D.5.2: Systematic survey report for cases

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Collated by the University of Manchester in association with CORE partners

Contents

Introduction

In this report we concentrate on bottom-up forms of governance that individuals, communities and institutions have developed in conflict contexts. We are particularly interested in forms of governance that people have developed to promote conflict resolution / transformation in different aspects of everyday life (e.g., economic, social or cultural activity). These grassroots initiatives might involve an element of dissembling or consciously avoiding overtly political or security-related issues. The initiatives may cooperate with, resist or exist alongside top-down governance initiatives of the state / EU. These bottom-processes may signal agency and so can help in the re-conceptualisation of accounts of governance.

Many standard accounts of initiatives to help manage violent conflict focus on top-down negotiations, agreements and mechanisms agreed by political and security elites. There are, of course, good reasons to focus on this top-down level. It is often elites (both national and international) who have the material and symbolic power to escalate and de-escalate tension and conflict. Put simply, they have the power to make and break peace. National elites are often (though not always) the main liaison point for international interveners, and they filter information and resources down to the sub-state level. Yet, an exclusive focus on the top-down, elite and formal dimensions of peacemaking risks giving a distorted and partial picture.

Recent scholarship has been interested in unpacking the multiplicity of political actors in transitions and examining the interface and interaction between top-down and bottom-up actors. Whether through the lenses of hybridity[1], friction[2] or contentious politics[3], this scholarship has sought to develop a fuller picture of the variety of actors involved in peace and conflict contexts. In particular, much of this literature has focused on the interaction between different levels of peacebuilding. These studies have often involved the use of methodological tools and disciplinary perspectives that are able to see past state and institution-centric accounts of the management of conflict.[4] Colleagues in the CORE project have used intensive qualitative interviews, and some semi-ethnographic techniques, to go beyond official accounts and attempt to access the texture of how communities deal with conflict and division. This research has been able to uncover examples of localized agency

All teams in the CORE project were tasked with fieldwork. This report is based on responses made by the fieldwork teams to four questions:

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[1] R. Mac Ginty, *International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance: Hybrid forms of peace*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011; O. Richmond and A. Mitchell eds., *Hybrid Forms of Peace*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012.

[2] See, for example, the special issue of *International Peacekeeping* 20(2) 2013 entitled 'Frictions in Peacebuilding Interventions: The unpredictability of local – global interaction', and a special issue of *Peacebuilding* 1(3), 2013, forthcoming.

[3] See, for example, the Contentious Politics book series from Cambridge University Press.

[4] See, for example, the work on hybrid political orders mainly by anthropologists: V. Boege, A. Nolan, K. Clements, A. Nolan, 'On hybrid political orders and emerging states: State formation in the context of fragility', Berlin: Berghoff Handbook, 2008. Accessed at http://edoc.vifapol.de/opus/volltexte/2011/2595/pdf/boege_etal_handbook.pdf

1. In your fieldwork, which examples of bottom-up conflict resolution initiatives did you encounter?

2. What was the primary force behind these grassroots initiatives? Were bottom-up dynamics essentially a reaction to state / EU initiatives or independent of them?

3. Did grassroots conflict resolution initiatives cooperate, resist or ignore state / EU initiatives? Did this impact on long-term stability?

4. Did the encounter between grassroots and state / EU initiatives produce ethical and practical dilemmas?

The questions were designed to elicit responses on bottom-up processes to manage conflict. They help illustrate the forms of governance at the sub-state level that have emerged as part of coping strategies or ways to lower the costs of conflict. They point to a number of forms of agency such as ignoring and subverting formal government or communities using their own initiative to establish alternative forms of governance. The report is organized so that the fieldwork teams 'speak for themselves', although a conclusion at the end of the document seeks to draw together the salient points. As both Delhi University and PRIA conducted extensive fieldwork in Jammu and Kashmir, they have two reports that can be read side-by-side.

The contributors to this report are:

Bihar and Jharkland: Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Central European University (CEU)

Cyprus: University of Manchester (UMAN)

Georgia: The Institute of International Affairs (IAI)

Jammu and Kashmir: Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) and Delhi University

Meghalaya : Malaviya Centre for Peace Research, Banaras Hindu University

Northeast India: Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (MCRG)

A note on fieldwork methodology

The CORE project combines concept and theory-building with extensive fieldwork in six locations. This fieldwork is designed to be comparative and to elicit local and experience-led responses from (post) conflict zone inhabitants, practitioners, academic observers and policymakers. Most of all, the project is interested in the views of those who have experienced conflict and attempts by local, national and international actors to ameliorate it. The project partners have spent much time discussing research methodology, with several meetings devoted to the topic. A four-stage methodological *modus operandi* was adopted by the project. First, all project partners signed up to ethical standards of research design and operation. This was in keeping with approaches to conflict-sensitive research and recognised that the areas in which the fieldwork was being undertaken were either experiencing conflict or had recently experienced violent conflict. In any event, the sensitive nature of the research

topic was recognised. The second stage was the design of the research questions. The CORE project is divided into a number of linked themes (operationalized as 'work packages'). Some of these are primarily conceptual and theoretical, while others deal mainly with field research. The project has been designed so that the different work packages or themes are interlinked. So the fieldwork elements of the CORE project were 'commissioned' by the theoretical elements, with a number of work packages (2, 3 and 4) collaborating to design the questions that would be asked in during the fieldwork. The fieldwork results would then be integrated back into the theoretical and conceptual work packages. In some cases, findings on the ground would necessitate a change in the theoretical or conceptual direction of the project.

The third stage of the field research process – the actual field research – was conducted by CORE project partners in five areas. Although the project members were interested in the same broad issue (governance and the reception and impact of governance in relation to conflict) they were able to have some leeway in the precise approach and timing of the research. It was felt that an overly rigid approach to research methodology would be counterproductive in eliciting responses. So a flexible methodology was agreed that maintained a focus on the core questions but allowed local-specific methodologies to be used. Moreover, while the fieldwork was conducted in roughly the same period, it was not conducted at precisely the same time in all five areas. This was because of local circumstances. For example, the imminence of elections meant that the fieldwork was delayed by two months in one locality, and serious rains (and the impassibility of roads) delayed it in another locality.

The fourth stage of the fieldwork involves the already mentioned feeding back of the research findings to the other CORE project members who can then integrate the findings into their research and the drawing up of the work package 'deliverables'.

The selection procedure, i.e., choosing who was to be targeted for interviews, reflected the local autonomy given to the CORE project partners. Ultimately it was up to the partners to use their own networks and knowledge of the local situation to select who was to be interviewed. Given that this particular report is interested in bottom-up initiatives, investigators were steered towards those with knowledge of the local situation. This involved local representatives, security chiefs and NGO practitioners, as well as citizens. The wide variety of cases means that a discussion of what constitutes 'the local' was required. In some respects, this was a question of scale. In the case of Cyprus, the smallness of the island (already bifurcated) means that local was taken as the entire Greek-Cypriot part of the island. In the case of a vast – and highly variegated – like India, such an approach was impossible and instead the CORE team specialised on particular localities within particular regions.

As already mentioned, there was no standardised questionnaire. Instead, the fieldwork teams were equipped with broad questions (see questions 1-4 on the previous two pages) and they were then able to use their local knowledge to formulate more context-specific questions. It was anticipated that this would yield better results than standardised questions that may not have been appropriate for particular contexts.

Bihar and Jharkland

Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)

Amit Prakash, Imran Amin & Rukmani

Introduction

The focus on bottom-up forms of governance developed by actors and institutions in conflict context of Bihar and Jharkhand involves looking at forms of governance that promote conflict resolution / transformation in everyday life. Therefore, this write-up looks at the actors and institutions operating at the grassroots level, and the process of their interaction over governance initiatives in the naxal conflict in Bihar and Jharkhand. The actors involved in this particular conflict include state officials of the central and State government, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) representatives, political parties, naxal outfits, and civil/non-governmental organizations. The institutions through which interaction between these actors and their networks are anchored include developmental administrative structures, police and security structures, local governance structures of the PRI, and social institutions of caste and tribe based structures. Detailed discussion on these actors and institutions has been taken up in our earlier field reports[5], and therefore is not taken up in this paper. However, it is important to delineate between the commonly accepted statist and academic perception of the causes of this conflict and the resultant top-down initiatives. This is also important because in the context of Bihar and Jharkhand, these top-down approaches have been the stimulus for many bottom-up mechanisms, which is the focus of this paper.

In the larger academic perception, the naxal conflict is seen to be embedded in issues of distribution of development and social justice. Thus, it has been hailed as a struggle meant to address concerns such as land redistribution, access to public commons, wage increases and caste based exploitation.[6] On the other hand, the statist perception no longer sees it as "merely a law and order problem" and concedes that it has serious "political, social, economic, and security" dimensions.[7] It is perceived to emanate from "vacuum created by functional inadequacy of administrative and political institutions" and "prevalent disaffection and perceived injustice" of the "the under privileged and remote segments of population".[8] These grievances emanate from 'poor governance' and an institutional vacuum at the grassroots level. Therefore, both the statist and academic perspectives see the root cause of naxalism to be embedded in the functional inadequacy of the governance - and security apparatus of the state at the grassroots level.

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[5] See earlier report, such as Prakash and Amin 2012 and Prakash et al 2012. CORE project deliverables can be found here: http://www.projectcore.eu/index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=199. Last accessed 8 May 2013.

[6] M.K. Jha and Puspendra, 'Governing Caste and Managing Conflicts, Bihar, 1990-2011', MCRG Policies and Practices 48, Kolkata: MCRG, 2012. Accessed at: http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP48.pdf. Last accessed 8 May 2013.

[7] Government of India, 2004. Ministry of Home Affairs Annual Report 2003-04, p. 39.

[8] Government of India, 2007. Ministry of Home Affairs Annual Report 2006-2007, p 19; Government of India, 2009. Ministry of Home Affairs Annual Report 200902009, p. 16; Government of India, 2011. Ministry of Home Affairs Annual Report 2010-2011, p. 21.

These pathologies of 'failures or limits of the state' were addressed by top-down governance initiatives involving tight policing with benign welfare measures. Herein, the response continued to have a military-security orientation with developmental work being seen as secondary and subsequent measures. Therefore, the restoration of the state monopoly over the means of legitimate violence is conceded as being the prerequisite for the developmental package to follow. In term of such security related measures, a quick look at the annual reports of MHA, since 2003, reveals how the state aims to buttress its security infrastructure by pouring funds into areas such as security-related expenditure; police modernization; specialized training schools; and, raising paramilitary battalions. And, the complementary developmental measures were to target the marginality and backwardness of these areas and the people living therein. For this purpose, the state prioritized social and physical institutional infrastructure by deploying funds under various schemes for the delivery of employment, health and education facilities. Here too, the solution was seen as pouring funds into various flagship programmes of the central government.[9]

However, the distinctive initiative that was crucial for the bottom-up mechanisms was the introduction of elected, 3-tier Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) with the 73rd Amendment to the constitution. These PRIs were seen as making the initiatives more 'people-centric' by being the mechanisms of both, local participatory governance as well as coherent and effective public policy delivery. Indeed, as elaborated below, they have had a critical bearing on the bottom up mechanisms of grievance redress and socially just access to the fruits of development. At the same time, participation of the population is deemed necessary for the success of the developmental policies as well as for socially just development by ensuring participation parity among members of the local population in collective decision-making and actions. What follows are reflections on the naxal conflict zone in Bihar/Jharkhand, across two themes: grassroots mechanisms of conflict resolution; their interaction with top-down mechanisms and the ethical and strategic dilemmas it creates.

- In your fieldwork, which examples of bottom-up conflict resolution initiatives did you encounter?

In Bihar and Jharkhand, the institutions of local governance, i.e., panchayats, have become the anchor to most grassroots mechanisms for overcoming the conflict dynamics. PRIs play a significant role because citizens are able to elect their local representatives. With seats reserved for both women and the marginalized sections of society in the elected councils, the PRIs have significantly increased the political representation of these groups. Furthermore, through participatory planning, the elected leaders along with the community members in the meetings of *gram sabha* have been given the responsibility and power to formulate plans for economic development. The gram panchayats in Bihar and Jharkhand are involved with various developmental activities such as prioritizing the projects available under the MNREGA scheme, minor infrastructural projects under BRGF and housing projects under

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[9] Schemes like the Backward Districts Initiative (BDI), Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF) and Integrated Action Plan (IAP), Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, and Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY) targeted rural housing, road connectivity and electrification, respectively. Further, social welfare schemes for health, education and employment were in forms of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), National Rural Health Mission (NHRM), Sarva Siksha Abhiyaan (SSA), mid-day meal, right to education and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 were operationalised. Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 was to provide for a framework for recording the forest rights. The dimension of social justice was addressed through the reservation policy of 'protective discrimination' for the purpose of ensuring recognition, redistribution and representation that allows for participation parity for all.

IAY, choosing sites for development activities and ensuring the proper functioning of child care centres, schools and health centres. They also organize meetings of the *gram sabha*, which is intended to inform the citizens about the state's developmental policies and allow the people to register their grievances.

PRIs were/are able to help in mitigating the conflicts as the *gram panchayats* mediates the negotiated solution between the parties involved. In fact, in the sample districts of Bihar and Jharkhand, dispute settlement has become the primary task of the panchayats. For example, members of Piri panchayat of Chatra district, Jharkhand and Navdiha panchayat of Gaya district, Bihar said that while the development work for the panchayat representatives is seasonal, dispute settlement has become the more permanent job.[10]

Further, the PRIs are able to somewhat reduce the possibilities of conflict because of the role played by *gram panchayats* and *nyayalayas* or the reservation of seats, and also due to the nexus that seems to be developing between the PRIs and the Naxals. In many of the panchayats studied, elections have held peacefully because the candidates are members of naxal organizations or panchayat elections are completely influenced by the naxalites. For example, the ward member of Serendaag panchayat, Semariya block, Chatra district, Jharkhand noted: "the elections of nearby panchayats called Lavalong was completely influenced by the naxals especially the TPC as every candidate is a member of TPC, the naxal organization".[11]

Other than the PRIs, the local police have also taken steps to overcome/ resolve the issues of conflict. They have come up with the concept of *janta darbar*, to make a police-friendly environment in which meetings are held at three levels: the *thana* (Police Station) level, the sub-divisional level and the district level. Meetings at *thana* level are helpful in solving cases of a petty nature, cases for which FIR cannot be lodged and for character verification, because these meetings are attended by PRI representatives, *thana prabharis* (Police Station in-charge), Superintendent of Police and others. These meetings of *janta darbar* have also been helpful in reducing the information gap and have been helpful to the police officials in knowing the actual security situations of distant and relatively inaccessible places. Similarly, the Station House Officer of Sikandra, Jamui district of Bihar, in a personal interview opined that they "distribute CDs of plays which shows the negative impact of joining the naxal organizations and plays which shows the positive effects of engaging in developmental activities instead of going along with naxal outfits; among the villagers of naxal affected areas".[12] Even the paramilitary forces are trying build on their civic interaction, as pointed out by the Deputy Commandant of the CoBRA battalion. He pointed out that CoBRA battalions "have been taking civic action in secluded and far flung areas in form of distribution bicycles and blankets".[13]

- What was the primary force behind these grassroots initiatives? Were bottom-up dynamics essentially a reaction to state/ EU initiatives or independent of them?

All the policy initiatives of the Central Government and their benefits are negotiated at the grassroots level through the active involvement of the PRIs, para-statal bodies, violent organizations like the various naxal outfits, and the local police. Therefore, it can be said that

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[10] Prakash et al 2012, op. cit.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Author interview held at Sikandra police station, 23 December 2012.
[13] Author interview 8 August 2012.

responses by local institutions of governance are not independent of Central Government initiatives. In fact, they negotiate the everyday practices that carry forward the initiatives taken by Central Government. The Central Government initiates welfare measures for the poverty-stricken masses because the government assumes that individuals join and support the naxalites because they are poor and underdeveloped.

In the case of Bihar and Jharkhand, the PRIs as well as various development projects have become an active site of negotiation with the state in order to address developmental inequality. For example, one of our respondents reported that:

> … under NREGA, there is a provision of digging wells or ponds either on the land owned by a SC/ST community person or on state-owned land. But there are regions where there is no such kind of land. So, there this kind of provision does not work. Similarly, the provision of growing trees is not suitable for the regions which are semi-urban like ours. We have less state land and SC/ST population dominates most of the region and they do not have sufficient land. So, if policy is not region-specific or do not fulfil the conditions of the region then it is of no use.[14]

Development initiatives such as MNREGA, IAY, BRGF, NRHM, etc. are able to reduce conflict because they are framed while keeping in mind the situations of marginalized sections of the society. However, as the practice of these policies is embedded in social hierarchical norms and negotiated interactions, the resultant outcomes has not been as expected. For example, caste hierarchies are still relevant in shaping the interaction within and among PRI representatives as revealed in the gram nayayalay meeting in Navdiha Panchayat, Imamganj Block, Gaya district of Bihar.[15] Herein, the Brahmin father-in-law of the elected lady *sarpanch* regulated and governed the entire proceeding despite the presence of elected *up-sarpanch*, a paswaan (OBC – Other Backward Caste) and a Bhuiyan (SC – Scheduled Caste) *panch sadasya*. In fact, caste hierarchies have had similar affect even within the so called 'liberating class-based' Leftist extremist organization. As was reported by one of the members, it was the rivalry between *ganjus* and *yadavas* that was the primary reason for the split within Communist Party of India (Maoists) and led to the formation of the *ganju*-dominated Tritya Samelan Prastuti Committee. The biggest dilemmas emanating from these processes are the persistence of caste-based hierarchies and the prejudices rooted in them. Furthermore, while the presence of violent organizations among the lower castes, especially in form of naxal outfits, has led to a reduction of caste-based atrocities against them in their manifest form, this however has not yet translated into the empowerment of the commoners in public forums like *gram sabha*.

Furthermore, PRIs have increased the inclusivity of the policies with effective and transparent verification of the beneficiaries but have not had autonomy in terms of choice of projects and the manner in which they are to be implemented. Also, while they are successful in ensuring accountability in governance by panchayat level officials, they are ineffective against those higher up in the bureaucracy. Bureaucrats continue to wield decisive authority over the choice of developmental work and beneficiaries, claims about the decentralization and devolution of substantive power to PRIs notwithstanding. For instance, the heads of many of the Panchayat Samitis reported that unelected state officials still remain the most

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[14] Prakash and Amin, 2012, op. cit.
[15] Prakash et al 2013.

powerful actors in local governance and are the final deciding authority for proposals of projects and beneficiaries and there is no other mechanism to effectively counteract their power. The state officials insist that the local elected representatives follow rigid bureaucratic procedures and guidelines for the utilization of funds, and in the case of any perceived irregularities, are threatened with prosecution.[16]

- Did the encounter between grassroots and state/ EU initiatives produce ethical and practical dilemmas?

The encounter between top-down approach and bottom-up approaches produces ethical and practical dilemmas. Among the state strategic dilemmas, the most crucial issues are that of the co-ordination of efforts between various police stations and between police and paramilitary forces. Thus, despite their successes and/or failures, governance initiatives often fail to tackle problems comprehensively, particularly because each state goes about combating the naxalites in different ways and with different methods. As Hoelscher et al. point out, efforts on the part of the state governments "have ranged from ceasefires and conciliatory gestures to all-out military campaigns".[17] This simply enables the naxalites to move from state to state whenever deemed necessary. Significantly, security offensives to tackle the naxalites often prove to be counterproductive, particularly when such offensives lead to atrocities against civilians, which often simply produce new recruits for the Naxalites. This is inherent in the specific nature of problem posed by naxalism - 'new' war that blurs the distinction between organized political violence, organized crime, and violation of rights.

Another reason for the growth of a practical dilemma between the two approaches is the belief of central government that once people reap the benefits of modern development, the Naxalite conflict should diminish automatically. Such a simplistic equation of 'if underdevelopment equals war, then development equals peace' overlooks many other factors which have led to the Naxalite conflict, including caste inequality, traditional land ownership structures, a lack of social justice, and government incompetence and corruption. Viewing the conflict only through the development lens negates the importance of these factors for the dignity of individuals and oversimplifies a complex situation.

Further, if development initiatives are carried out under conditions in which corruption is rampant, for instance, or without proper foresight, there is a significant chance that they could lead to worsened conditions for the communities as well as a more protracted conflict with the Naxalites. This is especially the case where development comes in the form of industrial (mining) expansion; the risks of such an outcome are high, because "a ramping up of industrial development without individual or monetary safeguards to prevent against corruption or other abuses" simply leads to greater support for Naxal ideology. For instance, the local mukhiya takes money for verifying any form and takes up to 10,000 rupees for allotting MNREGA wells. She/he asks for this sitting in the block office. One of the villagers was to be given money for *Kanyadaan*, for which the person needed her signature. The mukhiya (village leader) asked for 2000 rupees for signing on the claim form."[18] Or Government contracts are being given to close and bribe paying associates, who after paying these bribes at the political and bureaucratic level are relieved of all accountability.

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[16] Prakash and Amin, 2012, op. cit.

[17] K. Hoelscher, J. Miklian and K.C. Vadlamannati (2012) 'Hearts and Mines: A district-level analysis of the Maoist conflict in India', International Area Studies Review, 152, pp. 141-160.

[18] Prakash et al, 2012, op. cit.

Thus, the dynamics of interaction between the top-down governance initiatives and bottom-up processes constitutes a complex reality in which there is no chance of a universalistic policy succeeding. Local socio-economic and political processes define the contours and impact of such interactions. While the necessity of coordination across all levels and actors cannot be overstated, care is needed to ensure that such coordination does not undermine the locally-embedded processes and institutions. This is especially on account of the context-dependent nature of these processes, if they are to play a significant role in engaging with conflicts at the local level.

Northeast India

Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (MCRG)

Ranabir Samaddar, Paula Banerjee and Atig Ghosh

- In your fieldwork, which examples of bottom-up conflict resolution initiatives did you encounter?

The struggle for justice as evident in the spate of new social movements for transparency and accountability in governance, movements against the displacement of people induced by development projects, against environmental degradation, etc. seem to have brought about at least a mitigating— if not unifying— impact on the otherwise conflicting communities. Now that internal pacification is almost complete and the state has been able to establish its hegemony over the body politic (through the relentless operation of what Ranabir Samaddar has described as the liberal project of social governance, which on scrutiny ironically betrays more of an illiberal aspect of itself), the agenda of rights in the region seems to have shifted from citizenship being defined in contradistinction with the outsiders, 'foreigners', etc. to a new citizenship being defined as people's right to equality and equal opportunities and right over natural resources (namely, oil, coal, forests, etc.). *The new citizen is constituted as the new agent of peace in the Northeast.* Peace too seems to have shifted its constituency from the so-called NGOs and voluntary organizations masquerading as civil society organizations to new citizens fighting for the rights mentioned above. These new issues seem likely to relegate the ethnic issues of homeland, territoriality and autonomy into the background and bring the otherwise conflicting communities together. This is evident in, say, the series of movements led by Akhil Gogoi and his Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) established in 2005, as Samir K. Das's inquiries indicate. Another instance of this is the formation of the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR). Paula Banerjee's interview with Khesheli Chishi, former President of the Naga Mothers' Association (NMA), brought to the fore that the Nagas are actively trying to formulate a process of reconciliation with other human-rights group. Originally there were eighteen community members representing organizations such as the Naga People's Movement for Human Rights, the Hohos, the Naga Students' Federation, and church groups alongside the two women's organizations, NMA and the Naga Women's Union of Manipur. The FNR further brought six of the underground groups together on a common platform. All important rebel leaders are taking part in this process, including Th. Muivah, I. Swu, Gen. (Retd.) Khole Konyak , Kitovi Zhimomi, Brig. (Retd.) S. Singya and Zhopra Vero. The process began on August 20, 2011 with the leaders acknowledging the hurt they had caused each other and apologizing for it. They also promised to work towards "the formation of one Naga national government." Ranabir Samaddar in his study records other instances of attempts from below to bring peace: The Naga Peace Mission, the Assam Civil Society dialogue with the Government of India so that the latter initiates talks with ULFA, etc.

- What was the primary force behind these grassroots initiatives? Were bottom-up dynamics essentially a reaction to state/ EU initiatives or independent of them?

The primary force of these grassroots initiatives seems to be to achieve *peace with justice*. By the logic of this new notion of bottom-up peace, one of the major criteria seems to be, as Samir K. Das argues, that the presently established "centralized control over resources" must go. Besides, people also raise their voices against the government's inability to protect them against such natural calamities as floods and droughts, against man-made disasters like massive population displacement induced by so-called development and dams. Also, the fight against corruption has developed into a popular movement. People's right to tenure over land and control over forest resources is high on the rights agenda. All this highlights, as Xonzoi Barbora contends, the failure of the government in providing 'civic governance' and the success of the popular movement in "shaking off self-absorption and melancholia associated with radical dissent in Assam" so far. In the context of Assam, the rights are increasingly being perceived as ones pertaining to not just an ethnic community or as being exclusive to any group of them to the point of depriving others of it. Today rights are being claimed for the entire "public living in Assam" (*Asombasi Raij*). The KMSS stands for the *ganadebata* (the public as the God), as Akhil Gogoi calls it.

- Did grassroots conflict resolution initiatives cooperate, resist or ignore state/ EU initiatives? Did this impact on long-term stability?

In many ways, the Northeast of India may be considered a post-conflict society/polity, at least a region that seems to be inexorably moving towards becoming one with the rapid dwindling of the quantum of violence. The region has been pacified with a reasonable degree of success and, as Rajat Ganguly puts it, "mainly through force." But the peace that is said to have returned to the region— particularly in such hitherto insurgency-torn states as Nagaland, Tripura and Assam— is hardly accompanied by any resolution of the conflicts underlying those insurgencies. Peace achieved mainly through pacification (that is to say, without any resolution of conflicts) is constantly haunted by the spectre of war. One has to take note of the fact that there are different kinds of peace, and peace achieved through pacification - "mainly by force" - and peace based on some durable solution to conflicts, respecting the triadic principle of rights, justice and democracy, are certainly not the same. However, it may be that the former, however warped its political rationale may be, could be the precursor to the latter. If the incidence of insurgency and violence has come down, then one could talk of this process unfolding. And in this, the governmental imperative to pacify has given way to developmentalism just as much as bottom-up community-driven initiatives are making a strident case for durable solution to conflicts, respecting the triadic principle of rights, justice and democracy. The binarism between peace from above and peace bottom-up, so to speak, is becoming less and less tenable in the region.

The new citizen is caught somewhere between these two extremes: On the one hand, she refuses to accept that the parliamentary democracy with all its representative institutions is the be all and end all of democratic politics. The majoritarian argument has lost much of its edge. Justice is not necessarily expressed through the rule by the majority, as Alexis de Tocqueville so eloquently points out. The contemporary popular movements in the Northeast are only a pointer in this direction. On the other hand, there is more to violence and insurgency than the parties involved in them. The resolution of conflicts depends neither on pacification nor on rapid economic development through heavy doses of public investment— but by bringing into existence a social and political order that is considered just not only by

one community but by the society as a whole. This has been the case, say, in Tripura where the introduction of rubber plantations has salved indigenous economic and identitarian hurt while simultaneously quelling Bengali majoritarian anxiety, thereby bringing into existence a social and political order that is considered just by the society as a whole.

The Northeast is showing very early signs of the emergence of a new citizen who instead of belonging to any particular ethnic community in exclusion from another longs to situate herself within an irreducibly plural social order consisting of many groups and communities. In short, the grassroots initiatives did not operate in isolation, but had interface with state initiatives, had tension with the latter, and were at times in opposition with the latter. One may say, they can be considered as responses to state sponsored peace.

- Did the encounter between grassroots and state/ EU initiatives produce ethical and practical dilemmas?

Yes, the ethical and practical dilemmas were evident. The dilemmas arose from the paradoxes of the situation, namely: How much to reinforce and pursue the claims for justice in the quest for peace? How plural can the peace dialogues become? How are the peace-seeking groups below to face, negotiate, and settle the claims for liberal democracy that can cause fault lines within the conflict-ravaged community, such as "individual-centric rights of women", etc.? How to respond to the liberal advances that act as front paws of a counter-insurgency regime? Fundamentally, all these meant, how to make sense of the neo-liberal ethos that will valorize the market-friendly wealth seeking individual when insurgency is on the wane, and old social structures were breaking down due to market advances? The practical dilemmas followed from this. In all these cases it was clear that the situation called for principles of minimal justice as the way out. However with the norms of transitional justice being narrowly defined in the received discourses of peace – whether EU or Indian – these attempts at peace could not visualize or innovate appropriate norms of transitional justice.

Jammu and Kashmir I

Society for Participatory Research in Asia[19]

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Introduction: Operationalizing the definition of governance for the field study

Tandon defined governance as "the joint responsibility of the state, market and citizens to mobilize public resources and promote public decision-making towards the advancement of common public good."[20] Clearly the nature of what constitutes the public good will remain contested – some would argue too contested to make this the centerpiece of a working definition[21] - but what is significant in this definition is the acknowledgement of the presence of multiple stakeholders in determining what public good might be. This implies as Debroy points out that "governance is distinct from government, and is the process through which various stakeholders articulate their interests, exercise their rights, and mediate their differences."[22] Understood in this way, governance leads to what Prakash describes as a pluralization of actors as well as levels of governance and makes the political process within which social power is constituted central to any analysis of governance.[23] It also draws attention to the process in which actors and institutions, both state and non-state, play a role in governance.

In Jammu and Kashmir this broad understanding of governance translates into something even more complex given the conflict overlay. Indian administered Jammu and Kashmir like the other federal units in India currently has an elected state government with its legislature (state legislative assembly), a high court and its state executive with an elected Chief Minister and council of ministers. The last two elections to the state legislative assembly in 2002 and 2008 were also deemed to be free and fair, marking a significant break from the manner in which assembly elections had been continuously rigged since the time of independence with the most blatant subversion occurring in the elections of 1987 which is widely believed to have triggered the armed insurgency in the valley of Kashmir. Village council elections witnessed a 77.71 per cent turnout in the state and were successfully conducted in 2011[24]

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[19] This report is based on the archival and field research conducted by Priyanka Singh and Sumona DasGupta in Jammu and Kashmir. Five field trips were conducted in 2011-2012- these included visits to a Srinagar, Ganderbal, Anantnag, Pulwama, Baramula, Budgam (Kashmir valley) Jammu, Rajouri, Poonch, Doda (Jammu subdivision) Leh (Ladakh. A special field visit was also made to the trading points on the Line of control to document the process of cross border trade and speak with traders, drivers and businessmen who were a part of this confidence building measure.

[19]The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) was formed in 1993 to achieve the right to self -determination for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. It consists of several social, political and religious groups and separatists who were part of the militant movement but have now given up arms. APHC does not accept the writ of the Indian constitution in Jammu and Kashmir and rejects all forms of elections as these are necessarily held under the provisions of the Indian constitution.

[20] Tandon, Rajesh and Ranjita Mohanty (2002). Civil Society and Governance. New Delhi. Samskriti. P.10.

[21] Heinrich, Volkhart Finn (2004). "Assessing and Strengthening Civil society Worldwide." *Civicus Civil society Index Paper.* 2(1).

[22] Debroy, B. (ed.) (2004) Agenda for Improving Governance. New Delhi Academic Foundation.

[23] Prakash, Amit et al (2012) Discourses of Governance in India: Construction of Hegemonic Consensus and its Contestations, Scholarly article submitted to CORE as deliverable. Not yet published.

[24] The turn out figures are computed in the Report of the Committee on the Devolution of Powers to Panchayats, the text of which is available at http://jkgad.nic.in/statutory/Report_PRIs.pdf , accessed February 15, 2013.

Yet in spite of the fact that various procedural aspects of democracy are in place, Jammu and Kashmir is no ordinary unit of the Indian federation. It is an arena of competing nationalisms and there are sharp fault-lines at various levels between the political leadership of the state and the people of the state, between different communities and groups within the state in the three distinct geographical areas (Kashmir valley, Jammu and Ladakh) that constitute it, between the state and the union government and, most significantly, between the people of the Kashmir valley in particular and the state of India represented in its visible form by the armed and paramilitary forces. The so called "separatist" camp – noticeably represented by the All Party Hurriyat Conference (hereafter APHC), a loose association of political parties and organizations that comes together on the plank of asserting the right to self-determination for Jammu and Kashmir, may not be in a position to run a parallel government but does issue diktats and calls on various aspects of day to day life including calling for strikes, and protests.

A special legislation called The Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act 1990 (AFSPA) prevails giving wide powers of discretion to the armed forces and overturning the law of evidence. There is also the Public Safety Act (PSA) that provides for detention of a maximum of two years without trial in the case of persons acting in any manner prejudicial to the security of the state. It further allows for preventive detention of up to one year where any person is acting in any manner prejudicial to the maintenance of public order. These "exceptional" laws operate side by side with the other civil and criminal laws creating a complex legal mosaic where an average citizen is not always sure which law will be invoked under what circumstances.[25]

The special laws have to be seen in the backdrop of the huge government and security apparatus that exists. It is important to note that there has been a significant qualitative change in the situation in the Kashmir valley in terms of a shift from militant-led violence in the early 1990s to people-led sporadic protests that are not necessarily violent – though some may be - and centred on specific issues. The official estimates of active militants (armed non state combatants) is now down to 350[26] and even given the fact that they can strike at will this is a tectonic shift from the kind of command and control they had in the early 1990s. In terms of people's responses (the noncombatant population), while it is true that stone pelting of the kind seen in the summer of 2010 as a form of protest certainly cannot be considered non-violent it is not the same as an organized armed militant movement of the earlier time. The elite response has not been calibrated to take these shifts into account both in terms of the quality of protests and the people leading them and much of the same thinking on using the security forces and special police to deal with challenges to authority continues to dominate.

This melding of ordinary and extraordinary laws, institutions and processes makes it challenging to identify grassroots forms of governance that have emerged completely on their own. The overwhelming presence of bureaucratic and security structures intrude into everyday life which intentionally or unintentionally interface with all governance arrangements. In the next section we specifically draw attention to initiatives emanating from or at the local level, recognizing that sometimes even grassroots governance does not originate from that level but from the top. In other cases the initiatives are generated by the

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[25] DasGupta, Sumona (2012) "Borderlands and Borderlines: Re-negotiating Boundaries in Jammu and Kashmir ." *Journal of Borderland Studies*, 27(1).

[26] *J&K* in *Numbers*, Epilogue Vol 5, Issue 4, April 2011, p.35.

people invariably through informal or semi-formal associations and forums which then interact and engage with formal structures of governance.

- **In your fieldwork, which examples of bottom-up conflict resolution initiatives did you encounter?**

Governance and Local Village Councils (Panchayats)
Paradoxically the most visible grassroots initiative in recent years – elections and the constitution of the village councils – has been completely crafted and engineered by the top political leadership of the state with support from the Union government. Though not specifically intended as a conflict resolution initiative – in fact the newly elected representatives and the people in the community had clearly indicated that their participation in these elections should not be seen as endorsement of any grand solution of the Kashmir issue – the very fact that village level councils were created implied creating a potential for trust building at the community level. Trust had in fact been the first casualty of the conflict in the early years of the insurgency when the idealized village hamlet had become the site of insurgent and counter insurgent operations leaving a beleaguered population wondering who the neighbour was talking to or reporting to. The picture of the shadowy unidentified gunman had created fear and insecurity among the community in the villages.[27] In being provided a chance to elect their own representatives for local development work and through creating participatory forums for decision-making at the local level a great opportunity for trust building was indeed created.

The PRIA field work conducted over 2011-2012 indicated that the potential of this bold governance initiative soon got mired in controversy and far from generating confidence among the people had ended up generating much frustration. This was because of several reasons such as the dialogue gap between the officials and the people; the inadequate understanding of what the Halqa Majlis (known as Gram Sabha in other parts of India) represents; the failure of the government to explain the step by step devolution of powers and the practical impediments in the way that was delaying the process; and the lukewarm even sometimes hostile attitude of several Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and bureaucrats in Jammu and Kashmir who felt their position would be threatened by the devolution of power to the grassroots.[28] The fieldwork also indicated a complete sense of dependence of the locally elected representatives on the government for just devolution of functions, funds and functionaries but also in terms of the overall vision and direction on where this extraordinary governance initiative could go. Years of conflict seemed to have created a situation where to deconstruct what local decision-making power would even look like the supervision of the state government was deemed necessary. The general perception from the interviews conducted with local representatives was that unless the government is serious and showed them the way there was little they could do.

However it is notable that when frustration at the government increased, which was seen as reneging on its promise of devolution by not holding elections to the other two levels of the proposed three tier system, some newly elected representatives took the initiative to form a loose association across the state called the All Jammu and Kashmir Panchayat forum. Led by an articulate former journalist who is also a member of the village council they have made

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[27] DasGupta, Sumona (2012 b) "Pacification is not Peacebuilding: Why Special Economic Packages and Special Legislations do not work." In Berghoff Occasional Paper No. 32.

[28] Sumona DasGupta, "Village Council Elections in Jammu and Kashmir : A lost opportunity for conflict sensitive Governance" CORE policy Brief.

a series of demands to the government and its officials regarding the implementation of the provisions of the Panchayati Raj Act of 1989. They have led *dharnas* and signed petitions demanding devolution of functionaries and funds and the passage of the 73rd amendment act in the state legislative assembly.[29] This is one example of a grassroots level association that is increasingly taking on the role of a pressure group.

The dynamic of top-down that unleashed an unintended down-up dynamic around the holding of village council elections has been significantly different form the processes involved in other important elections in the state - namely elections to the state legislative assembly. Here not only is the turn out much less, perhaps because the history of elections at this level has been repeatedly tainted with rigging and intimidation, but also because it cannot escape the intrinsic link with the larger contested space of the politics of the conflict.[30] While the "non combatant" civilians in the village community would definitely like to see a conflict outcome that would bring about less daily strife and violence given their experiences of the militancy and the counterinsurgency operation, they are not interested in being associated with the regular daily political process around it which can sometimes turn violent.[31] This was also clear in the interviews we conducted in the villages where almost everyone we spoke to, barring a few who admitted their party links, insisted that they did not have anything to do with the contentious politics around the cause. This did not mean that they did not have an opinion on *azadi* (loosely translated as independence) and self-determination or did not feel a sense of alienation from India or did not have militant links or sympathies in the earlier phase of the conflict but having suffered long years of violence they did not necessarily want to be associated with the process and politics of the "cause" at this conjuncture. People were, however, invested in the process of local village council elections and the processes that it generated both during and after elections because this, unlike the assembly elections, was seen as a window to get involved in local development work and end what they called the "MLA raj."[32]

Given the high expectations, it follows that after the local elections the sense of betrayal and frustration that people felt when they perceived that devolution has not really occurred at the pace that they expected and the government had not adequately taken steps to explain the evolution and dynamics of this process, was also that much greater. The initial expectations and subsequent frustration following local village council elections was much more than the sense of betrayal the same set of people feel when their local MLA "disappears after

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[29] The 73rd amendment act of 1993 which provides a constitutional status to the panchayati raj system is not directly applicable to Jammu and Kashmir because of article 370 which mandates that all union laws have to be adopted by the Jammu and Kashmir legislative assembly to come into force.

[30] The so called mainstream parties at the state level which contest the state assembly elections such as the National Conference (NC) and the People's democratic Party (PDP) accept the Indian constitution and articulate their demands for autonomy and self rule within the constitutional parameters but they are not the only visible elements in the political space. The mainstream political parties compete for space with the so called separatist organizations and issues related to the right to self determination, human rights violations, Indo Pak relations specially their interface on Kashmir are a part and parcel of the general discourse and politics and figure prominently in the matters raised at the state legislative assembly debates. These issues however are not the "election issues" at the panchayat level.

[31] Our interviews in at the community level indicated that there was considerable conflict fatigue among the people. No matter what their loyalties and proclivities may have been during the early years of the militancy they were clearly fed up of the gun.

[32] MLA stands for member of legislative assembly. At the community level among the people we spoke to, both elected representatives and other villagers, the figure of the MLA typically represented power without accountability. This was in sharp contract to the elected representative of the village council who was seen as a sympathetic neighbour.

elections" or lets them down. The grassroots counter reaction, by forming a loose forum to assert their collective strength, was also sharp. As it evolved into a loose association/forum of elected representatives that refuted some of the facts and figures put out by the government and collectively took their demands to district magistrate's offices, it probably took the government by surprise.

The killings of some sarpanches and threats of mass resignations by other elected representatives ostensibly under militant threat in the autumn of 2012 caused the forum to up the ante. As Shafiq Mir the AJKPF spokesperson pointed out to us, on one hand there is no economic security as the government had not finalized the honorarium for elected representatives who often had to bear out of pocket expenses. On the other hand now there was no physical security either, and the hardliners and militants who had not directly opposed these elections were now able to capitalize on the situation.[33] Though there was no proof that militants were responsible for the killings as they had not taken responsibility (as they typically do when they make their point) and the two families of the slain militants we visited also felt that it was the work of unidentified gunmen who may or may not have been militants the fact that the elected representatives felt that their hands were tied because they had not been given the funds and functionaries to carry out their new functions and were rapidly losing credibility in the eyes of the community. The situation was ripe for militants to exploit because of what they saw as the inaction of the government.

Governance, Trader Associations and Chambers of Commerce
An important political initiative of the government of India and government of Pakistan has been opening up of what is termed as cross Line of Control (LoC) trade - an initiative that started in October 2008. While this was a political confidence-building measure at the topmost level – the working group headed by Ambassador Rasgotra set up by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh[34] had proposed a 10 point formula for the restoration of cross border trade links. This included the suggestion that "a joint consultative machinery of officials and representatives (including the chambers of commerce) from both sides be formed to resolve any difficulties in the flow of trade and commerce. Initiative in this regard can be taken by Chambers of Commerce of Jammu and Kashmir in consultation with and approval of the appropriate Government authority."[35]

Though the broad mandate for the involvement of the chambers of commerce and local traders was contained within this recommendation made at the top level, what is significant is the way the mandate was actually used and the kind of tasks that a pressure group like the chamber of commerce ended up performing. This included issues of dispute resolution that inevitably came up due to the nature of the trade which is described as blind barter trade. This means not only that no monetary transactions take place between the traders, but also that they have no idea of the quality of goods coming from the other side. Once the consignment comes in they can do little about it.

Once the formalities for this cross border blind barter trade were put in place, the trader's association and chambers started raising key demands such as expansion of the 21 items of duty free trade cleared by the two governments, and the provision of monetary facilities

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[33] Interview with Shafi Mir conducted in Poonch town, June 11, 2012.

[34] Five such working groups had been set up by the Indian Prime Minister following the second roundtable in Kashmir in March 2006. One was on strengthening relations across the line of control and was headed by ambassador M.K. Rasgotra and it submitted its report in January 2007.

[35] Recommendations of the Working group on strengthening relations across the Line of Control, 2007, p.4.

pointing out that the blind barter trade created the potential for a *hawala* trade[36] where the beneficiaries would be traders from the neighbouring states of Punjab rather than the small traders from the two sides of Kashmir. This implicitly raised the question: was such a move to be seen only as a political confidence-building measure between India and Pakistan or an economic confidence-building measure designed specifically to benefit the people living across the line of control separating Indian from Pakistan administered Kashmir? And a related question followed: Was this trade between Kashmir or trade through Kashmir? Should the items be restricted to goods produced and grown in the two parts of Kashmir or should it be expanded to include goods from other parts of India and Pakistan which however could be traded through these two trade points?

Many of these concerns were raised in the course of our field visit to Jammu and Kashmir in September-October 2012. In interviews conducted with traders and businessmen,[37] the picture that emerged was that of civil society representatives from the business and trading communities taking several initiatives independent of the government to iron out the inherent problems of a medieval form of blind barter trade. For instance, the blind barter has predictably raised disputes arising between traders as the quality and value of the goods traded could not be objectively ascertained. While the standard operating procedure devised by the Ministry of Home Affairs, government of India lays down specific rules for arbitration what was interesting to learn was that traders had also devised one of their own where they would meet and settle the outstanding issues and amounts at zero line. A cross LoC traders association, whose president Mr. Pawan Anand we met,[38] shared that since the government was not regulating the trade the responsibility of dispute resolution was on them and the chambers of commerce. They had taken out a "defaulter's" list and in fact he complained that this process of arbitration was taking up a lot of their time. [39]

Despite the awareness that blind barter trade could result in significant losses over time, the traders and businessmen from the Indian side had embraced the idea because they felt it would end militancy, provide employment and build trust between people on both sides of the line of control.[40] This view was also echoed by the small traders we met in Poonch some of whom were however finding it difficult to sustain the trade in view of the losses. As Anil Suri, president of the Bari Brahamana Industrialists Association. pointed out when the trade started in October 2008 "the heart ruled the head." While the measure had resulted in improved people to people relations on one hand – Suri recollected how he had met his counterpart across the line of control, Mr. Zulfikar Abassi, with whom he had built a close personal relationship as had others once this trade window was opened up - the economic prospects of the trade were not bright because of the impediments. These he listed as absence of free travel to check the quality of the goods traded, absence of communications (even

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[36] Illegal remittances without involving actual remittances of money typically done by obtaining false bills showing expenses that have not really occurred so that profits can be deflated on paper.

[37] The PRIA team of Priyanka Singh and Sumona DasGupta conducted interviews in Jammu city on 29 October 2012 as well as Kaman Aman Setu for which we sought special permission from the army and which we were able to visit on October 3, 2012. The last point where civilians are allowed is Urusa army post. It was at Kaman Aman setu (the friendship bridge half of which is controlled by Pakistan and half by India) where we witnessed the controlled movements of trucks crossing over from the two sides and followed them to Salamabad on the Indian side of the Line of control where the goods are unloaded.

[38] Interview conducted by the PRIA team on 29 September, 2012 in Poonch town,

[39] Mr. Anand also shared a document with us showing how disputes were being settled by the chambers of commerce presidents and the disputing parties- the document contained these signatures.

[40] Possibly the same reasons motivated traders and businessmen on the other side of the line of control but we were not in a position to ascertain this as we could not travel to the Pakistan side.

phone calls were restricted from India to Pakistan though the Pakistan-based traders could call the Indian counterparts), the limited basket of goods allowed in this trade transaction, and most importantly the absence of a banking and monetary system.[41]

A significant example of people-driven processes was the agreement reached between Presidents and other elected representatives of the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), the Jammu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI), the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AJK CCI), the Federation Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK), the Federation of Industries Jammu (FIJ), the Gilgit-Baltistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GB CCI), the Merchants Association Ladakh, the associations and councils of Cross Line of Control (LoC) traders from all four trading points (Tetrinot-Chakan-da-Bagh on Poonch-Rawalakot route and Salamabad-Chakothi on Srinagar-Muzaffarabad routes) and the Intra-Kashmir Trade Union.[42]

A perception survey report on the first ever opinion poll with Cross LoC traders on both sides of the divide in Jammu and Kashmir describes this as the first civil society initiative of its kind to put in place a formal structure of cooperation building on "the inherent desire of the stakeholders to complement a series of India-Pakistan Confidence Building Measures on reviving ties across the Line of Control between both sides of Jammu and Kashmir." According to the report:

> "While acknowledging the fact that a Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry was agreed upon by three constituent Chambers in October 2008 which could not realise its full potential due its limited scope of consultations, the participant representatives of different Chambers decided to organise the new body in an inclusive, participatory and sustainable manner. To emerge as a formally constituted, properly elected and fully representative body of industry and trade organisations drawn from all regions in both, Indian and Pakistani, sides of Line of Control the meeting discussed and agreed that the Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry shall represent not only interests of the ongoing Cross-LoC trade but also work towards other possibilities of cooperation across the Line of Control with larger objective of building peace and trust between the regions." (p.23).

This was a significant peacebuilding initiative where stakeholders to the process went beyond the restricted and controlled parameters set by the government and expanded the confidence building measures acknowledging both the economic imperatives of making cross border trade more viable as well as its relevance for the larger process of normalization of relations between India and Pakistan.

Civil society initiatives:

Perhaps unexpectedly, we find that in Indian administered Jammu and Kashmir there are literally thousands of NGOs registered - more than 3,000 according to an estimate by A.R Hanjura advocate and chairperson of the Yateem Trust in Jammu and Kashmir who has been working to build a transparent accountable NGO culture in J&K by bringing what he calls

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[41] Interview conducted on 28 September 2012, in Jammu.

[42] Perception report on the first ever opinion poll with the cross LoC traders on both sides was conducted by Indus Research Foundation on the Indian side and Centre for Peace development and Reforms on the Pakistan side. The full text of the report is available at http://www.c-r.org/sites/c-r.org/files/perception_survey_peacebuilding_crossLoC_trade201204.pdf

"credible organizations together" - but their mandate and activities are unclear. However he notes that the spirit of voluntarism and social service is not new – from ancient times there has been public participation in the name of helshari (voluntary construction work) but this has been largely unorganized. [43]

Not surprisingly many of the established NGOs work in the area of conflict mitigation or amelioration rather than in resolution and transformation processes – their work engages with *the consequences of the conflict*. For instance the J and K Yateem Trust, Srinagar, is one of the first ever-registered organizations and also has FCRA clearance.[44] With the slogan "help us to help others" the Yateem Trust addresses the needs of one category of unarmed civilian victims of the conflict - orphans. Though its origins go back to the period before the outbreak of the conflict, the Yateem Trust has intensified its operations post-1989. In 1990, following the outbreak of the insurgency, it had to restrict its functioning but after that it has been expansion as usual. With 74 branches across the state, its work has been redefined to include not just providing for basic needs of food clothing and shelter but also to providing psychological treatment with the help of experts to address social stigma and depression.

There are others NGOs like Global Green Peace which address environmental degradation, particularly following the armed conflict, and the also rehabilitation of landmine victims but like the Yateem trust do not directly engage with conflict resolution work.

A civil society organization of a different genre that works for justice for parents of those who have disappeared is Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP). APDP was founded in 1994 when a large number of parents used to visit the high court to file habeas corpus petitions. The relatives used to take the individual efforts in a disorganized manner and finally the patron Parveena Ahangar whose own son Javed still a school student, had disappeared in the early years of militancy, put them on a collective forum for collective action. The APDP labels itself as an association of sufferers wronged by the functioning of the state who are now campaigning for knowing the whereabouts of their missing relatives. Any person whose relative has disappeared can be a member of the association. Ahangar is careful to emphasize that it has no political affiliation and no political position. They demand repeal of draconian laws like AFSPA, the appointment of a commission to probe disappearances since 1989, handing over the bodies of the so called disappeared persons if they are dead, and allowing international bodies like the UN working group on disappeared persons to visit the valley.[45] This organization can be classified as a functioning people's initiative that works in the area of justice through nonviolent means – as such this is peacebuilding work.

It is significant that those engaged more frontally with conflict resolution and transformation work generally prefer to remain as a loose coalition of like-minded people rather than register themselves as an organization. This is a more skillful strategy as it attracts less attention and while funding for formal sources becomes difficult these loose coalitions rely on voluntary donations to carry out their work. One such network is Yakjah**.** This is a network of Kashmiri professionals, Hindu and Muslim, based in Delhi who work with the children and youth of

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[43] DasGupta, Sumona (2008). "Re-creating spaces for Dialogue: The Role of Civil Society in Jammu and Kashmir." In V.R Raghavan (ed.) *Civil Society in Conflict Situations*. Chennai. Centre for Security Analysis.
[44] Foreign contribution and regulation act (FCRA) enables an organization to receive foreign funding in India.
[45] DasGupta, Sumona (2008). "Re-creating spaces for Dialogue: The Role of Civil Society in Jammu and Kashmir." In V.R Raghavan (ed.) *Civil Society in Conflict Situations*. Chennai. Centre for Security Analysis.

Jammu and Kashmir. Yakjah implies "together", and uses multiple formats while engaging with young Kashmiris – including theatre, film making, art, photography, creative writing, story telling. Children are encouraged to write their own scripts and generate plays that are relevant for their lives. The themes the children chose were telling; police corruption, hardships of the life in camps for the displaced, and disappearances. Later the children were able to find a context to meet in Delhi and dispel many stereotypes and myths about each other's communities and finally come together yet again in 2005 for a joint theatre production that signified the extent to which barriers and fault-lines between the children of both the communities had dissolved.

An initiative that specially focused on women building constituencies of peace at the grassroots was called Athwaas (meaning handshake). Athwaas worked informally with Hindu, Muslim and Sikh women primarily from the valley who visited each other's constituencies and then moved on to take initiatives for setting up safe spaces for reconciliation called "samanbals". This was facilitated by Women in Security Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP) in 2000.[46] While it functioned as a loose coalition for almost a decade the political fault-lines caused the initiative to finally dissolve as, despite the empathy, they were not able to take a unified stand during some of the major disturbances that occurred in the Jammu and Kashmir such as the Amarnath land row. [47]Some of the old samanbals have not been able to sustain themselves though the idea remains intact with the setting up of new ones. This civil society driven experiment is a telling commentary on how difficult it is for women to actually come together and build coalitions for peace when they are living in the midst of militarization and a patriarchal culture that constantly calls on them to identify with particular markers of community identity.

- **Did grassroots conflict resolution initiatives cooperate, resist or ignore state / EU initiatives? Did this impact on long-term stability?**

Clearly Jammu and Kashmir marks a scenario where despite the formal existence of procedural democracy, and a relatively lower level of active manifest violence as compared to the 1990s, the threat of violence and disruption of life has far from disappeared. The Amarnath land row of 2008 and the stone pelting youths who were charged under the draconian public safety act in the summer of 2010 are indicators that the ebb and flow of violence and counter violence continues. A political economy of violence has ensued which has increased the dependence of Jammu and Kashmir on the government of India to which it looks for large grants to restore infrastructure, provide employment and so on. This has also impacted governance arrangements such as the establishment and functioning of village councils as this requires funds that again have to come from the central government. As this survey of governance initiatives show, in the current scenario without the active involvement of the government and clearance at the highest levels, bottom up initiatives will find it difficult to make headway. The best example is that of the Panchayat system where the idea, the execution, the funds, the trainings have all had to come from the state government acting in synergy with the central government of India.[48] The most prolific bottom up initiative therefore had a top down origin. Similarly there was no way the cross border trade initiative a

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[46] DasGupta, Sumona and Meenakshi Gopinath (2005). "Women Breaking the Silence: The Athwaas Initiative in Kashmir." In Paul Tongeren (ed.) et al, *People Building Peace II,* Boulder/London: Lynne Rienner.
[47] This was provoked by a move to grant land to a Hindu shrine in 2008.
[48] This is true for the rest of India but the extent of the dependence on the top is even more for Kashmir. Ironically even the newly elected representatives who were supposed to bring in a new era of decentralization were all clear that their functioning depended on the directives and decisions from the top.

major confidence building strategy could have materialized had it not been cleared at the top strategic and political level.

- **What was the primary force behind these grassroots initiatives? Were bottom-up dynamics essentially a reaction to state / EU initiatives or independent of them?**

However in both these cases the formation of people's initiatives in the form of the All Jammu and Kashmir Panchayat Forum and the manner in which the already existing traders associations and chambers of commerce have come into their own and have established themselves as pressure groups that continuously urge the government to increase the momentum of the governance initiatives is of significance. A top down governance initiative therefore can unleash new forces at the grassroots that can work in tandem with or alternatively criticize and challenge the government in the future.

On the other hand there are some organizations - though few and far between - like APDP that has evolved into a movement and generated a unique politics of grief by demanding that the state be accountable for those who have disappeared. Though their tactics have never been labelled as politics by their founder (who would in fact shy away from the term) it has in fact shown the way to do politics differently by using constitutional and legal mechanisms in a state where these are often in a grey area due to the application of special laws. The fact that APDP is led by a woman makes it even more significant.

Finally among what can be regarded as bottom up or people/civil society initiatives there are those NGOs who work on conflict amelioration (here too the government at the top retains an instrument of control in the form of the FCRA) while the ones who aspire to work in the field of conflict resolution and transformation find it more expedient to stay as a loose coalition rather than a formal civil society or registered NGO.

The PRIA fieldwork indicates that within the bottom up initiatives there are three strands. On one is the dynamic of the unintended interactions emerging from below, owned by the community and generally ignored or misunderstood from the top precisely because it is unintended and hence surprising. A second emanates from organizations that engage with the consequences of the conflict locating their work in the ameliorative and conflict mitigation space rather than in the more contentious resolution and transformative space. Within this (and this can be seen as the third strand) there is a small space occupied by an organization like APDP working with the parents of the disappeared.Though it also engages with the consequences of the conflict in doing justice work through constitutional mechanisms it distinguishes itself qualitatively from the other civil society organizations working in this arena. In the absence of a synergy across these levels a systematic response from the citizens to the conflict and its manifestations become difficult to imagine. What we have seen particularly from 2008-2010 are short-lived but volatile and sometimes violent street protests, strikes, hartals, protests on specific issues like human rights violations or perceived threats to the special status of the state.

The relationship between grassroots and people's initiatives and top state initiatives in Jammu and Kashmir have been marked sometimes by cooperation and sometimes by tension. The initiative to establish village councils or establish trader linkages between the two divided parts of Kashmir have of course been welcomed by the people and cautiously accepted even by the separatists who have at least not opposed the steps. However tension and frustrations

have arisen when the top down governance initiative has failed to deliver on their promises and this has led to the creation of a counter force to keep the pressure up on the government.

- **Did the encounter between grassroots and state / EU initiatives produce ethical and practical dilemmas?**

Ethical and practical dilemmas have emerged from this ambivalent relationship between top down governance steps and the ones emanating from the grassroots. While some like the APDP have managed to force the government to take cognizance of the fact that disappearance cannot go on unchecked and have to be explained and have not used government funds there are others in the NGO sector who would have to tread a careful path if their funding from external sources is not to be revoked. This along with the special coercive apparatus of the state which even when it remains in the background is an ever present reality constraints the range of activities that grassroots organizations can undertake.

Jammu and Kashmir II

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Introduction

The analyses of bottom-up initiatives for conflict resolution in the context of Jammu & Kashmir needs to keep in mind the following three qualifying factors.

First, bottom-up or top-down initiatives, technically speaking, may be discernible from where the initiative for the same arises (whether from local society itself or from governmental agencies located either at the state government level or at the Centre, in New Delhi). However, these boundaries begin to blur when a 'conflict resolution' initiative, whether top-down or bottom-up at the time of its setting up, continues to be owned, directed and driven by either local society or bureaucrats/ politicians/ civil society activists located 'above the local'. In other words, an idea that might owe its origins to the top leadership in Delhi or Srinagar can be subsequently owned and radically transformed by the local stakeholders.

Second, there are no neat, clear distinctions between the civil society-led conflict resolution initiatives and those mooted by the political actors as both must engage with their political implications because this longstanding conflict in Kashmir has deeply politicized its society. Thus, a grassroots level initiative by Athwaas, which reached out to the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh women for building bridges of trust between their respective communities, for instance, was not able to withstand the political faultlines of the conflict as explained in the PRIA field report. Likewise the DU research team learnt about the case of Usmaan Raheem who ran an American NGO, Mercycorps in Srinagar, which had launched an innovative program of youth entrepreneurship promoting economic development and offering them economic opportunities especially in the rural sector since 2010.[49] However, two years later, Raheem's visa was unceremoniously cancelled and he was deported when New Delhi looked askance at his contacts with the Hurriyat leaders on the one hand, and those with the US diplomats, on the other. In other words, it's well-nigh impossible to find any civil society initiative that may be characterized as a purely 'apolitical' one.

Third, it may be erroneous to make any prima facie assumption that *all* 'bottom-up' initiatives are 'good' or promote the idea of conflict resolution and vice-versa, all 'top-down' initiatives are an 'imposition' that lack support at the grassroots level. For instance, there is an implicit social coercion that forces the young school or college going Kashmiri girls to wear a 'hijab' replacing their indigenous, local styles of wearing their *dupattas* (scarfs), or the boys to report to the local mosques for Friday prayers. Likewise, many shopkeepers in Srinagar acknowledge (on conditions of anonymity) the subtle social and economic coercion exercised by separatists/militants forcing them to abide by the former's calls for hartals, strikes and bandhs. The story of 'social boycott' of Ladakhi Muslims by Ladakhi Buddhists during their agitation in the early 1990s demanding a Union Territory status is well

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[49] http://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/youth_entrepreneurship_in_kashmir.pdf

documented elsewhere.[50] So, those at the grassroots level can also be the primary force in exacerbating a conflict than ameliorating it.

The DU team's field research reiterates this point that not all bottom-up 'initiatives' or mobilisations are necessarily predisposed to 'resolving' the 'conflict'. The Facebook mobilisation against the holding of the Harud Festival in 2011, for example, was disruptive of an initiative that was seen as providing a platform to young writers in Kashmir to showcase their skills and work and connect with the literary circles in other parts of the country. Even writers writing on Kashmir can be seen as using different 'sites' to voice not inter-community faith and dialogue but expressing the festering discontent and anger at the way the conflict has impacted lives and livelihoods in the state. Fiction and non-fiction writing on the conflict point to the continuing feelings of distrust, anger, loss that people feel both in Kashmir and outside (for example the Hindu Pandits who fled the state once insurgency broke out). These mobilisations point therefore to the fact that they are not necessarily predisposed to 'resolving the conflict'.

Overall, it's imperative to view all such categories with a fair degree of caution.

- **In your fieldwork, which examples of bottom-up conflict resolution initiatives did you encounter?**

Field interviews with J&K's political leadership across the political spectrum including both elected representatives and the separatists showed that perhaps the most important battle in the realm of conflict resolution initiatives in J&K has been fought in the discursive domain. While it began by addressing the defining parameters of the Kashmir conflict—centering on territorial claims, religious/regional/ethnic identities, political rights and/or political values of secularism, federalism and democracy; its current focus revolves around the question as to what should be the final solution of this conflict—an independent Kashmir; merger with Pakistan or, re-negotiation of its autonomous status within the Indian Union? While all the three propositions continue to be propounded by varying segments of its populace, it is interesting to note how those advocating the last option have transformed this debate over the last one decade.

Though New Delhi had first revived the autonomy debate in the early 1990's in a bid to counter the secessionist agenda of the Kashmiri militants, the local politicians and the separatists have truly taken it forward in many directions. So, the State Autonomy Committee appointed by Farooq Abdullah-led National Conference in 1996 sought restoration of J&K's autonomous status as it existed prior to 1953; the PDP has advocated the idea of 'self-rule' that goes beyond recasting the centre-state relationship and seeks to build institutional linkages between the two halves of Kashmir divided across the Line-of-Control and, among the separatists, Sajjad Lone's treatise on "Achievable Nationhood" has taken this debate further by envisioning a system of shared sovereignty with India and Pakistan.[51] The political ownership of this debate lies now clearly with the local stakeholders though they do recognize that a breakthrough is possible only through sustained negotiations with the

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[50] Navnita Chadha Behera, "Autonomy in J&K: The Forgotten Identities of Ladakh," *Faultlines: Writings on Conflict and Resolution*, vol. 6, August 2000, pp. 35-59.
[51] Arif Ayaz Parrey, *Anatomy of the Autonomy: A Comparative Study of Some Documents Related to the Autonomy of J&K*, Guragaon: Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation, http://www.cdr-india.org/pdf's/Anatomy_of_the_Autonomy_2.pdf, accessed on 10th May 2013.

Government of India and hence, they must continue to engage the top level leadership to translate such conflict resolution ideas into practice.

The home-grown debate on the Kashmir's political aspirations for *azadi* (freedom) drives home the same point. Unlike the autonomy debate, this idea was originally mooted and popularized by the local political leadership throughout the duration of the armed insurgency till date. However, in the early years, the idea of *azadi* symbolized the goal of a sovereign and independent state of J&K and since then, it has traversed a long journey to its current juncture when 56% of the Kashmiri youth, in a recent survey, identified this idea with the issue of Kashmiris' rights—political, civic and economic rights.[52] Those seeking political rights stressed upon the need for the Jammu & Kashmir to have its own constitution and its own Prime Minister, often within the broader ambit of a discussion on self-rule, self-determination, self-government and autonomy of the state. Others said that *azadi* would mean an end to New Delhi's hegemony and its interference in the state's political affairs. A fairly high proportion of the youth demanding civic rights believed that *azadi* means an end to all kinds of human rights violations and atrocities by police, army and other security forces. Nearly 10% of youth specifically sought withdrawal of the armed forces from the Valley. Several others emphasized the importance of the fundamental rights specially the freedom of speech. Some said that *azadi* means restoration of peaceful conditions in the Valley and stressed upon the need to release all political prisoners. Then, there were those who assigned a central place to the economic rights in their vision of *azadi*. They explained the need for economic growth, development, freedom to trade (specially with Kashmiris across the Line-of-Control) and providing better education and employment opportunities to the youth. Others identified *azadi* as *azadi* from corruption. In addition, 9% of the youth shared multiple notions of *azadi* by simultaneously talking about the political rights, economic rights and civic rights in different combinations and permutations. Overall, this survey showed that the youth's vision of 'azadi' in the present day Kashmir is best captured through the discourse on Rights though they seemed to lack the political vocabulary, tools and perhaps forums for engaging these debates in a way that must explore and critically address what lies beneath the popular calls for *azadi*.

In the Ladakh region too, the idea of an Autonomous Hill Council (AHC) was originally mooted by the political leadership in Delhi to persuade the Ladakhi Buddhists to scale down their demand for the status of a Union Territory which had long-term implications for politically severing former's ties with the J&K state. Though the initiative of institutionalizing an AHC was cast in a 'top-down' mould at the outset but the field interviews by the DU research team in this region showed that its working experience over the past two decades has transformed it into a truly powerful instrument of fulfilling developmental and political aspirations of the people in this region. Establishing the Autonomous Hill Council have 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 ground as well. The Autonomous Hill Council has empowered the local stakeholders—both Buddhist and Muslim communities—to decide their own development priorities. There was a widespread opinion 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 dispensation. More importantly, the focus of discussions of elected councillors, panches and sarpanches,

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[52] Navnita Chadha Behera, *A Perception Survey of Media Impact on the Kashmiri Youth,* Gurgaon: IRIIS, 2012, pp. 33-34.

civil society representatives especially the leadership of the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) and Ladakh Muslim Association (LMA) as well as government officials with the DU research team was about streamlining and augmenting the funds flow from different sources including the Prime Minister's Reconstruction Plan for J&K, the Special Task Force appointed by the Ministry of Home Affairs, other centrally sponsored schemes, the State-sector Plans and the District Plans for Leh. The story in Kargil differed a little. While the predominant opinion shared the assessment that the AHC has empowered the people and, it has proved to be a better mechanism for expediting the development of the district but there remained a small section of those who accused the elected councillors of being more corrupt and indulging in playing 'favourites' than the government officials and hence, preferred the older dispensation. At the same time, however, the focus of discussions with the DU's research team still revolved around the developmental agenda for Kargil district and how could they "catch up" with Leh. Overall, the elected representatives both at the level of the AHC and the halqa panchayats in Ladakh region are more focused on finding ways and means of putting Leh and Kargil on the fast-track path of development while realizing that the real challenge lies in ensuring that its dividends are equitably shared among all the communities at the grassroots level.

Going beyond the domain of 'high politics' the DU team also felt the need to further distill the idea of conflict resolution in light of identifying the 'everyday concerns and interests' of the people. While several initiatives are certainly aimed at resolving the conflict itself (such as community dialogue) or grapple with the fall-out of the conflict (such as disappeared persons), other initiatives may be aimed at resolving everyday 'conflicts' around everyday needs and concerns rather than the conflict embedded in 'high politics'. To this extent therefore, the example of the Shikara Union (SU) or the Houseboat Owners Association (HOA) may be seen as bottom-up initiatives aimed at addressing the everyday concerns (regarding permits and licenses, pollution, corruption, maintenance, loans and so on) of the SU and HOA. However, they are not conflict resolution mechanisms of the kind analysed in other case studies. Nevertheless, these initiatives in order to work and have even a modicum of efficacy need some support and inter-linkages with the policy-makers and bureaucrats located above them. Hence, the ability of the SU and HOA to address the everyday concerns and needs of the community they represent is limited at best. Also, privately expressed views on the break out of conflict in the Valley and how it impedes their economic security did not even find expression collectively within the SU and HOA.

- **Did grassroots conflict resolution initiatives cooperate, resist or ignore state / EU initiatives? Did this impact on long-term stability?**

Since the society of J&K, as explained earlier, has been deeply politicized most grassroots conflict resolution initiatives have to grapple with their 'political' ramifications and, as a logical corollary, must also engage with the state. They cannot really afford to 'ignore' the state and, even 'resisting' the state often proves to be a counter-productive exercise, because most often, they need the state to accomplish their objectives—a point best illustrated by the study of the panchayat elections by the PRIA team. On a much smaller scale, in the case of the SU and HOA too, the initiatives have sought to cooperate with the state to wrest benefits and address their concerns and grievances. However, in this case, they have not been very successful in emerging as a pressure group that can collectively put its weight on issues that impact the community. In a different context, the Ladakh experience also showed that the state support—in this case, that of the central government rather than the state government—

has proved to be a critical factor in enhancing and deepening the long term stability of the Autonomous Hill Council initiative.

- **What was the primary force behind these grassroots initiatives? Were bottom-up dynamics essentially a reaction to state / EU initiatives or independent of them?**

The case study of J&K offers a somewhat different scenario whereby the primary force that created a conflict resolution idea or an initiative has not necessarily been the one, which carried it through and, often such transitions have resulted in a qualitative transformation of the idea itself. The initial driving force behind the AHC and the panchayat elections, for instance, was indeed 'top-down' in nature but over a period of time, local stakeholders have invested much social and political capital in making these initiatives their own. At the same time, however, it's important to keep in mind that no grassroots level initiative can function completely independently and totally escape the omnipresent authority of the state. The PRIA field report refers to the FCRA provisions as an instrument of control exercised by the state in allowing access of foreign funds to the NGOs working in the J&K state. The local peace activists interviewed by the DU team pointed to other such mechanisms ranging from issuing or denial of passports and grant or refusal of visas for their travel outside the state or, denial of permission to outsiders to visit the state; the legal provisions of the Public Safety Act' under which a person can be imprisoned on grounds of committing acts that are "prejudicial to the security of the state or maintenance of public order," to a simple imposition of curfew to not allow public protests and so on.

The primary force in the case studies of SU and HOA are specifically everyday concerns, interests and needs of a community (defined either through vocation or through interest/grievance [felt or engineered]). In the context of mobilisations such as the Facebook mobilization against the holding of the Harud Festival, they were a reaction to a mixed bottom-up and top-down initiative taken by individuals and groups from civil society who were interested in holding the Festival in the Valley.

- **Did the encounter between grassroots and state / EU initiatives produce ethical and practical dilemmas?**

The interesting 'encounter' that emerges in the context of those who ply shikaras and own houseboats is the clash between their everyday concerns for their livelihoods and the fact that those concerns do not get fed into putting pressure on the larger society for greater dialogue, cooperation or to quell rioting and stone-pelting. Most houseboat owners consider themselves to be on the margins of Kashmiri society and hence remain quiet bystanders, given their 'vocationally-driven' interest in not supporting clashes and outbreak of sporadic violence in the Valley. Their 'location' in society produces ethical and practical dilemmas for them, which are interesting to interrogate.

Meghalaya

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Introduction

Meghalaya, a scenic state in India's northeast, has been enduring diverse level of conflicts ever since its emergence as an independent state in 1972. Though carved out from Assam through peaceful means, it soon became a site of ethnic violence and insurgency. The newly emerged state that saw the rise of elite tribals of Meghalaya ousting the non-tribals from major administrative positions, and this, in turn led to the growth of subdued ethnocentrism in Meghalaya. The non-tribals, especially the Bengalis and Assamese, brought by the British to serve in various administrative as well as profitable positions in Meghalaya, were demonised on the grounds of taking away the job opportunities of the indigenous tribals. The ethnocentric impulse which bolstered amid the influence of Assam movement snowballed into tribal militancy and insurgency during 1979-80 seeking ethnic cleansing of non-tribals from the state. Since then, Meghalaya, known to be a relatively peaceful state, has been in the grip of ethnic disaffection and insecurities that from time to time erupted into violent episodes.

- In your fieldwork, which examples of bottom-up conflict resolution initiatives did you encounter?

Like elsewhere in India, in Meghalaya too we could discern conflict resolution initiatives at the grass roots level. The grievances of the tribals that were sidelined by the State or Central government in many cases received due attention through the bottom-up initiators such as civil societies, tribal councils and individuals. The following are examples of such initiatives:

- ***Ethnic Conflict 1979:*** In 1979, a single incident following the alleged beheading of a Goddess Kali idol by four Khasi youths catapulted in a massive ethnic riot between the tribals (Khasis and Garos) and Bengalis in Meghalaya. After the initial use of military force in retaining law and order in Meghalaya, the actual work of maintaining peace in the state was done by peace committees at the grass roots level. According to Naba Bhattacharjee[53], peace committees evolved in every locality of the disturbed areas that helped into building broken ties between the tribals and the non-tribals.

- ***Ethnic Conflicts 1987 and 1992:*** Though peace committees were able to maintain peace for a while it couldn't stem the rising sway of ethnocentric violence in Khasi Hills against the non-tribals or dhkars (Nepalese and Biharis and Marwaris) leading to great riots in 1987 and 1992-93. The Khasi Student's Union, a well-known pressure group in Meghalaya, acted as the primary instigator in carrying out the riots. However, the riots were mitigated through local mediation of the tribal institutions like the durbars, and other Non-tribal organizations including the Church.

- ***Achik Liberation Matgrik Army (ALMA) peace process:*** The growing militancy of ethnocentric movements in Meghalaya in course paved the way for insurgent organizations in

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[53] Interview with Naba Bhattacharjee, Working President, Central Puja Committee, dated 9th February, 2012, Shillong.

the Garo Hills as well. The Hynniewtrep Achik Liberation Council (HALC) which led to the making of a secession seeking group, the *Achik Liberation Matgrik Army,* carried out violent activities like extortions, kidnappings, robberies all over the Garo Hills. This tense situation propelled civil society members like the Garo Baptist Church along with several individuals to mitigate peace agreement between the government and the insurgent group. A peace committee was formed with Pankaj Jain, Former Deputy Commissioner of Garo Hills, as its head along with members of the Garo Baptist Church and other individuals to initiate dialogue between the government and ALMA.[54] This civil society-based initiative successfully facilitated the implementation of peace agreement between the government and ALMA. However, the mediation efforts continued even during the rehabilitation process wherein the surrendered cadres were supported by their families and villagers to adopt more stable forms of livelihood.

- *Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC):* A breakaway group of HALC, HNLC was formed in 1997 in order to make the Khasi Hills free from the dominance of the Garos and Non-tribals[55]. In due course, HNLC became involved in a virulent form of insurgency that included a series of illegal activities along with extortion, killing, and smuggling. Though initially the targets were mainly non-tribals, later on the Khasi populace was started getting targeted. It was at this juncture that a massive protest movement was launched by civil society organisations like *Shillong We Care* and *Shillong Khasi Jaintia Church Leaders Forum* to stop the atrocities of HNLC. Among these organizations, *Shillong We Care* became active in organizing protest marches against the atrocities of HNLC. It was their endeavour along with the efforts of the local grass roots institutions like the Rangbah Shnong to keep vigilance in the neighbourhoods that victims of HNLC started coming out in open to protest against the insurgent group. This coordination undoubtedly proved fruitful as the state government under the Home Ministership of R.J.Lyngdoh became active in curbing the extortion activities and fear of HNLC that finally led to surrender of the insurgents.[56]

- *Achik National Volunteers Council (ANVC) peace process:* In 1994, the ANVC was floated by Dilash Marak, a former ALMA member within three months of his escape from jail. ANVC cadres used to harass people with their constant demands for money, food and shelter.[57] Extortions, kidnapping, fake money circulation and other illegal activities of the ANVC generated a tense situation in the Garo Hills. Though the government tried to deal with the situation through anti-insurgency operations, it couldn't make much headway. Subsequently, the government sought the help of the Garo Baptist Church (GBCH) to initiate peace talks. The overwhelming popularity of the GBCH among the Garo people especially within the insurgent groups allowed it to build rapport with the ANVC leaders. In order to meet the ANVC chairman, a four member peace committee was constituted. As a peace facilitator, GBCH trudged through rough terrain to meet the ANVC members. And finally, the leaders of ANVC and GBCH met in Bangladesh at a Baptist convention where after many rounds of dialogue and persuasion, ANVC members agreed to come to the negotiating table.

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[54] Interview with Daniel Ingty, Joint Director of Horticulture (HQ), dated 27th November 2012, Shillong.

[55] http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/meghalaya/terrorist_outfits/hnlc.htm

[56] Interview with Patricia Mukhim, Editor, Shillong Times, dated 8th February, 2012, Shillong.

[57] Marak, Caroline R., *Militancy in Garo Hills – A Preliminary Note*, North East India Studies, North Eastern Institute of Development Studies (NEIDS), Vol.I,No.1, ISSN 0973-1180, June 2005.

- *Uranium Mining:* The debate over uranium mining in the hills of Meghalaya became the source of contention provoking massive agitations from the Khasi Students Union (KSU) which campaigned about its harmful impact over the regional biosphere and topography. Resistance in the form of 4-day blockade called on June 6, 2007 along with frequent rallies and general strikes by KSU had been successful in stalling the mining project to a large extent. However, on August 24, 2009, the declaration of leasing land to the Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL) for pre-mining activities intensified agitation in Meghalaya.[58] KSU, along with other organizations opposed this action of the government, ultimately led the later to suspend pre-mining developmental activities in Meghalaya.

- *Garo-Rabha Conflict:* On 1 January 2011, a major clash occurred between the Garos of Meghalaya and Rabhas of Assam over the demand of the Rabhas to establish themselves as a scheduled tribe in Meghalaya. More than 10 people were killed and around sixty thousand rendered homeless. The official steps to impose strict law and order did not help much to normalize the situation. However, it was civil society groups from the two concerned states which opened channels of communication and released the tensions between the two communities. Civil society groups like AASU, ABSU, GSU and Christian Missionaries created a conducive environment by organizing games, cultural festivals, and providing rations to the displaced people in the camps. This conflict resolution initiative yielded fruitful result.[59]

- Civil society has also made a valuable contribution in creating an environment against terrorist activities particularly when it concerned kidnapping, extortion, and killing of non-combatants. For instance, when Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) abducted three Meghalaya Energy Corporation Limited (MECL) engineers from their residence in the Rongkhon area on 23rd January 2012, it was the massive efforts and pressure from civil society that led to their release. According to *Shillong Times*, 2nd February 2012, a massive peace rally was organized by Hynniewtrep Welfare Association (HTWA), Tura in the Garo Hills that had participation of concerned citizens, church leaders, various NGOs, civil society members, students from various educational institutions, MeECL employees and teachers demanding the safe and unconditional release of the abducted engineers. This initiative was supported by another peace rally in Shillong, Khasi Hills by Khasi Students' Union that resulted in the release of the abducted engineers.

  - What was the primary force behind these grassroots initiatives? Were bottom-up dynamics essentially a reaction to state / EU initiatives or independent of them?

In Meghalaya, religious bodies like the Churches and NGOs have acted as the primary impulse for grassroots peace initiatives. These forces sometimes initiated peace between the conflicting bodies independently, and sometimes in coordination with the state/central government. As seen in the case of the Garo-Rabha conflict, independent initiatives were undertaken by the NGOs to mitigate conflict, irrespective of the government initiatives. Similarly, in the case of the kidnap of the MeECL engineers by GNLA, KSU and other civil

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[58] Shillong Times, dated August 24th, 2009.
[59] Interview with Nani Mahanta, Associate Professor, Political Science, Gauhati University, dated 2nd February, 2012, Guwahati.

society organizations took initiatives on their own. However, in the case of ANVC and ALMA peace process, coordination work between government and Garo Baptist Church has been reflected.

- Did grassroots conflict resolution initiatives cooperate, resist or ignore state initiatives? Did this impact on long-term stability?

Grassroots initiatives could play a vital role in resolving conflicts in India. Meghalaya, a relatively peaceful state having sporadic conflicts is a good case in point. Amid several successful and not so successful initiatives undertaken by government to pre-empt and manage the conflict, initiatives at the grassroots with or without governmental support proved rather fruitful especially as most of the conflicts had local causes and connections. At times though, the conflicts defused through coordinated initiatives did not yield a long lasting impact. The impact of the peace process could not sustain due to the urge for monetary benefits through insurgent activities. The rise of insurgent outfits like ANVC, ANVC (B), LAEF and the HNLC are some of the instances. Similarly, though the ethnic conflicts were curtailed at that time, but with the feeling of ethnocentrism remaining largely unresolved this often led to the harassment and subsequent fleeing of the non-tribals from Meghalaya.

- Did the encounter between grassroots and state initiatives produce ethical and practical dilemmas?

The ethnocentric environment had been hindrance not only in providing protection to the non-tribal populace but also in dealing with their disaffection with the tribal population. The kinship bonds of civil society members often prevent these initiatives from gaining purchase. No grass roots initiative based in the Khasi Hills would normally challenge the blatant demands of the Khasi Students' Union (KSU) to remove non-tribals from the state. Such ethnic affinities also impact on coordination between the civil society and the government.

Practical problems and dilemmas like these clearly reflects on the interface between the KSU and the government on measures to check illegal migration from Bangladesh, and also in the case of creating travel and work conditions for Indian citizens from outside the region. The negotiations around the introduction of a three-tier ID or the proposal of inner line and the work permit[60] reveal the difficulties in reconciling the grass roots demands emanating through the so-called civil society.

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[60]*"KSU: Show Work Permits or Leave Meghalaya", http://www.northeasttoday.in/our-states/meghalaya/ksu-show-work-permits-or-leave-meghalaya/, April 08, 2012.*

Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Introduction: Institutional and Societal Obstacles to Conflict Resolution

Post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), as arranged by the Dayton Peace Agreement, which is centred on the rights of the three *constituent peoples* (Bosniacs, Croats and Serbs), has been governed not as a sovereign political community, but as a conglomerate of three different ethnic communities instead.[61] Consequently, what we witness is a case of *spatial governmentality*.[62] In this context, *space* is understood as a category that 'provides a fundamental ordering system for interlacing every facet of thought', including both individual and collective thoughts, and along with that, perceptions and feelings.[63] Merry notes that recently there has been an 'increasing focus on managing the spaces people occupy rather than managing the people themselves', which as a form of regulation depends on 'creating spaces characterised by the consensual, participatory governance of selves'.[64] In the case of BiH, such spatial governmentality contributes to the on-going creation of social orders and identifications that occur as a result of the governing of ethnically conceived spaces.[65] This ethnic spatial governmentality, or *ethnic spatialisation* is evident throughout the country. The concept of 'spatialisation of ethnicity' or 'ethnic spatialisation' alludes to Ferguson and Gupta's work on 'the spatialisation of the state'.[66] According to the authors, this is the operation of metaphors and practices through which 'states represent themselves as reified entities with particular spatial properties', that contributes to them '[securing] their legitimacy, [naturalising] their authority, and [representing] themselves as superior to, and encompassing of, other institutions and centres of power'.[67] Through a similar process, a spatialisation of ethnicity can be observed occurring in BiH. With ethnic spatialisation at the core of the functioning of the BiH society nowadays, any bottom-up conflict resolution initiatives inevitably have to be analysed within that context. This is particularly so because the spatialisation remains as the single most important constraint to conflict resolution.

The ethnic spatialisation, or the existence of ethnically conceived spaces is manifested and at the same time reinforced through a large number of metaphors and practices. One such

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[61] Robert M. Hayden, '"Democracy" without a Demos? The Bosnian Constitutional Experiment and the Intentional Construction of Nonfunctioning States', *East European Politics & Societies* 19, no. 2 (2005): 226–259, 226.

[62] Sally Engle Merry, 'Spatial Governmentality and the New Social Order: Controlling Gender Violence through Law', *American Anthropologist* 103, no. 1 (2001): 16-29.

[63] Robert Sack, *Conceptions of Space in Social Thought: A Geographical Perspective* (London: Macmillan, 1980).

[64] Merry, 'Spatial Governmentality and the New Social Order', 19-20. Azra Hromadžić, 'Bathroom Mixing: Youth Negotiate Democratization in Postconflict Bosnia and Herzegovina', *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 34, no. 2 (2011): 268-289, 271.

[65] Hromadžić, 'Bathroom Mixing', 271.

[66] James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta (2002). 'Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality', *American Ethnologist* 29, no. 4(2002): 981-1002.

[67] ibid., 981-982.

practice is the insistence on three different languages, Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian, despite them having to a very large extent the same vocabulary and grammar, and being considered by many as dialects of the same language. Following the Yugoslav wars, however, there has been increasing efforts by both the Bosniacs and the Croats to add new, unique and recognisable elements to each language and distinguish the languages from the former official Serbo-Croatian language. Another related practice is the use of alphabets. The Cyrillic alphabet inside BiH appears to be perceived as intimately linked to the Serbian people and the Serbian language, with the sign posts in Republika Srpska (RS) being first written in Cyrillic then in Latin alphabet or in some cases exclusively in Cyrillic, as for instance the names of the streets in Bijeljina, and vice versa in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), as in the case of Tuzla. While both alphabets are constitutionally declared as the official scripts of the country, and by third grade each child is required to learn both, the reality is quite different. While some teachers push forward the learning of both alphabets, among other reasons due to the availability of library books in 'the other script',[68] there are also teachers that are not familiar with the 'other' alphabet themselves, let alone being able to teach it to their students.[69] An example of how interwoven the legal framework in BiH and the ethnic spatial governmentality, in this case its linguistic aspect, is article 6 of the FBiH Constitution states that '[t]he official languages of the Federation shall be the Bosniac languages and the Croatian language. The official script will be the Latin alphabet'.[70]

Yet another practice through which the ethnically conceived spaces are reinforced relates to the close identification of each ethnicity with a certain religion. In that sense, religion plays an important role in demarking the different ethnic spaces. Religious rituals, such as bread blessing and prayers, and symbols, such as icons and crosses, can be found in various institutions, schools, people's homes, offices, shops, etc.[71] The manifestation of the ethnic spatialisation when it comes to schools, both primary and high schools, goes even further. For one, BiH is widely known for the *two schools under one roof* (*dve škole pod jednim krovom*) phenomenon.[72] This is a system where two schools with different management and following different teaching curricula function in the same building, with the children of the different schools and therefore different ethnicities attending school either in different shifts, or having separate entrances or separate classrooms. This phenomenon is most common in the Central Bosnia and the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, where the majority of the students are Bosniacs and Croats, studying separately.[73] Moreover, certain separation among the students exists even in places that do not practice this system. Namely, even though most of the curriculum content used in the elementary schools around the country has been jointly agreed on to be universally used and was signed into law by the Common Core Curriculum in 2003, there remains a so-called *national group of subjects* which in most places has included Mother Tongue, Religious Instruction, History, as well as Geography, Nature and Society/My Environment and Music and Art (in the case of the Brčko District) that students attend

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[68] Interview with primary school teachers, Tuzla, 03 June and 05 June 2012.

[69] Interview with an international organisation representative, Banja Luka, 26 November 2012.

[70] Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, adopted: 18 March 1994, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b56e4.html [accessed 24 July 2012], art. I, sec. 1, cl. 1.

[71] Field notes, Teslić and Banja Luka, 20-23 July 2012.

[72] BBC, 'Under one roof in Bosnia', 14 September 2012, available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldclass/19559841 [accessed 19 November 2012].

[73] Interview with Nisvet Hrnjić, former Mayor of the Municipality of Jajce, Jajce, 27 June 2012.

separately.[74] While the situation since 2010 has improved in most places, the subjects of Mother Tongue and Religious Instruction almost universally remain ethnicity/religion based.

The metaphors and symbols through which spatialisation of ethnicity is achieved are frequent too. One is the display of flags. Seeing the BiH state flag in RS is not too common, for instance, while the RS flag, and even sometimes the flag of Serbia, can be seen displayed at most places. Similarly, the Croatian flag and even the Croatian coat of arms can be seen all over Mostar, Livno, Jajce and other places where there is a larger Croatian population. All across the Federation one can also notice the so-called Bosniac flag with golden lilies, but also various Islamic flags, with the green-with-white-crescent-and-a-star flag being displayed on each mosque. Another symbol of the ethnically conceived spaces can be seen through the use of mobile network operators in the country. There seems to be a societal understanding that one of the operators is Bosniac (BH-Telecom), one Croatian (ERONET) and one Serbian (m:tel), and the different ethnicities are by and large customers of the cell phone company associated with that ethnicity. While this might begin to change in certain areas depending on mobile charges, the subscribers to an operator that are of a 'different ethnicity' are an exception, rather than the rule.[75] Yet another symbol is in the offer and selection of newspapers, with there being an understanding on which newspapers are read by which ethnicity. For instance, 'Avaz' is considered a Bosniac newspaper, while 'Glas Srpske' is seen as a Serbian newspaper. Finally, certain symbolism of ethnically conceived spaces can also be seen in the fact that in some places, which are multi-ethnic, such as Brčko or Livno, there is a quiet agreement over which bars are visited by Bosniacs, which ones by Serbs, and which are considered to be Croatian bars. While no one is to be refused entrance in a bar where they would be a minority, people simple do not cross that line too often.

It is with these constraints that any bottom-up conflict resolution initiative is faced with at the very onset, both at institutional and more importantly, at societal level. The second part of this analysis will zero in on the civil society organisations' and everyday conflict resolution practices, and their limitations.

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[74] OSCE, 'Primary School Curricula in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Thematic Review of the National Subjects' (OSCE BiH, 2009).
[75] Field notes, Jajce, 29 November 2012.

- *In your fieldwork, which examples of bottom-up conflict resolution did you encounter?*

Bottom-up conflict resolution initiatives in BiH have primarily been associated with civil society. The development of a strong civil society (CS) has long been at the forefront of the international peacebuilding efforts in the country, especially due to the assumption of its potential for dialogue and compromise. As Belloni argues '[t]he discourse on civil society is growing among the international community because of this lack of success in fostering reconciliation through economic incentives, the inefficiency in the workings of joint institutions, and [back in 2000] the slow progress in refugee return'.[76] As a result, the CS sector has been infused with a significant amount of financial, technical and human support. A lot of these funds over the years have been directed towards conflict resolution through CS. In the period 1995-2000 alone, some $5-6 billion of international funds was invested in assisting local communities, which also includes the development of civil society.[77] It is difficult to estimate which part of that was invested in conflict resolution specifically, but many of the calls for applications for funding CS projects even nowadays still require a 'multicultural' dimension. Assistance to CS has significantly decreased since. At present, the EU remains the biggest donor. However, the results when it comes to conflict resolution have been at best limited. What is interesting in BiH is that grassroots governance and conflict resolution initiatives are limited because, on the one hand, they have been smothered by donor-driven project funding and, on the other hand, the still hard borders of ethnic spaces.

The civil society in BiH remains donor-driven and by and large follows the donors' agenda.[78] Reflecting on how their mission and activities have changed over the years, many share the sentiment of a Tuzla-based civil society organization (CSO) representative that 'you have to follow the donors' trends and the availability of funding'.[79] The donors are quick to point out that in deciding the priorities in which areas projects are to be funded for the year they consult with CSOs.[80] However, the opportunity for such input is perceived to be limited as the CSO representatives claim that it is clear in the consultation meetings who the one with the power to decide is and how much the CSOs can influence the list of priorities.[81] As a result, very few of them try. In addition, as part of the funding requirements of the donors, CSOs are encouraged to plan activities whose outcomes are measurable, indicator-oriented and tangible.[82] Finally, the CSOs are often divorced from the society at large. For the wider population, civil society remains synonymous with donor aid in the country's reconstruction, and with the perception of there being a foreign element. Most citizens are sceptical towards civil society and its initiatives.[83] There general public perception of CSOs is that of profit-making mechanisms that are close to the domestic governing structures and/or the international actors, and do not represent the wider population.[84] There are CSOs that are even perceived as a 'family business' with several family members being employed on

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[76] Roberto Belloni, 'Civil Society and Peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina', *Journal of Peace Research* 38, no. 2 (2001): 163-180, 166.

[77] Žarko Papić (ed.), *International Support Policies to South-East European Countries: Lessons (Not) Learned in BiH* (Sarajevo: Open Society Fund/Mueller, 2001), 30.

[78] Interviews with CSO representatives, Sarajevo, October-November 2011.

[79] Interview with a CSO representative, Tuzla, 14 November 2011.

[80] Interviews with international organisations' representatives, Sarajevo, 15-16 November 2011.

[81] Interview with a CSO representative, Sarajevo, 15 November 2011.

[82] Interviews with CSO representatives, Sarajevo and Tuzla, October-November 2011.

[83] Nebojša Šavija Valha, 'Civilno društvo u Bosni i Hercegovini: između prava i pomoći', *Puls Demokratije*, 30 November 2011 [accessed on 09 May 2013], http://arhiva.pulsdemokratije.net/index.php?id=1854&l=bs.

[84] Field notes, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Brčko, Banja Luka, October-November 2011, May-July 2012.

various projects, which negatively affects the legitimacy of the organisation and its initiatives among the population.[85] All of this has led to the CSO initiatives, including those that have a conflict resolution component, being anything but organic and genuinely bottom-up in most cases, even though many of them might have in actuality contributed to conflict resolution. One such example is the 'Community Gardens Project' of the American Friends Service Committee, which is run by a Bosnian, and has managed to bring together people of different ethnicities suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder in growing their own food and jointly managing their gardens.[86] While records show that the project has been successful in starting the process of reconciliation, the initiative has come from a foreign donor, rather than being an organic bottom-up project. Other examples include various youth initiatives, where young people of different ethnicities have been brought together to camps, workshops or public discussions.[87] Such initiatives, however, have two important limitations. On the one hand, they attract the same small group of people, and on the other, the results of those are not only non-multipliable, but also sometimes reversed when the participants return to their homes and continue functioning within the ethnic spatialisation.[88]

It is important to note that there are CSO initiatives that provide space for bringing together people that are potentially of different ethnicities, but do not have conflict resolution as an immediate goal. Such initiatives attempt to gather people around a different aspect of their identity, an aspect that unites them, rather than the one that divides them, such as religion or ethnicity. These activities are a way to reduce polarisation by emphasising other differences, such as chess players and non-chess players, framed in non-essential terms, with which the significance of ethnic and religious differences is reduced. Very frequently, people are united around a common interest and the initiatives come about as a response to a governmental policy or lack thereof, with CSOs often attempting to act as service-providers in areas not covered by the formal governing structures. Such an example is the organisation DownSy— Life with Down syndrome, which gathers families of children with Down syndrome from both entities, with its activities being spread all around the country.[89] In this case, the emphasis is on the common fate these families are faced with, rather than on their ethnic belonging. In a rather similar fashion, aware that their voice can be better heard if they join forces, the farmers of both entities are gathered in a single Farmers' Association, which function across entity lines.[90] While this can easily be dismissed as an only formal way of bringing the farmers together, the various events organised for promotion of different products or the material and knowledge exchange certainly go beyond that.

Parallel to such functioning of civil society, through international donors' influence, the concept of 'civil society' has become synonymous with civil society organisations. This is due to the requirement for an initiative to be registered as an organisation in order to be

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[85] Field notes, Sarajevo, Brčko and Banja Luka, May-July 2012.

[86] 'Healing The Wounds Of War - Sowing Seeds of Reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina', Common Dreams, last modified 15 September 2004 [accessed 28 April 2013], http://www.commondreams.org/news2004/0915-06.htm.

[87] For instance, see Denis Dzidic, 'Bosnian Youth Step Across Ethnic and Religious Divides', *Balkan Insight*, 11 April 2013 [accessed 29 April 2013], http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/peace-camp-brings-bosnian-youth-together.

[88] Interviews with youth activists, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Brčko, Doboj and Banja Luka, October-November 2011 and May-July 2012.

[89] Udruženje 'Život sa Down syndromom', http://www.downsy.ba/udruzenje.php [accessed 28 April 2013].

[90] 'Udruženje poljoprivrednika BiH', NGO Council, http://www.nvovijece.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=532:55-udruenje-poljoprivrednika-bih&catid=62:domae-organizacije&Itemid=88 [accessed 28 April 2013].

eligible for funding. This constrains most bottom-up initiatives to an organisational straightjacket. To that end, the concept of 'civil society' that the international donors have used is significantly different than what the understanding was on the ground before the war.[91] The number of officially registered CSOs in post-conflict BiH has grown so fast that there are currently over 12,000 registered CSOs in the country.[92] The civic movements, on the other hand, while initially having a critical element, in order to receive any kind of support ought to be registered, with which they appear to lose the impetus and become yet another CSO.[93] Several civic movements in actuality successfully brought together people from the previously conflicting ethnicities, but as soon as any funding was needed for the growth of the movement, the momentum ceases. At the same time, some of the former structures and organisations, such as the neighbourhood communities, *mjesne zajednice*, that used to fill in the gap between the elected officials and the local population, while also addressing their immediate concerns, had until recently been ignored due to their association with the previous system. Even though they were relaunched a few years ago, their functioning is still at a rather rudimentary stage. In the addition, many of the cultural and sport associations that used to bring the peoples of BiH together have fallen victim to the ethnic spatialisation in the country.

Aside of the formal, CSO conflict resolution initiatives, there has also been everyday conflict resolution practices by ordinary people. While the CSO initiatives usually attempt to complement the state and the international donors' initiatives, the everyday practices sometimes appear to resist some of the governmental policies. There is a big gap between the donor-funded 'bottom-up' conflict resolution initiatives and the everyday 'conflict resolution' practices. The latter have a low degree of governance or organisation, but do make a difference locally and on narrowly defined issues. In addition, these practices mainly take place in areas where the ethnic spaces are blurred, such as the villages though which the Inter-Entity Boundary Line runs. These actions are also not intentionally driven by the desire for reconciliation *per se*, but more frequently, reconciliation comes as a by-product of the endeavour to make life more bearable. Examples include exchange of seeds between neighbours in the village, even though they are of different ethnicities. Or joint initiatives at a neighbouhood, *komšiluk*, level to repair somebody's car or help someone's house reconstruction.[94]

Overall, primarily due to the ethnic spatialisation of the country that has permeated all spheres of living in BiH, bottom-up conflict resolution are faced with important limitations. At the same time, many of the initiatives that aim to contribute to conflict resolution are not organicaly, indigenously bottom-up. This all leaves for genuine conflict resolution, albeit at a very small scale, to occur in the places that are 'under the radar' of the ethnic spatial governmentality.

- *Did grassroots conflict resolution initiatives cooperate, resist or ignore state / EU initiatives? Did this impact on long-term stability?*

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[91] Ivana Howard, 'Building Civil Society in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Challenges and Mistakes in State or Nation Building?' in *Visions, Controversies and Perspectives of Political Transition in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, eds. Davor Marko and Eldar Sarajlic (Sarajevo/Bologna: University of Sarajevo/University of Bologna CIPS), 101.

[92] Interview with representative of the international community to BiH, Sarajevo, November 16, 2011.

[93] Interview with CSO and civic movement representatives, Sarajevo, November 13 and November 23, 2011.

[94] Field notes, Trnovo, 07 May 2012.

The bottom-up dynamics discussed above came about as a result of different processes. Most of the CSO initiatives that have a purposefully included component of conflict resolution have indirectly been encouraged by the international donors, including the European Union, through funding incentives. The civic movements, on the other hand, have often been a reaction to government actions, or lack thereof. One such example is the movement Dosta! (Enough!) that was formed in 2005 by a small group of activists who met though an internet forum, but has later expanded and included members from all over the country.[95] Dosta! was the first group in the country to organise protests, live massive actions, rallies, sit-ins, blockades and similar actions for different causes, many of which directed towards different governing structures. Others yet, come about in response to the ideology behind the reforms in the country, which are pursued both by the state and the international community. Such an example is JOSD, Unitary Organisation for Socialism and Democracy, which has a socialist ideology at its core.[96] At the same time, JOSD brings together people from different parts of BiH and from different backgrounds, that unite around the vision of the organisation. Needless to say, this organisation has by and large been ignored and sidelined both by state and EU officials. Finally, the everyday individual practices that result in reconciliation are independent from the state and EU initiatives, and come as a result of everyday needs, fueled by memories of pre-war amity.

Aside to them having different origin, all of these initiatives inevitably interact differently with the state and the international community, in partiucular the EU, initiatives. Most of the larger CSOs, funded by international donors, are unarguably always in line with their agendas. To that end, most of the CSO initiatives are in line with the EU agenda. Those CSOs that provide services are often complementary to the state structures, but it has not been uncommon for EU-funded CSO initiatives that have a conflict resolution component and are primarily advocacy-oriented, to be contrary to state initiatives. Interestingly, some of the civil movements that are critical to the state political processes are at the same time complentary to the work of the EU in the country and its overall goals. The aim of Dosta!, for instance, is to 'promote accountability and government responsibility to the people, and to spark civic participation of all Bosnian citizens, no matter what religious or ethnic group'.[97] This is very much in line with what the EU promotes in BiH, even when it targets politicians and politicial structures. Perhaps the biggest campaign of Dosta! so far, which was also the first online campaign in BiH, was the one in 2009 targeting corruption in the governing structures that eventually forced the then Prime Minister of the Federation to resign.[98] Other CSOs, as the aforementioned JOSD, openly resist both the state and the EU initiatives that aim to promote market economy and any initiatives that negatively affect workers' rights. The everyday practices, on the other hand, ignore both state and EU initiatives, yet they resist the logic of ethnic spatiality. The effect of all of the initiatives outlined above on long-term stability is rather marginal, since the changes that have come as a result, including those in the realm of conflict resolution, have been either cosmetic or relatively small.

- *Did the encounter between grassroots and state / EU initiatives produce ethical and practical dilemmas?*

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[95] Interview with a CSO representative, Sarajevo, 23 November 2011.
[96] Interview with a CSO representative, Sarajevo, 13 November 2011.
[97] Darko Brkan, 'Learning and Resources on the Ground', Non-Violent Conflict, [accessed 10 November 2011], http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/index.php/learning-and-resources/on-the-ground/1139-darko-brkan.
[98] Interview with a CSO representative, Sarajevo, 23 November 2011.

As a result of the encounter between the grasroots and state and EU initiatives, questions regarding the funding strategies of the civil society have been raised. Critics have been vocal about the unsustainability of conflict resolution efforts, which in part stems from the dependancy of the local civil society on donors' funds, the influence that the donors have on defining priorities and the image of the civil society among the wider population. While many donors have attempted to revise their decision-making process when it comes to defining the funding priorities and include the local CSOs, the dilemma of how to support civil society and at the same time ensure sustainability remains. The larger issue relates to the gap that exists between the CSO initiatives in promoting conflict resolution and the everyday, which goes to show that the outcomes of conflict resolution efforts are more sustainable when they are organically grassroots and in places where the borders of the ethnic spaces are blurred. This in turn highlights the wider conundrum of the EU and other international donors on the one hand supporting CSO initiatives that promote conflict resolution, while on the other hand supporting the politicial processes that foster the ethnic spatialisation.

Cyprus

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Introduction

Most state actors and international organizations involved in Cyprus' conflict resolution process believe that a solution to the Cyprus issue can only be found at the top level with questions of governance and power sharing as the main obstacle to a settlement.[99] Elite talks between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders, however, have not accomplished any notable progress during the last decades. Local conflict resolution processes and more recently, donor support to civil society have tried persistently to break this deadlock by fostering dialogue and interdependence between the two communities. The first section of the Cyprus case study reflects on development of bottom-up conflict resolution initiatives based on cultural exchange. It will report on their cooperation with the European Union (EU) and the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) as donors. It highlights the problems caused by project-based funding strategies such as a long-term insecurity of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the need of compliancy with donor agendas. It demonstrates that the less political these initiatives are the more support they receive by donors. The second section reports on examples of everyday resistance against EU- driven initiatives using the example of the interdependence via trade programmes. The everyday practise of consumers and the resistance of farmers contradict the initiative.

- In your fieldwork, which examples of bottom-up conflict resolution initiatives did you encounter?

In Cyprus, citizen-led reconciliation and conflict resolution activities started in the 1970s,[100] using problem-solving methodologies as theorised by John Burton and others.[101] Particularly during the times of closed borders between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot entities, the inter-communal movement played a significant role in keeping open communication channels between the two communities. They provided an opportunity to establish or sustain relationships with individuals from the other community.[102] Those programmes were entirely driven by participants' desire to resolve the conflict and counter ethno-nationalist positions postulated by their governments and fellow citizens or keeping in touch with former friends.[103] In the early 1990s, the inter-communal movement's engagement was eventually recognized and supported by various third parties ranging from bi-lateral to multi-lateral donors.[104] Today, conflict resolution via dialogue and cultural activities are the main

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[99] For instance: Russian Embassy, Confidential Source, European Commission, Interview 8.11.2011; Confidential Source, UNDP, Interview 8.11.2011

[100] Amongst others: Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis, Maria, 1993. 'Unofficial Inter-Communal Contacts and Their Contribution to Peace-Building in Conflict Societies: The Case of Cyprus', *Cyprus Review* 5(2): 68–87; Broome, B. J. 2004. Reaching Across the Dividing Line: Building a Collective Vision for Peace in Cyprus. *Journal of Peace Research,* 41**,** 191-209.

[101] Burton, John. 1969. *Conflict and Communication: The Use of Controlled Communication in International Relations* London: Macmillan.

[102] Vogel, B. & Richmond, O. P. 2014. A Viable Peace Process Already Exists: Relocating the Intercommunal Movements of Cyprus. In: Ker-Lindsay, J. (ed.) *Resolving Cyprus: New Approaches to Conflict Resolution.* London: I.B.Tauris.

[103] Maria Hadjipavlou, academic and activist, Interview November 2011, Nicosia.

[104] Broome, *op. cit*. p. 192

approach of bottom-up initiatives to conflict resolution. NGOs are trying to counter stereotyping, ethno-nationalism and prejudices which are still dominant in Cypriot society and the official state discourse. Those projects range from youth sport projects to local and regional conferences. Inter-communal projects are trying to change the perception of the 'other side' and to provide space to imagine alternative solutions to the status quo. These inter-communal activities are generally locally-led but sponsored by external actors, mainly UNDP-ACT[105] and more recently the EU. Thus, local actors do have an international component, partly of dependency but there is also a lot of friction over what local actors believe is international insensitivity, and their 'pragmatic', results-oriented approach.

- What was the primary force behind these grassroots initiatives? Were bottom-up dynamics essentially a reaction to state / EU initiatives or independent of them?

Civil society investment by donors is grounded in the idea that civil society is a 'basic pillar of democracy'[106]. It is seen as responsible for articulating and negotiating diverse political interests, a means of checking political institutions, power, balancing social equality and the transmitter for a just and stable social contract. Understanding civil society in terms of a normative concept as donors tend to do, a 'functioning' civil society will automatically contribute to 'the human project of civility, rule-bound governance and freedom from oppression'[107] and following the liberal thinking, eventually to peace. In Cyprus, NGOs are supposed to function as sources for bottom-up or mid-level peace initiatives with the aim of connecting the elite peace processes with the grassroots level.

Cypriot civil society is considered weak in both communities and is neither very active in advocating their rights nor participating in the conflict resolution process.[108] Officials assume that the dominance of the 'Cyprus issue' in the public discourse subordinates different social questions. The conflict functions for the governments and civil society as an excuse not to engage with additional social problems.[109] Further, a comfortable conflict situation and the absence of a hurting stalemate do not urge society to actively engage. Territorial separation of the communities makes it easy to ignore Cyprus' conflict in daily life. Local activists provide an additional explanation for a missing 'culture of activism' within the Greek Cypriot entity: Society remains dominantly organized along traditional political party lines. Families are integrated in party structures and tend to follow party opinions, often uncritically.[110] The majority regard politics as a top-down business.[111] Especially the young generation experience difficulties in finding ways of voicing their ideas.[112] Consequently, civil society falls short of holding governments on both sides of the Green Line accountable for their actions, including the delay of a solution.

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[105] USAID currently provides 100% of the funds for UNDP-ACT.

[106] Spurk, C. 2010. Understanding Civil Society. *In:* Paffenholz, T. (ed.) *Civil Society and Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. P.3

[107] Pearce, J. 2011. Civil Society and Peace. *In:* Edwards, M. (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. P. 408

[108] Confidential Source, European Commission, Interview 8.11.2011; Confidential Source, UNDP, Interview 8.11.2011, Nicosia.

[109] Confidential source, European Commission, Interview 8.11.2011

[110] NGO employee I, Confidential Source, Interview , 15.10.2012, Nicosia; Cypriot Activist, Interview 12.10.2012

[111] The Management Center (2011): Civil Society in Cyprus; pp. 24 -29. Print.

[112] UNDP employee, Confidential Source, 29.10.2012, Nicosia

To strengthen civil society and bottom-up initiatives, the EU and UNDP have funded various programmes over the last two decades encountering the following problem: Large civil society segments remain ethno-nationalist while simultaneously supporting international law, human rights or gender equality.[113] Therefore, a broad support to civil society has included the support of ethno-nationalist orientated groups. As a result, international actors have gradually pulled away from a general NGO support to exclusively funding peace-orientated civil society. Today only a few key 'compliant' players obtain most of the funding available. These NGOs further allocate small grants to other initiatives replicating the funding requirements they are subject to. Those criteria include inter-communalism, public visibility, and the assumed long-term effect. The change in funding policies and the close relationship between bottom-up initiatives and international donors has forced the former grassroots projects into institutionalised forms. A professionalisation on matters of writing funding applications and adjusting programmes and agendas to donor priorities was necessary to obtain funding. Rather than providing core funding to NGOs and leave the decision about the best possible use of these funds with the local activists, donors provide project funding. This impacts on the long-term stability of NGOs as they can hardly plan ahead of the next project.[114] That might become significant in 2014 as UNDP closes its programme in Cyprus at the end of the year.[115]

Donors have co-opted the former grassroots movement using their local legitimacy to implement their agenda. Instead of local needs NGOs often look at the current funding opportunities when planning their next project. In turn, large segments of society have started to regard UNDP-funded NGOs as part of an international plan for Cyprus. That has disturbed the citizen-civil society relationship. Donors however, do not seem to realise the dependency they have created.[116] Funded NGOs, further, refrain from engaging with security and power related political questions in a progressive way.

A significant, recent grassroots initiative providing a counter example emerged in late 2011 and was active until April 2012. The Occupy Buffer Zone Movement (OBZM) stated its main aim has been culture creation and to open a space where 'the various communities living in Cyprus can meet […] something that has been denied to them for years'[117]. Their involvement with the Cyprus issue however, has been more political than that of NGOs discussed above. The movement regards Cyprus as a multicultural society and argues that a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation would deny Cyprus a pluralistic face.[118] Pursuing this solution, OBZ activist fear, includes the institutionalisation of ethnicities. This endangers Cyprus to follow the negative example of Bosnia.[119] The same concern has also been raised by mainstream peace-orientated civil society actors but more hidden as organisations fear for their funding if they oppose the internationally favoured plan openly.[120]

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[113] Vogel and Richmond, *op. cit*.

[114] Confidential source, Cyprus Community Media Center, Interview 25.10.2012, Nicosia.

[115] Due to changing priorities in the US, USAID will not continue the support. Therefore, UNDP-ACT leaves Cyprus at the of end current phase which will be the end of 201. Some projects are ending in mid-2013 already.

[116] UNDP, Confidential Source, op. cit.

[117] Occupy Flyer (2012): Our Cultural Centre, print.

[118] Mihalis Eleftheriou, Occupy Buffer Zone Movement, Interview 26.02.2012

[119] ibid

[120] Confidential Source, NGO employee in Nicosia, Interview 02.03.2012

OBZ further demanded the demilitarisation of the island, which includes the removal of any foreign military, including Turkish, British and UN forces.[121] The movement further strongly opposed the ratification of certain EU laws in Cyprus such as the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA). Their main activities, however, centred around the idea of everyday interaction between Cypriots from both sides of the Green Line. That included dance classes, discussion rounds or movie nights similar to the activities of conventional NGOs. Other activists who were not part of the movement described it as the 'most amazing movement'[122] Cyprus has seen for a while.

The relationship between the OBZM and international donors has been ambivalent. The movement regards itself as having grown organically and has been proud of not being funded by any international donor. In the eyes of the Buffer Zone Movement other NGOs are corrupted by the international money they live on.[123] While officials of the European Commission and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) have articulated support during interviews they clashed several times with the activists. [124] Especially the relationship with UNFICYP was problematic. UNFICYP has asked them several times to vacate the Buffer Zone as their activities were 'not in line with the UN's regulation for activities in the Buffer Zone'.[125] The movement was perceived as an obstacle to their routine. Because of the highly political messages, police from both the north and south have asked UNFICYP several times to intervene and bring down political banners. UNFICYP has offered the movement to relocate to a field outside Nicosia.[126] OBZ activists declined as that would have cast them largely invisible to their target group.

The movement officially ended in June 2012 although it was already declared 'dead' by its founder in early March.[127] The permanent occupation had to stop after a police raid (RoC police) of the building in early April 2012.[128] The founder and members of OBZ admit that the movement was not destroyed from the outside but from within. One of the guiding principles has been the idea of inclusiveness. The concept was largely understood as being open to everyone without restrictions. That included that no one could be turned away.[129] Over time the house in Ledra Street became popular with teenagers, homeless people and had problems with internal violence as a result of excessive alcohol consumption. Its political mission got largely lost. For future endeavours the former leader would suggest that some form of leadership or core team is required and inclusiveness would only refer to people who respect the presence of others and the movement's political goals. It is worth noticing what happened to the physical space the movement had occupied. They have had occupied a house on Ledra Street between the two checkpoints for pedestrian crossing from the North and the South in old town Nicosia. Technically, the house was not situated in the UN administrated zone but still belongs to the territory of the South; the area in question is approximately 50 meters long and had consisted of a row of abandoned and ruined houses that predominantly belonged to the church. The formerly occupied area now has been renovated under the

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[121] Mihalis Eleftheriou, Occupy Buffer Zone Movement, Interview 26.02.2012

[122] Toumbourou, Kathrine, former activist, Interview 09.10.2012, Nicosia

[123] Mihalis Eleftheriou, Occupy Buffer Zone Movement, Interview 26.02.2012

[124] EC, Confidential Source, Interview 01.03.2012; UNFICYP, Confidential Source, Interview, 07.03.2013

[125] Cyprus Mail, 'UN asks Occupy protesters to vacate Ledra Street site' (January 14, 2012, online) http://www.cyprus-mail.com/cyprus/un-asks-occupy-protesters-vacate-ledra-street-site/20120114

[126] UNFICYP, Confidential Source, Interview, 07.03.2013, Nicosia.

[127] Eleftheriou, Mihalis, Founder Occupy Buffer Zone Movement, Interview 11.10.2012, Nicosia

[128] Evripidou, Stefanos Tensions high after police raid Cyprus Mail (8.04.2012, online)

[129] Eleftheriou, Mihalis, Founder Occupy Buffer Zone Movement, Interview 11.10.2012, Nicosia

Nicosia Master plan. The formally occupied building is protected with a lock to ensure it remains untouched.

- Did grassroots conflict resolution initiatives cooperate, resist or ignore state / EU initiatives? Did this impact on long-term stability?

Other forms of grassroots resistance have formed in direct response to EU policies. For instance, the EU pursues the notion that economic interdependence and in particular trade integration could bring Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots closer together. Among other documents EC No 389/2006 specifies the idea that economic integration leads to conflict resolution.[130] Hence, the EU passed several regulations seeking to ease trade between the two communities.[131] The so-called Green Line regulation has entered into force in May 2004 and provides the legal framework for inter-communal trade in Cyprus.

Greek Cypriot farmers, without organizing in a formal institution, are opposing the Green Line Regulation. Farmers in the Republic of Cyprus fear competition from agricultural producers in the north and frequently complain about lower production standards in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Rumours about illegal pesticides are widespread to stop the import of goods and further prevent customers from buying them. A recent example of local resistance escalated when Greek Cypriot potato farmers tried to stop the crossing of potatoes from the north. They blocked the highway with tractors and articulated their fear of unfair competition. The EU intervened by exerting political pressure on the Greek Cypriot authorities to assist the crossing of the potatoes. The same night the potato storage area where the cargo was placed before being exported was burned down.[132] While Greek Cypriot authorities claim this was a coincidence, Turkish Cypriots regard the incident as a targeted attack carried out by Greek Cypriot farmers. A similar case is currently emerging regarding the production and trade of halloumni/ hellim[133], a Cypriot cheese.[134] While the EC is encouraged to use it as a confidence-building measure, farmers on both sides undermine the project. The Pancyprian Organisation of Cattle-Farmers has launched an attempt to register halloumi as a product of protected designation of origin (PDO) but object to the inclusion of hellim in the application. The Turkish Cypriot side objects to having the Greek Cypriot side unilaterally making a PDO application on their behalf for hellim.[135]

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[130] Council Regulation (EC) No 389/2006 of 27 February 2006 'establishing an instrument of financial support for encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community' page 2, available from http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:065:0005:0008:EN:PDF

[131] As the Green Line does not constitute an external border of the EU, special rules concerning the crossing of goods, services and persons needed to be established. Initially, the EU had hoped to simply draft an agreement on direct trade via a third country agreement. In order to pass the agreement, however, the Greek Cypriot member state has to consent. Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus argue that a third country regulation would have to be agreed between the EU and an outside country – the TRNC, however, is not recognised as a state and thus unsuitable for such an agreement. From a Greek Cypriot perspective the agreement therefore would grant the status of a state and not an 'occupied area' to the north. Therefore, its implementation is not to be expected. Instead, the so-called 'Green Line Regulation', a mechanism that enables Turkish Cypriots to export goods to the Republic of Cyprus and vice versa.

[132] European Union Coordination Centre, Confidential Source, Interview 27.10.2012, Nicosia.

[133] The same product is known as Halloumi on the Greek Cypriot part and Hellim in the Turkish Cypriot area

[134] Stevenson, Peter. 'Say cheese: halloumi mooted for confidence building'. *Cyprus Mail*; 09.05.2013 available from: http://www.cyprus-mail.com/british-foreign-office/say-cheese-halloumi-mooted-confidence-building/20130509

[135] ibid

Equally, the everyday practice of consumers is undermining the EC initiative. Although more products have been added to the Green Line Regulation annually, trade between the communities decreases.[136] Members of the EC assume that social norms have a major impact on trade relations: as long as consumers reject products from 'the other side' traders have no incentive to openly do business across the Green Line.[137] Supermarkets, especially in the south, seem to be afraid of protest by their costumers if they stocked Turkish Cypriot products.[138] Newspapers and magazines frequently reject requests of Turkish companies to print their advertisements. Consequently, there are barely any Turkish Cypriot products on the shelves in the south and thus no demand to trade products over the Green Line.[139]

- Did the encounter between grassroots and state / EU initiatives produce ethical and practical dilemmas?

Peace-orientated civil society, as the small but long-standing section of civil society, has quietly mobilised to achieve peaceful coexistence despite their isolation from the societies they aim to transform. But instead of obtaining the support they would have needed changing funding policies in conflict governance, namely the concentration on only a few key actors, limited the outreach of their activities beyond the Buffer Zone. Donors have adopted a rather negative view of the capacity of civil society, stereotyping it as ineffective, inefficient, and made up of the 'usual suspects' referring to the small community they have built.[140] International actors in Cyprus have little understanding of the structural, social, political, professional, and cultural constraints inter-communal NGOs and their activists are subject to. They further seem unaware of their own impact on how civil society has transformed into a peace-industry in Cyprus in an attempt to secure funding. That impacts on their local legitimacy. Further, the project-orientated funding policies lead to insecurity for NGO employees and negatively impact the sustainability of NGOs and projects alike. Notable exceptions are the teachers unions on both sides and the OBZM.

Integration via trade has proven ineffective in Cyprus. While the EC has considered it as a neutral tool to connect the communities, inter-communal trade is a highly politicised issue. Resistance against this initiative can be found on the everyday grassroots level by customers refusing to buy product from the other community but also in a more organised form by farmers and producers in the Greek Cypriot part that fear competition from the north and try to secure their market.

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[136] ibid

[137] ibid

[138] European Voice 'Wrong side of the (trade) barriers' (2008), available at
http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/imported/wrong-side-of-the-trade-barriers/62192.aspx

[139] Conference presentation

[140] Confidential Source, European Commission, Interview 8.11.2011, Nicosia; Confidential Source, UNDP, Interview 8.11.2011, Nicosia.

Georgia/Abkhazia

Institute for International Affairs

Nona Mikhelidze

- In your fieldwork, which examples of bottom-up conflict resolution initiatives did you encounter?

Abkhaz civil society has emerged in the form of grassroots organizations to perform humanitarian functions, gaining a strong backing from the local population as a result of its "needs-driven" nature. Likewise in Georgia, grassroots organizations, consisting of the internally displaced peoples (ISPs) and refugees, have performed many of the regulative and distributive functions normally performed by the state since early 1990s. The organizations on both sides have tried to engage the grassroots by promoting people-to-people contact and reconciliation between Georgian IDPs and the local Abkhaz population. Several meetings, summer camps and joint trainings have been organized. The IDP groups have promoted contacts between teachers from both sides as well. There were/are interactions between ex-combatants and the family members of the lost soldiers for grassroots peacebuilding purposes.

- Did grassroots conflict resolution initiatives cooperate, resist or ignore state / EU initiatives? Did this impact on long-term stability?

Alongside these above-mentioned initiatives, economic grassroots activities have emerged, conducted independently and on voluntary basis. An example is the Inguri cross-border activities, where the Abkhaz cross the border for commercial purposes in order to reach not only the Zugdidi market (the first large city in Georgia close to the Abkhaz border) but Tbilisi as well,(380km distance from Inguri). This grassroots activity could be understood as a form of resistance to the state's regulations. However,according to civil society representatives, the Georgian police are well informed about these movements of Abkhaz with illegal Georgian license numbers, but they tend not to stop Abkhaz handlers.[141] Thus, in the view of a Georgian official, they would be indirectly contributing to peacebuilding.[142]

Not officializing these economic grassroots relations is in the interest of the Abkhaz as well. All the Georgian governmental proposals on conflict resolution are premised on the restoration of Georgia's territorial integrity as an end goal. That is why the Abkhaz prefer to opt for irregular (illegal) economic interaction. The trans-Inguri activities provide clear evidence of this. Over the years, goods and capital have continued to flow across the Inguri border. Also during the August 2008 war when the border was closed, Georgian capital continued to flow illegally into the Abkhaz market. Thus an unregulated economy, including black markets and irregular border crossing, has become an indirect governance mechanism in conflict resolution and an opportunity for contact and reconciliation in the long-term stability.

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[141] Interview with CSO representative in Georgia, Tbilisi, May 2012.
[142] Interview with state official in Tbilisi, May 2012.

- What was the primary force between these grassroots initiatives? Were bottom-up dynamics essentially a reaction to state / EU initiatives or independent of them?

Above described grassroots activity is the only one coming truly from the bottom-up. All the rest at that level happen through the funding of international donors, the European Union or the member states. Over the years, the EU has funded numerous projects designed for conflict-affected people and aimed at the improvement of their living conditions. Its activities have included the rehabilitation of damaged houses, schools and hospitals as well as the promotion of small-scale agricultural programmes. A far more important bi-communal activity is the EU's new initiative – Confidence Building Early Response Mechanism (COBERM) – which started after the Georgian-Russian war. COBERM envisages small-scale projects and seeks 'to have a demonstrable impact on confidence building within and across conflict divided communities'. The initiative is administrated by UNDP in cooperation with the EU Delegation.[143]

COBERM targets different social groups: from the representatives of mid-level civil society (NGOs, journalists, academics, researchers) to the grassroots (IDPs, ex-combatants, teachers, youth, farmers, etc.) and aims to finance projects supporting people and communities within or between conflict affected areas with an aim to (re)establishing relations and joint activities, encouraging inter-community communication and policy dialogues and proposing innovative grassroots initiatives. The total budget of such projects can be up to 10,000 USD. The duration of projects can be short and long-term, with a maximum of 12 months.[144] According to a representative of an international organization in Georgia, only a few NGOs or grassroots organizations managed to renew a project for more than 12 month. Yet the lack of durability of these projects limits the potential for confidence-building (the EU's declared goal when financing COBERM).

According to the same source, one of the projects was interrupted in a very important phase of its implementation, as COBERM refused to finance it for the second year. This project, first funded under the Instrument for Stability and later under COBERM was "Engagement Through Dialogue: Dialogue and Study Visits for the Transformation of the Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian–Ossetian Conflicts." The aim was to empower young Georgian and Abkhaz students and professionals, to facilitate dialogue between them and deepen their understanding of political processes across the conflict divide. The project contained a series of training sessions conducted in Georgia and in Abkhazia. Unlike many other projects carried out by international organizations, Dialogue Through Engagement foresaw an on-going rotation of participants, which enlarged the net of peopleinvolved and thus enhanced the effectiveness of the project. The topics of the workshops regarded issues in day-to-day political life and the perceptions of these issues by the different sides. The project also intended to build the capacities of young leaders to think about complex solutions to the challenges their societies face and to explore the possibilities and limits of trust-building processes.[145] The Abkhaz participants were young activists in local political life. Therefore, countering stereotypes and prejudices they have towards their Georgian counterparts was essential.[146]

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[143] Overview of EC Assistance to People Affected by Conflict in Georgia, European Union, Delegation to Georgia, May 2010.
[144] COBERM-2: Call for project ideas, COBERM – A joint EU-UNDP Initiative.
[145] Interview with CSO representative in Georgia, Tbilisi, May 2013.
[146] Interview with CSO representative actively engaged with the project, Tbilisi, May 2013.

It is well known that the only way to disseminate successfully the results of the project and to enlarge its impact to the wider population is to let the participants propose their own transfer projects,[147]which was in part what the Dialogue Through Engagement was doing. Yet the project was interrupted, as COBERM rejected the idea to re-finance it.

It seems that the priority is to finance a greater number of NGOs and grassroots organizations, rather than to mobilize the funding on certain projects. COBERM has financed 68 projects up until now. However, these have had had little/or no impact on the peace process. There are many reasons for this, some of them related to the EU's governance policy and others existing independently from that. These latter are:

- o A need for Abkhaz grassroots organisations to get permission from local authorities for engagement with their Georgian counterparts. Generally this permission is granted to organizations which have links to the local state authorities. According to the "Final Evaluation: Confidence Building Early Response Mechanism (COBERM)", nepotism seems rather diffuse amongst the Abkhaz NGOs and grassroots organizations, as the staff are often family members or parents of the organizations' director/founder. Furthermore, many local organizations are leader-centred, highly hierarchic and therefore often lacking 'transparency and accountability'.[148]During the presidency of Ankvab the situation has become even more difficult with the government trying to exercise control over the activities of the grassroots organizations in the conflict resolution process. In general any kind of interaction with Georgians is seen with suspicion. Even ill persons needing to cross the border and enter Georgian territory in order to receive the free health care services provided by the Georgian government, have to get a permission from "above".
- o Unregulated border issues between Georgia and Abkhazia (Zugdidi/Gali border). After the Russian recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and the military agreement between these two, Russia has gained total control of the border. After this, interaction has become much more complicated than it was before 2008. Thus the chances for effective confidence building projects are very scarein a context where the physical movement of people is limited.

- Did the encounter between grassroots and state / EU initiatives produce ethical and practical dilemmas?

To these objective reasons one can add other reasons related to the EU's policy towards grassroots initiatives:

- o Civil society organizations including grassroots ones are donor dependant. This means that their survival depends on foreign assistance. Therefore, instead of

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[147]Ropers, N. (2004) From Resolution to Transformation: The Role of Dialogue Projects. Austin, A., Fischer, M. & Ropers N. (Eds) Transforming Ethnopolitical Conflict. The Berghof Handbook.
[148] Final Evaluation: Confidence Building Early Response Mechanism (COBERM), FINAL EVALUATION REPORT, PREPARED BY: SEAMUS CLEARY &TinatinTkeshelashvili, 14 MAY 2012, UNDP Evaluation Resource Centre,
http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=5345.

promoting their own ideas regarding the peace process, sometimes they have to adjust them to the guidelines of the EU's call for projects.

- o As noted above, there is a lack of sustainability of the projects related to the duration of the promoted or financed initiatives; it is clear that confidence building is not achievable in 6/12 months;
- o Shortcomings in dissemination: already in 2000 Paula Garb noted that even if grassroots or unofficial diplomacy had its merits in changing perceptions of the conflict parties, it did not meaningfully influence public opinion. Most people are not informed about peace-building initiatives, as there is a little or no media coverage of these activities. This can be explained by a widespread idea among the Abkhazs that engaging with Georgians means somehow being less patriotic. Therefore only the direct project participants and their relatives or friends have been influenced by these activities;[149] the lack of information about implemented projects remains a main challenge for the EU/UNDP as well: ordinary Abkhaz and Georgians are unaware about these initiatives. In general, it is hard to get information as UNDP representatives are reserved about these projects allegedly in view of their sensitivity.
- o The grassroots organizations in the region (i.e. outside Tbilisi and Sokum(i)), even those in areas bordering the conflicting zones, which have more knowledge about local needs, are largely excluded from the peace process. Because of limited human resources as well as lack of administrative and management capabilities they are not able to engage with the difficult application (and reporting) process for EU grants. Furthermore, the EU tends to finance those grassroots organizations which have English-speaking employees. Those who do not satisfy this criteria are simply left out of the sponsored peace process. Thus a lot of ideas from grassroots organizations bordering directly the conflict zone are lost. Furthermore this EU approach contributes to the establishment of an elitist civil society sector, that in turn leads to the monopolization of the peace process by certain organizations on both sides.
- o The EU's funding policy has forced many grassroots organizations to compete with each other rather than to work together for common goals.[150]
- o The financial crisis inside the EU: according to an EU diplomat in Georgia, generally there are a lot of interesting ideas and project proposals, which the EU does not manage to finance because of scarce finding.[151]

COBERM is playing a valuable role in the conflict resolution process. Due to the isolation of the de facto states, it was instrumental to guaranteeing the interaction between the variousparties. However, the criteria, modalities and approach they usually use towards the selection process raise some doubts about the EU/UNDP's real motivations behind COBERM. As said, the decision to finance different organizations and projects every year hardly will create effective conditions for confidence-building. Therefore the EU's engagement with local Georgian and Abkhaz grassroots organizations seems to be more an

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[149]Garb, P. (2000) Small steps toward peace in Abkhazia. Give and Take, Publication of the Initiative for Social Action and Renewal in Eurasia, Vol. 7, Spring.
[150]Interview with a representative of the international organization in Georgia, Tbilisi, May 2013.
[151] Interview with a EU diplomat in Georgia, Tbilisi, April 2013.

instrument to control effectively tensions and prevent a renewal of hostilities between the confronted parties.

Concluding discussion

The six case studies attest to a highly complex relationship between governance and conflict resolution, and between top-down and bottom-up attempts to manage conflict and difference. As colleagues from Delhi University point out, it is very difficult to differentiate completely between the top-down and the bottom-up levels; they are often intimately inter-related. The CORE project partners engaged in fieldwork were given four broad questions:

1. In your fieldwork, which examples of bottom-up conflict resolution initiatives did you encounter?

2. What was the primary force behind these grassroots initiatives? Were bottom-up dynamics essentially a reaction to state / EU initiatives or independent of them?

3. Did grassroots conflict resolution initiatives cooperate, resist or ignore state / EU initiatives? Did this impact on long-term stability?

4. Did the encounter between grassroots and state / EU initiatives produce ethical and practical dilemmas?

The project partners engaged in fieldwork were able to calibrate these questions to suit local contexts, sometimes approaching the topic in an oblique way, and always mindful of the ethical framework that the project signed up to. The fieldwork makes clear the extent of 'treatment' or intervention by governments, international organisations and INGOs. So local actors do not operate on a blank canvas, and many of their actions are enabled by, or are in reaction to, the actions of external actors.

Given the variation between the cases (not least in terms of scale, the types of conflict and the stage of conflict) it is perhaps inadvisable to devise a comparative chart that aims to represent a precise comparison along standardised metrics. Such like-for-like comparison is not possible (without being swaddled in caveats) across a set of cases that vary so much. Instead, it is more advisable, by way of conclusion, to develop a few broader points that derive from the case studies. The following concluding points are indicative and best seen as discursive contributions to our understanding of the impact of governance initiative son conflict resolution.

The continuing power of states and institutions
While most of the case studies have shown that there are bottom-up, local and indigenous efforts to reach manage conflict and to introduce better governance, the power of states and institutions means that these local attempts are often overshadowed. The Indian state, for example, wields enormous material and bureaucratic power. It can act as a bureaucratic bottleneck, stymieing efforts by local actors to forge new relationships or regulate development. Unelected state officials have more power than local representatives or activists. This material power (and therefore the ability to shape/interfere with local initiatives) also extends, in some cases, to the European Union. The EU has significant leverage in terms of its compliance powers that encourage NGOs, farmers and others to conform to EU standards. This is perhaps most readily seen in the political economy

connected with conflict resolution and civil society NGOs in areas that have received large-scale EU-funding.

The heterogeneity of NGOs and civil society
Many of the case studies show civil society and NGOs following prescribed paths. A number of the case study authors noted how civil society becomes equated with civil society organisations, and conforms to orthodox structures and duties. Often this drive towards uniformity in civil society and NGOs is a function of a donor-driven environment. Yet, despite the large number of 'copy cat' NGOs in a number of contexts covered by this project, it is also worth noting that civil society is also a site of innovation and change. The 'Occupy the Buffer Zone' movement in Cyprus, for example, illustrates that some actors are prepared to step out of the conformity of 'approved civil society'. Such activity is often difficult, and is rarely rewarded with financial sponsorship from states and institutions, but it does show that civil society can be a zone of innovation and change.

Conflict resolution is an art rather than a science.
Both the Indian and European case studies show that authorities (states, regional bodies, security forces etc.) have decades of experience in governance, security and development interventions that seek to calm conflict. Yet, the experiences have been very different in different contexts. There does not seem to be a predictable relationship between inputs (resources, attention etc.) and outputs. In other words, states and other institutions often invest their energies and resources on the basis of hope rather than observed evidence. The rewards from the significant EU and UNDP investment in Bosnia Herzegovina, for example, have been extremely mixed, especially in terms of inter-communal relationships. Moreover, governance interventions can have unintended or unforeseen consequences. Often institutions are not used as their planners intended. The PRIs in India, for example, have taken on a life of their own. Their performance differs from region to region, but some have been more pro-active in dispute resolution than others. The one sector where investment usually draws dividends is through security responses. A number of Indian cases show how 'pacification' policies 'worked' in quelling insurgency, but at a very high social cost.

The observation that conflict resolution is an art rather than a science confronts policymakers and conflict resolution practitioners with a difficult lesson. Policymakers want to fund schemes that will work and deliver value for money. Yet, recognising the long-term and equivocal nature of conflict intervention initiatives means stepping back from a world of results-based management and evidence-based practice, and taking a leap of faith on schemes that may or may not work.

Top-down actors are often the initiators, but local actors show agency in giving projects life and new direction.
Virtually all of the case studies showed how top-down institutions (international organisations, INGOs and states) have been instrumental in establishing NGOs and civil society initiatives. Often they have the legislative capacity (states) or the material power (INGOs and international organisations) that provides the initiating power for projects and programmes. But the case studies have also showed how local capacity is more than a mere implementing force. Local actors have displayed agency by giving life to top-down initiatives, sometimes giving civil society initiatives a dimension that they did not anticipate.

Divided societies often find their own equilibrium

The Bosnia and Herzegovina case study in particular, showed how different communities evolve coping mechanisms that allow them to navigate through the awkwardness and danger of life in a contested context. The BiH case showed, for example, how different groups tended to use different mobile phone networks, read different newspapers, and socialise in different bars. This 'ethnic spatialisation' or 'ethnic spatial governmentality' is often the result of unwritten and unspoken inter-group agreements. Such agreements go against the grain of managed integration and reconciliation, but they do prove popular with communities, particularly in providing security and assurance. They are ad hoc, informal, everyday forms of governance that are adept at exploiting the spaces and institutions created by formal conflict resolution schemes, and the spaces left unattended by such schemes.

Governance and conflict resolution are sites of innovation
The case studies show that conflict zones are not sites of unchanging and static identities and positions. This is despite media commentary that often points to the unchanging ('ancient' or 'traditional') nature of enmity. The case studies show that there has been considerable innovation in conflict zones as institutions and peoples have sought to come to terms with conflict (and with environmental change such as population migration). As noted above, much of this innovation has been inspired by, directed by, or funded by top-down organs such as the central state. But local communities and leaders have had to adapt to changes introduced by top-down measures or through the evolution of conflict. The result has been processes of adaptation, resistance, negotiation, delay, co-optation and – ultimately – innovation as people and institutions have sought to find modus operandi that suit their circumstances. Some of the innovation involved the establishment of new bodies (e.g., peace committees in Meghalaya) but it also involved existing bodies (such as churches) adopting additional conflict amelioration roles. Perhaps one of the most tantalizing findings came from Northeast India where the project partners identified the emergence of the 'new citizen', one interested in plural forms of identity. These new forms of identity (more likely evolving hybrids than wholly new) suggest that partisan loyalties (whether to state or sub-state bodies) are still unsatisfactory and that new modes of governance offer a chance for such identities to emerge.

The establishment of civil society organisations is not – alone – sufficient for the emergence of civil society
A number of the case studies point to the multiplicity of civil society organisations. The report on Jammu and Kashmir points to the creation of 'literally thousands' of NGOs and civil society organisations, while other case studies point to a political economy whereby some organisations are grant-seeking. Given that conflict, and conflict amelioration, situations have been on-going for in the case study locations for any decades, and that there have been much civil society building. It is worth asking if this civil society building leaves much of a legacy? In blunt utilitarian terms, have investments in civil society paid dividends in terms of the creation of a more civic and plural socio-political environment. Here the picture is mixed. The European cases, and to a certain extent the Indian cases, display a scepticism towards the transformative effects of civil society. Certainly the sector can be useful, and as a number of the Indian cases show (such as Meghalaya), civil society organisations have played direct mediation roles or have discouraged violent activity through their protest activities. But beyond this instrumental activism, has there been a longer lasting legacy through which the spirit and ideals of civil society become embedded in the society and in governmental-societal relations. Here the picture gives grounds for less optimism.