possible in comparison to that which it is not, by contrasting it with different persons’ and groups’ identities which show up different characteristics and are – due to these differences – not members of the group (Hall 2000, 17; Eriksen 2002, 10).

However, the assumption that identity is a universal experience that people have all over the world has been criticised as being ethnocentric. The experience of creating an image of oneself or one’s community or group is not necessarily an experience shared by people globally. Examples from Mexican labour migrants in the US show how the concepts of individual identity and identity as a community member were not ones that they were familiar with. The concepts only became important once they were in the US. “Understanding that what we call ‘identity’ may not be a universal, but just one particular, modern, way of socially organizing – and indeed regulating – cultural experience (...)” (Tomlinson 2003, 271, 272).

Culture, like identity, also provides a duality of same/belonging and different/not belonging. Culture is something that is shared by a certain group of people and thus unites them, and at the same time, can refer to a particular group of people’s uniqueness, thus distinguishing them from other groups. Culture establishes identity. Arjun Appadurai conceives culture as “a pervasive dimension of human discourse that exploits difference to generate diverse conceptions of group identity” (1996, 13). Through the use of culture, we can highlight points of similarity and difference of the categories (ethnicity, gender, class, role, nation) and their characteristics (common experience, history, place of origin, goal). Culture is “a heuristic device that we can use to talk about difference” (ibid., 13). Adding the cultural dimension to one of these categories or its practices means that “we stress the idea of situated difference, that is, difference in relation to something local, embodied, and significant” (ibid., 12). As an example, the cultural dimension of a norm or a practice lies in its relation to its specific context. The specific context (be it socialisation, environmental conditions, historic development) means that something becomes ‘cultural’. The context then becomes the centre of analysis. Context includes the overall situation of a social event, historic and present. The context is constructed by and consists of the relations and interactions by its individuals, groups and organisations, institutions, or governments, and their outcomes.

¹⁰ Interview with Devika Sharma, June 5, 2012.

Culture, according to Appadurai, has yet another dimension when it comes to identity building. Culture is responsible for the naturalisation of the subset of differences and commonalities that have been mobilised and linked in order to create identity-image(s). This naturalisation process happens “through and in the historical process, and through and in the tensions between agents and structures” (Appadurai 1996, 14, 15). Certain cultural practices (including language, habits, behaviours, symbols, traditions, beliefs, values, norms, ideals, ideas, expectations, etc.) then become a ‘natural’ part of identity.

Working with culture is difficult because culture is not tangible – it is constantly in flux.¹¹ The above-mentioned categories of differences/commonalities are neither *deterministic, isolated*, primordial, nor given. *Rather, they* are socially created and dissolved and, thus, *are* dynamic, transformative, and translocal. They *evolve and change over time due to experiences, insights, instances, and exchange with* regional, state, international and global contacts. People’s characteristics are not limited to their ethnic heritage, but are subject to change and modification through experience (Bhabha 2004, Sen 2006, 113; Ådahl 2009, 6; CORE 2011a, 19-22). The same is true for identity. Stuart Hall pleads for an understanding of identity and identification from a discursive perspective. Identification is thus a process of construction which is ongoing and never accomplished. There is neither a constant core of self, nor collective or true selves that people from the same historical and cultural background share (Hall 2000, 16, 17). Identity is never cohesive but rather “increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions” (ibid., 17). Since discourses are tied to certain historical events, identities have to be understood within the context of this specific historical time period and environment when they were crafted.

Furthermore, relevant for working with culture is the fact that it has different levels. Every social entity has its own culture(s). There are cultures on the individual level as well as on the institutional or organisational level. There are cultures that are shared by people from an entire nation or region, but there are also cultures that are specific to a particular group of people, which can be a village or a sub-culture in an urban area, etc. (CORE 2011a, 19-22; Ådahl 2009, 6; etc.). These levels overlap and thus every individual may belong to several cultural repertoires at the same time. These repertoires influence the individuals, groups, communities, their institutions and activities, and are triggered by the different contexts in which they are moving. In times, certain aspects or repertoires can be more important than others.

However, *although culture can be seen as influential, there are other aspects that influence our practices and views, or in Sen’s words, culture is not “the central, inexorable, and entirely independent determinant of societal predicaments”* (2006, 112). *The social context as a whole influences our relationships and the processes of governance. The social context contains many factors apart from culture that are significant in influencing our lives, identities and behaviour, such as historical and political events, class, gender, and profession, to name a few* (Sen 2006, 112). *Some of these factors, nevertheless, are seen by anthropologists and others as being integral to the concept of culture or influenced by culture* (e.g. Appadurai 1996). Even more important to mention here is the fact that these different factors or sections are not separate from each other but are intertwined. *Intersectionality* is the theory that examines how *social and cultural categories relate to each other* and possibly reinforce each other. *For example, the analysis of relationships between gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, class and nationality reveals that several categories together may fortify the discrimination that a person is experiencing* (see sub-chapter/section on culture and feminist theory).

Additionally, “culture itself is a ‘culturally specific’ way of interpreting and knowing human difference” (Brigg 2010, 338). When looking back into history, the concept and meaning of culture came out of encounters with different peoples and the creation of categories and names of difference. These categories were used by European travellers, explorers, missionaries and colonial administrators to describe and

¹¹ Anthropologists whose subject it is struggle again and again with the term. One anthropologist even proposes abandoning the term ‘culture’ and suggests that instead, we should describe what we actually mean by culture, namely “how human thought and behaviour are patterned and how those patterns are produced, rejected, or acquired”, since the term of culture allows us to make “a shortcut for too many things” (Trouillot, 2002, 58).

classify people. The analogies they – and later scholars – used to explain differences in human behaviour, performance, and thinking are themselves screened through the idea of culture, and, therefore, formed by the explorers and scholars' mode of thinking, sense-making and culture. Culture is thus a concept that is shaped by European knowledge, disciplines, anthropology, and colonial experience (ibid. 2010, 338). This has implications for Europeans as well as non-Europeans. Both sides are marked by this historical experience. Furthermore, such a way of labelling difference is selective and discriminatory and clearly shows that culture is not a given fact but is socially created. For example, the cultural distinctions between Europeans are usually understated, while variation between Europeans and others tends to be inflated and overstated (ibid.). Homi K. Bhabha emphasises that categorising people means judging them according to their differences, which is a politicised and discriminatory process. In his view, it is not the differences themselves that are the source of conflict, but rather the process of categorising the people on the basis of differences: “To see the cultural not as the *source* of conflict – *different* cultures – but as the *effect* of discriminatory practices – the production of cultural differentiation as signs of authority – changes the value and its rules of recognition” (Bhabha 2004, 163).

3.2 Culture as Discrimination

This leads us to probably the most important of all issues when researching culture and identity. Culture and identity are not devoid of material and ideational bases. They are politically and historically loaded terms. The concepts become politicised for different purposes. Since cultural differences are socially created and amplified in certain contexts and are not simply given facts, this creation leaves room for political and discriminatory aspects. Over time, the concept has been used by different parties for different and often discriminatory purposes. The fact that identity has an excluding effect makes it a powerful instrument. By identifying common aspects and emphasising sameness among a certain group of people, a strong feeling of unified belonging and identity can be created. This is, for example, a common practice of nation-states when creating a national identity for the (sometimes very diverse) people living within its national borders. The national symbols, flag, anthem, language, a common history, folk tales, and the strong belief of community, but also the fight against a common oppressor (e.g. colonial power) are all aspects that contribute to the creation of a national identity (Eriksen 2002, 98ff). The emphasis on sameness is accompanied by the drawing of boundaries vis-à-vis others, who then become outsiders (ibid., 7). The intentional identification and propagation of differences between people and groups are clearly an act of power (Hall 2000, 18) and can lead to exclusion and even hatred. Differences all of a sudden justify exclusion and violence. Sadly, this has been exemplified many times and can often lead to violent pogroms and conflicts. In addition to the exclusion of others when identifying with like-minded, usually a hierarchy between “us” and “them” is created. While the first is positioned on the top of hierarchy, the latter is placed below (Hall 2000, 18). The exclusion and hierarchy can threaten a person's or people's identity. To protect their identity and culture, people stand together and revitalise common cultural aspects and identity such as language, rituals, etc. They develop great solidarity and a new consciousness about their culture, traditions, customs, and livelihoods (Xaxa 2006, 288), which hardens the fronts rather than relaxes them. This is what happens in ethno-political conflicts, as well as in autonomous movements. Culture has often been politicised, i.e. used to justify the rule of people belonging to a given culture over other, ‘inferior’ people with ‘less’ culture. Culture (as well as race and ethnicity) was often used to describe the difference between peoples. These differences have been misused to justify colonisation, slavery or genocide (Baker 2008, 93; Chandler 2010, 171).

3.3 Cultures of Governance for Peacebuilding

Culture in my understanding does not refer to a part of one's identity only, but also to the ways in which actions, including governance, are performed. 'Governance' is understood here as the manner in which power is held in the public realm. At the heart of governance is decision-making. The governing entity can be governmental as well as non-governmental (e.g. different societal and political units and their actors). According to Kooiman, there is a mutual interdependency between governmental and non-governmental entities, which is a characteristic of governance (Kooimann 1993, 2). The requirement for being a governing entity is to possess some level of power or agency of action. The extent to which the entity's efforts are supported by the society, whether voluntarily or forced, or have legitimacy within the society or community, contributes to their power and agency.

Governance that focuses on peacebuilding is referred to here as 'governance for peacebuilding'. In order to be (effective) governance, a peacebuilding approach or initiative needs to be supported to a certain degree by the community (be it a local or international community) and be legitimate for this community by corresponding to a certain normative framework (rules, laws, societal norms). Non-governmental actors can be influential in changing or affecting governmental strategies and conflicts, and governments and international organisations also have a strong influence on actors at all levels, e.g. by convincing them of their authority (Pogodda et.al. 2012, 5).

One way to understand governance – here, specifically, governance for peacebuilding – is to analyse the *culture* of governance for peacebuilding. Culture influences and shapes the understanding of a conflict. Culture therefore also shapes the way a conflict is addressed. The reasons why a certain peacebuilding initiative is chosen and designed to address the conflict depend to a certain degree on the cultural context.¹² But not only that: the way a governance entity for peacebuilding functions (e.g. its administration, work and decision processes, but also the principles guiding these processes) is culturally influenced as well. Something that makes sense, is appropriate, and is socially acceptable in a specific context is cultural. For example, in northern Europe – compared to southern parts of Europe or elsewhere in the world – flat hierarchies and participatory decision-making processes are socially more accepted (and indeed expected) than strict hierarchies and top-down decision making. This particular way of collaborating with colleagues is culturally specific for Scandinavia. Therefore, the fact that processes in some organisations are different than in others, e.g. more dialogical, inclusive, participatory, interactive and less hierarchical, is conditioned to a certain extent by the specific culture.

Additionally, these culturally influenced processes together make up a repertoire of processes within this governance entity. Seen as a repertoire of (mutually adjusting and coordinating) processes within an entity, this set of processes itself develops into and becomes a culture. In this understanding, we are able to analyse governance for peacebuilding as if it were a culture. This is how the French philosopher, anthropologist, and sociologist Bruno Latour investigated sciences. By using the anthropological gaze and methods to investigate anthropology and sociology – sciences that are known, accepted and normal – as if they were exotic and alien, he was able to critically reflect on and critique these sciences (Latour 1987; Latour & Woolgar 1979). Drawing on Latour's approach, we can investigate and critically reflect on governance for peacebuilding as an alien culture, and thus achieve a better understanding of governance.

Cultures of governance for peacebuilding are thus understood as an overarching quality. While rationality refers to the 'rational' explanation, concept or intention behind a governance initiative for peacebuilding by its supporters,¹³ the culture of governance for peacebuilding is the repertoire of processes and their underlying norms and principles with which a governance entity works. It describes how the

¹² I say "to a certain degree" because I am fully aware that apart from culture there are other aspects that determine how governance is carried out, such as funding, donor interests, but also climatic conditions, etc.

¹³ Explained in part 1 of report on theme B, a governance rationality for peacebuilding is "a kind of a discourse that delimits the field of intervention for building peace, lays out the appropriate methods and approaches to do so, and sets the boundaries within which governance initiatives for peacebuilding can be carried out" (Galvanek 2013, 8).

entity develops and implements peacebuilding initiatives. The culture of governance encompasses the work processes from planning to implementing, but also its underlying norms and principles, and the way problems are tackled, and how goals are privileged and chosen.

Such an example of a particular culture of governance for peacebuilding is the liberal peacebuilding approach (Brigg 2010). It is guided by principles like democratisation, economic liberalisation, neoliberal development, human rights, and the rule of law, which have their roots in the New York consensus, agreed on at the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change in 2004.¹⁴ Beside its principles, a main aspect of the consensus is the privileging of the state-building dimension of peacebuilding which is ideologically anchored at the UN (Kahler 2009, 288). It assumes that a certain type of peacebuilding agenda can be applied in every context, without a full consideration of the geographical, political and cultural differences in each context. It also assumes that what worked in the past, will work in the future and thus historical experiences can be applied to the present. These assumptions and aspects shape the agendas, strategies and practices of peacebuilders worldwide and can be summarised as the culture of liberal peacebuilding.

Another example of a culture of governance for peacebuilding is reflected in the government of India's peacebuilding strategy towards the internal protracted conflict in Jammu and Kashmir, the Naxalite violence in Bihar and Jharkhand, as well as the disputes in the Northeast of India. In addition to seeing these conflicts as state security issues, the government draws a link between socio-economic factors, governance, and conflict by understanding the reason for the conflicts arising from a development deficit and ineffective local administration in the said regions. In the case of Naxalite violence, the Ministry of Home Affairs believes that "the funds made available to the States under various Central [development] Schemes (...) acquire special significance and can go a long way in alleviating the situation and circumstances which the Left Wing Extremists attempt to exploit" (Ministry of Home Affairs 2011, 20-22). This link between ineffective governance, missing development, and presence of conflict is based on the "vision of political future of democratic and constitutional governance accompanied with modern industrial development, as projected by the colonial state", which "was adopted by the Indian intelligentsia as their own" (Prakash 1999, 114). The government's strategy is, thus, to first deploy and implement security measurements, and in a second step, to establish effective local governmental structures and economic development initiatives, which include infrastructure and the creation of jobs. In the case of Jammu & Kashmir, it is assumed that development and employment will "change the mental make-up or the mindset of the Kashmiri people", as the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told the Indian Parliament in 2011 (DasGupta 2012, 20; Mac Ginty et al. 2012, 7).

3.4 Culture in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation

In peace and conflict studies, the importance of culture has been widely discussed. According to Ramsbotham (2011, 336 ff.) there are approaches which consider cultural variation as not relevant to conflict transformation, while others stress that culture is essential for conflict transformation. To give some examples: John Burton's basic human needs theory from the late 1970s and 1980s belongs to the first category as it marginalises the role of culture, assuming that every human being has the same needs. Approaches to conflict based on this understanding intend to create a common language and a "problem-solving process based on an appeal to universally shared human needs" (LeBaron 2003, no pg. no.). In the same vein, William Zartman considers international diplomacy and negotiation as a universal culture and process. Cultural differences are only relevant with regard to style and language (Zartman 1997). In the 1990s, researchers and practitioners began to criticise the cultural blindness of generic conflict resolution approaches (Avruch 1998, Avruch et al. 1991; Lederach 1995, 2005). They advocate for culturally sensitive approaches to conflict transformation and reject the idea of externally imported prescriptive frameworks to

¹⁴ See <http://www.un.org/secureworld/>

work on conflicts. This view and attitude have been supported by many peace and conflict researchers and practitioners, even more so with the growing critique of the liberal peacebuilding approach. The approach that focuses on establishing a democratic governmental system, rule of law, economic liberalisation, and a civil society that functions as a watch dog, thereby monitoring the respect of human rights, has not had the expected effect (Richmond 2009, 2010, 2011, etc.; Mac Ginty 2010a, Donais 2009). It is said that affected actors accuse it of being “ethically bankrupt, subject to double standards, coercive and conditional, acultural, unconcerned with social welfare, and unfeeling and insensitive towards its subjects” (Richmond 2009, 558). The main critique targets the points raised by Lederach and Avruch: Instead of building on existing institutions and taking the specific cultural context as a starting point, liberal peacebuilders import and set up new institutions and norms which are based in the western European and American tradition, but not in the tradition of the affected people. Thus, their blindness to the local cultural context is seen by critics as a reason for the failure of the liberal peacebuilding approach. The local system and culture were not only overlooked; forceful attempts were made to change them as they were believed to be the problem and even one of the root causes of the conflict. From a liberal perspective, local cultural aspects conflict with the liberal cultural aspects and are better kept away from politics and peacebuilding (CORE 2011a, 18, 19). This blindness and arrogance towards local cultural and social contexts, needs, existing institutions and peacebuilding structures as a basis for peacebuilding activities are undermining the liberal efforts to build locally legitimate and sustainable peace that speaks to the concerns and needs of those living in post-conflict settings. Even if culture is addressed, this is usually a subterfuge to legitimise intervention “rather than as a comprehensive framework for international engagement in the paradigm of international state building” (Chandler 2010, 175). For example, the intervention by external organisations to support democratic transitions was explained as necessary because some states (e.g. former Soviet states) were seen as not having the cultural capacities and ability to cope with the transition by themselves (ibid., 176). It is therefore not surprising that local actors accuse the liberal peacebuilding agenda as being acultural, ethically bankrupt and insensitive towards its subjects. However, it is necessary to mention here that this debate largely focuses on the flaws of international intervention and is mainly about how the liberal approach is implemented, not so much about the liberal thinking behind the approach itself.¹⁵ It also might be perceived or discussed differently in contexts where international organisations are not prominently involved in peacebuilding, such as India. Although the critique might be true even there – however targeted towards the national government as the liberal peacebuilding instance – it is based in a different context and thus differs. This is addressed in the analysis of the cases in Part 2 of this report.

In order to rectify this blindness and arrogance towards the cultural context, and to show a different way of addressing conflict, approaches and methods have been recently developed by peacebuilding practitioners which aim to transform conflicts in an open, adaptive and creative manner. ‘Being culturally sensitive’ has become a widespread principle for implementing peacebuilding initiatives (see the chapter on cultural sensitivity below). For example, communitarian peacebuilding visions pursue an approach from below. They emphasise the high value of community as well as the importance of tradition and social context for moral and political reasoning.¹⁶ These alternative approaches address exactly what is perceived as flaws by the liberal peace approach. Systemic approaches to conflict transformation offer insights into how to capture and deal with complex, multidimensional conflict situations. By understanding conflict as a system, the interactions and interdependencies within the system are identified and analysed. Special emphasis is given to the social context and to the circularity of social phenomenon. Systemic approaches stress the need to involve diverse local actors who would define what is part of the conflict and what is not, and to identify specific characteristics of the different sub-systems, e.g. gender, ethnic and religious balances (Wils et al. 2006; Körppen et al. 2011). Ways to work directly with existing local, traditional or indigenous dispute settlement institutions and peacebuilding mechanisms are also explored. Furthermore,

¹⁵ This discussion is taken up in Janel B. Galvanek’s complementary CORE Project report on theme B. See also Chandler, 2010.

¹⁶ For more information on communitarianism see e.g. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/communitarianism/>

ideas have been developed on how ‘hybridity’ can be a useful concept for peacebuilding. In the following section, the culturally sensitive approach and the collaboration with traditional or indigenous peace actors are addressed in more detail.

3.4.1 Cultural Sensitivity

Peacebuilding brings together an array of diverse actors from different parts of the world. The interaction and collaboration among people who speak different languages, have different views, ideas and ways of working are real challenges. How do people approach and deal with individuals and groups that have other ways of thinking and working? The buzz word among international development and peacebuilding organisations is “cultural sensitivity”. Organisations claim that their approach is culturally sensitive and they provide workshops and trainings for their staff to build this capacity of sensitivity towards cultural differences. In short, the term is ubiquitous. In peacebuilding and conflict transformation, the approach was mainly characterised by Lederach. His ‘elicitive approach’ that considers “what is present in a cultural setting as the basis for identifying key categories and concepts to use as foundational building blocks for a conflict resolution model” (Lederach 1995, 100) encapsulates what cultural sensitivity is about. Instead of introducing new concepts and work practices, or a blueprint for a project, a conflict-sensitive peacebuilding project is “rooted in, and must respect and draw from, the cultural knowledge of a people” (ibid. 1995, 9-10). It is people-centred and builds on and nurtures respectful relationships. It is essential that stakeholders have a positive perception of culture, and that they understand cultural differences and commonalities positively as a resource for building peace, not as an obstacle. ‘Sensitivity’ implies not just having knowledge and awareness of one’s own assumptions, own cultural background, and the other’s values, norms, etc. that motivate their behaviour in conflict and in the peacebuilding process, but goes beyond passive awareness to include an active responsiveness to these differences. For the implementation of a project, this means not just building on the perceptions and needs of all stakeholders in the design of the initiatives, but also making efforts to adapt to conditions and requirements as the context (or one’s understanding of it) changes. This is a continuous process of development and adaptation, and requires a lot of flexibility in thinking, adapting, time and therefore funds. Cultural sensitivity is seen as a requirement in order to be able to conduct sustainable peacebuilding projects and – in the eyes of those people affected – legitimate and credible initiatives.

Originally, the idea of a culturally sensitive approach became important for the international peacebuilders when working in a new and unfamiliar location. The frustration of not understanding or misunderstanding different stakeholders and local partners demonstrated the need for a culturally sensitive approach.¹⁷ Therefore, the word ‘sensitivity’ can be understood as having an asymmetrical and hierarchical connotation, particularly in the field of peacebuilding. It is usually the external actors who are asked to be sensitive to the local environment, not the other way around. Local actors are usually not asked to be sensitive to the peacebuilding project or needs of external actors; they are expected to cooperate gratefully. One reason for this is that the external’s (usually liberal) peacebuilding approach is seen by the externals as universal knowledge, having international legitimacy and as employing objective technology and science. There is no sensitivity needed because it is not seen as a specific culture rooted in western thinking. However, as described in the chapter on “Cultures of Peacebuilding Governance”, the approaches follow a specific strategy that is based on a specific history and culture and indeed require some sensitivity in order to be understood.

Nevertheless, in a broader sense, symmetrical relationships also demand sensitivity. Whether between internationals and locals, or locals and locals, or internationals and internationals, sensitivity and empathy towards other people could lead to more positive outcomes for all involved.

¹⁷ Interview with Sumona DasGupta, April 9, 2012.

3.4.2 Locally Rooted Peacebuilding Practices

Cultural sensitivity and the perception of culture as a positive resource for conflict resolution resulted in locally rooted practices and ways of settling disputes becoming recognised by many organisations as valuable capacities for peace. They are explored, supported, upscaled, and integrated into larger external and domestic peacebuilding initiatives by international and domestic organisations and governments.¹⁸ Often referred to as traditional or indigenous peacebuilding, whereas ‘traditional’ implies a long-held practice, and ‘indigenous’ draws on local custom that is tied to a certain location (Mac Ginty 2010b, 349; 2008, 149), these locally rooted practices have potential for building peace. Their embeddedness in the local everyday, their ability to “connect with cultural memory banks”, and their “conformity to popularly held and accepted norms and expectations” makes the locally rooted practices legitimate and trustworthy by their communities and thus more promising for achieving a sustainable peace (Mac Ginty 2010b, 350; 2008, 139ff; Boege 2011, 436ff). Moreover, these practices often have a public dimension and thus are transparent in nature. They are conducted where the conflict takes place and are therefore accessible for the entire community. Transparency and accessibility provide “a visible affirmation of legitimacy” (Mac Ginty 2010, 349).

Another characteristic of locally rooted approaches is that they usually aim to restore relationships and focus less on arriving at a definitive agreement. Assuming that a dispute happens in a village, it is essential that peace is restored within the community, among people who share the same resources (ibid., 2010, 349, 350). Furthermore, such approaches are ‘low-tech’ and ‘low-cost’ and thus efficient, and take less time than official courts (ibid., 2010, 355). Importantly, the responsibility for conflict resolution or transformation remains in the community and is not outsourced (ibid., 2010, 355). This can benefit community members since they see conflicts as domestic affairs and their resolution as their duty. The process of, and capacity for, resolution or transformation “increase[s] community cohesion and reinforces internal ties” (Neumann, 2010, 16).

However, working with locally-based traditional and indigenous approaches entails a range of difficulties. Starting with the terms ‘traditional’ and ‘indigenous’, they are misleading since these approaches have changed over time and have come under outside influences. Traditions and customs adapt to new circumstances and influences and thus the practices change (Boege 2011, 437). It is therefore hard to come up with a definition or categorisation of whether an approach is traditional or indigenous or more of a mixed or hybrid approach. Additionally, the terms are loaded with rather negative meanings such as backward and old-fashioned. That is why a more open definition of locally rooted peacebuilding practices is preferred and used here.

By referring to the local normative framework, locally rooted practices are meant to be more legitimate and accepted by the community than external practices. However, the question is to whom they are legitimate. Very often, these practices are conservative and patriarchal in nature and don’t include women or young people (Mac Ginty 2010, 359, Boege 2011, 450). As a result, they are not necessarily supported by all community members and, in addition, can directly conflict with human rights and liberal democratic standards. Additionally, protracted conflicts affect the dynamics of social structure and relations and consequently, these locally-rooted practices and relations also suffer and quite often become obsolete or undermined. Furthermore, these practices are unceasingly delegitimised and exchanged with other concepts by international actors and younger generations (Neumann 2010, 22).

¹⁸ For example, the ‘Nyaya Panchayat’ and ‘Lok Adalat’ in India (see e.g. <http://www.legalserviceindia.com/articles/article+1e.htm>), the ‘Loya Jirga’ tribal liaison offices in Afghanistan (see, for example, Karokhail and Schmeidl 2006), and traditional justice mechanisms such as ‘Culo Kwor’ in Uganda, or the dispute resolution tool ‘Gacaca’ in Rwanda (see Huyse 2008)

3.5 Academic Perspectives on Cultural Influence on Peacebuilding Relations

3.5.1 Postcolonial Perspective

When analysing the influence of culture and identity on peacebuilding relations today, historic events and experiences play an important role. The oppressive and discriminatory experience that people had during the colonial era is such an example. Colonial power and oppression had and still have a great impact on the political, economic, cultural, religious life and identity of the formerly colonised. In their colonies, colonisers ruined cultural traditions and ways of living and instead introduced their own cultural practices and beliefs, the most powerful of which is probably the introduction of their language. This led to immense difficulties at independence, when former colonies were required to define a national identity and self-confidence. Postcolonial theorists investigate and call attention to how these experiences have fundamental influence even today on people's identity and culture of both former colonies and former colonial powers, and on the relation between them. By including both sides, the colonisers and the colonised, and by relating them to each other, a clear dependence of oppressor and oppressed on each other comes to light. The colonial authority produced identities and modes of discrimination (cultural, racial, administrative, etc.) in order to secure the colonisers' 'pure' and original identity of authority. In addition, the identification of cultural differences can lead to an evaluation of these differences in a bold and unfair way: "Cultural difference does not simply represent the contention between oppositional contents or antagonistic traditions of cultural value. Cultural difference introduces into the process of cultural judgement and interpretation that sudden shock of the successive, non-synchronic time of signification" (Bhabha 2004, 233). Furthermore, the process of identification is mutual and dialogical. The oppressors and oppressed are not separate units that define themselves autonomously or independently. On the contrary, the negotiation of cultural identity requires the constant interaction of oppressors and oppressed (ibid. 2004, 138, 139). The object of identification is ambivalent and "the agency of identification is never pure or holistic but always constituted in a process of substitution, displacement or rejection" (ibid. 2004, 233).

Moreover, postcolonial theorists investigate resistance and subversion by the colonised. By understanding the postcolonial cultures as 'hybrids', Bhabha points to the subversive capabilities of hybridity. The oppressed can resist and unmask the oppressor's hegemony and challenge diverse forms of oppression. This is possible, according to Bhabha, due to the person's knowledge of two or more cultures and his/her ability to negotiate the differences between these cultures. It is also possible because the colonial discourses are slippery and ambivalent. "The ambivalence at the source of traditional discourses on authority enables a form of subversion, founded on the undecidability that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention" (Bhabha 2004, 160). For example, the repeatedly used and reconfirmed stereotypes that the colonisers used for the colonised show contradictions when looking at them carefully. The colonial subjects are described as "savage (cannibal)" and at the same time as "obedient and dignified", and as "mystical, primitive, simple-minded and yet the most worldly and accomplished" (ibid. 2004, 118). A specific incident Bhabha describes is about a missionary who intends to convert people in a village near Delhi in 1817. The villagers, all vegetarians, resist by debating that they would only accept the Bible if its statements would not come out of mouths of meat-eaters (Kapoor 2002, 651). The demand for an "indianized Gospel" (Bhabha 2004, 169) or a "vegetarian Bible" (Kapoor 2002, 651), is in Bhabha's view a perfect example of successfully "using the powers of hybridity to resist ..." (Bhabha 2004, 169). Not only does it put "the project of conversion in an impossible position" (ibid. 2004, 169), it also creates "a 'colonial antagonism' that produced a 'supplementary' or minority discourse as a site of 'resistance and negotiation'" (Kapoor 2002, 651, 652; see Bhabha 1995, 114).

These issues, described above, such as the historical experience of discrimination, oppression, ways of resisting this oppression and how this resistance was and is perceived, are important for an analysis of peacebuilding relations where western organisations, actors and their norms, and ideas meet with actors and peoples from former colonies. The memories and dynamics still influence these relations to a certain degree.

3.5.2 Feminist Perspective

Similar to postcolonial theory, feminist theory is concerned with cultural differences being used to discriminate and marginalise individuals and groups. Feminist theory reveals that violence, decision-making, inclusion and exclusion are gendered, and show the importance of the analysis of gendered positions, relations and experiences (e.g. in the context of conflict). Furthermore, feminist theory points to gaps and contradictions within postcolonial theory and shows that if “the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (Spivak 1988, 287). Thus, women of colour experience not only sexism like white, heterosexual, middle class women, but also racial and cultural discrimination and oppression due to their skin colour, ethnicity, nationality and class. Feminist theory shows that major systems of oppression are interlocked.¹⁹ Furthermore, feminist critique draws attention to the fact that women in the Global South are not a monolithic group with the same and universal needs, wishes and capacities, but that the experience of oppression is diverse and contingent on geography, history, and culture. In other words, the ‘third-world-woman’ doesn’t exist, neither as an individual nor as a single monolithic group. Thus, the different dependencies and oppressions women experience need to be put in relation to, and in context with, the different meanings, values and historical and political practices attached to them (Mohanty, 1984).

An important contribution to the cultural discussion by feminist theory is the concept of intersectionality. This concept gained momentum during the 1990s when black feminism, feminist theory and postcolonial theory began to interact (Knudsen 2005, 62; Yuval-Davis 2006, 1993). It came out of the black feminists’ critique that white feminists acknowledged and produced diversity in gender, but homogenised race and culture (the “white woman” vs. the “third-world-woman”). Intersectionality reveals the interplay and a possible reinforcement between different cultural identities and categories such as gender, sex, religion, class, race, caste, age and disability (McCall 2005; Mohanty, 1984). It shows that cultural categories of marginalisation and oppression like sexism, racism, homophobia and religious fanaticism do not stand alone independently but interrelate and can produce an even stronger structure of oppression. For example, women with a cultural background – who are often seen as a minority in the country they live in – experience discrimination in a completely different way than their male counterparts with the same cultural background. Similarly, these men face discrimination that non-minority males and non-minority women would not encounter. “This is because groups often experience distinctive forms of stereotyping or barriers based on a combination of race and gender. An intersectional approach recognizes this” (OHRC 2001, 3). It recognises that individuals have various identities and that these identities shape their experience of discrimination.

Applying this intersectional approach to cultural categorisation is helpful because it reveals the production of power between the categories (Knudsen 2005, 62). It acknowledges the uniqueness and does justice to the complexity of people’s experience of discrimination. Describing such discrimination as merely racially or gender oriented can misconstrue the actuality of people’s experience. Furthermore, the intersectionality approach takes the social and historical context of the person or group into account. It exposes the fact that discrimination is often “subtle, multi-layered, systemic, environmental and

¹⁹ See, for example, the statement Black Feminist Statement, dated April 1977: <http://www.feministzine.com/feminist/modern/Black-Feminist-Statement.html>

institutionalized” (OHRC 2001, 5). This approach assists in the analysis of whether and how culture influences peacebuilding relations by not only pointing out the fact that cultural aspects are used for the purpose of discrimination, but also by emphasising the interplay and interrelation of different cultural aspects.

3.5.3 Cultural Globalisation Perspectives

Exchange between societies and their cultural practices and beliefs has always taken place since humans exist. However, with an increase in ‘globalisation’ people’s mobility and thus social relations and interactions on a global level between people from different cultural backgrounds have intensified and accelerated. This development manifests, not least, in the field of peacebuilding when international peace support interventions pour significant resources into a post-conflict environment. New media and communication technologies promote these interactions by connecting people in nearly every corner in the world. This undoubtedly has effects on people’s everyday life all over the world.

From a cultural perspective, globalisation is a dialectic process through which homogenisation and differentiation, conflict and cultural hybridity, and globalisation and localisation do not exclude but rather induce each other. There is not merely homogenisation; there is also differentiation at the same time. There might be more culturally (or ethnically) driven conflicts, but at the same time there is also more cross-cultural collaboration and hybridisation. Concepts and structures are spread globally, while at the same time, cultural specificities are emphasised or even newly created locally (Breidenbach/Zukrigl 2002, 19; Nederveen Pieterse 1994, 165).

Clearly, globalisation confronts us with new challenges. The increasing number and pace of interactions imply an increasing exchange of ideas, opinions, norms, customs, etc. People have different ways of dealing with such unknown and foreign cultural influences. The reactions can range from culturalisation, resistance²⁰, fear and violence, to adaptation, localisation, transformation and hybridisation. Culturalisation will be explained in more detail below.

The increasing reference to culture when explaining issues in social, political and economic life is generally discussed as culturalisation. Globalisation is seen as a driver for culturalisation, and culturalisation is understood as one of the principal forms of globalisation.²¹ Culturalisation can be a reaction to foreign cultural influences. With the introduction of new cultural aspects, people become aware of their own culture which before was taken as the norm without reflecting on it. From an essentialist point of view, culture is something that one owns and it can be taken from one. People with this understanding of culture may therefore fear that their culture and identity could be suppressed by the new ideas. They therefore emphasise and strengthen their cultural peculiarities. In the extreme case, an absolutisation of cultural differences and an ethnocentrism shaped by hatred and racism can be the result, based on the insecurity that their cultural identity is in danger. This insecurity is increasing due to globalisation and can be politically instrumentalised (Breidenbach/Zukrigl 2002, 23).

In general, but even more in a globalised environment where borders of nation-states lose importance and governance mechanisms are increasingly internationalised, culture becomes an important frame of reference for minority groups globally (indigenous, ethnic minorities, transnational sub-cultures, etc.). They refer to their cultural peculiarities at a global level in order to attain recognition, rights and support for their needs (Nederveen Pieterse 1994, 165; Breidenbach/Zukrigl 2002, 19). Here, culture becomes a means of power or a resource to gain more power. However, this is not always the case. An interesting study by Kaushik Ghosh (2006, 502) on the Koel-Karo movement by adivasi (tribal) groups in Jharkhand and

²⁰ For more details on everyday resistance, see Janel B. Galvanek’s complementary CORE Project report on theme B.

²¹ See e.g. the exchange program ‘Culturalisation and Globalisation’ by the Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden (ACSIS) at Linköping University and Institute for Culture and Society (ICS) at the University of Western Sydney. <https://www.isak.liu.se/acsis/culturalisation-globalisation?l=sv>

their relation to international organisations shows how the international organisation's transnationalism actually undermines the struggles of the adivasi people for more autonomy within their region. Ghosh shows how transnationalism leads to the emergence of a new tribal elite that becomes the main beneficiary, while the non-elite adivasi who are affected by new economic mega-projects such as dams and mines, do not get heard by the international organisations. Similarly, Shah (2010, 2007) researches local, regional and transnational activism for the rights of Jharkhand's culturally autonomous indigenous people, and comes to the conclusion that the activism unintentionally further marginalised the region's poorest people.

In order to be understood internationally, and to be able to set up transnational alliances, the articulation of cultural peculiarities has to happen in a standardised way. In order to explain cultural differences and commonalities, global categories such as language, ritual, religion, etc. are used. A common vocabulary and common categories become increasingly important (Breidenbach/Zukrigl 2002, 23). On the other hand, the common vocabularies also risk of being used with different meanings and understandings by different people. Using the same word implies that people are speaking about the same issue, which is not always true. Therefore, dialogue and clarity of dialogue become more important in a globalised world so that people can understand each other clearly.

Another way in which individuals react to alien influences triggered by globalisation is by adapting the new forms and practices partly and integrating them into their own behaviour repertoire or mixing the alien with their own. In the context of culture and globalisation any kind of cultural mixing or mingling can be referred to as hybridising.²² This was elaborated in detail in chapter on 'Hybrid Relations'.

3.6 Concluding Remarks

The above sub-chapter gives a detailed explanation of the concepts of culture and identity and how these concepts are debated and applied in the field of peacebuilding and other academic fields. We have chosen to use a definition of culture that is open and includes a broad range of commonalities and differences. We understand culture as a means to talk about difference and similarity, and as the social context itself. Hence, different and similar context-specific issues are seen as cultural. For the analysis of how culture and identity influence (hybrid and dialogical) relations in peacebuilding, this means that we understand context-specific aspects that play into the relations as cultural.²³ With this understanding, even actors' pragmatic steps that deviate from their original aim – democracy building gives way to stability building in order not to provoke a re-escalation of the conflict – are cultural because the motivation for taking these different steps is based in this very context and guided by the actors' ways of reasoning and experiences. Culture in our understanding includes both a part of a social identity and a mode of governance. The latter is conceived as the underlying assumptions which play a role in how an organisation or institution's strategy is designed, developed and implemented. The 'cultures of peacebuilding governance' are analysed as well.

The academic perspectives give valuable inputs that will be used for the analysis of the field research data. The postcolonial studies draw our attention to the fact that the identification of cultural differences can simultaneously lead to interpretation and a judgment about these differences. As we know from feminist theory, these differences can interact and thus reinforce discrimination against the person, group or society attributed with these differences. This is referred to as intersectionality. Therefore, when analysing cultural aspects, attention should focus on how these aspects interrelate, and what the effect of this interrelation on actors and their relation with other actors is. Additionally, our analysis of relations has to be done with a gendered lens in order to expose potential power relations between the sexes.

²² Although comparable in their meaning, the concepts hybridity, créolité, mestizaje and syncretism cannot be regarded as synonymous. While hybridity is the most general term, créolité and mestizaje refer to specific locations and times, and syncretism usually refers to a mixture of religions only. For more information see Nederveen Pieterse 1994, 169ff or Kraidy 2005, 1 ff.

²³ This of course does not include aspects such as climate change or disasters, accidents, external peacebuilding interventions, mega-projects, corporates, etc.

Furthermore, hybridity possesses the characteristic of acceptance as well as resistance and subversion. A hybrid peacebuilding initiative emerges when minor actors accept some parts but resist other parts of the dominant actors' ideas and initiatives to a certain degree. With the act of resistance, the minor actors make sure that their ideas are kept alive and do not become co-opted by the dominant actors. It is also important to understand the dynamics of globalisation and culturalisation when analysing the cultural influence on relations of peacebuilding. The fear of losing one's own cultural identity and therefore emphasising cultural uniqueness, but also the use of cultural specificities as a means to gain power, all play a part in domestic and international collaboration and relation building. They are significant historical dynamics that may explain why certain people and groups emphasise their cultural aspects more than others do. How and how far this might be the case is investigated in the next part of this report.

In the field of peacebuilding, cultural differences and commonalities are discussed as important aspects that need to be treated sensitively and included in planning, implementation and monitoring phases of peacebuilding projects. Even more, peacebuilding approaches should be designed based on what is available in the (cultural) context. Therefore, the focus on and interest in locally rooted peacebuilding initiatives are growing among peacebuilding actors and scholars. In some of the cases, this is clearly visible. One example is a government that starts working with the stakeholders of locally rooted initiatives. Their relations are investigated, specifically with a focus on cultural influence and hybridity, and thus their potential for sustainable peace.

This lays the framework for the field research analysis of the six cases in the CORE project. Part 2 of this report is devoted to the analysis of the field research data in these cases, gathered by our research partners during 2011-2012.

Analysis of Cases

Part II

Introduction

The second part of this report is dedicated to the thematic analysis of the field research in the case studies of the CORE project, in light of the theoretical reflection done in Part 1. The first subchapter analyses the nature and characteristics of relations between different actors in the peacebuilding process in terms of dialogical principles and hybrid outcomes. A following subchapter elaborates on the aspects of culture that play a role in the analysed relations. Each case is finally wrapped up with a conclusion that summarises the analysis and speculates on the outcomes of the analysis regarding the relations, dialogical principles and hybrid forms.

The case analyses are partially informed by the field research, which was carried out by different partners and their foci and emphases vary significantly on political levels and topics. These variations having shaped their findings also have a noticeable impact on my analysis. For example, in some cases, the relations between the government and citizens were analysed, while in others, the relations between international actors and the government or the international actors and the citizens were in the centre. This is particularly tricky for the comparison of the analyses across the cases, which forms part of the overall conclusions at the end of this report.

In the following sections, the case studies from India are presented, i.e. Nagaland, Jammu and Kashmir, and Bihar and Jharkhand, followed by the cases from Europe, i.e. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia and Abkhazia.¹ After the case study analyses, a detailed conclusion is presented for all the cases, based on a comparison of the findings across different cases and topics.

¹ The Cyprus case study, which is the sixth case in the CORE project, is not analysed in this report. It is, however, discussed in the complementary report on Theme B by Janel B. Galvanek.

Nagaland

1 Background¹

Located in the Northeast of India, Nagaland is a small and hilly state that was carved out of the states of Assam and Manipur, and inaugurated on December 1, 1963.² It borders Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Burma, and has an area of 16,579 square kilometers with a population of 1,980,602.³

The indigenous tribes that call themselves the Nagas met for the first time as a unified ethnic group in the Naga Club in 1918 and 28 years later in the Naga National Council (NNC). They were standing up for self-determination and freedom, first against the British, then against the Indian State, and were trying to create a common position with regard to conflicts with other ethnic groups in the region, such as the Assamese, Meiteis and Kukis. After India achieved its independence, a violent conflict escalated in the region. The Naga hills were split into Assam and Manipur, against the Nagas' will. Their violent protests, a boycott of Indian general elections in the 1950s, and long negotiations with the government of India finally led to the creation of their own Nagaland state within India in 1963; however, this was based on a memorandum that only considered a part of the Naga elites known as the moderate Naga People's Convention. The views of Nagas not belonging to this convention were not included, and so the battle for autonomy continued (Kikon 2005a, no pg. no.). The Naga people were spread over the states of Manipur, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and Nagaland, where the majority lived. Heavy militarisation and security measures by the Indian government as a response to the violence made their circumstances worse. Immense difficulties were caused by the enactment of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in 1958, which gives special powers to the security forces in the areas that were defined as

¹ This chapter is partly based on the field research carried out by Paula Banerjee and Ishita Dey at Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (MCRG) in Kolkata, India, in the framework of the CORE project. Research was carried out in Nagaland on various occasions in 2011 and 2012. A report has been published on the research: *Women, Conflict, and Governance in Nagaland*, which has partly established the topics and analysis for this chapter.

² Government of Nagaland: <http://nagaland.nic.in/profile/history/about.htm>

³ 2011 Census of India, data available at: http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/prov_results_paper1_india.html?drpQuick=&drpQuickSelect=&q=Nagaland

‘disturbed’, including the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura, and, since July 1990, also Jammu and Kashmir. It allows the security forces, regardless of rank, to either detain a person without accountability or to resort to violence up to the point of causing death against a person who is acting – in the judgment of the security forces – suspiciously and against law and order. The security forces thus enjoy full impunity.⁴

The emergence of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN) and its ultimate goal of a greater Nagalim, which seeks the integration of all areas in the Northeast and Myanmar that are inhabited by Nagas, triggered a new round of violence and clashes between different Naga groups in and outside Nagaland. In 1997, the NSCN and the government of India began peace talks and signed a ceasefire agreement. Additionally, civil society organisations stepped in to try to reconcile the intertribal disagreements. In 2001, when the government of India and the NSCN agreed to extend the ceasefire “without any territorial limits”, a renewed wave of violence occurred. People in Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh feared that this extent of the ceasefire was the first step towards a greater Nagalim which would mean that these neighbouring states would have to cede parts of their territory to Nagalim. Protests, during which government premises were set ablaze, and a massive exodus of Naga people fleeing Manipur, compelled the government of India to revoke its ceasefire extension declaration (Das 2007, 31-33; Banerjee 2002). The civil society groups, particularly the women’s groups, again stepped in and tried to achieve reconciliation between the different ethnic and tribal groups in and around Nagaland. For example, the Naga Mothers Association travelled to Assam to clarify to the Assamese government that the Nagas had no expansionist intent (Banerjee 2002, no pg. no.). These and other efforts slowly led to a relatively calm law-and-order and security situation, not only within the territory of Nagaland but in the adjoining states as well. The peace talks between the Nagas and the government of India continued.

In the Nagas’ long-lasting campaign for self-determination against India, different communities and interest groups (armed underground movements and civil society groups, such as women’s groups) had different views and aspirations. However, they were all at one with the goal of a sovereign state for the Nagas. With the peace agreement in place and the receding of the violent conflict with India, the uncertainty of how Nagaland should be governed and by whom led to a new round of violence, however; this time, among the Nagas themselves. “The conflict over sovereignty changed to a contest over governing” (Banerjee & Dey 2012, 6). Additionally, the Nagas started to face other social conflicts and disputes; these had resulted from their marginalisation over many years or had arisen due to transformations within society. Some of the new conflicts that came to light related to gender inequalities, for instance in land inheritance rights and wages, as well as other issues that affected women to a large extent such as alcohol abuse by men, migration, human trafficking, HIV, and competition over governing.

2 Actors and Their Positions

2.1 Women

Women have suffered severely during the longstanding violent conflict and from the injustices and cruelties which the fight for independence and the concomitant militarisation have brought. Women have been particularly affected by the violence and the impunity enjoyed by the security personnel under the AFSPA when engaged in violence. They therefore regard the Act as a form of government action against women in the Northeast. The statement by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) shows why:

⁴ On the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) see also: http://mha.nic.in/pdfs/armed_forces_special_powers_act1958.pdf

“...women are disproportionately affected by violence; gross patterns of violence facilitated by the Act [the AFSPA] involve women being routinely raped, sexually assaulted, beaten or killed in their homes and in public during military operations. ...the immunity that the Act provides to the military officers involved in the operation within the disturbed areas likewise affects women disproportionately. It constitutes yet another obstacle adding to many factors which already impede women from accessing justice, among them limited education and the burden of economic dependence and heavy domestic responsibilities.”⁵

The very large numbers of male security personnel sent to the region, particularly to Nagaland and Manipur, has had an additional impact. For instance, the security apparatus entailed extensive development of infrastructure (roads and buildings for the troops) which was constructed by male workers. This high level of male immigration has resulted in a gender imbalance and an increase in violence against women (Banerjee & Dey 2012, 10).

Several nascent women’s organisations and movements in Nagaland and its bordering states⁶ started a nonviolent struggle against such violence and injustices. They increasingly became active stakeholders in peace negotiations and mediation between the conflicting parties. In the 1980s and 1990s, women’s organisations “dominate[d] the peace movements in sheer numbers” (Banerjee & Dey 2012, 16). Although women’s activities as peace agents vary depending on their ethnic, social, religious and tribal background, they have in common a preference for political and non-military solutions (Banerjee & Dey 2012, 5).

One such organisation is the Naga Mothers Association (NMA). Driven by the concern for their sons and daughters, relatives and community in the violent conflict, they are working towards the repeal of the AFSPA, investigating atrocities, and negotiating with the armed group National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isaac-Muivah) (NSCN-IM). Together with their community and the underground movements, they support the idea of a sovereign state of Nagaland. They are involved in redefining security, “ensuring securitization of life and livelihood through patrolling in the neighbourhood” and organising peace dialogues with the underground movements and the army in order to prevent and settle conflicts. In their exchange with the government, they constantly shape and re-shape their response and change their negotiation techniques (Banerjee & Dey 2012, 6). In their endeavours, the Naga mothers pursue an inclusive approach. For their peace dialogues and negotiations, they always try to bring all conflict parties to the table. They try to be neutral and keep the trust of all parties and thereby gain respect for themselves (Manchanda 2005, 17). They work side by side with men and do not focus on women’s issues only. On the local level, the Naga mothers try to find common ground between different communities and ethnic groups, prevent disputes, act as bridge-builders, and make sure that there are peaceful spaces so that normal (peaceful) social life can continue even during conflict (Das 2007, 47).

The Naga mothers work with a broad understanding of peace which encompasses not only the end of the violent conflict, but also the building of the welfare and wellbeing of the entire society, which includes justice and development. Even during the violent conflict, they concentrated on development through education and on food security, protested about economic exploitation and social problems such as drug and alcohol abuse and human trafficking, and provided support for women living with HIV/AIDS.

New trend among the younger generation of women

During the years after the ceasefire in 1997, women’s issues and activism evolved and changed. A new generation of women, who have less painful memories of the long-lasting war against India, is taking up work. Their main issues of concern are social and political rights, with the policy of reserving a 33%

⁵ See the review of the Act by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: <http://www.humanrights.asia/resources/journals-magazines/article2/1003/the-armed-forces-special-powers-act-1958-in-manipur-and-other-states-of-the-northeast-of-india-sanctioning-repression-in-violation-of-india2019s-human-rights-obligations>

⁶ For a good overview of Naga women’s organisations working for peace, see Manchanda 2005, 13ff.

quota of seats for women on local councils and land inheritance rights at the forefront of their activities (Banerjee & Dey 2012, 6). The Naga society traditionally is patriarchal and women are not part of official and public decision-making. The fact that currently there is not one single woman represented in the local government bodies or in the Nagaland assembly is evidence of this. Despite Nagaland's commitment to the Municipal Council system, with one-third of seats being reserved for women,⁷ politics is in men's hands. Even though some women's organisations protest and make vociferous efforts to assert their political rights⁸, the customary and traditional tribal bodies, which are exclusively male and receive support from the state government, are not willing to involve women in politics.⁹

In this endeavour, the new generation of women's organisations has built innovative alliances with the government in order "to create a space in which they can be heard" (Banerjee & Dey 2012, 5). This alliance with the government is a new development and only possible since the peace agreement and the government's change of role. Another new development is that the women nowadays do not necessarily support independence from India, but rather wish to benefit from the positive developments that come from 'their neighbour' India. Therefore, they do not talk of violence anymore but rather of reconciliation with the government of India (Banerjee & Dey 2012, 25).

2.2 Government¹⁰

The driving force of the government of India in the violent conflict has been its fear of losing territory in the Northeast. "...the Naga struggle for right to self-determination has been considered a threat to the territorial integrity of India" (Kikon 2005b, 2833). Therefore, the government's main goal has been to restore order, manage and pacify the conflict by any means. The means it has chosen were heavy militarisation and security measures. The government has pursued an intransigent and unscrupulous strategy against the resistance and autonomy movement. It introduced the AFSPA which has created a culture of fear and uncertainty in the region.

Due to the numerous protests against the AFSPA and the government's militarisation and security measures, as well as a growing ambivalence within the government about the Act due to investigations and local and international criticism and reviews,¹¹ the government has realised that violence alone cannot solve a political problem. This insight, together with the introduction of the Look East Policy, led to the shift of its strategy from militarisation to a stronger focus on the region's development, albeit without repealing the Act to date. Initiated in 1991, the Look East Policy marked a strategic shift in focus away from the west towards the east. As a foreign policy, it aims "to expand India's economic space."¹² For India, the Northeastern states are the gateway to the ASEAN¹³ countries and thus have strategic and economic importance for India's national interests. In order to be able to make use of the region and its resources, a peace agreement with the underground movements had to be established first. The Northeast, whose development has been neglected by the government, has to be developed first in order to function as a bridge to Southeast Asia. In achieving this, the women's organisations have been a strategic partner for the government because they strongly support peace and development. Their connection to civil society, as

7 Human Rights Law Network (HRLN): <http://www.hrln.org/hrln/womens-justice-/pils-a-cases/732-naga-women-file-writ-petition-in-high-court-regarding-womens-reservations-in-nagaland-municipal-council-elections.html>

8 In 2011, the NMA filed a writ petition to the state court demanding immediate elections for local councils in Nagaland with 33% of seats reserved for women. The Hindu, August 28, 2012 <http://www.thehindu.com/life-and-style/society/article3828335.ece>

9 The Hindu, August 28, 2012 <http://www.thehindu.com/life-and-style/society/article3828335.ece>; the Statesman, June 24, 2012, http://www.thestatesman.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=414528&catid=52

10 By 'government', I mean the Indian central government and its security forces deployed in the Northeast.

11 See, for example, <http://www.humanrights.asia/resources/journals-magazines/article2/1003/the-armed-forces-special-powers-act-1958-in-manipur-and-other-states-of-the-northeast-of-india-sanctioning-repression-in-violation-of-india2019s-human-rights-obligations>

12 Press release by the Indian Ministry for Development of North-East Region, April 20, 2010: <http://www.pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=60558>

13 Association of Southeast Asian Nations

well as to the underground movements, and the legitimacy and trust they enjoy among their communities make them even more desirable partners.

3 Relations between the Government and Women's Organisations

Throughout the Naga people's struggle for self-determination and against the abuses of the Indian government's security forces, the women's relations with the government were overshadowed by atrocities carried out by the security personnel. The women therefore campaigned against these atrocities and violence, and together with their communities, for more autonomy as Nagas. Due to the AFSPA, there were major obstacles which made it much more difficult for the women to convey their grievances to the government. Once the women started to take an active role in informal and formal peace negotiations, namely by negotiating with both parties and convincing them to sit down together for peace talks, they had a direct channel for exchange with government and security officials.

During the peace negotiations between the government of India and diverse Naga groups and resistance movements, the government and the women's groups started to work together. Several factors helped to establish the relationship between the government and the Naga women's groups on a firm footing and prove its worth. Firstly, the women's willingness to work together with other ethnic groups and parties, as well as with the government, was what made this relationship possible at all. In order to achieve their aims, the women realised that they had to partner with other stakeholders. Since their aims had been rejected repeatedly by the leaders of their communities, they were willing to open up their array of alliances. "The more traditions failed them the more they were willing to invoke modern modes of redress and carry their community with them. This flexibility of the Naga women enabled them to ally with the state when all other forms of redress failed. This alliance for justice proved [to be] extremely effective as it also contributed towards peace" (Banerjee & Dey 2012, 15). The younger women in particular, with their agenda of women's (political) rights, faced strong opposition from the traditional leadership. Since the government supports women's representation in politics – the Constitution of India and the Naga Municipal Act mandate reserved seats for women in local government bodies – they saw the government as an ideal partner in this matter (Banerjee & Dey 2012, 26).

Secondly, with the softening of its highly militarised counter-insurgency strategy in the 1990s towards a stronger focus on development as part of the Look East Policy, the government pushed for peace negotiations side by side with women's groups, and looked for partners to implement its development goals (Banerjee & Dey 2012, 21).

Thirdly, once the peace agreement was signed with the underground movements and an armistice was concluded in 1997, the threat perception changed for the government. Secession was no longer the main conflict issue. The Nagas now have to deal with other major social issues, such as inter-ethnic disputes, land ownership, disputes with migrants, trafficking of women, AIDS, drug abuse, etc. This change in the nature of conflict gave the government the opportunity to modify its role. It was no longer a party in the new conflict but could act as a mediator for the contesting Naga groups, for example between the women and the traditional leaders regarding more political rights for the women. So for the women, the government was no longer a perpetrator or enemy – it became rather an acceptable partner (Banerjee & Dey 2012, 23ff.).

Fourthly, the development agenda that is part of the Look East Policy, although criticised and

contested¹⁴, brought interesting and indeed positive changes for women. Since the development agenda targets the social, political and economic empowerment of (specifically younger) women– visible, for example, in the establishment of the Department of Women’s Development, Nagaland¹⁵ – it fell on sympathetic ears among the women (Banerjee & Dey 2012, 12). Living in a patriarchal society and being constantly marginalised by social and political inequalities and traditions, the women were pleased to receive support from the government that helped them to claim important rights, such as the 33% quota for women in local government bodies. The chief minister of Nagaland, Neiphiu Rio, stated in 2010 that traditionally, women have not had “any role in public governance in Naga society”. However, today, he continued, quotas for women cannot be disregarded “as long as the Nagas want to have municipal bodies.”¹⁶

These aspects show that the relationship between the women’s organisations of Nagaland and the government of India is based on overlapping and coinciding goals, namely to stop violence and to support development. Thus, they have both benefited from each other’s support in order to implement their strategy. The women have been reliant on the government’s will to start numerous rounds of peace negotiations with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) and to work on finding a compromise agreement. The government, on the other hand, has profited from the women’s organisations’ consolidated support for the peace negotiations. Regarding development, the women have benefited from the government’s support for their struggle for women’s rights in which they were continuously impeded by the traditional leaders of Nagaland. The government has also profited from the women’s support to implement the development programmes under the Look East Policy, and on the other hand, provided women with tailored capacity-building and support programmes.

However, the women and the government have different understandings of what their common goals of building peace and development should look like. What is more, their common goals are driven by completely different motives. The women strive for a peaceful community life without violence, and equal rights for all the community members. The government seeks to push forward the Look East Policy for which peace is a requirement. Additionally, the government supports the transformation of the secessionist conflict into a Naga internal conflict about how and by whom the state should be governed, which for the government is easier to manage than the secessionist conflict.

As is becoming apparent, the relationship between the government and women’s organisations is first of all based on pragmatism and mutual benefits, and is about achieving objectives and getting things done. Both parties benefit from the relationship for their own purpose. I would, however, suggest that there are also some dialogical elements that guide the relationship. This becomes evident when carefully analysing the effects this relationship has on peace. The government, when changing its strategies and policies and moving towards less violence (or indeed nonviolence) and better protection for its citizens, to a certain degree understands and recognises the needs of the people. The women, on the other hand, are successful in peace negotiations because they manage with empathy to build trust and confidence among all the parties present, so that they become more open to nonviolent compromise. Moreover, the women and the government are both willing to enter into negotiations and adjust their strategies in order to move closer to a common position. They are both open to a measure of compromise in order to achieve their goals. The women broke the taboo of working with the government and thus changed the Nagas’ longstanding antagonistic relationship with the government. Even more, for the achievement of political and social rights for women, they found in the government a closer ally than in the leadership of their own community. The government, for its part, no longer clung to patriarchal values when supporting

¹⁴ See, for example, Das 2010, Kikon 2005.

¹⁵ The Department of Women’s Development, Nagaland “has the mandate of uplifting women to function as equal partners and participants in the development process. This new Directorate has initiated and is implementing a number of welfare and development programmes for women” (<http://www.indigenoussherald.com/index.php/region/119-women-development-in-nagaland>). These programmes aim a) to improve the socio-economic status of women; b) to safeguard the rights of women; c) to provide support services (Banerjee & Dey 2012, 13).

¹⁶ The Statesman, June 24, 2012, http://www.thestatesman.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=414528&catid=52

the women's demands, rights and needs. It was open to the idea of putting women's issues high on its development agenda within the Look East Policy. This openness is new and indicates a certain degree of hybridity in the government's approach. The women's demands were integrated, combined and mixed with classic infrastructure development initiatives and economic advancement, and formed a new approach under the Look East Policy.

Furthermore, the government's own approach is a hybrid. On the one hand, the AFSPA has been retained and with it a militarised approach. On the other hand, a nonviolent agenda that focuses on economic development has been introduced. In certain cases, the two approaches are combined, e.g. the security forces protect coal and mineral mines that are supposed to create economic advancement in the region.¹⁷ The outcome is an approach that is a mixture of direct and indirect conflict management.

4 Role of Culture and Identity in the Relations

Culture, as we understand it, refers to a part of social identity and to modes of governance. In this case, two aspects that influence the relations between the Naga women and the government stand out and are analysed below. The first refers to the culture that a governance initiative aimed at bringing more security to the region – the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) – has created. The second covers a part of social identity, namely how their identity as women and mothers helped the women in their endeavour to build peace.

4.1 The AFSPA Culture

The relations between the Naga women's organisations and the government are embedded in an environment that has been strongly shaped and influenced by the AFSPA, which has been operating in Nagaland for half a century. The Act was presented with the explanation that it would protect the people from violent actions by the 'suspicious' Naga underground militants (Banerjee & Dey 2012, 9). But it did not make people feel more secure. On the contrary, it has created a culture of fear, terror and insecurity for the people of the entire Northeast region, and a culture of impunity for the security forces. The region is declared 'disturbed' and its inhabitants as 'suspicious'. Whatever actions the people may carry out, they must assume that some army official might see them as suspicious. In such an environment, every protest or criticism and every wrong move is suspicious and legitimises state violence. The Act is thus responsible for atrocities and human rights abuses in the region and "human rights violations of a sexual nature lead to a climate of fear heightened by the lack of victims' institutional protection coupled with the social stigma attached to such violations."¹⁸ Even as a law, "it created a system of lawlessness where the constitution is unable to guarantee any protection to the people who have lost their human rights under the AFSPA" (Kikon 2009, 279). Although there has been a ceasefire in place since 1997, the Act still allows the army to take military action, which is indeed contradictory to the armistice (Banerjee & Dey 2012, 9).

¹⁷ See Kikon (2009, 276). On the connection between mining and economic development, the government of India states in its vision for the strategy of the Ministry of Mining: "Promote optimal utilisation of India's mineral resources for its industrial growth and its socio-economic development, through scientific exploration, sustainable mining practices and geo-scientific research and development" (pg. 2), see: http://mines.nic.in/writereaddata/filelinks/12277536_strategic_plan_final%20draft%20v%208.pdf
¹⁸ <http://www.humanrights.asia/resources/journals-magazines/article2/1003/the-armed-forces-special-powers-act-1958-in-manipur-and-other-states-of-the-northeast-of-india-sanctioning-repression-in-violation-of-india2019s-human-rights-obligations>

But it only gives the right to attack to one party in the conflict – the government. These asymmetric power relations and power games by the government against the ‘obstreperous’ people in the Northeast indicate that the conflict is not resolved yet.

These circumstances and experiences have strongly affected the people’s perception and behaviour towards government officials and the army. The Act has created a culture of insecurity and distrust between the society and the security forces. It has increased hatred and mistrust towards the government to such an extent that many people have lost interest and faith in democracy. The inhabitants of the ‘disturbed’ areas realise that they are in a weaker position compared with the power the security forces have under the AFSPA, and have stopped asking the government to take responsibility for its lawlessness. Instead, people try to settle the conflicts outside the justice system and find a compromise so that they can move on (Kikon 2009, 278, 280).

The Act has transformed everyday life for ordinary people. In the culture of the AFSPA, “the daily practices are perceived and redefined as legitimate/illegitimate, guilty/innocent and the landscape continuously surveyed as a safe/unsafe, peaceful/disturbed area” (ibid. 2009, 280). People are forced to see the world in which they live in black and white dichotomies which are disconnected from reality.

4.2 Identity as Women and Mothers

Why are women’s organisations successful peacebuilders in a patriarchal environment where women are generally marginalised in decision-making and politics? Why do men accept and respect the women’s or mothers’ inputs and demands during conflict? There are several factors that play a role here. First of all, their success in demanding respect for themselves from the men is, to a certain extent, attributable to their successful peace work. The women’s approach is unique. The Naga Mothers Association in particular pursues an empathetic ideology and its approach to building peace goes beyond ethnic and gender borders. The members strive for peaceful relations within the society of the entire Northeast. They act as bridge-builders between different communities and ethnic groups, they closely collaborate with women’s groups from other ethnic groups, and together they organise peace campaigns, seminars and protest marches. This approach proved its validity when there were clashes between the different social and ethnic groups and no other organisation but the Mothers Association was ready and willing to mediate between the different groups. While other groups refused to engage with people from different ethnic backgrounds, the mothers stuck to their ideology and commitment to a peaceful life for all. By working with a broad understanding of peace, the mothers’ focus is not only on achieving a ceasefire, but also on improving social conditions.

A second point here is that their identity as mothers plays an important role in their success story. As mothers, they enjoy great respect within society and within male-dominated entities such as the security force, the government, and the resistance groups. Society as a whole grants women a certain status as mothers. By drawing on universal motherhood – a mother cares about her own children and other children equally – they empathetically understand other mothers’ and other people’s suffering and problems and are thus able to transcend ethnic boundaries and work with the armed groups and the government equally. Thus, the Naga mothers have learned that if they approach the conflicting parties as mothers, they are trusted by them (Manchanda 2005, 17).

In a violent conflict, mothers try to use whatever means are available to restore a tolerable environment for their children and community. Their ultimate goal is to (re)create peace and to provide shelter and food security for them. This drive to create a safe environment for their children and communities supersedes cultural, ethnic and gender boundaries. The founders of the Naga Mothers Association, for example, strongly felt that in Nagaland, “it is the homebound mother who suffers most, and that only mothers understand the extent of damage that these situations cause to the social fabric.”¹⁹ By seeing this societal damage from

¹⁹ Peace Women Across the Globe, http://www.1000peacewomen.org/eng/friedensfrauen_biographien_gefunden.

the perspective of mothers as victims and directly affected persons, their intervention is based on strong convictions and they are successful in situations where men cannot be. “In a situation of anger when men cannot talk to men without violence, it is the mothers who can talk to the men, who can deal with anger and pacify them.”²⁰ With their way of negotiating, winning trust and creating comfort and their ability to mitigate tense situations, the Naga mothers thus succeed in tapping into the empathetic sensibilities of the men and convincing them to desist from violence. They enable men not only to hear their arguments but also to internalise the gravity of their predicament. In fact, as Manchanda states, “it is expected that women are needed to reach the warring factions, defuse inter-community tension, open channels for communication, and build a dialogue of understanding and trust” (Manchanda 2005, 14). In Nagaland, this is referred to as ‘women’s work’, as part of the Naga women’s traditional role as peacebuilders. Therefore, by claiming peacebuilding as part of their traditional role, women succeed in capturing for themselves some space in the political arena where they are otherwise denied any role (Banerjee 2002, no pg. no.). The statement by the chief minister of Manipur in a leading Manipuri newspaper lends weight to this point: “(...) Manipur is today veritably on fire and the major onus of dousing this fire rests on the shoulders of our womenfolk who have always taken a major role in shaping the history of the land. (...) there are no sons who will not listen to their mothers, no brother who cannot be influenced by their sisters” (Banerjee & Dey 2012, 5).

5 Conclusion

The relations between the women’s organisations and the government of India are effective in terms of their contribution towards peace. By participating in consultations with the army and the underground movements, women have been able to contribute to the shaping of the formal peace process. One such example is the shift in the peace agenda in 2001, when the ceasefire rules were extended to protect citizens from violations by armed entities (Manchanda 2005, ix). This change in policy demonstrates that the security forces and militant movements have recognised the need for peace and civilian security. Advocacy meetings between the women and the government and army officials have reduced tensions and violence and created space for peace dialogues. Women’s participation in the peace process has also led to a wider public awareness of the peace process, a “broad-based popular movement”, as Manchanda calls it (2005, 27).

The women’s alliance with the government in pressing for their socio-economic and political rights and protesting against inequalities and traditions that marginalise them has had an impact on the entire Naga society and has changed social structures and relations. The inclusion of women in peace negotiations has become indispensable, according to a renowned lawyer in Kohima: “In every public activity, in every public meeting, the men now ask: ‘Where are the women? We need the women’” (cited in Manchanda 2005, ix). Their official recognition as important peace agents has led to a new consciousness about women in general within their communities. Their peace work has increased women’s status and role in the public and political space. Gender relations have thus changed; women have become more self-confident in defending their social and political rights. The younger women’s agenda of women’s rights in the political arena and in land inheritance are examples. Women nowadays actively campaign for equal rights in these fields. By working from within the system, they have managed to promote social change for the system as a whole.

Despite the positive effects and outcomes of the women’s struggle and their opening up towards governmental support, as described above, the women are still relatively marginalised in the formal peace process in Nagaland. Despite the high level of respect and recognition they receive as peacebuilders and activists from their communities and the government of India, and the increasing demand for women to

php?WomenID=1289

²⁰ Statement by the NMA founder Neidonuo Angami, cited in Manchanda 2005, 14.

be involved in public activities and negotiations, they are not yet included systematically in official peace talks and in political decision-making at the local level, e.g. in the municipalities and village councils. Even though the women's organisations in the region continue their struggle for peace, justice and rights and attract considerable media interest, there is still some resistance to their full recognition and their objectives. The AFSPA has not yet been repealed – in fact, a Manipuri woman has been on hunger strike for exactly twelve years now, demanding the Act's repeal²¹ – and no elections have so far been held with 33% of seats reserved for women in the local councils. The government still refuses to repeal the AFSPA, but supports the 33% quota for women in the local councils in Nagaland. However, the local council members see the central government's support of the quota for women as a violation of their sovereignty as Nagas and therefore oppose it. As long as the Nagaland assembly does not agree with it, no demands from the centre will be accepted. Furthermore, the quota is seen as alien to Naga culture and as a breach of "the customary and traditional practices of Nagas as Naga women were never subjected to discrimination."²² Due to strong resistance from the traditional councils, Naga state officials are concerned that holding elections would offend their sensitivities and result in a new outbreak of conflict which then could endanger the ongoing peace negotiations between the government of India and the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland. In a social fabric where issues like traditional local politics, self-determination as Nagas, and state security and militarisation are interlinked, the women's demands are difficult to assert. It can only be hoped that greater national and international awareness of the Naga women's activities and demands will put pressure on the groups concerned so that women can finally be included in the official peace talks and take up seats in the local councils and the state government.

²¹ See, for example, http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-11-06/india/34947592_1_irom-sharmila-chanu-sharmila-kanba-lup-kongpal-kongkham-leikai; or: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/indian-hunger-striker-irom-sharmila-completes-12-years-without-eating-to-protest-actions-of-the-armed-forces-in-manipur-8282730.html>

²² The Telegraph, March 19, 2012: http://www.telegraphindia.com/1120319/jsp/northeast/story_15265745.jsp

Jammu & Kashmir

1 Background¹

The historical and ongoing conflict in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) is largely defined by its external and internal dimensions. In the international domain, the Kashmir conflict is viewed as a territorial dispute between India and Pakistan, which in turn is rooted in part in two mutually exclusive ideologies used to justify claims on its territory. On the one hand, Pakistan felt that a Muslim majority state of J&K should rightfully belong to it by the logic of partition based on the two-nation theory – namely that Hindus and Muslims constituted two separate nations. For India, which explicitly rejected this ideology, the accession of J&K, a Muslim majority state, was seen as the acid test of the country’s secular nation-building project (Behera 2006, 4; Varshney 1992, 196-199; Schofield 2003, 27-47; Jha 1996).

In 1989, the outbreak of the armed insurgency in the Indian-administered part of the Kashmir Valley shifted the discourse from the problem ‘of’ Kashmir to the problem ‘in’ Kashmir. The internal dimension between the Indian state and a significant part of the people of J&K is about self-determination. The different cultural and ethnic societal groups feel deeply alienated and are demanding the right to self-determination and secession from India (Behera 2006, 170-207).² Alongside demands for self-determination, the J&K state has, in the past two decades, witnessed a whole array of political demands: a ‘Union Territory’ status for Ladakh, followed by the demands for Autonomous Hill Councils for Leh and Kargil districts; a division of the J&K state into three parts: Jammu, the Valley and Ladakh; a homeland for the displaced community of

¹ This chapter is partly based on the field research which was carried out by Sumona DasGupta and Priyanka Singh from the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) and that of Delhi University’s research team including Navnita Chadha Behera, Devika Sharma, Surinder Mohan and Manish Kumar along with the local field researchers as part of the CORE project throughout the year of 2012.

² Across the Line-of-Control, people of Azad Kashmir and the Northern Areas have their own issues with the Pakistan government, which administers these areas. However, these issues remain outside the purview of this report as the field research undertaken as part of the CORE project confined itself to the areas in the Indian-administered state of J&K. For more information on this region, see Behera 2006, 170-207.

Kashmiri Pandits; demands for affirmative discrimination for Paharis for Scheduled Tribe status on a par with Gujjars; and inclusion of the Dogri language in the eighth Schedule in the Indian Constitution (Behera 2000, 17).

Three characteristics of these political movements can be observed. Firstly, some of them, notably the armed Kashmiri insurgents, have been extremely violent while others have remained largely peaceful (Behera 2000; Bhattacharjea 1994; Puri 1983). Secondly, contrary to public perceptions that have always highlighted Kashmir's religious divides, political mobilisation in J&K has taken place along the entire spectrum of ethnic, linguistic, religious and regional faultlines (Behera 2006, 104-144). Furthermore, these have varied significantly from one part of the state to the other at any given historical juncture. Thirdly, the mobilisation by civil society groupings, professional bodies and an array of interest groups is a nascent but growing phenomenon that has rather specific agendas, for example pertaining to economic demands, environmental protection, an end to human rights violations, or withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)³, among others. Most of these demands figure in the statements of the broader political coalitions mobilised by mainstream political parties and separatists. Recognising the rich, complex and multi-layered character of the Kashmir issue is important not only for understanding the structural causes of this conflict but also for creating critical political spaces that allow an exploration of ways and means to find a just, viable and lasting solution (Behera 2006, 263-264). The government of India and the state government of J&K have addressed these numerous demands for more self-determination with different governance initiatives, two of which are the Autonomous Hill Councils in Ladakh and the recent local elections throughout J&K.

1.1 Governance Mechanisms and Processes

Autonomous Hill Councils in Ladakh: A Successful Experiment

The unitary character of the J&K state constitution had led to a concentration of powers in the Kashmir Valley, often at the expense of Jammu and Ladakh. Historically, people in the Ladakh region – especially in Leh – felt neglected by the Valley-centric state administration which paid little attention to this far-flung and scarcely populated cold desert region in the state's developmental agenda; they also felt marginalized by central government policies which accorded a certain veto power to the ruling establishments in Srinagar (Behera 2006, 116-118). In 1980, agitation by the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) and its demand for Union Territory status heralded an internal power shift. The tripartite talks between New Delhi, Srinagar and LBA leaders in October 1989 led to an agreement whereby the LBA withdrew the demand for Union Territory status in favour of an Autonomous Hill Council (AHC) at district level. It was accepted as a compromise to provide a mechanism for self-governance by granting autonomy to Ladakh in administration, economy and planning. It took another six years to overcome the opposition by Kargil and, more importantly, the state administration in Srinagar, before the central government finally relented and the Ladakh AHC was established by law in May 1995. The relevant Act provided for an AHC for both Leh and Kargil and an inter-district advisory council to advise them on matters of common interest (Behera 2006, 117-118).

In the interviews conducted by the PRIA research team, there was a widespread view that development in Leh has fared much better under the AHC regime than in the old bureaucratic system and people feel more empowered in the new system. More importantly, the focus of discussions with elected councillors,

³ The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) is an act which, since July 1990, gives special powers to the security forces in the areas that are defined as 'disturbed', which include Jammu and Kashmir as well as states in the North East of India. It allows the security forces (regardless of rank) to either detain a person without accountability or to resort to violence, up to the point of causing death, against a person who is acting – according to the judgment of the security forces – suspiciously and against law and order. By doing so, the security forces enjoy full impunity. For more details, see the chapter on Nagaland in this report.

panches and *sarpanches*⁴, civil society representatives, especially the leadership of the LBA and Ladakh Muslim Association (LMA), and government officials was on streamlining and augmenting the funds flowing from different sources. With regard to the development projects, the elected councillors shared their concerns and views about the mega-projects in the power generation sector, electronic connectivity, and establishing an all-weather road network with the rest of India. Furthermore, they were concerned about the promotion of the tourism sector, the micro-level plans in the health sector, the education sector, and building small roads and bridges connecting far-flung places within the district.

The story in Kargil is rather different. The reason why the predominantly Shia Muslim populace of Kargil initially did not accept the AHC was partly because they resented the Leh-centric concept of the Ladakh region. They believed that the Buddhist majority in Leh would continue to overshadow Kargil's identity. Another reason was that they did not wish to antagonise the Kashmiri leadership in Srinagar. They therefore decided to postpone a final decision on the AHC until the turmoil in the Valley was resolved. Almost a decade later, they realised that the AHC offered benefits in terms of empowering the local communities to decide and implement their development priorities and hence the Kargil AHC started functioning in 2008. While the predominant opinion among interviewees is that the AHC has empowered them and has proved to be a better mechanism for expediting the development of the district, there remains a small section of people who accuse the elected councillors of being more corrupt and courting favour with government officials; these people therefore prefer the previous system. At the same time, however, the focus of discussions with the research team still revolved around the development agenda for the Kargil district and how it could "catch up" with Leh, which was widely perceived to be far ahead. This is partly because Leh's AHC started functioning as early as 1995 and partly because many believe that Leh is favoured by the central government in New Delhi. The sectoral debate within the development agenda was not much different, except that demands were articulated more vociferously, particularly with regard to better aviation services, since Kargil remains cut off for nearly six months a year.⁵

Generally speaking, the AHC's institutionalisation has proved to be a successful experiment to the extent that it has validated the principle of creating alternate and intermediary layers of governance for meeting the political and developmental aspirations of the people of a specific region through constitutional measures. The AHC has empowered the local stakeholders – both Buddhist and Muslim communities – to decide their own development priorities. It may be noted, though, that in the first decade of the AHC's work, the new governance mechanisms failed to meet popular expectations both because, from above, the state government was not quite willing to share powers with the newly elected councillors of AHC and, from below, the district-level bureaucracy was reluctant to accept the new framework of accountability that had posited the elected councillors as their new political masters. However, the insights gained from the field work carried out as part of the CORE project clearly show that this is a thing of the past and the AHC has indeed succeeded in bringing about a substantive transformation in the realities on the ground.

Establishing the AHC has shown how transforming governance mechanisms and processes can help ameliorate a conflict and bring about substantive changes both in terms of redressing the alienation of particular communities and changing the situation on the ground. Overall, the elected representatives both at the level of the AHC and the *halqa panchayats* are more focused on finding ways and means of putting Leh and Kargil on the fast-track path of development while realising that the real challenge lies in ensuring that its dividends are equitably shared among all the communities. The AHCs have transformed the political discourse from an overwhelming focus on demanding Union Territory status with an implicit separation from J&K state, to prioritising the developmental needs of the region by learning to effectively exercise the powers vested in their respective councils.

⁴ The *sarpanch* is the head of the village-level *panchayat*; the *panches* are the elected representatives at village level.

⁵ Interview with Navnita Behera, March 8, 2013.

The Local Elections in Jammu and Kashmir in 2011

The elections to the village councils or *halqa panchayats*⁶, as they are called in J&K, which were held in all three administrative entities after a decade-long hiatus, had raised great hopes and expectations for the people of J&K.⁷ There are several reasons why the *halqa panchayat* elections of 2011 were unprecedented in many respects and, consequently, held out considerable promise. To begin with, they were seen as a step to strengthen and exploit people's potential at the grassroots in matters of development through self-governance. In the interviews, this perception was shared by the local communities (DasGupta & Singh 2012a,b,c), and it is assumed by the researchers that the mainstream political parties, as well as militant and separatist groups have the same perception. The elections were not linked to the larger conflict over Kashmir.⁸ This means that the elections were at least to some extent freed from the controversy that elections to the state legislative assembly and national parliamentary typically evoke due to the demands for self-determination articulated by a segment of the population, particularly in the Kashmir Valley.

Another positive sign was that the elections were held in all the *halqa panchayat* constituencies throughout the state of J&K and not just in some constituencies of the Valley, as had been the case in 2001. This created a new institutional mechanism at the village level with the potential to handle the devolution of functions, funds and functionaries.

The elections were conducted without overt intimidation by militants or security forces – the first to prevent people from voting and the second to force them to vote – two common complaints typically heard in the Kashmir Valley. There were no serious pre-election threats even from existing militants; separatists too did not actively ask people to refrain from voting in these elections. The elections were perceived to be fair and free not just by observers but also by the people themselves who welcomed them and were appreciative of the government for conducting them. There was an average unprecedented turnout of almost 80% in the state, including 80% turnout in the Kashmir Valley.⁹ After the elections, a committee was set up to present a detailed report on the devolution of powers to *panchayati raj* institutions, which also studied the orders of devolution of powers in other states of India in order to learn from best practice.¹⁰ Indicating that it meant business, the devolution of functions and activities of 14 departments to the *halqa panchayats* was specified in a government order.¹¹

The stage was therefore set to restore confidence, rebuild social bonds at the community level that had been eroded during years of violent conflict, and give people a sense of agency by providing them with an official institutional space to participate in decision-making and participatory planning. However, the real challenge was to sustain the process that had been started. If this opportunity was frittered away by poor execution, faulty implementation or lack of political will to keep going in the direction that had been set, the loss of trust that would follow could easily become irreparable.

⁶ *Halqa* means a village or such a contiguous number of villages as may be determined by the government from time to time. *Panchayat* refers to the elected council in the village. *Panch* refers to a member of the *halqa panchayat* whether elected or nominated – every *halqa panchayat* consists of not less than seven *panches*, including the head (who is called the *sarpanch* and is directly elected by the electorate of the *halqa panchayat*).

⁷ *Halqa panchayat* elections could not be held in 2006 for security reasons. The elections held in 2001 attracted a good turnout, ranging from 57% to 82% in the Jammu region and 70% to 77% in the Ladakh region, though the Kashmir Valley got a very poor response, with a turnout ranging from 32% to 66%. It must be noted, though, that in several constituencies in the Kashmir Valley, the 2001 *halqa panchayat* elections could not be held at all. For more information, see Ajit Kumar Singh, "J&K: Democracy and its Discontents," in *Outlook*, 4 July 2011 at <http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?277507>. Also, see Rekha Chowdhary, "Panchayat Elections in Kashmir: A Paper Exercise," in *Economic and Political Weekly*, 19 May 2001, pp. 1674-1675.

⁸ See <http://tehelka.com/however-much-the-government-tries-to-protect-panches-and-sarpanches-they-will-be-targeted/>

⁹ According to Ali Mohammad Sagar, J&K's minister for rural development and *panchayats*, around 85% of the population participated in the process. He made these comments at the capacity building training that J&K *panchayati raj* functionaries held in Srinagar on 22-23 August 2012. This was witnessed by the PRIA research team.

¹⁰ See http://jkgad.nic.in/statutory/Report_PRLs.pdf

¹¹ No. 1126-GAD dated 22-09-2011

Local-level Government Policies in Jammu and Kashmir

J&K is a special case when it comes to local governance. Unlike the other states of India, J&K has its own state-level constitution. Article 370 of the Indian constitution provides for more sovereignty for J&K regarding state affairs. This means that except for defence, foreign affairs and communications, the Indian parliament needs the J&K state government's agreement for implementing any other law. Thus, the people of J&K are governed by a distinct set of laws, including those related to citizenship, property, and fundamental rights.

This also pertains to the local governments. The *halqa panchayat* elections of 2011 were conducted under the J&K Panchayati Raj Act of 1989. The 73rd and 74th amendments to the Indian constitution, which recognise *panchayats* and municipalities as government entities and lay the principles for devolution through *panchayati raj* institutions for all states in India, are not applicable to J&K, unless specifically adopted by the state assembly. The Jammu and Kashmir *Panchayati Raj Act* of 1989 was amended in 2004 to provide for reservations of seats for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and women, and the 2011 amendments brought it in line with those parts of the 73rd and 74th amendment relating to setting up a state election commission. To understand the full scope of the Jammu and Kashmir *Panchayati Raj Act* of 1989, it should be read along with the *Panchayati Raj Rules* adopted by the state government in 1996.¹

In all three administrative entities of J&K, only the district planning, the development body and the *halqa panchayats* (village level) have been constituted. The Block Development Councils have not yet been formed. This is a major complication in terms of the recently held elections, since the Block Development Council is essential to link the village level government with the district level government regarding the flow of development plans and funds (DasGupta & Singh 2012b, 4; THP 2007).

Clearly, the successful holding of *halqa panchayat* elections in 2011 generated enormous expectations in the minds of the people across the state, particular in the Kashmir Valley. The widespread expectation among the newly elected representatives interviewed was that decision-making power on the specified subjects would be handed to locally elected leaders who would also get the funds and functionaries to decide on their local development priorities (DasGupta & Singh 2012a, 2). The interviews conducted to map the hopes and expectations of these elected representatives, particularly in the Kashmir Valley, which had been the epicentre of years of political violence, echoed their hopes of turning a new corner in the local governance structures and processes (DasGupta & Singh 2012c, 9).

However, the high expectations that the fair and free elections had generated gave way to equally high levels of frustrations, even anger, among the local communities within six months of the elections. In their perception, the trust they had placed in the system by coming out to vote in large numbers had been betrayed. Nearly every elected representative to the village council across the Kashmir Valley and Jammu and to a lesser extent in Ladakh (where the picture is more complex because of the existence of AHCs) felt that the government had *not* done what it had promised by way of devolution of powers to the representatives as mandated by law. Conversations with elected *sarpanches* and *panches* some months after the elections indicated that people were confused, irritated, angry, and frustrated about the state of affairs – there was a litany of complaints about nothing having changed “on the ground” (DasGupta & Singh 2012a,b,c). Apart from the fact that funds and functionaries had not been devolved – the order devolving 14 functions to them remained what several *sarpanches* called a “paper exercise” – the elected representatives were also not clear about the scope of these devolved functions and how they were expected to execute them, nor did they think it was possible to do so without concomitant funds being allotted. Promises related to reimbursement for the campaigning expenses of the *sarpanches* and *panches* had not been met thus far, which was seen as a further betrayal. They were careful to distinguish this from the demands regarding the honorarium that is still being debated at the policy level. Yet, when the researchers met the state government officials in the secretariat in Srinagar and mentioned this, they were surprised to find that the existence of this order was unknown to some top officials. It is this lack of coordination and information between the elected representatives and the government functionaries that is feeding into an

already existing script of grief and grievances that have come out of long years of conflict (ibid., 2012a,b,c).

There was other evidence from the field at the community level that pointed to a communication and dialogue gap between the people and the government functionaries over *panchayat* matters. In interviews with elected *sarpanches* in the Kashmir Valley, the PRIA researchers found, for instance, that television and newspaper advertisements by the state government – making what the elected *halqa panchayat* representatives felt were bombastic claims – was adding to the simmering anger. A *sarpanch* in Budgam district, for instance, specifically drew attention to TV images showing *sarpanches* of a certain constituency receiving cheques and distributing them to the people. In an atmosphere where trust was yet to be re-established after years of conflict, this kind of media blitz simply triggered rumours and feelings of mistrust. It was likely to make people feel that their *sarpanches* may not have been transparent about funds they had received, whereas the reality was that the disbursement of funds specifically meant for the *halqa panchayat* institutions had not yet happened (DasGupta & Singh 2012a, 2, 4).

Unlike the Ladakh region, especially Leh, which has learnt over a decade-long period to negotiate with the multiple governance structures, the people in the Kashmir Valley are still experiencing disappointment on account of the confusion of roles and tasks between the different positions and levels in the governmental system that have sometimes even led to the halting of development schemes (ibid., 3). In other words, the new governance structures have yet to show substantive results in ameliorating the conditions on the ground and improving people's daily lives, and this diminishes people's faith in the state government's abilities to deliver on its promises. While this undoubtedly overshadows the relations between the elected representatives and the government officials at district and state level, it is important to keep in mind that the reluctance of the Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) to share power with *sarpanches* and *panches* in the state, and the Valley in particular, holds true for not only those belonging to the ruling coalition but also across the entire political spectrum (ibid.).

The Ladakh region brings forth a radically different picture, though there are significant internal differences between how the Leh AHC has been working with the *panchayat* institutions and officials from that of the Kargil AHC. First and foremost, there have been visible positive developments on the ground, particularly in the Leh district (DasGupta & Singh 2012b, 3-5). The elected councillors of the AHC had done the groundwork by putting an end to the contractor system and giving development-related work directly to the community. The *halqa panchayats* have further contributed to this bridge-building exercise between the people and the block and district-level bodies, which makes the people in the villages feel less isolated and more connected with the government structure of J&K (THP 2007). The *panchayats* have also brought in a level of transparency and accountability and people know where the money is being spent (DasGupta & Singh 2012b). Furthermore, micro planning, whereby *panches* and *sarpanches* are encouraged to draw up development plans for their respective villages in consultation with the local communities, has been introduced and strongly supported by the Leh district government.¹²

The situation in Kargil is, however, very different. The elected councillors of the Kargil AHC claimed that there is complete coordination between the AHC's work and the local *panches* and *sarpanches*. The district-level government officials' interactions with the common people in the far-flung villages, however, show a different picture. Many of the *panches* and *sarpanches* accused councillors of favouritism in allocation of funds and speedy execution of development projects falling under their own constituencies, often at the cost of those belonging to the opposition parties' councillors. Some of them voiced their preference for the old system in which government officials called the shots because even though they were tardy in making progress, the funds were shared more equitably, while others highlighted the accusations of the lack of transparency and corruption in the development projects being carried out in the Kargil district.¹³

This was in direct contrast to what was heard in the Leh district, albeit quite similar to that of the Valley, where no level of transparency had been established during the time of the field visit. The people of Leh felt

¹² Interview with Navnita Behera, March 8, 2013.

¹³ Interview with Navnita Behera, March 8, 2013.

included and unlike before, did not feel left out of the development process. This feeling of being included as part of the development process was termed as having found ‘*azadi*’, which means ‘freedom’. This was an interesting finding, and gives a completely new meaning to what the word *azadi* means for people in Leh in contrast to those in the Valley. In Leh, it was looked upon as more accountability, transparency, devolution at the grassroots level with increased people’s participation in the larger democracy and not being left out of the development process vis-à-vis Kashmir. In the Valley, *azadi* was often equated with political independence or at least the right to self-determination, or various degrees of autonomy from the Indian state.

As DasGupta points out, drawing on the PRIA fieldwork on *panchayat* elections, the varied expectations and perceptions of different players (the community, the elected representatives, the state government and its functionaries), both in terms of the significance of the elections and its intended outcomes, could have been harmonised if a process of dialogue and communication had ensued. In the absence of this vital dialogue between the different actors, a trust deficit was created and the initial euphoric moment after the successful holding of elections soon gave way to anger and frustration and later fear among the community following militant threats, and these feelings were palpable in the interviews with the communities at the village level across the state of J&K. Managing people’s expectations and creating a dialogical space could have turned the tide and ensured that the high expectations did not give way to the equally high level of frustration and what was perceived to be a breach of trust in the absence of visible changes at the grassroots level. In an atmosphere in which trust had in fact become the first casualty, as can be expected in a zone of protracted militarised conflict, the anger and frustration at the local level over this specific issue have tended to be drawn into the larger conflict script around the general denial of justice and democracy in J&K.¹⁴ The statements made by the political leadership in New Delhi that sought to use the turnout at the *panchayat* elections to showcase to the world that this was a referendum against Pakistan and terrorism was in fact the cause of open umbrage by militant outfits, including the Hizbul Mujahideen, who claimed that the original stated purpose of these polls was now being used for a different political purpose and the elected representatives should in fact resign to avoid attacks.¹⁵

2 Actors and Their Positions

2.1 Citizens of the Kashmir Valley, Jammu and Ladakh

The people in J&K had high hopes for grassroots democracy especially from a local self-governance initiative such as the *panchayats*, which would enable them to decide their priorities and development needs.¹⁶ They would like to have an approachable local level government that is better attuned to their needs and empowered to address their specific local requirements. In conversations during the field research, people, particularly in the Kashmir Valley, made an implicit and qualitative differentiation between the local-level elections and the assembly or national elections by displaying a much higher level of ownership of the local elections, which they regarded as being “their” elections in which they had actively participated, as compared to the state assembly and parliamentary elections. The elected representatives to the village council were seen as more approachable and less susceptible to the corruption with which the political class in Jammu and Kashmir is typically associated in the minds of the people (DasGupta & Singh 2012a, 2).

¹⁴ Interview with Sumona DasGupta, March 20, 2013.

¹⁵ See <http://tehelka.com/however-much-the-government-tries-to-protect-panches-and-sarpanches-they-will-be-targeted>

¹⁶ <http://72.78.249.187/SakaalTimesBeta/20110422/5388365721510897798.htm>

Furthermore, with the local government structures based in their village or block, they expected to be in a better position to control and oversee the processes of devolution of powers. They hoped they would have the chance to track the process of their development plans and demands, as well as the responses to them by the district and state government. In sum, they wished to be part of the *halqa panchayat* and bring in their views and ideas, as representatives and members of the local village community.

2.2 Elected Councillors

The elected councillors believe that the Autonomous Hill Councils have proved to be an effective instrument, attributing their success to their own efforts and, to some extent, New Delhi's support. Especially in Leh, the grievances vis-à-vis the state government persist. Earlier, the councillors accused the state administration of not releasing the funds in time, which led to the regular situation that the funds lapsed since these funds only have six months of operational time on account of the difficult terrain and weather conditions. More recently, they have argued that the main problem is a lack of adequate funds and the fact that the ruling regime devotes minimal resources to Ladakh from the state sector funds. The Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) has been at the forefront of the agitation in Leh but it seems to have taken a back seat with regard to the governance processes, even though its ability and power to mobilise the people remain undiminished. At the same time, it is important to note that in Leh, many people still think that while the AHC is good, getting the status of a Union Territory would be better. Hence, that agenda has not been completely abandoned yet. On the whole, the political leadership in Leh is much better educated, is politically more aware of its rights, and has a better pool of technical and intellectual knowledge and expertise for realising popular aspirations for Leh's development. The political leadership in Kargil, on the other hand, is acutely conscious that they are lagging far behind and realise that not accepting an AHC for their district much earlier was a strategic error. Now they seek parity with Leh in terms of funds allocation for spearheading the development work in their district. Significantly, the leadership in Kargil does not support the demand for Union Territory status and instead demands a Greater Ladakh and is lobbying for an all-year-round road connection.

2.3 State Government of Jammu and Kashmir

By holding *halqa panchayat* elections, the state government showed it was committed to adopting a people-centred approach to bring about the democratisation of governance and development. It also laid the ground for future transformation of conflicts since elections are a means of political freedom, justice, inclusion, and representation. By holding the *panchayat* elections, the state government had also hoped to avail itself of the central assistance of about Rs. 20 billion under various schemes for rural development during the 13th Finance Commission period from 2010 to 2015. It may be noted that the state had suffered a loss of at least Rs. 12 billion as central assistance during the 12th Finance Commission due to its failure to hold *panchayat* elections in 2006.¹⁷ In addition, with the elections and the implementation of an added layer of government at the grassroots, the state government expected to win the people's support and draw them away from pursuing separatist agendas and drive home the advantages of taking part in the democratic politics of the state. As we noted earlier, separatist and militant warnings on participating in these *halqa panchayat* elections were far more muted in 2011 as compared to similar elections held in 2001. For instance, the United Jihad Council's Head and the Chief of Hizbul Mujahideen Syed Sallauddin had earlier issued a statement to the effect that the *panchayat* elections were "only an administrative exercise

¹⁷ Ajit Kumar Singh, "J&K: Democracy and its Discontents," in *Outlook*, 4 July 2011 at <http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?27750>

and the militants had nothing to do with these polls.”¹⁸ However the Jamaat-i-Islami leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, viewed them as a “planned conspiracy to mutilate the Muslim identity of Kashmir.”¹⁹

3 Relations between Different Actors

The relations analysed in the following sections refer to the current status of local governance more than one year after the elections in all three administrative divisions of J&K.

3.1 Relations Between the Elected Representatives and District and State Government Officials

In the Kashmir Valley, the relations between the district and state-level government officials and the local elected representatives are often characterised by mistrust, disappointment, frustration and anger. Many of those interviewed are disappointed because they feel they have been taken for a ride by the state government, especially since they had campaigned for the *panchayat* elections with much effort, engagement and hope – yet they now feel like ‘toothless tigers’, without powers and tasks (DasGupta and Singh, 2012a).

Through the local elections, a huge new political class has emerged at the grassroots which has a great stake in governance, economic development measures, the transformation of the conflict, and issues of justice. There is therefore a need to create better communication links and convergence between the local bodies and other governmental bodies at different levels in order to realise the potential of local self-government at the village level. The absence of elections to the block and district level to date also implies that the potential of local self-governance remains untapped and the district-level boards consist only of officials nominated by the government.

The communication gap is creating an atmosphere of mistrust and anger in spaces where confidence and trust could have grown. For instance, the Institute of Management, Public Administration and Rural Development (IMPARD) in Srinagar, charged with the challenging task of training over 35,000 elected representatives, has technically completed the task of conducting the first round of the foundation course which was a huge logistic achievement. However, several *panches* and *sarpanches* claimed that these ‘trainings’ were mere ‘lectures’, referring to the non-participatory methodology of their delivery (DasGupta and Singh, 2012a, 3). Lessons learned from experiences of such training measures from around India could have been better integrated into the methodology of the capacity-building exercises to indicate that the government functionaries were serious about making the training meaningful rather than just fulfilling a technical obligation.

In the aftermath of the threats by militants in 2012, the question of security measures has also come up. The newly elected local representatives feel they have, on one hand, lost face with the local communities who see them as not delivering; on the other hand, they have to face the wrath of the militants who now feel vindicated that these elections were not able to deliver a new local level system after all. The former are waiting for development and services to be implemented in villages, while the latter threaten to impede elected local representatives from undertaking their work. The threats by the militants have

¹⁸ *The Telegraph*, 25 November 2011.

¹⁹ September 27, 2012, Kashmir’s besieged *panchayats* <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/kashmir-besieged-panchayats/article3939281.ece>

led *sarpanches* and *panches* in several districts in J&K to resign. In fact, more than 500 *panches* and *sarpanches* have resigned throughout J&K since the elections were held²⁰ in a situation where any killing of elected representatives produces psychological stress in an already fragile political system. Regardless of numbers, this adds to a fear psychosis that invariably follows long years of violent armed conflict. It has also been reported that around ten elected representatives were killed by militants, although militants have not claimed responsibility. These killings then triggered another round of resignations of *sarpanches* and *panches*. While it may be a logistic impossibility for the state government to provide security cover to over 35,000 elected representatives – the Indian Army has refused to do this, rightly pointing out that nowhere in the world can the army be expected to provide personal security – if the state government were to indicate its serious intention to bring the killers to justice, an element of trust could be restored. Trust is the basic ingredient for all peacebuilding efforts, and therefore, it is essential in building transparent relationships between the people and their government.²¹

A striking feature of the relationship between the elected representatives – especially the councillors and the government officials in the Ladakh region – pertains to the latter’s ethnic and religious affiliations, which are important factors in mediation processes. This is largely due to the fractured history of LBA’s agitation for Union Territory status in the 1980s when one of their main grievances was that the Srinagar administration always imposed Kashmiri Muslim bureaucrats on their region. These administrators were biased against the local populace and even favoured Kashmiri Muslims in awarding work contracts in different development projects and allowed Kashmiri traders and transporters to usurp the Buddhists’ business and job opportunities. As discussed earlier, the district-level bureaucracy was also most reluctant to accept the Chief Elected Councillor as its new boss. Significantly, however, this set of relationships has been transformed over the last decade and currently, the elected representatives and the district-level bureaucracy are working as a cohesive team. They coordinate well and make a good case for fast-tracking the development projects for the Ladakh region, both in Leh and Kargil.²² The only difference between the two districts is perhaps that the elected representatives in Leh still have reservations about the state-level bureaucracy, while those in Kargil are closer to the state-level bureaucracy.

3.2 Relations Between the Citizens and Local Elected Representatives

In addition to the lack of trust between the elected representatives and the state government, another layer of mistrust is slowly coming into existence – namely between the citizens and their elected representatives. On one hand, their desire to work on and address the neglected village issues is strong, and they are accountable to the citizens who elected them. On the other hand, the devolution of functionaries and funds by the state government has not yet occurred, and as a result, representatives are unable to undertake their work. In interviews, some *panches* and *sarpanches* admitted that they are “losing face” in the community, and in some cases, they have been “mocked” by community members for being powerless and not keeping promises made during the campaign – mainly promises regarding infrastructure development in the village (DasGupta & Singh 2012a, 2).²³ Since village life in J&K is “close-knit and [the] feeling of community and kinship ties are strong, (...) there is tremendous pressure on the ERs [elected representatives] to perform their duties well” (CORE 2012, 6). Some people in Jammu even shared their concern that the *panchayat*

²⁰ <http://www.insightonconflict.org/2012/11/political-peace-in-jammu-and-kashmir/>; <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/from-hope-and-history-to-fear-and-helplessness-in-a-year/950696>

²¹ *ibid.*

²² Interview with Navnita Behera, March 8, 2013.

²³ Since there were local-level elections in Ladakh back in 2001, people were better prepared and knew more or less what to expect after the elections were held. Therefore, they were more patient and sympathetic towards the newly elected representatives and of the length of time taken before receiving the funds and services from Srinagar (DasGupta & Singh 2012b, 5).

elections have affected and harmed relationships within their community and families. If there is no trust within the communities, it is difficult to uphold a local democratic system (DasGupta & Singh 2012c, 7).

The situation in the Ladakh region is quite different. This region also faces the problems associated with multiple stakeholders, as there is an added layer of elected councillors along with the *panches* and *sarpanches*. In fact, there is yet another category of revenue officials, locally called the ‘*Goba*’, who are responsible for maintaining land records and the birth and death records of local people. They feel marginalised after the election of *halqa panchayats* as some of their powers are now being exercised by the *panchayats*. Likewise, the elected councillors who had struggled hard to win their powers from the state bureaucracy were somewhat reluctant to share it with the *panches* and *sarpanches* initially, but as explained earlier, this situation, along with the much deeper ties between different elected representatives and the local communities in Leh, has been transformed over the past decade and the people at the grassroots level feel much more empowered. The story in Kargil is, once again, a little different because some segments of the local communities of those areas do not have any faith in the elected councillors and view them through the lens of their political party affiliations. Some of the *panches* and *sarpanches* also feel that they are not getting their due from the elected councillors, though interestingly, the latter insist that the new governance structures and processes are working very well.

4 Role of Culture and Identity in the Relations

4.1 The Culture of Conflict

The newly elected bodies in J&K are not the only ones which have experienced a lack of or delay in the devolution of powers. This occurs in many other states around India as well. What is specific to J&K, however, is the long history of conflict, which has left its mark and continues to amplify this lack and delay. The frequency of fights, injustice and atrocities during the past 20 years of violent conflict and an ever-present security apparatus of the AFSPA among the people have created a history of hostilities, grievances, and a culture of mistrust and fear. Therefore, every step made by the government is weighed and checked by the people with great suspicion and caution.

The local-level elections could have contributed to confidence and trust-building efforts to improve relations. However, due to mismanagement and a lack of communication, the elections have instead refreshed and even reinforced the distance between the state government and the people of J&K. The lost opportunity during 2011-2012 has fed directly into existing grievances (CORE 2012, 6-7). In a conflict environment where mistrust, suspicion and hostility are pervasive, such gestures can inflict significant damage on community and political relationships. If not addressed, these issues can have serious repercussions for the conflict environment, particularly when such gestures are carelessly repeated over and over again. The government officials’ lack of sensitivity towards this legacy of past grievances strongly impacts on their relationship with the people of J&K (ibid.).

4.2 Identity and Discrimination

The identity faultlines within the state of Jammu and Kashmir also percolate into the relationships between the elected representatives at all levels, including those in village councils. A genuine process of devolution

would in fact mitigate these sub-regional grievances as funds would be channelled through their local representatives into the villages, but until this becomes a reality, the overall identity issues within the state will continue to cast a divisive shadow over the way politics play out at all levels, including locally. Identity issues play an important role in the relations between elected local representatives from the administrative areas of Jammu and Ladakh and the state government in the Kashmir Valley. As it stands, there are cross-cutting cleavages based on multiple identities ranging from a regional divide (demographic belongings – Jammu versus the Valley, Ladakh versus the Valley and so on) to ethnic and religious divides that have been articulated and mobilised to achieve various political objectives in all three administrative entities of J&K. It is worth noting here that, before British colonisation, the identity divide was of marginal importance. The residents of the region at that time had been living in mixed communities for many centuries. They had very different social and religious origins and practices that they followed. People had plural identities without clear demarcations between them. For example, regarding religion, Buddhists routinely performed Hindu and Muslim practices, while Hindus and Muslims performed each other's as well as Buddhist practices. There were also contextual differences in the practices and customs within the same religion. Unlike today, the traditional religions, castes and social groups were not demarcated systems of belief and were not principally territorial (Behera 2000, 35).

However, this experience of multiple equal identities changed due to a number of policies adopted by governmental and non-governmental actors during colonial times, with the partition of India and Pakistan and the inclusion of a part of Kashmir in the Indian Union. The British brought instruments to map and enumerate aspects. Religion, language and demographic aspects were meticulously recorded, in order to classify and survey society. With an 'either-or' rationale, people were classified as Hindu, Muslim or Buddhist. Their former plural identities had no space within these fixed categories. People had to prioritise their identities and had to choose some aspects of their identity to be more important than others. Thus, "colonial modernity had fundamentally changed the conceptualisation of an identity in that it inculcated a strong sense of self versus other among individuals as well as communities" (ibid., 40). This clearly shows how cultural differences are socially created, in the case of Kashmir by dividing them into different categories and by documenting them in a classification system. As stated in part 1 of this report, the intentional identification and propagation of differences between people and groups are clearly an act of power (Hall 2000, 18) and can lead to exclusion and even hatred. Differences all of a sudden justify exclusion and discrimination. This is what happened in Kashmir during the Dogra Dynasty from 1846 to 1947. The different Muslim groups were discriminated against and treated as second class citizens. They were denied participation in state service and the right to own weapons, and the peasantry was highly taxed and denied any property rights. Furthermore, they were excluded from modern education, and their religious buildings were confiscated by the government. The experience of being discriminated against led to the need to stand together as Muslims and protect their collective interests. They developed considerable solidarity and a new consciousness about their common cultural aspects such as language, rituals, and customs. This led to the rapid growth of the political consciousness of Muslims and the potential for collective action and protest in order to influence the political processes. Thanks to classification numbers, they became aware that they were the majority compared to the other religious groups. The scattered Muslim groups organised themselves for the first time under the umbrella of the All-Jammu & Kashmir Muslim Conference in 1932. Thus identities emerged along ethno-religious alignment and antagonised other such identities, the main identities being Dogras versus Kashmiris and Muslims versus Hindus. Which group benefited the most politically was dependent upon that group's ties to the state representatives. The majority consciousness by the Muslims in J&K was based on the "myth"²⁴ of Muslims suffering under the rule of outsiders, mainly represented by the Hindu Dogra rule (Behera 2000, 45-47). Thus, the Kashmiri-Muslim identity was created and societal and identity issues were culturalised.

²⁴ It is a myth in the sense that there was no enumerated Muslim community before (Behera 2000, 47).

The consciousness of identity and the division between the different emerging identities became even more important in 1947 with the partition of British India into the two sovereign and independent states of India and Pakistan. The partition was organised on the basis of religious demographics. Hindus and Muslims were divided and ‘exchanged’ over the new borders or ‘line of divide’, as it was called by the residents from both sides. With independence, India became a nation state, according to which the only repository of political power lies with the state and is exercised by the majority of its residents (Behera 2006, 105). The majority at this time in the Indian-administrated Kashmir – the state of J&K – comprised the Kashmiri Muslims under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah²⁵. Identity then became a political issue. For example, Sheikh Abdullah tactically changed the conception of Kashmiri identity, which included all residents from J&K state regardless of religion and ethnicity, into one that only designated the Kashmir Valley Muslims, because the latter constituted his main support base on the Indian side of Kashmir (ibid., 113).

These historical events regarding the creation of identities are partly responsible for the violent conflict in the Kashmir Valley and surroundings between 1989 and 1996. They also influence to a great deal the current relations between the state government, the elected local representatives and the communities of J&K. During the Dogra Dynasty it was the Muslims that were discriminated against; however, with independence, the discrimination shifted away from the Muslims in the Valley towards the residents of Jammu and Ladakh. This is mainly because the “unitary state structures and parochial policies of the National Conference government favoured the Valley in political, economic, and administrative matters, leaving Jammu and Ladakh feeling neglected and marginalised, and prepared to seek separation from the Valley” (ibid., 109). This discrimination manifested in funds allocation to the different administrative entities (including the local bodies), job quotas in the government, and representation in the government on all levels. For example, Jammu has fewer government employees than the Kashmir Valley although it contributes a higher amount of taxes. Jammu also receives a much smaller part of the budget for development. Similar discrimination affects the residents of Ladakh. Additionally, professional and technical institutions are located in the Kashmir Valley and are therefore less accessible for the people from Jammu and Ladakh (ibid., 122). The residents from Jammu and Ladakh therefore feel neglected and excluded from the politics and decision-making of J&K.

The long-lasting discriminatory practices along identity lines have left traces and memories that play into the current relations between the different identity groups and the government. Since the political party landscape follows the same identity lines, this discriminatory history plays into state and local politics as well. While currently the Muslims from the Valley dominate state politics, all other identity groups feel (and are) underrepresented and neglected. An interpretation of the underrepresentation and the neglect as a matter of identity becomes very tempting. This interpretation unfortunately increases the mistrust among the residents of Jammu, Ladakh and the Kashmir Valley. The numerous policies and politics that attempted to divide people based on their religion (the partition, the banishment of the Hindu Pandits from the Valley, the social boycott of Muslims in Leh district during the 1989 agitation) have forced people’s religious identity to become more and more central to politics and discriminatory practices.²⁶

²⁵ Known as the *Sher-e-Kashmir* (the Lion of Kashmir), Sheikh Abdullah was one of the most important political figures in the modern history of Jammu and Kashmir and the leader of the National Conference (Kashmir’s largest political party).

²⁶ It is, however, important to keep in mind that the three religious groups are not homogeneous. The different groups of Muslims living in the Kashmir Valley, in Jammu and in Ladakh have different political aspirations. The Muslims in Ladakh and Jammu, for example, also feel neglected and not represented by the Muslim government in the Valley, and the Ladakhi Buddhists feel politically closer to the Hindus in Jammu than to the Muslims in the Kashmir Valley (see Behera 2006).

5 Conclusion

The inability to translate promises into practice by not devolving funds and functionaries to elected representatives several months after their election, and the failure to complete the process of local elections beyond the *halqa panchayats* by holding elections at the district and block levels, have both had a negative impact on the relationship between the people, the newly elected local representatives, and the state government. This failure has fed into identity and discrimination issues as well as into the culture of mistrust which exists after such a long-lasting conflict. The condition of the relationship is very fragile, and every mistake adds to the chasm between the people, the newly elected local representatives, and the state government. The absence of dialogue has made the distance between the people, the elected local representatives, and the state government even wider. Sadly, these elections remain a governance initiative which has not contributed to building peace in J&K. The elections are a missed opportunity, since “peace is always built on trust and it is the most fragile ‘political freedom’ to be protected for future resolution of the conflict.”²⁷

What happened in J&K is evidence that elections without a serious follow-up (the establishment of local and block-level bodies, serious training for the newly elected, and the proper devolution of funds and powers to the local bodies) do not lead to a positive outcome. Additionally, the belief or assumption by the state government of J&K and the government of India – which strongly supported the elections – that the local elections and the establishment of local bodies will address the larger fallout of the conflict – namely the broken trust and absence of participatory governance at the local level – has not been realised. In view of the multi-dimensional nature of this conflict, and developments over the past two decades, processes involved in addressing all the issues at stake are unfolding in different ways and, in all probability, may have different outcomes as well.

²⁷ <http://www.insightonconflict.org/2012/11/political-peace-in-jammu-and-kashmir/>

Bihar & Jharkhand

1 Background¹

In Bihar and Jharkhand, the everyday life of the residents is overshadowed by violent incidents and conflicts among different actors. The root causes of the conflicts are century-old inequalities and injustices between different societal groups, namely between classes, lower and higher castes, tribes and non-tribes, and women and men. The inequalities mainly pertain to social rights, land rights, use of resources, political power and representation. A leftist political and often violent movement, usually referred to as the Naxal movement², has been present in central India since the 1960s and in Bihar and Jharkhand since the 1980s, with the aim of addressing these inequalities. Itself consisting of members of the oppressed lower castes and tribes, the growing movement started with redistributing land from the rich landlords to the poor labourers, and more recently is involved in a levy economy and the “protection business” (see below). The violent conflict between the various emerged splitter groups of the Naxalites and the government has over the years become the centre of attention, while the original conflicts between different classes, castes, tribes and genders have faded from the spotlight but nevertheless remain unresolved.

¹ This chapter is partly based on the field research carried out by Amit Prakash, Imran Amin and Rukmani Joshi at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in New Delhi, India, in the framework of the CORE project. Research was carried out in Bihar and Jharkhand on various occasions in 2011 and 2012. Two unpublished fieldwork reports have been drafted based on the research: *Thematically Arranged Fieldwork Report Bihar Jharkhand* and *Report on Preliminary Field Study of Bihar and Jharkhand*. Both reports have partly established the topics and analysis for this chapter. Furthermore, the research carried out by the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group in the framework of the CORE project which is recorded in the two published reports *Governing Caste and Managing Conflicts Bihar, 1990-2011* by Manish K. Jha & Pushpendra, and *Governing Flood, Migration, and Conflict in North Bihar* by Mithilesh Kumar, have likewise informed parts of this chapter.

² Naxalites or Naxals are the supporters of the Naxal movement, which started in the 1960s in a village in West Bengal called Naxalbari (Verma 2011, 4).

2 Actors and Their Positions

2.1 Naxalites

Originally with a strong leftist ideology informed by Marxist, Leninist and Maoist theories, the aim of the Naxalites – the “party for the poor” – was to bring justice to the local poor and downtrodden peasants by fighting the exploitative landlords and punishing the rich oppressors³ (Prakash et al. 2012a, 3). Thus, in the past, the diverse Naxal groups successfully achieved changes towards more justice for the poor and oppressed. They were able to achieve a reform of land rights and a transfer of land from the landlords to the poor landless labourers. Furthermore, they ensured that the labourers were paid higher wages, and improved property and housing rights for the poor. Most importantly, the Naxalites engendered a political consciousness among the poor and members of the lower castes and raised awareness of their rights. The poor and lower caste members “are now more autonomous and assertive and claim equal social space and rights in the villages” (Sahay 2008, 8). In this regard, the Naxalites addressed the root causes of the conflict between the poor, lower caste landless people and the rich landlords. They managed to dissolve the dependency of the landless on the landlords and to restore dignity and honour to the poor (Bhatia 2005, 1542-1543).

Besides the more positive achievements and initiatives, the diverse Naxal groups in the past also had negative effects on people’s lives. In their fight for more rights for the poor, the Naxalites “violated all the basic principles of human rights” (Sahay 2008, 9). Not only were the rich landlords, government officials and security forces brutally harmed, but all the residents in the areas of their influence became objects of the armed struggle and the frightening environment in the villages contributed to a worsening of living conditions. The Naxalites recruited men, women and children into their movements, forcibly displaced people, targeted schools, and prolonged the violent conflict (ibid.). Since some groups follow Mao’s dictum that political power is only achievable with violence, their activities have remained armed and are based on extreme violence (ibid.).

This was mainly true for the underground groups which exclusively worked with armed strategies. However, some Naxal underground groups realised the importance of forming open fronts in order to build mass mobilisation among the poor residents in the region and gain influence as political parties in government (Bhatia 2005, 1544). These gradually emerging aboveground movements organised nonviolent actions in the form of meetings, economic and social boycotts, people’s courts, rallies, marches, road blocks and strikes, but also in the form of cultural media such as songs and plays, which were particularly fruitful in the illiterate rural communities of Bihar and Jharkhand (ibid.). Although the aboveground and underground groups were organised in different structures and each had their own manifesto, they were closely connected (ibid., 1546). While the underground provided guidance and protection for the aboveground groups, the aboveground groups in turn provided the underground with logistical backing and cooperation in order to escape attacks by security forces (ibid., 1545-1546).

Over time, however, the aims of the Naxal struggle have changed. Nowadays, their leftist and pro-poor ideology has faded into the background, and their legitimacy among the poor has diminished. Their focus is more on the “business of protection” in which they compete with the government over the protection of the citizens (Shah 2010, 166). In this viewpoint, violence is no longer the end goal but rather a means to achieve the goal of protection. This will be elaborated further below. The Naxalites have also detected a lucrative way of sustaining themselves by developing a levy economy, which is directly linked with

³ Unfortunately, not much information is available that would shed light on the Naxalites’ perceptions. Most of the field research studies cover the opinion of the local residents. Nevertheless, some of the residents are members of a Naxal group, and their views are covered by Prakash et al., and hence by this text.

one of the government's responses to tackle the Naxal conflict, namely the development of the region. The development approach involves huge and expensive infrastructure and mining projects, which are implemented by local and outside contractors. The Naxalites demand levies from the contractors' funds that they have received from the government to implement the various projects (Prakash et al. 2012a, 12). By opposing development (Bhatia 2005, 1536), but taking high levies from the funds meant for development, the Naxalites have harmed the poor they have promised to fight for by inhibiting their region from being developed and the conditions of life from being improved.

In Bihar and Jharkhand, there are several Naxal outfits and factions present which operate with different approaches. The Communist Party of India (Maoist) CPI (Maoist), which in the region is still known under its former name, the Maoist Communist Core (MCC), is famous for its brutality and its armed struggle against the government. It does not interact with the government at any level and broadly rejects electoral politics, even at the *panchayat* level (Prakash et al. 2012a, 2, 5). Other Naxal groups in the region include the Tiritiya Prastuti Committee (TPC) and the Jharkhand Prastuti Committee (JPC), which are more open to interacting with the government (ibid., 6).

2.2 Central, State and District Government

In order to tackle the Naxal conflict, the central and state governments have started to address the root causes of the conflict (the inequalities between the classes, castes, tribes and non-tribes, women and men). The underlying premise is that if the people feel more equally treated, they will no longer have any reason to join the Naxalites. Therefore, the government follows an agenda of economic development, decentralisation and democratisation of local level government with the reservation of seats for the marginalised in the local governments (Ministry of Home Affairs 2011, 20-22). Furthermore, it tries to provide protection for its citizens from the Naxalites with an intensified presence of security forces. For this chapter, I will focus on the democratisation initiative by the government.

2.2.1 Panchayat and Citizens

The main part of the democratisation initiative is the establishment of, and support for, a democratic local government system. In India, democratically elected governmental bodies at village, block and district level – the *panchayati raj* or the *panchayats* – were constitutionally recognised in 1993. They were supposed to transform the unelected village level governance structure, which had existed for centuries, into a democratic system by enabling all local residents and actors to actively participate in local politics and decision-making, the local judiciary, and in the planning of development initiatives. At village level, it is mandatory for the *panchayat* to organise *gram sabhas* (village assemblies) at least twice and up to four times a year to review all development activities of a village. This is the place where the direct participation of the entire adult population within a *gram⁴ panchayat* area happens. In this forum, the citizens can decide on development plans and make suggestions and recommendations for the *gram panchayat* (Goel and Rajneesh 2003, 71-72).

The premise behind setting up a democratic *panchayat* system was that if the citizens can participate in local planning, decision-making and implementation, the processes and outcomes will become more efficient and adjusted to the local context. Additionally, due to the linkage between the local bodies and the district and the state government, the latter entities will gain a better overview and control of village affairs and developments. Furthermore, the traditional format of the *panchayats* that people were familiar and confident with was complemented with democratic norms and procedures such as equal and inclusive

⁴ "Gram" means village in Hindi and refers here to the political level (village level *panchayat*).

participation, free elections and decision-making. In this sense, the structure of the *panchayat* is a hybrid of a traditional format and democratic norms. The gradual implementation of these democratic values, however, should not be understood in a ‘pure’ form isolated from the context, but rather as embedded in a very specific context with specific circumstances and actors. Thus, the grade of democracy that is applied and the meaning that people attribute to democracy are highly context-specific, depending on the circumstances and actors involved.

The *panchayats* in Bihar only began to operate in 2001. Jharkhand, a new state founded in 2000, which was carved out of the existing state of Bihar, had the first local level elections in 2011, after a gap of 34 years. Since the establishment of the *panchayats* in Bihar and Jharkhand, its representatives have operated at the intersection of local communities, the state government, and the Naxalites. They are thus closely intertwined with these actors. This becomes evident when examining the elected local representatives’ procedures and tasks in their everyday work with citizens. For instance, the most demanding work that *panchayat* representatives have become engaged in is the job of ‘*panchayati*’ or dispute settlement. In Bihar, this task was enshrined in law in Bihar’s *Gram Nyayalayas Act*⁵ in 2008, whereas for Jharkhand, there is no such official provision for dispute settlement in the *panchayat* (Prakash et al. 2012a, 3, 7-8; Prakash et al. 2012b, 17).

3 Relations between Different Actors

3.1 Panchayats – Naxalites – Society

To demonstrate its disapproval of the government, the MCC has set up a parallel structure, which in certain regions is referred to as *lal sarkar*, which means ‘red government’⁶. It has formed its own councils and courts to offer the local communities a non-feudal alternative to the government and to the traditional unelected councils (Bhatia 2005, 1540; Sundar 2005, 4430).

The TPC and the JPC, Naxal groups who are more aboveground, sometimes become actively involved with the government, as long as it suits their objectives. They cooperate with state security forces in tracking and attacking the MCC, while information sharing occurs via mobile communication (Prakash et al. 2012a, 6). The TPC and JPC also offer dispute settlement to the people, and in some regions, they control the area with threats and the use of violence and coercion. These groups routinely intimidate and warn *panchayat* members to be just to the poor people and to avoid the involvement of the police when settling conflicts (Prakash et al. 2012, 8). The TPC and JPC also take over cases from the *panchayats* if the people are not satisfied with the outcome in the *panchayat*. Naxal members and their sympathisers prefer disputes to be resolved by Naxal leaders rather than *panchayat* representatives. In such a case, the Naxalites meet with the local *panchayat* representatives and discuss the case. Frequently they come to the same decision as the *panchayat*, and the disputed parties have to accept the decision because of the sometimes violent penalties otherwise imposed by the Naxalites. If the other party is a Naxal member or sympathiser, or a member of another Naxal group, things can get complicated and can often end in a turf war. In such cases, *panchayat* members’ only choice is to withdraw their decision and involvement in the case in order to avoid violent

⁵ The Gram Nyayalayas Act aimed to establish courts at village or district level and provide people in rural areas with access to inexpensive justice. Its presiding officer (Nyayadhikari) is a strictly judicial officer and is appointed by the state government in consultation with the High Court. The Gram Nyayalaya deals with criminal cases, civil suits, claims and disputes (<http://www.vindianz.com/news/gram-nyayalaya-204427.html>)

⁶ According to Bhatia, the form and language the people choose when they approach the Naxalite parties are equal to those of petitions made to the (official) government (2005, 1540). Sundar also explains how the Naxalites have formed their own village assemblies in order to replace the traditional ones which they believe function in a feudalistic way (2005, 4430).

attacks, which invariably diminishes people's trust and confidence in the *panchayat* itself as a dispute settlement entity (ibid., 7).

Apart from dispute settlement, the TPC and JPC engage in *panchayat* elections as voters and candidates, and encourage their supporters and relatives to contest elections. For example, in several cases in the area under examination the head of the village *panchayat* – the *Mukhiya* – is the wife of a Naxal member and through her, the group exerts its power. The Naxalites thus take advantage of the *panchayat* as a platform to exercise dominance and influence, and to mobilise new supporters.⁷ By participating, the Naxalites sometimes intimidate voters and candidates from the communities to the extent that the voters and candidates do not dare to contest results or seats because of the fear of retribution by the Naxalites (Prakash et al. 2012, 11). The fact that the TPC and JPC follow an approach that is dominating, threatening and intimidating towards the people in the *panchayat* is indeed frustrating.

However, when looking from a different perspective, another reality presents itself. The fact that these Naxal groups, which operate arbitrarily and use violence whenever they want, actually participate in the *panchayats*, or, in Amit Prakash's words, "feel constrained to partake of the growing legitimacy of the *panchayati raj* structure at the local level", is indeed a sign of how pivotal the political process in this region is and what an important institution the *panchayati raj* has become.⁸ Its embeddedness in the complex local political process and its principles of inclusion and equality make the *panchayati raj* a valuable and attractive institution for its constituencies. The Naxal groups are part of the *panchayats*, as are all the other actors – state bureaucracy, NGOs, political parties and their activists/leaders, etc. In the examples described above, these Naxal groups continue to exert influence and issue threats, which might become even easier for them if their members are local elected representatives in a *panchayat*. However, their participation could, in Prakash's view, very well risk undermining their own power and role.⁹ By participating in the *panchayats*, they make an ideological compromise by becoming part of a system – the government – that they actually oppose, thus risking the loss of credibility among their supporters. Several people, including governmental actors in Jharkhand, also stated in the interviews that giving the TPC and JPC a position in the official system and guaranteeing them a role in the local decision-making process could be an incentive for the movement to give up armed struggle (Prakash et al. 2012a, 11-12). The District Supply Officer of the Chatra district in Jharkhand believes that Naxalites participating in the *panchayat* is a positive development, because there, they can "vent their fears and anger and (...) contribute in the process of making better societies." He also thinks that "efforts need to be made to incorporate and merge the [N]axals within the [*panchayati raj*] system (...)" (ibid.). Time will tell whether the Naxalites' involvement in *panchayat* processes lead to a change in their activities. As of now, the fact that they participate in the local political process and that several people see an opportunity in the *panchayats* for such a positive change in the long run are positive outcomes in themselves.

3.2 Panchayats – State and District Government – Society

A closer look at dispute resolution gives an interesting and good illustration of the relationship between the district and state government, the *panchayat* members (elected local representatives), and citizens. For instance, in cases of citizens' protests and claim-making towards the state government, the *Mukhiya* takes on the role of a buffer and conveyer. Mithilesh Kumar (2012) explains this in the case of the floods that occurred in North Bihar in 2011 and the citizens' discontent with the state government's response and assistance. As the village level government entity, the *panchayat* is the first and closest governmental contact point for the citizens. When irritated citizens affected by the flooding appear at the *panchayat* office,

⁷ In some cases there are members of Naxal organisations who hold positions as chairs at district and state level (Prakash et al. 2012a, 11).

⁸ Interview with Amit Prakash, February 23, 2013.

⁹ ibid.

the *Mukhiya* has to acknowledge and record their grievances and convey them to the district government. With the *Mukhiya* cushioning the people's anger and translating their grievances into objective demands, the district chairperson does not have to deal with a mob of angry villagers but can rather sit and discuss issues quietly with only the *Mukhiya*. This process illustrates how the *Mukhiyas* manage the conflict and "ensures to a large degree that claim-making does not cross the tolerated boundaries" (ibid., 17). Kumar asserts that "local representatives come in handy to regulate the process of claim-making and evenly distribute and channel the pressure from below and between various organs of the state" (ibid., 17). In this case, the *Mukhiya* is given a prominent role and a great deal of responsibility by the government, which is visual proof of his or her empowerment as a local governmental representative. The conveyance of the constituency's grievances to the government is a chance for him or her and the constituency to have a stake in the governance processes. There is also a chance that the grievances will actually be heard and taken up by the government since they are transmitted in a tolerated and acceptable way. However, being caught between expectations of both the government and the constituency, the *Mukhiya* is in a difficult position and must master the challenging task of being tactical and finding a way to please both sides. He or she has to constantly strive for legitimacy from the government and his or her constituency.

3.3 Naxalites – State and District Government

As mentioned earlier, the MCC avoids any interaction with the government, considering it to be the enemy. The same is true for the government, which does not interact with the MCC. The government of India views the Naxal movement as the greatest challenge to the internal security of the nation (Indian Express 2010). In 2009, the Ministry of Home Affairs banned the Communist Party of India (Maoist) and branded it a terrorist organisation (MHA 2011, 21). The state of Bihar has also declared the MCC an unlawful association (Kujur 2009, 1). However, when looking more carefully at this absence of relations between the MCC and the government, some important links between the two parties can be identified. First, the state provides a major source of resources for the survival of the MCC. Through its approach of providing development packages to affected regions in response to the Naxal conflict, the government, in essence, 'feeds' its enemy and keeps it alive. Also, numerous rural elites and state officials have switched from supporting local politicians to supporting the MCC because they feel better protected by the MCC than the state: "[t]he people who represented the MCC are now the same as those who previously represented the state" (Shah 2010, 181-182). From the perspective of the people, the government and the MCC look very similar (ibid.). The Jharkhand state government clearly benefits from the MCC's presence in that it can expand its presence, increase its power and influence, and ask for additional resources from the central government in order to be able to tackle the 'Naxal problem'. Given that the MCC are now labelled as terrorists, the state government needs new resources to protect its citizens and arrest the terrorists under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (ibid.). This decision to apply the Act against the MCC further empowers the state government to declare the area as being in a 'state of exception', which implies that the government can delay, defer or even halt the implementation of the provisional rules under which it legally operates (ibid.).

Another link between the state government and the Naxalites is their competition for the 'market of protection' (Shah 2010, 166). Although the commodity that the MCC is associated with is violence, this violence is only a means, not an end, and thus "the commodity really at stake is protection" (ibid.). Ultimately, the state government and the Naxalites compete for more control over people's protection. In order to gain more supporters among the citizens, the MCC promises them protection from its own violent activities and from the state security forces. The government tries to provide shelter for its citizens from the 'terrorists' with help from security forces. The security forces' violent actions are a form of violence that becomes legitimate in the name of civilian protection (ibid., 166, 172-181). In Bihar and Jharkhand, the MCC so far beats the state in the contest of protection with the enchantment of armed power, and coercion, and thus gains more supporters, like the above-mentioned rural elites and state officials (ibid.,

180-182; Bhatia 2005, 1546). The state is losing the battle and therefore is also failing to protect its citizens. Consequently, as a further unpleasant development, the landlords and higher caste members, in order to protect themselves, have taken up their own fight by creating private armies. These armies – openly using the ideology of caste – brutally attack Naxalites as well as people of lower castes who the army members alleged to have supported the Naxalites. Sometimes, these armies work together with the state security forces, and thus contribute more violence to the already highly violent environment (Sahay 2008, 10-11). Against the backdrop of these caste armies, protection by the Naxalites becomes even more important for the members of lower castes. This creates a vicious circle: violence is used in order to provide protection from violence. But as can be seen in the cases of Jammu & Kashmir and Nagaland with regard to the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), protection through violence does not make the people feel any safer.¹⁰

3.4 Citizens between the State and the Naxalites

All violent incidents between the Naxalites and the state security forces described above take place at the expense of the poorest people. Local communities living in Bihar and Jharkhand are frequently trapped between the violent measures taken by the national and state governments (security forces), the caste armies, and the Naxalites. Whereas in the past, people joined the movement as a form of revenge against the rich (Prakash et al. 2012a, 3), now they join it in order to receive protection (Shah 2010, 166, 172-181). The Naxalites openly offer the people protection from their own violent activities and from state security forces, which also offers easier access to the informal levy economy of state resources. Once people have joined the Naxal network, there does not appear to be a way out. Naxal intervention is highly coercive and leaves villagers not only dependent on their protection, but also in great fear of their protector, such that non-cooperation becomes futile (Shah 2010, 177, 180). As members of a Naxal movement, people additionally have to fear the state security forces and the caste armies, because for the latter two, the people are now deemed terrorists and are treated as such (ibid., 177, 180; Kujar 2009, 4).

4 Role of Culture and Identity in the Relations

Relations between the residents of Bihar and Jharkhand, their elected representatives, the state government and the Naxalites are strongly influenced by identity issues, particularly caste and gender. This is due to a long tradition of categorising the society into castes and tribal and non-tribal groups, which was initiated by the British. Nowadays, identity recognition for the marginalised groups is assisted with the reservation/quotas of seats in local politics, quotas for government jobs, and benefits from development schemes. The beneficiaries are categorised according to caste, tribal and gender identity. The reservations are a measure to push forward the inclusion of marginalised groups in the decision-making process at the local level (Misra & Kudva 2008, 175). The following section explains the impact of the categorisation and reservation policy, but also the role that caste and gender play for the marginalised sections of society in Bihar and Jharkhand.

¹⁰ See the chapters on Jammu & Kashmir and Nagaland in this report.

4.1 Caste

Caste has not vanished from society and political affairs. Rather, caste appears to be a resilient and publicly legitimate category and institution. It is an important part of people's identity, and an instrument to spell out claims as a group (Jha and Pushpendra 2012, 4; Prakash et al. 2012a, 16). It gains even more importance due to its politicisation in electoral and other quotas. Caste identity plays a prominent role in government departments and the promotion of officials within them, the selection of beneficiaries for reserved seats and development schemes, in canvassing, and in the election of representatives (Prakash et al. 2012a, 16). As Jha and Pushpendra note, “[i]n a democracy, governed by the apparatuses of the modern juridical-administrative-political state machinery, caste has paradoxically come to occupy the center stage as a means of claiming a share in socio-political and economic resources, particularly by the underprivileged and the marginalized” (2012, 5).

Looking back into history, the caste system in India evolved in ancient and medieval periods, and aimed to vertically organise social, economic and political relations in the community. The concept of caste refers to “practices that ritualised the low status of certain castes, institutionalised humiliation and contempt, such as the practice of untouchability, and tied them tightly to economic bondage to make escape difficult, if not impossible” (ibid., 5). The oppression by higher castes and feudal elites was resisted by the vast masses of lower caste members in the form of protest movements for land and salaries, as well as by ‘sanskritisation,’ or following and imitating the rituals and practices of the upper castes.¹¹ The lower castes’ resistance in the best case improved their material situation, but not their position in the social hierarchy. Political and administrative power remained in the hands of the higher caste landowners (ibid., 5).

In order to bring change to this social hierarchy, the left wing parties “tried to transform the ‘caste social’ into ‘class political’” (ibid.). This transformation has been based on the scheduled categories and reservation system of seats for local assemblies for the socially and economically marginalised sections of society, a system which was created and introduced by the British. The government of India borrowed and adjusted these categories “in the form of identification and reservation of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in the postcolonial era” (ibid., 6).¹² Due to reservations based on these categories as well as the regularly occurring official census, the political and social groups in Bihar became aware that their internal solidarity could help establish a numerical superiority over the higher caste members. Elected low caste politicians have established parties along caste lines and are supported mainly by members of their caste. For example, at the state level, Lalu Prasad, the Chief Minister of Bihar between 1990 and 1997, is a member of the *Yadav* caste, a lower caste that is part of the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category. His political moves strongly supported his lower caste constituencies and clearly weakened the higher caste elites. For example, he managed to replace the elitist higher caste administration in the Bihar government with members from backward castes. Since the MCC also exhibits a clear majority of *Yadav* members, the organisation collaborated with Lalu Prasad, and they assisted each other in gaining more supporters (ibid., 14). Similar to the Naxalites, Lalu Prasad was able to encourage a greater sense of self-esteem, self-respect and pride among the members of the lower castes. Through his actions, they felt less ostracised by others due to their lower caste identity and began rather to feel proud of it (ibid., 8, 9). Hence, caste solidarity and support were an important part of electoral and party politics for the OBCs and clearly helped them to improve their political but also their economic and social conditions. In the late

¹¹ Sanskritisation means the adaptation of a higher Hindu caste's (Brahmin) practices, customs, ritual ideology, ideas, values, etc. by a member of a lower or middle Hindu caste, in order to climb up to a higher position in the caste hierarchy. In “the time of the Vedas (c. 1500 bc), people from many strata of society throughout the subcontinent tended to adapt their religious and social life to Brahmanic norms. This development resulted from the desire of lower-class groups to rise on the social ladder by adopting the ways and beliefs of the higher castes. Further, many local deities were identified with the gods and goddesses of the Puranas [collection of myths]” (Britannica, “Hinduism”: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/266312/Hinduism/8975/Other-sources-the-process-of-Sanskritization>); see also: Charsley (1998).

¹² Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are categories of historically disadvantaged people that are given recognition in the Constitution of India. See the Constitution of India: <http://lawmin.nic.in/olwing/coi/coi-english/coi-indexenglish.htm>

1960s, solidarity and support assisted the lower caste members to show their potential to take over control in the government and by the 1990s, they were able to secure their political power (ibid.). For the first time, it was possible for economically weak societal groups to gain political power. Members of lower castes now had the opportunity to become dominant in politics without (necessarily) being dominant in economic and social life. Political power and economic power became disconnected and economic dominance no longer guaranteed dominance in politics (ibid.).

Caste also plays an essential role in village level *panchayat* elections in Bihar (Sharma 2001, 1577, 1581). The field research revealed that people vote for members of their caste group because they assume that their elected candidate, if from the same caste, will feel “a moral duty to look after members of his caste” (Prakash et al. 2012, 18). As elected local representatives, the choice of beneficiaries for development schemes is made in favour of their own caste group. They further benefit members of their caste groups in the allocation of government funds (ibid., 17).

Not only the government and its official policies but also the different Naxal groups are organised along caste lines. Caste differences are often the reason for internal disputes and consequent splits in the armed groups. As mentioned earlier, MCC members mainly belong to the *Yadav* caste. While the MCC leadership has been dominated by *Yadavs*, the cadre used to be occupied by *Ganjhu* caste members. The fact that it was mostly *Ganjhus* who died in clashes with the security forces infuriated them. In their anger, they began to work against their leadership by informing the police about their leaders’ location and, as a result, the leaders were caught. The following turf war between the *Ganjhu* factions and the *Yadav* MCC forced the latter to leave the area (Prakash et al. 2012a, 18). In other cases, different caste groups have split from the MCC and formed their own groups.

As the above illustrates, caste plays an important role in local and state politics, as well as in the formation and dissolution of political movements such as the Naxal movement. This might indicate that the central and state government’s democratisation initiative with its reservation policies has assisted the members of lower castes to gradually become more influential in politics and build a coalition for power. However, it might also indicate that the work of certain politicians (as exemplified here with Lalu Prasad) as well as the Naxal movement’s effects on the members of lower castes’ self-esteem and identity have contributed to the political rise of the lower caste groups. A closer inspection reveals that the government reservations and the support by politicians and Naxalites have actually created a new elite among the members of lower castes and tribes. It is this newly emerged elite that benefits to a great extent from the achievements of redistributions (Shah 2010). This shows the limits of caste affiliation. Once a group of lower caste members have become better off, they start to support each other exclusively. The specific caste of the winning candidate or the influential person becomes more important than belonging to the same level of caste (e.g. OBC) (Prakash et al. 2012a, 17). It is no longer true that lower caste supports lower caste, but a specific lower caste supports the same specific lower caste. The affiliation to the other lower castes is less strong. Thus, the conclusion that can be drawn here is that the governmental initiative of democratisation, the reservation of seats and the provision of schemes have brought major improvement for a small number of people – the new elite – and have addressed their grievances of inequality and injustice towards members of higher castes and classes. But the poorer segments of the lower castes – the majority of society – remain excluded from decision-making and beneficiary development and funds. Their grievances remain largely unaddressed.

4.2 Gender

The field research carried out in Bihar and Jharkhand shows evidence that the reservation of seats has brought women into public life. Although in small steps, women have started to participate in local politics and decision-making (Prakash et al. 2012a, 19; Prakash and Amin 2012, 3). However, the often heard opinion in India that the quota approach is merely a superficial action and many of the elected women are influenced and controlled by male family members who function as their surrogate representatives seems to be at least partly true in Bihar and Jharkhand. In a patriarchal rural society in which women usually are not present in politics, this quota meets resistance and a lack of understanding from those who are more traditional.¹³ Most of the elected women are confronted with tasks and responsibilities new to them and are thus vulnerable to domination and wrong information. This is an explanation for why women in the case studies of Bihar and Jharkhand are often elected as dummy candidates in order to fill the reserved seats, but behind them are dominant men who play out their influence. In many cases, it is the woman's husband, the '*Mukhiya pati*'¹⁴, or another male member of her family who runs the *panchayat* office and organises local politics, while the actual elected female *Mukhiya* only attends the formal meetings with state officials, and even then she is accompanied by her husband (ibid., 19). In one case from Bihar, a woman was also elected as a dummy candidate by a local influential contractor, without her knowledge. Unlike other female candidates, she established herself as the head of the village and became popular, and was admired by the local community. Later, when she found out that the contractor had siphoned funds in her name (the reason why he elected her), she stood up to him and dauntlessly withstood his attacks, supported by the village community (Banerjee 2011).

This tactic of electing a woman as a dummy candidate in certain cases can certainly be seen as an abuse of the reservation policy. The women get elected, but they are hindered in performing their tasks as elected representatives. This can be interpreted as an example of an undesirable hybrid form of governance. Similar to the frightening way the Naxalites are engaging in *panchayat* elections, the misuse of the reservation policy reflects a combination of the election process (the woman indeed gets elected) and some influential men's interests (e.g. the husband is performing her role while she is not allowed to do so). This combination turns the reservation policy into an undesirable governance initiative and does not assist women to step into public politics, unless women are undaunted and combative like the woman mentioned in the last example.

It is also interesting to compare the women quotas with the caste quotas in the cases in which field research was carried out. While the caste quotas have actually assisted the members of lower castes to gain political power, the women quotas do not have the same effect for the women. What is remarkable, when looking at the example of caste, is that the members of the same caste stick together. They vote for each other and support each other because they feel it is "a moral duty". This suggests that affiliation and solidarity among the people of a certain group – caste or gender – are essential for them to gain political power. When looking at the women, solidarity is certainly not absent. For example, women in Bihar and Jharkhand are increasingly forming women's self-help groups, in which they take up development and money-saving activities (Prakash and Amin 2012, 5). However, women's affiliation to each other is not as strong (yet) as among caste groups. This might partly have to do with the fact that women quotas in local politics are a very new phenomenon in Bihar (since 2001) and in Jharkhand (since 2011), while caste affiliations have been there before *panchayats* were established, in state level party politics for example, or in traditional village level councils and assemblies. Also, the quotas for women are not a result of a strong women's movement, but were "initiated and piloted through the legislative process by largely male-dominated political parties" (Misra & Kudva 2008, 182). So it will take some time until the women are able

¹³ An interesting finding by Prakash and Amin (2012) is, however, that in tribal areas the patriarchal norms are not as strong as in non-tribal areas. Therefore, in tribal areas, women representatives in *panchayats* are more autonomous and free (Prakash and Amin 2012, 4).

¹⁴ The very fact that there is an expression for the *Mukhiya's* husband indicates that this is a common phenomenon.

to benefit from these reservation policies and build up a political consciousness that will help them to withstand male domination. The development of women's self-help groups and other women's groups is definitely a sign that women are organising, exchanging experiences, and benefiting from the strength and support that come from that solidarity.

5 Conclusion

The conflict that originally provided the platform for the Naxalites to emerge is one of social inequalities between different groups in society, namely classes, castes, tribes and non-tribes, women and men. Both the Naxalites and the government have addressed these root causes but in different ways and with different objectives. The Naxalites, as a movement of members of lower castes themselves, initially addressed these root causes with a leftist ideology of empowering the poor peasants and fighting the rich oppressors and the elitist government. Based on some groups' Maoist ideals, these objectives were seen as achievable only through violence by them. The fight for more justice for the poor eventually became a violent conflict with the government security forces and private caste armies.

The government has addressed the inequalities with the provision of security, protection, and economic and democratic development for the citizens in the region. The development and democratisation approach is based on the assumption that it will address the Naxalites' and poorer social groups' grievances regarding a development deficit and injustice experienced by lower castes and tribes. Subsequently, the Naxalites have changed their approach and have developed a levy economy, which now hampers the government's development processes. While the MCC has provided the public with protection from state security forces (and from its own violent activities), the TPC and JPC have become involved in *panchayat* affairs and thus exercise their power over the local constituencies.

To a certain degree, both the Naxalites and the government, with their approaches, have managed to address the root causes of the conflict, but at the same time have exacerbated some aspects of the conflict. In the past, the Naxalites achieved improvements for the poor regarding their rights and empowerment, but simultaneously, created a hostile and insecure environment. The government's development programme has brought new infrastructure and opportunities into the region, but this has mainly enriched contractors, politicians and Naxalites. The democratisation initiative, which involved setting up *panchayats*, has brought a growing political process into the region. The reserved seats for scheduled castes and tribes in the different governmental levels have led to the emergence of strong solidarity among the members of the same castes and tribes and, ultimately, to political power for these members. However, in the end, it is a new elite among the marginalised groups which mainly benefits from political and economic improvements. The poor masses remain excluded from redistribution benefits.

When the relationships between the different actors are analysed, it is clear that the *panchayats* are in a unique position. As part of the government, represented by the society and some Naxal groups, they are at the intersection of society, upper government levels and the Naxal groups. The *panchayats* provide a platform where these three actor groups interact in elections, decision making and dispute settlement. Particularly in the *gram sabha*, where the entire electorate meets and decisions are made, but also when settling disputes between people and managing their grievances and channelling them in an acceptable way to the district and state government, the *panchayat* offers a space where dialogical exchange is possible among these actors and locally adjusted service is provided. It is a hybrid structure which embodies a traditional format as well as modern democratic values such as equality, liberty and inclusiveness of participation. Many people, including high-ranking officials, therefore see the *panchayats* as offering new hope for a transformation of the conflict in the long term. The *panchayats'* embeddedness within the context and connectedness with each actor group make them robust and inevitable, also for

the Naxalites. Certain groups such as the TPC and the JPC already participate. Even though they currently do it in their own way and thus abuse the system for their own purposes and intimidate the people, they nevertheless participate. Over the long run, when “vent[ing] their fears and anger”, as a District Supply Officer in Jharkhand said, their participation might become adjusted and their intimidating methods mitigated, so that in the future, the Naxal groups might even “contribute to the process of making better societies.” In this regard, as Prakash states¹⁵, “the *panchayats* augur well as mechanisms for long-term engagement with conflict in local areas.”

¹⁵ Interview with Amit Prakash, February 23, 2013.

Bosnia & Herzegovina

1 Background¹

With the death of President Josip Broz Tito in 1980, a destabilising period for the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia began. A deep economic, political and social crisis was emerging out of growing international debt and high unemployment. In this setting, seeds of nationalism began to take root in the region and a sense of insecurity permeated relations between the different republics of Yugoslavia and their societal groups (Povrzanovic Frykman 2008, 165). The breakup of socialist Yugoslavia culminated with its republics achieving independence. After Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia in 1991, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) was to become independent in 1992. However, BiH's declaration of independence was not supported by all the ethnic groups living within its borders at that time (CORE 2011b, 15). The Bosnian Serbs in particular feared that they would become a minority in a newly independent BiH (Pickering 2007, 7). The nationalist parties, who won throughout the region in the first multi-party elections in 1991, took advantage of these minority fears and insecurities between the ethnic groups (Isakovic 2000, 83). BiH became the target for hardliner nationalists who saw war as a means to strengthen and consolidate their power after the breakup of socialist Yugoslavia (Friedman 2004, 3). The elections in BiH resulted in a tripartite coalition of representatives from the three largest ethnic groups, the Bosniacs (Bosnian Muslims), the Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian Serbs. The Bosnian Serb party blocked the work of the new republic of BiH and proclaimed the establishment of a separate Serb Republic. Soon after, a cruel and violent war broke out between the ethnic and social groups in the territory of BiH and lasted from 1992 until 1995. The groups fought with shifting loyalties, self-serving partnerships and unequal military resources (Povrzanovic Frykman 2008, 167).

¹ This chapter is partly based on the field research carried out by Elena B. Stavrevska at the Central European University (CEU) in Budapest, Hungary, within the framework of the CORE project. Research was carried out in various places in BiH in 2011 and 2012. Two unpublished fieldwork reports have been drafted based on the research: *Report on preliminary fieldwork in Bosnia-Herzegovina* and *Bosnia and Herzegovina – Between a Rock and a Hard Place*. Both reports have partly established the topics and analysis for this chapter.

In 1994, the Bosniacs and the Bosnian Croats agreed to form the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH). The two ethnic groups then allied themselves against the Bosnian Serbs and thus began to weaken the Serb forces. It was only when many of the war atrocities became public, particularly the massacre in Srebrenica in July 1995, that NATO got involved and bombed Serb positions in BiH. The use of force by NATO finally brought the warring parties to the negotiating table, with the General Framework for Peace in BiH – the Dayton Agreement, being negotiated in November 1995 at an US army base in Dayton, Ohio (CORE 2011b, 15). The war claimed almost 100,000 lives. Roughly half the dead were civilians, 82 percent of them Bosniacs.² The war also caused four million refugees, of which two million were displaced within BiH (Povrzanovic Frykman 2008, 170-171).

Based on the Dayton Agreement, BiH was divided into two entities – the majority Bosniac-Croat Federation of BiH and Herzegovina (FBiH) and the majority Serb Republika Srpska (RS) – as well as the internationally governed Brčko District (Stavrevska 2012a, 4). The central government is headed by a tripartite presidency, with one president from each of the three main ethnic groups. The Federation of BiH is additionally subdivided into cantons, and both entities comprise municipalities at the local level (Wittman & Bojicic-Dzelilovic 2012, 8). The Dayton Agreement stabilised the ceasefire, provided a constitution for the country, authorised international peacekeeping forces and peacebuilding organisations in BiH for the implementation of the Agreement, and defined various roles for international actors (ibid.).

2 Actors and Their Positions

2.1 International Actors

The international community in BiH is dominated by prominent actors including the European Union, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations (UN), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), as well as different countries through their diplomatic missions, most notably the United States. Many governmental and private donor organisations and civil society organisations (CSOs) are also involved. Currently the most important and influential organisation is the EU. Between 2002 and 2011, the High Representative, who oversees the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Dayton Agreement and heads the Peace Implementation Council (PIC)³, was also the EU Special Representative to the country. Since 2011, the EU Special Representative, who is now also the head of the EU Delegation, and the High Representative have become again separate positions.⁴ The EU military mission to BiH (EUFOR) is responsible for the implementation of the military aspects of the peace agreement, and its mandate has just been renewed until November 2013.⁵

Given that BiH's top priority since the year 2000 has been to join the EU, it is natural that the EU has a certain dominance in the peacebuilding and state building process. The overview of BiH's fulfilment of requirements for formal accession to the EU has, since then, been part of the mandate of the head of the EU Delegation to BiH. Together with the High Representative and other international organisations, the EU has supported BiH in meeting these requirements.

² See <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/15/us-bosnia-dead-idUSBRE91E0J220130215> for the most up-to-date figure on victims and <http://www.ic-mp.org/> for figures on missing persons.

³ The Peace Implementation Council is an international body charged with implementing the Dayton Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Headed by the High Representative and comprising 55 countries and agencies, the Council coordinates the international actors and the implementation process on the ground. For more information, see the Office of the High Representative's website: <http://www.ohr.int/ohr-info/gen-info/#pic>

⁴ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/120066.pdf and <http://www.delbih.ec.europa.eu/News.aspx?newsid=4770&lang=EN>

⁵ See, for example, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/sc10815.doc.htm>

The overall common goal of the international actors' work – anchored in the Dayton Agreement – is maintaining stability by transforming BiH into a liberal democracy (Paris 2004, 99). The prevailing assumption is that democratic governmental institutions, fair procedures, free democratic elections, and the rule of law are the best way to create “peaceful relations within a pluralist society” (ibid.).⁶ The official international priorities for BiH regarding its EU accession include fiscal sustainability, institutional stability, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights (Wittman & Bojicic-Dzelilovic 2012, 9).

The international actors' resources in the peacebuilding and state building process are manifested in the attractive incentive of potential EU accession, as well as in the premier role of the High Representative, who possesses legislative and executive powers (Stavrevska 2012c, 66; Aggestam & Björkdahl 2011, 19). In the past, the High Representative frequently made use of his final authority in interpreting the civilian aspects that are part and parcel of the Dayton Agreement. For example, he imposed decisions or sacked individuals who impeded, resisted and blocked the process, even though they had been democratically elected (Friedman 2004, 70). Since 2006, however, this has no longer occurred.⁷ Nevertheless, the international community has secured a powerful position in the peacebuilding and state building process in BiH.

Although I am aware that the different international actors follow diverse objectives with the overall goal of maintaining stability by transforming BiH into a liberal democracy defined under the Dayton Agreement, it will not always be possible and useful to distinguish between the individual actors in this chapter. Since I refer often to the perspective of Bosnian citizens, I am providing their view of the international actors, which is usually one of the “international community”. However, whenever it makes sense and is possible, I will specifically name the international actors I refer to.

2.2 Citizens of BiH

As mentioned before, BiH is a multicultural country and its citizens, the Bosnians, comprise Bosniacs (Bosnian Muslims), Croats, Serbs and a number of ethnic minorities such as Jews, Roma, Albanians, Montenegrins and others. In the constitution, only the largest ethnic groups, namely Bosniacs, Croats and Serbs, are recognised as constituent peoples of BiH (Stavrevska 2012a, 4). These three groups are represented, generally on the basis of quotas, in state institutions, whereas other groups (referred to in the category “others”), such as ethnic minorities and people with an inter-ethnic background, are excluded from representation in the highest political offices in the country (ibid.).

The citizens of BiH suffered immensely in the war and as a result of the atrocities, both as soldiers and as civilians. In post-war BiH, they have suffered from persistent impoverishment – a dramatic drop in the standard of living and the disappearance of the middle class – and a major collapse of the BiH economy, which has aggravated the already desperate economic situation that existed before the war (World Bank 2002, 122). Due to these current conditions, several interviewed citizens stated that their main priority for development is socio-economic reconstruction, including improved job prospects. Their frustration is directed primarily towards politicians, because in the view of these citizens, politicians represent no one's interests but their own and try to maintain their position of power.⁸

Regarding their position towards the international actors, the different groups have diverging viewpoints. The Bosniacs tend to favour a stronger connection with the rest of Europe and see EU accession as an opportunity for economic and social improvement. They believe, however, that it is not in their power to achieve the requirements and development goals which have been defined by the international actors, and therefore depend on international support (Wittman & Bojicic-Dzelilovic 2012, 10). The Bosnian Serbs generally do not support this view; they favour more independence from the international actors and

⁶ This is anchored in the constitution of BiH, which is annexed to the Dayton Agreement (Paris 2004, 99).

⁷ Interview with Elena Stavrevska on February 16, 2013.

⁸ Interview with Elena B. Stavrevska on February 16, 2013.

oppose EU accession, and are even more opposed to NATO.⁹ Similar opinions to those of Bosnian Serbs were stated by Bosnian Croats in the Croat-dominated regions of BiH (ibid.).

3 Relations between International Actors and Bosnian Citizens

The relations between the international actors and the citizens of BiH are created by interactions and mutual influence through the implementation of the peacebuilding and state building process dictated by the Dayton Agreement and EU membership requirements. On the one hand, the international community's heavy presence and numerous large-scale activities have a great impact on people's everyday lives. The international community has paid for the roads and bridges that the citizens of BiH drive over and walk on. The hospitals where they are treated have been funded by it. The government institutions and the political decisions that often directly affect them have all been influenced by the internationals' agenda. Conversely and equally importantly, people's perception of and response to internationals' activities directly influence the efficiency of the project implementation of international actors (Pickering 2007). In the following section, I will show how the relationship between the citizens of BiH and the international community unfolds by explaining how the everyday lives of BiH citizens are influenced by the internationals' agenda and, conversely, how the citizens' responses influence the processes of implementation. I will therefore concentrate on one part of the peacebuilding and state building agenda, namely the ethnic divide in society.

3.1 Ethnic Power Sharing Structures as a Peacebuilding Initiative

The three and a half years of violent conflict that “mostly aimed at homogenising the population in certain regions” of BiH (Isakovic 2000, 75) increased hatred and mistrust between the citizens of different religious and ethnic groups and divided the society along ethnic lines. The division continued in the aftermath of the war and was not challenged by the international actors; rather, it was consolidated by the Dayton Agreement, which enshrined “ethnicity as the central cleavage permeating politics, the economy, and society” (Pickering 2007, 50). In an environment where memories of the war were still fresh and the nationalist rhetoric of ethnic homogeneous states was pervasive (ibid.), the international actors' immediate goal was to foster stability and prevent a re-escalation of violence. It therefore made sense at that time for international actors to accept the division that existed on the ground. In the Dayton negotiations, they consequently agreed with the warring parties to separate the country into two entities – FBiH and Republika Srpska – and to introduce an ethnic power-sharing structure (CORE 2011b, 17). Furthermore, the international actors envisaged a democratisation process for BiH based on a multi-ethnic state with a government in which only the largest ethnic groups would be represented (Pickering 2007, 50). The agreed solution seemed promising for both stability and democracy. An ethnically based political architecture and “a complex electoral system to guarantee representation in the parliament and presidency for the three main ethnic groups” were set up (Wittman & Bojicic-Dzelilovic 2012, 8). Each of the three presidents holds the chair on an eight-month rotational basis.¹⁰

⁹ http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bosnia-serb-leader-announces-referendum-over-nato?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=65fbaeef56-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email

¹⁰ See <http://www.predsjednistvobih.ba/nadl/1/?cid=5,1,1>, article V, section 2.

By separating the political institutions, Dayton signatories assumed that “if a candidate declares her/himself of a certain ethnicity, which is mandatory, he or she will be elected by and thus represent the interests of that same ethnicity” (Stavrevska 2012a, 4-5). This was a risky assumption because it has not always proved to be true¹¹, and it has discriminated against Bosniacs and Croats living in the Republika Srpska, and Serbs living in FBiH.¹² Additionally, with this assumption, citizens who have a mixed ethnicity due to parents from different ethnic groups, or belong to an ethnic group other than Bosniac, Croat, or Serb, are not regarded as equals (Stavrevska 2012a, 4). Needless to say, this division of the political institutions and the treatment of ethnicity as a static and fixed category over the years have provoked criticism among the citizens of BiH as well as from international actors.

This combination of an emphasis on ethnicity and the incorporation of the ethnic divides into the government, the constitution, and the territory have created a situation in which this ethnic divide now pervades various parts of people’s everyday lives, which Stavrevska describes as the “spatialisation of ethnicity” (Stavrevska 2012b, 6). This means that ethnicity is not just perceived as part of identity but as a space where a certain ethnicity has legitimacy, prevalence and privilege. It includes geographical, linguistic and religious spaces. These spaces are emphasised by symbols and practices. For instance, the languages, although very similar and mutually comprehensible, have been redefined by the three ethnic groups as unique and distinct from each other. After the war, increasing attempts were made by representatives of the ethnic groups to add new elements to “their” language in order to distinguish it from the others (ibid., 6). Due to its spatialisation, ethnicity is visible in official processes and forms, in religious practices, language, alphabets and in schools. It is part of metaphors and symbols, such as flags. It is also reflected in unofficial practices such as each ethnicity having a mobile phone network that they mainly subscribe to. In addition, there are newspapers that people associate with the different ethnicities, as well as bars that are frequented by one ethnicity or another (Stavrevska 2012a, 6-9).

3.2 Citizens’ Perceptions and Responses

This spatialisation of ethnicity has, over time, developed a momentum of its own by forcing citizens to live in a certain area, to send their children to a certain school, and to describe themselves as belonging to a specific ethnic group. The citizens of BiH perceive this divide in various ways. Some citizens actively support the ethnic divide and in some cases relate exclusively to those ethnic and religious groups that they feel most attached to (this applies primarily to people who live in ethnic majority areas, people from rural areas, and those who experienced ethnically based atrocities and loss in the war).¹³ Similarly, the political elites also support the ethnic divide, but this has to do with their power-political interests.¹⁴ Others, however, are unhappy and frustrated with the ethnic spatialisation that has made its way into their everyday lives. And yet some of them reinforce it, consciously or unconsciously, through their everyday practices. However, young people who reside in ethnically mixed urban areas (Sarajevo, Tuzla and Banja Luka) complain that they would not choose ethnicity as a defining feature when, for example, deciding on a place to live or joining an association. They do not necessarily feel attached to people just because they share the same ethnicity (Pickering 2007, 67ff). For the citizens of BiH, the war was a crucial and traumatic test which forced them to reconsider their ethnic identity (ibid., 68).¹⁵ Other citizens see the ethnic divide

¹¹ For example, the current member of the presidency Željko Komšić is suspected to have been elected by a majority of Bosniac voters for the Croatian seat (Stavrevska 2012a, 5).

¹² A current case before the European Court of Human Rights concerns discrimination against non-Serbs living in Republika Srpska (Stavrevska 2012a, 5).

¹³ http://www.undp.ba/upload/publications/EWS_EN_final.pdf

¹⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/05/us-bosnia-mostar-idUSBRE91400620130205>

¹⁵ It has to be kept in mind that this refers to statements by minorities in mixed urban areas. In majority areas, the statements were different and people in some cases reported that they related exclusively to the ethnic and religious groups that they felt most attached to (Pickering 2007, 69).

as the main impediment to peace; they see that “peace is incomplete because the war continues in people’s heads” (Wittman & Bojicic-Dzelilovic 2012, 9).

Although the majority of citizens of BiH accept the spatialisation of ethnicity as a fact and do not oppose it, a small part of the society nevertheless counters it in subtle ways. One way of countering it that Stavrevska has observed in her field research is that people “cope” with the ethnic spatialisation (Stavrevska 2012a, 20-21). Stavrevska refers to “coping” as the act of people resisting or reacting to a certain initiative or reality with the aim of making life more bearable and deriving some personal benefit, but not necessarily opposing the rationality behind the initiative itself (ibid.) Several examples of “coping” can be found, for example, along the Inter-Entity Boundary Line between the Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska, both of which have their own regulations and authorities. Since the boundary line has only existed officially since the end of the war, there are legal complications, which are being resolved gradually. Some people take advantage of these unresolved complications. For instance, living in one entity, some use a fake address in another to obtain a pension or (better) health insurance which they otherwise would not receive. The same approach is adopted to access cheaper vehicle registration (ibid., 21). However, by registering in an entity different from the one in which they reside, they risk not being able to vote or participate in the political life in the entity where they actually live (ibid., 22). Another example involves taxi drivers who work in towns near the boundary line. Due to legal issues, they are not allowed to work in the other entity. In some cases where the road connects two towns in Republika Srpska and in between crosses through the Federation of BiH, the taxi drivers have to cross through the Federation. When doing so, they are not allowed to pick up passengers in the Federation even if they want to go in the same direction. Despite stringent controls and negative consequences, some drivers still do so for the sake of earning some more money with an additional passenger (ibid., 22). In the mentioned cases, citizens seem to cope with the ethnic spatialisation in order to improve their economic income or wellbeing (ibid.). They cope even though it means that they are disadvantaged (no participation in local politics) and take risks (controls). At the same time, however, they do not seem to openly oppose the ethnic divide, the controls, the divided economy and law, or the overall division of the country (ibid., 22-23).

On other occasions, people openly resist and oppose ethnic spatialisation.¹⁶ This is the case with official documents that citizens submit for various reasons to the government, the universities, and other institutions (ibid., 19-20). In these documents, they are asked to declare their ethnicity, with only one option being available, which routinely provokes dissatisfaction, confusion and frustration, particularly among those with a mixed ethnic background, the minorities, or those who find the concept of ethnicity too rigid (ibid.; Pickering 2007, 65-67). As discussed in Part I of this report, identity is not static. Rather, it changes over time. People have multiple social identities which they call upon, depending on the context or the community in which they live.

Several examples from BiH reflect these difficulties and the reluctance of some citizens to define their ethnic identity. There are, for example, people who define themselves primarily as citizens of a specific town, and then only as a member of an ethnic group. Some mention their religion first, while others refer to a supra-ethnic category such as “Yugoslav” or “European”. Many feel closely attached to multiple social groups, which makes it difficult for them to declare themselves as belonging to one ethnicity only (Pickering 2007, 54ff). Some citizens prefer to define themselves as Bosnian and Herzegovinian, which in the official forms, ironically, falls into the category of “other” (Stavrevska 2012a, 20). For children with parents from different ethnic groups, the declaration of their ethnicity causes practical difficulties as well. In interviews, children of inter-ethnic couples explained how they have resisted declaring their ethnicity. Instead of choosing one ethnic group and neglecting the other, or choosing the category “other” and expecting to be marginalised in class or society, many choose to enter another ethnic group such as Chinese, Japanese,

¹⁶ For the notion of “everyday resistance”, please refer to the complementary report written by Janel B. Galvanek which deals extensively with this concept.

Indian, American, etc. Some even choose a fake ethnic group such as Martian or Jedi. Although the fake and other ethnic groups will be placed in the category “other” by the officials, these people prefer it that way instead of having someone else force them to “fit” into a category as narrow as ethnicity, says a son of an inter-ethnic couple (ibid.).

In another case, Stavrevska interviewed a woman who explains her strategy of signing with her name in both the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets (ibid., 20). In BiH, both alphabets are constitutionally recognised. However, the Cyrillic alphabet is usually linked to the Serb people and language, while the Latin alphabet is linked to the Croat and Bosniac peoples and languages. By signing in both alphabets, the woman’s aim is to avoid Cyrillic being associated solely with the Serbian language and Latin only with the Croatian language. This is another example of coping with or resisting the ethnic spatialisation. Yet another example is provided by a woman from Sarajevo who regularly goes to Republika Srpska “because otherwise it would mean that they [the nationalist Bosnian Serbs] have won and that the division has succeeded” (ibid.).

These reactions, although rather rare, reveal a number of important nuances that describe the relationship between the international actors and the citizens of BiH and provide valuable feedback for internationals’ initiatives. The citizens’ resistance, for example, shows that categorisation, in their view, is not appropriate because their identity is more complex than the ethnic category allows. In urban areas in particular, many people from ethnically mixed families are in an awkward position when they have to publicly declare their ethnic group in their daily lives.¹⁷ Some people with a mixed ethnic background do not want to “neglect ... part of their ethnic identity” and therefore consciously decide not to comply with the system and submit incorrect information instead (Stavrevska 2012a, 19).

By using alternate and fake ethnicities, citizens challenge the fixed thinking about ethnicities. They mock the categories and thus expose the disingenuousness, inadequacy and limitations of the categories and the system itself (ibid., 20). Similar to what Homi K. Bhaba states about mimicry (2004, 121ff), mocking has a subversive effect on expressions of power and is therefore a strong and influential act of resisting power. In this case, the act of mocking the categories undermines their meaningfulness and shows that ethnicities and how people perceive them are not static and cannot be put into fixed categories. For the university or government forms – or the long-planned census¹⁸ – to make sense, people have to participate and submit their accurate data. If they resist or provide the wrong information, the forms or the census become useless.

With these reactions, people communicate their needs. When coping and resisting, these people show what conditions they would actually prefer to have, namely better services and more tolerant and open-minded rules (“coping” examples), no obligation to declare or fit their (plural) identity into one categorical system, and the freedom to use an alphabet learned in school that is constitutionally recognised, without making an ethno-political statement. These reactions can therefore be helpful for international organisations and for the government to learn about the people’s needs and adjust initiatives accordingly, and to reconnect politics with the people.

¹⁷ In a newspaper article from February 15, 2013, a survey done by the research agency Prism is referenced, which stated that in BiH there are at least 70,000 “non-constituent” people: <http://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/u-bih-zivi-bar-700-000-nekonstitutivnih-gradjana/130215031>

¹⁸ In BiH, the demographic ethnic numbers are based on the last census which was organised before the war in 1991. A new census is planned for October 2013, as was just announced (http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/odobrena-odgoda-popisa-istanovnistva-bih?utm_source=ajbsf). The reason why no census has taken place since 1991 is because of the opposition by the political elites, all of whom speculate with numbers in their statements and use the lack of credible figures to their advantage. It was only under pressure from the international community that it was finally agreed to organise the census in April 2013. However, the delays following this initial decision have not been caused by the political elites, but by the EUROSTAT monitoring team. See the following article: http://www.b92.net/eng/news/region-article.php?yyyy=2013&mm=01&dd=25&nav_id=84347

3.3 Lack of Responsiveness by International Actors

In an asymmetric relationship with a powerful international community, resistance is a way for the citizens of BiH to express their opinions and dissatisfaction. From numerous studies on the international actors' peacebuilding methodology, we know that their approach is perceived as being top-down and culturally insensitive, and denies people's ownership in it, which has a direct impact on the implementation and effectiveness of the peacebuilding initiatives on the ground (Wittman & Bojicici-Dzelilovic 2012; Campbell et al. 2011; Richmond 2009, 2010, 2011; Mac Ginty 2010a, Boege 2010; Donais 2009; Narten 2008). According to a recent study by Wittman & Bojicici-Dzelilovic (2012, 10), many people in BiH perceive the international organisations as "heavy handed in their approach". There is a widespread opinion that "when the international community is determined to push a particular issue, it is generally implemented" (ibid., 11), which has been demonstrated several times by the High Representative.¹⁹ This leaves the citizens of BiH with a feeling of powerlessness and of not bearing any responsibility for the democratic transformation of BiH (Friedman 2004, 71). They often feel disengaged and excluded from decision-making processes, as well as from the benefits of the internationals' initiatives (Wittman & Bojicici-Dzelilovic 2012, 11-12). Furthermore, a focus group in Sarajevo determined that the exclusion of BiH citizens from the peacebuilding process continues due to a lack of mechanisms for them to voice their concerns. This is also confirmed by several international actors, one of whom said that "local people have no official redress" (ibid., 11).

Since the international community mainly interacts with the local governmental authorities and not with citizens, the latter perceive this as a lack of interest and engagement by the international community. "At the grassroots level, there is enormous resentment of the international community's alleged lack of interest in working directly with individuals and communities" (ibid., 11). The lack of exchange explains to some extent why the priorities of the citizens and the internationals in the peacebuilding and state building process do not fully correspond with each other. For example, many citizens wish for more economic development and job opportunities, while internationals largely focus on supporting democratic political institutions (Stavrevska 2012a, 9). The current mechanisms and processes do not allow much direct contact, interaction and exchange between the international actors and the citizens of BiH. The only recourse they have is to cope with and resist the misplaced initiatives that are implemented by the international actors.

For their part, the international actors seem to be busy with other problems instead of engaging more directly with the citizens of BiH. Their work is constrained by the Dayton Agreement and their own mandates, which are either derived from the Agreement or must be aligned with it. They also struggle with the local authorities' inflexibility and unwillingness to support reforms – one international actor complained that they "refuse to form a workable consensus" (Wittman & Bojicici-Dzelilovic 2012, 10, 14).

3.4 Effective Peacebuilding Relies on Exchange and Local Legitimacy

An often mentioned criterion for a peacebuilding initiative to become effective and sustainable is that it should be able to gain people's trust and legitimacy and take the local context and the people into account (Pickering 2007, 1-3, 51). In this line of thinking, the international community depends to a certain degree on the people and their will to participate in and to support peacebuilding, state building and development activities. The people will do so only if they are convinced that they have ownership of the initiative and can benefit from the outcome. If this is not the case, they will not join in, and the initiative risks being unsustainable. The people's response – in this case, the dissatisfaction and resulting resistance – has a

¹⁹ Donais (2009) refers to Wolfgang Petritsch who served as High Representative from 1999-2002. In this time, "armed with the Bonn Powers", the executive powers which were given to him due to the "slow pace of peace implementation, Petritsch imposed literally dozens of pieces of legislation—on such crucial matters as the state flag, a new currency, and the creation of a state border service" (Donais 2009, 4). He also sacked several democratically elected local officials because they were blocking the process (ibid.).

direct impact on the implementation and the effect of the peacebuilding and state building process. It is therefore important for the international actors to take resistance seriously, to regard it as feedback, and to change their approach accordingly.

Taking the citizens of BiH on board would also be necessary for the initiatives to become hybrid. The relationship between the international actors and the citizens in BiH, as it currently exists, does not lead to a hybrid outcome of initiatives because internationals and local citizens do not directly meet or engage in exchange. The internationals assume that the democratically elected political representatives (at all levels of government) and the CSOs represent the citizens and their needs and see working with them as a proxy for engaging with the citizens. This assumption is, however, not always true, because many political representatives follow their own goals²⁰ and CSOs are largely disconnected from society, often as a result of international political and funding dependence (Gentile 2011, 249). If the internationals were to take seriously the messages that are conveyed through coping and resistance, they would have to consider a change in their approach. One option would be to initiate contact, seek dialogue and build trust with citizens in order to find ways to change the approach. Such a modified approach could eventually lead to a combination of local and international perceptions, ideas and resources and ultimately correct the flaws that result from divergent priorities and aims. Another possibility would be for international actors to engage democratically elected local representatives and encourage a stronger link between them and citizens. In working together with them, international actors could organise open consultation meetings with citizens on various policies and initiatives. Strengthening these links could contribute to long-term peacebuilding efforts, particularly in regard to a future withdrawal of international players from BiH.

4 Role of Culture and Identity in the Relations

4.1 Culture of Governance for Peacebuilding

When looking at the culture of governance for peacebuilding within the international community's approach in BiH, it is important to examine how the actors develop and implement peacebuilding initiatives, the repertoire of processes they choose, and the norms and principles underlying these processes.

As mentioned earlier, the guiding frameworks for the international peacebuilding initiatives in BiH are the Dayton Agreement and, since 2000, the requirements for EU membership. These agreements foresee an approach which aims "to build sustainable political institutions through integration with, and eventual membership in, the European Union" (Wittman & Bojicici-Dzelilovic 2012, 10, 14). The principles that guide the implementation are fiscal sustainability, institutional stability, democracy, economic liberalisation, development, human rights, and the rule of law. These are liberal principles that have their roots in the New York consensus agreed by the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change in 2004.²¹ Many scholars have investigated the "liberal peacebuilding approach" and have filtered out a number of characteristics that determine it (Campbell et al. 2011, Richmond 2009, 2010, 2011; Mac Ginty 2010a, Boege 2010, Donais 2009). One of the main characteristics is the privileging of the state building dimension of peacebuilding, which is ideologically anchored at the UN (Kahler 2009, 288). This is clearly the case in BiH, where the building of democratic political institutions began immediately after stability

²⁰ See <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/05/us-bosnia-mostar-idUSBRE91400620130205>

²¹ See <http://www.un.org/secureworld/>

was achieved. By assuming what worked in the past in the West will work everywhere else, the builders of democratic institutions are “Western experts, who are familiar with the mechanics of liberal democratic institutions” (Donais 2009, 8). From this perspective, local views and ideas are seen as hurdles or obstacles to be overcome and avoided, not as potential sources of sustainable solutions (ibid.).

The liberal approach assumes that a certain type of peacebuilding agenda can be applied in every context, without full consideration of the geographical, political and cultural differences in each case. The liberal approach is therefore often criticised as blind towards local cultural aspects, as well as historical and social contexts (Richmond 2010, 674). In BiH, the Dayton Agreement took the local context with its hostile confrontations between the different ethnic groups into account, but did so from a security and stability perspective (the warring groups have to be separated). By striving for a democratic and multi-ethnic state and agreeing to political institutions that are formed along ethnic lines, the international community has not taken into account the citizens’ traumatic experiences of ethnic cleansing from the war. By not challenging the ethnic division, but instead consolidating it with the Dayton Agreement, the international actors have overlooked these personal experiences, and this has further exacerbated the ethnic divide in society. This also has implications for the ability of citizens to trust the initiatives. Today, some citizens of BiH are clearly frustrated with the spatialisation of ethnicity, as a resident of a Serb-majority town in the Federation of BiH stated: “We no longer care who is what ethnically; we are all equally struggling to make ends meet and are searching for ways to leave this place for better opportunities” (Stavrevska 2012a, 9).

Furthermore, the international community tends to work with standardised bureaucratic and technocratic means and norms (Mac Ginty et al. 2012, 37ff). Conflicts are believed to be resolved “via arbitration mechanisms that are able to reach judgments based on evidence rather than on competing claims that might be based on sentiments or identity” (ibid., 41). A technocratic approach is believed to be value-free and neutral since decisions would be based on “objective criteria” (ibid.). This implies that the international actors believe that their “role in certain areas is merely technical” and their work is neutral (Stavrevska 2012a, 14). However, numerous examples from the field research show that citizens of BiH have a different view (ibid., 13-14). For instance, because the High Representative in June 2004 sacked 60 Serb politicians and most of the cases before the International Criminal Tribunal have Serb defendants, the Serb public generally thinks that the international actors are biased in their support of Bosniaks and Croats (ibid., 13). These and other examples show that the internationals’ actions are not seen in isolation from the role that they have been playing in BiH.

A further assumption behind the liberal peacebuilding approach is that the war has destroyed everything or “wiped everything clean” (Stavrevska 2012a, 10). This implies that the internationals did not fundamentally examine the partly still existing pre-war institutions and mechanisms that were once effective and locally legitimate, such as the accounting system and the internationally competitive public enterprises from the socialist era (Woodward 2009, 52). Similarly, the neighbourhood associations (*mjesne zajednice*) in urban and rural areas, which enabled service delivery to the lowest units of the society structure during the socialist era, were not rebuilt by the international community after the war (ibid.). Only recently have any efforts been made by the entity governments and municipalities and by the international community, most notably the OSCE, to re-establish them.²² Despite this support now being forthcoming, the skills, resources and capacities of the *mjesne zajednice* vary significantly across the country. In the municipality of Novi Grad in Sarajevo, for instance, they function quite well.²³

Additionally, the liberal peacebuilding approach aims to introduce economic reforms supported by the World Bank and IMF conditionalities (Donais 2009, 8). This is part of the equation “*Democracy + Market Economy = Peace*” which is the “guiding principle of international intervention” in BiH (Fischer 2007, 447). As part of the ‘democratisation’ efforts in the international actors’ peacebuilding approach, the establishment of an organised civil society has been initiated by international scholars and practitioners

²² See the website of the OSCE project: <http://www.oscebih.org/Default.aspx?id=21&lang=EN>

²³ Interview with Elena Stavrevska on February 16, 2013.

rather than by BiH citizens themselves, which in turn brings into question its democratic nature (Gentile 2011, 249).

These assumptions, guidelines and principles are diffused and propagated by the EU and the UN and influence donors and CSOs on the ground. By determining their lines of funding, the donors prescribe the topics and principles according to which the CSOs have to plan and design their projects (Stavrevska 2012a, 18). Taken together, these assumptions and norms shape the agendas, strategies, guidelines, principles and processes and make up a culture of governance for liberal peacebuilding.

4.2 Competing Values

When analysing cultural aspects in BiH, one finds little public debate on what role socialist norms and practices play in the everyday life of the citizens (Stavrevska 2012a, 10; Gilbert 2006, 16). This is interesting given the background of BiH as a former socialist republic – notably with an economy open to global trade and never having been centrally planned (Woodward 2009, 52). One would expect that the citizens in BiH would use socialist values to comprehend and shape processes and transformations. It would also stand to reason that socialist values could represent a cultural factor that influences the relationships between internationals and the citizens of BiH.

In her field research, Stavrevska investigated how “socialist” values and an understanding of ethics, politics and unity play a role in citizens’ expectations, hopes and fears in the post-war era (2012a, 10). These values are pronounced in people’s mentality when applied to economics, as well as in the functioning of public institutions. Stavrevska observed that “the mentality of a subsistence economy, invoking the notion of ‘normal life’ and of having ‘enough’ is still widely present in [Bosnian] society” (ibid.). An elderly trader at the Arizona market²⁴ stated “I have earned enough, I do not need more; to have enough to cover the costs, and to have for food, that is all I need” (ibid., 11). This statement was echoed by other traders as well. This does not indicate that people who are more profit-driven are uncommon in BiH. What was observed by Stavrevska, however, is that many traders at the Arizona market look down on profit-driven people and ridicule them for their short temper and never-ending appetite for more. A middle-aged woman in the Arizona market expressed it in these words: “Those who want summer houses and jeeps and apartments, they are always easily irritable and are bothered by everyone” (ibid.).

There were similar statements by taxi drivers. In several towns, they work with fixed prices, which have either been set by the municipality or the local taxi driver association. The drivers’ opinion about these fixed prices is that it is “enough”, “everyone’s standards are low these days”, and that a few marks more or less do not make a big difference in the end (ibid.). There is also an unspoken agreement among taxi drivers in certain towns such as Brčko regarding who covers which neighbourhoods and areas. This agreement is remarkable given that the taxi drivers all work independently (ibid.). In the town of Doboј, the municipality has divided the taxi drivers into groups, which cover a neighbourhood each. Every day, these groups rotate and cover another neighbourhood so that each group can cover the bus station area on a particular day, where they usually earn more than around the train station or in another neighbourhood. “We have to cooperate so that there is something for all of us, even if each of us is registered as a separate firm”, explains a taxi driver from Doboј (ibid.).

As regards the institutions, some elderly civil servants still seem to assume that the central state will take care of the funding and functioning of various institutions (ibid., 11). One example with which

²⁴ The Arizona market, located in the Brčko District on the highway which links Croatia, Serbia and BiH, started where a checkpoint was set up by the NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR) after the end of the war. Due to the fact that this market became a meeting point for people from the different ethnic groups and from other Yugoslav countries to trade diverse commodities, the SFOR pushed for it to become an informal free-trade zone. As a market which was both unregulated and protected, however, it became a place of trade in illegal goods and it was therefore soon rebuilt and regulated (Stavrevska 2012b, 8). Today, the market is divided into a flea market-like part and a fully urbanised and organised part (Stavrevska 2012a, 17).

Stavrevska illustrates this assumption and its effect is the recent closure of the National Museum in Sarajevo. A few years ago it was decided that the state would in future only cover part of the budget, while the rest of the budget was to be secured by the management of various projects. However, the director of the Museum did not look for external funding because he assumed that the state would continue to be responsible for the functioning of the cultural institutions as it had been in the past. This situation finally led to the closure of the museum (ibid., 12).

These examples shed light on values such as cooperation and non-profit-making, which help people in BiH to cope with difficult economic and post-war circumstances. Whether these are socialist values or rather values that emerged in difficult times (e.g. during the war or in the current difficult economic conditions) when people have to stick together in order to survive is difficult to say, and more research would be needed to confirm such a statement. Being satisfied with a “normal life” and “having enough” could derive from a mentality coming from a subsistence economy, but it could also simply reflect the modest desires of a person who has experienced more arduous conditions in the past.

The examples of people who rely on a central power which they believe will manage societal concerns is interesting in terms of their relationship with the international community. The central government, which previously had the role of a central power, is now weak as a result of the war, reorganisation and transition (federalisation), widespread corruption, and the authoritative international community. It is therefore reasonable that citizens' high expectations might now rest on the international community and, if not met, lead to disappointment and disillusionment with the internationals. Tied to that sentiment is the unpredictability of prices, wages, and fluctuating employment in the capitalist system imposed by the Dayton Agreement. In fact, anthropologist Andrew Gilbert (2006, 17) refers to a similar point when he realises that “at times, Bosnia’s post-war reconstruction and ‘transition’ are promoted by international and domestic authorities alike through arrangements that bear a striking resemblance to those of socialist-era order”. He refers to the *nacionalni ključ* or ‘national key’, which is an informal socialist-era representation quota in the public and private sectors that should ensure equal and fair representation of all the ethnic groups in the country and thus secure ‘brotherhood and unity’. The international community revived this idea when it, together with the warring parties, decided to choose ethnicity as the main category of political participation (ibid., 18). Thus, in post-war BiH, an “uneasy coexistence” of “state socialist forms, nationalist values and the formal democratic and market-based requirements of EU accession” can be observed (ibid., 15). These values create undesirable combinations that lead to bewilderment and indignation. What made sense in a complex socialist system to guarantee equal treatment of the different ethnic groups has become a “cynical instrument” for nationalist politicians to maintain their power (ibid., 18). This odd coexistence of socialist forms, as well as nationalist and democratic values, which were prompted by international peacebuilding initiatives, might be another piece of the puzzle that explains why citizens cope and resist such initiatives.

5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explained the relationship between the international actors and the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I have therefore focused on the ethnic division of territory and political power that was created before and during the war and was consolidated by the Dayton Peace Agreement. Since international actors designed the Dayton Agreement (and then negotiated it with the warring parties), they bear a certain degree of responsibility for the “ethnic spatialisation” which has developed over the years. I argue that the critical responses by the citizens towards this ethnic spatialisation contain a lot of information which could be utilised by the international actors as feedback and ideas on how to improve their work. Taking this feedback into account could lead to more sustainable, effective and hybrid

peacebuilding. Citizens' responses also reveal that there is little interaction and exchange between the international actors and the citizens of BiH. There are no mechanisms for the citizens to voice their ideas, needs and grievances directly to the international actors in the country, perhaps because international actors work mainly with (local) governmental authorities and civil society organisations (CSOs), on the assumption that they represent the citizens. However, there is a lack of communication (channels) between the citizens and the local government authorities as well as between the citizens and the CSOs, and the CSOs and local governments do not represent the citizens sufficiently, which is a major problem. In the case of the CSOs, the internationals bear some responsibility. Due to the fact that CSOs are heavily supported by international funds and therefore follow international donors' trends, topics and terminologies, they are not sufficiently attuned to citizens' concerns and needs. Improved communication and exchange are essential for initiatives to achieve more sustainable and effective outcomes. In order to improve communication, the internationals' culture of governance must be modified. The focus of the international actors' approach needs to be more on citizens' engagement and inclusion, not only via CSOs, but also more directly through municipalities or the revived *mjesne zajednice* where they exist and function. This could lead to the necessary alignment of the priorities and aims of international actors and citizens respectively, the latter being the ultimate beneficiaries of the initiatives. Citizens should also assume more responsibility in the democratisation and development processes in their country: instead of relying too much on the international actors, they could instead approach them actively with their ideas, needs and grievances. Local bodies such as municipalities and *mjesne zajednice* could become an ideal forum for this, and a path to the international actors. In fact, the *mjesne zajednice* are an excellent example of hybrid governance whose functioning and acceptance by citizens, and links to international actors, should be investigated in more detail. It is without doubt, however, that genuine conflict transformation in BiH can only happen through a joint coordination and engagement of the aforementioned actors.

Georgia & Abkhazia

1 Background¹

The Abkhaz struggle for self-determination turned into an open political conflict when the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991 and Georgia became an independent state. An ethnic minority within Georgia, the Abkhazians feared that they would lose the autonomous status they had within the republic of Georgia in the Soviet Union (CORE 2011, 32). The Abkhazians thus took the opportunity afforded by the transition period and agitated for their independence in 1992. This resulted in Georgia's forces entering Abkhaz territory, and committing atrocities against civilians (Wolleh 2006, 15). Abkhazia received support from Russia, not least due to its deteriorating relationship with its southern neighbour, Georgia, and in the aftermath the Russian military was able to expel the Georgian troops from Abkhaz territory. The war resulted in the displacement of a large part of the Georgian population living in Abkhazia, and many of those who did not leave were attacked by Abkhazians and Russians (ibid., 16). Two ceasefire agreements in 1992 and 1994 ended the fighting, but not the tensions, and there have been sporadic violent incidents over the years. In the following years, several rounds of negotiations and talks between Abkhazia and Georgia were organised, which led to the stronger involvement of Russia as a mediator and the establishment of an UN observer mission (UNOMIG) in 1993, as well as the on-site presence of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union (EU) (CORE 2011, 32). With the exception of some sporadic outbursts, the conflict has remained largely frozen. Tensions again became intensified in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, another breakaway region within Georgia, when Mikheil Saakashvili was elected Georgian President in 2004 and

¹ This chapter is partly based on the field research carried out by Nona Mikhelidze at the Institute of International Affairs (IAI) in Rome, Italy, in the framework of the CORE project. Research was carried out in different places in Georgia and Abkhazia in October 2011 and May 2012. Two fieldwork reports have been drafted based on the research: "Summary of fieldwork (1st round) in Georgia/Abkhazia" and "National and European cultures of governance in Georgia and Abkhaz conflict resolution" (unpublished). Both reports have partly established the topics and analysis for this chapter.

promised to reunite the country. In 2008, the tensions escalated, with armed clashes between Georgian and South Ossetian forces and artillery bombardments and later also with Abkhaz forces.² As a reaction, Russia invaded South Ossetia with a heavy counter-offensive against Georgia. The EU helped facilitate a six-point peace plan, which brought the hostilities to an end. However, the implementation of the six-point peace plan was encumbered by Russia's non-cooperation and its recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states. Abkhazia, after having gained independence from Georgia in de facto terms back in 1993, declared its independence formally in 1999. The international status of both Abkhazia and South Ossetia has not yet been resolved (*ibid.*, 33). The US and the EU do not support the independent status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.³ However, besides Russia, also Nicaragua, Cuba and a small number of other states have recognised the sovereignty and independence of both entities. Therefore, the current deadlock is not only caused by the conflicting parties Georgia and Abkhazia, but also partly by the lack of an international agreement on a common policy and roadmap.

Since 1992-93 and even more so since 2008, communication between Georgia and Abkhazia has been limited and the borders between the territories have been closed to Georgians, except to the people from the Gali municipality. Mistrust between the two entities is high, and, due to a lack of communication, has not diminished.

2 Actors and Their Positions

2.1 Georgian Government

Under President Mikheil Saakashvili (2004 - present), two main political goals for Georgia have been pursued. Firstly, he has pushed for the reunion of Georgia with the two autonomous regions Abkhazia and South Ossetia. By seeing the two regions as autonomous provinces of Georgia, which are “occupied as a result of the military aggression by the Russian Federation”⁴, Saakashvili – with the backing of various international actors – tried to regain control of the territories and reintegrate them into Georgia (Mikhelidze 2011, 2). Before the war in 2008, the conflict was seen as frozen and Georgia saw a possibility to resolve it by military means. Since the stationing of Russian troops in Abkhazia and South Ossetia after the war in 2008, this view has changed and military means are no longer an option for Georgia (Mikhelidze 2011, 3). Secondly, the president has attempted to bring Georgia closer to the EU and NATO and away from Russia, and has accused the latter of supporting Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's separation from Georgia (CORE 2011, 32). He reformed Georgia's Soviet-style government into “a functioning and modern state free from corruption and criminality” (Mikhelidze 2012, 1), which, however, resulted in the abolition of entire bureaucracies, leaving thousands of people jobless (Nemtsova 2012). This ambiguous initiative by Saakashvili, although partly positive, led to widespread frustration in society and an eventual rise of the opposition.

Bidzina Ivanshvili from the opposition became Prime Minister in October 2012, and will assume more power than the President under the new constitution which will take effect in October 2013 (ICG 2012, 3). Ivanishvili is pursuing a very different political strategy for Georgia: he wants to (re)establish stronger ties with Russia, but at the same time intends to deepen ties with the EU and NATO⁵ (*ibid.*, 16). This new

² For more information see “Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia”, Sept. 2009, Vol.1, p. 10ff: http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFMCG_Volume_1.pdf

³ http://usa.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=595&info_id=12369; for the EU, see also the Extraordinary European Council held in Brussels on Sept. 1, 2008 (p. 2): http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/01_09_08_eurussia_statement.pdf

⁴ See the Law of Georgia on Occupied Territories: <http://www.smr.gov.ge/docs/doc216.pdf>

⁵ This dual strategy is a contradiction in itself because Russia has tried to prevent Georgia from becoming a NATO member at all costs (ICG 2012, 17).

alignment towards Russia has implications for the Abkhaz-Georgian peace process (Mikhelidze 2013, 1). By recognising Abkhazia “as an existing reality with its own voice regarding its future with which Georgia has somehow to engage”, the new Georgian government accepts Abkhazia as a party to the conflict, but at the same time is sticking to its policy of non-recognition of the breakaway regions (ibid., 1).

2.2 Abkhaz de facto Government

Abkhazia’s partnership with Russia has been strengthened over the years. The international economic embargo, which was set up at the time of Abkhazia’s formal declaration of independence in 1999, led to the high economic dependence of Abkhazia on Russia, which lifted its sanctions on Abkhazia in 2004. Russia has, furthermore, made it easier for Abkhazians to obtain Russian citizenship and consequently, most Abkhazians now hold Russian passports.⁶ The partnership received more momentum during the 2008 war when Abkhazians were protected by the Russian military. This has led to an even further decrease of Georgia’s influence in Abkhazia. Georgia no longer “exercise[s] control over its territory and does not participate in its administration, although it does influence the international conjuncture in relation to Abkhazia” (Kvarchelia 2013).

The Abkhaz government’s attitude towards Ivanishvili’s government is cautious but positive. Some officials stated during Ivanishvili’s campaign that “they were ready to negotiate with any Georgian leader except Saakashvili” (ICG 2012, 16-17). With his more modest attitude towards Abkhazia and his openness towards Russia, Ivanishvili might have good chances of opening up dialogue with Abkhazia. The fact that the new reintegration and defence ministers have a good relationship with Abkhazia could support this opportunity further (ibid., 16-17). However, scepticism and mistrust have yet to be alleviated and reduced.

2.3 International Actors

The dominant international actors involved in conflict mediation in Georgia in the framework of the Geneva Talks⁷ since the 2008 war are the US and the EU, together with the OSCE and the UN. To date, their policies and impact have been “controversial and ineffective” (CORE 2011, 37). This has to do with the actors – mainly the US – combining peacebuilding activities with strategic interests in the region as a gateway to Central Asia, the Middle East and Iran. Georgia greatly benefits from the presence of the US in terms of security and at the same time is “fanning the flames of great power politics in the region” (CORE 2011, 37). The EU’s engagement has been softer than that of the US (CORE 2011, 37). Its contribution to the region has mainly taken the form of aid, but in terms of conflict settlement, little has been done so far (ibid.). After the August 2008 war, an unarmed civilian monitoring mission (EUMM) was set up by the EU in Georgia with the task of reporting on the grievances of the people living on the Georgia side of the border to Abkhazia and South Ossetia. To date, the EUMM has been refused access to Abkhazian and South Ossetian territory both by their own authorities and Russia (Mikhelidze 2012, 9). Furthermore, the EU’s Special Representative to Georgia, together with the EU Delegation in Tbilisi, advises the Georgian State Ministry for Reintegration on its strategy regarding engagement and cooperation with the ‘occupied territories’ (ibid.). Peace promotion has been pursued by the EU indirectly via projects and initiatives that target democracy, good governance and regional cooperation. Numerous projects are operating with the aim of improving the living conditions of conflict-affected people, for instance the rehabilitation of damaged houses, schools and hospitals, as well as the promotion of small-scale agricultural programmes (ibid.). In general, these activities have,

⁶ BBC on Abkhazia, BBC website, retrieved on February 13, 2013 at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3261059.stm>

⁷ The Geneva Talks are an international mediation process over Georgia’s breakaway regions Abkhazia and South Ossetia that began 2008. On its progress, see: <http://www.iai.it/pdf/DocIAI/iai1025.pdf>

however, not yet resulted in promising outcomes (CORE 2011, 37).

Generally positioned in and operating from Georgia, the international presence in Abkhaz territory has been limited. The main obstacle for the US, the EU member states to work in Abkhazia is that they are subjects of international law. A fundamental principle of the international law is respect for territorial integrity. Thus, by acting in the framework of international law, they cannot accept Abkhazia's independence. The longest of the limited international missions in Abkhazia was that of UNOMIG. UNOMIG's mandate was to "verify compliance with the ceasefire agreement".⁸ In 2009, no consensus could be reached between Georgia and Abkhazia and so Russia vetoed the extension of the mission in the Security Council. As part of the Instrument for Stability (IfS), the EU has also supported projects by Abkhaz NGOs with the aim of strengthening Abkhaz civil society, the rule of law, governance and human rights. In the framework of the EU's Confidence Building Early Response Mechanism (COBERM), which began its work after the Georgian-Russian war of 2008, the EU has also supported dialogue initiatives between civil society actors from Georgia and Abkhazia (Mikhelidze 2012, 9). COBERM is an umbrella mechanism that – together with the UN Development Programme – funds small-scale projects aimed at confidence building within and across conflict-divided communities.⁹

As we have already seen from the background of the conflict, Russia of course plays a major role in the Georgia-Abkhazia conflict and its management by supporting the breakaway territory. Turkey, since the 1990s, is also an important security, economic and political actor in the region. For this chapter, I will focus on the relationships between the EU, the US and Georgia and between the EU, the US and Abkhazia.

3 Relations between Different Actors

3.1 The Government of Georgia, the EU and the US

The relationship between the Georgian government, the US and the EU is characterised by a similar view of the conflict, similar goals for the peacebuilding process, and mutual interests and benefits. The US, the EU and Georgia perceive the conflict since 2008 as being between Georgia and Russia, with Georgia having "lost" its territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia to Russia (Mikhelidze 2012, 4). Georgia's governance initiatives that are aimed at the resolution of this conflict therefore seek to re-engage Abkhazians' (and South Ossetians') interest by offering them attractive development schemes that they could benefit from if reconciling with Georgia. This is reflected in Georgia's "State Strategy on Occupied Territories: Engagement through Cooperation", which describes Georgia's approach to Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The strategy was drafted by President Saakashvili in 2010.¹⁰ In its preamble it says:

"The Government of Georgia strives to extend to the populations in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia the benefits of its continual progress in national reforms, and its closer integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures and institutions."

The "State Strategy" says that Georgia would offer incentives and would promote interaction between communities from both sides of the dividing line, such as economic, business, infrastructure, education, human rights, health and culture projects.¹¹ In sum, these initiatives would include 'indirect' peacebuilding

⁸ See UNOMIG website: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unomig/background.html>

⁹ See COBERM website: http://undp.org.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=40&pr_id=141

¹⁰ For the document, see: <http://www.civil.ge/files/files/SMR-Strategy-en.pdf>

¹¹ *ibid.*

in the sense of support for economic and social development, which is supposed to bring about peace in the long run, and ‘direct’ peacebuilding that would directly provide peacebuilding mechanisms such as confidence building and reconciliation (Mikhelidze 2011, 2012). The approach appears to be based on the principle of ‘engagement’, which, after having for years isolated the territories with the help of sanctions, would be a fundamental change of strategy. Engagement and de-isolation of Abkhazia (and South Ossetia) is also what the EU, the US and the UN support. For example, in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and Eastern Partnership (EaP), the EU directly supports conflict resolution with confidence-building initiatives in Georgia which involve Abkhazia, and indirectly with democracy promotion and economic development programmes in Georgia (Mikhelidze 2012, 7). Furthermore, the EU’s recent progress report on the implementation of the EU-Georgia ENP Action Plan from May 15, 2012 provides evidence of the Union’s emphasis on engagement. There, the EU’s recommendation for Georgia is to further continue the de-isolation policy towards Abkhazia and South Ossetia.¹²

The alignment with international aims and interests as well as the agreed position towards Abkhazia and South Ossetia are mentioned in Georgia’s “State Strategy” with the following words:

“Georgia pursues these objectives in concurrence with the international community’s adherence to a non-recognition policy toward Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, and its support for Georgia’s engagement policy.”

Along with the “State Strategy”, the Government of Georgia has also published “Modalities for Engagement of Organisations Conducting Activities in the Occupied Territories of Georgia” and the “Law on Occupied Territories”. These two documents regulate and oversee the activities of international actors and their local partners in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and vest the Georgian government with the powers of approving or rejecting these projects.¹³ The modalities stipulate that the projects have to be in line with Georgian legislation, the “State Strategy”, and international law, and have to focus on peace and confidence building in the territories. Donors have to consult the Georgian “Ministry for Reintegration” on their planned projects and aims and have to report project progress bi-annually to Georgian officials. The modalities further demand that project staff has to enter the “occupied territories” through Georgia and prescribe the travel documents for Abkhaz project staff. These modalities have not only enraged Abkhazian government representatives and society, but have evoked protest by international diplomats, donors and NGO workers, as well as some Georgian actors. In these regulations, they see violations of norms of international and free collaboration, as well as a restriction of civil society engagement (Kvarchelia 2011, 8). The regulations, furthermore, put at risk the carefully built trust between international organisations and Abkhaz actors, because the former have to report to Georgia regularly. Therefore, many international actors see these rules as impediments to real cooperation and confidence building.¹⁴ The fact that the Venice Commission, an advisory body of the Council of Europe, became involved in order to give recommendations for the Law on Occupied Territories (which were partly adopted by Georgia in 2010¹⁵) shows how severe the issue was. The new government of Georgia under Ivanishvili foresees further amendments of the modalities and the “Law on Occupied Territories” such as a more moderate treatment of persons entering the territories from Russia (instead of four years imprisonment, the person will be charged with an administrative fine).¹⁶

An additional aspect of the relationship between international actors and Georgia is the latter’s membership in international committees and bodies such as the EaP, the UN, the Council of Europe, the

¹² See the document at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-12-334_en.htm

¹³ The documents can be found following these links: <http://www.smr.gov.ge/docs/doc216.pdf>; <http://www.smr.gov.ge/docs/doc219.pdf>

¹⁴ See Margiani, Giorgi 2010. “New regulatory legislation: a threat to peace-building in Georgia” retrieved on March 26, 2013 at: <http://humanrightshouse.org/Articles/15513.html>

¹⁵ http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/dsca/dv/dsca_20110315_13/dsca_20110315_13en.pdf

¹⁶ See Jgharkava, Zaza 2013. “Law on Occupation awaits changes”, in Georgia Today, retrieved on March 26, 2013 at: http://www.georgiatoday.ge/article_details.php?id=10866

OSCE, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the World Trade Organization and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. In these committees, the government of Georgia and international actors have regular exchange and interactions in the form of meetings, conferences, assessments, progress reports and recommendations. These interactions and common working processes have contributed to the use of the discourses and language that are shared in these bodies. Georgia uses these for its own purpose, for example for the “State Strategy”, and in so doing, has gained international acceptance of the document.¹⁷

Viewed from a macro perspective, the relationship between Georgia and international actors rests on some mutual interests and benefits. Georgia benefits from the internationals’ support for economic and social development and for democratic transition, contacts to the West, expertise and prestige. Since Georgia has no oil or other lucrative natural resources, “its only resource is the political and economic support from the West” (Mikhelidze 2012, 11). In turn, Georgia works towards the requirements and priorities of the internationals. By showing progress in areas that are defined in the ENP Action Plan, such as combating corruption, promoting political, judicial and security sector reform, preparing trade agreements and visa dialogue between Georgia and the EU, and promoting freedom of religion and respect for labour rights¹⁸, Saakashvili has gradually moved Georgia closer to the West and his aspiration for Georgia to become a member of the EU and NATO¹⁹.

For the internationals, on the other hand, social, economic and strategic geopolitical interests are at play. In her speech at the launch of the Association Agreement negotiations in Georgia in 2010, Catherine Ashton, the European Union’s High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, reiterated that the EU has “a strategic interest in stability, prosperity and the development of democracy in our Eastern neighbourhood” and is striving for close links between the EU and its Eastern neighbours.²⁰ The US, for its part, is interested in the region as a gateway to Central Asia, the Middle East and Iran, and has a major strategic interest in Georgia due to oil flowing from Azerbaijan via Georgia to Turkey. In light of Russia’s strong presence in Georgia, the US is interested in stability and therefore supports the Georgian armed forces with training (BBC 2012). In this regard, the EU and the US benefit from the government of Georgia’s cooperation and progress in transforming the country into a democracy, as well as its development, confidence-building and reconciliation initiatives towards the breakaway territories.

Each partner’s strategic interests determine the basic parameters for the relationship between the Georgian government and the EU and the US. However, they also show that the partners do not have the same resources available. With two territories having seceded and Russia sitting in its backyard with new military bases in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Georgia has limited choices. It is dependent on the protection and support of the US and EU and therefore has to accept their aims, priorities and conditionality. Georgia also depends on the internationals regarding the resolution of the conflict with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In Mikhelidze’s view, the Georgian politicians under Saakashvili believed that they have a small stake in conflict resolution, because the conflict has become part of a geopolitical game in which only the major actors – Russia, the US and the EU – can decide its destiny. Therefore, the Saakashvili government’s conflict resolution and confidence-building initiatives mainly served to demonstrate to its citizens, but primarily to the international actors, that Georgia intends to solve the conflict in a peaceful way. This does not mean that the government truly felt it would be successful with the “State Strategy” and the intended initiatives.²¹

17 In fact, due to its use of internationally-accepted language, its publication in the English language only, and the exclusive process in which it was designed and adopted (without consultations with civil society and the territories’ governments and societies), the “State Strategy” has been widely criticised by Georgians and Abkhazians as “designed for the West”. See: Mikhelidze 2012, 4; see also http://www.rferl.org/content/Georgia_Unveils_Strategy_On_Occupied_Territories/1942534.html

18 See the document at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-12-334_en.htm

19 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_38988.htm

20 Speech: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-10-392_en.htm

21 Interview with Nona Mikhelidze, May 4, 2012.

Nevertheless, despite the dependence described above, the Saakashvili government has had a stake in the peacebuilding and state building process in its country. By designing the “State Strategy”, the modalities and the “Law on Occupied Territories”, it has aligned itself with the EU and the UN language, but at the same time has kept faith with its own goals and interests. The initiatives can be categorised as what Barnett and Zürcher call “compromised peacebuilding” (2009, 25). They were characterised by negotiation and reflected the interests of all the (powerful) actors involved. In order to ensure stability, the EU and the UN accepted the Georgian ruling elites’ interests and insistence that the democratisation reforms should not put at risk their interests and positions of power (Mikhelidze 2012, 11). The result of this compromise is that reforms were not implemented properly and the peacebuilding process has remained symbolic. The internationals and the Georgian government have pursued their common goal of stability and have created the impression that things will change, while actually leaving unchanged current state-society relations. Progress with such compromised peacebuilding agendas has therefore been limited and has supported the ruling elites’ interests only, without acknowledging the affected people’s voice (both Georgian and Abkhazian). The various confidence-building and peacebuilding initiatives that are implemented by international and local organisations in or with Abkhazia suffer under the strict rules of the Georgian law and modalities. Although the modalities require that the projects implemented in Abkhazia by international actors have the intention of confidence building and peacebuilding, the rules of the modalities and the law impede the possibilities for doing so. Strengthening democracy – one of the EU’s main aims for the entire South Caucasus – has also suffered under the compromise. In its state building process, the Georgian government has prioritised security over democracy, and the few democratic initiatives were implemented with autocratic methods (Mikhelidze 2012, 2). This resulted in a symbolic democracy, which has indeed showed impressive achievements (e.g. the successful elimination of endemic corruption), but has been managed in a top-down manner. Steps towards good governance, the rule of law, free media and the judiciary have been small or insignificant (*ibid.*, 1), because they have not been a primary goal of the ruling elite and are believed to be threatening to their power base.

What is interesting about this compromised relationship, however, is that it allows international and Georgian norms, ideas and practices to co-exist or to be amalgamated in an initiative. For example, Georgia’s “State Strategy”, although aligned to Western goals and norms such as nonviolent engagement, economic and democratic development, human rights protection and freedom of movement, contains initiatives that are in Georgia’s own interest and some of these initiatives also oppose the international actors’ aims. One such initiative is the introduction of the “Status Neutral Travel Document”, an identification document available to residents of Abkhazia without Georgian citizenship (*ibid.*, 4). This document appears to be a generous gesture, with which it is easier for Abkhazians to travel to Europe and the US than with a Russian passport. It is regarded as an opportunity for the Abkhazians to see an alternative to Russia and is intended to arouse their interest in achieving EU membership – as part of Georgia.²² However, this document is rejected by the great majority of Abkhazians. The primary reason for this disapproval is the imprinted Georgian country code (GEO) visible on the document (Mikhelidze 2012, 4). A community struggling for independence from Georgia will obviously not accept an identity card with the Georgian country code on it. The document therefore makes no contribution to the freedom of movement for Abkhazians, but provides an additional negative input for the relationship between Georgians and Abkhazians.

This example can be seen as a hybrid initiative which mixes Western norms and ideas with those emerging from a Georgian context. This hybrid initiative has generally had negative effects on the peace process because, as this case demonstrates, the Abkhazians were either not taken seriously in their endeavour by the Georgian government or were sidelined by it. This increases misunderstandings and a feeling of mistrust instead of contributing to confidence building and reconciliation.

²² Interview with Nona Mikhelidze, May 4, 2012.

3.2 The Government and Society of Abkhazia and the EU and the US

The relationship between international actors and the Abkhaz government and society is characterised by the parties' diametrically opposed understanding of the conflict and the post-August 2008 realities. For the Abkhazians, the conflict is between Abkhazia and Georgia, which is different from the international organisations' understanding of the conflict as being between Russia and Georgia (Gegeshidze 2010, 87). For Abkhazians, the conflict with Georgia has to do with values and identity (Mikhelidze 2012, 3). The population in Abkhazia is multi-ethnic and includes Abkhaz, Armenian, Russian, Greek and Georgian groups. The numbers of each group have varied over time: in 1989, for example, Abkhazians, according to the Soviet census, comprised only 17.8 per cent of the total population of 525,000 people, while Georgians comprised 45.7 per cent, Armenians 14.6 per cent, and Russians 14.3 per cent (WRITENET 1997). As minority groups in Georgia, they had been regularly exposed to nationalist slogans and discrimination by Georgians ever since Georgia gained its independence from the Soviet Union. This caused increasing ethno-nationalism, fear among the non-Georgian groups, stronger solidarity and unification among the different ethnic groups in Abkhazia (Akaba 2010, 9), and finally de facto independence. Against this background, the recognition of Abkhazia's independence by Russia in 2008 "had serious moral and psychological significance for the Abkhaz nation, as it was the result of a long, hard struggle for self-determination", as the Deputy Foreign Minister of Abkhazia, Irakli Khintba, asserts (Khintba 2010, 27). For the first time, the Abkhazians' struggle for self-determination was recognised and supported and, in addition, provided with "certain security guarantees" (ibid.).

By seeing Abkhazia as a 'lost territory' of Georgia occupied by Russia, the overwhelming majority of internationals thus deny that Abkhazia has its own agenda, interests and needs. Furthermore, in the international actors' view, Abkhazia is not considered a party in the conflict and, consequently, has not been invited to peace talks such as the Geneva Talks. Such diverse perspectives and understandings are not an ideal basis for collaboration and are the main reason why Abkhazia does not accept foreign aid and support.²³ However, with its aspiration to achieve international recognition as an independent sovereign state, interaction and even an international presence on its territory are necessary. Abkhazia therefore regretted the end of UNOMIG in 2009, since its presence could have "increase[d] Abkhazia's prospects of wide international recognition and becoming a UN member state" and "attract[ed] international attention to events in Abkhazia" (Khintba 2010, 28). Abkhazia could also benefit from support for its socio-economic modernisation and democratisation (ibid., 27). The problem with aid and support from the EU, the US and the UN is that they are always based on a strategy of 'reintegration' of Abkhazia into Georgia, as part of their acknowledgement of Georgia's territorial integrity.²⁴ Furthermore, the non-recognition of Abkhazia's independence means that all projects and programmes by international actors are managed through Georgia, from Tbilisi, which is unacceptable from the perspective of an Abkhazia which seeks independence from Georgia.²⁵

The answers from Abkhazian government representatives and society in a public opinion survey by Kvarchelia in 2011 reflect these views. In general, the perception of the Abkhazians interviewed is that the internationals view Abkhazia through the prism of Georgian interests (Kvarchelia 2012, 6). Abkhazians are disappointed that the internationals do not consider the bigger picture, namely the root causes and

²³ An example is given by Khintba (2010, 28) regarding the EU's monitoring mission that was perceived as suspicious by the Abkhazians. This therefore led to mistrust towards the EU and a preference to have rather a UN presence in the country than the EU (which was also supported by Russia).

²⁴ UNOMIG's extension was not accepted by the Abkhaz government because the conditions by the Abkhaz government – to change the mission's name (take out "Georgia") and mandate (no longer relevant due to the new realities of Abkhazia being a recognised independent state) – were not accepted by Georgia (Khintba 2010, 29).

²⁵ It is not only the internationals who bear the blame for this: some of the blame lies with the Georgian government for introducing the Law on Occupied Territories, which was adopted after the 2008 war. It "defines the status of territories and places certain limitations on free migration, economic activities, real-estate transactions, and other activities in the occupied territories, and empowers the Government of Georgia to agree on implementation of those programs and projects in the occupied territories that meet humanitarian needs and promote confidence building" (Mikhelidze 2012, 5).

history of the conflict. Instead, for geopolitical reasons the internationals associate conflict resolution with the political goal of Georgia's territorial integrity (*ibid.*). The internationals, furthermore, do not condemn and sanction Georgia for atrocities committed during the wars, which in the respondents' view would be necessary to motivate Georgia to find peaceful solutions with Abkhazia (*ibid.*, 5). As a consequence, the internationals are seen as biased and unable to act as neutral mediators in the conflict, which "exacerbates the existing conflict by adding new nuances" (*ibid.*).

Another point stated by the Abkhazian respondents is that the internationals have not treated Abkhazia equally with Georgia with regard to development assistance. Since the 1992-1993 war, Georgia has received massive assistance with state building, democratisation and social and economic development. Abkhazia, however, on whose territory the 1992-1993 hostilities and destruction occurred, was sanctioned with an economic embargo and was isolated for several years (Kvarchelia 2012, 2). Abkhazia thus had to deal with challenges to its economic survival and an uneasy democratic transition with minimal external assistance. Such unequal treatment led to an increased feeling of injustice among Abkhazians and this strengthened their mistrust of Georgia and its international allies (*ibid.*).

With their decision to deny Abkhazia's independence, the international actors have distanced themselves from the Abkhaz *de facto* government and thus have manoeuvred themselves into a position where they cannot support democracy building. In the absence of simultaneous development and reform of state institutions, the support of individual governance and democracy projects has a marginal impact (*ibid.*, 3). Furthermore, with their understanding of the conflict, the internationals focus on confidence building and peacebuilding between Abkhazia and Georgia and do not support wider infrastructural and democratic development in the way that the Abkhazians would wish (*ibid.*, 3, 5).

Although the opinion that the relationship between international actors and Abkhazia is overshadowed by mistrust is widespread among the Abkhazians, some government and society representatives nevertheless state that they have not lost hope for a gradual engagement process with the EU (*ibid.*, 6). The interviewed government representatives also speak of engagement with the EU, but in terms of "a step towards recognition of Abkhazia" (*ibid.*, 9). Consensus among all respondents was that independence is non-negotiable: "Abkhazia could interact with Europe but not at the cost of capitulating on the issue of independence" (*ibid.*). They also hope that an improvement in European-Russian relations could lead to better European-Abkhazian relations as well (*ibid.*). A similar statement came from Abkhazia's former Prime Minister Sergei Shamba, when he was asked about the expansion of the EUMM to Abkhazia: "If the EU recognises Abkhazia as a subject of international law then we may even be interested in their presence in our state" (Haindrava 2010, 95). For those Abkhazians (politicians, civil society representatives and business representatives) who fear that too much dependence on Russia could endanger their sovereignty, a relationship with the EU could diversify and broaden Abkhazia's international relations (Kvarchelia 2012, 14).

The statements in this poll show that people in Abkhazia would wish for and welcome international support and presence in their territory, but only if this is unbiased and receptive to the needs and interests of Abkhazia. For the international actors, this would mean changing their strategy of "integration/engagement without recognition" and coming up with their own de-isolation strategy and initiatives and de-linking them from the aim of resolving the conflict (Kvarchelia 2013). However, as we know from the previous section in this chapter, the international actors pursue their own geopolitical and strategic interests in the region. They are unlikely, in the near future, to change a strategy that protects "Georgia's territorial integrity against Russian aggression and recognition of what hitherto even Russia acknowledged were Georgia's *de jure* territories" (Frichova Grono 2010, 11).

For Abkhazia, this relationship becomes more complicated when including the relationship it maintains with Russia. According to Kvarchelia (2013), Abkhazia has to balance three aspects: "firstly, the joint interest of Abkhazia and Russia in dispelling the myth of the 'occupation' of Abkhazia, which cannot be achieved if Abkhazia remains cut off from the West; secondly, there are Russia's concerns that Abkhazia's loyalty might waver; and thirdly, Abkhazia has concerns that relations might be put at risk with its sole ally, guarantor of security and principal donor". These are indeed not easy circumstances

for Abkhazia to handle. There is basically only one option: to expand its international contacts while maintaining and deepening its partnership with Russia, in the hope that this will be accepted by both the international actors and Russia.

4 Role of Culture and Identity in the Relations

4.1 The EU Culture of Governance for Peacebuilding

The EU's strategic interests in the South Caucasus, as officially stated, are stability, prosperity and the development of democracy as well as the creation of close links with its Eastern neighbours (Ashton 2010). In order to achieve these goals in Georgia, the EU has set up several instruments and policies such as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) (since 2003), the Eastern Partnership (EaP) (since 2008) and the Instrument for Stability (IfS) (since 2007). Most of the EU's support programmes in Georgia seek to promote its strategic interests through these instruments and policies (Mikhelidze 2012, 1).

The underlying premise of the EU's approach in its engagement with Georgia's territorial conflicts is "an endorsement of Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty and thus its non-recognition of the de facto independence of Abkhazia" (Mikhelidze 2012, 1). The EU assumes that Georgia's growing attractiveness in terms of development, democratisation, business and trade will eventually lead to Abkhazians' surrendering their idea of independence and will thus bring about a resolution of the conflict (ibid.).

However, what is interesting to observe is that the EU has significantly changed its approach since the 2008 war. Before the war its activities were generally disconnected from the conflict and the emphasis of its projects was on democracy building, the rule of law and development. After the war, the EU has largely focused its projects and programmes directly on conflict resolution (Mikhelidze 2012, 1, 7). With the new IfS framework, the EU "has tried to complement the ENP and EaP with direct conflict resolution governance initiatives" (Mikhelidze 2012, 1). In 2008, the IfS funds were spent on support initiatives for displaced people, later on confidence building,²⁶ with projects such as 'Support to Mitigate the Consequences of the Recent Armed Conflict in Georgia', 'Support confidence-building measures and de-conflicting after the armed conflict in Georgia in August 2008' and 'Support for Georgian efforts to overcome its political crises and to deepen its democratic reforms' (Mikhelidze 2012, 1). The complementing of development and democracy support initiatives with conflict resolution and confidence-building initiatives might provide evidence for the fact that the EU realises that mere development is not enough to bring the conflicting sides together. Thus, the EU might reconsider its underlying assumptions since Abkhazia has not shown any interest in re-joining Georgia.

5 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the relations between the EU and the US and the Georgian government on the one side, and the Abkhazian de facto government on the other. The relationship between these

²⁶ EU Delegation to Georgia: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/georgia/eu_georgia/tech_financial_cooperation/instruments/instruments_ifs/index_en.htm

international actors and the Georgian government displays a partnership-like character and is based on a shared understanding of the conflict, similar goals for the peacebuilding process, and mutual interests and benefits. Georgia can count on the support of the EU and US in its activities but simultaneously becomes dependent on them to a certain degree. The relationship is based, up to a point, on dialogic aspects. Each party's aims, interests, norms and practices are negotiated in a dialogue and compromises are sought. Under the cover of 'partnership', however, strong interests are pursued on both sides. Due to compromises that are based on political power and strategic interests, the resulting initiatives that emanate from this relationship are therefore not fully-fledged and are rather disappointing. The initiatives originating from this relationship also have a hybrid character – a mixture of Western and Georgian contextual norms, ideas and interests shapes them. The mixed norms and practices in the examined cases are, however, rather negative and therefore lead to an undesirable outcome. The analysed hybrid examples unfortunately do not lead to more confidence building and reconciliation between the Abkhazians and Georgians. It is therefore an example of a negative hybrid form of initiatives (Richmond 2010, 689).

The relationship between the EU and the US and the de facto Abkhaz government, however, rests on diametrically opposed understandings of the conflict as well as an ignorance of Abkhaz interests and needs by the international actors. Because the EU and the UN stick to their strategy of integration/engagement without recognition, the Abkhazians see limited possibilities for collaboration. The option of expanding their international contacts while maintaining and deepening their partnership with Russia would be ideal but is difficult to achieve, because it puts them between a rock and a hard place. Above all, they have to keep their main donor and protector Russia happy, but they must also keep the doors open to the EU and the US. It will be difficult for the Abkhazians to approach the government of Georgia without putting the economic and military support from Russia at risk. Since the EU, the US, and Russia are at cross purposes regarding their intentions for and interests in the South Caucasus, they will probably not appreciate such an attempt by Abkhazia.

There is some hope that the recently elected Georgian Prime Minister Ivanishvili will perhaps pave the way for Abkhazia to move closer to the West *and* Russia. He is pursuing the same strategy – strengthening relations with Russia and at the same time continuing to deepen ties with the EU and NATO. However, his aspirations for NATO membership in particular will be a thorn in Russia's side.

An improvement, at least for the relationship between Georgia and Abkhazia, might be Ivanishvili's intention to reconstruct the destroyed railway through Abkhazia to Russia. This project would require collaboration between Georgia and Abkhazia and could therefore function as a confidence-building mechanism (Mikhelidze 2013, 1-4). Ivanishvili is also planning to modify some parts of the "Law of Georgia on Occupied Territories" for the same reasons, namely to build confidence with Abkhazia (Menabde 2013). Furthermore, his party has promised a stronger focus on minority issues, including the protection and integration of minorities, increased representation in government, improved educational rights and the protection of their culture and traditions "in addition to working on Abkhazia and South Ossetia" (ICG 2012, 9). These are promises that could indeed result in positive outcomes for Abkhazia. However, this has yet to be proven. Meanwhile, the Abkhazians remain sceptical and will wait and see. The reconstruction of the railway is already viewed by the Abkhazian government as a veiled new attempt to integrate Abkhazia into Georgia (Mikhelidze 2013, 2). It is to be hoped that Ivanishvili is serious about his promises and that some of his initiatives will gradually build trust between the Georgians and Abkhazians.

The analysis of the five cases provides some interesting insights into the themes discussed in the theory chapter at the beginning of this report. These themes are: the nature of relations between different actors in peacebuilding, dialogical principles in the relations and a lack thereof, hybridity, and the role of identity and culture in relations. Below, these themes will be revisited and assessed with reference to the case studies. Comparisons are drawn whenever possible. However, since the cases and the investigated aspects within the cases vary so dramatically, a comparison is, for most aspects, not a meaningful option.

Conclusion

Assessment of Analysis and Comparison between the Cases

1 The Nature of Relations between Different Actors in Peacebuilding

What the three case studies in India – Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar and Jharkhand, and Nagaland – have in common is that the main actor involved in conflict transformation is the Indian government. Unlike the cases in Europe, there are no international peacebuilding missions on the ground and the international activities are confined to sectoral cooperation, for example in the area of development and technical assistance. Intra-state conflicts in India are managed and addressed at the domestic level. Conflict resolution mechanisms exist in several forms and on different levels. They are mainly state-led or locally-rooted, and few are internationally led. Thus, in all three cases in India, the analysed relations are between the government (central, state and district level), the local elected representatives in the *panchayats*, and civil society or citizens. State-led initiatives are often viewed as being motivated by pacification goals, not by sincere interest in conflict transformation. However, the analysis showed that positive examples also exist: examples are the *panchayats* in Bihar and Jharkhand and the relationship between the Naga women's organisation and the government of India, which seem to have great potential for sustainable peacebuilding initiatives, as discussed below.

In the cases in Europe, the international actors and the government are the main actors supporting the peacebuilding process. The internal conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and in Georgia and Abkhazia are managed and addressed by both the governments and the international actors. In the case of BiH, the international actors designed the peacebuilding guidelines (the Dayton Agreement) and negotiated it with the warring parties. In Georgia, it was the other way around: the government came up with the "State Strategy" and consulted the international actors during drafting. In both cases, there is strong collaboration between the governments and the international actors.

2 Dialogical Principles in the Relations and a Lack Thereof

When analysing the relations between the different actors, particular emphasis was placed on dialogical characteristics or elements. “Dialogical” means that the collaboration between the involved actors is based on dialogue: actors actively contribute to, and shape the agendas of, projects and strategies in a participatory manner. It implies that there is space for direct encounter, exchange, mutual empathy, interest, openness, understanding, flexibility, transformation and joint activities, and asymmetries between the actors are addressed. In that sense, the analysed relations in the case studies are not dialogical. Some of them do, however, display dialogical elements, such as the relationship between the Indian government and the women’s organisations in Nagaland. The women and representatives of the central government directly interact around and during peace talks with underground movements. Both sides are willing to enter into negotiations and are open to a measure of compromise to achieve their goals. For example, by changing its strategies towards less violence, the government supports the women’s (and citizens’) demands. The women manage with empathy to build trust and confidence among all the parties, the government included, so that they become more open to nonviolent compromise. This dialogical exchange assists both parties to achieve their goals. The women’s organisations are more successful in peace negotiations and are supported by the government in their struggle for political and social rights. The government benefits from the women’s peacebuilding capacities, their good relationships with the underground movements, and the legitimacy and trust they enjoy among their communities when striving for stability, peace and development in the region.

There are also some dialogical elements that guide the relationship between the Georgian government and the international actors (mainly the EU and the US). The related actors work together as members of international committees and other bodies, participate in the Georgian democratisation and peacebuilding process, and thus engage in regular exchange and interaction. Their goals overlap (stability within Georgia and the region, achievement of all the reforms that are required for EU and NATO membership, etc.) and in their dialogical exchange, they respect each other’s interests. This leads to what I have described as a “compromised” or, in fact, a limited outcome for democratisation and peace. Democratisation and peace are only possible in a symbolic sense, and the current state-society relations remain unchanged, because each party’s own interests do not allow these endeavours to become fully-fledged and realised.

In contrast, the relationship between the Naga women’s organisations and the Indian central government has helped to raise public awareness of the peace process and reduced tension and violence. It has fostered a change of relations within society, resulting in an improved and stronger status and role for women in the public and political space. It has also led to a change in relations between civil society and the government. The women broke the taboo of working with the government and thus changed the Nagas’ longstanding antagonistic relationship with the Indian government.

Apart from these two diverse examples of relations that exhibit dialogical elements, the other relations analysed are more often than not characterised by a lack of communication and dialogue. This is true of the relationship between the state and district government and the elected representatives and citizens of Jammu and Kashmir. After the local elections, there was a gap between the promise of devolution of functions, funds and functionaries and its actual implementation. A lack of dialogue and communication between the state government and the elected representatives at the village level has led to a number of misunderstandings.

In BiH, the mechanisms and processes in place do not allow much direct interaction and exchange between the international actors and citizens. The international actors work mainly with (local) government

authorities and civil society organisations (CSOs), both of which often fail to directly interact with citizens. The lack of communication with and involvement of citizens leads to non-corresponding priorities being pursued, as well as to initiatives that lack legitimacy and connectedness with citizens, and a peacebuilding and democratisation process implemented without citizens' support.

Relations between the EU, the US and the UN – which have differing aims, but a similar approach – and the government of Abkhazia are another example; these relations are characterised by an absence of dialogue and exchange. These actors' close relationship with Georgia, their understanding of the conflict and their refusal to recognise Abkhazia's independence have caused indignation on the part of Abkhazia and a lack of interest in working with these actors.

3 Hybridity

As mentioned in Part 1 of this report, hybridity is usually discussed in peacebuilding and state building settings where international and local actors meet. This applies also to the two cases in Europe that I have looked at in depth – BiH and Georgia. In India, where there are no international peacebuilding missions and only marginal international interventions, hybridity between international and local actors' approaches and strategies does not occur. There are, however, hybrid forms between government and non-government actors' initiatives, which I have investigated in the case studies.

Hybrid forms can be identified in several of the case studies. They can be allocated to the four meanings of 'hybridity' identified in Part 1. These are: hybridity as a result of dialogical relations, hybridity as a result of resistance and acceptance, hybridity as an analytical claim to enhance the chances of effective and sustainable peace, and hybridity as a benchmark to assess legitimacy or the extent to which peace is co-owned by different actors.

In the case of Georgia, the relationship between the Georgian government and the EU and the US allows international and Georgian norms, ideas, and practices to co-exist in the resulting initiatives. The Georgian "State Strategy on Occupied Territories" is aligned with Western goals and norms such as nonviolent engagement, economic and democratic development, human rights protection and freedom of movement. At the same time, it contains initiatives that reflect Georgia's own interests, and some of these initiatives, such as the "Status Neutral Travel Document", actually conflict with the international actors' aims. Due to the fact that "State Strategy" with its initiatives hybridises partly contrary points of view and non-corresponding norms, it has produced a compromised hybrid form which has adversely affected the peace process with Abkhazia. For example, the very fact that the strategy calls Abkhazia (and South Ossetia) "occupied territories" excludes the Abkhazian perspective and leads to misconceptions and distrust rather than confidence-building and reconciliation. The same is true of the "Status Neutral Travel Document", which, with the imprinted Georgian national symbol, does not consider the Abkhazians' strong wish to be recognised as an independent state. In this sense, these hybrid initiatives are a result of the dialogical elements within the relationship between the Georgian government and the international actors. They are, at the same time, a result of acceptance and resistance, whereby the Georgian government partly accepts the Western norms in shaping the "State Strategy" but resists full acceptance of these norms and processes by pursuing its own priorities and interests. This case clearly shows that hybridity does not necessarily enhance the chances of effective and sustainable peace. If, as in this case, it is a hybrid form of compromised non-corresponding norms, the outcome is an uneasy mix and a negative form of hybridity. Additionally, due to the fact that the compromise serves only the Georgian elite and the international actors, the citizens of Georgia and Abkhazia derive no benefits from the initiative. The resulting hybrid initiatives are therefore neither legitimate from the international actors' perspective (because they partly conflict with international actors' aims), nor in the view of citizens (they receive no benefits). It is only

legitimate for the Georgian political elite. Hybridity is evidence of the extent to which peace is co-owned by the Georgian government and the international actors. The international actors influence the processes and measures with their own rules and norms, while the Georgian government chooses the ones it wants to adopt. However, as we know from the asymmetric power relations between these actors regarding geopolitical interests, and also bearing in mind Georgia's interest in joining international bodies (the EU and NATO), the Georgian government's scope to choose which international rules and norms it wishes to apply remains rather limited – it has to adopt those stipulated and required.

In the cases in India, the establishment of a legal basis for local institutions to assume the role of local governmental bodies – the *panchayats* – can be considered a hybrid governance initiative. It combines the format of the familiar traditional local institutions with democratic norms and procedures such as equal and inclusive participation and free elections. The reason for complementing the *panchayats* with democratic norms was to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of governance at the local level, and this has been successful in many cases, notably in those areas of Bihar and Jharkhand where our research was carried out. There, the field research team gained the impression that the very fact that Naxal groups participate in the *panchayats* shows how pivotal the political process in this region has become. The *panchayats'* embeddedness in the complex local political process and their principle of inclusion and equality make them valuable and attractive institutions for their constituencies. The hybrid character of *panchayats*, I suggest, contributes to their legitimacy as local governments. Their ancient format has legitimacy from the local communities' and actors' perspective, due to its familiarity and historical embeddedness. The democratic norms of inclusiveness and equality allow everyone – including the marginalised sections of society and the Naxal groups – to participate in and contribute to the local political process.

In the case of Nagaland, the government developed a hybrid approach by combining some of the women's demands (nonviolence, social welfare, social and political rights) with classic infrastructure development initiatives and economic advancement. In fact, it put women's issues high up on its development agenda within the Look East Policy. This hybrid approach might be one outcome of the dialogical elements of the relationship with the women's organisations. Moreover, it is a strategy adopted by the government to enhance the chances of effective and sustainable peacebuilding and development.

The government's approach is hybrid in other aspects as well. Although a militarised approach is still being pursued (the deployment of security forces and the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)), a nonviolent agenda that focuses on economic development and democratisation has been introduced. In certain cases, the two approaches are combined, e.g. the security forces protect coal and mineral mines, which are supposed to create economic advancement in the region. The outcome is an approach which combines direct and indirect conflict management and is yet another strategy to enhance the chances of effective and sustainable peacebuilding and development.

Several hybrid forms of initiatives are the result of localisation or adaptation to the local context or to a particular interest of an actor group. For example, in some cases, the Naxalites have adapted the reservation quota for women in the *panchayats* for their own benefit by putting up a dummy female candidate; through her, they execute their power and their agendas.¹

While the first example from Georgia demonstrates negative hybridity, the following two from India – the *panchayats* in Bihar and Jharkhand and the government's approach that includes the women's demands in Nagaland – are positive examples of hybridity. They lead to positive outcomes and could therefore be regarded as good practice for hybrid peacebuilding. The last two examples – the government's approach which combines military and development/democratisation as well as the example of the Naxalites' adaptation of the reservation quota for women in the *panchayats* – are again hybrid forms of initiatives that obviously do not lead to sustainable peace.

¹ The adaptation of initiatives so that they fit better into the setting is discussed in detail by Janel B. Galvanek in the complementary report on Theme B.

What clearly comes out from these examples is their diversity. Although the resulting hybrid initiatives are all governmental strategies mixed with either international, traditional and/or democratic norms, the constellations of related actors and the contexts are very specific and are therefore difficult to compare.

4 The Role of Culture and Identity in the Relations

One objective of this report was to explore how identity and culture influence and shape relations between different actors in peacebuilding processes and to find out if culture and identity have a prominent role in the collaboration between these actors. The analysed cases provide evidence that identity and culture play a role and influence the relationships between the different actors in peacebuilding processes. The analysis shows that culture influences governance for peacebuilding and, indeed, that governance for peacebuilding becomes culture. Culture influences and shapes the understanding of a conflict and the way a conflict is addressed by specific actors. It therefore also shapes the ways in which governance for peacebuilding is performed. This implies that certain institutions' or organisations' processes are different from others. Similarly, a conflict environment can become a culture. I describe it as the culture of conflict, where mutual fear and mistrust prevail between the actors. Furthermore, identity plays a role in representation in politics and quotas for economic and social benefits and influences people's role in, and their effect on, the peacebuilding process.

For the analysis of the case studies, a broad framework of identity and culture was adopted. Working with a broad definition of culture has the advantage that different understandings and natures of identity and culture can be included. A disadvantage, however, is that it is difficult to make a precise analysis of the many different understandings and natures of culture and identity without running the risk of the notions of 'identity' and 'culture' becoming empty signifiers. Thus, the analysis of these differing cases entails quite diverse images of culture.

4.1 Culture of Governance for Peacebuilding

As described in Part I of this report, looking at the culture of governance for peacebuilding requires us to examine how actors develop and implement peacebuilding initiatives and to consider the repertoire of the processes they choose, the norms and principles underlying these processes, and the patterns and practices that evolve through time. In the analysed cases, I have focused on the cultures of governance for peacebuilding by key international actors in the cases in Europe (the EU, the UN and the US) and by the government of India for the cases in India. Although the approaches vary and are adapted to each context to some extent, the trend remains more or less the same. In Georgia and BiH, the international actors have an outsider perspective and pursue an approach to peacebuilding that is based on liberal principles and aims (institutional stability, democracy, economic liberalisation, neoliberal development, human rights, and the rule of law). State building is the priority and implemented with the assistance of external experts and standardised bureaucratic and technocratic means. This approach is grounded in the assumption that 'what worked in the past in Europe will work elsewhere' and 'our work is value-free and neutral'.

In the cases in India, the Indian government has a domestic perspective and pursues an approach to conflict resolution that is also based on liberal principles. Its priority is to restore law and order by pacifying rather than building peace, to address the development deficit and to strengthen democracy, the latter

being regarded as “essential for conflict resolution and nation building, particularly in pluralistic States.”² The government of India makes a link between socio-economic factors, governance and conflict by taking the view that conflict arises from a development deficit and ineffective local administration. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the Indian government’s conscious decision to deal with internal conflicts on its own, without the assistance of external actors, also belongs to its ‘culture’ of governance for peacebuilding.

There are some overlaps between the two cultures of governance for peacebuilding, most prominently the liberal emphasis on principles and aims, and the focus on development and democratisation as indirect peacebuilding measures. These cultures of governance influence the relations with other actors. For example, in the case of Nagaland, the government and the women activists found that their aims overlapped. The government’s official support of women’s political and social rights is part of its liberal and democratic aims. These have had a positive effect on the activists’ demand for social and political rights for women in Nagaland. In BiH, the international actors’ culture of governance affects their relationships with the citizens in many, often negative ways. By giving precedence to Western expert knowledge over local views and ideas, the peacebuilding process has marginalised citizens. As the new structures have been developed without adequate account being taken of existing legitimate local structures, they often lack any roots in society (for example, civil society organisations are often funded by international actors and therefore seen as being “co-opted” by them). Mistakenly assuming that their approach is neutral, the international actors overlook the fact that some of their activities have political implications and, in certain cases, lead to anger and mistrust.

The two cultures of governance for peacebuilding which analysed here provide two different responses to the pervasive criticism of the liberal peace approach, namely that it does not take into account local conditions and the affected peoples’ aims, needs and identities. In the case of the Naga women’s demands, the liberal principle of inclusion and equality is advantageous, while in BiH, the international actors’ way of working is not. I do not intend to draw any conclusions here because the two examples are highly diverse and would need to be further investigated. Nevertheless, it is clear that some liberal principles are indeed beneficial and of interest to the marginalised sections of society in all cases – such as women and the Scheduled Castes and Tribes in India, persons with different ethnic backgrounds in BiH, and the Abkhaz minority. Liberal principles such as equality and inclusion assist them in their endeavour to secure a stronger position as autonomous actors and societies.

4.2 Culture of Conflict

The relations between the different actors are also conditioned within a climate of fear, suspicion, mistrust and compromise, which is present in most of the cases analysed for this report. In Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and Nagaland in particular, this has clearly influenced relations between the citizens and local actors with the government. In J&K and Nagaland, the long history of conflict has left its mark. The government’s militarised approach – in the deployment of a massive number of security forces and through the notorious Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) – is associated with numerous atrocities and human rights abuses. Due to the Act’s declaration of the areas as ‘disturbed’ and its inhabitants as ‘suspicious’, people are seen as suspicious whatever they are doing. Generally speaking, the militarisation and specifically the AFSPA make people feel less secure and have created a climate of terror, increasing suspicion and mistrust between the people and the government. Every step taken by the government therefore meets with suspicion. However, this suspicion works both ways and can easily escalate. In the case of Jammu and Kashmir, the gap between promises made by the state government, such as the failure to deliver on its pledge to devolve funds, must be seen in this context. The delay in devolution therefore needs to be addressed by the government with particular sensitivity.

² Government of India 2008. Capacity Building for Conflict Resolution. SECOND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS COMMISSION, Seventh Report, February 2008. Pg. i.

In Nagaland, people are aware of their weaker position compared with the security forces' power under the AFSPA and have stopped asking the government to take responsibility for its lawlessness and do not demand justice for the abuse of their rights so often any more. Instead, they look for other ways to try to settle the conflicts in order to continue their everyday lives.

A culture of conflict is also present in Bihar and Jharkhand, where fear of either the Naxal atrocities or the state security forces is widespread in society. Some people may choose to join the Naxalites since they can protect people better from the security forces than vice versa.

Mistrust and suspicion also play a role in the analysed cases in Europe. The Abkhaz government is mistrustful of the Georgian government and the international actors, and the Georgian government is suspicious of Russia. Although the Georgian "State Strategy on Occupied Territories" propagates a non-violent approach, the Abkhazians are mistrustful of Georgia and have clear memories of the 2008 war. This does not provide a good basis for reassurance.

4.3 Representation in Politics and for Social and Economic Benefits

The government of India is pursuing a democratisation process that involves citizens' representation in the government at different levels; the same applies to the international actors who have strongly influenced the state structures established in BiH and Georgia. The politics of representation, however, raises some difficult issues and dilemmas for multicultural and multi-ethnic states, of which most of the cases under investigation are examples. How can different identities within a nation be equally represented without discriminating against others? How can their diverse issues and needs be given a voice? Should identity be used as a category for representation or not? Should identity issues be emphasised or downplayed?

In India, the government has addressed these questions by introducing official quotas for the marginalised sections of society (women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes), which apply to seats in government, development schemes and government jobs. The quotas are intended to foster these groups' inclusion in decision-making processes and allow them to share in socio-political and economic resources, with the long-term aim of balancing wealth in society. Although the constitution does not allow discrimination based on caste affiliation, it states that people belonging to the lower castes need more benefits than people from higher castes, regardless of their wealth, income and living standards. In the case of Bihar and Jharkhand, we have seen the effect of reserving seats for these groups on their political power and social welfare. Pooling them into categories of scheduled castes and tribes has allowed people falling into these categories to build solidarity with each other, which has helped them gain political power and improve their economic and social conditions. It has become evident that caste identity is particularly effective in this context, while gender identity is not (yet). However, it has also been demonstrated that this politicisation of caste creates a new elite among those members of these groups who become the ultimate beneficiaries. Therefore, it seems that the reservation of seats and quotas for economic benefits only partly lead to the desired goal, i.e. the inclusion of the marginalised.

In BiH, the Dayton Agreement confirmed an ethnic power-sharing structure for the three main ethnic groups – Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs – in order to avoid a re-escalation of the conflict between these groups and allow them equal political power. The segregation between the different ethnic groups in BiH has led to discontent and grievances among some sections of society (mainly urban populations and persons of mixed ethnicity). Ethnicity has become enshrined and institutionalised in the everyday life of BiH's citizens. When looking at this divide from a peacebuilding perspective, it seems to be counter-productive, because it gives ethnic identity more weight in everyday life (as we have seen in the 'spatialisation of ethnicity') and divides people along these lines instead of creating common ground between them. In other words, it creates dividers instead of connectors. In order to build trust or reconcile people from the different ethnic groups, it is important to emphasise people's commonalities instead of (ethnic) differences. Before

the war, people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds lived together in the Republic of Yugoslavia and inter-ethnic marriages were by no means uncommon in BiH. People still have a memory of this shared life, which could serve as a basis for peaceful co-existence between the different ethnic groups in future.

In both India and BiH, identity is used as a category for representation. In Bihar and Jharkhand, the emphasis of caste identity has resulted in political power and improved economic and social conditions for the elites but not for most members of the scheduled caste category. The emphasis on ethnic identity in BiH has not helped to build trust between the ethnic groups; in fact, it has strengthened the ethnic divide and ‘frozen’ the conflict between the ethnic groups. The mistrust and differences of opinion among the ethnic groups in the government have led to the blocking of political processes. Although the Dayton Agreement ended the war, it has not yet been possible to (re-)build the bridges between the ethnic groups and to (re-)connect them with overarching norms and structures.

4.4 Identity as an Assisting Role

Yet another facet of identity is that it can assist in peacebuilding, as is the case with the Naga Mothers in Nagaland. Their identity as mothers has helped them gain respect and trust from society as well as from the security forces, the government officials, and the insurgent groups. As mothers, they are trusted and not feared or seen as an enemy. The mothers are successful where men are not. They can talk to men and mediate among them in situations of anger and thus manage to mitigate or prevent violent excesses. The Naga mothers’ success – in reaching the warring parties, resolving inter-community tension, creating channels for communication, and organising dialogue – has made them indispensable as peacebuilders. With this role, the women have captured for themselves some space in the political arena where they otherwise have been denied any role. This example shows that identity can be beneficial for building peace.

5 Concluding Remarks

Although there is no clear pattern of relations that are most promising for sustainable peace, it seems that matching goals and openness towards each other are indeed beneficial, as the examples from Nagaland and Georgia show. However, if the motivation behind the matching goals is different, it is questionable how sustainable the resulting initiatives will be. The answer from the compromised relationship between the Georgian government and the international actors hints that scepticism may be appropriate; so does the fact that the Naga women’s organisations are still not always included in official peace talks. Relations that impede the peacebuilding process are those in which local actors tend to be excluded and lack inclusive communication channels. This is clear in the case of Jammu and Kashmir and BiH. When there is no communication, hybrid forms are also unlikely to emerge.

A main finding of the analysis is that at the point where different actors – regardless of whether they are domestic, internal, local, governmental, non-governmental, international or external – come together with their ideas and initiatives, there is potential for interesting alternative ideas and initiatives to emerge. Some of them are indeed promising for peacebuilding in a broader sense. This is the case in Nagaland between the local women’s organisations and the government of India, and in India in general with the *panchayats*. Hybrid forms of initiatives emerge not only as a result of intervention in traditional systems, but are the result, more generally, of social interaction between different actors. In this regard, peacebuilding should not be understood as a linear process in which one actor implements peacebuilding projects and programmes while others benefit from it. On the contrary, all the different actors have a role to play and can influence the process of peacebuilding in their own way and with the means at their disposal, which includes everything from funding to resistance.

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