

Mapping memories and rebuilding identities:

Understanding post-conflict reconstruction in Osh
(Kyrgyzstan)

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Abstract

Following the devastating riots that took place there in June 2010, the city of Osh (Kyrgyzstan) has been the subject of a number of post-conflict reconstruction projects aimed at rebuilding its damaged urban fabric. As well as being varied in form and approach, these interventions have had a significant impact on the ways that Osh's citizens experience the city. Whilst some residents have welcomed the changes that have been brought about in Osh, others are concerned about what these might mean for their continued wellbeing in the city.

By interrogating the shifting relationships between place, identity and collective memory, this thesis explores post-conflict reconstruction in Osh between 2010 and 2013. It seeks to build a clearer picture of urban change in the city over this period, and to unpack the diverse motivations that underpinned the reconstruction projects that were pursued or proposed at that time. Above all, it asks what these changes have meant for Osh residents, many of whom were still reeling from the violence that ripped the city apart in 2010.

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For more information on Zach Krahmer's photography please visit www.zachkrahmer.com	

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The view from Sulaiman-Too

At the centre of the southern Kyrgyzstani city of Osh stands an imposing rocky outcrop - Sulaiman-Too Mountain - from whose summit visitors can see the whole of the city spread out before them. The mountain is a gift to the urban geographer. A short walk up the steps climbing the side of the mountain, past teenagers flirting on the rocks and elderly ladies making a pilgrimage to pray at the summit, and you are rewarded with a bird's eye view of the city's streets and neighbourhoods, and an insight into many of the identities and experiences that intersect in the city. Looking around, your eye can travel from the bustling *mahallas* to the north, to the green parks that snake alongside the river Ak-Bura as it cuts through the length of the city. In the foreground some landmarks stand out: the new Mosque, funded by Saudi Arabian contributions, situated on the mountain's southern slopes, and the dark red neo-classical buildings of the Osh State University's main campus. Further out, past the bazaar or down towards the south-east of the city, Soviet era blocks rise, a hulking reminder of the city's relatively recent past as part of the Soviet Union. On a clear day you can see right to the snow capped mountains that mark the edge of the Ferghana Valley and hint at the Tajik border which lies beyond. On most days your mobile phone will chirp when you reach the summit, as a text message welcomes you on to the mobile phone networks of nearby Uzbekistan.



Figure 1. Location and views of Sulaiman-Too (Source: GoogleMaps)

Looking once again towards the north, another feature may catch your eye; a slash of shining new metal roofs tracing the path of the road to Aravan, shining silver against the dulled metal of their neighbours. These roofs tell a story. They bear witness to those buildings which have been rebuilt and repaired following the terrible violence that engulfed the city in June 2010, killing around 470 people. Residents in this neighbourhood built barricades to prevent the marauding mobs from penetrating deeper into their community, but they couldn't save the houses that lined this street (a main route in and out of the city). All along Alisher Navoi Street, houses were burned to the ground, in a pattern that was repeated across Osh in those few days. From the mountain, you can see the city's scars.



Figure 2. Silver roofs of repaired houses along Alisher Navoi Street, seen from Sulaiman-Too

(Source: Author's own)

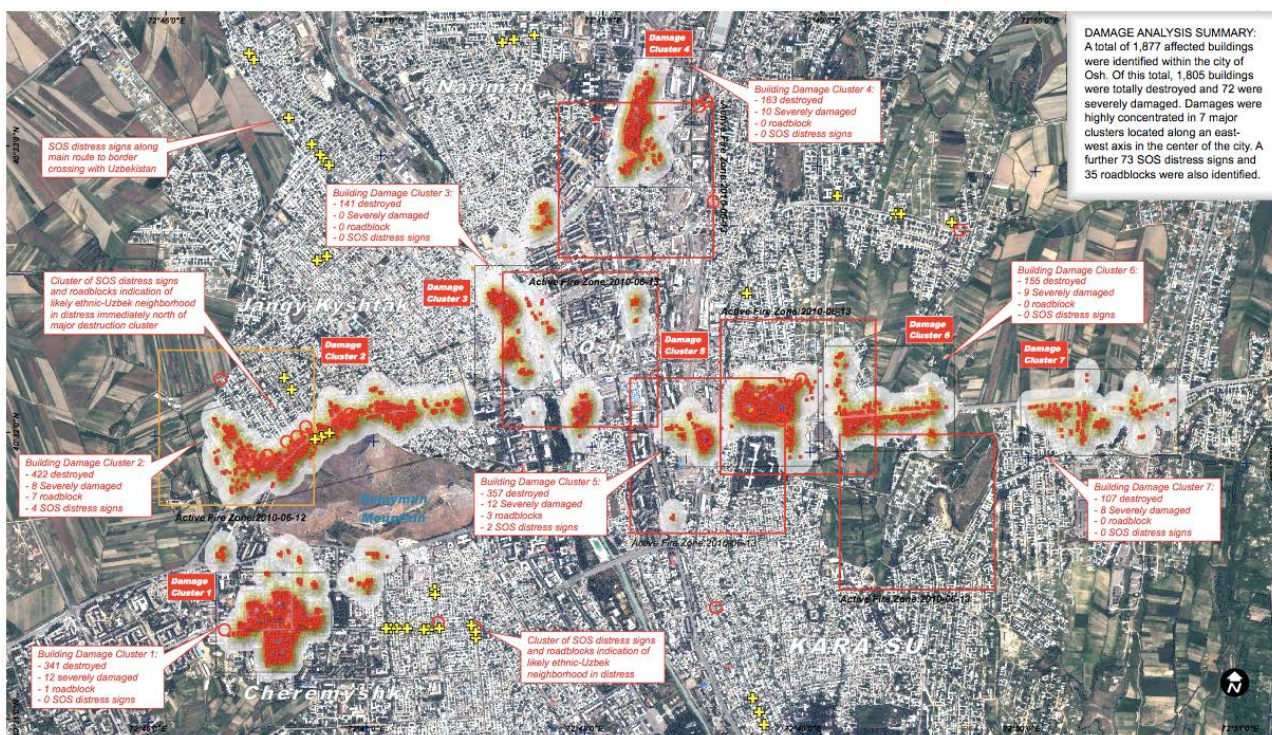
These silver roofs are testament to the twin forces of destruction and reconstruction that have shaped the urban environment in Osh since 2010, and it is these forces that are at the heart of this investigation. The violence of 2010 has brought about many changes in the urban landscape of Osh, but the logic and effects of these changes are not always clear at first glance. This thesis attempts to dig deeper into the physical changes that constituted reconstruction in post-conflict Osh to ask how this reconstruction should be understood. It examines the activities of international organisations and donors alongside the municipal authorities' vision of urban renewal (as embodied in the city Masterplan) and the hopes of non-elite city residents to build a full and nuanced picture of the aims and effects of reconstruction on Osh. To this end, it poses a number of key research questions;

- Firstly, how has the physical reconstruction of the city been carried out in Osh since the 2010 Events? Who has been responsible for this process, and what have been the underlying principles and approaches that have informed it?
- Secondly, how should this process of reconstruction be characterised? Did it represent a continuation of the violence against the city that took place in June 2010, or was it intended as a corrective response to this, one that would protect the spaces - and by extension people - most at risk as a result of the June Events.
- Finally, this investigation will explore how changes in the built environment have disrupted and reshaped these relations between communities, place and memory. It will ask how this has been experienced by the people living in Osh, and what this might mean for their future in the city.

1.2 The Osh Events

The Osh Events, as the violence that took place between the 10th - 14th June 2010 has come to be known, took place in the tense and destabilising power vacuum which followed the ousting of President Bakiyev from power in April 2010. The Events have been the subject of a number of enquiries by national and international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and one international commission (the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission, or KIC), which have enabled observers to piece together a picture of what happened on those fateful nights.¹

¹ See Bibliography for a list of key reports into the violence.



To give a brief picture of the Events, the violence which was to rip through the heart of Osh was apparently triggered by an incident in a Casino near the Hotel Alai in the city centre, causing large groups of young men to face off against each other, and against police. Before long, this violence had spread throughout Osh city and into neighbouring towns and villages (aided by the ubiquitous use of mobile phones to spread rumours, information and calls to arms), including to Jalalabad, the second largest city in the south of Kyrgyzstan after Osh (KIC 2011). Violence was largely carried out along ethnic lines, with members of the region's ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek populations carrying out violent acts against each other, including murder, assault, sexual violence, kidnapping and destruction of property. When the dust settled after four nights, the toll of death and destruction was heavy. Most international investigations agree that around 470 people were killed, and a further 1,900 seriously injured. 400,000 had fled their homes in Osh, Jalalabad and surrounding towns and villages, with around 100,000 of these crossing the border into nearby Uzbekistan (KIC 2011, Amnesty International 2010, Freedom House et al 2012, International Crisis Group 2010). The

physical fabric of the city also suffered greatly. Iconic buildings and places such as the Uzbek Theatre, several Uzbek schools and the historic central bazaar were burnt, along with around 1,800 homes and businesses in Osh city alone. Although both Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities suffered *and* committed atrocities during the Events, the ethnic Uzbek community bore a disproportionate burden of violence. Amnesty International estimates that 74% of those killed were Uzbek, and that 90% of the homes and businesses destroyed belonged to Uzbeks (Amnesty International 2011). The aftermath of the violence further exacerbated this asymmetry, as the police response to the Events have focussed overwhelmingly on the Uzbek community. One year on from the violence and 85% of the 271 people arrested for offences related to the events were Uzbek (Amnesty International 2011).

The reasons behind this outbreak of devastating violence are complex. The largest city in the Ferghana valley, a historically important trading stop on the silk road, Osh encapsulates the region's diverse ethnic mix and cartographic contradictions (Ismailbekova 2013; Liu 2012). Osh is Kyrgyzstan's second largest city after the capital Bishkek (the 2009 census recorded a population of just over 258,000), and was named the country's second capital in 2000, being granted republic city status (equivalent to an Oblast' or province, and the same as Bishkek) in 2003 (National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2009). It is home to a large ethnic Uzbek population, along with minority groups such as Russians, Tajiks, Tatars and others. This varied ethnic make up, along with its physical proximity to the border with Uzbekistan, and the cultural and educational legacy of the Soviet era, means that Osh is a trilingual city, where Russian, Kyrgyz and Uzbek are widely spoken. It became an important industrial centre during the Soviet period, a process which, along with policies of sedentarisation and high rise housing construction, brought about significant changes to the city's demographic profile (Liu 2012). Since the collapse of the Soviet Union industry in Osh has followed a similar pattern of decline to that witnessed in many former Soviet states, and the

factories that once employed thousands have now closed down. The city has known two episodes of serious conflict in recent years; in 1990 violence broke out, triggered by a dispute over land use in the city, that quickly degenerated into inter-ethnic violence throughout the oblast' (2012). Sadly, this was repeated just 20 years later, when the city again came to the fore for all the wrong reasons and violence flared up in the form of the Osh Events.



Figure 4. Map showing location of Osh (Source: Nations Online Project)

Although commonly described as ethnic violence, the roots of the June Events are more complex than this phrase suggests, and without the sense of inevitability such terminology often implies. Indeed, Bond and Koch underline the importance of contextualising such outbreaks of apparent ethnic violence in order to fully understand their causes and dynamics (Bond & Koch 2010). This

is especially important when one considers that in the long history of the Ferghana valley region, inter-ethnic relations have generally been well managed - such violence is the exception, not the norm (Megoran 2012).

As mentioned above, the violence of June 2010 should be situated in the context of the political instability which followed the removal of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev in April 2010. Following this sudden political transition - often termed the 'Tulip Revolution' - the provisional government found itself unable to effectively respond to rising tensions in the country's South, with disastrous consequences. These tensions can themselves be attributed to a number of factors, including criminal networks, unemployment and political instability (Freedom House et al 2012; Melvin 2011; KIC 2011). A crucial element in understanding the Osh Events, though, is the linking of ethnicity, clan structure and the North-South divide that has defined politics in Kyrgyzstan since independence, and possibly before then (Bond & Koch 2010), an issue that will be discussed again in Chapter 4. To Melvin, this "dynamic ethno-political process" links local ethnic tensions to the wider conflict responsible for the "steady erosion of the already weak state institutions in Kyrgyzstan and the growing use of mass popular mobilisation and violence in political struggles." (Melvin 2011: 6). According to this model, the first post-Soviet President Akayev, a northerner, courted the support of the Uzbek community (resident almost entirely in the Southern provinces of Osh, Jalalabad and Batken) to shore up his support in the country's South. This formed an informal alliance whereby the Uzbek community was afforded protection and non-interference in exchange for their tacit support of Akayev. The pact fell apart when Bakiyev - a southerner with no need for the Uzbek community's support - came to power in 2005. Instead, in the five years of Bakiyev's rule nationalism rose and the position of the Uzbek community in the South became more difficult (Megoran 2012; Melvin 2011). With inter-ethnic relations so intertwined with the North-South struggle for political power in Kyrgyzstan, it is perhaps unsurprising that the 2010

revolution, which brought northern politicians back to the Presidency, should have a destabilising effect on interethnic relations in the South.

Following the fall of Bakiyev, then, the Uzbek community once again turned to northern politicians to guarantee their rights (Bond & Koch 2010). Leaders of the Uzbek community in Kyrgyzstan perceived that the arrival of the new provisional government contained opportunities to advance certain community interests (such as language rights) through consultations around the elaboration of a new constitution (Megoran 2012; Freedom House et al 2012; Melvin 2011). However, public statements and meetings in this regard were perceived very negatively by many Kyrgyz, who feared the spectre of Uzbek separatism in such actions. Such a response is revealing of what Megoran has termed the “profoundly insecure” nationalism that has come to play a central role in Kyrgyz politics in recent years (Megoran 2012: 16), and also informs the Osh Events. Although former President Askar Akayev initially pursued a politics of inclusion under the slogan ‘Kyrgyzstan our common home’, this had become less prominent by the end of his rule, and was replaced entirely by the language of nationalism during the Bakiyev era (Megoran 2012: 6). Such nationalism does not readily agree with the aspirations expressed by Uzbek politicians in the Spring of 2010, further increasing tensions in the South.

Since the 2010 violence, progress has been made in the city’s reconstruction, with International Organisations, NGOs and donor governments helping to rebuild homes, businesses and cultural venues in the city, as well as funding the rehabilitation of parks and schools. However, this process has been caught up with the introduction of the city Masterplan, which sets out plans for Osh’s regeneration, resulting in a somewhat confusing picture of the city’s future, a situation that will be explored in detail in Chapter 6. This has been muddled even further by the city authorities’ reluctance to share the contents of the Masterplan with residents and other interested parties,

leading to confusion and apprehension regarding its potential impact on the city. The judicial response to the violence is also problematic, with one Human Rights Watch report warning that this had been marked by torture, harassment and ethnic bias against Uzbeks (Human Rights Watch 2010). Today an uneasy peace reigns in the city; whilst daily life may have returned to normal, many residents express fear that the violence that has occurred twice in 20 years may well return to the city a third time.

1.3 Interrogating violence against the city

Although the overt violence has, for the most part, ended in Osh, its effects can still be felt in the city. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the city still bears the scars of the Events. What is more, the three years following the violence (the time period that this investigation focusses on) saw a great number of interventions introduced in the built environment as a response to the destruction that occurred there. Understanding what drove these post-conflict interventions in the urban fabric of the city and unpacking their relationship with the violence that preceded them is one of the central challenges of this thesis.

This investigation proceeds from an understanding, central to contemporary visions of the city, that urban space is by its very nature heterogenous, and that this heterogeneity is at the very heart of what it means to be urban. This plurality cannot be divorced from the city - to attempt to do so would diminish its essential 'cityness' (Coward 2009). Furthermore, this thesis understands the Events to represent an attack not just against residents in Osh, but against the city itself, and against the kind of plurality it represents. Of course, this is not the only way of reading this violence, nor is it the only cause of the Events. Conflict that tips over into overt and serious violence of this kind is due to a complex causal web of factors (Cashman 2014). However, the overwhelming targeting of

Uzbek homes, businesses, educational establishments and cultural venues show that this is *one* important and valid way of reading the Events. What is more, it is an approach that has the potential to reveal as much about the reconstruction that followed the violence as the violence itself.

The acknowledgement of diversity and plurality at the heart of the city is an idea that has steadily gained currency in the last few decades. The great Jane Jacobs placed the concept of diversity - economic, spatial and socio-cultural - at the heart of her seminal critique of urban planning *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, calling it the “ubiquitous principle” of the city (Jacobs 1992: 14). More recently Amin and Graham have also situated the idea of the heterogenous city at the centre of their conceptualisation of the “multiplex city” as a driving force in a globalising, urbanising world (Amin and Graham 1997). Their eloquent description of the city as a “variegated and multiplex entity - a juxtaposition of contradictions and diversities, the theatre of life itself” certainly rings true for Osh, as we shall see throughout this thesis (Amin and Graham 1997: 418). In both of these visions the city is not simply characterised by diversity, but actively constitutes it. As Valentine has noted, the very “density and intensity” of the city forces its inhabitants into close proximity with difference, creating the conditions for plurality (Valentine 2001: 224). More recently, in their major ESRC project on the effects of conflict in cities, Pullan and Baille have noted that “plurality, even when its presence remains feeble, remains the over-riding theme to urban everyday life” (Pullan and Baillie 2013;4). One of the most devastating impacts of urban conflict, they go on to say, is the way it disrupts these conditions of plurality. This view is echoed by Coward, a theorist whose work on the concept of *urbicide* will be revisited in more detail in Chapter 2. Put simply, two important principles underpin Coward’s view of urban space. Firstly, the concentration of buildings in the city is “constitutive of a fundamentally public spatiality”, that is the “heterogeneity that is the existential quality which defines urbanity” (Coward 2009: 54). Secondly, when these buildings are attacked it is precisely *because* they both represent and create

the possibilities for this heterogeneity. An attack on the city can therefore be understood as an attack on the plurality in engenders, an attempt to diminish the conditions that make this diversity possible.

It is in these terms that this investigation will frame the Osh Events. Instead of seeing the destruction of 1,800 homes and other notable spaces and buildings simply as ‘collateral damage’ from the violence that was carried out in the city, these places are seen as having a meaning and symbolism of their own. Having taken this approach, the choices that followed this destruction - those that decided what should be rebuilt, how and when - also cease to be neutral, and become charged with meaning. If we frame the urban destruction and violence of the Events as an attack on the city as a site and condition of a plurality that has, for whatever reason, come to be viewed as problematic by some, then a crucial question arises. How should we characterise the reconstruction efforts that have followed the violence? This is the question at the heart of this investigation. Over the next ten chapters, this thesis will examine the changes (both completed and ongoing) that have been proposed in Osh’s urban landscape from 2010 to 2013. It will ask whether these changes represent an attempt to continue the assault on plurality so violently expressed by the ‘Events’, or whether we should consider urban interventions in the post-conflict landscape as a response to this attack - an attempt to safeguard and rebuild heterogeneity in the city. It will question whether urban change in fact represents something else entirely; an attempt neither to diminish nor preserve patterns of diversity in the city, but to take advantage of the state of post-crisis flux Osh finds itself in to remake these patterns in a new way.

1.4 Thesis Structure

In order to address these questions, this investigation will draw upon primary data gathered during fieldwork carried out in Kyrgyzstan in 2012 and 2013, as well as supplementary information from media reports and other documentary sources. It will set out an overview of the physical changes that have been introduced in Osh since the ‘Events’, and the reasoning behind them. It will then move to focus on three case studies of specific spaces in the city - the bazaar, commemorative spaces, and housing types - in order to dig down more deeply into the fine grained detail of the transformations. Finally, it will draw upon the findings of these case studies to build a picture of the different identities that are being unmade, rebuilt and refashioned in the urban landscape of post-conflict Osh. The next section sets out the structure of the thesis in greater detail.

Chapters 2-4: Theoretical background.

Chapters 2 - 4 introduce some of the key theoretical concepts that inform the research questions guiding this project. Chapter 2 looks at the question of post-crisis reconstruction of the built environment, focussing especially on the ways that power is exercised through both the destruction and the reconstruction of urban space. It presents some of the challenges of post-crisis reconstruction practice, including attaining ‘authenticity’ in reconstruction, building back better and successfully implementing participatory practices in post-crisis projects, before moving on to suggest a three part model against which reconstruction projects could be measured in order to assess their likelihood of promoting a sustainably peaceful city. It is this model that will be used in order to assess the likely impact of urban change in Osh later in the thesis.

Chapter 3 introduces concept of collective memory, examining its theoretical background, introducing different ways of conceptualising the concept (including the approach adopted in this investigation), and demonstrating why it is such a useful tool in analysing urban conflict and change.

Chapter 4 provides the contextual background to the study, focussing on the historical, political and demographic context of Osh. It sets out three common narratives for understanding the city - as a Southern city, an ethnically divided city, and a post-Soviet city - to provide a more nuanced interpretation of the environment in which the 2010 Events and subsequent reconstruction of Osh have taken place.

Chapter 5: Methodology

Chapter 5 provides a description of the research methods employed in this investigation, along with the rationale for the use of these particular methods. It also describes some of the particular challenges posed by the research environment in Osh.

Chapters 6 - 10: Empirics

Chapter 6 addresses the first of the research questions underpinning this thesis, describing the changes in the urban environment that have taken place since the Events and the logic of development driving these. Since it has proved impossible to separate post-crisis initiatives from wider urban planning initiatives that took place after the Events (as shall become clear from this chapter), it explores both, using case studies to provide a detailed snapshot of the issues and challenges that have been brought to life by these processes. This chapter will introduce crucial

information regarding the city Masterplan - a central yet highly secretive document at the heart of the municipal authorities' plans for urban change in Osh. Having presented this overview of physical change in Osh post 2010, the chapter then moves on to present an initial outline of resident perceptions relating to these changes, focussing especially on the central figure of the city Mayor at the time of this investigation, Melis Myrzakmatov.

Chapters 7 to 9 dig down more deeply into the fine grained detail of the transformations described above, by examining three case studies relating to urban change in Osh; the bazaar, commemorative spaces, and housing. All three case studies are used to unpack the second and third research questions addressed by this thesis, focussing on how everyday residents of Osh are experiencing Osh's evolving landscape, and how this relates to the aims and expectations of those actors engaged in the reconstruction process.

Chapter 7 focusses on the bazaar - a place which is both physically, culturally and socially central to life in Osh. Whereas the bazaar had previously been highlighted as a space of peaceful exchange and economic interdependence (Megoran 2010, Liu 2012), this chapter will demonstrate how recent and ongoing change in the bazaar was being interpreted and seized upon by two groups in the city. Minority ethnic respondents, especially Uzbek men, reported how their changing use of the bazaar reflected their increasing exclusion from public space in the city. In contrast, young women spoke about the bazaar in a way that reflected the delicate balance they were trying to achieve; to reconcile the conservative gender roles they were expected to fulfil with the globalised aspirational lifestyles they wished for themselves, and simultaneously to take the opportunity to carve out a safe public space for them to inhabit.

Chapter 8 considers changes in commemorative spaces in Osh since the Events. It describes the five new monuments built in the city since June 2010, and examines their role in the ‘Kyrgyzification’ of public space in Osh, and the far lesser prominence afforded the two ‘peace’ monuments to the Events. It also examines the way non-elite memories were being expressed in the urban fabric, identifying a number of non-elite narratives which spoke to issues such as Osh’s industrial heritage, cultural identity and experiences of the violence. Finally, it will bring these two strands together asking how they interact in the spaces of the city and to what effect. This will lay bare the official commemorative silence over the city’s industrial past, the divergence of opinion around how and where to best remember the Events, and show how questions of ethnicity and identity are being negotiated through commemorative space in Osh.

Finally, Chapter 9 examines the question of housing - an issue with the capacity to rouse great emotion in the city. It shows how certain forms of housing have come to be identified with certain groups, serving as *lieux de mémoire* for these communities. When faced with the prospect of replacing traditional *mahalla* housing with new high rise apartment buildings, this chapter will examine variations in resident opinion in this regard. Whilst the idea of constructing new high rise buildings was widely accepted, there was disagreement as to whether this should entail the removal of the *mahallas*, seen as dangerous and foreign by some ethnic Kyrgyz, and crucial to identity by many ethnic Uzbeks. The chapter will also show that when speaking about housing in Osh, ethnicity is not the only issue of importance, with the new *novostroiki* neighbourhoods increasingly occupying a vital position in the changing landscape of housing in the city.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

Chapter 10 will draw these strands together to return to the questions posed at the beginning of this thesis. How was the city reconstructed after the events, taking into account the differing approaches of international and municipal actors thrown into relief by controversy around the Masterplan, for example? And how should the reconstruction that has taken place in Osh from 2010 - 2013 be characterised, in what way is this affecting city residents and the way they use the built environment to store their memories and identities? It will ask what this means at the local level in Osh, but also what this can contribute to discussions of post-conflict reconstruction, collective memory and the city that are ongoing at a wide level. First, however, the next few chapters will spend some time setting out the theoretical framework that will underpin this investigation.

Chapter 2: Destruction, Reconstruction and Power in the Post-Crisis City

2.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter One, this inquiry brings together a number of key themes with the aim of better understanding the processes at play in cities in the aftermath of serious violence; collective memory, the destruction and reconstruction of urban space, and the contextual details specific to the case study in question, Osh. As will be explored in Chapter 3, there are deep-seated and important links between the notion of collective memory and urban space; collective memory often crystallises in the built environment, lending it a sense of permanence. Actors engaged in memorialising processes from both the ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ utilise urban spaces and structures in order to make (and remake) their narratives of memory and identity in a range of creative ways, from the construction of formal monuments to informal retellings of memory through quotidian uses of the built environment. But this environment is far from static, and in situations of severe conflict the urban space where these memories reside often becomes both the location and target of serious violence (Pullan and Baillie 2013). It is this circumstance that will be the focus of the following chapter; how the built environment is destroyed and remade by instances of crisis, and what this might mean for some of the key issues explored in the previous chapter: power, identity, memory and the prospects for rebuilding a sustainably peaceful city.

Conflict in urban areas, such as that which occurred in Osh in 2010, can be devastating not only for the populations that live in the city (although they clearly bear a heavy burden of such violence) but also for the wider political community in which the town or city is situated. Towns and cities are

certainly important economic and cultural centres, but they have often reached a tipping point of “spatial concentration” that enables the development of the kind of political and civil institutions traditionally seen as the guarantors of successful democratic states (Hirst 2005; 10). Destroying such centres can have considerable repercussions, then. And yet the destruction of towns and cities is often represented simply as an unfortunate by product of conflict (whether this takes the form of all-out war, acts of terrorism or civil unrest), whose main aim is to pacify or wipe out a population, capture a territory or control an economically important asset. In short, the political aims of conflict may be acknowledged, but the political aims of the destruction of urban areas often go unexamined (Bevan 2007). This is also the case for the process of reconstruction that follows urban destruction – this is often widely viewed as a technical undertaking, not a political one (Charlesworth 2006). Rebuilding shattered towns and cities thus becomes an affair for technical practitioners – architects, planners, builders – whose main goal is to accomplish the task as quickly and effectively as possible (See Yarwood 1999 for an example of this approach, and Charlesworth 2006, for a critique).

But this is a dangerously reductive view of the situation. Seen through a different lens, the destruction and reconstruction of urban spaces can be viewed as two sides of the same coin. As we shall see in sections 4 and 5 of this chapter, both are concerned with achieving specific political aims and exercising power; power over and through space. This understanding of destruction and reconstruction echoes that proposed by Flint and Kirsch (2011), who caution against the “false dichotomy” between war and peace. They use the example of the Reconstruction era that followed (and overlapped with) the American civil war to insist that reconstruction can in fact be viewed “as a process of conflict and of militarised power” (Flint and Kirsch 2011: 3). What is more, they underline the fact that reconstruction is social as much as physical, with power relations and social mores subject to a process of rebuilding, as well as the physical fabric that has been destroyed. By adopting this perspective it becomes possible to unpack the otherwise hidden aims of stakeholders

involved in both the ruin and rebuilding of towns and cities, thereby uncovering whose interests are served by these processes. This chapter argues that revealing these hitherto concealed relations of power and interest opens the door to a more transformative practice of post-conflict reconstruction (Fetherston 2000). Such a practice would seek to ensure that urban spaces are rebuilt with the needs of *all* communities who live in them in mind, thus contributing towards sustainable and peaceful urban environments. In doing so it would allow post-conflict reconstruction processes to finally live up to their oft-quoted mantra of ‘building back better’ (Kennedy et al 2008; Amartunga and Haigh 2001; Lyons 2009; El-Masri and Kellett 2001).

This literature review will examine two conceptions of power which will serve as useful frameworks through which the seemingly opposed forces of destruction and reconstruction at work here can be viewed. Firstly, Michel Foucault’s approach, which encourages the researcher to read buildings and the urban environment as statements in a wider discourse of power, and in doing so to make visible power relationships and interests ingrained in the city (Hirst 2005). Later in the chapter, Hannah Arendt’s understanding of power as mutual action will be examined as a possible guiding principle for the reconstruction of spaces which can serve the needs of urban communities (Arendt 1958; Allen 2002).

These two understandings of power will then be carried forward into a more detailed examination of the processes of urban destruction and reconstruction in sections four and five, in order to further understand how these processes are intricately linked to the interests of different stakeholders, and how gaining a greater understanding of these relations might help future post-conflict reconstruction practitioners in delivering more effective, sustainable solutions in post-conflict contexts. First, however, it is important to set out exactly what is meant by terms such as ‘post-conflict

reconstruction’, and how this differs from (or indeed, resemble in some respects) other forms of reconstruction, such as that which follows natural disasters.

2.2 What is post-conflict reconstruction?

Although the term ‘post-conflict reconstruction’ may seem straightforward, in reality it is anything but. Simply defining ‘post-conflict’ can be problematic – often reconstruction efforts are underway even as military operations are ongoing in other areas of a country, as has been the case in Afghanistan and Iraq in recent years (Brinkerhoff 2005; 4), and frequently serious disagreements between warring parties continue long after the violence has come to an end (Ibid). This explains why the period immediately following the cessation of hostilities has variously been called the “twilight between war and peace” (Ferguson 2010; 1) and “Clausewitz in reverse... a continuation of war ‘with the addition of other means’” (Ramsbotham et al 2005; 200). The post-conflict period is also dangerously fragile - Collier suggests that nearly half of all civil conflicts are the result of “post-conflict relapses” (Collier et al 2008), and former High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina Paddy Ashdown has spoken of the “golden hour” of opportunity for effective intervention in the immediate post-conflict context (Ashdown 2007). So, any definition of post-conflict must take into account the complexities of this period – as the former Special Representative to the UN Secretary General, Lakhdar Brahimi, has noted “In post-conflict situations, there is an absence of war, but not necessarily real peace” (Brahimi 2007; 3).

The origin of contemporary post-conflict reconstruction is often traced back to two key periods. The first widespread use of the term ‘reconstruction’ following conflict came after the American civil war, when the physical, legal and social fabric of the South was remade, largely under the aegis of the victorious North (Flint and Kirsch 2011). Later, the Marshall Plan reconstruction of post-World

War Two Europe, when the United States financed the physical, and economic, rebuilding of a continent ravaged by war, was to present another important example of the systematic and large scale reconstruction of a war torn place (Barakat 2005). However, in recent years the focus has switched from this emphasis on the physical restoration of infrastructure and buildings and industry as the main aim of the reconstruction process, to seeing this as just one element of a larger programme of reconstruction (Ramsbotham et al 2005). Such a holistic vision of reconstruction seeks to address a range of issues including security, justice, government, economy and society in order to ensure that the conflict is succeeded by a sustainable peace (Ramsbotham et al 2005; Barakat 2005; Brinkerhoff 2005). This approach sees successful post-conflict reconstruction not simply as the absence of violence in a rebuilt environment, but in the resolution of the factors that had previously led to conflict; to use conflict resolution theorist Johann Galtung's terminology, moving from negative to positive peace (Ferguson 2010, Galtung 1969). Echoing this approach, Barakat quotes the World Bank definition, of post-conflict reconstruction, as aiming to "to facilitate the transition to sustainable peace after hostilities have ceased and to support economic and social development" (Barakat 1998; 10).

It is important, then, to situate a consideration of the physical reconstruction of the built environment after violent conflict, such as this investigation, within the wider context of the modern post-conflict reconstruction project. In this way, theorists and practitioners of post-conflict, and post-disaster, reconstruction increasingly acknowledge that the bricks and mortar of the urban fabric cannot be successfully rebuilt without reference to the psycho-social reconstruction of the city and the communities it plays home to (Charlesworth 2006, Clarke et al 2010, Campanella 2006, Hassan and Hanafi 2010). Samuels captures this point well in her investigation of the post-tsunami reconstruction of Banda Aceh, Indonesia (a double reconstruction in many ways, since the area had been plagued by a long and bitter civil war before the tsunami), saying "apart from the visible, built

environment, 'reconstruction' is also a less visible social, psychological and everyday process. Banda Aceh's residents did not sit and wait for their society to be reconstructed. Indeed, because people form the society they live in, only they themselves can rebuild it." (Samuels in Clarke et al, 2010). So, whilst this investigation limits itself to examining the physical reconstruction of the built environment in a stricter sense, it does so in acknowledgement of, and in relation to, the wider context of the post-conflict reconstruction paradigm.

2.2.1 Post-conflict versus post-disaster reconstruction

Traditionally literature on post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction has been quite separate, since the context and root causes of urban destruction were seen as very different (Nasr 2003). However, such a separation may be detrimental to our understanding of reconstruction efforts. Since urban disasters are most strongly felt by the most vulnerable groups (Godschalk 2003), these groups often suffer a 'layering' of man-made and natural disasters. For example Banda Aceh, had been the site of an intractable conflict which had marked both the environment and the communities which live in it long before the Tsunami which razed the city to the ground in 2004 (Clarke et al. 2010). Similarly, when Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans the destruction caused served to highlight serious ongoing social conflict in the city, making tensions even more acute, and producing very real effects in the reconstruction process (Birch and Wachter 2006).

In practice it is not always feasible, or advisable, to attempt to treat post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction as two separate processes. Moreover, the impact of any disaster on the urban environment is seen by some theorists as the function of a city's resilience, and the resilience of its inhabitants, rather than of the nature of the event that initially precipitated the crisis (Godschalk 2003). That is to say, all disasters, whether they stem from an earthquake or a bomb, are essentially

manmade. As El-Masri and Kellett put it “there is a growing recognition that all disasters are ‘acts of man’ in which a hazard turns into a disaster by human error or lack of foresight” (El-Masri and Kellett 2001: 536).

When seen this way, then, it is clear that there is a fertile potential for mutual learning between the experiences of post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction. Whilst the circumstances may not be exactly comparable, especially in post-conflict cases where social resilience can often be severely hampered by the divided nature of communities, there is a very real opportunity to build on the experiences of post-disaster reconstruction in the post-conflict field, therefore this literature will be included in the following sections. Within this chapter the broad term ‘post-crisis reconstruction’ will be used to signify the process of reconstruction after a traumatic disruption to the life and fabric of the city, whilst the terms ‘post-conflict’ and ‘post-disaster’ reconstruction will refer to elements which are specific to one or other of these contexts.

One of the most significant ways in which post-conflict and post-disaster literatures often diverge, however, is around the question of how to measure their success. Whilst many post-disaster theorists advocate for successful reconstruction that brings about a more resilient or sustainable city, post-conflict reconstruction theorists focus on the question of rebuilding a more peaceful city. But what is meant by peace? Before proceeding any further it will be important to take a moment to unpack the notion of peace, given its centrality to this thesis.

Johann Galtung, one of the foremost exponents of the field of peace studies, proposed two notions that will strongly inform this investigation’s understanding of peace. Firstly, he made the distinction between “negative” and “positive” peace (Galtung 1969). This distinction is underpinned by a tripartite vision of violence “direct violence (children are murdered), structural violence (children

die through poverty) and cultural violence (whatever blinds us to this or seeks to justify it)” (Ramsbotham et al 2005; 10). Negative peace, therefore, exists in the absence of direct violence, but positive peace can only be achieved through the eradication of cultural and structural violence also. These distinctions inform the rise of liberal peace theories, of which post-conflict reconstruction activities are an integral part, which have become pervasive since the end of the cold war (Richmond 2012). This approach is embodied by institutions such as the United Nations, whose interventions are often intended to address these three types of violence through the actions of peace keeping (direct violence), peace building (structural violence) and peace making (cultural violence) (Ramsbotham et al 2005). Liberal peace theory proposes that peace can be built and maintained through the introduction of “liberal institutions, norms and political, social and economic systems” such as democracy and a market economy (Richmond 2012: 1). However, this concept has increasingly been criticised as ethnocentric, culturally biased and even “flimsy” in its results (Richmond 2006: 291). Some non-Western actors have proposed other models for peace building, such as the ‘Sri Lankan Model’ of “counter-insurgency and stabilisation”, which appears far closer to the classic realist vision of a victor’s peace (Goodhand 2010: 342). Simultaneously, theorists such as Richmond have called for a ‘hybrid’ approach to peace which takes into account the agency and particularities of civil society actors, and refocuses peace making around considerations of human security (Richmond 2012).

This challenging of what has, in recent years, been a near hegemonic vision of the nature of peace and peace building has also been reflected within the field of geography, notably in the emerging field of peace geographies. Calling on geographers to problematise peace McConnell et al recall the many possible meanings of peace, stating “peace can be a yearning for a radically new and just social order, or a mechanism employed by the powerful to resist just such a change” (McConnell et al 2014: 2). In other words, it is crucial to question *whose* peace is being constructed and seek to

unpack who benefits from the kind of peace being rebuilt (see Pugh et al (2008) for an in-depth discussion of this issue). As this investigation moves on to consider the activities being undertaken in the reconstruction of a sustainably peaceful Osh, it will be vital to keep this question in mind.

2.2.2 Post-crisis as opportunity

Moreover post-conflict, and post-disaster, reconstruction is increasingly viewed as a unique moment of opportunity in the life of the city to ‘build back better’, to use a much repeated phrase in reconstruction literature (Kennedy et al 2008, Amartunga and Haigh 2001, Lyons, 2009, El-Masri and Kellett 2001). Such an approach recognises the exceptional – and fleeting - circumstances that come together in the post-crisis city, and expresses a concern that at present architects, planners and agencies involved in the reconstruction process are not making the most of the opportunities for improvement that these rare circumstances present (Amartunga and Haigh 2011, Charlesworth 2006). In the post-crisis period the question of urban reconstruction is brought to the top of the government’s agenda for action as communities urgently require shelter and the re-establishment of crucial infrastructure; at the same time, external donors and agencies are on hand to provide money and expertise to aid the reconstruction effort, and state authorities recognise the importance of engaging with these donors before their attention is turned to the next crisis (Ferguson 2010, Hassan and Hanafi 2010, Suhrke 2007, Amaratunga and Haigh 2011).

However, this is not simply an opportunity for benevolent actors, both within the state and externally, to build back better – the reality is far more complex. As the next section of this chapter will set out, any intervention in the fabric of a town or city entails multiple opportunities to exercise power through reconstruction. Choices as diverse as what is rebuilt or knocked down, in which

neighbourhoods, by whom, in which style or timescale, or what kind of reconstruction or regeneration is prioritised, all have repercussions in terms of the power exercised over and through the city, power which can affect different city dwelling communities in different ways (Hirst 2005, Nagel 2000, Bollens 1998).

2.3 Conceptualising power in the City

The relationship between space (in this case urban space specifically) and power is key to understanding the meaning and intent behind the destruction and reconstruction of cities in conflict. Urban space is not neutral (a theme that will emerge again in the following chapter). It is utilised by different groups to keep memories alive, and therefore as a tool in struggles over power and identity also. It is therefore useful to consider urban space as a “resource for power” (Hirst 2005; 3). As such a resource urban space has particular resonance; the physical environment lends an impression of solidity and timelessness to that which it represents (Connerton 1989). This means that power relations ingrained in the fabric of the physical environment are less likely to be questioned, more likely to be seen as permanent and timeless (Agnew 1999).

But how, then, is this resource for power formulated and used, and who does it serve? Understanding the built environment as such a resource requires a more complex and nuanced understanding of power than the often voiced conception of power as something which can be stored and dispensed by the sovereign centre in order to dominate its dependent subjects - such a view is too reductive to fully appreciate the way in which power is both spatially transmitted and transformed (Allen 2004). It will be more useful to use the framework set out by Michel Foucault, whose conception of power allows a greater appreciation of the myriad mechanisms and effects of power at play in the built environment, and who they serve.

Foucault rejected the notion of power as solely a force of domination, exercised in a direct line from sovereign over subjects. He saw power as more diffuse (both in its effects and exercise), situated in a variety of centres, with productive as well as restrictive capacities (Foucault 1982, Allen 2004, Hirst 2005). According to this thinking it only exists when it is in action – it is not a resource that can be stored or held until somebody wishes to use it (Foucault 1982). In Foucault's work power is intricately linked to knowledge. Its greatest triumph of the modern era has been to normalise itself, to ensure that rather than forcing a choice on its subjects it has already ensured that all choices presented fall within its scope of acceptable outcomes (Allen 2004). This is the subtlety of Foucault's view of power –it is internalised by its subjects in such a way that even as it sets limits on the scope of possible actions, this seems normal (Foucault 1982, Allen 2004, Fetherston 2000) – this is a power that governs all possibilities instead of simply dictating one, and is all the more seductive for it. As Fetherston eloquently puts it;

“More fundamental than repressive power, Foucault's conception posits an array of disciplines, discourses, specialised knowledges, techniques and institutions which together function not to prohibit or repress, but to exhort and to normalise modes of thought and action” (Fetherston 2000: 200)

Foucault further suggested that it was by identifying and unpacking these discourses, techniques and institutions that researchers would be able to glimpse the mechanisms of power, and lay bare who was served by the power relations ingrained in the structures of the status quo (Foucault 1982). But how does this relate to the built environment, and more specifically to the seemingly opposed forces of its destruction and reconstruction?

A crucial aspect of Foucault's vision is that he considered that objects (including buildings and other features of the built environment) as part of discursive practice, that is the practice that sets the limits on what is possible and normal (Hirst 2005). In his essay 'Foucault and Architecture', Hirst urges us to follow Foucault in reading buildings and structures – their layout, appearance, location, interior and more – as statements, in order to understand their particular and deliberate role in the production of power and knowledge (Hirst 2005). As he says “the task of the architect is not merely constructing spaces, but spaces which have specific expressive-experiential effects on the subject” (Hirst 2005: 162). It becomes clear, then, that buildings are not neutral; they are designed to produce effects of power on those who use, or even see, them, and as such form part of a wider discourse of power. By unpacking this discourse, the purpose, reach and beneficiaries of this power can therefore be made more clear.

A powerful example of how power relations are bound up with the built environment can be found in recent critiques of the gendered nature of the city. Since the 1980s, feminist geographers have advanced a research agenda which demonstrates the mutually constitutive relationship between the spatial organisation of the city and the social organisation of gender relations. Scholars such as Valentine, McDowell and Fenster have demonstrated how the spatial organisation of the city is not impartial, but reflects hierarchical gender relations that define the private sphere as inherently feminine, and the public as masculine (or perhaps even more accurately, as male, heterosexual and white) (Fenster 2005, McDowell 1999, Valentine 2001). Gendered space produces effects at multiple scales, defining what kinds of places are open (and welcoming) for women to use at the local level (Fenster 2005), as well as impacting the historical design of cities through the division of spaces of production (such as factories) from spaces of reproduction (such as the home) (Valentine 2001).

In turn, urban spaces and the buildings that form them reinforce and enable these hierarchical gender relations as part of a discourse of power which restricts women's access to and right to freely participate in certain types of public space and activity. Public space is therefore not universal - it is composed of multiple public places to which different groups have differing levels of access (Fraser 1990). As Fenster notes in her critique of the Lefebvrian notion of the right to the city, women are restricted from freely accessing and making decisions about many urban spaces because they are "designed so that they become a 'trap' for women, unpleasant and thus unused" (Fenster 2005: 224). These spaces are often feel unwelcoming and dangerous to women, having been designed without them in mind. In contrast, the spaces that seem safe and open to them are often linked to certain gendered roles - women as caregivers or consumers, for example - reinforcing the public/private binary of gendered space set out above (McDowell 1999). Of course, this also serves to obscure the fact that most violence against women occurs in the privacy of the home, and not in the 'dangerous' public realm (Valentine 2001). Within this paradigm, women's mobility in the city becomes a transgressive act, upsetting as it does the "settled patriarchal order" built into urban space (Massey 1994: 11). Unpacking gendered experiences of the built environment, then, reveals how urban space has been used as a resource for a certain arrangement of patriarchal power relations, and restricts women's experience of the city. As Fenster puts it succinctly "the right to use and belong to the city is abused by patriarchal cultural and religious powers constructing public spaces as forbidden" (Fenster 2005: 224).

Moreover, another aspect of Foucault's understanding of power which is of particular relevance to an investigation of the destruction and reconstruction of the built environment, is the question of who has the right to express certain types of knowledge in a given society. Referring to Foucault's work on insanity and clinical observation, Hirst shows how "enunciative modalities mean that only certain subjects are qualified and able to speak in particular ways: that certain statements cannot be

made by everybody and anybody” (Hirst 2005; 157). This is important in the context of reconstruction since, as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, reconstruction is often framed as an apolitical process to be undertaken by technical practitioners – ‘experts’. However, by digging deeper and seeking to understand how certain subjects are qualified as ‘experts, and why it is only certain people or groups (architects, planners et al) are deemed qualified to intervene in reconstruction, we can again begin to unravel the power relations that underpin this situation.

So, by adopting Foucault’s nuanced account of power as set out above, it becomes possible to begin to reveal how the built environment, its destruction and reconstruction, itself acts as part of one or more discourses of power. The physical fabric of towns and cities is not neutral, then – it exerts effects on the people who use it, framing and limiting their choices whilst all the while making this process seem normal and immutable. Understanding the way this happens enables the researcher to unpack the power relations that are ingrained in the built environment, and to discern whose interests are served by the buildings and spaces that make up a given town or city (and whose interests would be served by changes to it). Bearing in mind this framework for understanding power, its location, exercise and mechanisms, the following two sections will examine the processes of urban destruction and reconstruction in more detail.

2.4. Conflict in the city – power through destruction

The city as a site of conflict may not be a new phenomenon – human history is full of examples of urban warfare from Carthage to Hiroshima to Fallujah (Coward 2009, Graham 2004). However, cities experience violent conflict intensely - Birch and Wachter have noted the “disproportionate effect” of disasters, whether man made or natural, in urban environments, a fact they attribute to the

density of the urban fabric and the complex, interdependent nature of their systems (Birch and Wachter 2006; 1).

Sadly, the phenomenon of urban conflict looks set to become ever more significant in the future, not least as the world continues to urbanise at a staggering rate: the UN predicts that 60% of the global population will live in cities by 2030 (UN DESA 2005), and the Stern report has noted that the effects of this urbanisation will be especially acute in developing countries, where climate change will make already marginalised urban communities even more vulnerable (Stern 2006). At the same time, the International Labour Organisation has warned that inequality is on the rise in cities across the world (ILO 2008), all of which factors combine to make the city a tinderbox for possible violent conflict. Moreover, the rise of asymmetrical warfare (in the decade from 2001 to 2010, only two of the twenty-nine major armed conflicts that took place in the world were between states (SIPRI 2011) has often meant that the city itself has become the site and target of violent attacks by terrorists, insurgents and rebel groups, and of battles between such groups and the state actors seeking to pacify them. Such conflicts seem to fit within Kaldor's definition of 'New Wars' – conflicts which ““involve a blurring of the distinctions between war (...), organised crime (...), and large scale violations of human rights” (Kaldor 2002; 92). Although Kaldor's assertion that New Wars are no longer about ideology seems premature, her description of the non-traditional actors involved in such conflicts, and the diffuse, globalised war economies that fund them, characterises much of the violence that has occurred in cities in recent years very well (Kaldor 2002, Graham 2004).

Taking these factors into account, there can be little doubt as to the importance of understanding conflict in cities as a distinct phenomenon, and one that looks likely to continue to proliferate in the

future. As Graham warns “urban areas are now the “lightning conductors” for the world’s political violence” (Graham 2006; 4).

2.4.1 Urbicide

Conflict is not simply something that happens *in* cities though. Certainly, the forces explored above increase the likelihood of outbreaks of violent conflict in urban areas. However, for many theorists this is just one side of the coin; violence also needs to be examined as something that happens *to* cities (Coward 2009, Bevan 2007). In other words, the urban environment is not only the location of violence, but its target. In its most extreme form this phenomenon has been termed ‘urbicide’, and is explored in greater detail below.

Martin Coward, probably the foremost exponent of the concept of urbicide points to the experiences of war in Mostar and Sarajevo, in the former Yugoslavia, and the “rubbleisation” of towns in Chechnya and Afghanistan by Russian forces as proof that in many cases the very buildings and streets that make up the city had become targets in themselves, rather than simply that strategic buildings and infrastructure you might expect (Coward 2009). Other theorists have cited the bulldozing of buildings in the occupied territories by the Israeli Defence Forces (Graham 2006), and the Nazi destruction of synagogues, Jewish owned shops and other buildings on Kristallnacht (Bevan 2007) as examples of cases where the destruction of the fabric of the city for its own sake has come to the forefront of urban violence. Of course, as Graham points out urbicide does not only occur at the hands of an armed group, but also through peacetime activities of planning and urban development, which often requires the destruction or remaking of huge swathes of the cityscape. This is “the dark side of the discipline of urban planning that is rarely acknowledged” (Graham 2004: 34).

2.4.2 Destroying spaces of multiculturalism

The significance of such occurrences can be explained in two, by no means mutually exclusive, ways. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the first explanation sees the urban environment as symbolic of possibilities for multiculturalism, pluralism and mixing. Building on Heidegger, it sees the spaces provided by the city as the basic conditions which enable ‘being-with-others’, making heterogeneity “the existential quality which defines urbanity” (Coward 2009; 54). This means that the act of targeting the city, seeking to destroy the very spaces that enable this mixing, is an act of violence against the multiculturalism at the heart of the urban experience, which aims to install an exclusionary, monocultural society in its place (Coward 2007). Some theorists have interpreted this as the revenge of the ‘backwards’ countryside against the city, yet such an interpretation cannot account for the experience of many urban conflicts, and risks falling into the trap of anthropocentrism (Fregonese 2009, Coward 2009). Crucially, though, it must be recalled that plurality does not necessarily mean equality - even highly heterogeneous places can have “highly asymmetrical” power relations (Pullan and Baillie 2013: 4).

Of course, such an attack on urban plurality can be achieved through bombs – the case of the Stari Most in Mostar is emblematic of this, as its destruction served more than just a strategic purpose; it physically prevented the two communities of Mostar from meeting and mixing (Yarwood 1999). This is perhaps closest to what Coward has written about - urbicide as a military strategy. And yet, it can also come about through more subtle, insidious means, such as the discriminatory planning policies and practices which can have a significant impact on different groups’ access to the city or the character of a neighbourhood, for example (Weizman 2007, Coward 2007, Bollens 1998, Graham 2004). The gentrification of the city, often greatly encouraged by state authorities, can have

a similarly deleterious effect on disadvantaged communities (Murtagh 2008). This could be characterised as a kind of slow urbicide - a strategy which is not as immediate as the shelling of a city, but just as devastating for its diversity.

2.4.3 Erasing memories of difference

The second logic of urbicide - either slow or fast - is intricately linked to the first, and sees urban violence as an attack on the culture and identity of a particular group, as expressed through the physical fabric of the city. Such violence has the ultimate aim of eradicating all memories and evidence of the group in the space of the city (Bevan 2007). In these cases Bevan argues that “architecture takes on a totemic quality” (Bevan 2007; 8), whereby the destruction of the physical expression of a community’s identity, sense of belonging and memories, is an inevitable precursor to the destruction of the community itself. Bevan acknowledges that in post-conflict situations it is not always possible to readily differentiate between the general destruction caused by conflict and targeted urbicide of culturally significant space, but argues that even a lack of care in this regard can serve the same purpose (Bevan 2007).

Such a view foreshadows the ideas that will be explored in the next chapter, on collective memory. When a community’s memories are ingrained into the built environment, they gain a sense of permanence and timelessness (Connerton 1989, Nora 1996). By destroying such markers, then, the group’s memory and identity are literally wiped from the city. The impact of this kind of urbicide on the process of post-conflict reconstruction is considerable. Rebuilding culturally and commemoratively significant buildings becomes an act of resistance for the community or communities which have been under attack; we can consider the swift (and frequently criticised) reconstruction of Warsaw city centre in the aftermath of the Second World War, or Palestinian

refugees' insistence on rebuilding the exact street patterns of their ruined neighbourhoods in Nahr al-Bared as communities' ways of fighting back against efforts to erase their memories, and therefore identities, from the urban fabric (Bevan 2007; Hassan and Hanafi 2010, Ramadan 2009).

The preceding sections have demonstrated the value of understanding the specific effects and meanings of violent conflicts in urban areas. Not only are such conflicts likely to become increasingly common, as urban populations swell, inequality grows and asymmetric 'new wars' continue proliferate, but they are likely to produce disproportionate effects on densely packed cities and their inhabitants. These conflicts, and the reconstruction that follows, take place within an urban environment that is deeply embedded in discourses of power. As such the destruction and reconstruction of the built environment should not be seen as neutral or incidental, but rather as an intervention in these discourses of power, producing effects that demand analysis and attention.

Moreover, there has been a growing acceptance that violence does not just happen *in* cities, but *to* them. Violence directed against the city itself – urbicide - can occur in a number of ways, as part of a military strategy or as part of urban planning initiatives, for example. Key to this notion - especially in any investigation into the question of post-conflict reconstruction - is the idea that urbicide constitutes a two-pronged attempt to fundamentally change the character of the city, turning it from a heterogenous, multicultural space, where the buildings themselves are testimony to the communities that live there, to an exclusionary, monocultural zone where all trace of the other has been erased, and control is absolute. Urbicide, then, can be read as an attempt to pacify a problematic urban space and bring it into the discourse of power of the aggressor or powerful party.

Whilst the notion of urbicide focusses on the destructive side of the equation, the question of what is rebuilt following conflict or crisis in the city is also of vital importance, and is bound up with

questions of power in the city. The next three sections will explore some of the key issues involved in reconstruction programmes. Firstly, it will examine the normative goals of reconstruction – the will to ‘build back better’ – to identify some of the potential pitfalls of this otherwise laudable aim. It will then consider the vexed question of authenticity, which is often invoked as an important aim of the reconstruction process. Finally, it will explore the question of community participation, which is often presented as a panacea to problems arising from the first two issues, but which itself entails a number of challenges. All three of these issues combine practical concerns in the post-crisis moment with wider questions about the way the reconstruction of the cityscape is again bound up with issues of power, identity and memory.

2. 5. Issues in post-conflict reconstruction practice – rebuilding power

2.5.1 Building back better

When seeking to rebuild urban places shattered by disaster, one of the first questions to present itself to practitioners is whether to rebuild what was there previously, or whether there is an opportunity to ‘build back better’. For many theorists this choice is simple; it is simply impossible to return the post-conflict city to the status quo ante. As Clarke et al point out, the passage of time, people’s experiences of the events that damaged the city, and their experience of the reconstruction process itself (their interactions with donors and aid agencies, for example) mean that it is simply impossible to recreate the urban environment as it was before the crisis hit (Clarke et al.,2010). They liken this to a corkscrew effect – the city might return to a similar position to prior to the conflict, but it has also moved on tangibly (Clarke et al. 2010).

Practitioners are therefore urged to consider how their reconstruction interventions can rebuild a better urban environment. What precisely is meant by ‘better’ varies between writers: for some it means increasing the resilience of the city, improving its capacity to bend but not break under systemic stress (Godschalk 2003, Berke and Campanella 2006), whereas others question whether the reconstructed city could be made more sustainable (Pelling 2003). Others still focus on the role of “architects as potential peace-builders” in remaking more peaceful, equitable cities (Charlesworth 2006;1). It is the last of these definitions that is the most relevant in the context of this investigation.

Furthermore, it is suggested that reconstruction programmes often serve a political as well as practical purpose, showing the victorious government as powerful, active, progressive and above all, concerned with the welfare of its citizens (Charlesworth 2006). Nonetheless, any description of the post-crisis urban environment at a “fresh start” (Amaratunga and Haigh 2011; 8), should be avoided. If, as discussed earlier, the city is constructed of its communities as much as its buildings, then even the most catastrophically ruined town cannot be seen as a blank slate where architects and planners have free reign to rebuild however they wish. Crisis is not necessarily a break with the past, but can itself be a concentrated expression of that past (Bond Graham 2008).

Bollens has identified a typology of four different modes of planning that it is useful to consider in this context; a *neutral* planning strategy, which attempts to treat urban issues as purely technical questions; a *partisan* strategy, which explicitly seeks to favour one group over another through planning strategies; an *equity* strategy, which seeks to redress perceived ethnic or political imbalances in the city; and finally a *resolver* strategy, which, in Bollens’ words, “seeks to reconceptualise the planning of cities and urban communities to facilitate mutual empowerment and tolerable urban co-existence” (Bollens 1998; 731-2). Practitioners seeking to ‘build back better’ in

the wake of serious urban conflict should aim, therefore, to adopt the position of planners as resolvers if they are to rebuild sustainably peaceful urban places. As we shall see in the course of this investigation, however, in reality neutral, partisan and equity strategies are all too common in such situations.

2.5.2 Authenticity in reconstruction

One of the most persistent questions to raise its head in discussions of post-conflict reconstruction is that of authenticity. The notion of authenticity is difficult to pin down – after all, who decides what is and is not ‘authentic’ – but to many theorists it is of vital importance to the success of the reconstruction process (Bevan 2007, Greer 2010, Clarke et al. 2010). In short, the reconstructed landscape should in some way match, and therefore be endowed with meaning by, the “internal landscape” of communities living there (Clarke et al. 2010). This can take the form of rebuilding original street patterns and ensuring former neighbours can live together again (Hasan and Hanafi 2010), or by attempting to acknowledge the history and memory of a space, and how it was previously used in daily life, in any new plans (Hebbert 2005). In 1994 UNESCO recognised the centrality of the question of authenticity to modern planning, conservation and reconstruction practice when it agreed the Nara Document on Authenticity. This document recognises the notion of authenticity as a guarantor of the “collective memory of humanity”, and warns against the ideological misuse of conservation activities to erase or change this collective memory (UNESCO 1994; 4).

The consequences of skin deep, inauthentic, reconstruction are serious. Writing about the reconstruction of Mostar’s famous bridge, the Stari Most, Greer decries the new structure as a “prosthetic” or “simulacrum” which simply parrots the old bridge, without paying testimony to

Mostar's wartime experiences, a silence which "may have the counter effect of making memory even more potent and dangerous" (Greer 2010; 130). Similarly, Bevan has highlighted the reconstruction of post World War Two Warsaw as a complex and problematic case. Whereas the process of fast reconstruction could be interpreted as an act of defiance after the near destruction of the city, the end result of this process has been lambasted as a "Disney operation" which again represents a facsimile of the former town without acknowledging the impact of the war (Bevan 2007; 181-3). Both writers fear such reconstruction, which is concerned with heritage rather than history, to use Lowenthal's distinction (Bevan 2007), simply papers over the cracks caused by conflict. Clearly this is far from the *resolver* model of planning discussed above. As we shall see in Chapter 6, this kind of approach is all too common, with prominent individuals such as the former Mayor of Moscow Yuri Luzhkov espousing an approach to heritage and reconstruction that has been criticised for its inauthenticity and denounced as "sham replicas" (Cecil 2011).

But if the importance of authenticity in reconstruction is so readily acknowledged, then why does it continue to cause a problem? This can partly be attributed to the need to reconstruct quickly, as communities' needs for shelter and infrastructure are pressing in the immediate post-conflict period. This may mean that questions of authenticity are not at the forefront of practitioners' considerations (Bevan 2007, Pelling 2003). However, this urgency is not the only reason that authenticity may be disregarded in some cases. Whilst this may be seen as integral to the successful reconstruction by some theorists, these theorists measure the success of such interventions by their capacity to rebuild more peaceful cities (Bevan 2007, Greer 2010, Suhrke 2007).

And yet, peace is not always the sole, or even primary, goal of all post-conflict interventions. Whoever controls the reconstruction process can use this to promote specific policy aims, whether they are political, cultural or economic. For example, Nagel notes that reconstruction in post-civil

war Beirut is largely concerned with the reconstitution of a commercially successful space in the city centre (Nagel 2000). In fact, the commodification of post conflict spaces and projects in the global and donor-driven economies is a recurring theme in post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction literature (Greer 2010, Sammuels 2010). Elsewhere Bollens has demonstrated how Israeli planning regulations fail to take into account traditional Arab patterns of land ownership and construction, thus obstructing authentic Arab housing developments, and contributing to the wider Israeli policy aim of discouraging the growth of the Arab population in Jerusalem (Bollens 1998). Conversely, Saudi Arabian funding of the rebuilding of mosques in Bosnia has paid little attention to the local vernacular of Islamic architecture, instead favouring plain, whitewashed interiors that reflect Saudi Arabia's own Wahhabist tradition of Islam, and its wish to promote this form of religion abroad (Bevan 2007).

All of these interventions – whatever their underlying policy aim - will be in vain if the city slips back into violent and destructive conflict. The message of theorists such as Bevan is clear – reconstruction that simply seeks to sweep the traces of past violence under the carpet leaves a city which is doomed to repeat the mistakes of its past. But given that the concept of authenticity is both nebulous and often contested (especially in divided cities), how can practitioners integrate it effectively into their work? The next section explores one solution that is often proposed as an answer to this question, but that is in itself a problematic and contested issue; participatory reconstruction and planning.

2.5.3 Participatory approaches to reconstruction – panacea or whitewash?

Stakeholder participation in reconstruction projects is widely held to have a range of significant benefits to the rebuilding process. It ensures that practitioners have all the relevant information and

pertaining to the project, enabling goals to be met more effectively (Siriwardena and Haigh 2011); it empowers communities, encouraging them to feel ownership of the projects rather than simple passive recipients of aid (Clarke et al 2010); it can be more economic, more closely tailored to the needs of the community, and more smoothly implemented (El-Masri and Kellett 2001); and it can even help ease the trauma in conflict and disaster affected communities (Pelling 2003). It is no surprise, then, that stakeholder participation and consultation has become a buzzword in reconstruction, and in development practice more widely.

Stakeholder engagement is no simple task, however. Taking on board Freeman and Reed's definition of stakeholders as "any identifiable group or individual who can affect the achievement of an organisation's objectives, or who is affected by the achievement of an organisation's objectives" (Freeman and Reed cited in Amaratunga and Haigh 2011; 118), Siriwardena and Haigh note the near infinite list of people and groups that could be considered to be stakeholders in any reconstruction process, from residents to unions, credit organisations, state bodies, international non-governmental organisations, traditional and religious authorities and much more (Siriwardena and Haigh 2011). Moreover, these stakeholders may support, oppose or be indifferent to the project, and this position may change over time (Siriwardena and Haigh 2011).

Stakeholder engagement also requires a considerable shift in practice on the part of reconstruction practitioners; this way of working often requires them to move from the position of lauded expert (a position which afforded them considerable power) to that of facilitator (El-Masri and Kellett 2001). This process can be met with significant reluctance, as reconstruction professionals are reluctant to cede their position of power or are concerned that the participatory approach, while laudable, does not take sufficient account of the technical necessities and skills of the planning and construction professions (Turok 1994). Turok eloquently demonstrates how these concerns can arise during the

transition to a more participatory planning system in his investigation of the development of a post-apartheid planning system in Johannesburg, through the Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber (Turok 1994). Here he notes another important concern regarding the practicalities of instituting participatory approaches to planning; put simply, it takes a lot more time to reach decisions in this way (Ibid). Clearly, this could prove problematic given the urgent needs of communities in the immediate post-conflict context, and yet for many theorists the involvement of affected communities is the key to rebuilding successfully (Godschalk 2003; Sammuels in Clarke et al. 2010; Siriwardena and Haigh 2011). Once again we see the tension between the urgency of the post-conflict period and the need to address from the outset the long term issues which are crucial to rebuilding sustainably.

However, this kind of stakeholder engagement is not without its own set of problems. In fact, some theorists warn that, if not properly thought out, this kind of engagement can actually make the situation worse in post-crisis zones. For example, Simpson has noted that in the aftermath of the Gujarat earthquake in 2001, consultation with local people was distinctly biased towards a small number of members of the middle class Hindu community – meaning that the consultation was not truly representative, and in fact risked cementing a certain arrangement of power relations within the community (Simpson 2006). Similarly, Pelling warns that the need for NGOs and donors to promptly find suitable and capable interlocutors to facilitate stakeholder engagement risks creating an NGO dependent class of professional interlocutors, without actually engaging the most marginal groups (Pelling 2003). The simultaneous requirements to act quickly in the post-crisis context, and to ‘build back better’ in a sustainable and inclusive manner are once again at the heart of this conundrum (Amaratunga and Haigh 2011). There is widespread acknowledgement that stakeholder engagement in post-crisis reconstruction is necessary, and that owner-driven projects are more effective than donor-driven, and yet it also crucial to acknowledge that such engagement it is no

quick fix, and brings with it its own set of complexities and problems (Davidson et al. 2007, Pelling 2003, Simpson 2006).

2.6. Conclusion – destruction, reconstruction and power

Foucauldian analysis of how power relations are ingrained and normalised through the spaces and practices that surround us in everyday life, this suggests a three-pronged approach to understanding the destruction and reconstruction of the built environment, and to building back better. Such an To return to the question of power explored earlier in this chapter, it is clear that a Foucauldian perspective is a useful tool in unpacking the power relations ingrained in the built environment, and in identifying whose interests are served by the destruction and reconstruction of towns and cities. Seeing the built environment as part of a discourse of power has a knock on effect on how we view interventions in this realm. The targeting of the city (urbicide in its diverse forms) is thus understood as part of a struggle to exert control over identity and memory. Choices made during the reconstruction process - what to rebuild, how, where and by whom - are also revealed to be part of this struggle, as the city is remade according to a new set of power relations. But in order to adopt a more transformational approach to the endeavour of post-crisis reconstruction, aiming to ‘build back better’, it might be useful to move beyond Foucault and adopt a more avowedly normative approach. Whilst a Foucauldian approach can help to identify webs of power in the built environment, it does not necessarily suggest the practical steps to build against domination through reconstruction, which must be the ultimate aim of reconstruction practice. As Fetherston has noted, reconstruction is not enough; post-crisis intervention must be transformative, and aimed at building a long-term peace (Fetherston 2000).

To do this, it seems apt to consider the work of Hannah Arendt, whose notion of power has a number of explicitly spatial and transformative elements, and Jurgen Habermas, who builds on Arendt's legacy to present a theory of communicative ethics – an approach which has readily been taken up by some planning theorists (Healey 1992 and 2006).

For Arendt, power only ever exists through action; like Foucault, she rejects the idea that it can be stored in reserve as a resource (Arendt 1958, Allen 2002). In her own words, it is “a power potential, not an unchangeable, measurable and reliable entity like force and strength” (Arendt 1958; 200). Where her concept of power differs considerably from Foucault is her emphasis on the ‘bottom-up’ potential of power (for better or for worse – she warns against the potential for ochlocracy, or mob rule (Arendt 1958; 203)). Arendt sees power as constituted through the free interaction of people in the public realm – the “space of appearance” - in which issues of public interest can be debated, plurality (of actors and opinions) acknowledged, and from which power, in a productive, emancipatory sense, can emerge (Arendt 1958, Hansen 1993).

The spatial element of this vision of power is crucial. The ‘space of appearance’ that Arendt refers brings with it a potential for power through the exchanges and plurality it houses – in short, by making the free association of people possible (Arendt 1958, Hansen 1993). The relation between space and power is therefore mutually reinforcing – a public space, such as a town square or civic building, may help to make free association, and therefore power, possible, but it only becomes truly ‘public’ through the concerted actions and expressions of power that take place there – as Benhabib puts it “public space is the space ‘where freedom can appear’” (Benhabib 2002; 211). Seen in this light, the links between an Arendtian concept of power and the debates surrounding the destruction and reconstruction of urban places discussed earlier in this chapter become clear, especially with regards to divided communities. Violence against urban places, and the

reconstruction that follows this, can threaten this heterogeneous space of appearance at the heart of the city. Hansen picks up on this theme, highlighting the relevance of Arendt's thinking to contemporary discussions about "the capacity of urban forms to provide public access to common sites within which people could assemble as equals enjoying each other's company as competent actors – in short, as a plurality of citizens joined in solidarity by a common world" (Hansen 1993).

This thinking is especially useful when thinking about urban planning in a post-crisis context. The creation of such sites would not only allow people to interact freely, but have a sufficient "capacity for ambiguity" to meet the needs of a fractured post-crisis society, in contrast to top-down approaches such as monuments or general plans, which all too often attempt to impose a unitary view on the city (Pullan and Baillie 2013; 5). Such an approach suggests that urban reconstruction in the post-crisis moment should be about opening up spaces of opportunity and ambiguity - public places that enable creative and emancipatory power from the bottom-up. This is in direct contrast to the urge to secure and privatise space seen in so many instances of post-crisis reconstruction such as post-civil war Beirut (Nagel 2000), Banda Aceh after the 2004 tsunami (Sammuels 2010), and the City of London after the terrorist attacks of the 1990s (Coaffee 2004).

Arendt has been criticised by some, though, for an overly restrictive view of which issues are admissible for discussion in the public realm, and which should remain in the private realm. Benhabib offers a powerful critique of Arendt from a feminist standpoint, showing how excluding issues that have been traditionally assigned to the private sphere from the agenda in public space, in fact risks maintaining a patriarchal arrangement of power relations (Benhabib 1992). A perspective which maintains such an imbalance of power relations clearly fails to meet the transformative goal of post-conflict practice set out above. In response to this perceived shortcoming Benhabib offers Habermas, who shares Arendt's focus on the importance of public space as a forum for dialogue,

but is more committed to widening and democratising access to this public sphere (Benhabib 1992). Whereas Arendt's view of power and public space underlines the importance of creating spaces that have a bottom-up power enabling potential, Habermas' approach encourages intervention earlier in the reconstruction and planning process to ensure that public space is constitutive of, and constituted by, a "radically open" public agenda (Benhabib 1992).

Such an aspiration fits with the widely held view of Habermas as a strongly normatively committed theorist of modernity (Howell 1993). His theory of communicative action in the public realm is especially well suited to the post-conflict context since it seeks to provide a procedural roadmap to aid modern, plural societies in achieving what Fetherston has termed "dynamic coexistence", or a "means of renegotiating the bases of mutual existence distorted by war", through reasoned, intersubjective dialogue (Fetherston 2000; 212). In a Habermasian "ideal speech situation", actors would participate in communicative exchange with the goal of identifying valid claims, defining priorities and deciding on actions in the political community (Healey 2006). Such exchanges would be subject to four tests – are they "clear and comprehensible", "sincere and trustworthy", "appropriate and legitimate" and "accurate and true" – to guard against the danger of communicative misinformation or distortion (Forester 1982).

The ultimate aim of this process is to bring the diverse concerns and claims of a plural community into the same horizon of understanding, providing an open, just and rational means of deciding that community's path, whilst precluding the subjugation or exclusion of any one group by another (Healey 2006). The attraction of this approach in the reconstruction of divided towns and cities is clear, as Healey sums up "such reason is required where 'living together but differently' in shared space and time drives us to search for ways of finding agreement on how to 'act in the world' to address our collective concerns" (Healey 1992; 150). As discussed in section 4 of this chapter, cities

can become targets by dint of their inherent potential for plurality and multiculturalism; indeed, managing such mixity is often seen as a thorny policy issue for contemporary urban administrations. Habermas' theory of communicative rationality therefore seems to offer a possible means of positively managing this diversity, using it as a tool for empowerment rather than a fuel for division (although some have questioned how successful this can be in the face of deep rooted divisions (Healey 2006)).

One theorist who has attempted to build a Habermasian approach into planning theory is Patsy Healey, whose theory of collaborative planning seeks to develop an institutionalist, communicative approach to planning (Healey 1992, 2006). She applies Habermas' principles of communicative rationality to the planning process, using them as a tool through which, even in the most conflictual of circumstances, communities can find "a way of living together differently, through struggling to make sense together" (Healey 1992; 152). This approach places as much emphasis on the process of planning as on its content, and shares the normative goals expressed by Charlesworth – that planning should be oriented towards goals of sustainability, social justice and inclusion (Healey 1992, 2006). Interestingly, as well as its clear links to Habermas, the institutional approach adopted by Healey shares Arendt's views on the generative possibilities of power, as well as an acknowledgement of the socially grounded and constructed nature of the decisions, interactions and knowledge that make up the planning process (Coaffee and Healey 2003). In short, Healey is calling for an approach to planning which, in direct contrast to neoliberal planning practices, emphasises the widest possible inclusion of stakeholders in the planning process, and the realisation

of consensus around even the thorniest of planning issues via free discursive practices in the Habermasian mode (Healey 1992, 2006).²

Arendt and Habermas' spatialised conceptions of power suggest two opportunities for transformative interventions in the reconstruction of the post-crisis city. Coupled with the Foucauldian analysis of how power relations are ingrained and normalised through the spaces and practices that surround us in everyday life, this suggests a three-pronged approach to understanding the destruction and reconstruction of the built environment, and to building back better. Such an approach would consist of three steps;

- Unpacking the hidden power relations ingrained in the built environment, and their role in influencing which buildings were destroyed in conflict, and which are which are scheduled to be rebuilt. As the next chapter will suggest, one way of approaching this challenge is through the prism of collective memory.
- Encouraging a collaborative planning process in the post-conflict environment, where the reconstruction agenda is set through inclusive, communicative practices that themselves build mutual trust and understanding in divided communities.
- Promoting the reconstruction of shared buildings and spaces that enable generative, grass roots power, rather than those which perpetuate divided communities, or the spatial arrangements of power which formerly contributed to conflict

² Whilst Healey acknowledges criticisms of this approach as being overly idealistic and unrealistic, she points out that the 10 years between the first publication of her book *Collaborative Planning* have seen a sea change towards greater multi-stakeholder consultation across Europe (Healey 2006).

In addressing these three steps, reconstruction efforts must also avoid the pitfalls raised in section 5 of this chapter. Reconstruction must be authentic to the communities that will live and use the environment, and not a convenient facsimile of what went before. The reconstruction process must be truly inclusive, engaging with all concerned groups as equals and aware of the power relations at play during the consultation process itself. Finally, the reconstruction process has to represent an attempt to move towards progressive and sustainable peace in and through the built environment, not simply a return to the status quo ante.

The understanding of the destruction and reconstruction of the built environment, and its relationship to the exercise of power, explored above is intricately linked with the idea of collective memory that will be set out in the following chapter. The distinction between power exercised over subjects through the urban fabric, and generative power constituted and wielded by people coming together in and through spaces in this environment, mirrors the distinction between ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ expressions of collective memory in the built environment that will be discussed next. This suggests that to use both theoretical frameworks in concert could provide an opportunity to bring new insight to the understanding and practice of post-crisis reconstruction of towns and cities. A key task of this enquiry will be to use the notion of memory to help ascertain to what extent the three steps set out above have been met in Osh since the events of 2010. That is, unpacking the relationship between memory and the built environment in Osh will help us to understand how power relations are ingrained in current and recent planning decisions, to what extent any planning process has been - or should be - collaborative, and whether reconstruction in the city is enabling the creation of spaces for generative power or simply (re)building problematically skewed power relations. These questions, and more, will be addressed further in Chapters Six to Ten, but before

moving on to this analysis it will be useful to spend some time exploring the notion of collective memory, what it means and how it can help to provide an insight into the post-crisis city.

Chapter 3: Theorising Collective Memory

“The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting”

Milan Kundera, The Book of Laughter and Forgetting

3. 1. Introduction

Of the trio of central themes underpinning this research identified in Chapter One, the notion of collective memory is significant as the key which should help to unlock new insights into the question of post-conflict (re)construction in Osh. It is the prism through which multiple perspectives on urban change in Osh since the 2010 events can be both discerned and analysed. And yet the concept of collective memory is by no means a unitary one. As shall become clear over the course of this chapter there are a number of ways that collective memory has been theorised in recent years, with some writers presenting it as a way in which power (over identity or historical narratives, for example) is imposed from above, whilst others insist on its potential for emancipatory resistance at the grassroots. The relationship between collective memory and the built environment is also multifaceted, sometimes recording indelible traces of power relations, sometimes concretising identity and sometimes helping to process the experience of radical - even traumatic - change into the narrative arc of a community. In the broader context of an investigation into urban change in the aftermath of violent conflict, then, it is clear that a consideration of collective memory, with its intimate links to notions of power, identity, trauma and resistance, has the potential to be quite illuminating, hence its central position in this thesis.

Collective memory has become increasingly popular in recent years, both as a subject of academic investigation and as a prism through which academics seek to better understand a wide variety of phenomena – indeed, it has become such an important issue that Huyssen has been moved to call it “a cultural obsession of monumental proportions” (Huyssen 2000; 26). Numerous explanations have been offered for memory’s inexorable rise, including the increasing prevalence of identity politics and ethnic conflict (Bell 2006), the rise of the nation state as the pre-eminent form of political organisation in the contemporary world (Olick 2003), the wave of democratisation that spread over Eastern Europe, South America and Southern Africa, prompting public debates over the past (Miszta 2003) and the seemingly unstoppable rise of globalisation, which has pushed people to look to memory as a shelter from what Edward Said termed “the ravages of history and a turbulent time” (Said 2000; 177).

Collective memory is not the same thing as history, even though, as Bell has noted, the distinction between the two concepts is not always clear (Bell 2006). This paper will take the view that whilst history should be seen as the conscious re-telling and analysis of events that have already occurred in the past, memory, the very act of remembering, brings those events into the present, and presents them as an ongoing experience (Halbwachs 1952; Bell 2006; Connerton 1989).

So, what can collective memory offer as a prism through which to view post-conflict cities? Firstly, as will become clear in the course of this chapter, many theorists have suggested that collective memory is intimately linked to space and the built environment, (see Halbwachs 1952, Nora 1996, Connerton 1989) and that this link deserves further investigation in order to fully understand the way we use and understand the world around us. Secondly, seeking to understand how collective memory is mediated through the urban environment suggests new ways of seeing and investigating cities, whether it is by focussing on monuments and other explicitly commemorative spaces (see

Johnson 1995, 2002; Crampton 2001, Jarman 2001) or by seeking to understand the informal ways in which ordinary people use their surroundings as aide-memoires in their day to day lives (see Blokland 2001, Hebbert 2005) as discussed in the first half of this chapter. By questioning how collective memory is inscribed in the built environment, these writers have all developed powerful and novel methods for exploring cities. Finally, as will be argued in the second half of this chapter, understanding how collective memory and the built environment are linked helps us to better understand themes such as power, identity and trauma, all of which are central to understanding the post-conflict city.

3.2. What is collective memory?

Virtually every consideration of the concept of collective memory begins with reference to the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs – as Myszta puts it “his assertion that every group develops a memory of its own past that highlights its unique identity is still the starting point for all research in the field” (Myszta 2003; 51).

Although Halbwachs’ seminal works on collective memory, including *Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Social Frameworks of Memory) and *La Topographie legendaire des evangiles en terre sainte* (Legendary Topography of the Gospels of the Holy Land), were neglected for some time, the key concepts he developed in the early part of the 20th century have since played a central role in informing discussions of collective memory, and particularly the spatial elements of memory (Hebbert 2005). Some of Halbwachs’ key ideas, that collective memory is constitutive of group identity; that memories are acquired and evoked socially, not individually; and that collective memories are rooted in the present, and continually recalled and remade according to the needs of the present (Halbwachs 1952), are still central to our understanding of collective memory. These

ideas have been lent further credence by the rise of modernist conceptions of the nation as an “imagined political community” which relies on shared cultural resources and mythology popularised by Benedict Anderson (Anderson 2006; 7).

What is more, Halbwachs’ work introduced a consideration of the dynamic relationship between collective memory and place. His 1941 work *La topographie légendaire des évangiles en terre sainte*, explored how spaces in Jerusalem had been overlaid with layers of memory by Jews, Romans, Christians and Muslims, all of whom have used the landscape, buildings, paths and other elements of the built environment as parts of their frameworks of remembering (Halbwachs 1941). Places in the built environment are especially attractive components of a framework of collective memory by virtue of their perceived stability – what better way to underpin your community’s claim to a specific, unbroken lineage than by linking it to “the material milieu that surrounds us”? (Connerton 1989; 37).

The notion of using the built environment to store memory was further developed by another French academic, Pierre Nora, who undertook a vast project of cataloguing the sites – often, but not always, material – in which French collective memory is inscribed (Nora 1996). Nora identified what he called *Lieux de mémoire*, or realms of memory, which he described as “material, symbolic and functional” sites, which house the complex network of collective memories that support a given community (Nora 1996; 14). Although Nora has been criticised for promoting an overly nostalgic view of the past as a golden age of more authentic memories (Till 2008), his assertion that the acceleration of history in the twentieth century explains the growing importance of the study of collective memory, and its expression through the environment that surrounds us, remains influential today (Nora 1996).

Today, numerous academics have further investigated the role of elements of the urban environment as potential vessels or “touchstones” for collective memory (Forest and Johnson, 2002, Gillis 1994, Johnson 1995), and it is these investigations that will form the basis of this literature review. The second part of this review will examine some of the key issues brought to light by investigations of the links between collective memory and the built environment – power, identity and what could be called post-crisis paradigm shifts – and in doing so demonstrate the considerable explanatory power of collective memory as a prism through which researchers can view the built environment.

3.3 Theorising collective memory; ‘top-down’, ‘bottom-up’ and meeting in the middle

However, before exploring these issues, it will first be vital to look more closely at contemporary interpretations of the notion of collective memory itself, especially focussing on its interactions with space. This section will set out two broad schools of thought on the nature of collective memory – often characterised as “top-down” and “bottom-up” (Miszta 2003) – before suggesting a third approach that attempts to integrate the most useful elements of both ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ methods, whilst seeking insights in the dynamic space where ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ expressions of collective memory meet.

3.3.1 Imposing memory from above

Broadly speaking, the ‘top-down’ approach, which explores how collective memory is used by elite groups to continuously legitimise their position of power and conception of society, can trace its theoretical roots to Hobsbawm and Ranger’s (1983) study of the construction of tradition (and by extension social memory) *The Invention of Tradition*. This influential work sought to demonstrate how much of what is currently presented as age-old ‘tradition’ is, in fact, a relatively recent

invention, created to increase social cohesion and cement group membership, to legitimise the authority of governing institutions, and to ensure group members share the same belief systems and norms of behaviour (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Crucially, Hobsbawm and Ranger point to the process and materials used to construct new traditions, and they highlight the fact that a tradition itself may become the site and symbol of discord, a battleground where group identity is negotiated and tested (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983).

This observation is particularly pertinent for the study of collective memory in the physical environment, and has been developed and tested by numerous geographers who have studied the process of memorialisation in the built environment (see Johnson 1995, 2002; Gillis 1994, Forest and Johnson 2002). Mitchell has likened these investigations to an “archaeology of power”, that uses the diverse traces inscribed in the physical landscape – but especially around commemorative sites such as memorials, statues, museums and the like - to piece together a picture of the way the dominant force in a given society wished to be seen – what it wanted people to remember, and forget (Mitchell 2003; 446). In recent years a range of spaces have been subjected to this kind of investigation, including Robben Island and the Voortrekker monument in South Africa (Deacon 1998; Crampton 2001), Soviet statues and memorials in Post-Soviet Russia (Forest and Johnson 2002), protestant ‘orange arches’ in Ulster (Jarman 2001) and public statuary in Dublin (Johnson 1995) to name but a few.

These kinds of investigations are demonstrative of the ‘top-down’ approach to collective memory in a number of ways. They focus on elements of the built environment that have been constructed with the explicit aim of promoting collective remembering of something, or someone, unpacking the both the visual imagery and symbolism used in the commemorative space, and its placement and relationship with other elements of the environment (Till 2008, Crampton 2001, Johnson 2002). By

subjecting the form and location of memorial spaces to careful scrutiny, these writers have sought to unearth clues to the political and social purpose of the space beyond its stated aim of commemoration.

Recalling Renan's prescient statement that "'l'essence d'une nation est que tous les individus aient beaucoup de choses en commun, et aussi que tous aient oubliées bien de choses" (*the essence of a nation is not only that individuals have many things in common, but also that they have all forgotten many things*) (Renan cited in Bhabha 1990; 11), 'top-down' theorists of collective memory have investigated the processes whereby certain memories are allowed to be commemorated in public space, and others are not. The successful development of memorial spaces can be ascribed to the social power and cultural capital of the person or group pushing for commemoration (Jordan 2006), with controversy and contestation around this process arising when power relations are in flux (Deacon 1998, Forest and Johnson 2002).

However, the 'top-down' approach has been criticised for focussing too narrowly, to the detriment of its explanatory power. By restricting its investigations to the most obvious of memorial spaces – the monuments and museums that Schudson sees as "self-consciously framed acts of commemoration" – 'top-down' theorists have ignored the countless other places in which collective memory crystallises (Schudson 1997; 3). Thus, investigations have concentrated on the quintessential 'low hanging fruit' – places where memory has clearly been codified, instead of digging more deeply to find the less obvious, but potentially more interesting, quotidian expressions of collective memory in space. As Schudson puts it "we look for effective public memory at self-conscious memory sites not because that is where we will find what we are looking for, but because that is where the illumination makes looking most convenient" (Schudson 1997; 3).

What is more, many theorists have rejected the idea that an entirely ‘invented’ collective memory or tradition can be imposed on people from above – as Myształ points out “people tend to reject any vision of the past which contradicts their recollection and sense of truth” (Myształ 2003; 60). Seeing collective memory solely as the prerogative of ruling elites, who impose it onto the passive masses from on high, is seen by many theorists as a reductive, and unrealistic, approach which negates the power of the everyday experience of most people (Irwin-Zarecka 2007, Myształ 2003, Olick 2003, Rolston 2010).

3.3.2 Identifying ‘street level’ memories

Thus, a different approach developed alongside the ‘top-down’ method, one that takes its cue not from the elites, but from the street level – this is often referred to as popular memory (Myształ 2003; 61). This approach, which seeks to identify and examine collective memories that are constructed from the ‘bottom-up’ takes its cue from the writings of Michel Foucault, who suggested that popular knowledge is devalued by a pervasive “system of power which blocks, prohibits, and invalidates this discourse and this knowledge” (Foucault 1980: 207). Foucault was therefore interested in how ‘counter’ or ‘popular’ memories – often articulated in informal ways outside the scope of this system of power - can resist the hegemonic discourses of memory, and other “regimes of truth”, imposed from above (Myształ 2003, Foucault 1980; 81). It is clear to see how this concern has been carried over into investigations of collective memory by theorists who seek to identify how certain groups express their collective memories in opposition to the universalising commemorative discourse of those in power (Myształ 2003). This point is well made by Olick, who reminds us that “memory is never unitary, no matter how hard various powers strive to make it so. There are always subnarratives, transitional periods and contests over dominance” (Olick 2003; 8).

The ‘popular’ memory approach gained in popularity in the 1970s and 80s, especially through the work of the Popular Memory Group, based in Birmingham University’s Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (Misztal 2003). Members of the Popular Memory Group were concerned to ensure all of the ways a society constructs the past were taken into account when thinking about collective memory and history, and saw popular memory not simply as an “object of study”, but also as a “dimension of political practice”, that is to say, they considered the uncovering of previously unheard or silenced narratives as an emancipatory, and very political, process (Popular Memory Group 1998; 75). After all, there is a reason that certain types of knowledge are privileged in the public sphere whilst others are silenced. One of the most important contributions of the Popular Memory Group to the study of collective memory was their focus on the importance of oral history as a way of unearthing hidden narratives, and literally giving voice to silenced memories (Perks and Thomson 1998, Misztal 2003).

This conception of collective memory is reflected in the work of writers such as Hebbert, Blokland and Atkinson, who have advocated investigations of collective memory that begin at street level and through the experiences of ordinary people (Hebbert 2005, Blokland 2001, Atkinson 2007). In investigations of the built environment, this approach does not focus on the monumental architecture constructed by elite groups with the express aim of commemoration. Rather it examines the everyday spaces in which members of a community meet and participate in the re-telling (and therefore construction) of collective memory – in Atkinson’s words “the ordinary places where memory erupts” (Atkinson 2007; 521). This might include a cafe, a butcher’s shop, or a street corner (Blokland 2001), or a new housing development – and its relationship with what previously stood in that space (Atkinson 2007, Dawson 2005), investigating how these spaces resist the discourse that elite groups might seek to impose. This approach also takes into account the conflicts and tensions between groups seeking to inscribe memories in public spaces from the bottom-up, as

described, for example, in Bosco's analysis of the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* movement in Argentina (Bosco 2004).

3.3.3 Collective memory – a third way?

However, the most fruitful approach to understanding collective memory, and specifically its relationship with the built environment, is to bring the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches into the same investigatory framework, as has been advocated by a number of academics (see Schudson 1997, Olick 2003, Rolston 2010, Irwin-Zarecka 2007). This approach does not deny that elites attempt to construct and privilege certain narratives of collective memory, but either does it ignore the narratives being created and popularised at the street level. Instead it looks at the dynamic interactions between these narratives to try and shed light on the processes through which one narrative becomes widely accepted as the 'truth', and how this changes over time (Rolston 2010, Misztal 2003).

This focus seems particularly appropriate for investigations of the relationship between collective memory and the built environment, since this often provides the space in which 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' expressions of collective memory interact – for example, some writers have begun to detail the changing ways in which people interact with monuments and statues – exemplars of 'top-down' collective memory - showing how people's everyday use of monumental space can often be highly subversive, using the space to tell their own story (see Forest and Johnson 2002, Mitchell 2003). Of course this process works both ways, and Rolston's consideration of the future of murals in Northern Ireland shows how elite groups, now embarrassed by images of warfare seen to be out of the step with the new, peaceful, Northern Ireland, have tried to use the street level vernacular of mural painting to portray a more peaceful past and future (Rolston 2010).

Such a dynamic approach to understanding collective memory does not negate the experiences of ordinary people, and the way they use and experience the built environment from day to day. Neither does it deny the power of elite groups to manipulate and shape the built environment to reflect the narratives of collective memory they favour, or underplay their motivations to do so. It does, however, encourage researchers to think in wider terms than simply one paradigm, and to pay attention to the processes and negotiations that occur when differing narratives of collective memory, formed in different contexts, from different materials and by different groups, collide in the same space.

3.4 Power, identity and trauma in collective memory and the built environment

The second section of this literature review seeks to examine why collective memory is such a useful prism through which to examine the built environment. Understanding how, as Nora (1996; 1) put it, memory is “crystallised” in our surroundings helps us to understand how the built environment is affected by (and produces effects upon) a number of issues that will be central to this research. Specifically, investigations of the relationship between collective memory and urban space, using the dynamic approach outlined above, have often revealed particularly interesting insights into questions of power (who does and does not have power in a given society? What are the hidden ways through which power exercised in the public sphere?); identity (how is community identity constituted and perpetuated? Who is left out of this process?); and the impact of sudden, often traumatic, shifts in social and political relations, such as periods of warfare or revolution. Of

course, these issues rarely stand alone – they are interlinked in complex causal webs, and impact on each other in diverse ways.

3.4.1 Collective memory and power

Mitchell has likened the process of deconstruction of collective memory in the built environment to an “archaeology of power”, that uses the diverse traces inscribed in the physical landscape to uncover who held power in a community, by investigating who was able to decide what was memorialised in the built environment, and what was not (Mitchell 2003; 446). Just as the previous chapter demonstrated how buildings can form part of a discourse of power in a given place and time, commemorative places often play a key role in this discourse. This archaeology requires the researcher to take into account both the top-down and bottom-up perspectives, as it is concerned as much with unravelling officially constituted memorials and commemorative spaces as it is with showing their flip-side; which narratives have purposefully been devalued or forgotten in the public space.

For example, Till has noted the gendered nature of imagery prevalent in many war memorials, suggesting that in the past women were often left out of such representations, or reductively represented as passive victims of conflict, instead of the active participants they often were (Till 2008). This suggests that women’s memories of conflicts were not valued in public, monumental spaces. Similarly, Andrew Crampton’s examination of the Voortrekker monument in South Africa highlights the positioning of the monument in direct sight of the South African parliament in Pretoria as a significant statement about power relations in and of itself (Crampton 2001). Conversely, Mitchell has described how groups can subvert the meanings and use of memorial spaces that they do not feel meet their commemorative needs or accurately reflect their memories

and experiences, even when they may not have the power to erect their own competing memorials (Mitchell 2003). These examples show how subjecting the form and location of memorial spaces to careful scrutiny can uncover clues to the structure of power relations in a society at the time they were erected, and how these shift and change over time (Johnson 2002). This supports Connerton's assertion that dominant groups consolidate their dominance by refusing to allow other groups to assert their collective memory (Connerton 1989).

Such scrutiny takes into account not only whose memories are honoured in the built environment, but how they came to be so – who had the power to ensure their voice was heard. This can partly be explained by the cost of building and maintaining commemorative places, which can often only be borne by (or with the support of) powerful elites (Mitchell 2003). Referring to urban change in Berlin, Jordan develops this argument further, setting out four factors that she believes must combine if a space is to be transformed into a widely accepted memorial space; firstly, so called “memorial entrepreneurs”, or advocates for memorialisation in a space, must lobby on behalf of the space; then proposals made by such advocates “must resonate with a broader public”; and finally both land use, and land ownership, must favour its transformation into a specifically commemorative space (Jordan 2006; 11-13). These factors all rely on the kind of cultural, social and economic capital that is more accessible to powerful groups, who are more likely to be able to lobby (or be in a decision making position), have more tools at their disposal to influence public opinion, and are more likely to be able to influence issues of land ownership and use. This assessment seems to be borne out by Chang and Huang's investigation of waterfront redevelopment in Singapore, where what has been built – and crucially what has been demolished and ‘forgotten’ – reflects the values of elites. The ‘ordinary’ people that previously lived and worked there were powerless to stop their experiences from being written out of the redeveloped environment, except

from through highly selective state-controlled processes of commemoration through public art (Chang and Huang 2005).

3.4.2 Collective memory as marker of identity

Theorists of collective memory have long been concerned with the question of identity – it was Halbwachs who suggested that collective memories are used to continually construct and reinforce the identity of a given community by demonstrating both its uniqueness, and a sense of its unbroken continuity through time, from past, to present, to future (Halbwachs 1952). It is by being reshaped through what Connerton refers to as the “framework” of collective memory that individual memories are forged into the distinct and continuous historical narrative deemed so important to the legitimacy, and therefore longevity, of a group’s identity. (Connerton 1989; 37). There is considerable overlap between this conception of collective memory as a constituent part of group identity and the modernist views of national identity proposed by Smith, and by Anderson who famously proposed the model of the nation as an “imagined political community” (Smith 1999, Anderson 2006; 7). This explains why many collective memory theorists see the rise of the nation state and the increasing attention paid to the question of collective memory in the public sphere as closely linked, as the new national community sought to strengthen people’s perceptions of it as cohesive and legitimate (Misztal 2003, Till 2008).

Investigations of expressions of collective memory in the built environment can reveal hitherto unseen aspects of the construction of identities in public space. For example Deacon’s work unpacking the debates that took place in South Africa in the 1970s and 80s around the future of Robben Island aptly demonstrates this point. Here she shows the tension between the ‘old guard’ of the right wing government, who wished to turn the area into a nature reserve, and anti-apartheid

campaigners, who wanted to turn it into a museum, specifically geared for remembrance of the apartheid period and prisoners who had been kept there. Each group was attempting to use the physical space (Robben Island) as a resource in order to purposefully remember or forget the horrors of the apartheid era as it came to an end, and as South Africans began to negotiate a new political and cultural identity after years of white supremacist rule (Deacon 1998). Similarly, Mills' investigation of a neighbourhood of Istanbul – Kuzguncuk – investigates how the existence of a well known Armenian church alongside a mosque is presented as proof of the harmonious and tolerant history of this rapidly gentrifying neighbourhood. However, she argues that this selective interpretation of the built environment in Kuzguncuk obscures the traumatic and violent experiences of minority groups such as the Armenians (but also the Greek and Jewish communities) during the 'Turkification' of modern day Turkey. Indeed, Mills contends that by the time the mosque was built, the multi-ethnic nature of the neighbourhood that residents now 'remember' through the juxtaposition of church and mosque had already disappeared (Mills 2006). Numerous other writers have undertaken similar work to show how what is remembered and what is forgotten in the built environment can tell the researcher much about the struggle to define and negotiate community identities in public space and, crucially, how such identities shift and evolve through time (see Lim 2000, Jarman 2001, Schwartz and Zerubavel 1986).

3.4.3 Radical change and social trauma

According to Connerton, expressions of collective memory often signify an attempt to "mark out the boundaries of a radical beginning" through a ritualised use of the past (Connerton 1989; 13). This is because all new beginnings, however radical they may be, need to refer to the past regime and ways of being in order to be intelligible (Connerton 1989). This understanding supports suggestions that it is when a community feels threatened that it asserts its collective memory as a

bulwark against the perceived threat (Bell 2003, Rolston 2010, Megill 1998). This is particularly salient during periods of sudden, radical social and political change, and helps to explain why numerous theorists have chosen to investigate the links between collective memory and traumatic events in recent years (see Bell 2003, Edkins 2003, Neal 1998, Sztompka 2000).

The concept of trauma has increasingly been transplanted from its origins in psychology and medicine to become a figure of contemporary social discourse (Sztompka 2000). However, as Bell has pointed out, this process has not been without controversy, with some theorists protesting that psychological readings of trauma cannot be stretched to encompass the collective experience, even as others have argued that trauma at the collective level is essentially a social construct (see Bell 2003).

Attempts to define trauma at a social or cultural level have drawn on a number of key themes of temporality, perception and community cohesion. Sztompka has identified four qualities of “potentially traumatising social change”; timing (it is “sudden and rapid”), scope (it is far reaching), origin (it is perceived as being externally imposed) and mentality (it is perceived as “shocking” or “unexpected”) (Sztompka 2000; 452). Neal echoes this assessment, seeing collective trauma as “an assault on social life as it is known and understood” which provokes shock and chaos, and threatens a group’s core values (Neal 1998; 4-5). In turn, Edkins has described social trauma as an event which upsets and distorts the “linear time” of the state (or other dominant political community), and therefore threatens to disrupt its carefully constructed narrative of unbroken political and social legitimacy (Edkins 2003). So, drawing on all of these conceptions, social or collective trauma can be defined as an event (or events) that radically disturb that which a community has come to perceive as normal.

This is not necessarily a wholly negative experience – trauma can be viewed as a feature of social change (Sztompka 2000), a brief “window for re-inscribing new understandings of the world” (Bell 2003; 10). That is to say, the shocking effect of a traumatic event on a community prompts a re-ordering of not only social relations but also social memory, as old orthodoxies are questioned and collective memory is rewritten in order to make sense of trauma by selectively incorporating certain of its elements – what Salvatici, Losi and Passerini have called ‘taming chaos’ (Salvatici et al. 2001). Indeed, the process of absorbing a traumatic event into a community’s narrative of collective memory can itself bolster group cohesion, as members of a community negotiate appropriate ways of retelling and recalling the event (Neal 1998, Bell 2003). Intriguingly there are parallels between this notion and the idea of a brief window of opportunity to physically ‘build back better’ in the post-crisis moment explored in the previous chapter.

Of course, in this process many of the same tensions described in the first half of this chapter will emerge, as a new narrative is developed and inscribed in the public space through a process of negotiation between ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ impulses, where some aspects of collective memory are privileged and others forgotten. In this vein, Gluck’s examination of Japanese memories of the ‘Postwar’ period is illuminating, as it shows how the national trauma of defeat the Second World War gave rise to five separate narratives of collective memory, supported by different elements of Japanese society, all competing to reframe Japanese national identity in the Postwar. The extent to which these narratives negated or incorporated the memory of the war itself differed from narrative to narrative, as did their success in positioning themselves as the dominant, convincing story of a people (Gluck 2003).

In this case there was at least widespread recognition of the traumatic nature of the event which prompted the memory “repair work” (Neal 1998; 5) carried out in the Postwar (Gluck 2003).

However, this is not always the case, and the very question of what is allowed to be publicly acknowledged and commemorated as ‘traumatic’ is subject to the same questions of power and resistance explored earlier in this chapter. As Edkins remarks, “the way in which we acknowledge and describe what we call trauma can be very much influenced by dominant views, that is, by the state” (Edkins 2003; 11). Dawson’s exploration of the politics of Bloody Sunday in Northern Ireland demonstrates how the dominant political power – the British state – attempted to deny the traumatic nature of the experience of civil rights protesters on Bloody Sunday. In addition to the official narrative set out by the Widgery Tribunal, described by Dawson as a whitewash which actually served to intensify the feelings of trauma in affected communities, the very space in which the event occurred was changed almost beyond recognition by road-building and redevelopment programmes, effectively writing the trauma out of public space (Dawson 2005).

So, traumatic events provoke a reframing of collective memory in affected groups, as communities seek to make sense of events, and weave them into familiar and constructive narratives of identity. Moreover, the acknowledgement or denial of an event as ‘traumatic’ in narratives of collective memory– and its subsequent inscription as such in the built environment – once again sheds light on the way that collective memory, and by extension identity, comes to be framed in public space.

3.5 Conclusion

Reviewing the breadth of literature regarding collective memory, with special attention to its relationship with the built environment, has amply demonstrated the challenges and opportunities inherent in considerations of collective memory as a concept. The greatest challenge is to move beyond overly reductive approaches, that either view collective memory as a monolithic discourse imposed and manipulated by elite groups in the service of their own interests; or that claim that only

‘counter’ or ‘popular’ memories which emerge from the street level can have any sort of claim to authenticity, as explored in section three of this chapter.

Whilst these approaches, characterised here as ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’, undoubtedly have considerable power when brought to bear as explanatory frameworks in the built environment, the real opportunity lies in bringing these two apparently opposing conceptions together in the same horizon of investigation. By interrogating the way in which ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ narratives of collective memory collide and interact in the built environment, the researcher can begin to unpack the ways in which narratives of memory (and their corollary, narratives of forgetting) are actively negotiated, framed and recorded in urban space. As explored in section four, this process is affected by, and produces significant effects on, the power relations, identity politics and experiences of radical change and trauma of any community engaged in the ongoing process of building and expressing its narrative of collective memory.

One important feature of collective memory explored above is its relationship with the built environment, which has a particular role to play in mediating and expressing collective memory by presenting it as a concrete and timeless fact (Halbwachs 1992, Connerton 1989). For this reason it seems apt for researchers to pay particular attention to the experience of conflict in the urban environment, which is often devastating. This is not just because of the impact of war and violent conflict on the inhabitants of cities and towns, but because it could be interpreted as an attack on the very fabric of a community’s memory, and therefore, as we have seen in sections three and four above, its sense of identity (Bevan, 2007). If we understand conflict as a prime example of a socially traumatic event then, building on the ideas explored in section four, the experience of conflict on cities can be seen as doubly significant for urban societies.

Moreover, returning to the understanding of the built environment set out in the previous chapter - as a resource for power, a key element of the discourses of power that define the scope of available choices for the residents of that environment - means the interplay between collective memory and urban landscape becomes all the more important. The physical manifestations of collective memory - be they official monuments or informal touchstones - are part of the ongoing processes of negotiating and mediating power through the city. As discussed above, these manifestations record certain configurations of power and social and economic capital, they concretise identity, and they serve to process trauma into coherent, productive community narratives. Urban commemorative spaces produce effects on city residents then, although - as this investigation will go on to show - these effects can vary wildly between residents. Thinking in terms of collective memory, then, gives the researcher an insight into all these processes.

How authorities, and communities, manage the effects of conflict in the city is therefore a highly contentious process – as Nagel demonstrates, the reconstruction of post-war Beirut has highlighted urban memories of multiculturalism and openness in the new built environment – building public parks, squares and souks, and turned its back on memories of conflict by not according them room in the rebuilt public space (Nagel 2002). However, memories of war and its impacts on the fabric of urban life cannot be so easily written out of the city, and Beirut remains riven by segregation and (not always) latent conflict that is beyond the control of the Government (Nagel 2002.). This is one reason that the question of memory has been at the forefront of contemporary academic enquiry into urban conflict, with initiatives such as the ESRC *Conflict in Cities and the Contested State* programme putting notions of memorialisation and commemoration at the heart of their studies.

Although the previous two chapters have developed a valuable theoretical framework within which to situate this investigation, this will be of little use without a thorough understanding of the

particular context of Osh as a research site. The Soviet heritage of Kyrgyzstan (and Osh in particular), its specific identity as a city of southern Kyrgyzstan, and its troubled and violent recent history all exert their own powerful influences on the lives of residents and power brokers living there today. Any attempt to understand current urban trends in Osh without situating them in this wider historical arc would be therefore be partial at best, and doomed to fail at worst. The following chapter will therefore attempt to sketch out some of the most powerful vectors of influence acting on urban life in Osh today in order to shed further light on the reconstruction of the city since the Events of 2010.

Chapter 4: Osh - A City at the Crossroads

4. 1. Introduction

Having explored the main theoretical concepts - collective memory, post-crisis reconstruction, power and the city - that underpin this research in the previous two chapters, we turn now to the site of this research project, Osh. Whilst this investigation strongly disagrees with those who criticise a case study approach as being overly specific or producing incomparable data (as will be seen in Chapter 5), it is unquestionably true that the particular historical, cultural and economic trajectory of Osh must be brought into the field of inquiry of any rigorous research project based there. Any attempt to understand memory and reconstruction and Osh would fail without understanding the processes that have shaped the city, and its residents. This chapter, then, seeks to provide a broad overview of Osh, and identifies some important forces which continue to produce effects in the contemporary city.

As discussed in Chapter One, Kyrgyzstan has been subject to two instances of serious internal conflict in the past quarter of the century, both of which occurred in the country's south, primarily in Osh *Oblast'*, but also in Jalalabad *Oblast'*.³ The most recent, and most serious, outbreak of violence has left lasting scars on both the physical cityscape of Osh city, and on the affective cityscape of its inhabitants, and is the subject of this research. This chapter aims to explore the context in which this violence occurred, and continues to produce effects. It will begin by setting out the historical background of Kyrgyzstan, and of Osh city in particular. It will then focus on three of the most common narrative tropes used to speak about Osh, which have been reproduced in great

³ An *Oblast'* is an administrative division of territory, roughly equivalent to a region.

numbers of news articles, non-governmental reports and academic papers in recent years, and unpacking them in order to understand their history, their links with the violence in Osh and their impact on the people who call the city home.

The first narrative of Osh, and one which likely frames the other two, is as a post-Soviet city. No report into the 2010 violence in Osh has been able to tell the story without first situating it in the ruins of the Soviet Union.⁴ Similarly, scholarly papers seeking to explore issues such as ethnicity, security, boundary disputes, language and much more all begin by first restating Kyrgyzstan's position as a post-Soviet space (Fumagalli 2007a, Tishkov 1995, Menon 1995, Korth 2005). The centrality of this narrative will be dealt with in the present chapter in two ways. Primarily, section 3.1 will specifically explore the urban legacy of the Soviet era through a relatively narrow lense. It will ask how Osh was governed and developed as an urban place during the Soviet era, how this has changed in post-Soviet times, and what effects this has produced on the city and its inhabitants. But sections 3.2 and 3.3 of this chapter, which explore two other commonly used narratives for Osh, will also make reference to the experience of Osh as a post-Soviet place. Such was the all-encompassing nature of the Soviet project that it would be unrealistic to try and divide its effects into neat sections without making allowance for overspill between them.

The second trope that has become almost shorthand for Osh, is that of an ethnically divided city. A brief survey of news reporting regarding Osh reveals a near unanimous view of the city as divided along ethnic lines, with Uzbeks on one side, and Kyrgyz on the other, inspiring headlines such as "Scars remain in Osh after ethnic violence" (BBC 17/11/11), "Signs of official bias and abuse

⁴ See, for example, investigations into the 2010 violence in Osh and its aftermath by the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission (KIC 2011), Human Rights Watch (Human Rights Watch 2011) and International Crisis Group (International Crisis Group 2012), or the Open Society Foundation's comprehensive 2011 paper on peace promotion in Kyrgyzstan (Melvin/Open Society Foundations 2011).

deepen Kyrgyzstan's ethnic rifts" (New York Times 05/11/11), "Osh Mayor pushes ahead with plan to rehouse Uzbeks" (Telegraph 14/08/11). Similarly, every major report into the Osh events by an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) or inquiry commission describes the violence as inter-ethnic in nature (Freedom House et al 2012, Human Rights Watch 2011, International Crisis Group 2010, Amnesty International 2010, Melvin/Open Society Foundations 2011). How the city of Osh, and indeed southern Kyrgyzstan more widely, came to be viewed so consistently along ethnic lines, and how this affects prospects for peace there, is explored more thoroughly in section 3.2.

Finally, Osh also seems to have a third identity that analysts and journalists alike have commonly used to write about the city – that of Osh as a city of Southern Kyrgyzstan (and by extension, a city of the Ferghana Valley so often identified as 'troubled' in international literature (Megoran 2007)). Once again, none of the significant journalistic, scholarly or NGO reports mentioned above are able to engage with Osh as a city without situating it as a specifically *southern* city. Whilst this may at first seem like a matter of simple geographical location and context setting, when seen in the light of domestic Kyrgyzstani politics with its long history of north-south tension, it assumes more importance, as will be demonstrated in section 3.3 of this chapter. Before moving on to investigate these narrative tropes in greater detail though, it will be useful to spend some time setting out a little of the history of Kyrgyzstan, and of Osh in particular.

4.2 History

4.2.1 Kyrgyzstan – a brief historical overview

One of the five republics to make up Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan may be small, with a population of around 5.5 million (CIA World Factbook 2012), yet it occupies what has proved to be a strategically

important location, from the time of the silk route to the present day, with key geopolitical concerns being played out in neighbouring Iran and Afghanistan (Roy 2009). According to the 2009 census Kyrgyzstan has a diverse population, with the majority 70.9% ethnic Kyrgyz population existing alongside significant ethnic Uzbek (14.3%) and Russian (7.8%) minorities, as well as other smaller minority groups such as the Dungan, Turks, Uighurs and Tajiks (National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2009). There are two officially recognised languages in the country, with Kyrgyz being accorded a higher status as the state language, and Russian identified as an official language. Uzbek, the language of the country's second largest ethnic group, has not been recognised as an official language, much to the displeasure of many members of the Uzbek community, mainly located in the country's south (Bond and Koch 2010). Kyrgyzstan remains a relatively poor country, with almost 33.7% of the population living below the poverty line, and almost half the population engaged in agriculture (CIA World Factbook 2012). Crucially, it currently lacks the ability to exploit significant natural resources, unlike some of its Central Asian neighbours (Dannreuther 1994), although experts believe at least 10% of the country's GDP comes from a single, much disputed, gold mine Kumtor (Trilling 2014). In recent years Kyrgyzstan once again came to geopolitical prominence in terms of its strategic importance in the US led 'war on terror'. Following September 11th the US used the Manas airbase in northern Kyrgyzstan as a base for its operations in Afghanistan, bringing it into competition with Russia, who still views the country as falling firmly within its sphere of influence and maintains its own airbase (named 'Kant') not far away (Roy 2009). After several years of speculation and negotiation the Manas airbase closed in 2014, and all US troops were withdrawn from the country.

Kyrgyzstan has a rich legacy of historical influences, being situated at the crossroads of powerful empires both ancient and modern, a legacy which has led some to comment that cultural syncretism is the very "hallmark" of the diverse Central Asian region of which Kyrgyzstan is an integral part

(Akiner 1994; 6). The region was conquered first by Persian then, from the 6th to 16th centuries, by Turkic invaders, both of whom have left indelible traces on the linguistic and religious heritage of Kyrgyzstan and its neighbours (Roy 2009, Ferdinand 1994). Today's nation states of Central Asia are a more modern phenomenon. By the end of the 18th century political life centred around three structures that had formed in the region - the Bhukara Emirate (mainly in modern Uzbekistan), the Khiva Khanate (situated south of the Aral Sea) and the Kokand Khanate (made up of parts of modern day Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) (Akiner 1994). From the early 19th century another influence was thrown into the mix, as Tsarist Russia extended its influence southwards, finally taking control of the last of the Khanates, Kokand, in 1876 (Akiner 1994). Although Russian control did bring about some modernisation amongst the urban elites of Central Asia, the pace of change in the region was slow until World War One (Akiner 1994).

4.2.2 Soviet Kirghizia

It was the advent of the Soviet Union in 1922 which brought Kyrgyzstan into being as a nation state, albeit one which was subsumed by this larger political structure. In 1924 Stalin initiated the process of national delimitation in Central Asia, leading to Kyrgyzstan's constitution first as an Autonomous Province, then as an Autonomous Republic, and finally as a Union Republic in 1936 (Akiner 1994). The process of national delimitation remains of crucial importance to political life in Central Asia today (Haugen 2003), and the continued significance of this process will be explored further in section three of this chapter. In short, this period saw the creation of territorial divisions associated with a particular dominant ethnic and linguistic group, leading to the establishment of five the ethno-nationally constituted republics that now make up Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan (Roy 2009). The borders of Kyrgyzstan finalised in 1924 remain largely unchanged to the present day (Akiner 1994). Thus, the experience

and legacy of the Soviet era is central to forming any understanding of life in contemporary Kyrgyzstan, from ethnicity, to urban planning to regional identity, as shall be demonstrated later in this chapter.

Clearly the legacy of the Soviet era looms large over Kyrgyzstan; many elements of the contemporary Kyrgyzstani experience can be traced to the Soviet epoch. Kyrgyzstan's economy has been directly shaped by its experiences in the Soviet era, for example. Under the Soviet Union the Kyrgyzstani economy followed a classic colonial model of centre and periphery, with the Central Asian periphery providing raw materials to the industrial, Russian centre (Akiner 1994). Kyrgyzstan therefore became fully integrated into the Soviet economic system of inter-republic trade, a fact which caused considerable trouble when the sudden demise of the Soviet Union left it exposed to the vagaries of a global marketplace for which it was entirely unprepared (Roy 2009). This situation was exacerbated by the sudden loss of Soviet subsidies, which had accounted for up to a quarter of Kyrgyzstan's income up in the Soviet era, making it economically ill prepared for independent statehood, even by the standards of its Central Asian neighbours (Engvall 2007).

The cultural impact of the Soviet period was also significant in Kyrgyzstan: as was common across Central Asia literacy rates soared, and was accompanied by the rise of Russian as the Soviet *lingua franca* (Hiro 2011), underpinned by the introduction of Cyrillic in place of Arabic or Latin script in 1940, as part of a universal education system which was "saturated with ideology" (Akiner 1994; 12). Islam was actively discouraged, with mosques and madrassas closed down or repurposed (Liu 2012). Women were educated and encouraged to leave the confines of the home sphere, cast off their veils, join the workforce and participate in political life (Liu 2012, Akiner 1998). Traditional art forms were replaced with Western/Russian alternatives such as opera or ballet, and even people's dress and body language became Russified (Akiner 1998). This was all part of what Hirsch has

termed the Soviet Union's mission as a "modernising empire" concerned with inculcating in its subjects a modern Soviet identity (Hirsch 2005). Crucially, in the context of this enquiry, urban spaces underwent a similar process of change during the Soviet era, as Akiner (1998) explained:

"In the cities, the change in orientation was emphasised by the new, international style architecture, with its use of gleaming, modern building materials, open public spaces and multiple windows – a self conscious statement of dissociation from the private, intimate scale of traditional urban planning, characterised by narrow, winding streets, lined with blind, mud-brick walls"

This process of Sovietisation was also facilitated by the high levels of population exchange under the Soviet Union. Large numbers of ethnic Russians moved to Kyrgyzstan during the Soviet period, either to work, or as a result of the perils of hunger, war and Stalinist purges occurring in the west of the Union. Although the phenomenon of Russian migration to Central Asia had existed prior to the Soviet Union, this gained momentum following this time (Kulchik et al 1996). Other groups, like Ukrainians, Germans, Chechens and Koreans, were forcibly resettled in the region during the Second World War, and came to rely on Russian as the common language of survival in their new surroundings (Kulchik et al 1996). All of these distinct elements of the Soviet experience have left indelible traces on the landscape and experience of Kyrgyzstan today. As section three of this chapter will demonstrate, it should come as no surprise that one of the most important elements of the Soviet legacy in Kyrgyzstan, and in Central Asia more widely, has been the struggle to create a viable, and stable, national identity within the territorial boundaries carved out during the Soviet era. Having only existed as a modern nation-state since independence in 1991, Kyrgyzstan's post-Soviet experience has, at least in part, been defined by the search for nationhood in the shadow of the hegemonic Soviet past. The country is not alone in this - across the Central Asian region the

immediate post-perestroika era was defined by a renewed focus on local ethnic and cultural identities, often termed as the “national revival” (Khan 2009 and 2010).

What this means for Osh in particular - its identity as a post-Soviet city, the impact of soviet nationalities and ethnicities policy, and the country’s persistent clan politics - will be explored in greater detail in section three. However, in light of the significance of the Soviet era in shaping Kyrgyzstan as we see it today, it is apt to spend a little time first examining the debates surrounding the political trajectory of post-Soviet countries.

4.2.3 Post-Soviet Transitions

After the collapse of the Soviet Union attention was soon turned to understanding and qualifying the transitional period that former Soviet countries were entering into. As one journalist noted in what was then Czechoslovakia 1991 “A friend of mine has a thick file labelled simply “TD”. It contains invitations to conferences on the subject ‘Transition to Democracy’ in Eastern Europe. “TC” might be a more accurate label. What one can certainly observe in the whole of Eastern Europe, and in much of the Soviet Union, is the Transition from Communism.” (Garton Ash 2000; 36). This vignette neatly demonstrates the neo-liberal consensus that swiftly emerged out of the ashes of Communism; that post-Soviet countries should be assisted in making the transition – presented as entirely natural – from a communist to a liberal democratic system, characterised by a free market economy and democratic polity (Pickles and Smith 1998, Carothers 2002). This belief was famously summed up by Francis Fukuyama’s premature declaration of the “end of history” (Fukuyama 1992).

However, the reality of the diverse experiences of post-Soviet countries (including Russia) in the decades since the end of the Soviet Union have undermined this tidy narrative, and compelled theorists to look again at what Carothers has criticised as the “democratic teleology” that characterised earlier responses to the challenge of theorising post-Soviet transition (Carothers 2002; 7). For example, whereas the Baltic states appear to be more or less firmly on the path of liberal democracy, as symbolised by their entry into the European Union in 2004, Belarus has earned the dubious distinction of being Europe’s ‘last dictatorship’ (Taylor 2011), and the current crisis in Ukraine shows just how contentious this path can be. Furthermore, efforts to smoothly transform nations into fully functioning liberal market democracies have not always paid the dividends which were promised or expected. Indeed, many post-communist societies, including Kyrgyzstan, have witnessed a significant increase in poverty and inequality, which has undermined the strengthening and deepening of the liberal democratic project in these countries (Pickles and Smith 1998).

In this way, then, the paradigm of post-Soviet transition that focussed on the seemingly inevitable progression of former communist countries into liberal democracies can be seen to be just as arbitrary and inflexible a framework to impose on the post-Soviet experience of Kyrgyzstan, as the five stage Marxist-Leninist perspective used to explain the country’s history and development in the Soviet era (Tchoroev 2002). A more fruitful approach would be to acknowledge the “path dependency” of post-Soviet countries (Pickles and Smith 1998; 14). That is to say, to step outside a reductive assumption that transition is “a one-way process of change from one hegemonic system to another” and instead consider the particularities of each case of transition, their impacts on each country’s current position (Pickles and Smith 1998; 2).

Of course, the post-Soviet experiences of the Central Asian states are good examples of the benefits of this approach. Although subject to highly similar forces under the Soviet Union, they have taken

different paths in the two decades of independence that have followed it, with Tajikistan falling prey to a long and bitter civil war from which it is still recovering, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan not deviating far from the model of command economy and strongman leader they inherited from the Soviet period, and Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan experimenting with different levels of economic and political liberalisation (Gleason 1997). Of all five states, Kyrgyzstan moved the quickest to embrace the economic and political ideals of the West, adopting a constitution that led it to be labelled (somewhat hastily) “Central Asia’s island of democracy” (Engvall 2007; 36), and enthusiastically implementing International Monetary Fund-inspired economic liberalisation policies (Gleason 1997; Akiner 1998). As President Akayev himself put it “I became convinced that the only way out of the blind alley the socialist economy found itself was the way of radical reform and liberalisation of the economy on the basis of market reforms” (Akayev 2001; xi). However, the Kyrgyzstani approach has not been an unqualified success – the economy continues to struggle even as the country’s resource-rich neighbours power ahead. Moreover, the country’s political life has been marked by a series of struggles to maintain democratic gains against creeping authoritarianism and corruption (see, for example, the revolutions in 2005 and 2010). It is unsurprising, then, that some analysts see increasing convergence in the stories of the post-Soviet Central Asian states, rather than the divergence that first seemed set to take root (Gleason 1997).

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and subsequent disintegration of the Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan, like its Central Asian neighbours, found itself somewhat unexpectedly independent in August 1991 (Roy 2009). Politically, the post-Soviet period has been something of a mixed bag in Kyrgyzstan. It was widely seen as the most democratic of the Central Asian republics in the years immediately following independence, thanks to its relatively liberal constitution (Jones Luong 2002). First President Askar Akayev, a physicist from the northern Chuy province who rose to power in the dying days of the Soviet Union, set about transforming Kyrgyzstan into a market economy, and

introduced a relatively liberal constitution (Gleason 1997). However, some fourteen years after independence Akayev still held the reigns of power, and the purse strings, in what was widely perceived to be an increasingly corrupt regime (Melvin 2011, Radnitz 2006). This led to the so-called ‘Tulip Revolution’ of 2005, which toppled Akayev and installed a new President, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, a former Prime Minister who hailed from the country’s southern Jalalabad province (Melvin Op Cit, KIC 2011, BBC 29/04/10). By April 2010 concerns had once again become apparent about the rampant corruption and monopolisation of power in the hands of President Bakiyev. A fresh round of demonstrations beginning in the Spring of 2010 ousted Bakiyev, and replaced him with interim President Roza Otunbayeva (Melvin Op Cit, KIC 2011). Otunbayeva had served in both Akayev and Bakiyev led governments in her long political career, and agreed not to run in the 2011 elections in an attempt to usher in the country’s first peaceful transition of power since the fall of the Soviet Union (Telegraph 08/04/10). In 2011, these elections brought President Almazbek Atambayev to power - another Chuy native and former Minister and a colleague of Otunbayeva’s in the Social Democratic Party. As we shall see in section 3 of this chapter, these alternations in power are significant, since they are intricately linked to the patterns of clan politics and patronage ingrained in Kyrgyzstani politics, as well as the country’s problematic north-south divide.

4.2.4 *The City of Osh*

The city of Osh certainly presents a striking picture to the first time visitor, with the distinctive silhouette of Sulaiman mountain rising in the city centre, the dense neighbourhoods of *mahalla* housing surrounding it, and the slash of green running through the heart of the city signalling the

path of the Ak-Bura river and the parks that run along it.⁵ Osh is frequently presented as one of Kyrgyzstan's most historical cities, and an important stop on the ancient silk road – a legacy underlined by the Government's decision to celebrate the city's 3000th anniversary in 2000 (Liu 2012). Situated in the south of the country, in the fertile and ethnically diverse Ferghana valley, the city grew rapidly during the twentieth century, from a population of 33,315 when it became a provincial centre in 1939, to 258,000 in 2009 (Liu 2012, National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2009). Osh also holds particular legal position along with Bishkek as a city with *Oblast'* status and the Southern Capital of Kyrgyzstan. As will be discussed in more detail later, the city has long been distinguished by its strong Uzbek identity. Situated only a few kilometres from the border with Uzbekistan, Osh's Uzbek legacy has left its mark on almost every aspect of the city, from the ethnic make up of its population (which the 2009 census put at 44% Uzbek), to the aesthetics of many central neighbourhoods, to the many cafes and restaurants selling *plov* (a rice dish) and *samsy* (savoury pastries) - foods that are most commonly identified as Uzbek.

Well before the advent of the Soviet period Osh had been subject to successive waves of development and urbanisation, building its identity first as an important silk road trading post home to a significant bazaar (Zakharova 1997), then as a seat of learning and Islamic culture (Amanbaeva and Abdullaev 2000; Zakharova 1997). The expansion of imperial Russia into Central Asia was to write another chapter in the development of the city, with the construction of army barracks and the Russified new town, which crucially expanded the city to take in the right bank of the Ak-Bura river as well as developing neighbourhoods to the south (Zakharova 1997). However, it was under the

⁵ The *mahalla* is a key feature of the urban landscape of Osh. As we shall see in Chapter 9 a *mahalla* is a particular form of largely Uzbek urban neighbourhood, with its roots in the peasant community which traditionally regulated daily life (Kulchik et al, 1996), normally characterised by narrow streets and low-rise houses organised inwards around spacious, secluded, courtyards (or *hovli*) (Liu, 2012).

Soviet Union that the city was to encounter its most far reaching and fast paced development. During the process of national delimitation the status of Osh was a subject of much debate, however it was eventually decided that the city be attached to what was then Kirghizia, since it was in need of an industrial centre in order to ensure the Soviet project of progress through industrialisation could be met (Reeves 2011).

The Soviet era saw the city become more industrialised, with an important textile factory being established in the city centre, along with silk, turbine, vodka and other factories. Simultaneously, the city's swelling population led to the construction of Soviet style apartment blocks in the city centre (in place of some existing low level Uzbek *mahalla* neighbourhoods), and the expansion of the city limits towards the mountains to its south, and the Uzbek border to its north (Liu 2012). Today, the city centre is defined by its huge bazaar, which stretches along the river just north of the city centre and has replaced the Soviet era factories as the economic heart of Osh in the post-Soviet period.⁶ All in all, the diverse forces acting on the development of the city during the period of its rapid growth in the 20th and early 21st centuries have had something of a patchwork effect. Seen from the convenient vantage point of Sulaiman mountain, the mixture of Soviet era tower blocks, traditional *mahalla* neighbourhoods and recent *novostroiki* buildings, alongside green spaces explained by the *kholkoz* farms that used to exist there, or the moratorium on building on land affected by the UNESCO world heritage site around Sulaiman mountain, has a striking effect. Indeed, one respondent remarked that it made the city look more "gerrymandered" than it really is (IV09).

⁶ Unfortunately another increasingly important factor in the economic life of the city is the drugs trade, and linked organised crime, as the city (and surrounding region) finds itself a key staging post for drugs being smuggled out of Afghanistan sometimes called the 'Osh knot' (UNODC 2012)

Osh has been buffeted by successive logics of development, from the silk road trade, to Russian invasion, the control economy of the Soviet era and the free market of the independence period. Coupled with the natural constraints presented by its very geography, with the Uzbek border to the north, and the rocky hills rising to the south east and the constant threat of seismic activity, the cityscape has a number of stories to tell. The next section of this chapter will explore three of the most pervasive narratives used to speak about Osh - as a post-Soviet city, an ethnically divided city and a southern city. These frames of reference are frequently used to explain the city everywhere from academic articles to *chaikhana* (tea house) discussions between friends. It is therefore imperative that they are explored here in order to contextualise the analysis that will come later.

4.3 Key narratives for framing Osh

4.3.1 Osh: a post-Soviet City

The first lens commonly used to describe Osh is that of a post-Soviet city. This is unsurprising - as demonstrated in the preceding section, the Soviet project had a massive impact on the development of Kyrgyzstan as a country within the USSR. However, the urban legacy of the Soviet Union is also quite specific, and merits further investigation here. In Soviet thinking the city occupied a central role as a tool of the overall Soviet project; one element of the all-encompassing political, economic and spatial change that Soviet leaders hoped would, in time, bring about a socialist state (Pallot and Shaw 1981). In short, “land development was a part of the ideological machine of social and economic regulation” (Golubchikov 2004; 231).

The city occupied a key strategic position in Soviet thought, since it presented a number of opportunities to achieve two crucial goals; combatting inequality and increasing productivity. To

Soviet leaders, the concentration of the capitalist elites and private property in towns and cities needed to be combated in order to reduce inequality between urban and rural areas (Pallot and Shaw 1981). Moreover, a high concentration of the population in urban areas would also give all citizens equality of access to resources through spatial rearrangement of the city (Ibid). Similarly, high density urban settlements allow citizens to participate more easily in industrial production to the best of their abilities. As Pallot and Shaw put it “The Soviet view, therefore, is that communism means the equal ability of all to enjoy access to society’s resources according to their needs, [and] to participate in social production according to their various abilities (...). Spatial planning should therefore be adapted to these goals, for the fact of location should not be allowed to interfere with any of these rights” (Pallot and Shaw 1981; 11). The city was therefore a vital front in the battle to achieve Soviet modernity.

By putting the city in the service of these goals, the Soviet era therefore witnessed an explosion in urbanisation and industrialisation of urban spaces across the Union (Tsenkova 2006), the legacy of which can be clearly remarked in today’s post-Soviet towns and cities, including Osh, whose population rose almost five fold between 1904 and 1989 (Zakharova 1997). It will, therefore, be useful to examine in greater detail the what effects Soviet urban policy had on cities and how it achieved these effects. This will be relevant to the current situation in Osh since, as Stanilov reminds us, “The way in which urban space is used can also determine the level of social integration (or segregation) in a given region or nation” (Stanilov 2007; 5). Furthermore, the abolition (and subsequent reintroduction of the land market) has had a significant impact on the spatial patterns and experiences of urban dwellers in a city where space has long been at a premium (bounded as it is by the border with Uzbekistan to the north, and the rising valley walls to the south) (Liu 2012). Since Soviet cities were often subjected to particularly “heavy handed” efforts to manage their form

and spatial organisation as part of a specific ideology (Liu 2012; 4), then it is reasonable to surmise that this process continues to influence the life of the city today.

Various features of Soviet (and more widely, socialist) cities are commonly identified by scholars of the former Soviet Union. Firstly, they were compact, with dense housing areas and a clear “urban edge” (Hirt 2006; 465), although many were plagued by housing shortages throughout the life of the Soviet Union (Gentile and Sjoberg 2006). As mentioned above, economically they were dominated by manufacturing and heavy industries (such as the silk , cotton and turbine factories built in Osh), with little in the way of retail or diversity of service provision (Hirt 2006, Tsenkova 2006). Whilst aesthetically the Soviet cityscape has been denounced as a monotonous and “bland version of Modernism”, there was a commitment to creating large-scale civic spaces which “expressed the socialist commitment to the civic realm” (Hirt 2006; 465-6). Osh’s central square, with its large space used for rallies and celebrations overlooked on one side by a towering statue of Lenin, and the other by the hulking municipal building, is emblematic of this aesthetic quality.



Figure 5. *Lenin statue in the central square , during Victory Day celebrations 2013 (Source: Author's own)*

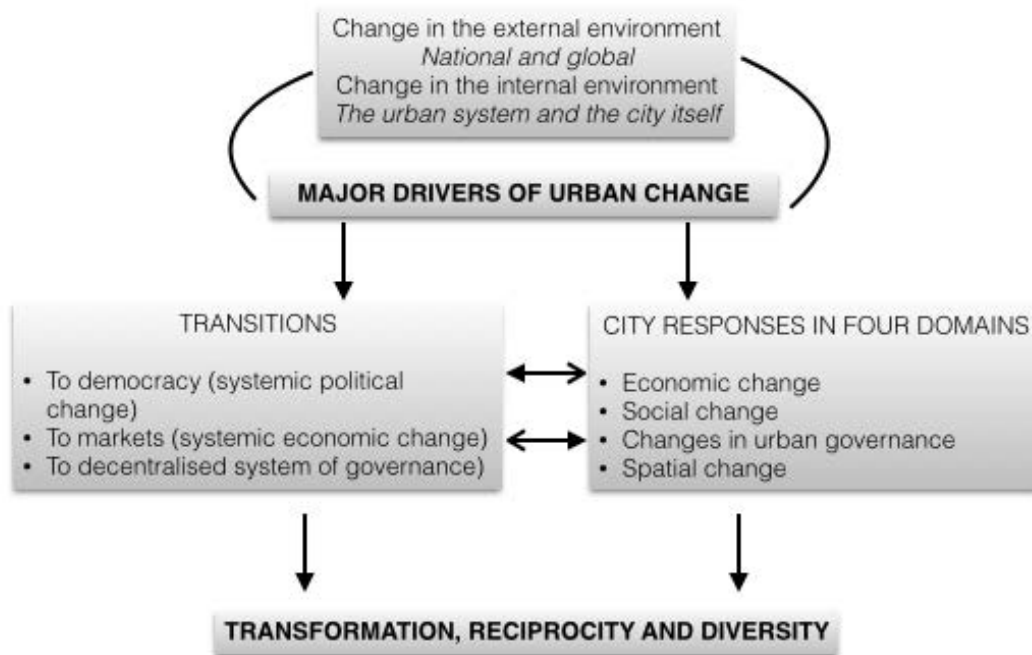
The Soviet city could be described, then, as a dense but highly industrialised space where urban form was dictated by the Soviet ideals of civic equality and effective production, rather than more individualistic notions such as service choice. Interestingly, Gentile and Sjoberg note that despite the Soviet aim of using the city as a means of decreasing inequality, the problem of ethnic segregation in fact persisted in cities throughout the Soviet Union, and this was certainly the case in Osh (Gentile and Sjoberg 2006).

When it came to planning, urban considerations were just one element of the larger system of economic planning in the Soviet Union – put simply, “urban planning was subservient to the

complex hierarchy of economic planning” (Golubchikov 2004; 231). This had a number of implications: firstly, it created a highly centralised system of planning, with planners at the periphery implementing centrally imposed decisions (Stanilov 2007, Tsenkova 2006). Secondly, since all land was owned by the state, there was no land market – in Osh, for example, citizens applied to the *Gorispolkom* (City Executive Committee) or *Domkom* (Housing Committee) for a home or land to build on, rather than purchasing a flat or plot themselves (Liu 2012). This also meant no planning legislation was required, giving planners a purely technical role, with very little legal expertise (Golubchikov 2004). Unsurprisingly, such a centralised system engendered very little competition, and did not allow for public participation in planning processes and decisions (Golubchikov 2004, Stanilov 2007).

When the Soviet Union began to crumble in 1989, this brought with it a seismic shift in the way cities were managed. By the time Kyrgyzstan became independent in 1991 a “paradigm shift” had occurred in former Soviet cities which would have consequences for their future development (Stanilov 2007; 5), and Osh was no exception to this. Tsenkova offers a useful model to describe forces acting on post-Socialist cities, and their effects:

Fig. 6: Transitional forces in post-Soviet cities (*Tsenkova 2006; 24*)



This model shows three transitions at work: the political shift from totalitarianism to democracy; the economic shift from a control to a market economy; and finally the “quiet revolution” of decentralisation (Tsenkova 2006; 23), a change which, as we shall see, is of considerable importance to urban planning. Of course, as noted earlier in this chapter, it is simplistic to view the experience of post-Soviet countries as a successful transition to democracy. Still, it is important to be aware of the impact of some degree of movement away from the Soviet form of totalitarian government on the post-Soviet urban experience. Certainly these transitions can be observed in the legal framework governing urban planning in Kyrgyzstan since the end of the Soviet Union. Amongst the numerous new laws and regulations promulgated in this period several stand out. The newly written Constitution soon enshrined the respect of private property rights in Kyrgyz law, whilst also setting up a decentralised system of governance through representative bodies at the local level (UNECE 2010). The Land Code of 1999 set up a framework for the transfer of land ownership and rights, and defines the institutions responsible for the transfer and administration of

land (UNECE 2010, Kaganova et al 2008). The Law on Town Planning and Architecture delegated authority for these activities to local authorities and the State Agency for Architecture and Construction, as well as clarifying the distinctions between different kinds of urban and rural settlements (UNECE 2010). These changes in the legal framework both drove and responded to the challenges of liberalisation, democratisation and decentralisation set out above.

However, Hirt also reminds us that post-Soviet (and other post-Socialist) cities have not solely been subject to the transition out of the Soviet era. They have also been buffeted by the diverse processes of globalisation, as have the capitalist cities of the world (Hirt 2006). Thus, Tsenkova's model of triple transition could be set inside Hirt's two-track model, which attributes change in post-Socialist cities such as Osh to both their transitional experiences *and* the forces of globalisation. Crucially, though, Stanilov asserts that whatever the differing national contexts and various speeds of change, the "principal direction" of spatial transformation in post-Socialist cities has been "remarkably similar" (Stanilov 2007; 6).

So, what kind of city has been forged by these forces of transition? Probably the most important change to the urban fabric of post-Soviet cities in general has been the introduction of a land and property market, and therefore the rise of privatisation, since its knock-on effects can be felt in every part of city life. This is why Stanilov has described "the main direction of urban spatial restructuring" as "a transfer of assets, resources and opportunities from the public to the private realm" (Stanilov 2007; 11). Privatisation through the introduction of a market economy can be linked to most of the features in the table below. For example, privatisation of land and buildings, and the private sector's key role in new construction has brought pluralism in architecture, where once the Soviet version of Modernism dominated (Hirt 2006). A summary of common changes in

post-socialist cities - many of which will become familiar in the empirical chapters of this thesis - can be found below:

Fig. 7: Post-socialist urban transformations in CEE cities (Stanilov 2007; 9)

Positive Characteristics	Negative Characteristics
URBAN PATTERNS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break-up of mono-centric model • Diversification of mono-functional areas • Revitalisation of some urban districts • Improvements in building standards 	URBAN PATTERNS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaotic development patterns • Suburban sprawl • Depopulation of city centres • Decline of socialist housing estates • Derelict industrial areas • Surge in illegal construction
URBAN IMPACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in individual standards and choices • Increase in home ownership rates • Diversification of market choices • Increase in shopping opportunities • Increase in personal mobility 	URBAN IMPACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline in communal living standards • Loss of open space • Decline in public service provision • Privatisation of public realm • Increased congestion, air and noise pollution • The costs of sprawl • Social stratification

As the table above demonstrates, the dizzying rise of the private sector in the IMF supported “market euphoria” of the 1990s (Golubchikov 2004) also led to a number of negative consequences for the city, including pollution, growing inequality and urban poverty (Tsenkova 2006). These negative consequences can, at least in part, be attributed to what Stanilov has termed “the retreat of planning” in the post-Soviet era (Stanilov 2007; 9). The tensions generated by this impending transition were all too clearly demonstrated in Osh, where in 1990 concerns regarding state allocation of land for housing for Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities sparked violence that would lead to the deaths of hundreds of people, and the armed intervention of Soviet troops (Liu 2012, Tishkov 1995).

Generally city planning in the former Soviet Union has been characterised as “laissez-faire” (Tsenkova 2006, Hirt 2006, Golubchikov 2004). In practice, this means a number of things.

Perhaps most significantly, the era of central planning had come to an end, with responsibility for town planning being transferred to local authorities (Tsenkova 2006). This is certainly the case in Osh - Chapter 6 of this thesis will show how the city's Mayor has assumed a central role in city planning. Generally speaking the balance of power in setting the agenda for urban development has shifted accordingly from large centrally devised projects, giving way to small to medium sized projects driven by the private sector, making the most of new land markets (Hirt 2006). It is important to note, however, that the distinction between the public and private sector has often been blurred in the post-Soviet context, with high ranking public officials intricately linked to the private enterprises tasked with delivering these projects (Chapter 6 will return to this theme through the figure of former Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov). This shift has brought both positive and negative consequences; on the one hand, it has encouraged greater public participation in the planning process, often via non-governmental organisations, although this is often not particularly far reaching (Stanilov 2007). On the other hand, the authority of planners – and by extension of planning laws and regulations – has been seriously diminished, which has led to a considerable rise in illegal and semi-legal construction projects and settlements (Stanilov 2007, Golubchikov 2004) such as the *novostroiki* that have sprung up around Osh and Bishkek. In all, the *laissez faire* nature of urban planning in the immediate post-Soviet context led to a system, and an urban environment, which was more diverse but also more fragmented, and lacking in strategic direction (Stanilov 2007). Kaganova, Akmatov and Undeland have highlighted one important consequence of this approach in southern Kyrgyzstan, demonstrating the damagingly high levels of potential revenue the cities of Osh and Jalalabad have lost through the inconsistent, incorrect and negligent application of planning regulations in the years since independence (Kaganova et al 2008).

In more recent years there has been a movement back towards the recognition that government oversight does have an important role to play in urban planning, especially with regards to curbing

the excesses of a market driven system (Golubchikov 2004, Stanilov 2007). The *laissez faire* system has not eliminated all the problems of the Soviet city, and has in fact introduced some new concerns. Moreover, weak governance and a convoluted and often confusing planning system has often fostered a culture of corruption and cronyism in post-Soviet urban planning that has increasingly frustrated urban citizens (Ibid). For this reason, many cities are now implementing the traditional model of General Plans, and others have introduced strategic plans, with the aim of ensuring that future urban development is carried out according to an overarching city strategy (Stanilov 2007).

It is in this context that urban planning in Osh city currently takes place. The city has a number of frameworks in place to enable urban planning in addition to those mentioned earlier in this chapter. These include land zoning regulations instituted in 2003 (UNECE 2010) and a Strategic Land Management Programme (Kaganova 2008), whilst a city master plan is reputedly under development, as shall be discussed at some length later in this thesis (UNECE 2010). Principles have been enshrined in law relating to state repossession of urban land in order to facilitate large scale city development projects (USAID 2011), and offices of the State Registration Service act as a hub for registration, mapping and valuation of land (USAID 2011). But despite the existence of these new tools and legal structures, planning in Osh remains plagued by the challenges described above - a lack of sufficient funds and implementing capacity, widespread corruption and rent seeking activities, and a mistrust of authorities. In the case of Osh, these problems are compounded by the fact the city now finds itself in the aftermath of serious conflict; as demonstrated in the previous chapter, planning in a post-crisis environment clearly entails its own set of challenges. What is more, the question of ethnic identity also plays an important role in urban life in Osh, as shall be explored in greater detail in the following section.

4.3.2 *Osh: An ethnically divided city*

The most prevalent view of Osh, and of the 2010 violence, is rooted in the notion of the city as ethnically divided, on a faultline between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek citizens of Kyrgyzstan. As such, accounts of the violence situate the city close to the border with Uzbekistan, on the edge of the diverse and apparently fragile mix of ethnicities that make up the Ferghana Valley. Articles and reports underline the fact that Osh and Jalalabad Oblasts are home to a much higher proportion of ethnic Uzbeks than the northern regions, and point to the seemingly age old and insurmountable differences between the nomadic , mountain dwelling Kyrgyz and their sedentary Uzbek counterparts in the valleys.⁷ Ethnicity undoubtedly impacts life in Osh - people use it to explain statements about themselves and their and lifestyle (“Uzbek people are hardworking”, “we Kyrgyz are mountain people” or “you don’t have to pay [the police] if you’re Kyrgyz, but if you’re Uzbek you do” are all statements from interviews carried out in this research, for example). The city itself still bears the marks of ethnic division - graffiti denoting the ethnicity of a buildings inhabitants is still visible, along with ethno-nationalist slogans daubed on numerous city centre walls. Schools are classified as Kyrgyz language, Uzbek language or Russian language. As Chapter 9 will show in great detail, neighbourhoods and housing types are strongly associated with ethnic groups. Official identity documents record the holder’s ethnicity alongside their nationality. However, it is important not to fall into the trap of seeing ethnicity as the only causal factor when thinking about Osh. Whilst ethnicity did undoubtedly play an important role in the conflict in Osh (the patterns of violence in 2010 support this) and continues to inform life in the city today, it would be reductive to view the conflict, and by extension the city, in solely ethnic terms. Some have pointed out that in fact Uzbeks and Kyrgyz are very similar when it comes to many of the markers traditionally used to try and

⁷ For a representative example of such reports see International Crisis Group 2012, Amnesty International 2010, BBC 2011, Telegraph 2010, Shishkin 2014.

denote ethnicity, such as religion and language (Ismailbekova 2013). Moreover, focussing on ethnic difference and conflict between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Osh obfuscates both the long periods of peaceful coexistence between these two groups (Megoran 2013), and the existence and experiences of other ethnic groups present in Kyrgyzstan, such as Russians, Dungans and Meshketian Turks (Dukenbaev and Hansen 2003). So, there is a balance to be struck when investigating the city, one that acknowledges the central role of ethnicity in Osh, but not to the detriment of other important factors.

How, then, has ethnicity come to be seen as such an important prism for understanding Osh, and what can this reveal about life in the city today? Once again the impact of the Soviet era looms large, since the terms in which ethnicity is widely understood in Central Asia today were introduced then. It was with the arrival of Soviet ethnographers in the 1920s and 1930s that the people of the Ferghana Valley and elsewhere were separated into ‘Uzbek’ and ‘Kyrgyz’ groups – the names having little meaning before that time (Hirsch 2005, Hanks 2011, Dukenbaev and Hansen 2003, Tishkov 1995). As discussed earlier, at this time Soviet Socialist Republics were formed around these ethnic groups, following the explicit link drawn in Stalin’s Soviet nationalities policy between language and ethnicity (or nationality, to use the Soviet term) (Slezkine 1994). Several theorists have pointed out the practical elements of national delimitation as a policy. For example, Hirsch has demonstrated that the so-called ‘nationalities question’ actually played a central role in the formation of the Soviet Union, helping to reconcile Bolshevik politics of anti-imperialism with the desire to keep the territories contained within the old Tsarist Empire (Hirst 2005). Elsewhere, Haugen has also emphasised the process’s importance as a practical measure to overcome potential local cleavages that might threaten the stability of the nascent union (Haugen 2003). The overarching features of Soviet nationalities policy can be summarised as the following:

- The territorialisation of ethnicity – under the “ethnofederal” structure of the Soviet Union, autonomous territories were each linked to a ‘titular’ nationality that had primacy in that territory (Faranda and Nolle 2010, Slezkine 1994, Khazanov 1995).
- The belief that ethnicity was inextricably linked with language, and that an ethnic group spoke a common language (Slezkine 1994, Khazanov 1995).
- The creation of a link between the political status of a given ethnicity (or nationality) and the level of autonomy, and therefore privilege, its members could attain. This system differentiated between *natsiia* (seen as the most developed peoples), *natsional’nost’* (seen as underdeveloped nations) and *narodnost’* (ethnic groups, perceived as having the lowest prestige) , affording decreasing levels of autonomy to each (Khazanov 1995, Tishkov,1999).
- The establishment of the practice of stating a person’s nationality/ethnicity on their passport and other official documents (Faranda and Nolle 2010, Dukenbaev and Hansen 2003)

The legacy of these policies can also be seen in the terms used to describe nationality and national belonging in Kyrgyzstan today – this was the moment that “nationalism as a belief system developed among Central Asian groups” (Haugen 2003: 7). For example, the conflation of ethnicity (based on common language) with nationality, and persistent references to the special status of the ‘titular nationality’ in a given state (ie. The Kyrgyz in Kyrgyzstan) date from this period (Tishkov 1999, Hanks 2011). What is more, the boundaries that determine that Osh sits 10km within Kyrgyzstan, rather than across the border in Uzbekistan, were drawn up by these same Soviet

ethnographers in the process of ‘national delimitation’ that took place between 1924 and 1927 (Reeves 2009, Liu 2012). There is considerable disagreement regarding the motivations which governed national delimitation, with some writers attributing malicious intent to the process and others, as shown in the previous paragraph, seeking to place it within the larger context of the early Soviet Union’s attempts to reconcile Marxist doctrine with the realities of building and governing a new, and massive, geo-political entity.⁸ Whatever the motives, Hirsch (2005) notes that the very process of supporting or contesting decisions made during delimitation in fact served to integrate local elites further into the mechanisms of power and decision making within the Soviet Union.

What is clear, is that the cumulative result of these heavy-handed Soviet interventions in the constitution of ethno-national identity in Central Asia, and in the Ferghana Valley in particular, has meant that it has become a region where, in Reeves’ words, “territory and ethnicity are both symbolically linked and discursively over-determined” (Reeves 2009; 1281). But what effects has this over-determination produced on peoples’ experiences in Kyrgyzstan, and in Osh in particular?

Numerous theorists have noted the striking theme of ‘national revival’ that came to the fore across Central Asia following the advent of perestroika, and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union (Hirsch 2005, Khan 2009 and 2010). This trend, which saw the symbolic use of ethnicity and cultural heritage to justify political authority over a given territory, gave rise to a situation which the “past becomes even more real than the present” to many (Khan 2010: 70). The most striking consequence of Soviet nationalities policies in Kyrgyzstan has been the exclusionary effects they have produced on ethnic minorities in the country, and especially the largest of these minorities – the Uzbeks. For example, by affording the ‘titular nationality’ in Kyrgyzstan a privileged status,

⁸ See Reeves 2011 for a nuanced discussion of the motivations behind and impacts of the process of national delimitation in relation to ethnic relations in Osh.

there began a process of “Kyrgyzzification” of positions of power and influence in the multi-ethnic Kyrgyz SSR, that carried over into the newly independent state through such rules as the constitutional requirement that all Presidential candidates speak fluent Kyrgyz (Dukenbaev and Hansen 2003; 18, 22). This process of “titular ethnicisation” took place across the region, not simply in Kyrgyzstan (Khan 2010: 76). The exclusion of Uzbeks from positions of power that began in the Soviet era therefore continued to be a feature of independent Kyrgyzstan (Bond and Koch 2010).

Furthermore, initiatives aimed at defining and popularising a national identity in independent Kyrgyzstan increasingly moved away from the inclusive approach initially predicated in President Askar Akayev’s slogan “Kyrgyzstan – our common home” towards a more narrowly defined and exclusionary view of national belonging (Melvin 2011; 10, Liu 2012). The promotion of exclusively Kyrgyz national such as the Manas epic poem, or the 19th century leader Kurmanjan Datka, as the cultural and historical building blocks around which the fledgling Kyrgyz state could be built is ensuring that minorities such as the Uzbeks are being excluded not only from the corridors of power, but also from the national ‘story’ (Liu 2012, Hanks 2011). ⁹ In recent years, this process of nationalistic myth building has been carried out with increasing intensity thanks to the increasing popularity, and influence, of nationalist political parties such as the *Ata-Jurt* (or Homeland) party (Melvin 2011). Interestingly, a very similar process of ‘Uzbekification’ of national heroes and symbols such as Tamerlane was simultaneously underway in neighbouring Uzbekistan (Liu 2012, Adams 2010). Crucially, Megoran has characterised the kind of nationalism at play in Kyrgyzstan as “profoundly insecure” about the viability and very survival of the Kyrgyz state (Megoran 2012). In his words “It is absolutely crucial to grasp this for, as will be seen in the following sections, it

⁹ It is worthwhile noting that the Manas epic was originally promoted by President Akayev as a symbol of multiethnic harmony, but has come to be widely understood in a narrower sense in Kyrgyzstan today (Megoran 2012, Cummings 2013).

explains to a significant degree the difficulties that the sizeable Uzbek minority presents to the Kyrgyz nationalist project” (Megoran 2012; 16).

Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan are doubly problematic. They have not been able to participate in symbolic nation building processes in Kyrgyzstan or Uzbekistan, since they form part of what Khazanov estimated in 1995 to be 60 million people stranded outside the borders of their ethno-national homelands (Khazanov 1995). This situation, a direct legacy of the borders and nationalities set out in the Soviet era, has led many ethnic groups to find themselves excluded twice over, welcome in neither the country of their citizenship nor that of their ethno-national identity (Liu 2012, Khazanov 1995). For the Uzbek community of Kyrgyzstan, President Karimov has made it abundantly clear that his responsibilities end at Uzbekistan’s borders, and that he has no interest in integrating or representing Uzbek communities in other countries (Bond and Koch 2010). This leaves a sizeable ethnic minority in Kyrgyzstan stranded – excluded from positions of power, and from the process of nation building in Kyrgyzstan, and simultaneously distanced from the other ethno-political community they might expect to represent their interests. The experience of ethnic Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan has been mirrored by other minority groups across Central Asia, whose autonomy has largely been limited to the cultural realm for fear that any other kind of autonomy (political, for example) would be dangerously destabilising to the relatively new nation state (Khan 2010).

Of course, this kind of ethnic tension and exclusion does not lead inexorably towards ethnic violence. Some writers have pointed to the role of “ethnopolitical entrepreneurs” (Bond and Koch, 2010: 535); individuals in positions of power within a community or group, who are able to mobilise people around the banner of ethnicity in order to achieve a specific goal (Megoran 2012; Bond and Koch 2010). Once again, this links back to the all pervasive legacy of the Soviet era. As Haugen notes, it was at this time that control or ownership of political resources became linked to

one or another ethnic identity, meaning that where previously conflicts had been about control of resources, these were now inextricably linked with the notion of ethnic identity (Haugen 2003). This is all the more important in the context of Osh, given the vitally important role of clans and patronage networks in daily and political life in the region – a phenomenon that will be explored in greater detail in the next section.

4.3.3 *Osh: A Southern city*

The final narrative that is often applied to Osh, is its status as a southern city. The city is thus inextricably bound up in the web of clan politics and north-south tension that has defined politics in Kyrgyzstan since independence and that, as discussed earlier in this chapter, was seen by many to be an important factor in the 2005 and 2010 revolutions. Osh has been the administrative centre of Osh province since 1939, and was declared the ‘second capital’ of Kyrgyzstan in 2000, during the 3000 year anniversary of the city (Liu 2012; 85). The significance of its southern identity comes not only from its geographical location, but also from the way this relates to persistent clan structures in the country. In this respect Osh is part of what Doolotkeldieva has defined as the “crucial but rarely explained phenomenon of localism” that characterises Central Asian politics more widely (Doolotkeldieva 2013: 88). The complex linkages between regional and clan identities, and patron-client relations in Kyrgyzstan have a considerable impact on political, economic and social life in the country, and as such have been a subject of study by numerous theorists (See Radnitz 2010, Megoran et al 2013, Jones Luong 2002, Collins 2006, and Schatz 2004).

Broadly speaking, the forty “tribal unions” of Kyrgyzstan are divided into three confederations: “*On kanat* (Right wing), *Sol kanat* (Left wing), and *Ichkilik* (Neither)” (Temirkoulov 2004; 94). Of these confederations, *Sol kanat* represents clans from the country’s north (Chui; Talas; Issyk-Kul and

Naryn), whilst *On Kanat* and *Ichkilik* represent the south (Osh; Jalalabad and Batken) (Bond and Koch 2010). As well as having a territorial element, some theorists point to a historical animosity between the northern and southern clans, with the northern groups having been quicker to align itself with Tsarist Russia in the 19th century, whereas southern groups remained aligned with the Khokand khanate, and thus resisted Russian rule (Morozova 2010, Temirkoulov 2004, Bond and Koch 2010). Clans continue to be of great importance in the economic and political life of Kyrgyzstan today (Fumagalli 2007b, Collins 2006, Schatz 2004). It might have been expected that their importance would have diminished during the Soviet era, as the Soviet leadership attempted to stamp out pre-modern forms of political organisation. Conversely, however, Kyrgyzstan's clan structure emerged from 70 years of Soviet rule stronger than ever, partly due to the introduction of collective farms (*Kolkhoz*), which often regrouped members of a clan in one location, and reinforced ties between them (Temirkoulov 2004). Moreover, many people in Kyrgyzstan increasingly came to rely on clan and kinship ties as a coping mechanism in the face of severe shortages that characterised the Soviet economy (Bond and Koch 2010).

Of course, historical animosity aside, tension between northern and southern clan confederations, and between clans within these confederations, most likely results from the fact that they are all in competition for the same pot of relatively limited resources (Collins 2002). As Hierman has noted, in semi-authoritarian regimes such as Kyrgyzstan two distinct but linked spaces of competition exist; “(1) a hidden, informal arena where elites compete directly with one another over access to state resources and (2) a public arena where elites appeal to voters and other constituents” (Hierman 2010; 247). In the case of a society such as Kyrgyzstan, such elites are presented with a ready-made constituency, or resource, to which they can appeal in both the hidden and public arenas of political competition (Hale 2005). In this way, the competition between northern and southern elites for access to state resources and power encompasses people at every level of clan networks

(Temirkoulov 2004). Although some theorists, such as Jones Luong, ascribe this to regional networks rather than clan affiliations the central theme of competition for resources is the same. This intense competition for resources can be witnessed in the recent oscillations in power between President Akayev (a northerner), to President Bakiyev (a southerner), to interim President Otunbayeva and President Atambayev (northerners).

Radnitz's (2010) analysis of the 2005 'Tulip Revolution' in Kyrgyzstan goes further in examining how relations between elites and clans or other local and regional community groupings relate to national politics. Using the term "subversive clientelism" he described how wealthy elites situated outside the regime in Kyrgyzstan cultivated local support bases that could be mobilised to protect their position should they perceive it to be under threat. Given that formal institutional arenas of redress, such as the justice system, are too weak or too closely linked to the regime to adequately protect these actors they instead seek to "create a social support base by making material and symbolic investments in local communities" (Radnitz 2010: 5). Within this reciprocal arrangement the client communities gain access to resources, and can be mobilised by the patron against the regime when necessary. Clan structures facilitate this process, providing a pre-existing community that the patron can appeal to. Radnitz asserts that this model helps to explain why previously politically inactive communities marched on municipal offices in great numbers during the 2005 unrest, and crucially why others did not (Radnitz 2010). Although this interpretation has been criticised by some as giving insufficient weight to the agency of communities and clans (Doolotkeldieva 2013), his analysis remains of central importance in demonstrating the continued influence and role of clans in contemporary Kyrgyz politics.

So, again it is apt to ask what specific effects this phenomenon brings about in Osh itself. Firstly, it moves the city (as it does the entire country) further away from a system of representative

democracy, and towards a system where voting, and indeed all engagement with the political system, is personalised (as Collins has noted, the strength of personalised voting is remarkable in Kyrgyzstan, even in a region characterised by patronage and clan politics) (Collins 2002, Radnitz 2006). This means that many people, in both Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities, have no way of interacting with power other than through intermediaries from their clan based networks (Fumagalli 2007a). What is more, this is a reciprocal arrangement; representation to power comes at a price for members of these communities, who are expected to mobilise in support of their clan elites when called upon (Hierman 2010, Temirkoulov 2004). This reinforces the kinds of ethnic divisions and sense of social separation explored in the previous section – crucial in an ethnically diverse city such as Osh, as communities interact with elites and leaders drawn from their own clan (and therefore from their own ethnic group), rather than engaging with wider rallying ideologies. Furthermore, by dint of the division between northern and southern clan confederations, communities in Osh are encouraged to buy into a narrative of “southern nationalism” and the fight against “humiliating ‘southerners’ by the ‘northerners’” through their actions in mobilising in support of their clan elites (Morozova 2010; 71). In turn, this situation opens the door to the rise of divisive, but highly successful, figures such as current Osh Mayor Melis Myrzakmatov, whose personalised brand of southern and Kyrgyz nationalist politics have led to accusations that he is running Osh as highly lucrative personal fiefdom - something that will be explored in more detail in Chapter Six.

A further complicating factor in this picture is the fact that Osh’s Uzbek community has in fact often aligned itself with the Northern clans, particularly during the Akayev Presidency (Liu 2012, Fumagalli 2007b). This has been in part due to Akayev’s stated aim of protecting the multi-ethnic character of the country (Fumagalli, 2007b), and partly as a system of checks and balances against the power of the southern clans against the Uzbek community (Melvin 2011). The decision of

Uzbek groups to intervene in support of the (mainly northern) transitional government, and against the family of the ousted President Bakiyev (a southerner) in Jalalabad province in summer 2010 can be attributed to this. However, in this case the gamble of offsetting local Kyrgyz power in Osh by seeking an alliance with northern Kyrgyz power seemed to backfire and add fuel to the fire of accusations of disloyalty against Osh Uzbeks (Melvin 2011).

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter, as wide ranging as it is, only begins to scratch the surface of the social, political and historical context of Osh. Without the constraints on time and length imposed in the context of this thesis, more could be written about the pre-Soviet era, for example, or the shifting role of religion in the city. However, for the purposes of this investigation, examining some of the most common tropes used to speak about Osh - as a post-Soviet city, a southern city and an ethnically divided city - is a crucial step. As well as contextualising this inquiry, this problematises some of the most commonly held views of the city, presenting a more nuanced picture of the influences acting on Osh today, and the effects they produce. This brief overview has shown how urban change in Osh is framed by the physical, cultural and legal legacies of the Soviet era, just as it is shaped by ethnic and clan affiliations, and shifting patterns of intra-national politics. Most importantly, it reminds the researcher not to rely on reductive causal explanations in Osh - the violence there should not be seen as the result of some ancient ethnic hatred, or as the inevitable consequence of post-Soviet collapse. Rather, events in the city are taking place within a complex contextual web of cause and effect, drawing on all of the themes explored above, and likely others besides. As such, it will be vital in this investigation to consider narratives of collective memory and instances of post-crisis reconstruction and regeneration in the same manner. They do not occur in a vacuum, and need to be

considered in relation to the issues explored in this chapter if we are to hope to fully understand them.

Chapter 5: Research Methods

5.1 Introduction

As discussed in the introduction, this research project aimed to explore the post-crisis reconstruction and urban change that took place in Osh following the violence that broke out there in 2010. In order to achieve this aim it asked a number of interlinking questions. Firstly, quite simply, it asks how has this reconstruction taken place - what has been rebuilt, and what other changes have been effected in the urban fabric of Osh - since such information has scarcely been recorded in the public domain so far. It also explored the relationship between memory and the urban environment, asking how and what people use the built environment to remember, and for what reasons,. It sought to uncover some of the unspoken outcomes and power relations ingrained in planning and reconstruction decisions in Osh, unpacking how different groups are affected by such decisions in different ways. Finally, it asked how the reconstruction and ongoing redevelopment of the city should be characterised - as a continuation of the violence of the Events, as a response to this violence that sought to protect the city's heterogeneity, or as a restructuring of patterns of diversity in the city. As demonstrated in the literature review that preceded this chapter, this approach brings together themes as diverse as urban planning, collective memory, and post-conflict and post-soviet contexts. As such, it was important to adopt a research methodology that successfully addressed these themes whilst simultaneously enabling meaningful and successful research into the questions at hand.

Given this research's focus on questions of memory, power and how people experience the city, then, it was apposite to adopt a qualitative approach to this research - after all, collective memory is hardly something that can be counted or measured using quantitative methods. Situating this

research project within a qualitative research framework meant adopting an ontological approach that acknowledged the possibility for multiple truths and realities to emerge in the research site (Creswell 2012: 20), something that seems particularly important when dealing with such something as subjective and varied as memory and urban experience. That is to say, a qualitative approach seeks to engage with the messiness and complexity of real life (Limb and Dwyer, 2001), accurately reflecting what Nietzsche termed “the rich ambiguity of existence” (Flyvbjerg, 2006; 237) rather than reducing it for the sake of theoretical elegance. Although the qualitative approach has in the past faced criticism over perceptions that it is somehow less scientifically rigorous than other methods, this investigation supports the position of writers such as Flyvberg (2006) and Gormley and Bondi (1999) who refute this accusation on the grounds that qualitative methodologies’ insistence on reflexivity and a robust consideration of researcher positionality in fact make them, when well done, eminently rigorous.

Taking into account the constraints on time and funding inherent within the bounds of the PhD process, along with my commitment to undertaking detailed research that would really dig down into the fine grain of people’s experiences of the post-crisis city, it was apparent early in the research design process that a comparative or large scale study involving numerous research sites would not be appropriate here. Instead, the most fruitful approach was to focus on one case study; the city of Osh. Case studies can be defined quite simply as the “detailed examination of a solitary exemplar” (Ruddin, 2006: 797), and this attention to detail reflects the wider commitment of qualitative methodologies to grasp the fine detail of the research subject, whilst simultaneously allowing the researcher to narrow their field of enquiry to a manageable size. Although the use of case studies has attracted some criticism over whether they produce generalisable knowledge, Flyvbjerg rejects these criticisms, demonstrating that carefully chosen case studies (“critical cases” (Flyvberg 2006:230)) can enable fruitful generalisation of findings. He goes on to

demonstrate how the detailed nature of case studies force researchers to be more rigorous since case study research often allows participants to “talk back” and correct researcher bias (Flyvberg 2006: 236). Perhaps the greatest strength of case study research, however, is simply in allowing the researcher to present the rich complexity of reality, rather than summarising or simplifying it for the sake of convenience (Ruddin, 2006).

5.2 Responding to the research context

Doing research in Osh, however, posed a number of distinct challenges to the researcher, and it was important to take into account the particularities of Osh as a research site in order to select the most appropriate research methods from the wide spectrum under the banner of the qualitative approach. These particularities included, primarily, the “closing” nature of the political context in Kyrgyzstan; the ‘post-conflict’ status of the city (and the ongoing social conflict still present there); and the configuration of gender roles and other power relations in Kyrgyzstan (and in particular in the south of the country) as they related to my own position as a researcher. These will be explored in a little more detail here below.

While Kyrgyzstan should not at the time of this research have been considered an authoritarian or “closed” research context (indeed, as described in Chapter 4, the country has generally been the most open of the central states in the post-Soviet era), there is some merit in situating it as a “closing” context, to adopt Koch’s terminology (Koch 2013). Directly before and after my main fieldwork period in Osh, researchers working there were arrested by the security services (International Crisis Group 2012; Kloop 2013), whilst observers have expressed concerns that the country’s “democratic gains are backsliding” after the State Committee for National Security (GKNB - the successor of the KGB) sued a prominent journalist for defamation (Trilling 2014).

Certainly, these concerns became very real to me during the course of my fieldwork, firstly when I was called in for questioning by the GKNB in Osh after a controversy at a local language centre in which I was teaching, and later when one of my research assistants - a young Uzbek student - was stopped by the police on his way home one night and warned to stop working with the 'English journalist'. It was at this point that I ceased all research activities, deeming the risk of persecution by state security services too great to my assistants and participants. This 'closing' context, then, has a considerable impact on research design. If, as Gentile has so rightly explained, the "bare minimum" standard of research in such contexts is that "we must ensure that the integrity and security of our research contacts not be compromised by our activities" then thorough risk assessment and careful, reflexive research design, and a strategy for when things go wrong is an absolute necessity (Gentile 2013: 426. See also Romano 2006, Dowler 2001). This is especially true since so many research methods have been developed in relatively 'open' contexts; it is vital to reflexively interrogate the assumptions inherent in them in order to be sure that they would be appropriate in a more authoritarian research landscape (Koch 2013).

The second important contextual aspect to impact on research design in Osh is the fact that the city finds itself in the aftermath of a recent violent conflict, and in the grips of considerable ongoing social conflict. To use Galtung's terminology, a negative peace reigns in Osh; outright violence may be largely absent but the city is still marked by tension and conflict (Galtung 1969). Clearly, this tension is in some ways linked to the 'closing' context and intrusive presence of state security agencies described above. It also produces important effects of its own on the way research can be carried out in the city. For one thing, conflict sites are often under-researched due to their inaccessibility, and the inaccessibility of participants within these sites - especially those from marginalised communities (Clark 2006). Cohen and Arieli summarise the difficulties of undertaking

research in sites of serious and recent conflict well. Having discussed the importance (and difficulty) of connecting with participants who have gone “underground” because of conflict, overcoming mistrust and avoiding the attentions of potentially problematic security actors (Cohen and Arieli 2011: 425), they go on to detail some of the ways this can impact the actual process of doing research;

“Social research in an environment of conflict involves several methodological challenges. These are projected onto the researcher’s tasks of identifying research populations, mapping subjective perceptions on conflict, gaining familiarity with the needs, interests and concerns of the human research population, and assessing the quality of information received. While the interpretation of data and ethical challenges of research in conflict environments have been discussed, political scientists have reflected less on the strategies they use to collect data in conflict settings” (Cohen and Arieli 2011: 425)

So, undertaking research in a conflict affected setting not only requires the researcher to address issues of ethics and replicability and rigour of data, it also demands that they think carefully about the methods and strategies they will use to gather data in the field. Both Clark and Cohen and Arieli have identified the use of Snowball Sampling Methodology (SSM) as one way of adapting research methods to a conflict context. SSM, they argue, helps to overcome mistrust since respondents the researcher has been referred to them by someone they already know (Clark 2006). It enables the researcher to locate and access participants who may otherwise have been impossible to speak with, or wary of the researcher (Clark 2006). It is an ideal strategy to use in a context when mistrust is high and research populations have retreated for safety reasons, then, though it is vital to be wary of the possible research bias inherent in this method. Relying on a ‘gatekeeper’ to introduce potential research participants can mean that the gatekeepers own preferences or social background end up disproportionately represented in the research sample (Cohen and Arieli 2011). During my own

fieldwork in Osh I became aware of just such a trend emerging within my research which led me to make the changes to my recruitment strategy that will be discussed later in this chapter.

In addition to this, the particular social and cultural circumstances of the research site - and crucially the way in which I as a researcher relate to this context - were also vitally important factors in the choice of research methods. As discussed in Chapter 4 Kyrgyzstan (and particularly the more conservative south) is a more socially conservative country than the UK. Gender relations tend to be more patriarchal, and stricter Islamic social norms are becoming increasingly widely adhered to (as shall be explored further in Chapter 7). It is also a poor country, with 38% of the population living under the poverty line, and a Gross National Income (GNI) of just \$3070 per capita in 2013 (World Bank 2013). It was reasonable to expect whilst planning this research that all of this would contribute to a certain configuration of power relations, perceptions and expectations between myself as a young, white, female, non-Islamic researcher from a rich Western country, and my research participants. It was also reasonable to expect that these configurations of power relations would shift according to the participants with whom I was interacting. As such, it was vital to build a clear consideration of my own position as a researcher within power relations pertaining to the global north/south divide, gender difference, class and education into the research design from the start (Sultana 2007). Such a critical engagement with my positionality does not erase these power relations entirely, but should at least serve to minimise their impact by making them visible (Gormley and Bondi 1999). The appropriate research methods for this context would, then, allow for an ongoing process of critical reflection around the power relations at play in the research process (indeed, such a process adds to the overall rigour of the research, as mentioned earlier in this chapter). Moreover, they should not reduce this to an overly simple binary of 'powerful researcher' and 'disempowered research subject' - as Sultana states (and as I was to find on so many occasions during my field research) "power relations can work both ways" (Sultana 2007: 380).

5.3 Research design

Taking into account the specificities of the research context (the ‘closing’ research environment and ongoing social conflict), and understanding the importance of keeping a critical eye on my own positionality in the research process, led me to identify a strategy that would enable me to access the participants and information I sought, whilst also ensuring that this was done in a safe and ethical manner for all concerned. This research project was carried out, then, on the basis of ethnographic fieldwork carried out primarily over a period of 4 months from March - June 2013., and supported by a preliminary visit in July and August 2012. This ethnographic fieldwork was supplemented by a series of semi-structured interviews designed to uncover detailed information about the ways in which the material environment of Osh had changed since the violence of 2010, and how these changes had affected the people living there. This dual approach had the merit of being flexible, reflexive and sensitive to the context in which it was being carried out.

So why focus on these two research methods in particular? Ethnography is an inductive process, which seeks to create meaning from the phenomena it observes rather than vice versa (Blommaert 2006). It is concerned with “situated knowledge” (Taylor 2002; 3), produced by the researcher’s in-depth, and often lengthy, engagement in the community they are researching, and extensive use of observation, often supported by interviews and other investigative tools (Lillis 2008). The aim of such a long term engagement is to allow the researcher to gain a highly detailed view of the minute of daily life, enabling greater access to the data, whilst retaining some measure of the distance which facilitates the empirical analysis of any data which has been gathered (Blommaert 2006). As such, the presence and position of the researcher is acknowledged as important in ethnography, leading the discipline to challenge notions of researcher objectivity, explicitly bringing the figure of the researcher, their background, personal perspectives and preconceptions, into the frame of reference (Lillis 2008, Maybin and Tusting 2011). This approach aims to use the detailed data

gathered at the local, or micro, level to understand and explain phenomena at the wider, macro level (Heller 2011, Silverstein 2003). Crucially, this responds to a number of the challenges set out above - a longer term, on the ground engagement with ordinary people helps to overcome the mistrust and difficulties in accessing participants inherent in closing and conflictual research landscapes. It stresses the importance of acknowledging the positionality of the researcher, and values building mutually respectful research relationships over faster 'hit and run' research techniques. Since four months is probably some way shy of the optimal period of time over which to carry out an ethnographic study, I decided to supplement this with a series of semi-structured interviews starting around six weeks into my fieldwork period. This six week delay was designed so I could build observations from the early stages of my fieldwork (on everything from subject matter, to security, to social customs) into the interview design. Semi-structured interviews can be a powerful research tool. They allow participants to express what they feel is important rather than being restricted by the interests or bias of the researcher, whilst still being comparable by dint of the pre-identified areas of discussion the researcher anchors the interview around (Cohen and Crabtree 2006). Although the researcher prepares a number of core questions or themes in advance, the interview is still free to progress in unpredictable directions. As Wengraf warns, however, this less structured approach to interviews entails no less work on the part of the interviewer - "they are *semi*-structured, but they must be *fully* planned and prepared" (Wengraf 2001: 4).

It is worth mentioning here that I had at several points during the research process considered employing other supplementary research methods in this project, notably the use of walked interviews with GPS positioning to create individual maps of 'safe' and 'no go' areas in the city, and the use of visual research methods to elicit responses during interviews. For the former, it became clear during initial scoping meetings with scholars and international organisation representatives in Bishkek in 2012 that this would likely be something that neither research participants nor local and

national authorities would be comfortable with due to concerns about spying and surveillance. On their advice I decided not to pursue this avenue any further. With regards to the use of visual methods during interviews, I did trial this tool during my three earliest interviews, asking participants to show me where they lived by drawing a map, with the hope of eliciting a series of maps of the city and spaces participants perceived as safe or unsafe. Unfortunately, this intervention during the interview seemed to interrupt the flow of conversation without bringing any great additional insight, and after three attempts I decided not to continue using this method. On reflection, I believe this to be because I had not given enough thought to the way I should frame the request to draw a map, the timing of this request, and the materials I provided. I remain convinced that using visual research methods in a more considered and better designed manner could uncover fascinating new insights in this research, however, and would be keen to pursue this in a future research project.

5.4 Gathering and analysing data

Using the methods outlined above, I was able to undertake a two month period of initial scoping research in Bishkek and Osh in July and August 2012, during which I carried out interviews with 11 researchers and representatives of international and non-governmental organisations familiar with Osh. Following on from this, I undertook 4 months of ethnographic research in Osh in 2013, which I recorded through notes in a fieldwork diary, as well as via photographs and the collection of secondary data such as visual data and media sources. During this period I also carried out 52 interviews with international and non-governmental organisation workers and residents of Osh. These interviews were recorded via dictaphone where possible, however in many cases the participants were not comfortable with being recorded in this way. In this case I took detailed notes during and after our conversation, which I then cross checked with my research assistant immediately afterwards to ensure that I hadn't left out or misunderstood any important details. As

much as possible I endeavoured to include short verbatim quotes in these notes. These interviews were carried out in one of four languages, according to the preference of the participant - English, Russian, Kyrgyz and Uzbek. When the interview was carried out in English, and in some cases later in the fieldwork period when my confidence in my own spoken Russian had improved, I carried out these interviews directly. However, when they occurred in Kyrgyz, Uzbek or sometimes in Russian, I undertook these interviews with the assistance of a local research assistant fluent in that language. The experience of working with local research assistants, and their impact on my research, is an important issue, and one that will be discussed in greater detail in the final section of this chapter.

As stated in the previous section, semi-structured interviews with local residents only began after I had spent around 6 weeks living in Osh. This period allowed me to refine the list of questions I wish to put to respondents, as well as allowing me vital time to become more acquainted with the security situation in the city and basic social conventions to ensure I respected during interactions with my research participants. This initial period also allowed me to meet and develop friendships with the individuals who would go on to become ‘gatekeepers’ in my research, facilitating my recruitment of participants via SSM. Interviews with these participants would take place in a location of their choice (unless they preferred that I suggest the location), usually a cafe, restaurant or park in the centre of town, but sometimes also in their home. After running through the purpose of my research, and discussing a number of issues pertaining to research ethics (again, I will return to the question of research ethics in the final section of this chapter), interviews would proceed, structured around a number of key questions. These questions always included the following:

- Where did the participant live?
- What parts of the city would the participant visit in a normal week, and where would they rarely or never go?

- How had the city changed in the time they had lived there?
- How did they think the city would change in the future?
- How did they think the city *should* change in the future?

Whilst the use of SSM proved invaluable to my research and enabled me to meet and interview a great many respondents in what remained a challenging research environment, I became aware of an increasing bias within my research sample during my third month in Osh. Since my two most active gatekeepers were both university educated professional women, I found that the participants they introduced me to were also overwhelmingly university educated. Interestingly, although both gatekeepers were also female and Uzbek, this did not seem to affect the people they introduced me to, who represented a fairly even cross section of genders and ethnicities. Since my other major way of meeting participants had been through the universities in which I was providing free language classes, I became concerned that my sample contained a disproportionate number of highly educated respondents, and very few who had not attended, or were not in the process of attending, university. In order to counteract this, I decided to introduce a new interview strategy. This involved identifying a street with the aid of my research assistant, then walking along the street, stopping to carry out shorter interviews with people we met along the way. These interviews again centred around the questions set out above, although often the second question would be dropped for reasons of time. In total 14 interviews were carried out in this manner, in 3 different neighbourhoods. These interviews typically enabled me to speak with respondents from a different socio-economic background to those identified through SSM - respondents included several housewives, a woman selling sweets in a park, and an unemployed labourer. Although they were not as in-depth as the more formal interviews (some of which stretched to more than an hour), they nevertheless provided valuable snapshots of three neighbourhoods. Although I had been planning to

carry out more interviews of this kind, alongside further in-depth interviews identified through my gatekeepers and my work at the universities, unfortunately I had to pull back from these ‘pro-active’ research activities in early June due to security concerns. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, following attention from the GKNB and a warning to one of my research assistants by the local police, I decided that it would be prudent to scale back my research activities in order not to place my research participants and assistants in a potentially harmful position.

Upon returning to the UK at the end of my fieldwork period, I transcribed all interviews, with a Bishkek based translator transcribing and translating those that were not in English, and typed up the notes and reflections I had gathered in my field diary. This body of data was then analysed through a process of detailed and repeated reading in order to identify key themes and repeated narratives across the data. These themes formed the basis of a spreadsheet into which the data was transferred, including thematic headings such as ‘Has the city become better or worse’, ‘Normally visit’, ‘Never visit’ and ‘Hopes for the future’, as well as allowing me to highlight useful quotes in each section.

Using this spreadsheet then allowed me to analyse each data set according to ethnicity, age and gender, digging deeper into the information I had gathered. Crucially, I did not attempt to analyse the data according to a pre-existing theory or framework, but instead tried to uncover trends and patterns from within the information I had gathered. I chose not to use a pre-existing software package such as NVivo in the analysis process, partially for reasons of practicality (I undertook the analysis from a number of computers, not all of which had this software available), and partially as I felt that building my own spreadsheets was a useful part of the analytical process which encouraged me to engage deeply with the data.

	How has city changed															Themes
	Bazaar	Navoi Park	Fentan Park	Toktogul Park	Sulaiman Too	Aravanskaya	Zapadny	Frunze	Chereyomushki	Youzhny	Yugo Vestok	HDK	On Adir	American Centre	Library	Other
IV01 (FG)																
IV02 (FG)																
IV03 (FG)																
IV04																
IV15			x		x			x			x					
IV16	x					x	x									
IV17	x	x		x	x	x	x	x						x	x	nightclubs, cafe
IV18						x					x					
IV19 P1		x	x	x							x					River, swimming pool
IV19 P2											x					Says she will go everywhere
IV20	x		x			x					x					
IV21																
IV22 P1	x															
IV22 P2	x															
IV23																
IV24																
IV25																
IV26																
IV27																
IV28																
IV29																
IV30																
IV31																
IV32																

Figure 8: Screenshots of spreadsheets used during the data analysis process.

	Positive change since events	Love for city	Fear of night	Urban rural divide	Soviet nostalgia	Country of ancestors	QUOTES	Themes
IV19 P1							House is better... see dialogue in transcript	Mayor is working greener, the other mayors who worked before, so they didn't do... see dialogue in transcript
IV19 P2	x							
IV20			x				"I wouldn't need that... old buildings, they're not attractive, they're scaring people"	"you know, our population is growing, and we need more places to live, more buildings, and if we built high scrapers (...) we can like, er, we can like put in them more people"
IV21		x	x				"I love this city of Osh"	"We have a funny democracy"
IV22 P1						x	"normal life, it will compare with other countries. For example I have been in Russia, living is a little bit difficult, but it is our country and, er, our parents, grandparents lived here and we also, erm, ought to live [here] I can say"	"I'm happy in my house, I don't like living in multi-storey, because in multi-storey the buildings you have only, for example, 2-3 rooms, but er our nation, our people need more rooms and yards in their house. They are used to live in houses like this, and I think it would be difficult to live the multi-storey houses"
IV22 P2						x	"You know, sometimes er, this new culture, we don't know how to speak with people with different cultures. They come, other people who are in the centre now, they come with a new culture for us, and we don't know. We say like this - they say like this, and better to keep silent with those people, you know?"	"How I understand, they have this plan, we need to do this, maybe, road, but they don't spend all these contributions normal way - they use part of this for self contributions (...) and this is why some central roads doesn't, still not under construction you know, since two years"
IV23				x	x	x	re 1st violence "They wanted to give this land for constructions only to Kyrgyz people, and Uzbek people rebelled How could it be? We were born here, our blood from the belly button was dropped here, our parents were buried here, died here" and because of it the war began"	"Motherland about our c
IV24				x	x		"So that's why in order to unite nations, it's better to make them live together, so in these multi-storied building"	"Where is mahalla situated, especially Uzbek people since the beginning of time they have been closed to this problem [drugs], so, they deal with drugs, during the events, they were one of the successes of the police, so that

5.5 Challenges and lessons of the research process

Carrying out this research process presented a number of challenges. Whilst I believe that overall the approach adopted here was both appropriate and successful, there were certainly elements that required adaptation during this process (such as correcting the bias in participant recruitment, as discussed above), and others that continued to provide food for thought long after I had left my research site. These challenges, which largely centre around the questions of how to carry out truly

ethical research, and how to carry out research using interpreters, will be explored in more depth in the following section.

5.5.1 Informed consent and participant safety

The University of Birmingham and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, who funded this research) both require that research projects under their aegis undergo a process of ethical review to ensure that they are transparent, professional and above all, do not cause harm to research participants (University of Birmingham 2014, ESRC 2012). One significant part of the review process this project underwent focussed on the need to ensure respondents give informed consent regarding their participation - in the ESRC's own words "participants must normally be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks, if any, are involved" (ESRC 2012). A common response to this requirement - and one which was encouraged by my own ethical review board - was to develop an information sheet to be shared with potential participants (including details on the aim of the project, and how to withdraw if they so desire), along with a form to be signed by the participant demonstrating their informed consent to take part in the project. However, on my arrival in Osh it became apparent, after numerous discussions with researchers (both local and international) living there, that within the specific research landscape of Osh this may not in fact represent the most ethical and effective approach. This was largely due to the mistrust and fear of security services described earlier in the chapter. Many participants, although keen to speak with me, were not comfortable with me recording the interview on a dictaphone (one asked me not to even take notes in public, leading me to scurry to the bathroom to take down precious quotes half way through our interview). Given this caution, asking them to sign a document confirming their participation seemed both insensitive and unrealistic. Indeed, one local NGO representative warned me off such an approach very early in my stay in Osh, describing how she herself had been subject to intense

police scrutiny after her name had been found in documents belonging to an arrested foreign researcher several months previously.

On the basis of this, I decided not to use participant information sheets and consent forms, replacing it with a verbal consent system instead. In this, I explained the purpose of my research, along with procedures for withdrawing their data should they change their mind, at the start of each interview and asked them to verbally state that they understood and were happy to continue, recording this on the dictaphone whenever I was allowed to record the interview this way. This approach had two major advantages; firstly it was less threatening to participants who were rightfully concerned about their anonymity and personal safety. Secondly, it ensured that I took the time to discuss the purpose of my research in detail with each participant, really ensuring that they understood the commitment they were making, rather than simply fobbing them off with a piece of paper they may have felt pressured to read quickly. In this way, recording verbal consent may also have helped to counteract problematic effects of a potentially imbalanced power relationships between the figure of the educated Western researcher and some less educated or confident participants. So, whilst this may be an imperfect solution - it doesn't provide the concrete paper trail of informed consent represented by information sheets and forms - in many ways this actually felt like a more ethical and more considered way of carrying out research in Osh, and certainly one that was more likely to meet the ultimate goal of ethical research frameworks; to protect research participants.

The challenge of ensuring no harm was caused by my research also extended to my research assistants. Although I speak Russian to an intermediate level, I was aware that this would not be sufficient to carry out in-depth interviews in Osh. For this reason, I decided to work with two research assistants - one young Kyrgyz woman (Cholpon) and one young Uzbek man (Daniyar), both of whom also spoke fluent Russian as a second language. Neither was a professional interpreter, since the constraints of my funding meant I was unable to afford such rates, instead both

were students at a local University, who spoke excellent English and had been recommended by mutual friends. I had recruited two assistants due to the particular linguistic context in Osh. Osh is a trilingual city, in which most citizens understand all three main languages (Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Russian), but in which language has been inextricably caught up in the identity politics that have overshadowed life in the city since the violent riots of June 2010 (Canning 2013). As such, I was repeatedly told during my initial research in 2012 that ethnic Kyrgyz residents would be most comfortable speaking with an ethnic Kyrgyz translator, just as ethnic Uzbek residents would prefer to communicate with an ethnic Uzbek translator. During our work I requested that where possible (if the respondent was fully comfortable expressing themselves in Russian) they carried out interviews in Russian, in order that I could follow the gist of the conversation.

The importance of understanding, and managing, the potential risk to the interpreters and translators that we work with is probably the most important lesson to come out of my time spent in Kyrgyzstan. Although our ethical review process places a lot of emphasis on the need to protect and inform research participants, no mention is made of steps we might take to protect interpreters (indeed, no such steps were required in order to complete the ethical review process for my fieldwork). I had my first hint as to why this might prove problematic in week 3 of my research, when I visited the local branch of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) with Cholpon to try and gain the necessary permissions to interview someone from the Mayor's office. During the course of what was at times a quite bad tempered interview, Cholpon was asked by the MFA representative to provide her name, contact details and University, and sternly told that they considered her "responsible" for me (Field notes, week 3). This situation clearly made both myself and Cholpon uncomfortable, and having not considered the risk of such an eventuality, I was unprepared to deal with it in a satisfactory manner. Cholpon dutifully handed over her details, but when we discussed the incident later we agreed that in the future I should intervene to ensure it was clear that I held

sole responsibility for my conduct and actions in the course of my research, and to shield Cholpon from the scrutiny of the authorities.

Worse, however, were the events that occurred in week 12 of my research, and which I have already mentioned caused me to stop carrying out interviews. The day after Daniyar and I had been working in an Uzbek neighbourhood, he called me in the evening to say he had been stopped by the police on his way home from University, interrogated about my work, and warned not to help me again. Although he remained calm, it was clear he was concerned and rightfully so; Osh has been plagued by police discrimination and brutality against the Uzbek community, especially young men, since the 2010 events (Amnesty International 2010). I felt devastated, and guilty, that my actions had put Daniyar in such a risky situation, and all the more concerned that I had no strategy in place to deal with such an eventuality. Again, my field notes from the time show how this caused me to reflect on my practices as a researcher, and how these could be improved:

“Daniyar’s situation reminds me of my responsibility as a researcher to protect RAs/interpreters. They are in the firing line – up to me to ensure I assess risks sufficiently, and take steps to ensure they are not placed in difficult or uncomfortable situations.”(Field notes, week 12)

Although Daniyar wasn’t contacted by the police again, I decided that this situation, and the fact that I didn’t have a credible strategy in place to deal with it, meant that it would be irresponsible, and unethical, to continue to expose either of my interpreters to such a level of risk by bringing them to the attention of the police. This is certainly one area of my research design that I believe should have been considerably stronger.

5.5.2 Language barriers

As discussed above, my language skills (or lack thereof) meant that I decided to employ two research assistants to help with interpretation during my fieldwork in Osh. When I first decided to carry out fieldwork in a country where I did not speak the language fluently, I was concerned that my lack of language skills would prove a barrier to my research, for a number of reasons. I worried that I would be unable to build a rapport with interviewees, that I would miss out of the fine detail of interactions, and that my independence and spontaneity as a research would be limited by the necessity of working with an interpreter. Certainly, my field notes show that these frustrations did play a part in my experience of doing research in a foreign language. In week two I was concerned that I was missing out on “the sense of solidarity/being an insider” that comes from sharing a language with those around you; in week three I was worried that the presence of an interpreter in an interview “Creates a confusing power dynamic in interviews – who is leading the research? Who should the participant reply to?” (Field notes, week 2). By week 11 my Russian language skills had improved to the point where I felt able to do some interviews on my own (provided it was recorded), with my field notes revealing that it “Feels great to be able to speak and connect directly to people”, and reveling in the flexibility and freedom this gave my research schedule (Field notes, week 11).

At first glance, then, the ability to speak directly to research participants seems to be greatly preferable to speaking through an interpreter. However, my field notes also reveal a number of ways in which being a linguistic outsider actually appeared to benefit the research process. Firstly, I had been concerned prior to arriving in Osh that my choice to learn Russian might be interpreted as having chosen the language of the colonial oppressor. In fact, it soon became clear that in the politically charged linguistic context of Osh, many people felt the fact that I communicated in Russian or English meant that we were communicating on a “neutral middle ground (Field notes,

week 7). This feeling was compounded through conversations with other researchers, who did speak Kyrgyz or Uzbek, and recounted the difficulties of trying to figure out which is the correct language to address someone in without causing offence, and the times they had been reprimanded by friends and respondents for mixing up Kyrgyz and Uzbek words in their speech (Field notes, week 2). Moreover, whilst being an outsider undoubtedly feels uncomfortable, this can itself bring useful insights. I noted on a number of occasions that by “playing up the stupid outsider role” (Field notes, week 2), and by asking for extra linguistic clarification, I was able to elicit extra information from respondents keen to make sure I really understood the situation in Osh (or at least, their perspective on it). So, whilst it may seem frustrating not to speak all the local languages in your field site, there can actually be hidden benefits to this that researchers should be aware of and seek to maximise where possible.

More importantly, though, my experience of working with Cholpon and Daniyar fully supports the view of translators and interpreters as cultural brokers and producers of knowledge (Turner 2010; Edwards 1998). One incident in particular, recorded in my field notes, demonstrates this well, and occurred when I was carrying out interviews in an Uzbek neighbourhood with Daniyar:

“Visiting Mahalla [Uzbek neighbourhood] with Daniyar and see 4 aksakal [elderly men] sitting on a tapshan [raised dining platform] in a courtyard, talking. I think this would be a really excellent opportunity for an interview, but am pulled past by Daniyar. We stop just past the entrance to the courtyard, out of sight, and F points out the carpets and fabrics hanging up along the yard – says this signifies a death in the family recently, and that the aksakal are there for the funeral. Would have been highly inappropriate to barge in and start asking questions, which I would have done had Daniyar not been there.” (Field notes, Week 9)

Daniyar's intervention in this case not only prevented me from making an embarrassing cultural faux pas, but also allowed me to learn more about the different ways in which Mahalla space is used in the production of social life in these neighbourhoods. Daniyar and Cholpon also actively participated in the production of knowledge in other ways – both became interested in the research, and actively sought out information independent of our time together, that they would then enthusiastically tell me about at our next meeting. Cholpon even went so far as to write one of her University papers about the legality of the construction of a park within the boundaries of the UNESCO world heritage zone around Sulaiman-Too mountain. Similarly, one of the most interesting days I spent in Osh came when Cholpon suggested she walk me through the neighbourhood near her University, taking me through back streets and near deserted areas I might otherwise never have stumbled across. These experiences gave me a powerful appreciation of the role that interpreters and translators can play in collaboratively producing knowledge, and the importance of being open to this possibility as a researcher.

Recent literature on the use of translators/interpreters also recommends that researchers widen their consideration of power and positionality in fieldwork to consider how it applies to translators/interpreters (Temple and Edwards 2002; Berman and Tyyska 2011), and once again my time in Osh suggests that such a step is vital. Whilst I had taken steps in this direction, by ensuring I used a Kyrgyz interpreter when I interviewed Kyrgyz respondents and an Uzbek interpreter for Uzbek interviews, on reflection this actually led me to play down other elements of Cholpon and Daniyar's positionality that came to have an influence on their work. For example, Daniyar's position as a relatively wealthy young man from a respected family (along with his very respectful approach to respondents) helped to ensure that our street interviews in Uzbek neighbourhoods were largely successful. Conversely, the strongly paternalistic culture of Kyrgyzstan sometimes created

challenging working conditions for Cholpon as a young woman (especially when we visited city representatives in week 3). Speaking with another foreign researcher's local assistant revealed similar tensions, as she explained the problems she faced as an in-migrant from the village to the city, and how this affected her relations with long-term city dwellers, revealing another level of positionality that I hadn't considered.

Quite early on, I also had to reassess what I had assumed to be the power relationships between myself and my interpreters. When I decided to work with local interpreters, my first concern had been to ensure I paid them a fair wage and provided good working conditions. Daniyar, however, refused to accept any payment for his services, telling me he came from a wealthy family, and that to him the experience of working with me, and practicing his English with a native speaker, was more valuable to him (Field notes, Week 2). Similarly, over the four months I spent working with Cholpon, I found that she increasingly used me as a strategy to present a different point of view (usually in the guise of a well travelled western expert) in arguments with her more traditional family (for example, about whether she should travel to work in the USA for the summer). Both cases forced me to reassess my previously lazy assumptions about where I stood in relation to Daniyar and Cholpon. Rather than automatically placing myself in the role of the reluctant patron, I came to appreciate that our working relationship was far richer and more complex than I had initially understood.

5.6 Notes on the presentation of data within this thesis

Finally, before moving on to the empirics chapters it is important to note a number of points about the way data is presented in the text. Firstly, all quotes are anonymised, with respondents assigned different names throughout the text. This was important in order to allow participants to speak

freely about very sensitive issues without fear of repercussions. A schedule of interviews containing further information can be found in the appendices of this thesis. Secondly, as discussed above, interviews were carried out in four languages, with some being transcribed and translated into English at a later date. For this reason, some quotes employ idiosyncratic turns of phrase or idioms that may seem surprising when presented in English. In order to make clear what language the speaker was using during the interview, then, the reference following each quote will include a letter (E for English, R for Russian, K for Kyrgyz and U for Uzbek) denoting the language the interview originally occurred in.

Having established the theoretical and methodological basis for this investigation, then, it is now time to explore the findings generated by this research project. The next chapter will begin by setting out how the urban landscape in Osh has changed in the years since the events, focussing especially on a number of initiatives introduced as part of the immediate post-crisis response, and ongoing city master-planning activities. It will then move on to give an initial insight into the widely differing ways in which these changes have been perceived by city residents. Finally, it will spend some time introducing the figure of Melis Myrzakmatov, the former Mayor of Osh, whose figure looms large over efforts to reconstruct and develop the city's landscape in recent years.

Chapter 6: Post Conflict Reconstruction and Regeneration in Osh

6.1 Introduction

The first challenge of writing about post-crisis reconstruction and urban development in Osh since the 2010 Events is simply to record what has been done in the years following the violence, as this information is not easily accessible. As such, a large part of this research project (especially in its earlier stages) was devoted to simply trying to unearth what has been achieved in this regard. This was by no means straightforward: numerous actors have been involved at different points of this process and, as shall become clear in this chapter, it has often been difficult to distinguish between reconstruction efforts and the ongoing development of the city (an important finding in its own right).

This chapter, then, serves a number of vital purposes in the context of the overall investigation. Firstly, it tries to set out the substance and logic of the reconstruction efforts that followed the 2010 violence. This entails determining the main actors involved, the main actions undertaken, establishing the logic driving these actions, and identifying some of the controversies and tensions that sprang up around them. Given the constraints on length inherent in this thesis, the chapter goes on to focus on one element of reconstruction efforts - housing and shelter - in order to present a more detailed snapshot of these issues in practice. The overview of physical reconstruction work in Osh presented in this chapter has been drawn from documents in the public domain, internal documents acquired over the course of field research, and interviews carried out with individuals involved in the reconstruction process, as well as observation of reconstruction projects in Osh itself.

Secondly, this chapter acknowledges the impossibility of separating reconstruction efforts from the wider context of ongoing urban planning in Osh, as embodied by the city Masterplan. This document - itself a holdover from the Soviet tradition of urban planning described in Chapter Four - manages the feat of being absolutely central to the project of city planning in Osh and a complete mystery to most of the city's residents. Even though, as we shall see through a case study on the redevelopment of Osh's Monueva Street, this document is already having a great impact on the physical redevelopment of the city, the municipal authorities have declared it to be a secret document, and refused to share the details of its contents with residents or concerned local and international organisations. As such, the information presented in this chapter has again been pieced together from interviews carried out with key stakeholders involved with the planning process in Osh, as well as publicly available documents and media statements.

Finally, having established this overview of physical interventions in Osh's urban environment since 2010, the chapter will then move on to consider the central question of how Osh residents have perceived these changes. Although Chapters 7 - 10 will delve into this issue in more detail, it will be fitting to sketch out some broad brushstrokes of residents' reactions to urban change in this chapter, as this will provide a useful framework within which to consider the following chapters. One especially striking element of these reactions has been the strong identification of changes in the urban environment since the Events as the responsibility (for better or worse) of former Mayor Myrzakmatov, and the chapter will end by reflecting a little on the significance of this.

6. 2 Post-crisis reconstruction responses in Osh

In the three years following the June Events, the urban landscape of Osh saw a large number of interventions aimed at repairing the damage done to the city and improving it - to return to the

terminology introduced by theorists such as Charlesworth (2006) and Pelling (2003) in Chapter Two, 'building back better'. These interventions included the construction of new housing blocks, and the reconstruction of existing housing stock damaged or destroyed in the violence. Cultural venues such as the Uzbek Music and Drama Theatre and the Kirgizia Theatre were also restored, as was the Alisher Navoi monument that stands opposite the entrance to the bazaar on Navoi Street. As will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8, five new monuments were erected in the city; two commemorating the June violence, and three celebrating figures from Kyrgyz history and culture. Numerous parks were rehabilitated, such as the one in Oshsky microdistrict at the junction of Kara-Suuskaya and Masalieva streets, and across the city street lights, traffic lights and bus shelters have been improved, and in many cases installed for the first time. These measures represent a mix of immediate post-crisis response, and longer term efforts to rebuild a safer city. They have largely been funded by international donors and international organisations; for example, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have funded much of the shelter provision and reconstruction, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has supported several projects regarding the rehabilitation of parks, and the provision of street lighting and traffic lights, amongst other things.

In order to coordinate the different actors involved in this process, and to attempt to respond swiftly to the challenge of reconstructing Osh and Jalalabad, the interim government of Kyrgyzstan established the State Directorate for Reconstruction and Development (SDRD) through resolution 485 on June 21st 2010. The SDRD's mandate was then reinforced in the following month by resolution 121 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. The Directorate was assigned a number of key functions, namely the co-ordination of all actors involved in the reconstruction efforts (such as international organisations, NGOs, donor governments, the Kyrgyz government and the local

authorities); the management of funds allocated to the reconstruction process; and attempts to drum up further investment into the rehabilitation of areas affected by the June events (Satybaldiev 2010).

The SDRD had a wider mandate than simply the physical reconstruction of Osh and Jalalabad - as its work progressed it was given responsibility for promoting peace building and reconciliation through its work in affected areas. However, in the immediate aftermath of the violence, the Directorate focussed on beginning the repair and rehabilitation of structures which had been seriously affected by the violence. Specifically, it prioritised the following key areas: housing, schools and other educational facilities, healthcare and social facilities, municipal buildings, and infrastructure (Satybaldiev 2010). Unfortunately, despite its prompt establishment, the work of the SDRD was dogged with accusations of the kind of corruption endemic in public bodies in Kyrgyzstan - as one senior international organisation representative put it, the Directorate was “hamstrung by organisational constraints and by corruption” (IV56, E). This assessment was shared by another local NGO representative, who complained about the misuse of funds and corrupt practices rife within the organisation (IV29).

6. 2.1 Starting reconstruction - housing first

Despite these shortcomings, the SDRD remained the focal point of reconstruction programmes in Osh, and soon identified housing as the most pressing reconstruction need in the city. The need for reconstruction of the urban fabric of Osh was clear and urgent in the aftermath of the June violence. Whilst estimates of the number of buildings destroyed in Osh and Jalalabad and their surrounding areas vary from 2,323 (Satybaldiev 2010) to 2,843 (KIC 2011), all agree that the vast majority of damage was done to housing stock, with estimates ranging from 1,893 (UNHCR) to 1,975 (Satybaldiev 2010). Of these, the lion’s share of the destruction took place in Osh city and the

surrounding areas: between 1,446 (UNHCR 2012) and 1,576 (Satybaldiev 2010) homes. As the UNHCR estimated the average household size in damaged homes to be 7.4 persons, this meant that between 10,700 and 11,662 people were directly affected by the loss or extreme damage of their home (UNHCR 2012).

It is worth noting here that the particular geographical arrangement of Osh city and the surrounding Kara-Suu district (part of Osh Oblast') can lead to some confusion regarding the location of damaged homes. Although the SDRD estimated that there was a roughly equal number of homes destroyed in Osh city and Osh Oblast' (776 and 800 respectively), it is likely that a large number of the destroyed houses allocated to Osh Oblast' formed part of the urban conglomeration of the city. The complex territorial limitations of the Osh municipality and Kara-Suu region have led to one

NGO representative remarking that the city "looks more gerrymandered than it is" (IV09, E).

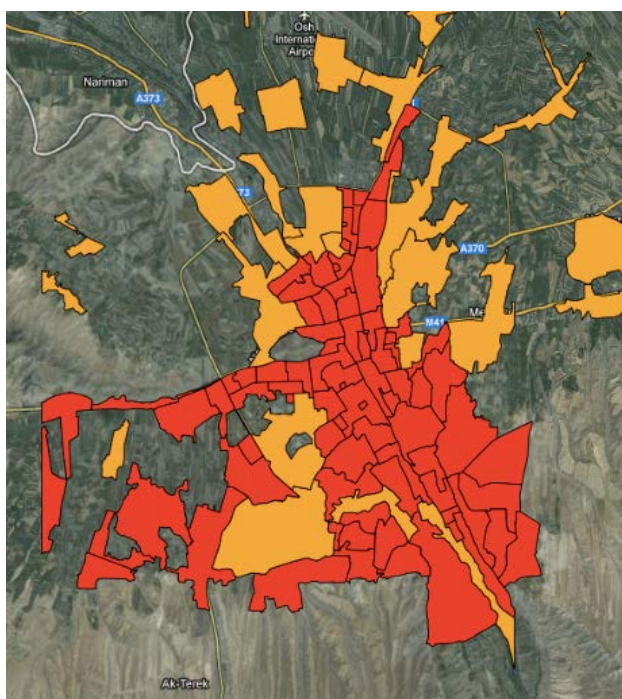


Figure 9. Map showing electoral precincts of Osh city (red) and contiguous urban areas classified as villages (yellow) (Source: Eurasianet)

Put briefly, this means that some urban areas at the heart of the city, such as the *mahallas* to the north of Sulaiman mountain, which are entirely contiguous with the rest of the city, are not legally and administratively part of Osh city (see Figure 8). Of course, this *de jure* separation does not prevent residents of these areas participating in the daily life of the city of which they are a *de facto* part. Crucially, many areas contiguous to the city, but not officially part of it, suffered greatly

during the June events - for example the houses along Abdukhadirov/Navoi street, or along Pamirskaya street heading out of the city.

With this in mind, when this investigation refers to reconstruction in Osh it refers to reconstruction happening within the parts of the city administratively classified as villages in Kara-Suu district as well as those that legally form part of the municipality. Since the body charged with managing and implementing reconstruction after the events was mandated to work in Osh City, Osh Oblast' and Jalalabad City, it was also able to work across these administrative boundaries. Another factor which made the need for swift reconstruction of housing all the more pressing following the June violence was the weather. The temperature in Osh regularly reaches the mid-30s in July and August, before dropping rapidly throughout the Autumn to temperatures that dip below freezing at night time by the beginning of December. Such extremes in temperature make the need for the swift provision of shelter obvious (IV56).

In order to address housing needs, the SDRD established two departments focusing on this; one with responsibility for building entirely new homes, and a second to rebuild damaged and destroyed homes (IV14). Information materials provided to Osh residents by the SDRD in the Autumn of 2010 give a useful insight into the kind of work being carried out by the directorate at this time. These pamphlets provide details of multi-storey buildings being constructed in Osh and Jalalabad, along with the cost of each contract and the company responsible for construction, including a 75 apartment housing complex on Razzakov Street, 64 and 60 apartment complexes in the Anar microdistrict in the West of the city, and a 70 apartment building on Masalieva Street. They also provide information about the programme to provide transitional shelter, including progress reports and information on how to access loans to aid housing reconstruction. Finally, they give details about the SDRD's equality policies, and hotlines and a physical address where residents can access more information, advice or report complaints regarding the conduct and work of the Directorate.



Figure 10. English language version of SDRD outreach materials (Source: Author's own)

6.2.2. Reconstruction of housing - Phase One

Focussing on one element of the post-crisis reconstruction process in Osh - the reconstruction of destroyed and severely damaged homes - allows us to make more clear some of the key decisions and compromises being negotiated during this process, and what they meant to affected residents. This element of the reconstruction process took place over two broad stages; first came the provision of shelters to meet residents' immediate needs. This was followed by a second stage, in which support was provided towards the reconstruction of permanent housing. The UNHCR estimated that around 90% of the houses affected by the Events fell into the categories of either "major damage" or "complete destruction" (UNHCR 2012: 10).

Following the June events international organisations and NGOs responding to the unfolding crisis used the cluster system established for post-crisis contexts in order to coordinate their response more effectively. This system identifies eleven thematic and operational areas of importance in the post-disaster context, with one organisation taking the lead in co-ordinating the organisations participating in each cluster. In the case of Osh in 2010, the shelter cluster was led by UNHCR, and included the Danish Refugee Council, Catholic Relief Services, Care International and ACTED, working in co-ordination with the SDRD once it had been established (UNHCR 2012).

As a senior member of the shelter cluster explained in 2012, the organisation's original plan for the shelters they wished to construct in Osh and Jalalabad comprised of a three room structure, with each room measuring 14 metres squared, and a small semi-enclosed porch at the front. These plans, he explained, were soon scaled back due to concerns about available materials and timeframes, resulting in a compromise design of a two room brick structure measuring 28 metres squared, to be built on the site where the recipient's home had previously stood. Around two thousand of these structures had been built by the onset of winter in November 2010, an achievement the representative ranked as one of the best of his career in the humanitarian sector (IV56). UNCHR documents also show that this approach was informed at least in part by an attempt to build in participatory planning approaches, such as those advocated by Sammuels (2010) and Siriwardena and Haigh (2011), to the designs. Focus groups were held with affected communities in which their expressed preferences - for brick built homes on the foundations of their original houses, and for aid to be distributed in materials rather than cash (to lessen the danger of money being siphoned off through corrupt practices) - were integrated into the final plans for reconstruction (UNHCR 2012).

Two aspects of this first phase approach stand out as significant; the decision to construct shelters on the same sites as destroyed homes, and the choice of brick as the principal building material for

these shelters instead of a material such as panel board, which is often used in the construction of such interim shelters. Although this second decision can in part be attributed to concerns about the upcoming winter, both owe a great deal to a different goal; to reassure the affected population, and safeguard their space in the city. One former SDRD worker, Meder, clarified the decision to build brick shelters right on the site of residents' former homes through the psychological effects it had on these residents, saying they believed "if there was a concrete foundation, nobody would dare touch them" (IV14, R). For people still reeling from the horror of the June events and the violent loss of their home, the use of brick was both comforting and symbolic. Brick shelters were perceived as less temporary and more difficult to remove or destroy than their panel board counterparts. The decision to build shelters in the sites formerly occupied by destroyed homes further added to this sense of reassurance, reaffirming these residents' physical presence in the city so soon after many had been forced to flee for their lives. This reflects Connerton's assertion, as explored in Chapter 3, that the built environment can be used to lend permanence to a group's memories, identity and feelings of belonging. This sentiment was echoed by the shelter cluster representative, who himself explained that the decision to build brick shelters represented a wish to "ground the Uzbek community", and prevent them from being pushed from the city centre (IV56, E). Intriguingly, the SDRD and UNHCR representatives I spoke with both claimed that they had been responsible for the decision to build with brick, and implied that they had needed to fight to impose this choice on the other actors involved.

6.2.3. Reconstruction of housing - Phase two

Having met the immediate shelter needs of the affected population in time for winter, the focus then shifted to the longer term reconstruction of damaged housing. This process was undertaken by the SDRD in collaboration with a number of donors and implementing organisations, notably the Asian

Development Bank (ADB), which funded the reconstruction of a significant number of homes in Osh and Jalalabad through a \$28 million grant to the Kyrgyz Government. The second phase of reconstruction commenced in April 2011, and eventually resulted in the reconstruction of over 1500 houses, and the repair of around 100 more (ADB 2013). Whilst funding and support for this programme was provided by the ADB, implementation was carried out by two non-governmental organisations working in partnership with the SDRD; ACTED and the Danish Refugee Council. (Ibid).

Simply put, this phase of reconstruction allowed recipients to choose from a range of eight housing designs that had been approved by the city architecture office, measuring up to 100 metres squared. Meder explained that the size of the reconstructed building was a function of the size of the destroyed home. For example, if this had measured 80 metres squared, then its replacement would measure the same size. However if, as he estimated was the case for around 5% of the destroyed houses, it had measured over 100 metres squared, the reconstruction would be capped at an upper limit of 100 by the SDRD (IV14). Houses were again rebuilt on the sites that the damaged structures had stood on and, where possible, reused the existing foundations as part of the new structure. Decisions about which houses were eligible for reconstruction aid were made by a multi-stakeholder board in which the SDRD, municipal government and donor organisations all participated. (Ibid)

This programme featured a number of elements at the forefront of post-crisis reconstruction practice in recent years as already described in Chapter 2 of this thesis. These were self-build projects, in which architectural plans and good quality materials were provided to residents who are then expected to undertake the construction process themselves. In those cases where households were deemed to be especially vulnerable, or unable to carry out the reconstruction themselves, extra

money was provided for them to hire labourers to carry out the work for them. The use of such self build projects is not only cost effective, but encourages recipients of reconstruction aid to take more ownership of both the process and final project, helping to empower them in the aftermath of a traumatic event which has been distinctly disempowering for so many residents (Clarke et al 2010). Reconstructed houses also represented an attempt to implement the principle of building back better in Osh. An ADB representative who had previously worked in the aftermath of serious natural disasters around the world proudly told me that he was confident that in Osh they had achieved this aim. Better quality materials had been used in the new homes, he explained, the eight approved designs met stringent construction standards, and perhaps most importantly, the new buildings incorporated structural measures to withstand the seismic stress common to the region (IV11). Of course, this understanding of building back better as using better quality materials and designs is somewhat narrow when compared to the vision of the peace building architect advanced by Charlesworth (2006).

It is really at this moment that the relation between the post-crisis reconstruction processes and the ongoing planning and regeneration processes advanced by the municipal authorities in the city as a whole begin to interact in an increasingly complex and sometimes problematic way. The administrative boundaries discussed at the beginning of this chapter became especially significant at this point, as reconstruction within areas that fell under the administrative purview of the then Mayor of Osh, Melis Myrzakmatov, were liable to delays that were repeatedly attributed by my interviewees to Myrzakmatov's own ideas about development in the city centre. These ideas, as we shall see later in this chapter, differed significantly to those represented by the SDRD led reconstruction efforts. Indeed, the Mayor's input into the reconstruction process was characterised by one donor organisation as "throwing up as many roadblocks as he could" (IV11, E), an

assessment which was echoed by the majority of the individuals engaged in the reconstruction process I spoke with.

Two issues were repeatedly raised by respondents in reference to these delays; the so-called ‘red line’ delineating where residents should and shouldn’t build in order to respect the city Master Plan, and the difficulty of obtaining the correct registration papers for properties in the city. The infamous ‘red line’ denotes areas in Osh on which construction is not allowed. These areas are apparently due to be redeveloped as part of the proposed master plan to facilitate, for example, the widening of certain central streets or the construction of new multi-storey buildings in the city centre. Since the city master plan has not been made public, in spite of repeated requests by local and international organisations, it is unclear how residents should know whether or not their property is affected by the red line. The question of whether or not to rebuild houses over this boundary provoked much discussion within the SDRD. The Municipality’s position was clear - one of the city’s Deputy Mayors, Taalaibek Sabirov, went on record to state that houses rebuilt in contravention of the city master plan would be liable to demolition, asserting “We say, ‘Yes, let’s restore the homes,’ but only temporarily. When implementing the Master Plan, some houses will have to be destroyed. They will be destroyed according to the laws of the Kyrgyz Republic” (Trilling 2011). Such a temporary restoration of housing, however, was not an attractive option. This ran counter to the expectations of donor organisations, who demanded value for money, (IV62) and would also undermine the positive psychological effects of the provision of stable housing as described above. Eventually, “after a lot of arguments” the SDRD decided to rebuild homes where they stood - taking into account the red line where possible, but building across this boundary where there was no other choice (IV14, R).

Rebuilding a house was only half the battle, however. The registration of buildings also represented a significant struggle, and was considered to be a serious issue by almost every actor involved in the

reconstruction process that I spoke with (IV56, IV63, IV11, IV09, IV10). Problems obtaining the correct registration and ownership documents for a property were attributed to a number of factors in my discussions. For some, the Uzbek community (disproportionately affected by property destruction during the violence) remained too wary of official bodies to risk engaging with them to obtain the correct documents (IV55). Another blamed a registration process that is “cumbersome and unclear” along with a continued preference amongst the population at large to manage housing, land and property issues along informal lines, or according to customary law (IV63). Many also underlined the lack of political will on the part of the municipal authorities to facilitate the registration process, suggesting that this was now being used as a political tool and delaying tactic to favour the kind of development supported by the city authorities (IV56, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/63951>). Indeed, one international organisation representative expressed her concerns about the possible political nature of this problem, saying the local authorities used to “close their eyes” where properties were not correctly registered, but had taken a far stricter approach since the events of June 2010 (IV63, E). As Weizman has so amply demonstrated in his work on Israeli planning practices, property registration processes and other seemingly straightforward elements of urban planning and regulation can be used for powerful discriminatory and political purposes (Weizman 2007). In all likelihood the reality in Osh probably reflects a combination of all of these factors.

Interestingly, another international organisation employee working in Osh pointed out that this issue - incomplete documents and unclear property registration - was not restricted to the domain of private individuals. He identified the lack of clear information regarding land ownership, zoning and legal status of publicly owned land as one of the biggest obstacles to reconstruction he had encountered - perhaps a result of the well documented swing towards largely unregulated “*laissez faire*” planning in the immediate post-Soviet era (Stanilov 2007). Using the example of a large

scale sanitation project he was currently overseeing, he explained how the loss of many relevant documents in the post-Soviet era was making his work difficult;

“No one knows if the land we need to buy to build the plant is agricultural (and therefore subject to a moratorium on transfer to industrial use) or riverain. People are sure that it is government land, but they don’t know to which department it belongs (...) This makes reconstruction very complex” (IV11, E)

For private individuals, possession of the correct registration documents for their homes had become particularly important in the aftermath of the June events. Firstly, those people whose homes were destroyed or damaged in the violence needed to be able to prove their ownership of these properties in order to access aid in rebuilding them. Secondly, valid documents would be necessary in order to receive fair compensation for the destruction of buildings (including some that were rebuilt in the post-crisis reconstruction effort) demolished as part of ongoing city redevelopment projects rolled out since 2010. The case of Monueva Street, which will be explored in more detail later in this chapter, amply demonstrates how these two situations can intersect. Suffice to say that two years after the beginning of phase two of housing reconstruction in Osh, registration of properties remained a thorny issue.

6. 3. The Osh City Master-plan

A few weeks after I arrived in Osh, it became something of a tradition amongst members of the international community in the city to greet me with the words ‘Have you seen it yet?’, as they were aware of my wish to see a copy of the city’s much vaunted *general’ny plan*, or master plan for development. The plan had become notoriously difficult to track down; speaking candidly in his

office one day, one international organisation representative in Bishkek likened it to the Loch Ness Monster (IV56), whilst another questioned whether such a document even existed as such, suggesting it may be a cover for a “piecemeal” programme of development (IV05, E). When I asked why the plan was such a closely guarded secret a variety of answers were proffered. One NGO worker active on the issue informed me that the local authorities insisted that all 10000:1 scale maps in Kyrgyzstan were restricted (imagine my surprise, then, to see just such maps on the walls of the architecture department of a local University a few weeks later). At the city architect’s office I was told that the plan couldn’t be made public until it had been approved in Bishkek (IV13, IV62). Another member of the international community complained that the Mayor’s office had promised to make the plan public nine months previously, but that this was apparently being held up by “technical issues” (IV06, E). At a round table meeting regarding human rights and urban planning former Mayor Myrzakmatov himself is reported to have explained that the plan was not being made public due to the “strategic information” it contained about the city’s infrastructure (Personal Communication 2014).

But beyond these jokes, theories and explanations lies a very real problem. By August 2012, during a preliminary fieldwork visit to Osh, evictions were already taking place to allow for the widening of a road in the city centre, Monueva Street. This project was being presented by the city authorities as the first step in the implementation of the Master plan, a document that the overwhelming majority of people in Osh had never seen, much less been consulted about. One representative of a local NGO later recalled being allowed to look at the plan on boards set up around a stuffy, airless room during a roundtable meeting with municipal representatives (including the Mayor himself) in 2012 (IV52). Another international worker noted that her predecessor’s notes recorded seeing a copy of the plan several years earlier, before the June Events (IV06). For the most part, however, the plan remained a closely guarded secret even as it was being implemented.

Obviously this situation presents a serious problem to a researcher concerned with planning and urban change in Osh. How can one write about the potential impact of urban planning on a city's residents when the plans themselves are secret? This was the challenge faced during the course of this research when it became clear that no copy of the plan was publicly available, and that the Mayor's office was unwilling to even agree to a meeting, let alone reveal details of the plan. Efforts to obtain copies of the plan from the national archives in Bishkek and the Russian State Library in Moscow also proved fruitless, since neither institution was able to locate a copy of the plan, or any related documents. Other local and international organisations with an interest in the plan confirmed that they too had been unable to obtain a copy in Bishkek (though they had not attempted to get a copy in Moscow). For this reason, the approach taken in this project shifted to focus on drawing up a picture of the general principles guiding the Municipal authorities' interventions in the urban landscape, and by extension the master plan, from information in the public domain, interviews with individuals with first hand knowledge of the plan, and observation of public infrastructure and development projects being carried out in the city during the fieldwork period. Although this approach hasn't allowed for a presentation within this thesis of the fine-grained detail of the proposed development of Osh that the master planning document itself would provide, it has enabled the elaboration of a compelling picture of the kind of city the Mayor's office wishes to create through the Master Plan.

6. 3.1. Aims of the Master Plan

All respondents agreed that the Master Plan was not a new document, rather it is an updated version of a Soviet era plan. This would place Osh firmly within the wider trend of a return to a master planning method in former Soviet cities following the *laissez faire* approach that characterised the

initial post-Soviet period (Golubchikov 2004, Stanilov 2007). Despite seemingly widespread confusion regarding precisely which Soviet plan it was based on, the city architecture office and academics involved in the development of the plan all assured me that it had been developed on the basis of the the 1985 plan (IV12, IV13). Such revisions were necessary, they explained, because the previous plan had been written taking into account a potential city population of 300,000, whereas they now believed the city could grow to between 600,000 and 800,000 by 2025, numbers that the Soviet era plan simply was not designed to accommodate (Ibid). Interestingly, neither the academics nor the architecture office mentioned another pressing reason to update the Soviet plan that Meder, the former SDRD worker explained:

“The problem of the Master Plan is, when it was the Soviet Union, the Master Plan was created in quite another way; it was a time when no land was private property and that’s why the Government could create any Master Plan. But nowadays the Master Plan has to take into consideration one’s private property, and the city, before creating a Master Plan, has always to think over if they have enough money to realise the Master Plan. And... of course, a city develops and changes greatly year after year because this market environment makes the city develop. It doesn’t matter if the municipality or city hall wants it or not, a city will develop because people are coming, migration is increasing, people have to live somewhere, feed their family; one wants to sell, another one to work (...) nowadays, as it was in the Soviet Union, it is impossible to create the Master Plan for the whole city for thirty years ahead” (IV14, R)

In short, the entire context in which urban planning takes place has changed from a command economy without private property, to a market economy where people’s rights to private property must be respected. Meder’s statement implicitly acknowledges the triple transition highlighted by Tsenkova as driving urban change in post-Socialist cities; systemic political change, systemic

economic change, and decentralisation of power (Tsenkova 2006). As such, the Master Plan - indeed the entire planning process - needs to be adapted to fit these new circumstances. Unfortunately, Meder believed that the Master Plan hadn't got to grips with this new reality, and noted grimly that voicing these opinions had made him very unpopular with the city authorities (Ibid). Instead, the municipal authorities advanced a different narrative to explain the changes they planned to introduce in the city. As well as accommodating its swelling population in an effectively functioning and comfortable city, the Master Plan is presented as the means to achieving certain policy goals regarding Osh's identity and role in modern Kyrgyzstan.

These aims are most clearly expressed in a policy document issued by Melis Myrzakhmatov's office (but removed from the city website since the election of a new Mayor) *The Renaissance of Osh - The centre for the development of the southern region of Kyrgyzstan (Development plan for the period 2010-2015)*. This wide ranging document (here translated from the original Russian) set out the Myrzakhmatov administration's understanding of the challenges facing the city and details the steps they believe would be necessary to meet these challenges in the domains of security, economic and social development, cultural and spiritual development, and urban planning. The document sets out the Mayor's wish to situate Osh as "a centre of the Kyrgyz state and culture" and economic driver of the country's populous southern region (The Renaissance of Osh), matching its administrative status as Kyrgyzstan's southern capital. It sets out a number of aspirational statements to this end;

"2.1: The vision of the future city of Osh as the centre of development in the southern region of Kyrgyzstan

- Osh will be the foundation stone for development of the country, a bulwark of the state in the south of Kyrgyzstan*

- *Osh will be the business, spiritual, socio-cultural and scientific centre of the Fergana Valley and of Central Asia.*
- *Osh will be a contemporary dynamic city, with a traditional and spiritual identity, and an attractive business community, drawing in investors, tourists and pilgrims.*
- *Living in Osh will be comfortable, prestigious and interesting. The city will create effective opportunities for the education, careers and economic activities of the inhabitants of the region.” (Ibid)*

What these relatively vague statements mean for urban planning becomes clearer later in the text, where a number of measures are proposed, including the demolition of traditional housing forms to make way for high-rise buildings and wider roads, with the ultimate aim of enabling “a gradual change of the “village structure” into an urban way of life and into business activity of a contemporary nature” (Ibid). According to this the southern capital should look less like a village, and more like a modern city (a narrative that will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 9). These beliefs were echoed by the city architecture office and academics I spoke with, who hoped to see the “rural buildings” (IV12) of the city centre replaced with something they perceived as more modern as the plan progressed. Of course, the replacement of the ‘rural’ and ‘old fashioned’ with the ‘modern’ was a key component of Soviet era Master Plans as well (French 1995).

6. 3.2. *Achieving these aims*

The implementation of the proposed city Master Plan is expected to meet three aims; to accommodate the city’s rapidly growing population; to reassert Osh’s status as the Southern Capital, a city of significant historical, political and economic significance; and to create a place defined by a modern, urban lifestyle rather than a rural way of living. But how does it propose to achieve these

aims through concrete interventions in the city's urban landscape? A number of construction and infrastructure projects have been proposed (or in some cases undertaken) by the Municipal authorities since 2010 that advance these aims, and can be taken as indicative of the measures contained in the Master Plan. These are as follows.

Water provision and sanitation

With the support of a large international donor organisation, work has already begun to improve the provision of clean, reliable drinking water in the city through the rehabilitation of current infrastructure and construction of a new reservoir (IV11, IV13). This is especially important in a city like Osh, which is often subject to water shortages in the summer, and where some neighbourhoods such as On Adir have to bring in all their water by truck.

Expansion of the city boundaries, subsuming certain surrounding villages

In *The Renaissance of Osh* the city authorities spell out their wish to expand the city's territory to the South in order to create new residential zones, although exactly which areas should be included is not made clear (*The Renaissance of Osh*). The city Architect's office was more precise, stating that this expansion would be towards the farmland of the South West, notably integrating the villages of Teuleken, Japalak and Papan into the city, and denying that other villages lying to the north (Kyzyl-Kyshtak, Nariman and Sharq) were slated for similar inclusion (IV13). The inclusion of Papan on this list is significant. Papan lies around an hour south of the city, and would not be an obvious candidate for inclusion in the municipal boundaries were it not for the fact that it also includes the reservoir which is currently responsible for Osh's water supply.

Renovation of public spaces and parks

One of the most visible changes in Osh's cityscape in recent years has been the work to renovate the city's parks and public spaces. Indeed one donor organisation representative estimated his body had funded the rehabilitation of 30 urban parks since the June Events, and throughout the period of my fieldwork efforts were ongoing to install new paving and seating (decked out with the obligatory *tunduk* decorations - representing the top piece of a yurt) in the popular Navoi Park (IV09). Again, this focus on improving green spaces and parks is foreshadowed in the *Renaissance of Osh*, which suggests replacing buildings situated in earthquake sensitive zones with "open social welfare spaces (parks, squares etc)" going on to assure the reader that "there will be improved provision for the implantation of green spaces in accordance with existing standards" (The Renaissance of Osh).

Construction of high rise buildings in the city centre, preferably instead of traditional low-rise housing

The question of high-rise housing, the reasons some in Osh support it, and the impact it could have on life in the city will be explored further in Chapter 9, since the discourse surrounding high-rise and low-rise building types provides an illuminating window onto urban issues in Osh. In terms of the aims of the Master plan however, this is one of the central ways in which the municipal authorities proposed to meet the aims of modernisation and regeneration in Osh. Whilst little has been constructed as yet (with the exception of some 5-6 storey block built after the Events) individuals from both the city Architect's office and the Architecture department at Osh Technological University were united in the opinion that this represented the best option for the city (IV12, IV13). Once again, this matches the vision set out in the *Renaissance of Osh*, which identifies the "construction of modern multi-storey buildings and structures" as a proposed result of

the plan, whilst simultaneously calling for the apparently dangerous and unsanitary single storey dwellings occupied by a large part of the city's population (Renaissance of Osh).

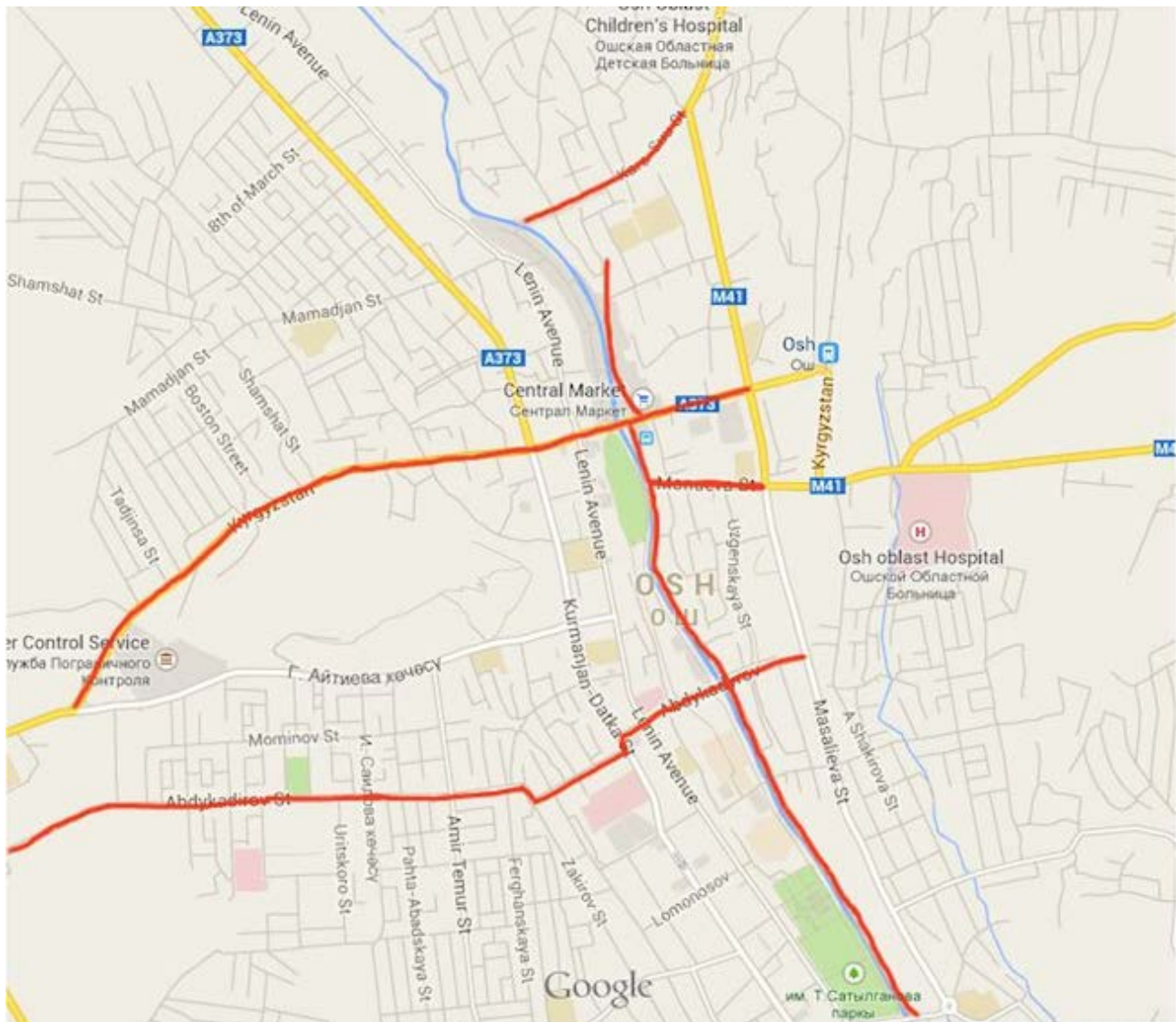


Figure 11. Map showing key roads to be widened in Osh (Source: GoogleMaps, with author's edits)

Widening of key arterial roads

Finally, in response to what one respondent called the city's "greatest problem", a programme of road widening has begun to be implemented in order to relieve traffic jams in the city centre (IV12). As part of this process Akburinskaya Street, which runs parallel to the Ak-Bura river through the

centre of Osh, has already been renovated, and at the time of my field research work was well advanced on widening and resurfacing Monueva Street, which would link Akburinskaya street to routes out of the city, without having to pass through the crowded bazaar. Work was just beginning on two further streets in this area - Oshskaya and Karasuuskaya - with the apparent intention of relieving the considerable congestion in the bazaar area. Another representative of a local organisation working quite closely with the municipality on this issue stated that once these were complete the focus would switch to widening Navoi and Abdukhadirov Streets, also situated in the city centre (IV10).

As the element of the Mayor's plans for city development that has so far progressed the most in Osh, the question of street widening can give a useful insight into some of the issues and challenges that attempts to implement a city Master Plan could well involve. The case of Monueva Street provides a useful snapshot in this regard.

6.3.3. Case Study: Monueva Street

Monueva Street is a small street in the heart of Osh, home to a predominantly ethnic Uzbek community living in traditional low-rise, walled housing compounds. Set back one block from the bustling central bazaar, it links Masalieva Street, one of Osh's main arterial roads, to the newly renovated Akburinskaya street that runs through the city's heart. The widening of this street, then, would link these roads, alleviating pressure on Masalieva Street by allowing drivers to traverse the city without having to pass by the chronically congested Navoi Street in the bazaar, and was referred to by one respondent as the "first step" in the wider implementation of the Master Plan (IV62, E). However, the project to widen Monueva Street also required the demolition of a number of inhabited houses. Although no-one I spoke with in Osh was able to give me the exact number of

houses demolished, one international organisation representative in Bishkek suggested that 22 homes had been knocked down, of which 4 were in fact houses that had been rebuilt by international donors following the June Events - a vivid example of the clash between different attempts to 'build back better' discussed earlier in this chapter (IV55). Of course, any development that involves expropriation of property is likely to be a complicated, and often controversial, process. In Osh the widening of Monueva Street brought to light three main issues: the fear that the demolitions were ethnically motivated, the perceived poor quality of the area families were relocated to, and concerns regarding due process and fair compensation to those who had lost property. Although Chapter 9 of this thesis will address the question of housing and its symbolic meanings in greater detail, it is worth spending a little time on the issue here in order to shed some light on the processes behind construction and redevelopment in Osh.



Figure 12. Construction in Monueva Street April 2013 (Source: Author's own)

I first came to hear about the demolitions on Monueva Street when a number of international organisation and NGO representatives used the case to illustrate their concerns that the Master planning process was being caught up in the problematic question of ethnicity in Osh (IV55, IV61, IV63). Certainly the Uzbek community has been disproportionately affected by the developments on Monueva Street - all of the householders to lose property were ethnic Uzbeks. However, the overwhelming impression of those closest to events on Monueva (from international and local organisations supporting residents and lobbying the Municipality, to residents themselves) is that ethnicity was not the driving force behind the decision to widen this street. As one high ranking international organisation worker put it, somewhat cynically, “no one played the ethnic card” (IV63, E). Whilst the fear amongst the wider Uzbek community in Osh may be that Monueva Street residents have lost their homes by dint of their ethnicity (IV14), this view didn’t seem to be shared by the Monueva residents themselves (IV09, IV62). Amongst these residents there is an acceptance that the work was probably necessary, but that the process should have been managed better. One woman whose house was still standing but slated for demolition at an unspecified future date explained further;

“Development is good, but the authorities need to consult with the population first - they should ask people’s opinions and permission before doing something. For example, here on Monueva Street they just arrived one morning and said that the houses would have to be demolished. There was no information, no warning” (IV34, U)

Perhaps some level of consultation and information dissemination with city residents would quell fears in the wider Uzbek community that the Master Plan is specifically targeting them. Unfortunately, the head of one local organisation confided to me that she had made precisely this

recommendation to the Mayor's office without success. Giving out information about future demolitions, they feared, would only cause "panic" in the population (IV10). The contrast between these two positions is striking - whilst Monueva residents wished to be more involved in the planning process, the Municipality appeared to perceive a more collaborative approach as dangerously destabilising. As Healey has demonstrated, the process of planning can in some ways be as important as the outcome, and this certainly seems to be the case with regards to Monueva Street (Healey 2006). Here residents were often pragmatic about the need to widen the road in a part of the city where streets often become clogged with traffic, but concerned about the way in which they were excluded from the planning process, their voices never heard and information withheld.

Whereas wider stakeholder inclusion in the planning process would have encouraged sharing of opinions and information, the lack of collaborative planning encouraged distrust and concerns that the plans were ethnically biased. Linked to perceptions that the development of Monueva Street targeted the Uzbek population are the serious concerns raised about the area of the city that affected homeowners have been relocated to. Walking in Monueva Street on a fiercely hot day in May, I came across a family loading bricks from the rubble of their home into a flat bed truck. These materials would be used to build a new house in On Adir, the large Uzbek neighbourhood situated on the South-western fringe of Osh where Monueva residents had been offered new land to build on. This was far from a like-for-like swap, the family complained "The place they want us to move to has no water, no electricity, it is 20 kilometres from the centre of town,¹⁰ when our previous house was at the centre. It was comfortable, convenient, close to the market" (IV31, U).

¹⁰ This is likely something of an exaggeration - the southernmost (and therefore furthest) tip of On Adir is around 10 kilometres from the central bazaar.

This family's frustration was mirrored across the city. One respondent described the area where land has been allocated to Monueva residents as being "like the surface of the moon" (IV09, E), whilst another local human rights worker lamented the lack of basic amenities such as water and electricity there. If the decision to widen Monueva Street was probably not driven by the wish to move Uzbeks out of the city's historic centre, then the decision to relocate families to such a remote part of town certainly does nothing to dispel impressions to the contrary. As one international community representative working on the issue put it, it's not the plan itself which is the problem, but "what comes after" (IV06, E). To return to Bollens' four models of planning, an apparently 'neutral' planning strategy which focusses only on technical questions and fails to consider the wider socio-political context of development may produce 'partisan' effects (Bollens 1998).

The final issue that caused friction during the development of Monueva Street was that of fair compensation for loss or damage of property. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this can be a particularly difficult undertaking in Kyrgyzstan; many households lack correct or up to date documents for their homes (IV09, IV62), and this problem is compounded by the absence of an adequate legal framework in place with which to carry out the expropriation of property and subsequent compensation (IV62, IV63). The case of Monueva Street has been no different in this respect. Initial compensation offers to the street's residents were low - purposefully so according to observers (IV09) - to the despair of residents. One woman complained that her offer wouldn't even cover the cost of the roof she had installed in her previous home, even after it had been raised significantly (IV31). Recognising this as a serious concern, local and international organisations intervened to offer legal advice to residents and set up an independent valuation mechanism, resulting in a significant rise in the value of compensation packages (IV52, IV10). Moreover, this legal assistance was then extended to residents of other streets slated for development (notably Oshskaya and Karasuuskaya streets) to ensure that they have the correct paperwork and accurate

valuations before the municipality comes knocking (IV09). Whilst the outcome in this case has been largely positive, it is likely that without the interventions of these organisations residents would have been forced to accept drastically lower compensation for the loss of their homes, which could have deepened perceptions of victimisation yet further.

Overall, then, Monueva Street offers a mixed picture of the way that future development may pan out in Osh. In terms of ensuring legal due process and meeting international standards, some international representatives expressed satisfaction that Monueva Street had in some ways been a dry run that had enabled them to set up useful mechanisms and learn lessons for the next round of development (IV62). They also acknowledged that the municipality had, to some extent, tried to act according to due process - these were not violently forced evictions, and there was some compensation (Ibid, IV06). At the same time, however, one senior international actor warned that attempts to reward these positive steps may backfire resulting in the local authorities feeling they can get away with acting with less care when the next wave of demolitions rolls around. There was, she warned, a “balancing act” to be mastered here (IV06, E).

When it comes to ethnicity, it is clear that the development of Monueva Street has disproportionately affected one ethnic group living in Osh. Many Uzbek families living on the street have lost their homes and found themselves relocated to the outskirts of the city, whilst others live with the knowledge their home may be next to be demolished. Whether this has been undertaken because of their ethnicity (as some feared) or simply through necessity (as others believed), the result does not look good. It has fuelled concerns that Uzbeks are being driven from the traditional heart of the city, with planning being used as a political tool in pursuit of “cultural cleansing” (Bevan 2006: 25, Weizman 2007). Since future street widening is also likely to take place in centrally located, largely Uzbek, neighbourhoods, it is easy to see how this could have a

deleterious effect on interethnic relations in the city. In this way urban planning in Osh is now acknowledged by international aid organisations as both a response to and potential cause of conflict in the city (IV63). This is far from the ideal of the architect as peace builder, and closer to the picture painted by Bollens and Weizman in which urban planning can be used as a tool of domination, control and even violence by one community over another (Weizman 2007, Bollens 1998).

Finally, the case of Monueva Street can give us an insight into the approach the Municipal authorities are likely to take with regards to the implementation of other elements of the Master Plan. Residents were given very little information regarding the proposed developments until the municipal authorities arrived on the street to begin the project. This lack of information was a source of great distress to residents on the street itself, and has led to concern in the wider city (especially among Uzbeks) that the same could happen to them. These concerns, and the rumours that go hand in hand with them, could be mitigated by providing information about future developments to the public. However, despite the repeated requests of local and international organisations, the Municipality has so far declined to make details of the plan public and undertake consultation on it. Indeed, even the relatively simple suggestion put to the Mayor's office by one highly regarded local organisation - to put up information panels warning residents which streets are affected by the plan - was dismissed by the local authorities (IV10).

This overview of reconstruction and regeneration projects since the 2010 violence sheds light on a number of important issues in Osh that speak to the wider issues of post-crisis reconstruction discussed in Chapter 2. Firstly, it underlines how difficult (and indeed, how ill advised) it is to try to separate post-crisis reconstruction initiatives from the ongoing urban development projects that preceded and followed the crisis, as the two will necessarily affect each other, both in the short and

long term. Perhaps it is better to see them as part of a continuum, where ‘normal’ urban construction, development and regeneration projects will gradually come to replace post-crisis reconstruction projects as the driving force for urban change as time passes. This is important. As we shall see in Chapters 7 - 10, both post-crisis and ‘peace time’ changes in the physical fabric of Osh are affecting the way residents experience the city, and its prospects for building sustainable peace, so both should be considered here. Secondly, this overview reminds us of the politicised nature of any intervention in the built environment, something which was explored in detail in Chapter 2. In this case, developments in Osh have hinted at the use of physical reconstruction projects as an instrument of peace building or human rights in the way that Charlesworth (2006) and Healey (2006) have advocated for (for example, the international community’s concern with ‘grounding’ the Uzbek community in the city). But they have also revealed a potential as a discriminatory tool, reminiscent of Weizman (2007) and Bollens’ (1998) concerns, as some residents of Monueva Street and members of the wider Uzbek community clearly fear. What is perhaps most interesting is that these different understandings of construction and reconstruction in Osh are being applied to the same projects and spaces, creating a tension about the purpose, meanings and effects of changes being introduced in the cityscape. This tension will be at the heart of the following chapters, where the focus shall be on some detailed case studies of places in Osh. Finally, the sections above have begun to demonstrate the role that collaborative planning - or even just transparency in planning - could have in lessening fear and tension and building more sustainably peaceful places in what is an already highly charged situation (Healey 2006). Unfortunately, however, there seem to have been few attempts to implement such an approach, particularly on the part of the municipal authorities.

6.4. Public perceptions of change in Osh

The previous sections have set out some of the key changes in the urban fabric of Osh in recent years, as well as those changes the local authorities would like to see occur in the near future, as the city has attempted to come to terms with the twin challenges of responding to the June 2010 violence and pursuing its development goals. What has not been clear so far is how these changes have been perceived by the city's residents. The next section of this chapter seeks to give a brief overview of this question, based on 40 interviews (some involving multiple participants) carried out with non-elite actors in the city in Spring 2013. As mentioned in the previous chapter, interview participants were quite representative of the ethnic and gender make-up of Osh, and included a wide spread of ages and occupations. Of course, using such a small sample size means that these findings are by no means exhaustive, nor can they be deemed to constitute an accurate survey of public opinion in Osh at the time. They do, however, accurately and briefly reflect the substance of the many discussions I was party to during four months of ethnographic fieldwork in Osh in 2013, and provide a thumbnail sketch of people's views of change in Osh in recent years.

Overall, resident perceptions of urban change in Osh were deeply mixed. Reading across the interviews carried out with residents of the city for this research, respondents were evenly split between those who generally expressed a belief that the city had changed for the better, those who believed it had changed for the worse, and those who didn't express an overwhelming opinion for the worse or better (only one respondent stated that the city simply hadn't changed at all).

This eloquently demonstrates the tension which exists at street level - most people agree that the city has changed in recent years, but they do not agree about the vector of this change. Digging a little deeper into this data is revealing, though not conclusive; although both the positive and

negative change groups were drawn from a wide range of ages, those who believed the city had become better were mostly ethnic Kyrgyz (8 out of 13, with one respondent whose ethnicity was not disclosed) and female (10 out of 13). Conversely, those who believe the city had got worse were mainly drawn from national minority communities (10 out of 13) with slightly more men represented (8 out of 13). Again, whilst far from exhaustive, this data does support the prevalent impression I gained during my time in Osh - that minority communities were in general less happy about the direction of change in Osh than members of the titular nationality (Kyrgyz). That women were more happy about these changes than men was not something that was immediately apparent during fieldwork, and only emerged through analysis of the data in the UK. This represents an intriguing finding, and one that will be examined in the next Chapter. Asking if people were optimistic or pessimistic about the city's future elicited a similarly mixed response, with 9 respondents saying they were optimistic, and 7 reporting that they felt pessimistic. Once again, the optimistic group was mainly composed of ethnic Kyrgyz (7 out of 9), and the pessimistic group of minority members (4 Uzbek and 1 Russian out of a total of 7 respondents).

Since the majority of residents reported perceiving some kind of change in Osh in recent years, it was pertinent to ask *how* they thought the city had changed. Respondents identified a wide variety of changes, both positive and negative. Amongst the positive changes identified by respondents the most commonly identified developments were the enhancement of parks and green spaces, the improvement of roads in the city, and the creation of new buildings (although no one building was consistently identified), new monuments and new bus stops. When it came to negative changes respondents frequently highlighted the loss of jobs and factories in Osh, the decline of multiculturalism in the city, and the rise of what was perceived as a poorer 'mentality' amongst residents.

Only two of these responses seemed to be particularly tied to one ethnicity in particular - only Kyrgyz respondents pointed to the existence of new buildings or new monuments in the city as evidence of positive change. All other indicators of change listed above were reported by fairly mixed groups of participants. Similarly, there was a generally even mix of ages and genders represented in those reporting the positive and negative changes set out above, with the exception of those lamenting the loss of jobs and factories in the city, and the decline of multiculturalism, who tended to be drawn from respondents aged at least 30 and over (and therefore old enough to remember the city under the Soviet Union first hand). One striking element of the perceived changes set out above is in their nature. Those things identified as positive developments are all noticeably concrete and easy to identify in the cityscape: Renovated parks, better roads, new bus stops, buildings and monuments all represent tangible and visible changes in the fabric of the city. In contrast to this, the negative changes identified by respondents are much less visible. The decline in employment opportunities, multiculturalism and 'mentality' of residents cannot be quite so easily read from the physical fabric of the city (although as we shall see from the following chapters, that is not to say that these issues are not intricately bound up in Osh's bricks and mortar).

One reading of this could be that recent relatively minor changes in the landscape of the city, such as the renovation of bus stops and parks, have been effectively deployed by the city authorities to satisfy residents' appetites for change, without addressing larger underlying issues such as unemployment and interethnic tension that many citizens believe are undermining Osh's future. Given the focus amongst many city residents on the recent developments in the centre of Osh, it is no surprise that another very strong message emerged from these non-elite interviews. This narratives identified Mayor Melis Myrzakmatov as the driving force of positive change in the city. Expressed in 12 separate interviews by respondents of all ages and genders, crucially this was an overwhelmingly Kyrgyz message - of these 12 respondents 10 were ethnic Kyrgyz, one did not

disclose his ethnicity, and one was Uzbek. Given the strength of this message, it is worth spending some time focussing on the figure of the former Mayor and his relationship with urban planning in Osh.

6.4.1. Melis Myrzakmatov: Building popularity in the city

Melis Myrzakmatov is perhaps the pre-eminent figure in Osh's political landscape in recent years, a politician as lauded by some as he is hated by others. Appointed by former President Bakiyev in 2009 Myrzakmatov was, until he lost his position in the elections of early 2014, the only Bakiyev appointee to outlast his regime. Although the government did try to oust him soon after the June events, he proudly proclaimed in August 2010 that the decisions of the northern provisional government didn't carry the same weight in the south, and carried on as Mayor of the city regardless of the wishes of Bishkek (Kommersant 19/08/10, accessed 02/04/14). A self proclaimed nationalist (Ibid) Myrzakmatov authored a book about the June events, *In search of Truth*, in which he placed the blame for the violence squarely on the shoulders of Uzbek separatists, going so far as to claim that thousands of Uzbek troops had massed on the border, ready to support their compatriots in Osh (Megoran 2012, ICG 2012). The international inquiry set up to investigate the violence in Osh noted wryly in its final report that "The nationalist rhetoric of the Mayor of Osh, Melis Myrzakmatov, was not conducive to the calming of inter-ethnic tensions" (KIC 2011, iv). This hints at the divisive way in which Myrzakmatov is viewed by many; a strong leader who sticks up for the south and gets things done (as many local residents were keen to tell me), or a nationalist whose interventions actively marginalise the city's Uzbek population, further undermining prospects for sustainable peace in the city (ICG 2012). In addition to concerns regarding his nationalist politics, rumours have long swirled around Myrzakmatov's links to organised criminal groups operating in Osh, especially those controlling the highly lucrative drugs smuggling routes

that pass through Osh on the way from Afghanistan to the West (Freedom House 2012; Markowitz 2013). Myrzakmatov is undoubtedly a wealthy man, with considerable business interests stretching from the vast Kara-Suu market to the Osh Tataan indoor shopping centre in the south of Osh.

During this research the Mayor was repeatedly and forcefully evoked as the driving force behind urban redevelopment in Osh. He was “doing everything to change the city” (IV15, E), and had “built in two years what it would take other mayors ten years to build” (IV42, K). Kanykei, a middle-aged Kyrgyz woman working to support her son’s education abroad in Cyprus exhorted “Write this down! You must go back to your country and tell people that we have such a man [as Melis Myrzakmatov] in Kyrgyzstan. If only we had three or four like him Kyrgyzstan would be a great country” (IV41, E). From an old lady selling sweets from a makeshift stall in a city centre park to the offices of the city architect, the message was the same (at least amongst the ethnic Kyrgyz population of the city) - Mayor Myrzakmatov was changing the city around them. Of course, Myrzakmatov is far from the first Mayor in possession of a forceful personality to be so identified with initiatives in the city they serve - one need look no further than London’s ‘Boris Bikes’ for an example of this closer to home. However, in the case of Osh, the perception of Myrzakmatov as *personally* responsible for (re)construction in the city appears to go further than this. In this his approach was far closer to that of former Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, as we shall see later in this Chapter. Time and again respondents would tell me of Myrzakmatov “he built the park where we are sitting now” (IV43, K); “he is building things for young people (...) he has also built the tallest building in Osh” (IV45, K); “he’s improved the roads” (IV48, R); “He’s modernising buildings” (IV15, E). Everything from clearing stalls away from crowded roads, to building monuments, to putting up street lights and renovating public parks and squares was personally attributed to the Mayor rather than to the Municipality more broadly. Indeed, one

respondent went so far as to suggest that Myrzakmatov might be paying for these developments out of his own pocket (IV17).

Given that many of these projects were in fact funded and managed by international donors working in the city, Myrzakmatov's ability to present them as his own achievements to such a large portion of his domestic audience was a source of frustration and no little concern amongst international and NGO representatives in Osh, who were wary that their efforts to improve living conditions for city residents might inadvertently bolster the popularity of such a controversial figure (IV06). These concerns seem well founded: many Kyrgyz respondents gave a very specific timeframe for when Myrzakmatov had begun to enact these improvements in the cityscape - the last 2-3 years, in other words since the June Events (IV12, IV13, IV18, IV19). Although it was this violence that precipitated the involvement of many of these organisations in Osh itself, Myrzakmatov seemed to be reaping the benefits of this work in terms of his popularity and standing with many city residents. This exchange between two ethnic Kyrgyz teachers of English, Aigul and Zhyldyz, is revealing of this trend;

“Zhyldyz: I can say we are lucky with our ... etot mer [trans. this Mayor]... Mayor! With our Mayor, he did a lot of things. In spite of, in 2010 we had just a great tragic war between nations, and he ... it seems to me that during three years, it doesn't trace from that tragedy. I think that in spite inside of that persons this can live forever, for somebodies, but just now we visually cannot see it.

Interviewer: Ok, so since the events the city has become better?

Zhyldyz: Yes! Become better, and the city is growing day by day

Interviewer: That's good. And this is because of the Mayor?

Zhyldyz: Yes

Aigul: Mayor is working greatly, the other Mayors who had worked before, so they didn't do...

Zhyldyz: Anything!

Aigul: ... many things for people. Now this Mayor is doing all, he with his initiative, erm, he built some sculptures

Zhyldyz: Monuments, monuments"

(IV19, E)

For Zhyldyz and Aigul, the Mayor has through his own hard work and agency, managed to erase the scars of the June Events from the urban landscape (if not from people's memories) in three short years, a feat they doubt any of the city's previous Mayors could have achieved. Never mind that many individuals involved in the reconstruction effort had complained to me that Myrzakmatov was a hindrance to this work rather than a help (as seen earlier in this chapter), to many ordinary Kyrgyz residents of Osh, the three years since the June violence had helped cement Myrzakmatov's reputation as someone who could get things done in Osh. This reputation is especially important when we consider the rapid downturn in quality of life, and the quality of the material environment, that followed the end of the Soviet Union in Kyrgyzstan. Seen in this context, Myrzakmatov's apparent ability to achieve visible and tangible results in the city impressed even respondents who were otherwise uncomfortable with his nationalist leanings. One respondent eloquently described this tension between discomfort at the Mayor's politics and happiness that he appeared capable of changing things as Tolkun, a Kyrgyz man in his 50s. Elsewhere in our interview Tolkun would express his sadness at the loss of Osh's culture of interethnic tolerance, and argue passionately that physical traces of the city's diversity should be preserved, but when it came to the Mayor he was keen to stress his achievements, saying;

“So, our Mayor he is... though people think that he is a nationalist, so, he’s made more than others for the city. He changed the city, it became brighter and it was constructed. He does everything for the city. He went against the system” (...) at the beginning, before the events, he was considered a nationalist. They said, they said that his guys killed Uzbeks, and other things... but... erm... I don’t think it’s true that he went out and killed somebody. Maybe he frightened somebody. I don’t know - maybe he has a clandestine group, maybe he even has yakuza,¹¹ I don’t know. But his contribution... A person who does not work never makes a mistake. So maybe he does make mistakes - I can’t say that he is an ideal man. But he has a desire to change the world, to change the city” (IV25, R)

Tolkun, then, was willing to accept that the Mayor might threaten people, might even be part of a serious organised crime syndicate, as long as he gets things done in the city.

This picture of Myrzakmatov is reminiscent of another powerful post-Soviet Mayor about whom far more has been written, and the comparison is instructive. Yuri Luzkhov was Mayor of Moscow from 1992 to 2010, a period during which the city underwent immense transformation in all spheres, not least its physical face. Using his extensive power over life in the city (what one observer termed “hyper mayoral powers” (Cecil 2011: 77)) Luzhkov embarked upon a series of massive construction projects aimed at meeting the city’s desperate need for residential accommodation, and reclaiming Moscow’s place, and self image, as a national and global powerhouse (O’Loughlin and Kolossov 2002). The ability to push through these projects - again, against the often chaotic background of post-Soviet Russia - allowed Luzhkov to cultivate an image

¹¹ This refers to the well known Japanese organised crime syndicates called ‘Yakuza’, roughly equivalent to the Italian ‘Mafia’ or other organised crime groups.

amongst residents of a man who gets stuff done. Writing in 1999, seven years into his time in office, Jensen described how Luzhkov's attention to the smaller scale elements of the urban landscape encountered by ordinary muscovites in the course of their daily lives cemented this reputation;

“The Mayor has a reputation of getting things done - even to the smallest detail - never mind exactly how. Luzhkov has spent lavishly in support of culture and the arts. He has fixed broken street lamps, filled potholes, repaired sewers, restored crumbling historic facades, and ordered shopkeepers to install Christmas decorations outside their businesses” (Jensen 1999: 84)

The existence of tangible proof of the city's renewal in the everyday life of city residents, from street lighting to potholes to Christmas decorations, perhaps made these same residents more willing to overlook the accusations of extensive links with the criminal underworld and vast personal economic gain (by dint of his wife's massive construction business) that dogged Luzhkov throughout his administration (Cecil 2011, Jensen 1999). Certainly, it is a model that Myrzakmatov seemed keen to follow in Osh, where praise for road surfacing or mandatory neighbourhood cleaning initiatives he had announced far outweighed concerns about alleged criminal links or conflicts of interest in my conversations with city residents. Luzhkov's many interventions in the physical landscape of Moscow, then, can be seen to have served a number of purposes. They improved the image of the city for which he was responsible, thus improving his own image and popularity, whilst the very ability to effect these changes also served as a continuous reassertion and demonstration of his own power. Through these interventions Luzhkov was also able to reward his own constituencies in the criminal, economic and political spheres that had sustained him in power for so long, whilst simultaneously enabling his own attempts to capture a share of the resources. It is for this reason, then, that Jensen has described Luzhkov's mayoralty as “patrimonialism in one city” (Jensen 1999: 94). Further parallels between the approach of the two Mayors can be found in

Golubchikov's description of the Luzhkov administration's approach to the city's Masterplan. Although this plan, elaborated and adopted in 2000, was open to public consultation for one month (whereas the Masterplan in Osh remains secret), Golubchikov reports that no "intensive" public discussions took place about this, and there is no evidence that anything changed in the plan as a result of this consultation (Golubchikov 2004: 241). Instead, he writes, "It seems that the vision of the General Plan by Mr Luzhkov and his government is that it is not a public good but Moscow government's property. They have created the plan and have got the exclusive authority to implement and modify it—if necessary, bypassing the formal procedures and ignoring the opinion of local residents" (Ibid). Substitute 'Myrzakmatov' for "Luzhkov", and 'Osh' for 'Moscow', and this sentence would represent a fair assessment of the Osh authorities' attitudes to the city Masterplan so far.

Myrzakmatov, then, is not alone in trying to instrumentalise the built environment in this way. He has followed in the footsteps of others, such as Luzhkov, in using construction projects in Osh to underpin his reputation as someone who gets things done. What is more, he is a shrewd enough politician to marshall the benefits from projects that he himself is not actually responsible for - such as the many donor and NGO funded projects that have sprung up in Osh since the June Events - and use these to further burnish his reputation as a man of action. By presenting real and tangible changes in the quotidian environment of Osh, he has won over large sections of a city weary of post-Soviet decline and underachieving politicians. As mentioned at the start of this section, there is a strong ethnic element to the question of Myrzakmatov's supporters too. Almost every resident who expressed support for the then Mayor, a self proclaimed nationalist, in our conversations was ethnic Kyrgyz. Given that some of the most striking developments in Osh so far, such as the rehabilitation of the park at the corner of Karasuuskaya and Zainabedinova streets, and Razzakov

Park a little further up the road, have occurred in strongly Kyrgyz areas of the city, there is more than a little suspicion that Myrzakmatov was using such projects to reward what he saw as his natural constituency. This would certainly conform to the patterns of patronage politics described in Chapter 4, which are common in Kyrgyzstan (Fumagalli 2005). When compared to the demolitions taking place in strongly Uzbek areas such as Monueva Street, and seemingly proposed in the city Masterplan, such a suggestion becomes all the more compelling.

Of course, there is one final striking parallel between the cases of Myrzakmatov and Luzhkov. For all that their strategies may have earned them popularity and power in their own cities, this did not protect them from dismissal by the central power, the President. However, these actions did produce - and continue to produce - effects on the residents who live in the environments they created. In Osh, Myrzakmatov's use of city planning and construction to underpin his own position can help to explain the politicisation of the planning process, and the widespread fears that the Masterplan may be ethnically motivated. It is for this reason that the following three chapters will focus in more closely on three specific areas where change has either occurred or been planned in the urban landscape of Osh in the years since the Events; the bazaar, monumental space, and housing. These chapters will detail what change has occurred - and is planned for the future - in each space, what is the reasoning behind these changes, and how these changes are being experienced by the people that live in and use these spaces. Undertaking in-depth investigations into specific elements of the urban landscape will provide greater insight into why resident reactions to urban change in Osh has been so mixed, and ask what this can tell us about struggles over power and identity in the city.

Chapter 7: Case Study - Solving “our Bazaar problems”: Young women negotiating public space in Osh

7.1. Introduction

The question of ethnicity will come to the fore time and again in this thesis, as it does in writing about Osh more generally. Given that violence along ethnic lines has flared up in the city twice in recent history, this is perhaps understandable. But as we saw in Chapter 4, it would be a mistake to believe that this is the only issue producing effects in Osh today. To focus on ethnicity at the expense of other identities and rallying points that are meaningful to the city’s population would risk both essentialising ethnic identity in Osh, and attributing all problems to this one source, overlooking other important forces and lines of fracture at play. For this reason, this chapter steps away from the question of ethnicity a little to refocus on the question of gender - specifically, how might women be experiencing space in Osh differently to men, and how are changes in the city affecting this? The notion of the gendered city as a space which both reflects and contributes to the construction of the social organisation of gender relations was introduced in Chapter Two. The gendered city was introduced there as a prime example of the way in which urban spaces constitute part of a discourse of power - in this case patriarchal power relations. This chapter will pick up this theme by interrogating one space in the city detail - the central bazaar - paying particular attention to the shifting role it plays with regards to men and women in Osh. As we shall see, the bazaar is literally and metaphorically central to life in the city, and as such provides a particularly fruitful space to ask how people in Osh relate to such an important place, and how this is evolving in the post-Events era.

The centrality of the bazaar can perhaps best be evoked by a vignette from the field. My first impression of Osh's sprawling bazaar was of a confusing, disordered place, one that didn't conform to the shape or layout of markets I had known elsewhere in Kyrgyzstan or further afield. At first glance I felt I had little hope of learning to navigate it. Yet by the end of my stay, I had come to understand its layout well enough to know where to buy the best *kurut* (a kind of small, hard sour cheese snack) and other distinctive local milk products, as well as which stalls were likely to stock more exotic vegetables early in the season. I could guide visitors to the area of the bazaar, a few steps from Alisher Navoi street, where traditional Kyrgyz clothing and musical instruments could be bought, or lead them up through the bustle of the food stalls on Oshskaya street to the *lagman*¹² restaurants beyond. This previously illegible space, full of the basic substance of daily life in Osh, had become legible to me.



Figure 13. The central bazaar 2013 (Source: Zach Krajmer)

¹² *Lagman* is a kind of noodle dish popular in Kyrgyzstan.

Over time I also came to understand what *couldn't* be bought in the bazaar: For example the traditional Ikat patterned Uzbek cloth that nowadays would require a trip outside the city to the even larger Kara Suu bazaar, though it used to be sold in Osh. I came to discover that away from the busy main alleyways, there remained large sections of the market where stalls stood empty, deserted after the 2010 violence, or where people simply didn't visit very much anymore (such as the spice stalls in the covered section on the left bank of the Ak Bura river). Later in my stay I witnessed first hand as stallholders desperately pulled their wares out of the way of the steamroller being used to prepare the ground for the new road being laid along Oshskaya street, through the heart of the bazaar (part of the Mayor's road widening initiative discussed in Chapter 6). These ongoing works made food shopping into an ever changing obstacle course, as impromptu bridges were set up over new drainage pipes and water channels being dug along the road sides.



Figure 14. Stallholders in the central market pack their goods next to a steamroller, 2013

(Source: Zach Krahmer)

Throughout, it seemed to me that the bazaar is not only a subject of change - whether from post-Soviet economic liberalisation, the 2010 riots or current construction projects - but also a witness to these changes. The products on sale, the people selling them, and the shifting areas of focus within the bazaar itself all bear witness to developments in the wider city. Perhaps this is why in my early weeks in the city one of my research assistants, Cholpon, insisted on guiding me on a walk through the bazaar. Starting at Kara-Suuskaya street, and progressing through the near deserted Jayma clothing bazaar, before cutting through a nearby mahalla and emerging onto Oshskaya street, where food stalls lined the sides of the road all the way to the junction with the busy Navoi street. As we walked, she reflected on the sights and sounds we passed, touching on everything from the violence of 2010 (the scars of which are still visible from the scorched walls of former stalls in sections of the market), to the ever-present problem of corruption, and the controversial figure of Mayor Myrzakhmatov.

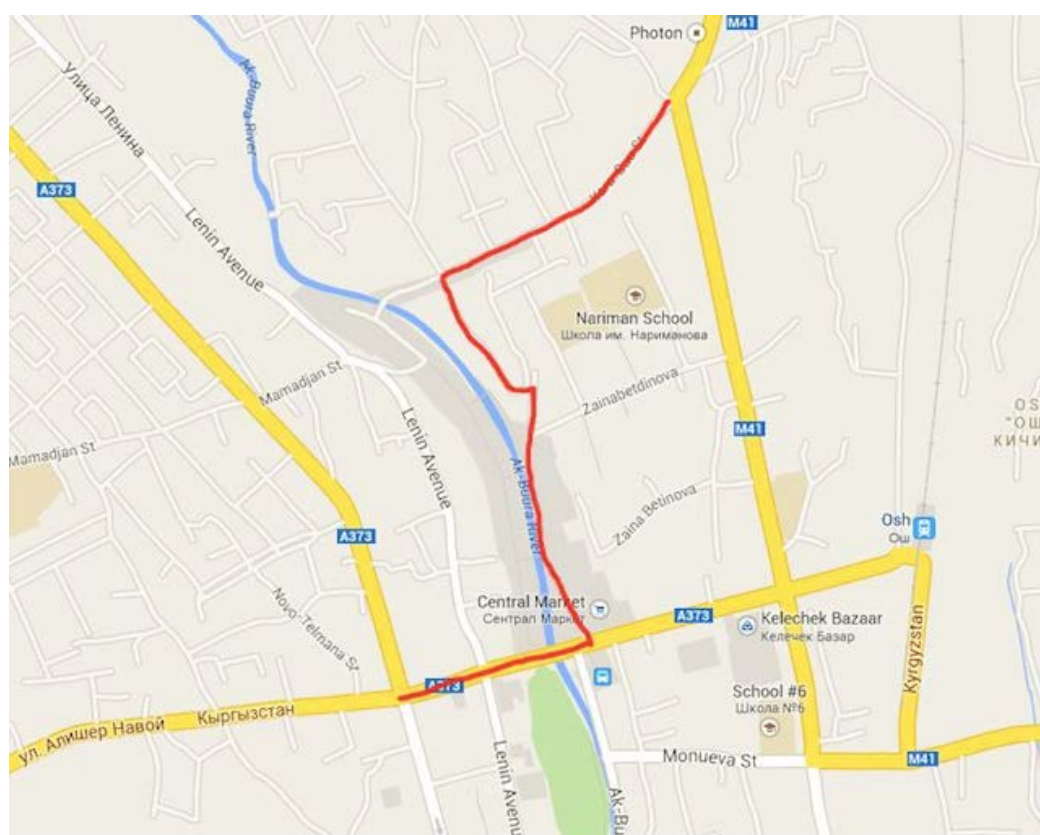


Figure 15. Map showing the location of the central market, and the route of my walk with Cholpon (Source: GoogleMaps with authors edits)

7.2 Thinking with the bazaar

Cholpon's insistence on using the bazaar in order to explain the city is a perfect example of the phenomenon of "thinking with the bazaar" identified by Liu (Liu 2012; 31). Put simply, this refers to the way that Osh residents repeatedly use the bazaar as an "idiom" to explain issues and trends in contemporary Kyrgyzstan (Liu 2012; 21). Liu vividly evokes the diverse forces acting on Osh, and how they play out in the space of the bazaar:

"Strolling the central bazaar, one witnesses the hawking of local and global commodities; the conversion of foreign currencies; the jostling of different ethnicities, languages, lifestyles, and professions; the juxtaposition of new affluence and widespread poverty; the precarious balance between the opportunities of innovative enterprise and the nostalgic yearning for state paternalism." (Liu 2012; 21)

And yet the bazaar is more than simply a convenient space within which the interaction and negotiation of these forces can be observed. Liu demonstrates how to residents of Osh, speaking about the bazaar becomes a way of speaking about and explaining questions as wide ranging as the political and economic transition from the Soviet socialist system to western style capitalism, or perceptions of contemporary public morality. In this way Liu recounts how elderly Uzbek residents would illustrate their concerns about declining standards of public morality, by insisting that stallholders in the bazaar could leave their goods unattended at night in the pre and very early Soviet era, without having to worry they might be stolen (Liu 2012; 32). Such narratives demonstrate how the bazaar has come to be a *lieux de mémoire* for many in Osh. To return to Nora's words, it serves as a "material, functional and symbolic" site through which these residents can remember what it means, and has always meant, to be from Osh (Nora 1996: 14)

Although Liu focuses more specifically on Osh's Uzbek community, it became clear through this research that this mechanism of thinking with the bazaar, and its role as a touchstone of memory, continues to be employed by many residents in the city today. Everyone from teenage Kyrgyz girls, a middle aged Uzbek man and an elderly Tatar lady used the trope of the bazaar to explain their experiences of contemporary Osh in their interviews. The aim of this case study, then, is twofold; on the one hand it will seek to identify which narratives residents are using the bazaar to recount and explain, and how these are being expressed through the space of the bazaar. At the same time, it will reflect on how changes in the bazaar since the 2010 violence, and those planned for the future, interact with and affect these narratives, and the people expressing them. Before that, however, it will be useful to consider why the bazaar occupies such a central position in people's conceptions of Osh.

7. 3. The bazaar at the heart of Osh

The bazaar is central to life in Osh in a great many ways. First and foremost, it is a vastly significant source of income and employment in the city, especially since the closure of the factories of the Soviet era (Liu 2012). What is more, it is the city's most important shopping destination, where residents can purchase everything from food, to clothing, household goods and toiletries, as well as larger items such as prams, musical instruments or electrical goods. It serves as an informal information point, and all day long a PA system broadcasts announcements and small ads throughout the market. As such, it is visited by large numbers of Osh residents everyday. Indeed, in conversations with respondents the bazaar was the single destination that most people reported visiting in a "normal week", regardless of age, gender or ethnicity.

It is also geographically central, stretching northwards along the banks of the river Ak Bura from Alisher Navoi street. Zakharova (1997) explains how the bazaar historically formed one of the two main hubs around which the city developed (the other being the Sulaiman mountain) in her book *The historical-architectural development of the city of Osh*. Here she describes how the buildings that were constructed around the bazaar represented the most architecturally significant in Osh, comprising “architectural jewels” such as the Alymbek Paravanchi Datka Madrissa (Zakharova, 1997: 69). Although these buildings were destroyed during the Soviet era, their legacy remains in the central position of the bazaar in contemporary Osh (Zakharova 1997).

The bazaar also informs the historical identity of the city, and has often been invoked by historians (and local residents) seeking to situate Osh in a wider historical context. The bazaar is heralded as physical proof of the city’s identity as a “fabled silk road city” (Hanks, 2011: 177). It testifies to the city’s past glories as “the greatest scientific-cultural and economic centre in Kyrgyzstan” (Amanbaeva and Abdullaev, 2000), and one of the most important centres on the legendary silk road trading route (Malabaev, 2000). Furthermore, the bazaar speaks to the history of the city in another way. It is used to explain the unique ethnic and cultural identity of Osh, especially by authors seeking to underline the considerable periods of interethnic peace and harmony the city has known. As such, the bazaar represents the central point of a system of “symbiotic economic interdependence” that benefited both the urban Uzbek residents of the city and the nomadic Kyrgyz herdsmen from the surrounding region (Megoran, 2013; 896. Kenensariiev, 2000). Crucially, Megoran has stressed the bazaar’s central positioning in traditional proclamations of good interethnic relations between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities, encapsulated in the previously often repeated statement “Our bazaars are one” (Megoran 2010). These explanations of the bazaar as the keystone of mercantile and interethnic transactions in the city’s past represents one reason why Liu has characterised the bazaar itself as an “idiom of exchange”, though he noted that

this function was severely undermined by the violence of 2010, which hit the bazaar hard (Liu, 2012: 21).

The central role of the bazaar in Osh's history and identity is not lost on its residents today. Sitting in a city centre cafe one evening Tolkun, a middle aged Kyrgyz man, broke off from reminiscing about a youth spent listening to bootlegged Rolling Stones albums to set out his vision for Osh's future. Tourism would be key to growing the economy, he explained, but if city development continued along its current path there would be nothing left for the tourists to see. Taking up the popular reprise of Zadneprovsky's estimate of the city's age, he explained:

"It turns out that Osh is a more ancient city than Rome, one of the ancient cities in the world, but we have no evidence. In spite of these stones which are exhibited in the museum, we have no other evidence. They razed the bazaar, which...er...it had existed for 300-400 years. It is for sure, on this place was a bazaar, an ancient one, one of the ancient; from the beginning of time there was a bazaar, all people they came here and bought, and left. So now they want to build there, reconstruct the city - on this place they want to build a recreation area! Yes, it goes without saying we need it, but we have to save our history." (IV25, R)

In Tolkun's explanation the bazaar becomes a symbol of Osh's glorious and ancient silk road heritage, one that has just about weathered the storm of 70 odd years of Soviet rule only to find itself under renewed threat from contemporary development. It is also presented as one possible answer to the economic problems that had been plaguing the city, and the country more widely, as a source of tourist revenue. Tolkun was the only interviewee to express this concern so clearly, but he was certainly not the only one grappling with these issues, with several respondents acknowledging the important role this historical site might play in the future of the city (IV14, IV49).

Finally, the bazaar plays a very important social role in the city. It is a place that people come to gossip, to exchange information, and to advertise cars and apartments for sale via the continuous announcements piped over the external PA system. Since so many city residents visit the bazaar each week, it becomes a place where you run into friends and colleagues who live outside your neighbourhood and trade news. In short, it is what Liu has termed a place of “intense sociality” (Liu 2012: 30), though as we shall see in the following section the character of this sociality has changed for some in the wake of the June events. Perhaps most importantly of all, given the context of this investigation, the bazaar is a powerful place of memory. To return to Atkinson’s formulation, the bazaar is one of the “ordinary spaces where memory erupts” (Atkinson 2007: 521). As a touchstone it is full almost to bursting with memories of life in Osh - a place of peaceful exchange and coexistence *and* a site of terrible inter-communal violence; a place where Islamic heritage, silk road history and Soviet modernity collide. Above all, it is a space that is used by the majority of city residents on a regular basis.

A close reading of my interviews in Osh has identified several narratives that emerged when people speak about the bazaar, and these will be investigated more thoroughly in the following sections. In these narratives the bazaar becomes emblematic of the way that different groups experience and use the city. On the one hand, minorities - and particularly minority men - use the bazaar to illustrate their increasing exclusion from the city, especially from its spaces of leisure. On the other hand young women are increasingly speaking about the bazaar (and the changes they would like to see there) as a way of trying to mediate the increasing tension between their globalised aspirations and the ‘traditional’ expectations they are subject to, as shall be seen in section 5 of this chapter. Finally, section 6 will explore the ways in which young women are trying to capitalise on this period of change in the urban landscape of Osh, and in the bazaar in particular, in order to carve out safe spaces in the city for themselves.

7.4 When the bazaar is not the bazaar - narrating exclusion

Although they overwhelmingly used it on a weekly basis, a number of the non-Kyrgyz residents I spoke with used the bazaar in our conversations as a way of explaining their increasing feelings of exclusion from the city, especially its public spaces. In these narratives respondents often contrasted the bazaar as they remember it in the past - described as aesthetically pleasing and easy to navigate - with the messy, disordered space they perceive today. Perhaps more significantly, they recounted how the market has been transformed from a space that was enjoyable to visit, as much about social interactions as about purchasing food and other items, to the purely functional space they experience today. As Maria, an elderly Tatar lady accompanied by her daughter, explained:

“Maria: I usually shop at the main market...”

Daughter: We have to watch what we spend, I’ve been to all the markets to see where it is cheapest to buy.

Maria: The market used to be very different - it was more colourful before. Everyone would have their products laid out on the floor, it looked like a beautiful, colourful carpet. People would shout out to you ‘come and buy my lovely apples’, ‘come and buy my fresh apricots’, but now it is silent. It was because the sellers were Uzbek - marketing, selling, it is in their blood.” (IV27, E)

This evocative description of the bazaar formed part of a wider conversation we were having about the changes in the city since the events, from its ethnic make up to the daily soundscape Maria encountered when she left her house. The quote above evokes the sounds and sights of an idealised market, setting it as a beautiful place, one that Maria found real pleasure in visiting, that has since been lost to her. The perceived loss of access to such enjoyable public spaces has left residents such as Maria feeling stranded; still able to use the bazaar to shop (indeed, compelled to due to the high

prices elsewhere), but finding it qualitatively reduced, no longer the enjoyable place to visit it once was. As Maria herself put it (clearly relishing the opportunity to practice her impeccable English) “now we are here, betwixt and between, just waiting - we don’t know whether to stay here or go somewhere else, so we wait” (IV27, E). This position is familiar to many members of smaller minority groups in Kyrgyzstan, especially those deported to Central Asia during Stalinist purges as was the case for Maria’s family (Schmidt and Sagynbekova 2008).

Such sentiments were shared by Zarif, an Uzbek accountant in his late thirties. Zarif recalled the bazaar of the past as “a good place”, well kept, with goods such as vegetables, meat and clothing all neatly assigned to their proper place (IV21, E). He described the “beautiful Chaikhanas” (tea houses) that ran along the bazaar, where one could eat, drink and meet with friends, contrasting this with the place he dismissed today as “a mess”. Again, this fitted into the wider story of exclusion that he told me, lamenting the fact that his once “beautiful” city had become a place where he was afraid to venture to many areas of the city, and where he now felt “like a refugee” (IV21, E). Whereas once the bazaar had been an attractive place, and an enjoyable environment in which to spend leisure time, it now fitted into a different image of the city as a dangerous, unpleasant and unwelcoming place. Perhaps the most striking use of the bazaar to talk about this sense of exclusion from the city, though, came during a discussion with Otajon and Shavkat, two young Uzbek men working as teachers in the same school. Responding to my question about the places they would usually visit in Osh, Shavkat became visibly frustrated as he tried to explain the distinction he made between the bazaar as he experienced it today - a place that was strictly for shopping, and served no other purpose - and as he used to experience it.

“Shavkat: [laughs] Kuda ty poidesh?! Kuda? [trans. Where do you go? Where?!] 2010. Before we visited these places, but now we visit but we don’t feel happiness, OK? We don’t see any effect of our

spending time. Before 2010, before this time, we visited other places, we go hiking, and we go these places - to bazaar, but you know, that's not bazaar, that's... that's not bazaar! that's not! It's... kak skazat? [trans. how to say?] That's [unclear] yeah? Evil, it's evil...

Interviewer: Yeah, so where, if you don't like going to the bazaar, where do you go if you want to buy?

Otajon: No, we cannot say that we never go to bazaar, er, we go to bazaar, but...

Shavkat: We go to shop! But that's not bazaar

Otajon: No, not to walk, only if we need, we go there" (IV22, E)

For Shavkat and Otajon, their unease at visiting the bazaar reflects the unease they now felt in visiting public spaces in the rest of the city. They went on to talk about a park in the centre of Osh (*Fontan*) and the billiard clubs that they used to be able to visit, but now avoided in order not to provoke any “conflicts” (IV22). More than this, however, they seem to see the very meaning and character of the bazaar to have been transformed by the violence of June 2010. The bazaar is no longer the bazaar in its fullest, social sense, but has become something “evil”. The essential qualities of the space - as a pleasurable place to walk and socialise - have been stripped away, reducing it to its barest functions of buying and selling. For Shavkat and Otajon, and for Maria and Zarif also, the bazaar is no longer the place of “intense sociality” described by Liu, or the symbol of Osh’s mercantile and multicultural identity evoked by Megoran; it is simply a place to buy food before withdrawing from a public space which, like so many others in Osh, has become unfamiliar and threatening to them. This concern was echoed by international and non-governmental organisation workers I met with in Osh, who recounted the problems met by Uzbek stallholders in the bazaar since the events. In many cases, they explained, these stallholders were forced to pay protection money, or a ‘roof’, in order to continue their business there, actions which contributed to the increasingly mono-ethnicisation of important public spaces in the city (IV06, IV29).

This dislocation seems all the more extreme for Zarif, Shavkat and Otajon. Whilst Maria's description of the past bazaar still presented it as serving a function (commerce) albeit in a more pleasant way, the men's descriptions focus on the social-leisure function of the space, lamenting the loss of the bazaar as a place of recreation. Such a distinction raises the question of whether the bazaar should be considered as a gendered space. Certainly, during the time of this research the bazaar was a place that was used by men and women - the majority of shoppers were female, but men also did their shopping there. A large proportion of the stallholders were women, but certain roles in the market such as the cobblers and porters, were always performed by men. On the whole the main parts of the bazaar were dominated by a constantly moving throng of people buying and selling throughout the day, especially women buying food and domestic products. It does not appear to be a space that women are prevented from accessing due to the "cultural symbolic meanings" referred to by Fenster earlier in this investigation (Fenster 2005). Berna Özcan has highlighted the important role of women in Kyrgyzstan's bazaars, showing how this pushed the level of female entrepreneurship in Kyrgyzstan to around 30% (one of the highest in the region), even finding its way into popular idiom via the saying "'*Erkek kazanda, aial bazarda*' (emphasising that women look after men through their bazaar activities)" (Berna Özcan in Welter et al 2006).

That women are so prominent in the bazaar suggests at first glance that this is a space to which they have free and unimpeded access. However, women's apparent mobility in the bazaar should not be read as the threat to patriarchal order (Massey 1994). As Maria's account demonstrates, even in the more pleasant past, her use of the bazaar was mainly linked to its function as an extension of the private sphere, a place where she bought the food and other goods needed to fulfil her duties within the home. To be sure, she derived pleasure from the sights and sounds of the bazaar, and no doubt from the social interaction and sharing of news that took place there, but its primary function was to

purchase household necessities at the best price. In contrast, Zarif, Shavkat and Otajon mourn the loss of the bazaar as part of the public space they have the right to freely access and enjoy. Now that is *just* a place to shop, it can no longer be defined as the bazaar as they understand it, as a leisure space - it has become something else, something “evil”. These interviews suggest that experiences of the bazaar are gendered, and closely linked to the gendered spatial binaries that define public space as inherently masculine, and private space as inherently feminine (McDowell 1999). As the next section will demonstrate, this gendered view of the bazaar also effects the younger generation of women, but with somewhat different results.

7.5 “It’s really like a dirty place” - young women rejecting the bazaar

The second way that people in Osh use the bazaar to speak about the city looks in another direction. Whilst the previous section focused on the contrast some residents made between the pleasurable bazaar of the past and the perceived diminished place of today, in this narrative other residents - specifically young women - also find the bazaar to be a problematic space. However, instead of looking to an ideal type of the bazaar located in the past, these respondents contrasted it with a vision of modern, western style shopping centres they would like to construct in its place.

Sitting with a group of female students from the Osh Humanitarian-Pedagogical Institute (OHPI), all in the early stages of their teacher training, a consensus soon became clear regarding one of the most urgent changes required in the city - to change the bazaar (or as one girl put it, to solve “our bazaar problems” IV02, E). In place of the current sprawling collection of stalls, tables, shipping containers and low level buildings, the girls agreed that something far more modern should be built. One of the students explained her thoughts in detail:

“I would join all the parts of our bazaar together, and put them in one high rise building, with different things on different floors; food on one floor, clothes on one floor, our national things on one floor. I hate shopping at the bazaar at the moment” (IV02, E)

This sentiment was echoed repeatedly by other young women in the city in our conversations. Begimay, also a student, complained that the bazaar was “really like a dirty place” where conditions to sell food were “not healthful” due to stalls’ proximity to the road (IV17, E). She lauded Mayor Myrzakmatov’s efforts to move these stalls, and talked excitedly about the development of a new shopping centre in Osh, contrasting it to the bazaar and nearby Kelechek (or ‘Future’) clothes market with the ultimate accolade: “it’s really, like, modern” (IV17, E). A few days later another young student, Altynay, explained that she avoided shopping in the bazaar entirely, waiting until she could visit more modern malls in Bishkek instead (IV15). The dismay of these young women at the state of the bazaar was summed up by Katya, a Russian woman in her mid twenties, who described her shock at the state of the bazaar in the expressive fashion I had come to expect from her, telling me indignantly “on Saturday I, with my cousin, we went to bazaar and we just... it was just some kind of idea that it was just after a bomb, you know? We were just like this [mimes shock]!” (IV49, E).

Katya would go on to explain her dream of leaving Osh for Bishkek, where she believed the higher standard of amenities, as well as the larger Russian community, would make for a more fulfilling life than she could achieve in Osh. Like Begimay and the OHPI students, Katya too believed the bazaar should be replaced with a more modern alternative. Even though she had worked in the tourist sector, and recalled many visitors to the city wanting to visit the bazaar as one of Osh’s most famous sites, she remained convinced that this messy, disordered space should make way for a more modern alternative. Aidai, an English teacher in her 20s, also recognised the potential importance of

the bazaar to tourists, suggesting “some piece” be left for their benefit, but insisting all the same that the bazaar make way for a “big supermarket” in its place (IV51, E).



Figure 16. Ongoing construction work in the bazaar 2013 (Source: Author's own)

It is striking that this message should come overwhelmingly from young women, and this perhaps represents an attempt on their part to build their aspirations and expectations about their futures in Osh into the same framework. Aspirations, because they belong to the generation that has grown up since the end of the Soviet Union, spending their lives under capitalism instead. In addition to this, their generation has borne the full force of globalisation, something which is all the more powerful in the context of a comparatively large city such as Osh. As Kirmse, writing about young men's responses to globalisation in Osh, puts it “Young people in Osh inhabit a ‘marketplace for styles and identities’. In contrast to youth in villages or in neighbouring states such as authoritarian

Uzbekistan, they engage with an array of social actors, from religious activists to international organisations, which reflect life in a rapidly ‘globalising’ city” (Kirmse in Darieva et al 2011). The young women I met in Osh would listen to Adele songs before class, watch Turkish soap operas in the evening and feverishly ask me whether I thought Justin Bieber was good looking (and if not, why not?). They would come for extra language classes in the *Amerikansky Tsentr* [trans. American Centre] and ask for help applying for internships with one of the many international organisations and NGOs working in the city. A month after I arrived in Osh in 2013, I was whisked into a concert hall in town by two 18 year old friends to watch the smash hit movie at the time - *Salaam New York* - which tells the story of a young Kyrgyz man overcoming all the obstacles in New York to graduate top of his class at Columbia and become a hot shot lawyer. “That” Cholpon told me breathlessly afterwards “is my dream!”. Young people in Kyrgyzstan today have access to a vast array of information about the world beyond the country’s borders, and this accordingly affects their aspirations about the way they want to live (see Kuehnast 1998 for an extensive and insightful discussion about this).

Simultaneously, though, young women in Osh (and Kyrgyzstan more widely) are all too aware of the expectations and restrictions placed on them by virtue of their gender. Whereas Soviet ideology promoted gender equality (in theory, at least - gender inequalities in areas such as salary remained stubbornly entrenched throughout this era (Thieme 2008)), recent years have seen a resurgence of practices and trends that threaten such equality. Bride kidnapping (*ala kachuu*) has become ever more problematic over the past 40 years, with one in-depth study of a Kyrgyz village in 2005 suggesting that 40% of marriages in Kyrgyzstan may now result from this practice, and that the rate of non-consensual kidnappings is rising (Kleinbach et al 2005). Fear of kidnapping, along with economic hardship, may also explain why many families are so keen to ensure that their daughters are married early (by their early 20s at the very latest) (Thieme 2008). Many female students I

spoke with would explain that their families expected them to marry as soon as they finished University, in a tacit bargain that allowed them to complete their education. The past 20 years has also witnessed a renewed freedom to practice Islam in Kyrgyzstan, which had been repressed under Soviet rule. Crucially, this has seen the growth of a stricter variant of the religion than the traditional blend of Sufism and nomadic beliefs which had previously characterised religious observance in the country (Heyat 2010). As a result the resurgence of Islamic practice in Kyrgyzstan has often gone hand in hand with the growing popularity of a type of Islam where “custom and edicts are interpreted in an orthodox, Sunni tradition, and often in a fundamentalist form, that has a very restrictive view of women and gender relations” (Heyat 2010: 282). This in itself represents another facet of globalisation, as young people in Kyrgyzstan are increasingly exposed to different ways of practising Islam, with more and more choosing to adopt a more strict interpretation of the religion (McBrien 2009). The conjunction of these factors means that many young women in Kyrgyzstan - and especially the traditionally more conservative south - are aware that by their early 20s they are quite likely to be married, often living with their in-laws, with the responsibility for running a household. Certainly, this is what one group of female students in their final year at Osh State University told me as we chatted after class one day. The young women - no older than 20 - giggled nervously as they discussed the weddings that they told me would inevitably follow their graduation that summer. When I asked a friend teaching at the University about this later, she explained with exasperation how many times she had been visited by mothers that month asking to know who her best students were, so they could identify the best marriage prospects for their sons from that year’s graduates.



Figure 17. Stallholders in front of buildings that have been partially destroyed as part of street widening in the bazaar, 2013 (Source: Author's own)

Young women such as Begimay, Cholpon and the OHPI students are left to try to reconcile the aspirational lifestyle they have been imbibing through their participation in the globalised capitalist reality of Osh today, with the conservatism of the gender roles that will be the reality for many of them. This balancing act between their aspirations and expectations, then, may explain their attitudes to the bazaar, as once again the city reflects the gendered experiences of its inhabitants. If young women are to be tied to the 'traditional' position and responsibilities of a housewife - shopping, cleaning, cooking, childcare - then they can at least do these on the terms and in the image of the globalised lifestyle they aspire to.

Instead of shopping in a dusty, open air market, they want access to a clean, shiny multi-storey shopping mall. This compromise reflects what Kuehnast identified as the “strategic” and “shifting” ways in which young Kyrgyz women have employed and combined traditional and modern conceptions of Kyrgyz womanhood to navigate their ways as successfully as possible through the shifting economic, social and cultural realities of post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan (Kuehnast 1998: 643). It also underlines the truth of Fenster’s observation that gendered arrangements of power in the private sphere affect the way in which women use and perceive public spaces (Fenster 2005). Some young women forge another path, of course, and soon after I left Osh I learnt that both Katya and Cholpon had left the city, Katya for Bishkek and Cholpon to move to New Jersey, where she would later confide to me that she felt this was the only way to escape the marriage she felt was otherwise inevitable.

7. 6 “For women it’s not convenient” - (re)claiming space for women in the public realm

There is another level to this process, however; another aspiration at play, that once again becomes clear through comparison with the narrative advanced by Zarif, Shavkat and Otajon at the beginning of this chapter. As mentioned before, these men were distraught at the loss of a treasured public space of leisure and sociality, as the bazaar no longer performs this function for them. Indeed, this closing of public space to national minority groups in Osh is a very serious issue. Unpacking young women’s responses to changes at the bazaar, and their hopes for its future, suggest that they too are struggling with the question of which public spaces are open, and comfortable, to them. Aidai, who as we saw earlier was strongly in favour of replacing the bazaar with a modern mall or supermarket, complained vociferously about the lack of places in Osh where she could spend time with her friends outside the house:

“We want to have... er... places, just, cinemas, theatres, it will be just... bowling centres! It would be good, because for me I couldn’t go... for example, I’m tired of cafes, and I only wander along the street, and there is no place just to play games. We have billiards, pool, here, but there’s a lot of men - for women it’s not convenient” (IV51, E)

I asked Aidai where she could go when she wanted to meet up with her female friends, and she replied with a short list of the cafes where they felt comfortable meeting up to talk and, in her words, “to gossip sometimes”. These cafes - *California, Tsarskiy Dvor, Hangar and Borsok* - were among the most expensive in the city, underlining that for Aidai finding a place to spend time with her female friends was not only difficult, but costly. Seen in this light, young women’s hopes of building a mall in place of the bazaar could also be read as an attempt to carve out a space in the city centre where they could socialise on their own terms. Vanderbeck and Johnson have demonstrated how malls have come to occupy such a central role in young people’s conceptions of leisure spaces in the US (Vanderbeck and Johnson 2000), an idea which young women in Osh have been fully exposed to through the globalised media they consume. Women in Osh are by no means the first to look for a measure of freedom in this kind of space. In actual fact they are inscribing themselves in a tradition of women using semi-public spaces of consumption such as department stores and malls as a “place where women might escape from the confines of domesticity and male presence/control, even if only for short and temporary periods” that reaches back to the nineteenth century (McDowell 1999: 149). Replacing the bazaar with the mall, then, might allow young women to redress the power balance of public space in Osh, creating a space where they are more shielded from the gaze of the masculine city, and where they hold the knowledge about how to behave. Certainly, where new malls have been constructed in Kazakhstan, young people have flocked to them as social spaces (Koch 2013).



As well as changing the bazaar, young women I spoke with would list other recreational spaces they would like to see built in Osh - theatres, cinemas, parks, bowling alleys, libraries, and amusement parks.

Figure 18. Young women in the central bazaar (Source: Zach Krahmer)

Whilst at the time I thought little of this, seeing it as the natural response of young women looking to enjoy themselves, stepping back to see just how often this refrain emerged made the dearth of safe, comfortable public space in Osh for young women more obvious. Of all these respondents, Katya seemed to feel this the most acutely, perhaps because as an ethnic [redacted] with a penchant for [redacted] hair dye and mini skirts, she was instantly identifiable as straying from the increasingly conservative expectations placed on young women. When I asked her why she was so keen to move to Bishkek, she started by listing the places she could go there - the theatre, the cinema, bowling, discos - whereas in Osh “we have only two options where to go - it’s to eat shashlik or samsa¹³, that’s it!” (IV49, E).

It soon became clear, though, that her concern wasn’t only about the lack of a proper cinema or variety in her dining options. Rather, she no longer felt able to express her identity as a young woman in public, without being subject to harassment and comment - as she explained “I don’t like

¹³ Shashlik (a meat kebab) and Samsa (a pastry, most often filled with mutton) are popular foods in Osh, and are widely sold in the city’s cafes and restaurants.

it when people [are] just gazing at me, and just like when passing by ‘beep beep beep beep’ [*mimes pressing a car horn*]. I don’t like it” (IV49, E). The cinemas and theatres of Bishkek, then, represent spaces where Katya felt she would be able to spend leisure time in a public space that was safe and comfortable, where she would be more able to fulfil her right to freely access the city. It is no surprise, then, that so many young women expressed a strong desire to build similar places in Osh, where safe space for women to socialise is currently limited to the home and a few expensive cafes.

Perhaps this explains what might otherwise seem a paradoxical element of my findings: whilst life for most people in post-independence Kyrgyzstan has become more precarious, women have been particularly hard hit - as Thieme succinctly puts it “women face particular forms of vulnerability that intersect with one another” (Thieme 2008). And yet despite this increasing vulnerability, in my research women were, overall, far more likely to express happiness about changes in Osh than men. In fact, around 3/4 of the respondents who told me that Osh had become better in recent years were women. Women were distinctly more likely than men to remark upon the renovated parks, new monuments, resurfaced roads and new bus stops, as well as works underway to change the bazaar. Men, on the other hand, were far more likely than women to complain about the disappearance of jobs and factories in the city. These divergences should not be seen in terms of a crude gender divide - it would be inaccurate and simplistic to suggest that only men are concerned with the changing landscape of employment in the city, or that only women appreciate the aesthetic changes brought about by the new parks and monuments. However, the case of the bazaar suggests one possible reason for this divide in perceptions of urban change in Osh between men and women. Perhaps women see changes such as the creation of parks, construction in the bazaar area, and installation of new bus stops, as steps towards creating more safe and comfortable public spaces for them to enjoy. Certainly, on a walk through her neighbourhood in a former industrial area of the city Begimay was proud to show me their newly renovated park, describing how she was now able to

take pleasant walks there with her mother in the evening. Women in Osh are embracing the opportunity to ‘build back better’, and lending their support to initiatives to construct spaces they believe would be more attuned to their needs. Rather than returning to the *status quo ante* in the city, these interviews suggest young women have sought to take advantage of the post-crisis period, and the renewed attention on the built environment that this invariably brings (Ferguson 2010, Amaratunga and Haigh 2011), to improve their access to public space in Osh. Their ideas about how to improve the bazaar are emblematic of this. However, as the concluding section of this chapter will show, there is a paradox at the heart of this situation that means that these very spaces of perceived free access may actually be contributing to a wider pattern restricting women’s spatial mobility in Osh.

7.7 Conclusion - opening and closing public space in the bazaar

It is clear that the bazaar occupies a central role in residents’ ways of seeing Osh. At first glance this centrality comes from the fact that so many city residents use the space each week. As such it could be read as one of the city’s few remaining shared spaces, a place where residents of all ethnicities, age groups and social classes mix on a regular basis. Such a vision chimes with Liu’s positioning of the bazaar as an “idiom of exchange” in all its forms. But as we have seen above, this research has uncovered other ways in which the bazaar is being used to explain other visions of contemporary Osh. For some, notably Uzbek men, the bazaar has become emblematic of the way that public space in the city feels increasingly unwelcoming to them. Where once the bazaar was a convivial place, one that afforded space to socialise with friends, it has now been reduced to its most basic functions of buying and selling.

For young women, however, the story is quite different. They celebrate recent construction work in the bazaar as a sign of things they hope are to come - the replacement of the traditional bazaar with a modern shopping mall or supermarket. This hope indexes two aspirations. On the one hand it reflects the way young women in Osh are seeking to use elements of the built environment in order to negotiate the complex, and at times tense, relationship between their aspirations of participating in the globalised lifestyles they have been exposed to in the post-Soviet era, and the increasingly conservative social norms they are expected to conform to. At the same time, this excitement about the development of a different kind of place in place of the bazaar reflects young women's desire for more access to public space in the city. Whilst currently there are very few places in the city that they can comfortably and safely spend time with their friends, young women appear hopeful that changes in the bazaar, as well as other recent changes in the city such as the renovation of many parks, may represent the creation of more space for them in the city.

This may seem like a positive development at first glance, and a step towards addressing the gendered spatial inequalities that persist in Osh as in so many cities. However, a number of caveats should be kept in mind.

Firstly, in her critique of Lefebvre's concept of right to the city, Fenster notes that women's rights are often obstructed on two levels - the right to freely access spaces in the city, and the right to participate in decisions about them (Fenster 2005). Whilst the opinions expressed by the young women interviewed in the course of this investigation suggest they are challenging the first of these issues, there has been no consultation or outreach from city authorities that would suggest the second is being addressed. Although young women in Osh clearly have very strong hopes and opinions about the way they would like to see the city evolve, there is little evidence anyone is listening to them. Instead of participating in the planning process and having a voice in the creation

of a city that is open to them, young women are most often left to make the best of the situation presented to them. The case of the bazaar is perfectly representative of this - women such as Aidai, Begimay and the students of OHPI can see that change is afoot, and have a definite vision of the change they would like to see, but they do not have the power to influence this change. Instead, as is so often the case for young women in contemporary Kyrgyzstan, they must simply watch, wait and try to find the strategic compromise between aspirations and reality that works best for them.

Secondly, the spaces that are apparently opening up, the opportunities being identified by young women, are intimately linked to a gendered spatiality that ties women to the private sphere, and men to the public. Whilst the idea of a mall or supermarket may hold the promise of freedom and increased access to the city, this is somewhat illusory. The path of “consumption as (partial) liberation” has already been trodden by other women, and whilst it may offer a temporary respite from male dominated spaces, it also reinforces a view of women as consumers rather than producers, as firmly situated in spaces that are linked to their role in the private sphere rather than the public arena (McDowell 1999: 159). Young women may be trying to gain access to more places in Osh, but these places represent a continuation of some very traditional gender roles.

Finally, the kind of progress being imagined by these young women is coming at a cost to other city residents. The mall or shopping centre these young women wish to see built can hardly be considered *public* space. Instead, it would certainly be a more privatised space than the current bazaar, and (as we have seen in similar cases in Kazakhstan) highly exclusionary to all those without the requisite economic and cultural capital to access the space (such as the poor, the rural and the elderly) (Koch 2010). Moreover, it is impossible to ignore that even as public space is potentially opening up to one group, it is closing to others. It is clear from the testimony of Zarif, Shavkat and Otajon above that Uzbek men find it more and more difficult to freely participate in

life in the bazaar. For them, changes in the space have not met the goal of facilitating free communication and peaceful coexistence between all city stakeholders as imagined in the Arendtian view of 'spaces of appearance' explored in Chapter 2. Certainly the argument can certainly be made that opening up more public space for women is an important step in (re)building a more peaceful city in Osh. However, this process is unlikely to meet with success whilst it reinforces problematic gendered spatial divisions between the public and private, continues to exclude women from decision making processes about the future of the built environment, and comes at the expense of other groups in the city.

Chapter 8: Case Study - From monuments to *mahallas*: contrasting memories in the urban landscape of Osh

8.1 Introduction

Walking in a sun-dappled park in the centre of Osh, it is difficult to imagine the violence that engulfed the city just three years before. And yet, tucked away in this quiet leafy park are two memorials to the violence, euphemistically known as the ‘events’. On the day after the 3rd anniversary of the events these seemed to stand as the perfect visual metaphor for the complex relationship between memory and place in the city since the events. Sitting at the base of the Peace Bell monument sat a large wreath of red and white flowers, laid there by the city Mayor and the Prime Minister in a small official ceremony the previous day (Figure 17). The bell itself, though, was missing (as it had been for at least four months by that point) leaving the poignant sight of the floral tribute to victims of the events languishing under an empty structure.



Figure 19. The Osh Peace Bell following the commemorative ceremony, June 2013 (Source: Author's own)

This tension between the urge to create commemorative spaces in the urban landscape and the extent to which these spaces are maintained, used and perceived as authentic by the communities they are meant to serve is present throughout the cityscape, and is

the focus of this case study. It can reveal much about how communities and the city authorities are experiencing changes in Osh since the violence of 2010, and how they are using the built environment to attempt to mediate, and in some cases control, these changes.

Although in recent years a body of literature has begun to emerge around monuments, changes in urban form and the construction of national identity in Kyrgyzstan (notably in Cummings (2013), Liu (2012) and Megoran (2013), but also in Marat (2008), Morozova (2008) and Diener (2013)), this has largely focused on events in the capital city, Bishkek, and on elite interventions in the cityscape, with the exception of Megoran and Liu. Cummings has advanced interesting discussions around the relationship between monuments and official ideology in Kyrgyzstan, but her focus has remained centred on the way that elite driven narratives are concretised in space, arguing that ‘as observed elsewhere in the Soviet Union, liberalization has not considerably widened the pool of monument entrepreneurs’ (Cummings 2013: 608). Whilst this may be true, that is not to say that elite narratives are the only ones being written into the built environment in present day Kyrgyzstan. On the contrary, in Osh non-elite narratives of memory and identity are being expressed through the informal and quotidian fabric of the city, and that contrasting these spaces with the formal monumental spaces described by Cummings enables the researcher to build a far richer picture of forces at play in Kyrgyzstani cities today.

This case study juxtaposes the 'top-down' commemorative perspectives of the municipal government, and the 'bottom-up' perspectives of the diverse communities who live in the city, seeking to unpack how these views interact and where they diverge, and what effects this produces. It will show how official commemorative interventions in the city since 2010 have sought to inscribe a distinctly Kyrgyz (rather than Kyrgystani) identity in Osh's urban space, at the same time as encouraging a focus on reconciliation through the monuments that respond to the June 2010

violence. On the other hand, it also identifies a number of non-elite narratives of memory which speak to issues such as Osh's industrial heritage, cultural identity and experiences of the June violence, and explores the insights that can be gained from placing these narratives alongside those supported by elites in the city. As explored in Chapter 3, such an approach argues for a move away from investigations that focus purely on either 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' views of commemorative spaces, then, supporting those theorists who have suggested that the richest observations can come from examining interactions between these two views (Irwin-Zarecka 2007; Olick 2003; Forest, Johnson and Till 2004).

In the case of post-conflict Osh such a juxtaposition sheds new light on how interventions in the cityscape are producing different effects on the urban populace, and questions how future urban development may affect the potential for building a sustainably peaceful city. Using this dual lens of collective memory, it explores how a greater understanding of this relationship could improve our understanding of the possible impacts of interventions in the physical fabric of the city, from the monumental to the small scale, especially in the wake of crisis. It interrogates spatial changes in the city that have occurred since the events, as well as those planned for the future, alongside persistent visions of Osh as expressed by non-elite city residents.

The question of memory is one that can reveal much about life in the city. For example, it can illuminate areas of tension, and concordance, between the hopes and expectations of the city authorities and the man on the street. Similarly, it can sketch out some of the varied narratives that animate people's conceptions of Osh as a place in which they live and work, or suggest ways in which recent and proposed future changes to the cityscape might impact on the socio-geographical experiences of its inhabitants.

So, how do the relationships between memory and place, between top down and bottom up narratives, and between the monumental and the quotidian expressions of collective memory express themselves in contemporary Osh? And how can this help us to illuminate the city's recent tumultuous past? The following section will begin by interrogating city authorities' attempts to build their favoured view of Osh into the city from the top down, via the construction of a number of public monuments since the events of June 2010. It will then go on to consider a number of different commemorative narratives that emerged from non-elite actors during my research, which interact with these officially sanctioned interventions in different ways.

8. 2 'Patriots of the City'¹⁴ – New monuments in Osh since 2010

Since the 'Events' in 2010, five significant new monuments have been constructed under the aegis of the city authorities; statues of three heroic figures from Kyrgyz history and culture Manas (unveiled on the second anniversary of the events), Barsbek and Alimbek Datka (both built in 2011), as well as the 'Mothers' tears' statue (erected on the first anniversary of the June violence) and the Osh peace bell (also unveiled in 2011). These statues represent the elite narrative of memory being inscribed in the city. In the case of Osh it is important to recognise the 'elite' represents the municipal authorities, and in particular the then Mayor, Melis Myrzakmatov. When we talk about the elite narrative in Osh, then, this does not necessarily represent the view of a national elite, but rather that of a powerful local elite, with the capacity to dictate urban change in the city, centred around Myrzakmatov.

¹⁴ IV13, 26/04/13, Osh

This research suggests that the impact of these monuments in the minds of city residents has not been equal. Indeed, it is possible to sharply delineate between the three larger monuments – Manas, Barsbek and Alimbek Datka – which were repeatedly mentioned by respondents, and the two peace monuments, whose presence appears largely overlooked by city residents. Accordingly, this chapter will adopt this distinction whilst examining the nature, position and impact of the new city monuments.

The statues of Manas, Barsbek and Alimbek Datka can first and foremost be distinguished by their size. They tower over the roads where they stand; ancient, sword-wielding warriors on a grand scale, contrasting sharply with their often crumbling surroundings of post-Soviet decay. Driving past them (or underneath, in the case of the Datka arch) is impressive; to walk by them is arresting – the new monuments tower over passersby in a way that is only matched in the city by the remaining Lenin statue in the centre of the city. All three statues stand at major access points to the city, meaning that the vast majority of visitors to Osh will pass under the gaze of at least one of the stern warriors – a fact which is not lost on the local population; one taxi driver noted that the three stood at the ‘doors’ to the city, greeting visitors from the airport, Bishkek and Aravan (IV04, U).

Legendary warrior and subject of Kyrgyzstan's most famous epic poem, as well as a concerted post-



Soviet attempt to build national identity (Marat 2008), Manas sits astride his rearing horse at the centre of a roundabout near the airport (Figure 18). Here the dramatic red stone plinth rising from the ground (guarded by a growling mountain lion) led one respondent to proudly tell me that Osh could now claim to be home to 'the largest Manas in the world' (IV41, E).

Figure 20. Manas monument, June May 2013 (Source: Author's own)

Barsbek (Figure 19) also stands atop an impressive plinth in the middle of a

roundabout, this time at the far end of Sulaiman-Too mountain, on the road to Aravan. Sword raised in one hand (some have suggested towards the nearby border with Uzbekistan), he is flanked by four equally fierce looking guards, each of whom is accompanied by panels explaining Barsbek's role in the formation of the Kyrgyz state in Kyrgyz and in English (although making it across the lines of traffic circling the roundabout to read these panels can be a somewhat hair-raising experience).



Figure 21. The Barsbek statue, May 2013 (Source: Author's own)

The last of the trio is arguably the most impressive (Figure 21). Whilst the monument to Alimbek Datka (a former leader in the south, to whom this is the second monument in the city, as well as another to his even more famous wife, Kurmanjan Datka, herself a problematic emblem of Kyrgyz statehood (Morozova 2008)) also includes a statue of the famous figure, pride of place is given to an immense arch, topped with a tunduk – the top part of a yurt, which also figures on the country's flag. This arch stands astride four lanes of traffic entering and exiting the city on the road that eventually leads to Bishkek. Leading up to the monument on either side the street is edged with colourful mosaics seemingly depicting scenes from traditional Kyrgyz life – yurts, horseback warriors, manaschi (traditional Kyrgyz storytellers, responsible for reciting the epic poem of Manas) and women in traditional headwear.



Figure 22. Map of Osh showing location of major monuments (Source: OpenStreetMap contributors, with author's edits)

So, what does the placement and form of these monuments reveal to us? Firstly, these are indisputably Kyrgyz monuments – they depict a trio of heroes who are inextricably linked to Kyrgyz history and culture, but likely have less resonance for other ethnic groups in the city (although this may be less true in the case of Manas, who has been promoted as a symbol of inter-ethnic co-operation during the Akaev era, on account of his diverse family and entourage (Megoran 2013). This is all the more striking when, as in the case of Barsbek, the monument is directly

juxtaposed with numerous buildings on Navoi Street still clearly bearing the marks of the June 2010 violence.

These three monuments were all completed under the aegis of the then Mayor of Osh, Melis Myrzakmatov. As discussed in Chapter 6 Myrzakmatov is probably the most significant figure in the city's political landscape in recent years, a divisive figure who has been closely identified with much of the changes that have been brought about in Osh's urban fabric since the 'Events'. Whether you view him as a dangerous nationalist or a much needed strong leader, Myrzakmatov used his time in office to "energetically" pursue the twin policy aims of promotion of tolerance and the development of Kyrgyz symbolism in the city - such as the new monuments - during his time in power (Megoran 2012, 22). Noting that these policies may appear contradictory, Megoran demonstrates how they are in fact indicative of Myrzakmatov's belief that inter-ethnic peace in the city can best be achieved by the development of a strong Kyrgyz state as guarantor, a state that will be underpinned by the kind of symbolic underpinning he has begun to introduce to Osh (Megoran 2012). How, then, are the most visible examples of this Kyrgyz symbolism perceived by the people of Osh? For some city residents, this focus on Kyrgyz heroes is a welcome way of increasing people's knowledge of the country's history whilst also improving the aesthetic qualities of the town; one Kyrgyz teacher applauded the Mayor's decision to recognise what she termed 'heroes of history' through the monuments, saying 'it is good, you see? He shows the history and it is a sightseeing place at the same time' (IV19, E). For others, however, these monuments seem emblematic of the introduction of a 'new culture' (IV22, E) into the town, with its own heroes, stories and rules of behaviour that they must learn anew. One Uzbek respondent lamented the fact that, in his opinion, Uzbek heroes were no longer celebrated in Osh. Pointing towards the statue of Barsbek he complained that no-one had even heard of him before the statue went up, adding mischevously that at least he could be sure of the history of his pet dog, also called Barsbek.



Figure 23. The Alimbek Datka arch and statue, May 2013 (Source: Author's own)

Secondly, there is their sheer size. These are monuments built to impress passersby – they are formidable, dominating the space in which they stand. There are no accommodations made to help people to interact with them at a human level (unlike, for example, the monuments to the Second World War, Afghan War or Chernobyl victims elsewhere in the city, which invite the viewer to step into and use their monumental space). Standing at the entrances to the city they send a message to everybody passing by that they are now entering a space that has been specifically and symbolically identified as Kyrgyz, through the use of both Kyrgyz subject matter and an ethnicised visual language that uses tunduks, yurts and patterns taken from traditional Kyrgyz arts and crafts to underline its heritage. The use of the arch in the Alimbek Datka monument (Figure 21) is especially telling here – as Jarman has shown with regards to Protestant ‘orange arches’ in Northern Ireland,

the act of passing through such a structure (especially one topped with a symbol such as the tunduk) is a powerful marker of stepping from one territory to another (Jarman 2001).

Thus these three monuments appear to fulfill a dual function; on the one hand they use their size, placement and subject matter to identify and mark the space in which they stand as distinctly Kyrgyz, and by dint of their position at the main gates to the city, they extend this identification to the whole of the city – a vitally important message in a city with such a contested identity as Osh. At the same time, they appear to fulfil a secondary role of promoting knowledge amongst the populace of certain figures from Kyrgyz history. Both roles are consistent with the experience of other cities such as Dublin (Johnson 1995), Moscow (Forest and Johnson 2002) and Pretoria (Crampton 2001). Strikingly, this dual function of public statuary - to impress and to instruct - is reminiscent of the use of monuments in the Soviet Union. Across the Soviet Union monuments were erected in public space as part of the process of constructing and disseminating a Soviet national identity – ‘Soviet patriotism’ even – in the furthest reaches of the Soviet Union (Bruggemann and Kasekamp 2008: 430, Forest and Johnson 2002). Adams has demonstrated how Soviet forms of inculcating identity into public space - whether through the construction of monuments and buildings, or through the staging of grand spectacles - continue to have important implications on the way that Central Asian elites use the urban environment to narrate national identity today (Adams 2010). Certainly, Koch has demonstrated that one need look no further to the capital of neighbouring Kazakhstan, Astana, to see another example of how the built environment is being instrumentalist to both legitimise the governing elite, and underpin the national image they seek to promote in the post-Soviet era (Koch 2010).

If there is any doubt as to how effective such a strategy can be, we need look no further than Osh itself to see the results of a previous top-down intervention whose traces can still be found in the

city today - President Akayev's 'Osh 3000' celebration, initiated in 2000. This initiative comprised of a year long celebration of Osh's position as one of the most ancient cities of the world. Named 'Osh 3000' after the apparent age of the city, Akayev intended this plan to bring Osh more firmly into the Kyrgyzstani political landscape, identifying it as an 'exemplar of longstanding co-existence' in Kyrgyzstan, rather than a 'problematically' Uzbek city (Liu 2012: 67). Today the city still bears the marks of this celebration - buildings and gates are inscribed with the slogan 'Osh 3000' across the city centre, whilst in other places decorative lights spelling the same flutter listlessly across a central street. More strikingly, many respondents took up this theme in our conversations, repeatedly telling me of the Soviet scientist (Y A Zadneprovsky) who proved that Osh was 3000 years old, and proudly proclaiming their city 'one of the ancient towns in the world... older than Rome' (IV18, E). That so many city residents were keen to independently tell me of the ancient nature of the city, using the exact formulas and narrative promoted by the Osh 3000 campaign is testament to the power of an officially promoted narrative to endure when it has been built into the ever day fabric of the city, from the monumental to the mundane.

Interestingly, there has been a move towards inscribing many of the same symbols and patterns used in these great nationalist monuments into the more mundane aspects of city space in recent years. Throughout Osh new parks are being edged with fences incorporating the tunduk motif (representing the top part of a yurt, and traditionally considered sacred (Cummings 2013)), a symbol which can also be found on the sides of benches, gates and at the top of buildings. At night, coloured lights decorate numerous streets in the city centre, picking out traditional Kyrgyz patterns in blue, red and green lights along the side of streets and across roads. This echoing of monumental motifs in miniature results in space, for example the parks in Oshsky Rayon or at the foot of Sulaiman-Too mountain, that is symbolically bounded as Kyrgyz space, tied in to the same register and version of history as the three new monuments.



Figure 24. The Peace Bell, August 2012 (Source: Author's own)

The contrast between the three monuments described above, and the other two to have been erected since the events could not be greater. Both of these structures are tucked away in a small, leafy park next to the Municipal buildings on Lenin Street. One, known as the ‘Mothers’ tears’, shows two women crying together, carved from a light stone and identified as Uzbek and Kyrgyz by their headdresses and by the use of traditional patterns drawn from Kyrgyz and Uzbek crafts around the base of the statue. The other, standing no more than 10 metres away, is a metal structure designed to hold a metal ‘peace bell’, inscribed with the phrase ‘peace in all the world’ in English, Russian and Kyrgyz, but not in Uzbek. Neither stands more than a few metres high, in stark comparison with the other new monuments, and with the towering Lenin statue that stands in a nearby square. Whilst the ‘Mothers’ tears’ statue appears to be in good condition, the peace bell was a somewhat neglected sight during the period of this research; the bell itself had disappeared entirely, leaving an empty space at the centre of the monument, and the structure itself had been graffitied with slogans saying

‘Chechnya’ and ‘Caucasus power over all tombs’. By the occasion of the third anniversary of the June events this graffiti had been cleaned off, yet the bell was still absent - a trip to the monument on the day after the anniversary commemorations yielded the striking picture of a large floral wreath to the victims, placed there by Mayor Myrzakmatov and Prime Minister Jantoro Satybaldiev, laying under an empty space where the peace bell should have hung.



Figure 25. The Mothers' tears monument, May 2013 (Source: Author's own).

Strikingly, during my research respondents were almost entirely silent about these monuments - they were mentioned only once, during a language class themed around potential tourism sites in the city. This silence speaks volumes - whereas the new monuments took a central place in respondents' descriptions of the city (for better or worse), the two peace monuments simply don't seem to have struck a chord with

city residents. Given the less than prominent form and position the authorities have given to these structures within the cityscape, perhaps this apparent indifference is less surprising. However, this

leads to the question, if residents' memories of the 2010 conflict are not crystallising in these officially sanctioned spaces, where and how are they being expressed? In order to try and answer this question it will be useful to examine the question of memory in the city from another perspective - from non-elite city residents, or the 'bottom-up'.

8.3 Ghost cities – Seeing Osh from the bottom up

If it has been relatively easy to pinpoint official, top down, interventions in the city, it is far more difficult to identify unofficial narratives of memory; instead of crystallising around clearly identified and codified commemorative spaces, such memories are more likely to 'erupt' in spaces of everyday life (Atkinson 2007; 521). Nonetheless, it has been possible to identify a number of compelling conceptions of collective memory from the bottom up.

Like most cities, Osh is overlaid by maps of memories held by its inhabitants; maps which often reveal a different narrative to that prized by local elites. In Osh, these memories manifest themselves in a number of ways. For example, the continued use of old names for streets and institutions long after they have been officially renamed is common. The central streets of Kurmanjan Datka and Masalieva are still commonly referred to by their Soviet era names of Aravanskaya and Kyrgyzstanskaya, whilst one student of the now Kyrgyz Social University told me it was simply 'easier' to stick to the 'old habits' of calling the University by its pre-events name, the Kyrgyz Uzbek University (IV20, E). Similarly, some respondents expressed surprise that another central street, Zainabedinova, had been recently renamed after a previous Mayor - it seems likely that its original name will prove just as resistant to change by city authorities as others in the city centre.

This question of the persistence of street names gives a clue, then, to the existence of other persistent conceptions of the city overlaying the officially sanctioned version in the process of being constructed in recent years. Three of these in particular have come to the fore through this research. Firstly there appears to be, most particularly amongst people of from the generations old enough to have experienced the Soviet era as adults, a persistent and compelling vision of the city's past economic prosperity and stability. Respondents repeatedly mapped out the locations, purpose and workforce of the city's former factories in their interviews, until it became a kind of mantra: The silk factory in Yugo-Vostok, that employed thousands of people and now stood as an indoor market (Osh Tataan). The cotton paper factory in KhBK district, which at its height employed 11,000 people in 3 shifts (Liu 2012: 82), and now stands as an empty, hulking reminder of the city's industrial past. The pump factory that once led the world in technology, but is now home to another indoor clothes market and mall (Kelechek). These buildings are the concrete reminders of how, as one middle aged respondent put it, "from an industrial agricultural country, we turned into an agricultural poor country" (IV50, R).

These three factories have become the poles of a memory map which, for many older Osh residents, overlays the city and contrasts unfavourably with the post-Soviet landscape of economic decline. A map which is all the more real for being laid out in bricks and mortar - solid and highly visible traces of an aspect of the city which seems indelibly changed. Indeed, it is telling that respondents were repeatedly drawn to these three factories out of the 24 that had been present at the height of Osh's industrial age (Liu 2012), perhaps because these buildings continue to play an active role in everyday urban life in Osh (either through their new use or, in the case of the cotton factory, because they have given their name to an entire centrally located neighbourhood). In the words of one despairing resident, now working as a taxi driver 'Before we had factories, we produced textiles and silk, but today there is no work, no money, no future' (IV37, R).

The second street level memory map describes more recent memories - those of the 2010 violence. This map does not look the same to everyone - indeed, every respondent had their own set of places in Osh where memory is linked to the bricks and mortar of the city - what is striking is the way so many respondents used landmarks in the city to tell their story of the events. For example, an office building is reframed as the location of snipers during the violence by one young Russian woman; the Lenin statue is where a member of the Tatar community recalled gathering for evacuation to Bishkek; A young Kyrgyz girl points out a kiosk near her home on Kurmanjan Datka Street and recalls its owner sheltering underneath the floorboards during the violence. Elsewhere an elderly Uzbek woman points out the house of her Kyrgyz neighbour who hid her during the events, whilst an elderly Kyrgyz man points to the corner on which a man was shot during the violence, and to the place he and his neighbours built a barricade to keep violent groups away from their homes. In another part of the city a group of teachers lament the loss of a school in the Yugo-Vostok neighbourhood – ‘a good school, and old school’ - burnt during the events and never rebuilt (IV01, R). Another Uzbek woman weeps as she tells the story of her Aunt, forced to bury her son in the courtyard of their home, only to see the home burnt to the ground the very next day.

Across Osh, people are using the built environment as a way of telling their story of the events, and as a vessel for their memories of this traumatic time. It is as if a ghost city sits on top of the everyday sights of Osh, one in which familiar landmarks and previously unremarkable buildings are simultaneously read as places of danger or sanctuary. By walking through this landscape every day, residents are participating in the reformation and recollection of these memories, keeping them alive and constantly interweaving the ‘now’ of a place with the ‘then’ (Hebbert 2005; Blokland 2001). Given how present the past is in everyday Osh, any interventions in the cityscape are bound to collide with these memories, and the people keeping them alive through their daily routines.

To these two memory maps I would add a third compelling narrative of the city which emerged through my conversations with respondents. This third narrative recalls Osh's past as a multicultural city, setting it against what is perceived as the mono-ethnic nature of the town today. Numerous respondents saw this as evidenced by the presence of distinctive Uzbek mahalla neighbourhoods in the city's historic centre. One, himself an urban planning professional, explained that Uzbeks were concerned their homes were being targeted for demolition along ethnic lines, and passionately spoke about the need to preserve this heritage, saying 'The city of Osh is an ancient city (...) its own traditional features have to remain, and a small street – mahalla, such small streets, these small houses – such kind of stuff should be preserved' (IV14, R). Again, this is a narrative which was almost exclusively recounted by members of the older generation (at least over the age of 40), from professional backgrounds, and across a wide variety of ethnic groups. These respondents remembered studying and working alongside not only Kyrgyz or Uzbek, but Russian, Tatar, German, Greek, Ukrainian and other groups in their youth, and lamented the loss of this diversity in Osh today. One ethnic Tajik teacher fondly recalled how neighbours had all chipped in to help her to learn Russian when she arrived in Osh as a child, remarking sadly that 'then nationality wasn't important – no one asked what your nationality was. It's a pity today – everyone wants to know your nationality, but not your personality' (IV01, E). Another elderly Tatar respondent vividly described how the audio geography of the city had changed in recent years, with Uzbek music becoming rarer and market sellers falling silent, leaving the city with an increasingly mono-ethnic soundtrack she described vividly as "a kind of language violence" (IV27, E).

8. 4 Mapping the complex interactions of memory

On the one hand, then, this research suggests a compelling picture of the official narrative of memory that city authorities are trying to build into Osh. Through the construction of a number of monuments, and the apparent privileging of the three which depict heroic figures from Kyrgyz history in particular, the city authorities are endeavouring to mark out the city of Osh as a specifically Kyrgyz territory. This is no mean feat in an area where identity is as keenly contested as Osh. Through the act of monumentalising these figures, and strategically positioning them at entrances to the urban space, the authorities are also attempting to inscribe a particular version of history - one which favours heroes tied to the titular nationality, the Kyrgyz - into space, and therefore into the consciousness of city residents. Although these monuments may be alienating to some groups in the city, they do appeal to others - most notably (though not exclusively) in my research, to ethnic Kyrgyz residents of the city, who expressed pride in these monuments. This is an important point: just as the elite narrative of memory in Kyrgyzstan is not unitary, with interventions in Osh representing a localised elite, non-elite narratives should also not be viewed as monolithic.

At the same time, three strands of bottom-up or non-elite memory have emerged through the course of this fieldwork; firstly, the ghost of Osh's past as a successful industrial city, in which familiar landmarks in the cityscape carry a double identity as former places of work for many of the city's older residents. Secondly, the mapping of memories of the 2010 conflict onto the city by practically every respondent, show how residents are using the cityscape to order and store their memories of that traumatic time. The third strand of memory repeatedly identified by older residents was that of Osh as a previously multiethnic city, as symbolised by the mahalla neighbourhoods in the city centre, that had increasingly lost this diversity. All three strands seem to support Liu's assertion that

‘Viewed from the streets, Osh presents a complex social, political, economic and religious reality. It shows that issues of wide import, such as the trajectories of post-socialist economies, the effects of state power, the nuances of inter-ethnic relations or the new public presence of Islam need to be examined through the details of everyday lives within actual public places.’ (Liu 2012: 25).

Whilst this in itself is revealing about life in Oh since the events, the most fruitful approach to understanding collective memory, and specifically its relationship with the built environment, is to bring the top-down and bottom-up approaches into the same investigatory framework (see Schudson 1997; Olick 2003; Rolston 2010, Irwin-Zarecka 2007). As demonstrated in Chapter 2, this approach does not deny that elites attempt to construct and privilege certain narratives of collective memory, but either does it ignore the narratives being created and popularised at by non-elite actors. Instead it looks at the dynamic interactions between these narratives to try and shed light on the processes through which one narrative becomes widely accepted as the truth, and how this changes over time (Rolston 2010; Misztal 2003). It is important to note that this approach does not assume that all expressions of memory will fit neatly into either a ‘top down’ or ‘bottom up’ categorisation - life most often far too messy for such binaries - rather that applying such an analytical framework provides a way of seeing memory in the built environment that has the potential to reveal previously unremarked linkages, oppositions and silences in the narratives of memory being expressed there. This focus seems particularly appropriate for investigations of the relationship between collective memory and the built environment, since this often provides the space in which top-down and bottom-up expressions of collective memory interact

Such a dynamic approach to understanding collective memory does not negate the experiences of ordinary people, and the way they use and experience the built environment from day to day. Neither does it deny the power of elite groups to manipulate and shape the built environment to

reflect the narratives of collective memory they favour, or underplay their motivations to do so. It does, however, encourage researchers to think in wider terms than simply one paradigm and to pay attention to the processes and negotiations that occur when differing narratives of collective memory, formed in different contexts, from different materials and by different groups, collide in the same space. As Forest, Johnson and Till eloquently put it simply opposing so-called ‘public’ and ‘elite’ versions of memory is reductive; in reality ‘different social groups, functioning as distinct ‘publics’ and counter-publics may interact with officials or choose other actions that influence the remaking of these [commemorative] places (...) public memory is an activity or process rather than an object or outcome’ (Forest, Johnson and Till 2004: 358).

The situation in Osh demonstrates this point amply; the different strands of memory weave in and out of one another in a complex pattern, sometimes coming together in harmony, sometimes opposing each other in their visions of Osh, and sometimes not reflecting the same concerns at all. Examining the whole of this commemorative picture in the same framework brings to light a number of points that may otherwise be missed if we only consider the top-down or bottom-up spaces of memory.

For example, whereas many residents seem to be engaged in a process of mapping out the city’s industrial past as they walk through its mercantile present, this narrative does not seem to feature in the slightest in the city authorities attempts to narrate Osh’s past and future. Perhaps the city authorities do not wish to draw attention to this divergence, brought about by the city’s economic decline since the end of the Soviet era. Or perhaps this narrative is simply not their most pressing concern in a city where challenges are legion, and resources scarce. Crucially, this narrative recalls the existence of challenges and contrasts in Osh beyond those brought to light by the 2010 events. If the 2010 violence focussed attention on Osh, there is a concomitant risk that researchers, authorities

and local and international organisations focus on the effects and causes of this violence to the exclusion of other long term challenges which continue to define Osh residents' lives, such as the economic decline of the post-Soviet era. This economic decay is likely not something Osh's governing elite wish its citizens to focus on. The Soviet era pride in industrial achievement - still visible in the urban fabric through the huge murals that have survived on residential buildings - has been replaced in the symbolic language of the city by the figures of Barsbek, Manas and Alimbek Datka. The current official silence regarding Osh's industrial identity is made explicit, then, when it is contrasted with the non-elite narratives being expressed by people as they make everyday use of the city's post-industrial landscape.

In other cases bringing together the elite and non-elite narratives reveals clear opposition. For example, the vision of Osh being promoted by the city authorities through their monumental interventions in the city is that of a distinctly Kyrgyz city taking its place in the greater arc of Kyrgyz history and mythology. This runs counter to the memories expressed by some respondents, who see Osh not as a historically Kyrgyz city, but rather one that has traditionally been characterised as a diverse and multicultural place. This narrative resists city authorities' efforts to inscribe an exclusive sense of Kyrgyzness in space. It demonstrates just how these efforts are causing non-Kyrgyz residents (and to some extent, older Kyrgyz residents) of the city to feel out of place and under pressure in the very place they call home. Certainly, this seems a long way from former Mayor Myrzakmatov's stated aim of building tolerance in the city. And yet it is important to note that this was overwhelmingly expressed by older residents of the city, and rarely by the young. This suggests that this resistance might decline further in future years (at least amongst members of the titular nationality), as the new officially favoured narrative of public memory in Osh takes root, and comes to resonate with the lived experience of a generation that has grown up since the Soviet

era. Already, many city residents I spoke to actively expressed their support for these monuments and the history they celebrate.

When it comes to the 2010 events and memories of violence there is a clear attempt from all quarters to commemorate and situate these memories in the physical fabric of the city, giving them a sense of permanence. However, the places this is being done do not match up with one another: although peace monuments have been purposefully constructed by city authorities, they do not appear to have been incorporated into the commemorative vernacular at street level. Indeed, most people seem more comfortable locating their memories of the events in places that form part of their daily routine, and do not interact with the official spaces of commemoration (even though they are mere steps from other frequently visited sites). This can partly be attributed to the kinds of narratives these spaces represent; whilst the official monuments support messages about reconciliation and peace, the unofficial spaces are often used to express memories of violence, fear and trauma (though this too is not exclusive - one Uzbek teacher described her neighbourhood as a place of mutual aid during the violence, insisting attackers came from outside the area (IV28)). Thus attempts to commemorate the same event don't always represent the same story. This is more than a simple mismatch or misunderstanding between citizens and the city authorities: such a situation privileges and protects the official sites, whilst leaving the unofficial sites actively being used by people at risk from future development, a risk that will be explored in the final section of this case study.

Reading across these narratives also allows us to see how understandings of public memory can be nuanced by factors such as time, place and subject matter. For example, an individual may resist elite narratives through their insistence on recalling the city's industrial past in their everyday practice, whilst wholeheartedly supporting the city authorities' attempts to bolster ethnic Kyrgyz

identity in Osh's urban fabric through the construction of heroic monuments. In other cases the meaning of symbols inscribed in the cityscape has changed over time. Just as older Osh residents may remember that Manas used to represent a commitment to multiculturalism in the immediate post-Soviet era, they now read the new Manas statue as symbolic of rising Kyrgyz nationalism in the city. Perhaps most interesting, though, is what happens when these commemorative spaces intersect. The peace monuments, with all their imagery of inter-communal reconciliation, immediately abut the place where one minority community member recalled standing and waiting in fear to be evacuated from the city during the June events, along with other members of her community. Similarly, the positioning of the new heroic monuments to Alimbek Datka and Barsbek in the middle of mahalla neighbourhoods which were seriously damaged during the June violence, leads to a layering the physical expressions of commemorative narratives of Kyrgyz nationalism, multiculturalism and violence onto the same physical space. These spaces, through which people move on a daily basis, are therefore saturated with narratives of memory; narratives that city residents respond to in different ways as they interact with the spaces. It is this commemorative saturation that leads Liu to suggest we "think with" the city of Osh as an analytical framework, rather than simply about it, in order to understand the effects of these densely layered spaces on the people who use them (Liu 2012: 13).

8.5 Looking to the future - writing memory out of the city

Planned changes to Osh could also have far-reaching consequences for the way people currently remember in the city. Chapter 6 of this thesis set out in detail developments which have been planned for Osh in the near future, as well as those changes which have already taken place, including the widening of key central streets, construction of high rise buildings, and development of the city to reflect a "contemporary" urban way of life (The Renaissance of Osh). Such a logic of

development could have a number of effects on memory in the city. Firstly, as the city Masterplan is to be implemented, many parts of the city centre look set to be remodelled. Indeed, numerous houses and businesses have already been demolished as part of the street widening in Monueva Street and in the central bazaar. By officially proclaiming the two peace monuments as the official commemorative spaces for the events, even though these do not appear to resonate with the wider population, the authorities are failing to acknowledge and safeguard the multitude of meaningful commemorative spaces in the everyday fabric of the city. Such spaces may find themselves at a very real risk of demolition or transformation in the near future, and the bottom-up memories of the June events written out of the city

Secondly, if carried out these steps will have one clear consequence for the urban landscape of Osh – the removal, or at the very least reduction in size, of historical mahalla neighbourhoods in the city centre, largely inhabited by ethnically Uzbek families. To remove this highly visible symbol of Osh's identity as a multicultural city brings the city authorities into direct conflict with the narrative of memory of diverse Osh set out above, and expressed by numerous city residents.

Removing mahalla neighbourhoods in the city centre could fatally undermine the Uzbek community's memories of belonging in Osh, built into the very fabric of their homes which, as Bevan has noted elsewhere, could leave them not only physically displaced, but disconnected from their networks of memory and by extension, identity (Bevan 2007). Given this possibility, it becomes more easy to understand why one Uzbek respondent likened his situation to that of a refugee in his own city (IV21). This feeling can only be exacerbated when it is contrasted with the city authorities' grand scale interventions in the urban landscape so far, in the shape of the three distinctly mono-ethnic that now mark the gateways to the city.

So, whilst the reality of Osh's future urban development is still unclear – whether the city authorities will have the money, political stability and support from Bishkek to carry out their plans is a decidedly moot point – it is clear that these decisions could have important consequences for the construction of a sustainably peaceful city. Without taking account of the way different groups in the city (not simply along ethnic lines, but also defined by age group) use everyday elements of the built environment to express their memories of the city, the city authorities risk destroying these street level commemorative spaces, and in doing so alienating and marginalising many city residents, further reducing Osh's prospects of sustainable peace.

Only by examining the way in which collective memory is being built into urban space from both the top-down and the bottom-up can these relationships be fully brought into the light. Applying this technique to the question of public memory in post-events Osh has proved especially fruitful: It has demonstrated that whilst memories of Osh's industrial past are being relived by many city residents on a daily basis through their ordinary routines, there has been little or no attempt to mirror this commemorative narrative by building it into the city's urban fabric from the top down. It has revealed agreement between elite and grassroots actors over the need to express memories of the 2010 violence through the built environment, yet laid bare the divergence of opinions on how, and where this could best be done. Finally, it has shown that some citizens use the cityscape to dispute the narrative of mono-ethnicity being expressed in top down monumental interventions in the city (which are supported by numerous city residents), presenting an alternative vision of Osh as a historically multiethnic place. In the case of Osh, understanding the ways in which elite and grassroots narratives of memory are expressed and interact in the built environment enables the researcher to build fuller and more compelling picture of life in the city than would emerge from studying either phenomenon in isolation.

Chapter 9: Case Study - Housing in Osh: Identity politics and aspirational living

9.1 Introduction

Having taken an in-depth look at the shifting meanings of commemorative spaces and the bazaar in Osh in the previous two chapters, it is now time to explore another important element of the post-conflict cityscape - housing. As we shall see in this chapter, housing in Osh is both a deeply emotive issue, and the subject of many reconstruction and development efforts in recent years, making it a particularly useful area of inquiry in the context of this research project. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that residents in Osh espouse a wide variety of differing views about what kind of housing should be built in the city. This chapter will set out some of these opinions in greater detail, demonstrating the tensions that exist between contrasting views of future housing. It will show how at the elite level the approach favoured by the Myrzakmatov municipality (the construction of high rise apartment blocks) has often been opposed by international donors funding reconstruction in the city, a trend that was first picked up on in Chapter 6. At the non-elite level, this chapter will reveal a nuanced picture, where pragmatic acceptance of the need to increase the housing stock in the city often goes hand in hand with deeply emotional responses to housing types (seen by many as the repositories of group memory and identity in Osh in the way that Connerton, Till and others have described (Connerton 1989, Till 2008)) from within both Uzbek and Kyrgyz communities. Seen as a whole, the question of housing throws into relief the wider struggle over the future of Osh's identity, something which has already come to the fore on several occasions in the preceding chapters, and will again be a key theme in Chapter 10.

As evidenced in Chapter 6, the logic of urban development in Osh since 2010 suggests a number of interventions in the sphere of housing. These interventions have been driven by three main factors. Firstly, they are a response to the urgent need created by the destruction of upwards of 2000 houses in Osh and Jalalabad cities, and surrounding villages, during the 2010 Events. In Osh city alone the UN counted 1462 residential properties as destroyed. Concerns regarding the harsh winter conditions in Kyrgyzstan (where winter temperatures usually drop below zero by the end of November) made the prompt reconstruction of destroyed housing all the more pressing.

Taking a longer term perspective, the provision of housing has also been identified by municipal authorities as a priority in order to accommodate the continued growth of Osh's urban population. The population of Osh city exploded during the Soviet period (rising from 47,149 in 1904 (Zakharova 1997) to a little over 229,000 by 1989 (National Statistical Office of the Kyrgyz Republic 2009). This vast expansion can be attributed to the twin Soviet policies of forced sedentarisation of previously nomadic Kyrgyz communities throughout the first half of the twentieth century, as well as the development of Osh as an industrial centre with an attendant workforce (Saliev 2000; Liu 2012). The city has continued to grow in the post-Soviet era with the current population officially stated to be around 250,000 (National Statistical Office of the Kyrgyz Republic 2009), although many estimates of the city's population rise as high as 500,000 if new neighbourhoods and surrounding settlements are included (World Bank 2008). The geographical location of the city - with the border with Uzbekistan a little way to the north, development restrictions linked to the UNESCO world heritage site around the Sulaiman mountain, and hilly, rocky ground rising to the south-east of the city - has led many to believe that the only way to accommodate Osh's growing population will be to build upwards, through the construction of multi-storey apartment buildings.

‘Eastern’ or Islamic character seen as incompatible with Soviet socialist values. As Aliev has noted “The very first plan for the building and reconstruction of the city coincided with the so-called ‘struggle with architectural excesses and vestiges of the past in the consciousness of the people’, especially relating to religiousness” (Aliev 2000: 119). Of course, the continued existence of *mahalla* neighbourhoods in the city centre show that this policy was not entirely successful.

A third factor driving interventions in the sphere of housing - specifically the proposed construction of high rise apartment buildings - is the belief that the city today still has the appearance and structure (and by extension the mentality) of a village, rather than that of a modern city. This belief was repeatedly expressed during my research, both by individuals within or aligned with the municipal authorities, and by many ordinary residents. Many respondents suggested that Osh’s status as the ‘Southern capital’ of Kyrgyzstan was at odds with its appearance, which is more akin to that of a “big village” (IV03) or as one middle aged Kyrgyz man put it, a *kishlak* (an Uzbek word for a village or rural homestead):

“If you look from the Sulaiman mountain you see kishlaks, kishlaks, kishlaks, and the multistories buildings, and kishlaks...so...but there is no total look of typical city blocks” (IV26, R)

The solution to this situation is widely seen as the construction of ‘modern’ high rise buildings, akin to those found in Dubai, Astana or Hong Kong (IV12, IV13, IV37, IV39). So, as we shall see in the following section, it is possible to identify three narratives driving interventions in housing provision in Osh city. On the one hand, tensions between local and national government officials, and international donors, has informed immediate post-crisis housing provision, and resulted in the construction of single storey interim structures where homes were destroyed. On the other hand, discussions about longer term housing needs have often focused on the erection of high rise

constructions, but for two quite different reasons. For some people this represents a cautious acceptance of multi-storey buildings as a pragmatic response to accommodation needs in a growing city. For others, though, it represents an opportunity to replace traditional forms of housing they find troubling, even frightening. Of course the actual construction of such buildings is contingent on the availability of already scarce funding, but whether or not they are likely to be built in the near future, resident attitudes to housing types are very revealing of attitudes and aspirations within the city.

9.2 Reading the meanings of housing in Osh

Before exploring these narratives further, though, it is of vital importance to understand that any such interventions in Osh take place in a context where types of housing have come to be widely identified with certain ethnic groups. This is primarily expressed through the concept of *mahalla*, the traditional high density, low rise residential neighbourhoods that have long given Osh its distinctive character when compared to other Kyrgyzstani cities, such as Bishkek. Liu has written extensively on the distinctive architecture and arrangement of *mahalla* homes, which often house several generations of the same family, and are built with few windows on the outside, instead opening onto a central courtyard (Liu 2012). These courtyards often house fruit trees, a small garden, and maybe some chickens. Indeed, one of my most enjoyable evenings with an Uzbek family in the neighbouring town of Aravan, was spent eating *kovatok* (stuffed vine leaves) made from the vines trailing above our heads, whilst the family's teenage son repeatedly attempted to convince their rogue chicken to return to its pen in the corner of the courtyard. Walking through a *mahalla* neighbourhood is also a quite different experience to that of walking through an area dominated by apartment blocks. The streets are more narrow, sometimes twisting, and the houses alongside them often decorated with beautiful, intricately carved wooden panels. Although

ethnically diverse to a certain extent, the *mahalla* is largely inhabited by ethnic Uzbeks - indeed, may ethnic Kyrgyz people consider the *mahalla* to be a dangerous and threatening space (Liu 2012; IV17, IV18). Moreover, as Liu has demonstrated, *mahalla* neighbourhoods do more than simply house Uzbek communities:

“Mahalla has a much wider meaning. It’s connected with what it means to be Uzbek. Because Uzbeks are a minority within the entirety of Kyrgyzstan, the mahalla becomes all the more important because its a place where they can be themselves, they can be Uzbek” (Liu interview by Solash 2012)

This form of housing is seen as being intricately linked to the kind of social life - specifically Uzbek social life - that takes place and is continuously reproduced in them, then. The buildings themselves, and the environment they create, become repositories of memory - and therefore Uzbek identity - and in turn become constitutive of this very identity. To return to Nora’s famous formulation, they become *lieux de mémoire* for Osh’s Uzbek community (1996). Of course, *mahalla* living isn’t to everyone’s taste - one part Uzbek friend who was raised in a flat confided in me that she could never settle into *mahalla* life, where “everyone knows your business, what you’re wearing, where you’ve been!” (Field notes 04/05/13).

On the other hand, multi-storey apartment buildings are largely - though not exclusively - identified as a Kyrgyz or Russian form of living. Such buildings were mainly erected during the Soviet era, when the rapid industrialisation of Osh meant that the city’s workforce rapidly swelled, and needed to be accommodated. This has created another way of reading the city’s history. One middle-aged resident explained to me “you can learn the city just looking at its constructions”, going on to explain how to tell the difference between different eras of Soviet construction, since “the

Khrushevka [*apartment block built in the Khrushchev era*] is a bit narrow, and built from brick”, whereas a Brezhnev era building, or “Brezhnevka” is “a bit wider, and built from reinforced concrete” (IV26, R). Oftentimes the construction of a factory would then necessitate the construction of a residential neighbourhood around it, where its workers would reside - one resident of the Yugo Vostok neighbourhood recalled how the forest of mulberry trees that previously covered that area were cut down in the 1970s to make way for workers at the nearby silk factory (IV27). This area is now almost completely Kyrgyz, with the exception of some Russian and Tatar families, and prized in the summer for the cool breezes that rise from the river running alongside it.



Figure 27. A new apartment block in Osh, decorated with a ‘tunduk’ symbol (Source: Author’s own)

This legacy of residential development in Osh also produces effects on the spatial distribution of housing types in Osh. Many of the largest *mahalla* neighbourhoods sit in the ancient heart of the

city, around the base of the Sulaiman mountain and around the bazaar. Zakharova describes this “old city” as being “laid out like an amphitheatre” around the mountain, gradually spreading out towards the river Ak Bura’s flood plain (Zakharova 1997; 64). Following Russian annexation of this part of modern day Kyrgyzstan in 1876, the ‘new’ or ‘Russian’ town was constructed along the river Ak-Bura, especially towards the South-East, and the three main streets running parallel to the river were set out (Ibid). These three parallel streets, today named Kurmanjan Datka, Lenin and Masalieva, continue to form the back bone of central Osh’s transport infrastructure.



Figure 28. Soviet era buildings in the city centre (Source: Author’s own)

Soviet era construction thus mainly sprung up around the edges of this Uzbek/Russian core, for example in neighbourhoods such as Zapadny, KhBK and Yugo Vostok. That is not to say, however, that the Soviet city planners were completely averse to demolishing traditional homes in the city centre to make room for new buildings when they saw fit. One of Osh’s largest *mahallas* is a result of just such an intervention. Situated on a hill top above the Yugo Vostok neighbourhood, in the

South East of the city, On Adir (also known as the Amir Temur micro district) was originally created to rehouse ethnic Uzbek families whose city centre neighbourhood was bulldozed in Soviet times (Liu 2012).

Since the end of the Soviet era a third type of housing has increasingly made its presence felt in Osh's urban landscape. *Novostroiki*, or new-build, houses have sprung up in numerous neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the city, such as Ak Tilek in the west. Commonly built by Kyrgyz families, these homes are often not linked up to the city's water and electricity networks, and lack good road links. The World Bank, which has implemented a programme focussing on improving living standards in *novostroiki* in Osh and Bishkek, estimates that around 40,000 people currently live in one of Osh's seven *novostroiki* neighbourhoods constructed since 1991 (World Bank 2008). Interestingly, although the World Bank identifies the *novostroiki* as areas of deprivation in need of access to basic services, Osh residents often referred to them as aspirational, with one interviewee excitedly informing me that her family was building a home there (IV19), whilst another disparagingly noted "the rich guys live there" (IV16, E).

It is clear, then, that the ethnic identification and spatial distribution of housing types in Osh mean that interventions in the sphere of housing reconstruction, especially in the wake of a traumatic experience such as the 2010 Events, are likely to be characterised by complexity and contestation.

This research has uncovered a number of instances where such intricacy has emerged: firstly in contestation between the municipal authorities and international actors (and later Bishkek backed actors) regarding what kind of housing should be reconstructed after the Events, and where. Secondly, non-elite conversations about housing reveal a complicated mix of pragmatism and deep emotional attachment that cannot be reduced to the simple message that Uzbeks only want to build

and live in *mahalla* housing and Kyrgyz all want to build and live in high rise apartment blocks. Finally, the municipality's apparent commitment to supporting multi-storey housing raises the question of what impact this could have on Osh's distinctive cultural and social identity, which is in no small measure remembered through the presence of *mahalla* neighbourhoods at the heart of the city.

9.3 Elite level tensions

As discussed in Chapter 6, the immediate post-crisis response of the authorities in Kyrgyzstan to the destruction of homes and other buildings in Osh was to create a body, the State Directorate for Reconstruction and Development (SDRD), responsible for overseeing and implementing reconstruction in the city. The SDRD stated from the outset that it would take into account certain "key principles" advanced in the city master planning process for Osh and Jalalabad - that is the respect of the "red zone" within which development should not be allowed to occur, and a general preference for the construction of multi-storey housing (Satybaldiev 2010). This became clear as early as 6 weeks after the Events, when the head of the SDRD (Zhantoro Satybaldiev, who went on to become the country's Prime Minister from September 2012 to March 2014) set out his organisation's priorities for the reconstruction of Osh and Jalabad, identifying the "urgent rehabilitation and construction of housing for the affected people", and going on to underline that "we are already starting to construct blocks of flat, which will be offered to the affected, depending on their choice" (Ibid). Interestingly, Satybaldiev also appears to acknowledge the issue of ethnicisation of housing types Osh, when he affirms that "the interests of all population groups for construction of individual houses will be taken into account independently of the

nationality” (Ibid).¹⁵ An interview with another former SDRD employee (the body has now been dissolved) confirmed that at the beginning of its work in Osh, it was expected that they would pull down the damaged houses in the city centre to make way for multi-storey buildings, as envisaged in the city Masterplan:

“There were a lot of people who [we were] told not to rebuild their houses, but to give them lands in a new district, in order to build on these places multi-storey buildings. Why did this question arise? Because all the burned down houses were situated in the centre of the city, the centre of the city is traditionally the ancient part of the city and generally old houses were burned (...) they were built in an ethnic-traditional style, so, so called ‘Mahalla’, but it is situated right in the centre of the city, and according to the new general plan these houses would be moved or rebuilt” (IV14, R).

Media reports from the time suggest that the construction of multi-storey housing blocks was also part of a somewhat clumsy attempt on the part of the municipal authorities in Osh to enforce the creation of multiethnic neighbourhoods, by rehousing Uzbek and Kyrgyz families affected by the violence in the same housing blocks (Orange 2010, Feifer 2010). On one level this can be read as an attempt to ‘build back better’, to take advantage of the moment of opportunity that emerges in the post-crisis city (as described by Amartunga and Haigh (2011) and Charlesworth (2006)) to rebuild it in a way that addresses the ethnic divisions that lay at the heart of the Events. However, whilst this aim may seem laudable at first glance, it is far from the “resolver” strategy of reconstruction advanced by Bollens (1998). In relying solely on an architectural vernacular and housing type so strongly identified with one group of residents this approach fails to “facilitate mutual empowerment and tolerable urban co-existence” through these new constructions (Bollens 1998:

¹⁵ Note that Satybaldiev's use of the term ‘nationality’ here is in line with its Soviet era use (as discussed briefly in Chapter 4) denoting ethnic identity rather than national citizenship.

731-2). Instead, the resulting policy appears closer to a “partisan” strategy, favouring those residents who have already embraced apartment living and leaving no room for *mahallas*.

And yet, the same ex-SDRD worker went on to explain that his organisation had in fact favoured a different reconstruction strategy. Taking into account factors such as the importance of private property, human rights and what he called the “ethnic element” of the situation, as well as a pragmatic concern to provide viable housing before the onset of winter, the SDRD chose to focus its immediate efforts on rebuilding individual temporary homes on the exact sites where houses had been burned down (IV14).

A representative of an international organisation involved in the reconstruction effort further elaborated on this approach, explaining that alongside the urgent need to construct shelters capable of withstanding a harsh Kyrgyz winter, there lay a second concern underpinning their approach to reconstruction: the wish to “ground” the Uzbek community, to prevent them from being driven out from the centre of Osh by quickly providing them with a solid presence on the site of their former homes (IV56, E). This introduced what the representative saw as a “protection” element to the reconstruction work, which was underlined by the decision to build shelters from bricks rather than other, more temporary, materials that would usually be employed in such a situation (IV56). Such an approach betrays a consciousness of not only the functional, but also the symbolic role of these buildings. As explored in Chapter 2, the “totemic” aspect of certain buildings - the way in which they signify the presence of a certain community in a certain place and space - helps to explain why they are attacked in times of conflict (Bevan 2007; 8). Building brick shelters on the exact spot where homes were destroyed, then, kept a space open to rebuild these physical markers of ‘Uzbekness’ in central parts of the city.

This approach quite clearly diverges from the municipality’s vision of high rise buildings rising from the ashes of damaged neighbourhoods, however, and as such led to a certain level of tension

between the municipality and international organisations and the SDRD. A representative of another international organisation involved in this process noted the many “roadblocks” thrown up by the Mayor’s office during the construction of these shelters (IV11, E), whilst the SDRD employee remarked wryly that “the city municipality doesn’t like me, because I criticise a lot” (IV14, R). Certainly one year on from the Events, Osh’s chief architect complained to the press that “90%” of the reconstructed homes violated the city plan, going on to express their concern about their ability to withstand seismic stress (Kloop 2011) – an accusation denied by representatives of international organisations in my interviews. At the end of the day, however, the approach supported by international organisations and donors, as well as the SDRD, won out over the municipal authorities, most likely because these groups held the purse strings for most reconstruction and development activities in the city.

The differing approaches to reconstruction of the municipal authorities, SDRD and international donors reveal the tensions and complexity that lie at the heart of Charlesworth’s vision of the “architect as potential peace builder” (Charlesworth 2006:1). In the case of post-Events Osh all actors have explained their position in these terms, whether by trying to enforce ethnic mixity via multi-storey buildings, attempting to protect the right to remain in the city of communities perceived to be at risk or, as was shown in the previous chapter, through Myrzakmatov’s aim of building a strong ethnic Kyrgyz identity into the fabric of the city. All can be argued to be responding to the challenge of building back better, of using the (re)built environment to promote peace, and yet in practice these approaches clash, even undermine, each other and have led to no little mistrust between some of the main actors involved in reconstruction in Osh.

So, if there exists a certain level of tension among the ‘elite’ level actors involved in shaping the future of housing in Osh, what is the view from the street level? Here, my research has unearthed a complex mix of idealism and pragmatism regarding the city’s future, coloured by individual choices

(too often overlooked in discourses about housing in Osh that sometimes betray universalising tendencies) and highly emotional responses to certain forms of housing.

9.4 The view from the street

One of the most striking messages to emerge from my non-elite interviews was that the most common hope for the future development of Osh, expressed by residents I interviewed, was the construction of high rise buildings. Respondents were not directly asked about building types (or at least, not until they themselves had first opened up this line of discussion), but instead largely expressed this opinion in response to the questions ‘if you could change Osh in the future, what would you change?’ and its variant ‘If you were the Mayor of Osh, what would you change in the city?’.¹⁶ Given that I ensured my respondents were broadly representative of the ethnic make up of Osh, such striking support for the construction of multi-storey buildings in the city meant that a significant number of ethnic Uzbek respondents had expressed their support for this proposal. Indeed, of the 14 non-elite respondents who spoke specifically of the need to construct high rise buildings in the city, 5 were ethnic Uzbeks, one was ethnic Russian, and the rest ethnic Kyrgyz.

Respondents gave a wide range of reasons for supporting the development of multi-storey housing blocks in the city. Some, for example, pointed to practical concerns such as the growing population of Osh, or to the perceived comfort and convenience of apartment living compared to the time consuming upkeep of a private house and garden (IV34), as evidence of the need to grow the city’s housing stock upwards. As one young Kyrgyz man put it;

¹⁶ As discussed in Chapter 6, the Mayor is widely perceived in the city to be the driving force of construction in Osh, and responsible for decisions about the city’s future development. Having heard this narrative multiple times during my fieldwork I began to incorporate it into this question, especially if the initial way of formulating the question - ‘if you could change Osh in the future, what would you change?’ - did not elicit a response. There were no noticeable differences in the types of answers prompted by the two questions that would lead me to believe they were understood differently from one another.

“you know, our population is growing, and we need more places to live, more buildings, and if we built high scrapers (sic) we can like, er, put in them more people” (IV20, E)

Others saw in high rise buildings the chance to improve the aesthetic quality of the city (“our city will be very beautiful, with very high buildings, with beautiful houses” IV18), notably by making it appear more modern. In this perspective, the current aesthetic quality of Osh is unfavourably compared with a vision of modern, high rise buildings akin to those found in Dubai, Astana or Hong Kong (IV12, IV13, IV37, IV39). Such a view led some residents, such as a young Russian woman living in an apartment building in the centre of Osh, to state;

“As I consider myself a modern person, I think that it’s ok to build just multi-storey building because we have no, just er, historical architectures (...) we have no, just, historical structures, no historical monuments. I think that it’s ok to create something new” (IV49, E)

As we shall see, such a view of Osh as a city without historical architecture is one that contrasts strongly with the views of other city residents (notably from the Uzbek community, but also from older, well educated Kyrgyz respondents), who expressed deep attachment to mahalla housing as the physical proof of Osh’s status as an ancient city.

Interestingly, one respondent - the head of a research institute in the city - suggested that building high rise apartment blocks would play a peace building role in Osh by forcing ethnic groups to live together, echoing the policy proposed by the municipal authorities in the immediate aftermath of the June Events (IV24). In sum, then, the broad support for multi-storey constructions expressed by a number of Osh residents is explained by them in a number of ways: They are more modern, more convenient, necessary to house the city’s growing population, and are even seen by some as a tool to build a more harmonious society.

9. 4.1 Uzbek pragmatism

Dig a little deeper, though, and this support is revealed to be more nuanced. Nearly all of the Uzbek respondents who proposed the construction of multi-storey apartment buildings qualified this in some way. One respondent suggested these buildings should be built in Zapadny, an area in the West of the city which used to be quite multi-ethnic, but has become more markedly Kyrgyz since the June Events, and is already home to numerous Soviet era apartment blocks. Another suggested it would be “better to build the city, how I understand, multi-storey buildings around the city, and in the middle kind of these, you know (*gestures to low level houses outside the window*)” (IV22, E). This idea was supported by my Uzbek translator, Daniyar, in a later conversation. As a self proclaimed supporter of all things focussed on progress and business development, and impatient to see Osh develop into a modern city, Daniyar was at pains to ensure I understood that such progress couldn’t occur at the expense of the traditional mahalla neighbourhoods around the base of Sulaiman-Too. Here, he explained, the Soviets had already determined that the earth was seismically unsuitable for multi-storey construction. Better that such buildings be reserved for a district like KhBK. (Field notes 15/05/13) In short, where Uzbek respondents supported the construction of high rise housing blocks, this was almost immediately qualified as something that should occur away from the mahalla - either on the outskirts of town, or in a neighbourhood already characterised by this type of construction. Most importantly, high rise buildings were very much seen as a pragmatic solution to *complement* existing low rise and *mahalla* housing, not to replace it.

Indeed, it would be difficult to imagine many of the residents I spoke to standing aside to let their traditional homes be demolished, given the deep emotional attachment many of them expressed. “This is the house of my father, and his father before him” explained one man “I don’t want to leave here” (IV37, U). Others cast doubt as to whether they would be able to live in a flat, saying they were too accustomed to living in a house (IV39), or that living in a house is integral to an Uzbek

way of life, because “our nation, our people, need more rooms and yards in their house. They are used to live in houses like this, and I think it would be difficult to live in the multi-storey houses” (IV22, E). As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the *mahalla* is more than just a collection of houses, it a repository of memory and practice which is constitutive of Uzbek identity in Osh, and gives this identity a sense of stability and permanence (Liu 2012, Connerton 1989).

It was interesting to note, however, that not every Uzbek respondent expressed this point of view. One female respondent told me that she wouldn’t mind living in a flat in order to take advantage of the “modern conveniences” it contained, and suggested this might be especially good for young people (IV34, U). A young female Uzbek friend of mine echoed this sentiment a few days later, saying that her busy work schedule made living in a flat a more attractive option to her. Again, she went on to say that she would like to see more high rise construction in the city, as long as it didn’t impinge too much on historical city centre neighbourhoods (Field notes 24/04/13). Women, especially younger daughters and daughters-in-law (*Kelin*) who have moved in with their husband’s family, are expected to shoulder the burden of ensuring exacting standards of cleanliness and tidiness are maintained in traditional houses (especially in close knit *mahalla* neighbourhoods, where any lapse in standards could immediately be remarked upon by neighbours). Is it any surprise, then, that it is these women who are most inclined to view apartment living as an opportunity to embrace ‘modern convenience’, and reduce the amount of housework they are expected to undertake every day, often on top of jobs and childcare responsibilities? Conversely, young men that I spoke to, such as Daniyar or Sajrafuddin, a student in the faculty of languages at Osh State University, seemed the most adamant that they would not want to live in high rise housing (Field notes 15/05/13, 23/04/13). Of course, given the traditional division of labour in the home, it is unlikely the burden of cooking and cleaning the house fell on them, so the appeal of the modern conveniences of apartment living was probably lessened.

9. 4.2. Replacing the 'dangerous' mahalla

Looking more carefully at Kyrgyz and Russian responses that support high rise construction is also quite revealing. Whilst respondents offered a number of pragmatic reasons to explain their hopes of building multi-storey buildings in Osh (as mentioned above, these reasons include the perceived modernity and convenience of apartments, as well as being a practical response to the pressing needs of the city's growing population), another theme emerged through these conversations. If some members of the Uzbek community I spoke to lent their qualified support to this type of construction as a practical measure which could complement, but not replace, existing housing in Osh, the inverse was true of many of the Kyrgyz and Russian residents I spoke to. For a significant number of these residents the construction of multi-storey buildings in Osh went hand in hand with the destruction of traditional low rise neighbourhoods in the city centre – the *mahalla*. This narrative is informed by a perception of the *mahalla* as a dangerous or frightening space amongst many non-Uzbek residents (Liu, 2012), and therefore one which they would be happy to remove from the cityscape. Whilst one elderly Kyrgyz man (the same person that had suggested that making communities live together in apartment buildings would build ethnic unity) warned me of the criminal activities that took place in the *mahallas* (“these *mahallas*, for example On Adir district, drugs were found there also” (IV24, R)), ¹⁷ another young Kyrgyz woman, Begimay, confided her fear of the *mahalla*, saying;

¹⁷ Although reliable crime statistics are difficult to come by in Osh, especially given the mono-ethnic nature of the police force in the city and the prevalence of corruption in law enforcement agencies, contacts within the OECD policing mission in Osh confirmed that illegality is no more commonplace within *mahalla* neighbourhoods than in the rest of the city.

“I’m afraid, there are a lot of mahallas, like Lyuli [a term for gypsy communities] mahalla, other gypsy people live there, Lyuli, who are like asking, begging the money. Yeah, I’m afraid to go there, I don’t need to go there” (IV17, E)

The conflation of the *mahalla* space with the presence of the Lyuli community here is revealing. The Lyuli, or Mugat, people are a Central Asian gypsy community subject to a vast amount of discrimination and marginalisation in Osh, who largely live in closed communities such as the Yangi *mahalla* on the outskirts of the city (Erkinov, 2009). Indeed, local friends would often warn me sternly to beware of Lyuli ‘beggars’ or ‘thieves’ in the market, and most weeks I would see stallholders aggressively chase Lyuli children away from their stalls. For Begimay, the *mahalla* space was so threatening, so foreign, that she appeared to see all *mahallas* as inhabited by this most hated and marginalised of groups, and not by someone who could easily be sitting next to her in one of her classes at the local University. Begimay was certainly not alone in expressing this fear of the *mahalla* – respondents as diverse as a 14 year old school girl and a University lecturer in her 40s admitted they never visited “Uzbek streets” or well known *mahallas* such as the sprawling hilltop community of On Adir, because they were afraid of these places. Another young Kyrgyz student, Ruslan, had a simple, more final, solution to what he perceived as one of the city’s problems; “I would say destroy *mahallas* (...) because I like skyscrapers, and I am standing for a modern city” (IV20, E). Ruslan was also troubled by the presence of the *mahalla* for its anti-modern connotations, which ran counter to the bright modern city he felt Osh should become.

One of the most striking ways that debates about the *mahallas* would often be expressed was through a seemingly wider discussion about the urban versus rural. Across Osh people use their discourse to privilege the urban experience, depicted as superior by dint of its perceived inherent modernity, over the the rural experience, commonly described as backwards, old fashioned, and anti modern. This dialectic was demonstrated to me early in my stay in Osh, as Cholpon (a young

student in Osh State University's language faculty) ruefully explained how students born in Osh would tease her for being '*aildik*' - from the village - since she had come to live and study in the city from a small village a couple of hours away. To be *aildik*, Cholpon explained, was to be backwards, unsophisticated, and less able to speak Russian (a mark of having received a good education) than their urban counterparts. Indeed, Cholpon would rarely speak Russian with anyone other than eager foreign visitors such as myself, for fear that she would make mistakes that would show her up as a villager. The city, another group of students in Osh would tell me, is more civilised and more educated than the village, a modern place, with better services and greater access to job opportunities (see IV03 focus group).

But whilst this dialectic of the modern city versus the anti-modern village may be widely accepted in the city, this narrative diverges when it comes to the character and status of Osh itself. Whilst some city residents identify Osh as a centre of modernity that stands as a bulwark against its problematic anti-modern rural hinterland, others are dismayed that the city itself is indistinguishable from the villages that surround it, and is desperate need of intervention if it is to become truly modern.

"You know who are more prone to violence?" asked Azamat, "It's the people who live in villages". City dwellers, he went on to reassure, were "more tolerant, more open minded" (IV16). Like many in the city, Azamat blamed the worst excesses of the 2010 violence on an influx of people from the villages. To him it was simply inconceivable that the residents of cosmopolitan Osh, the second largest city in Kyrgyzstan, would turn on each other in such devastating fashion. This was a refrain expressed on numerous occasions, from residents keen to explain that the attackers in June 2010 were *ne mestnye* - not local - but had travelled into the city from surrounding rural regions such as Alai with the express intention of carrying out violent acts (IV28, IV29). Seen in this perspective,

the June events are as much an attack by the rural against the urban, as they are an episode of inter-communal urban violence. This in itself mirrors some explanations of urbicide, in which violence against the city is seen as the revenge of the ‘backwards’ countryside against the progressive, modern countryside. Of course, as explored further in Chapter 3, whilst this narrative may be compelling in its simplicity, it risks obscuring the political aims of urbicide, such as the destruction of spaces which create the potential for heterogeneity and urban mixity (Coward 2009).

One local human rights advocate elaborated on this problem further, suggesting that inter-communal peace building efforts in Osh should take into account the residents of rural areas, who were increasingly coming into the city in search of work. These people, she explained, were uneducated, and unused to the multiculturalism they encountered in the city, which made them more easily incited to violence (IV29). In these accounts, then, Osh was presented, whether accurately or not, as a ‘modern’ place, home to a reasonable and educated population used to living in peace with one another. The countryside surrounding the city was presented, conversely, as an uncultured and backwards place. This thinking, it should be noted, was very much in line with the view of the city promoted in the Soviet era as the home of modernity, and the space in which modern Soviet citizens would be produced through education and participation in the workforce. The city, then, was presented by some residents of Osh as being under threat from the uneducated, unreasonable and potentially violent inhabitants of the villages around it, who needed to be educated in the norms of the modern city if they were to successfully participate in its life. During the course of my stay in Osh many respondents made reference - sometimes affectionately, sometimes with malice - to the rural ethnic Kyrgyz as having “come from the mountains” (IV41) or “come in from the villages” (IV30), making them less civilised - and potentially more aggressive - than their urban counterparts. Given that rural to urban migration is ongoing at a considerable rate in Osh (as it is in

the rest of Kyrgyzstan) it is easy to see why some residents of the city felt uneasy about the potential impact of influx of rural populations on Osh's modernity.

However, in the opposing narrative the border between Osh as a modern city and the backwards rural space that surrounds it is much less clear. According to this view Osh is problematic precisely because it is "just a big village" (IV03). To return to Sagyndyk's earlier complaint about the view that greets those who climb to the top of the city's iconic mountain, it's all "kishlaks, kishlaks, kishlaks" and "no total look of typical city blocks" (IV26). Sagyndyk's consternation arose from the fact that the aesthetic quality he and many other Osh residents associated with the vision of a modern city (that of regular ranks of high rise buildings) was apparently being stymied by the continued presence in the centre of Osh of the *mahalla*. Through the *mahallas* the rural had invaded the urban, holding back the development of modern Osh. No surprise, then, that the municipal authorities favoured changes that would "permit a gradual change from the 'village structure' into an urban way of life and into business of a contemporary nature" (Renaissance of Osh 2013). This narrative was neatly summed up by a senior academic in the Osh Technological University, who had himself been involved in city planning efforts for a number of years:

*"We want Osh to be a modern city, and to build high buildings (...) I guess she [note-myself] has seen in what condition is our city, the central part of our city? **So most of the buildings are one storey buildings, which were built 50-60 years ago, right? These buildings look like rural buildings, right?** We also want that the central part of Osh city, being an ancient city in Central Asia, so, will be built up, the same as in the Arab Emirates, in Astana, and European cities" (IV12, author's emphasis)*

Taken together, these highly emotional responses suggest that for some people the construction of high rise housing in Osh would serve a second purpose – not only providing housing space that meets the diverse hopes of residents described earlier in this chapter, but as a way of destroying spaces that some residents perceive as threatening, dangerous and foreign. The continued presence of these buildings at the heart of Osh makes possible the presence of a troubling ‘other’ (portrayed here as criminal, threatening, foreign or old fashioned) that only the removal of these buildings can rectify.

Again, this is not to say that this is a unanimous message – one middle aged Kyrgyz man asked me worriedly “how shall we prove that the city is ancient? How is it possible without history?” when we began to discuss plans to knock down the *mahallas* (IV25, R). To him the *mahallas* demonstrated Osh’s unique and ancient historical identity, without which the city would be like any other in Kyrgyzstan. Perhaps more interesting, though, are the houses that have sprung up around Osh in recent years, which point to another aspiration regarding housing in the city, and one that is not acknowledged in the simple binary of high rise housing versus *mahalla* housing. Passing through the outskirts of the city on the road from Bishkek for the first time, I was immediately struck by the large numbers of new houses standing part finished by the roadside. As explored earlier in this chapter, these ‘*novostroiki*’ homes, instantly recognisable by their shiny roofs and unblemished brickwork, have sprung up all around Osh and other large cities in Kyrgyzstan. Their presence reflects the fact that although many see the construction of multi-storey buildings in the city as a necessary step, living in a private house remains an important aspiration for many Kyrgyz people. As two young university teachers I interviewed explained:

“R1: House is better!”

R2: Than flat, of course!

R1: You have your own yard, and you have your own small garden..

R2: And orchard also, garden, I prefer garden, er how to say? Garden kitchen?

I: Oh yes, a kitchen garden?

R2: Kitchen garden! Because you can grow everything, and when you choose something, when you cook something from your own kitchen garden, it is just... sweet, yes, tastier.”

(IV19, E)

Another respondent, a teacher in the same University, told me with pride that she and her husband had recently moved from a flat in KhBK district to a house they had built in the western suburb of Ak Tilek (IV18). These women expressed a sense of pride about living in a house instead of a flat, and the numbers of *novostroiki* homes springing up in neighbourhoods such as Ak Tilek suggest they are not alone in this aspiration. Interestingly, another neighbourhood marked by the presence of large private homes is the wealthy *Residencia*, so called because the President’s summer residence is situated there, along with the offices of most of the international organisations operating in Osh. This part of the city, with its large, leafy homes set behind high outer walls, is situated in the central south-west of Osh, and was saw no homes destroyed during the June Events. Home to the city’s wealthiest residents, this is the lifestyle to which many ordinary Kyrgyz aspire, and which many *novostroiki* are replicating to some extent (what one international worker in Osh described as 2-3 storied “mansion boxes” surrounded by a wall (IV05, E)). It serves as a salient reminder that ethnicity is far from only factor affecting people’s housing choices and aspirations – to overlook questions such as wealth and socio-economic status risks trapping the debate in a dangerously deterministic view of life in Osh. Similarly, failing to acknowledge the presence and significance of *novostroiki* neighbourhoods, presents a falsely reductive view of housing options in the city.

Even though at first glance, then, my data would appear to show quite a broad level of support for proposals to construct high rise buildings in Osh, taking in a variety of ages, genders and ethnic groups, a closer look at the data reveals a more nuanced story. As discussed above, many (although not all) in the Uzbek community seem keen to continue living in traditional low rise housing, synonymous with *mahalla* neighbourhoods. However, in giving qualified support to the development of multi-storey housing as long as it doesn't entail the destruction of their homes, Uzbek community members also demonstrated their hopes regarding the future development of Osh, and an acknowledgement that some construction will be necessary in order to achieve this future. This pragmatism is tempered with a deep emotional attachment to *mahalla* living, and the conviction that Osh's future should not come at an unbearable cost to their way of life, expressed through *mahalla* living. On the other hand, similar pragmatic reasons for supporting the construction of apartment blocks expressed by Kyrgyz residents are accented by another deeply emotional narrative about housing types. This narrative expresses fear and discomfort over the presence of *mahallas* – perceived as foreign, threatening, dangerous – in the city centre, which the proposed high rise buildings would erase from the cityscape, rendering it safe. That said, it is imperative to remember that these narratives are in no way unitary, and that there are other vectors at play in the discussion about housing types and the future of Osh than just the so-called ethnic question. As touched on above, it seems likely that wealth and social class also play a significant role in this conversation, and one that would merit further research.

9.5 Analysis - a slow uricide?

Talking about housing in Osh pulls together actors operating at different levels, then, including local, national and international government representatives, humanitarian actors and local residents, who also draw on a variety of allegiances and identities depending on their ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, gender and much more. Trying to unpack the different narratives being

deployed by these diverse actors in conversations about housing amply demonstrates the complex political, emotional and aesthetic context in which interventions in the urban fabric of Osh occur. One common thread that runs through many of these interventions, though, is how certain types of housing have come to represent the identity of a certain group – and by extension the identity of Osh as a city – and what it might mean to change this. The notion of the mutually sustaining links between collective memory, group identity and the buildings and places that perpetuate and lend permanence to these memories and identities is a theme that has run through this investigation, and one that comes to the fore again with regards to housing.

As Liu has eloquently demonstrated, traditional *mahalla* neighbourhoods have come to serve as a *lieux de mémoire* for the largely Uzbek communities that live in them, and this has consequences for the way many ethnic Uzbek residents see the future development of the city. Although respondents I spoke with often supported the construction of high rise buildings to accommodate Osh's rising population, they also stipulated that this should not take place at the expense of *mahalla* houses. To destroy this way of living, it would seem, would destroy a central element of Uzbek memory and identity in Osh. To those living outside the *mahallas*, these areas are also often highly emotionally charged spaces, perceived by many residents as frightening, foreign places. To these respondents, mainly ethnic Kyrgyz or Russians, the construction of high rise buildings would not only be a practical solution, but a way of removing this threatening spaces from the city once and for all. Crucially, it would also remove the physical vestiges of Osh's non-Kyrgyz heritage from the urban landscape, and prevent them from being rebuilt in the future, by occupying these spaces with a different kind of architecture. Both the memory of the city's multicultural past, and the possibility of its multicultural future could thus be written out of the city. In the previous chapter of this thesis it became clear that Mayor Myrzakmatov had been attempting to build an ethnic Kyrgyz identity into the landscape of Osh through the construction of a number of new monuments. In

contrast, this chapter suggests that some city residents supported an approach to housing in the city (one that had the support of the Myrzakmatov municipality) which would build a more Kyrgyz identity into the city via the *destruction* of problematic *mahalla* spaces. Both can perhaps be seen as part of a process of ‘Kyrgyzification’ of space in Osh, and a rejection of the Uzbek identity and history that the *mahalla* testifies to. As Megoran has noted, Kyrgyz nationalism is “profoundly insecure about the country’s survival”, therefore it should not be so surprising that the presence of this non-Kyrgyz space at the heart of the country’s second city is perceived as threatening by so many residents (Megoran 2012: 5). Remove this space, then, and the threat to Kyrgyz identity is removed also. As Bevan reminds us, this process is all the more powerful since it applies not only to the present, but to the material evidence of the past, to memories of belonging (Bevan 2006).

Housing interventions in Osh’s urban fabric are universally couched in terms of improving the city, and yet this research shows that the preferred approach of the Myrzakmatov municipality, which has a broad level of support amongst ordinary people, has the potential to undermine what Coward has called “the existential quality that defines urbanity” - heterogeneity, or the sharing of space by different groups (Coward 2008; 54). That is to say, the heterogenous nature of Osh, to which the diverse housing types in the city bear witness, is an essential element of its successful identity as a city, and one that is at risk from such interventions. As seen above, such a concern seems to motivate some city residents (as well as international donors) who are keen to preserve these traditional housing types, in order to preserve Osh’s unique history and identity. The unease (sometimes explicitly stated, sometimes implicitly) underpinning many objections to the replacement of *mahalla* neighbourhoods with multi-storey housing is that the municipality’s post-conflict reconstruction and urban development efforts might achieve through town planning what the violent mobs of the 2010 Events began - the erasure of Osh’s physical proof of a heterogeneity largely symbolised by its Uzbek population, a kind of slow urbicide. Weizman has poignantly

described way urban planning policy has been used in just this way to isolate and minimise Palestinian neighbourhoods in Jerusalem, describing them as “transformed into an archipelago of small islands of conjured ‘authenticity’, within an ocean of Jewish construction” (Weizman 2007: 51). Were the Myrzakmatov municipality able to follow through their plans of erecting high rise blocks across the heart of Osh, the remaining *mahallas* of Osh could be reduced to just such a fate.

Chapter 10: Conclusion - Building Back Better?

10.1 Introduction

This investigation began by advancing one understanding of the June 2010 violence in Osh as an attack against the plurality at the heart of the city, both literally and symbolically. Taking its cue from Pullan and Baillie (2013), Coward (2010) and Bevan (2006) it categorised the urban violence that took place in Osh as violence committed *against* the city - against the diversity that it both symbolises and makes possible - rather than simply *in* the city. Taking this approach meant understanding the reconstruction that followed the violence in the same way; as a process with symbolic as well as practical significance (Charlesworth 2006). It went on to pose a number of questions central to this research project. It asked how post-conflict reconstruction took place in Osh between 2010 and 2013? This question sought to pin down exactly what type of projects were undertaken, how they were implemented, and which actors were responsible for rebuilding the city. It then questioned how should this reconstruction should be characterised - was it a continuation of the violence against the city carried out during the Events, only this time via what Graham (2004) termed the “dark side” of urban planning (p. 34)? Or have these interventions been intended as a curative riposte to this violence in the vein of Charlesworth’s peacebuilding architect (2006), aiming to safeguard the plurality that that was threatened by the violence? Moreover, is it possible that in the highly fluid post-conflict context a new arrangement of plurality was being inscribed in Osh’s urban fabric, as traumatic experiences were woven into a new commemorative narrative of the city (Bell 2003). Were the construction and reconstruction projects explored over the previous four chapters then part of this ongoing process? Finally, it asked what can the notion of collective memory reveal about the way the city has changed, and how this has affected city residents? Building on an understanding of collective memory, place and identity as being inextricably linked,

this investigation explored this relationship against the backdrop of Osh's changing cityscape in order to shed new light on the way urban (re)construction was being experienced by the people who live and work in the city.

Nine chapters later, a number of key findings can be drawn from the data collected for this thesis, and will be discussed in more detail in this final chapter. Firstly, the built environment in Osh is saturated with memory, and changes in urban space there (both those that had already taken place, and those that seemed likely to) are affecting and being affected by this. Secondly, in line with the theories advanced by Foucault (1980) and Hirst (2005), the urban environment in Osh is being marshalled as a resource for power by a number of groups, and this process is all the more visible - and urgent - for taking place in the post-conflict moment. Finally, all three characterisations of the reconstruction that has taken place in Osh were observed. Different actors are intervening in different ways, and with different underlying motivations, leading to a layered and complicated vision of reconstruction in Osh. This complex picture of reconstruction has a number of consequences for investigations into the practice of post-conflict reconstruction more widely, as well as for residents of Osh, and raises the question of what does it actually mean to 'build back better'.

10.2 Summing up the empirics

This investigation has uncovered a number of important points, which range from the big picture of developments in Osh's urban fabric in recent years, to the fine grained detail of the way these developments have been experienced by the city's residents. Taken together they represent a compelling picture of the content, motivation and impact of the physical reconstruction projects pursued between 2010 and 2013. The previous chapters have answered the question of *how*

reconstruction has happened. They showed the variety of projects undertaken under the umbrella of reconstruction activities, especially focussing on the provision of damaged and destroyed housing, and determined that these were largely driven by two groups of actors; international organisations, donors and NGOs on the one hand, and the municipal authorities on the other. Chapter 6 underlined how difficult it is to separate out post-conflict reconstruction activities from ongoing construction activities in the post-conflict context, for example, or the competing reconstruction initiatives advanced by international organisations and NGOs, and the city municipality, often in the same spaces. Instead it suggested that post-conflict reconstruction be viewed as a continuum that moves from immediate needs to longer term projects, with different actors taking the lead at different points. These actors were demonstrated to employ different approaches to reconstruction, with international organisations and NGOs putting into practice some of the principles discussed in Chapter 2, such as participatory planning and stakeholder engagement, whilst the municipal authorities preferred a more top-down approach, with little to no resident consultation. The investigation also showed how these projects had elicited mixed reactions from city residents, often divided along ethnic and gender lines, and how one figure - former Mayor Melis Myrzakmatov - had captured the narrative of construction in the city to bolster his popularity amongst certain constituencies in the city.

Chapters 7 - 9 explored the complex layered reality of urban change in post-conflict Osh. They showed how all three narratives identified in Chapter 4 are relevant in the city. The post-Soviet legacy can be seen in the renewed centrality of the Masterplan in urban planning (a direct holdover from the Soviet era (Stanilov 2007)), the city's layout and dilapidated *khrushhevki* apartment blocks, and the strong memories being kept alive by non elite actors in elements of the cityscape such as the former factory buildings that litter the city centre. The ethnic divide emerged time and again in discussions about housing type, access to public space, and the construction of monuments, to name

but a few. And the city's identity as a 'Southern Capital' was repeatedly raised by respondents keen to underline its unique identity, long history and important role in modern and ancient Kyrgyzstan. These chapter also suggested other useful ways of thinking about Osh, for example as a gendered city, or a place where the role of religion is increasingly being negotiated through its public spaces. Above all, these chapters revealed Osh to be a place which was deeply affected by the Events, but not defined by this alone. The city's streets, parks, markets and monuments are both site and subject of processes of negotiation and contestation regarding the ethnic, gender, generational, regional and religious identities of contemporary Osh.

10.3 An over-determined commemorative landscape

At the very beginning of this investigation the question was posed what can an understanding of collective memory reveal about post-conflict urban change in Osh and the way that this is impacting residents? The answer, as has been repeatedly demonstrated over the previous chapters, is a great deal. As demonstrated in Chapter 2 of this thesis, social groups use buildings and other elements of the built environment as frameworks of remembering (Halbwachs 1952), because the perceived solidity of the built environment lends a sense of solidity and timelessness to the memories being expressed there (Connerton 1989). This investigation of post-conflict Osh supports this assertion; the urban landscape is saturated with commemorative narratives of the Events and much else besides. This is occurring from both the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' perspectives. The 2010 - 2013 period witnessed clear attempts by elite actors to inscribe their own commemorative narrative in the cityscape (what Schudson (1997:3) termed the "self-consciously framed acts of commemoration"), for example through the construction of monuments and introduction of the pointedly Kyrgyz *tunduk* motif in renovated public spaces. These three years also saw much memory work from the bottom-up, as non-elites used the so-called "ordinary places where memory erupts" (Atkinson 2007:

521) to make concrete their own narratives of memory. Take the Uzbek men who used their memories of the bazaar in the past to highlight how they increasingly felt excluded from public space in the city since June 2010, or the myriad places in the city where residents recalled the June Events - pointedly not using the official monuments to the violence.

Just as Irwin-Zarecka (2007) predicted, though, the most interesting insights have come when bottom-up and top-down narratives have sought to use the same “touchstones” to solidify and transmit, or to erase, memories. When this occurs, these sites become over-determined by their commemorative meanings, flashpoints in an already tense context. In Osh one such space is the *mahalla*. As Liu (2012) has shown, and this investigation has borne out, *mahalla* neighbourhoods play a specific role in enabling Uzbek ways of life within a Kyrgyzstani city. These neighbourhoods bear witness to the continued historical presence of an Uzbek community at the heart of Osh. Uzbek respondents in this research repeatedly underlined what the *mahallas* represented to them - as “the house of my father, and his father before him” (IV37, U), a way of living well suited to “our nation, our people” (IV22, E), and a defining characteristic of Osh as a city (Field notes 24/04/13, 04/05/13). In short, the *mahalla* was the framework through which the memory of what it was to be an Osh Uzbek could be transmitted and concretised. In contrast, it was the *mahallas*’ very role as a marker of Uzbek memory and identity that made it so problematic to other respondents. Commonly depicted as sites of criminality (IV24, IV17) and danger (IV15, IV18), and classified as unsanitary and old-fashioned in municipal documents such as *The Renaissance of Osh*, the *mahallas* recalled above all historical presence of Uzbeks at the heart of the city. At a time when the Myrzakmatov led elites were trying to construct an exclusively Kyrgyz ethno-national identity for the city this space - and the memories it embodied - disrupted the process, and became one of the things that would need to be forgotten in the process of forming a new identity. As Renan famously noted, the process of forgetting is just as important as the process of remembering when it comes to the interplay of

memory and identity (Bhabha 1990). In Osh this forgetting could be facilitated through the replacement of *mahalla* neighbourhoods with housing more readily identified as Kyrgyz, but the importance of the *mahallas* in Uzbek frameworks of memory and identity means that this process would likely be highly contested, and deeply distressing for the communities living there. Similarly, the city's urban fabric is being used to facilitate the forgetting of Osh's Soviet heritage, as these buildings are repurposed, removed or neglected, cutting adrift a generation of Soviet educated citizens from these important elements of their frameworks of identity and memory.

10.4 Undertaking an “archeology of power” in Osh

Interrogating collective memory in the post-conflict city sheds light on places where commemorative saturation of the urban landscape can explain the tensions that arose around proposed and real changes there. It also helps to lay bare the built environment's relationship with power. Just as Hirst (2005) predicted in Chapter 2, elements of the built environment across Osh have been deployed as part of multiple discourses of power, that occurred at different scales, and often in the same place. For example, Chapter 7 showed how the system of patriarchal power used buildings and spaces in the city to restrict young women to certain types of public space they read as safely accessible (the bazaar - even though many young women would like to change its form, and certain cafes, streets and parks), as opposed to the many spaces that they feel are “not convenient” (IV51, E) or prone to unpleasant street harassment (IV49). Within the *mahalla*, the built environment also helped to regulate the lives of women. This occurred, for example, through the mutual surveillance of these close knit communities (where “everyone knows your business, what you're wearing, where you've been” (Field notes 04/05/13)), and through the huge amount of house work expected of housewives there, which made some female respondents ruefully admit they might enjoy the “modern conveniences” of an apartment home (IV34, U; Field notes

14/04/13). Similarly, the use of heroic Kyrgyz monuments and traditional Kyrgyz decorative patterns in the urban fabric, along with proposals to destroy ethnically identified *mahalla* housing discussed above, formed part of a discourse of power that privileged ethnic Kyrgyz identity over others in the city. This discourse used the built environment to shore up the “insecure nationalism” of the young Kyrgyz state (Megoran 2011), both by promoting Kyrgyz identity and by writing out the memory that other ethnicities also found their home there (What Bevan (2006) has previously termed “cultural cleansing” of the built environment (25)).

What is perhaps most intriguing is that the same spaces and buildings are being simultaneously used in several discourses of power. For example, the post-2010 monuments not only serve to reinforce the construction of ethnic Kyrgyz identity in space, they also form part of the discourse of patriarchal power. Their content is both gendered, focussing on strong male warriors with women only appearing in the role of weeping mothers, and ethnicised, writing out Uzbek, Soviet and other experiences from the cityscape. Similarly, the young women discussed in Chapter 8 were keen to remake the bazaar in a more ‘modern’ and welcoming form - using this space to push back against the patriarchal order that restricted their ability to fully enjoy many other public spaces. However, in seeking to challenge patriarchal power through the bazaar (what McDowell (1999; 160) termed “consumption as partial liberation”) these young women are simultaneously reinforcing the patriarchal order which casts women as consumers rather than producers, assigning them once again to the private sphere. It is for this precise reason, then, that Mitchell has characterised explorations of collective memory in the urban environment as an “archeology of power” (Mitchell 2003; 446).

Although these processes are at constantly at play in Osh and other cities, the post-conflict moment makes them perhaps easier to observe and unpack. As shall be discussed below, the urban

environment is in flux at this point - decidedly not a blank slate (Clarke et al 2010), but presenting a fleeting opportunity to intervene in the cityscape with more haste and more resources than would usually be possible (Amartunga and Haigh 2011). As such different actors converge in the city, each with their own motivations and power structures that they wish to use the rebuilt environment to advance there. This was certainly the case in Osh, where the cast of stakeholders looking to participate in the city's reconstruction after 2010 was wide - bringing together local, national and international actors, donor governments and municipal authorities, and city residents from a huge variety of backgrounds - all of whom had specific ideas about how the urban fabric of Osh should be rebuilt and, as we shall see below, with what ultimate goal.

Looking beyond what collective memory has revealed about changes in Osh, sections 10.3 and 10.4 above also underline the value of taking this into account when planning and undertaking post-conflict (or post-crisis) reconstruction projects more generally. Chapter 2 brought to the fore the views of a number of theorists - notably Esther Charlesworth and Scott Bollens, for example - who insisted on a nuanced vision of reconstruction, one that acknowledged the political potential of these activities and identified the wide variety of motivations competing to drive such a process. This investigation throws further weight behind this viewpoint - one cannot understand former Mayor Myrzakmatov's personalisation of reconstruction activities in the city, or UN led attempts to 'ground' the Uzbek community by rebuilding homes in the city centre, as anything but political. Considering collective memory takes this insight one step further. As discussed above, considering collective memory sheds light on previously obscured power relations embodied in reconstruction projects. In Osh this has meant showing how the construction of monuments, shelters and parks has formed part of a struggle to define the commemorative narrative and landscape of the city. Applied elsewhere such an approach has the potential to reveal the hidden power relations embedded in proposed reconstruction projects, moving away from a reductive view of reconstruction as a

technocratic undertaking and towards a more holistic, and effective, understanding. This investigation has also demonstrated how interrogating the links between collective memory and the built environment enables researchers to give voice to the experiences of non-elite stakeholders. Most literature explored in Chapter 2 focussed on post-conflict reconstruction as an element of the liberal peace building architecture, typically led by the UN or NGOs. Considering collective memory encourages a wider interpretation of this process, one that places the memories and experiences of non-elite actors at the heart of considerations.

This investigation has amply demonstrated the diverse ways that Osh's urban landscape is inextricably bound up with questions of power, identity and memory, the range of spaces this occurs in, and how this can lead to tension, or to the double exclusion of some groups, when a space in the built environment becomes over-determined with meaning and memory or when it is deployed as part of a discourse of power. It argues for the extension of a collective memory approach to other cases of post-conflict reconstruction, which would benefit from the insight this generates. Clearly, in this context interventions in the city's fabric can never be simply technocratic or neutral, then. So, to return to the second research question that began this investigation, how should we characterise reconstruction in Osh since 2010?

10.5 Characterising reconstruction in the city

Of course, as is so often the case, the answer to this question is a complicated one. In reality the data presented in this thesis provides evidence to support all three motivations described in the introduction to this chapter.

Looking at the interventions funded or carried out by international organisations and NGOs, there is a clear normative slant to the projects they advanced in post-conflict Osh. As well as providing much needed shelter to affected populations, these projects specifically sought to counter the damage done to the city's conditions for diversity by the 2010 violence. Respondents from NGOs and international organisations underlined what they called the "protection" element of these projects and the vital role they would play in "grounding" the embattled Uzbek community in the city (IV56). Other respondents raised concerns about the increasing popularity of ethnic Kyrgyz imagery in new monuments, parks and street furniture (IV09), and expressed worry that certain previously diverse public spaces were becoming mono-ethnic as a result (IV07). Donors opposed Mayor Myrzakmatov's plans to rebuild apartment blocks in place of destroyed houses after the Events (IV56, IV14), supporting the construction of low rise private homes instead, echoing the ethnicised view of housing discussed in Chapter 9. NGOs were concerned about the timing of reconstruction projects, and keen to ensure both Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities received the same attention in the reconstruction period (IV61). The shelter cluster, tasked with providing immediate and longer term accommodation for residents of seriously damaged homes, involved these stakeholders in discussions around the design and implementation of the reconstruction project to ensure it met their needs (IV11).

Taken together these actions reveal a marked preference for those actions that reconstructed or protected conditions for diversity in the city (the presence of *mahalla* style housing, public spaces that are comfortably accessible to all ethnic groups, ensuring minority voices were heard in the reconstruction process), and a sensitivity to the idea that this plurality was under threat. 'Building back better' in this case meant rebuilding a city where Uzbeks, and other national minorities, would still have a secure place despite the violence of the June Events. This is no real surprise given that these stakeholders are acting within the pervasive wider framework of liberal peace building

discussed in Chapter 2, which as Richmond reminds us is closely associated “with humanitarian intervention, with security sector reform (and DDR¹⁸), with institution building, good governance, democratisation, rule of law programming, human rights, reconstruction, development, and free market reform” (Richmond 2012; 5).

In contrast, the approach favoured by the Myrzakmatov-led administration seems designed to do just the opposite and continue to reduce the qualities of and conditions for diversity in the urban environment, a process that this thesis argues began in the Events. The previous section recalled how Myrzakmatov oversaw a process of Kyrgyzification of space in the city. By acknowledging ethnic Kyrgyz identity in spatial interventions (but not Uzbek or Russian, for example) an exclusionary, mono-ethnic identity was increasingly built in the city. This took place through the erection of imposing monuments at key entrances to Osh, the use of symbolic imagery such as the *tunduk* on buildings, fences and park benches, and traditional Kyrgyz patterns on lights and painted on walls. The Peace Bell monument was inscribed with a message in English, Kyrgyz and Russian, but not Uzbek (the only recent intervention in the urban landscape to acknowledge Uzbek identity was the ‘Mothers’ Tears’ statue - a very passive and non-threatening vision of Uzbek identity. At the same time, the the municipal authorities repeatedly expressed strong support in their post-conflict reconstruction and city master planning activities for the replacement of symbolic *mahalla* neighbourhoods (so central to the identity and lifestyle of the Uzbek community as discussed above) with new high rise apartment blocks or parks.

This all points to a conscious remaking of the city as an exclusively Kyrgyz space - a process which is also underway in Bishkek, where there has long been a large Russian population, for example

¹⁸ DDR stands for “Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration”, a key concept in peace building practice and literature.

through the replacement of Russian street names with Kyrgyz ones. If the June violence was the first step in diminishing plurality in Osh in favour of the titular nationality (and the targeting of Uzbek homes, businesses, educational establishments and cultural centres suggests that this was one aim of the violence), then the actions of Myrzakmatov's municipality appear intended to continue this process through other means. But what was the motivation behind this? Was it simply a case of crass nationalism designed to reward Myrzakmatov's core constituency, in line with the neo-patrimonialism and patronage that so often characterises Kyrgyz politics (Morozova 2010, Collins 2002)? Certainly this has been intimated by some international observers (for example, see the International Crisis Group's 2012 report "*Kyrgyzstan: Widening ethnic divisions in the South*"), and the same fear was expressed by a great many respondents during this research, especially those from national minority groups.

However, it is possible to see this in another way. Recounting an interview with the then Mayor in 2011, Megoran reveals that Myrzakmatov saw the Kyrgyzification of Osh as a necessary step in building peace in the city, explaining "“By building statues of Barsbek, of Manas, we are strengthening the Kyrgyz state and thereby are guarding the peace between the peoples.”" (Megoran 2012; 25). According to this logic, the Events were caused by disunity (or at its most extreme, Uzbek separatism) and the best guarantor of a peaceful city was a strong Kyrgyz identity that all groups in the city would subscribe to (Megoran 2012). Interventions to suppress expressions of Uzbek identity in the built environment and bolster symbolically Kyrgyz ones were therefore intended to impose one unifying identity that would combat the dangerous disunity that reached its apogee in the violence of the Events. To Myrzakmatov *this* was 'building back better'. The approach favoured by the international community was by extension viewed as dangerously destabilising, since it supported the existence of plural identities in the city (Chatham House 2013). Understanding the reconstruction tactics on international actors and NGOs, and the Myrzakmatov

led administration, as belonging to two quite different traditions of post-conflict peace building interventions, however, certainly helps to make clear why the two have clashed in the cityscape of Osh.

Not all of the changes in the post-conflict environment in Osh can be attributed to these two groups of actors, however. Osh residents have also played an important role in setting the tone for city development since 2010. As seen in Chapter 7, and discussed above, young women expressed their hopes for change in the bazaar in a way that was quite different to the narratives proposed by either the internationally backed reconstruction efforts or the municipal authorities. Similarly, Chapter 9 showed that residents did not necessarily see their housing options as split between the two ethnicised options of *mahalla* or apartment block. In fact, several spoke excitedly about the opportunity to live in one of the new neighbourhoods of detached houses being built in areas such as *Ak Tilek* in the west of Osh. Moreover, the different commemorative narratives being grounded in the cityscape from the bottom-up interacted in complex ways with the intentions of the top-down reconstruction efforts - sometimes supporting them (many ethnic Kyrgyz residents were highly supportive of Myrzakmatov's work in the city, for example), and sometimes resisting them (as is the case with the older generation's refusal to accept official silence about the city's Soviet industrial past, or the places that non-elite memories of the Events are remembered, as discussed in Chapter 8).

When seen from the bottom-up, it is impossible to characterise urban change in Osh as either reducing or safeguarding plurality. It is, however, quite possible to see this as a process of re-arranging plurality, the outcome of which is not yet clear. Different groups of residents tried to capture (or constrain) the momentum of (re)construction in the post-Events period in a way that would best serve them, that would bring the re-made city into the service of their own discourses of

power. This process also reflects the re-ordering of social memory that so often takes place after a traumatic event such as the Events, as social groups seek to inscribe the experience into their communal narrative in a constructive manner (Bell 2003).

Widening the focus from Osh to post-conflict reconstruction more generally, an important lesson has emerged from this consideration of the motivations of different stakeholders active in the reconstruction process. The range of actors and motivations that competed in the remaking of Osh's urban space described above paints a picture of reconstruction that is far messier than the literature often allows for. As mentioned in section 10.4, writing on physical post-conflict reconstruction most often (though not exclusively) focusses on the actions of the UN, NGOs and donors. In contrast, one key observation of this study has been the complex, even messy, nature of urban reconstruction in practice. Osh's rebuilding has involved a range of actors, contrasting - sometimes conflicting - motivations, differing time frames, blurred lines between what constituted reconstruction and 'normal' city development activities, and contrasting views on how best to involve communities in planning. Taking all of these into account makes the challenge of building back better even more complicated, to be sure, but it would also allow for a better understanding of potential controversies and unintended consequences in the reconstruction process. Rather than being shocked by the 'roadblocks' thrown up by a figure such as Myrzakmatov, practitioners and policy makers would be better prepared to understand why some stakeholders might oppose their initiatives and how this could be addressed earlier.

10.6 Conclusion: 'Building back better' for whom?

This thesis has succeeded in illustrating *how* reconstruction was carried out in Osh following the 2010 violence, how this process was perceived by local residents and the way in which former Mayor Myrzakmatov captured the narrative of reconstruction to shore up his popularity with many city residents. It has demonstrated how this reconstruction can simultaneously be characterised as safeguarding diversity, intended to reduce diversity, and attempting to reinscribe a new vision of diversity in the city, depending on which projects and actors one considers. Finally, it has shown how a consideration of the relationship between collective memory and urban space can provide vital insights into the power relations being built into Osh's landscape, and explain how some spaces - over-determined with memory - have come to be flashpoints in the changing city. These findings have resonance outside Osh. This investigation supports those theorists of post-conflict reconstruction who underline the political nature of such an undertaking. It emphasises the potential of collective memory to uncover hitherto hidden power relations in the (re)built environment and ensure non-elite experiences feed into the reconstruction process. The case of Osh has shown the deep complexity of the post-conflict reconstruction process - the actors involved, the timeline and the approach to urban planning, for example. This thesis argues that taking into account this complexity at the beginning of other reconstruction projects has the potential to make these more effective and responsive to the needs of the places and communities being rebuilt.

One important question remains, however; what do all these changes mean for the people of Osh? This investigation has repeatedly shown how central the bricks and mortar of the city are to the identity and sense of security of its residents. From the *mahalla* neighbourhoods, to the bazaar to the monuments and informal commemorative spaces through the city, there is an important and highly emotional connection between people and place in the city. Residents described Osh as their "motherland" (IV15, E), declared their love for it (IV21, IV41) and told of the generations of their family who had made it their home (IV40, IV37) and dropped "the blood from our belly button"

there (IV23, R). However, the counterpoint to this emotive and often passionate attachment to the city revealed a more distressing reality. Many residents - notably those from minority communities and an older, disempowered generation brought up under Soviet rule - expressed deep anguish at what they perceived as their increasingly precarious place in the city. Responding to recent changes in Osh, these residents described themselves as “refugees in our own city” (IV21, E), people with “no future” in Osh (IV46, R), which had become somewhere “we all dream of leaving” (IV01, E). The place that had been so important to forming and sustaining these residents’ identities and memories, then, had become threatening and closed to them. The municipality’s approach to urban development can be strongly linked to this. The mode of reconstruction discussed above, which seeks to rebuild a specifically Kyrgyz identity in the city, is increasingly excluding these groups from Osh.

Even though, as discussed above, some reconstruction efforts in Osh have also focussed on preserving the city’s historic diversity, or remaking this in a new image, it is the municipality’s efforts that appear to be bringing about the greatest effects on people there. This is perhaps unsurprising - the international community’s activities were winding down and moving on to the next emergency even as this research was taking place, and such a crisis response was never designed with a long term presence in mind. Similarly, whilst the young women interviewed in this investigation were passionate about their hopes of carving out space for themselves in the city, they scarcely possess the economic and social capital to make this happen. In contrast, even with the fall of former Mayor Myrzakmatov, the municipal authorities retain the interest, presence and authority (although perhaps not the money) to pursue their plans for the city’s development. This paints a bleak picture for Osh’s most precarious communities. Even without a recurrence of the overt violence of 2010, the places that hold their memories and identities, that prove their history and continued presence in the city, look likely to continue to be eroded as city development proceeds

further. This leaves a large portion of Osh residents stranded; increasingly cut off from the frameworks of memory and identity that had sustained them for so many years, unable to comfortably access large parts of the city in the ways they once did, but unable - or unwilling - to go elsewhere. As one resident of a home slated for destruction in the next round of street widening put it when I asked if she would leave the city “We would stay here, of course we would stay here, where else would we go?” (IV34, U). Osh may be being built back better, but not for everyone who lives there.

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Annex: Interview Details

Resident interviews

	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Gender	Profession	Ethnicity	Date & Location
IV01	Group interview (6 people)		Female	Teachers	Uzbek, Tatar, Tajik, Russian	26/05/13 Osh
IV02	Group interview (6 people)		Female	Students	Kyrgyz	08/05/13 Osh
IV03	Group interview (10 people)		4 Male, 6 Female	Students	Kyrgyz, Russian	29/03/13 Osh
IV04	Aziz		Male	Taxi driver	Uzbek	13/05/13 Osh
IV15	Aigerim		Female	Student	Kyrgyz	29/05/13 Osh
IV16	Azamat		Male	Unemployed	Kyrgyz	17/04/13 Osh
IV17	Begimay		Female	Student	Kyrgyz	20/05/13 Osh
IV18	Gulnara		Female	University teacher	Kyrgyz	15/05/13 Osh
IV19	Aigul and Zhyldyz		Female	University teachers	Kyrgyz	17/05/13 Osh
IV20	Adilet		Male	Student	Kyrgyz	25/04/13 Osh
IV21	Zarif		Male	Accountant	Uzbek	08/05/13 Osh
IV22	Shavkat and Otajon		Male	Teachers	Uzbek	18/05/13 Osh
IV23	Chingiz		Male	Retired	Kyrgyz	27/05/13 Osh
IV24	Omurbek		Male	Scientist	Kyrgyz	06/06/13 Osh
IV25	Tolkun		Male	Businessman	Kyrgyz	29/05/13 Osh
IV26	Nurbek		Male	University teacher	Kyrgyz	29/05/13 Osh
IV27	Maria		Female	University teacher	Tatar	15/06/13 Osh
IV28	Feruza		Female	Teacher	Uzbek	16/03/13 Osh
IV29	Dinara		Female	NGO worker	Uzbek	15/03/13 Osh

IV30	Street interview (Monueva Street)	■	Male	Unemployed	Uzbek	15/05/13 Osh
IV31	Street interview (Monueva Street)	■	2 Male, 2 Female		Uzbek	15/05/13 Osh
IV32	Street interview (Monueva Street)	■	Female		Uzbek	15/05/13 Osh
IV33	Street interview (Monueva Street)	■	Female	Housewife	Uzbek	15/05/13 Osh
IV34	Street interview (Monueva Street)	■	Female	Housewife	Uzbek	15/05/13 Osh
IV35	Street interview (Mahalla)	■	Female	Housewife	Uzbek	21/05/13 Osh
IV36	Street interview (Mahalla)	■	Female	Housewife	Uzbek	21/05/13 Osh
IV37	Street interview (Mahalla)	■	Male		Uzbek	21/05/13 Osh
IV38	Street interview (Mahalla)	■	Female	Housewife	Uzbek	21/05/13 Osh
IV39	Street interview (Mahalla)	■	Female		Uzbek	21/05/13 Osh
IV40	Alisher	■	Male	Taxi driver	Uzbek	18/05/13 Osh
IV41	Kanykey	■	Female	Teacher	Kyrgyz	05/06/13 Osh
IV42	Street interview (KhBK)	■	Female		Kyrgyz	27/05/13 Osh
IV43	Street interview (KhBK)	■	Female	Street vendor	Kyrgyz	27/05/13 Osh
IV44	Street interview (KhBK)	■	Female		Kyrgyz	27/05/13 Osh
IV45	Street interview (KhBK)	■	Male	Student	Kyrgyz	27/05/13 Osh
IV46		■	Male	Taxi driver	Uzbek	26/04/13 Osh
IV47		■	Male	Taxi driver	Russian	20/04/13 Osh
IV48		■	Male	Taxi driver	Kyrgyz	12/05/13 Osh
IV49	Katya	■	Female	Unemployed	■	22/04/13 Osh
IV50	Almazbek	■	Male	Security Guard	Kyrgyz	18/04/13 Osh
IV51	Aidai	■	Female	Teacher	Kyrgyz	18/05/13 Osh

Institutional Interviews

	Name (pseudonym)	Organisation type	Date & Location
IV05		International organisation	14/03/13 Osh
IV06		International organisation	29/03/13 Osh
IV07		International organisation	09/04/13 Osh
IV08		Non-governmental organisation (international)	25/04/13 Osh
IV09		Non-governmental organisation (international)	08/04/13 Osh
IV10		Non-governmental organisation (local)	17/04/13 Osh
IV11		International organisation	31/03/13 Osh
IV12		Academic	22/04/13 Osh
IV13		Local government	20/04/13 Osh
IV14	Meder	State Directorate for Reconstruction and Development	12/04/13 Osh
IV52	Jamila	Non-governmental organisation (local)	10/06/13 Osh
IV53		Non-governmental organisation (international)	04/07/12 Bishkek
IV54		Donor Government	10/07/12 Bishkek
IV55		International organisation	17/07/12 Bishkek
IV56		International organisation	18/07/12 Bishkek
IV57		Academic	19/07/12 Bishkek
IV58		Non-governmental organisation (international)	20/07/12 Bishkek
IV59		Academic	07/08/12 Bishkek
IV60		Non-governmental organisation (international)	22/08/12 Bishkek
IV61		Non-governmental organisation (international)	24/08/12 Osh
IV62		International organisation	24/08/12 Osh
IV63		International organisation	24/08/12 Osh

