Environment and Planning A 2013, volume 45, pages 892 – 907

doi:10.1068/a44505

Shared space, divided space: narrating ethnic histories of Osh

Nick Megoran
School of Geography, Politics and Sociology, Newcastle University, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE1 7RU, England; e-mail: nick.megoran@ncl.ac.uk

Received 17 July 2012; in revised form 27 February 2013

Abstract. In June 2010 the Kyrgyzstani city of Osh was engulfed in three days of mass killing, arson, and looting. Accounts by journalists, academics, politicians, and organisations tend to either overdetermine ethnicity as a causal factor, or dismiss its significance as a social process. As a result, internal responses to the tragedy have been viewed by outsiders as mendaciously irrational. To overcome this impasse, this paper foregrounds the idea of Osh as national territory. Based on ongoing ethnographic study since 1995, plus an analysis of media reports, it shows the ways in which Uzbek and Kyrgyz residents of the city have narrated its ethnic past as one of divided or shared space. The resonance of these narratives can both help account for responses to the violence within Kyrgyzstan that have puzzled outsiders, and also uncover resources of hope. The paper highlights the importance of considering nationalism as a geographical phenomenon in explicating ethnic-based violence in contemporary Central Asia.

Keywords: nationalism, territory, Kyrgyzstan, violence, peace

Introduction: competing territorial narratives

Nationalism is an inherently geographical phenomenon. Seemingly intractable ethnonational disputes are generally accompanied by apparently irreconcilable historical narratives of contested territory. The Peace Research Institute of the Middle East argues that a prerequisite to peace as reconciliation is an empathetic grasp that the other's narrative is not wildly irrational but is rather internally logical and emotionally compelling (Adwan and Bar-On, 2012, page x). This paper develops the growing interest in geographies of peace (McConnell et al, forthcoming) by delineating the narratives of conflict—and cooperation—in the Kyrgyzstan–Uzbekistan boundary city of Osh.

Osh is Kyrgyzstan's second city, home to a large population of ethnic Uzbeks (Liu, 2012). The relationship between the two groups in the city is characterised by cultural proximity and symbiotic economic relationships on the one hand, and tensions over the sharing of space on the other (Reeves, 2010). Although political and community leaders have generally been adept at managing these conflicts, on two occasions the city has been engulfed by massive intercommunal violence between the two groups. These were both at moments of profound political crisis: June 1990 as the Soviet Union teetered on the verge of collapse (Asankanov, 1996), and June 2010 in a power vacuum created by the overthrow of Kyrgyzstan's corrupt governing regime two months previously.

The violence of June 2010 appears to have been triggered by a fight outside a casino on the evening of 10 June, but escalated rapidly as security forces failed to contain it. By the time large-scale violence subsided by 14 June, some 470 people (74% Uzbek and 25% Kyrgyz) had been killed, 2800 properties had been damaged, 111 000 people had fled to Uzbekistan, and a further 300 000 were displaced internally (Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission, 2011, pages 3, 44). In the days and months that followed, a bitter struggle was fought over Internet and news media to tell one-sided stories about victimisation and brutalisation.

Foreign NGOs and media sources have generally presented Uzbeks as the victims of organised pogroms, echoing the stories told by Osh Uzbeks. Stung by the depiction of Kyrgyzstan as guilty of genocide, Kyrgyz media and politicians have generally reacted by downplaying the victimhood of Uzbeks, and foregrounding the suffering of Kyrgyz people as bravely defending themselves against a treacherous insurrection instigated by separatism Uzbeks and loyalists of the ousted Kyrgyz regime. For example, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Special Representative to Central Asia, Dr Kimmo Kiljunen, chaired an investigation into the violence that concluded Uzbeks suffered 'disproportionately' and that Kyrgyz may have perpetrated 'crimes against humanity' (Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission, 2011, pages i–ii). The official Kyrgyz government response to the report accused it of "display[ing] an overwhelming tendency that only one ethnic group has committed crimes, ignoring the victims and deaths of this very group, and portraying the other group solely as defenceless victims" (Government of Kyrgyzstan, 2011a, page 2). Following publication of the report, the Kyrgyz parliament voted to declare Dr Kiljunen persona non grata and bar his reentry to the country.

This polarisation is a major obstacle to peace—meaning the achievement of justice and the restoration of mutually beneficial relations between the two communities in Osh. But it did not materialise from nowhere. Rather, it builds on narratives of intergroup relations told by the city's Kyrgyz and Uzbek inhabitants over recent decades. The purpose of this paper, which draws on more than fifteen years of ethnographic and other qualitative research within and around the city, is to understand these narratives: their form, provenance, context, and resonance. Such an understanding is crucial to enable scholars to interrogate and engage with the multiple ways in which the Osh tragedy is framed by journalists, politicians, international organisations, NGOs, and other actors. It is not claimed that narratives of conflict and coexistence cause violence or lead to peace. Rather, they are here understood as resonant discursive resources that can be invoked to justify or condemn violence, capture meaning, apportion blame, sacralise loss, explain victimhood, and produce hegemonic consensuses which will influence power relations.

Seeking such an understanding is a marked divergence from most writing on Osh 2010 to date, which generally aims to identify the *causes* of the violence. This is true of media commentators, independent and Kyrgyz government commissions of enquiries, and some scholars (Bond and Koch, 2010). Echoing Brass's work on communal violence in India, this paper argues that the search for causes of such events is "over-emphasized and often misplaced" (Brass, 2003, page 20). Not only can such a search never be separated from the values of the observer and his or her identification with the perceived victim, but attempts to explain the causes of interethnic riots often place blame on either the values of a group or their structural socioeconomic conditions. This, suggests Brass, often ignores the dynamic processes of riot production, and the possibility that riots may be the "willed actions, concrete productions of thinking, acting people". Furthermore, the models and theories that academics produce in providing explanations "cannot fail to feed into the interests and purposes of individuals, groups, governments and societies that seek satisfying explanations" (pages 22–23). Rather, suggests Brass, it is more useful to focus upon the 'production' of violence: the relationship of violent events to categories and understandings of, in his case, 'Hindu' and 'Muslim'.

Recognising that "Cities, warfare, and organised political violence have always been mutual constructions" (Graham, 2004, page 1), this paper uses geographical approaches to nationalism not to explain the causes of the violence, but rather to spotlight the production of urban space as contested *territory*. It identifies parallel narratives of Osh as either a Kyrgyz or an Uzbek place that is threatened by the other group. However, it also uncovers a rich strain of thought, common to Uzbek and Kyrgyz narratives, of Osh as shared space.

Nationalism, history, and geography

The goal of this paper, therefore, is to understand the narratives of Osh as shared or divided space that preexisted the 2010 violence, but whose resonance both enabled it to occur and framed the subsequent rationalisations and responses to it. However, recent Anglophone Central Asian scholarship on nationality and ethnicity, to which history has made the greatest contribution, does not immediately lend itself to the task of identifying the relationships between urban conflict and the meaning of 'Uzbek' and 'Kyrgyz' in Osh. These studies of Central Asian nationalism, informed by antinationalistic schools of historical sociology, have majored on the question of *when* contemporary national affiliations congealed (see below, next section). In emphasising the contingency of national identity as a product of state power, such studies are ill equipped to engage practically with many of the pressing intellectual and political questions raised when it erupts as bloody reality.

I suggest that it is more useful to think about the *geography* of nationalism in relation to the Osh conflict. More specifically, a geographical study of nationalism considers Osh not simply as space, but rather as national *territory*—space claimed not simply for immediate personal use, but also in the name of a national group. Territory is not a passive given—rather it is "space that has had something *done to it*": as "land that has been identified and claimed" territory is "a spatial expression of power" (Cowen and Gilbert, 2008, page 16, italics in original). The claiming of space as national territory is a remarkably pervasive human activity that creates and moulds political relationships and identities through socially constructed territories (Vollaard, 2009).

In a classic essay, David Smith observes the paradox that "Geographical space must simultaneously be shared and divided" (1990, page 1): people must come together to facilitate survival and prosperity, yet they may also be obliged to exclude. This paper considers the ethnic history of the modern city of Osh according to three narratives of sharing and dividing space: the peaceful coexistence of kin nations in the same hometown, the aggressive Kyrgyz takeover of an Uzbek city, or an irredentist Uzbek attempt to capture a Kyrgyz city and fracture the nascent Kyrgyz state. The purpose of this paper is to outline these different narratives, and demonstrate how they can coexist. This is important because, as Grundy-Warr (1994, page 177) argues, "Most violent conflicts have territorial elements, and questions of who controls what land or who lives where become inseparable from problems of conflict management."

Methodology: studying ethnicity in Osh

The literature on ethnicity over the past two decades has argued that it is a social relationship that is historically contingent and malleable. "Identity", argues Vila (2000, page 14) "is not a 'thing' that an individual 'has' once and forever, but rather, a construct, which undergoes constant negotiation with 'others' as its contours are defined and redefined over time." Students of Central Asia have highlighted the fluidity and historical contingency of ethnic boundaries, the role of Soviet and post-Soviet (Allworth, 1990; Kamp, 2002; Schoeberlein-Engel, 1994) authorities in designating and manipulating national categories, and the difficulties and dangers of reading politics from ethnicity (Heathershaw and Megoran, 2011).

More specifically, elsewhere I have shown the pitfalls of researching ethnicity in the Osh context. By imagining two completely different sets of hypothetical leading questions for an interview or questionnaire, I have argued that the way that ethnicity is framed in a research project is crucial to the results that it produces (Megoran, 2007, pages 258–261). Thus, studying ethnic conflict can be a self-fulfilling prophecy, especially when such studies inform policy. Alimov argues that the superficial reporting of the alleged problems of non-nationals in Uzbekistan only aggravates discontent (Alimov, 1994, page 232; see also Tishkov, 1999).

As Eriksen contends, the "The choice of an analytical perspective or "research hypothesis" is not an innocent act. If one goes out to look for ethnicity, one will 'find' it and thereby contribute to constructing it" (1993, page 161). Yet, in a sense, 'look for ethnicity' we must because, as the 1990 and 2010 incidents of widespread violence in Osh show, it can be a deadly salient ingredient in social relations.

The researcher is thus presented with a dilemma: how to study ethnicity without reifying it and in so doing missing other important social processes and perhaps even exacerbating conflict. The solution I developed to this problem is to ask not about ethnicity directly but rather to study a different topic—in my case, international boundaries in the Ferghana Valley—and observe how ethnicity emerges (or does not) in this context (Megoran, 2007).

This is the approach that I take within this paper. It is based upon ongoing ethnographic research in the city of Osh since 1995 (Megoran, 2006), augmented by social science research methods, secondary academic literature, and reports in the Kyrgyzstani, Uzbekistani, and international media. I first visited Osh in 1995, and it was a case of 'love at first sight'. Sprawling along the winding Ak-Bura river, and nestling around Solomon's Mountain with its ancient rock drawings and archaeological remains that testify to a succession of civilisations over at least three millennia, it is an extraordinarily beautiful city. As a scholar who has also lived in the largely ethnically Kyrgyz northern town of Naryn and in Uzbekistan, and who speaks both languages and is fascinated by both cultures, their interface in Osh has made the city a particularly congenial place to be. Over the past decade and a half I have visited the city regularly, for sojourns of anything between a few days and eighteen months at a time. In common with standard understandings of 'ethnography', my research has been marked by *participation* in the lives of Osh folk, and reflective *immersion* within their cultural settings (Jones, 2010, pages 7–8). To this end I have studied history and both languages, and been variously a student, a researcher, and a lecturer at Osh State University. I have worked with local media and a foreign organisation; visited as a tourist, and participated in the intellectual, spiritual, and social life of the city. I have lived with both Uzbek and Kyrgyz families and have divided my time and energies roughly equally between the two communities. This is both because of my previous familiarity with the two cultures, and to obviate the dangers of what Robben (2007) calls 'seduction'—strategies that research subjects in contexts of conflict use to transfer their understandings of conflict to the researcher.

Throughout I have kept detailed field notes. I have introduced myself, on the advice of a local friend, as someone who was 'writing a book' about the region, in order that people understood I was recording interactions. As well as ethnography, I have also conducted other social science research methods such as focus groups, elite interviews, and systematic qualitative discourse analysis of local newspapers. In all this time I have never asked about ethnicity or ethnic relations unless the topic was brought up by interlocutors. Rather, I have sought to observe it and to allow it to emerge (or not) as a salient factor in conversations and interactions as I have been busy with other things, those 'other things' mostly being living life in a city I love.

This material presented in this paper is drawn from this research. As Light argues, "there is no universal formula or method for 'writing up' ethnographic research" (2003, page 175). I have chosen to stand back from individual stories and offer a set of three 'narratives' based on the narratives of the social actors I have studied (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, pages 198–200). These show how the ethnic history of the modern city of Osh can be understood according to three models: the peaceful coexistence of kin nations in the same hometown, the aggressive Kyrgyz takeover of an Uzbek city, or an irredentist Uzbek attempt to capture a Kyrgyz city and thereby fracture the nascent Kyrgyz state.

Osh as shared space

Kyrgyz presidential discourse and practice

The narrative of Osh as shared space has many rich resources to draw upon. One was the Soviet notion of "The Friendship of the Peoples" (Manley, 2009, page 233). This imagined the Union as bringing its multiple nations together in harmony, a diversity of cultures working alongside each other to build a new socialist utopia that prefigured the eventual unity of the human race. In post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, this ideology found formal continuation in the Assembly of the Peoples, a talking shop for minorities created and supported by Kyrgyzstan's first President, Askar Akaev. Although its influence was limited, it had a significant media presence as its activities were widely reported in state media.

These speeches often reproduced phrases that were commonly heard amongst Uzbek and Kyrgyz townsfolk, such as "our bazaars are one, our mazars [cemeteries] are one". The shared markets of Osh where the ancestors of the sedentary Uzbeks and seminomadic Kyrgyz in and around the city met to trade were far from the only example of symbiotic economic interdependence. In the Soviet period and beyond, daily works buses ferried labourers from the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) to factories in the Uzbek SSR. More recently Uzbek day labourers have worked the fields of Kyrgyzstanis. Until at least 2010—I do not know whether this is still occurring—Osh Uzbeks paid Kyrgyz herdsmen to take their sheep into the high summer pastures. Within Osh itself certain professions have been dominated by one ethnic group: thus, for instance, many Kyrgyz rely on Uzbeks for hairdressing, cooking, and carpentry services, while Kyrgyz dominated such sectors as horse and livestock trading.

But mutual ties go beyond economic interdependence, to deeper cultural, linguistic, kinship, and religious bonds. In his first state visit to Uzbekistan in 2006, Kyrgyzstan's President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, who ousted Akaev in 2005, delighted his hosts by declaring in Uzbek during a press conference:

> "Our air is one, our water is one, our God is one, our language is one. Therefore, the Uzbeks and the Kyrgyz will never be separated. I think that they should live together as well as grow and develop together" (Uzbek Television First Channel, 2006).

A Kyrgyz politician from outside the Ferghana Valley would be unlikely to speak Uzbek.

But President Akaev placed interethnic harmony far closer to the centre of his political strategies and discourse than did Bakiyev. Akaev drew on the Kyrgyz's epic oral poem, *Manas*, which occupies "an exclusive place in their cultural heritage" (Sultanova, 2011, page 22), to derive "7 principles". One of these was interethnic harmony. The heroic warrior became in Akaev's representation not the militarised embodiment of his ethnic group's exclusive claim to their territory, but a champion of interethnic harmony with wife, best friend, and closest ally drawn from neighbouring national groupings (Akaev, 2003). One of Akaev's favourite slogans was "Kyrgyzstan is our common home", illustrated on a thousand roadside billboards with a smiling Akaev amidst a group of Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, and others in national dress.

These were not empty words. Minorities received both a measure of support and of protection. Akaev promoted the founding of Osh's Kyrgyz–Uzbek University, and the creation of Osh State University's Uzbek Humanities–Pedagogical Faculty by the merger of the Uzbek philology and pedagogy departments.(1) These demonstrated a concrete commitment by the state to reproduce an educated Uzbek class within Kyrgyzstan, in particular to staff the numerous Uzbek-language schools in the south of the republic and ensure the viability of Uzbek intellectual life in Kyrgyzstan.(2) These new institutions also produced Uzbek-language textbooks for Kyrgyzstani Uzbek schools, a vital move as those from Uzbekistan were unsuitable because of their Latin script and their thick veneer of state patriotism.(3)

(1) Interview with anonymous academic, Osh, December 2009.

(2) Interview with Yodgor Jalilov, *O'sh Sadosi* 28 June 2001.

(3) "Ona darsliklar xususida", *O'sh Sadosi* 25 September 2000.

Politically, Akaev's main rivals were a loose alliance of nationalistic Kyrgyz opposition parliamentarians and their sympathetic press that had strong roots in the south and were openly suspicious of the Uzbek minority. Akaev forged alliances with Uzbek politicians in Osh, such as Mamasaidov, the influential Osh MP who was also rector of the Kyrgyz–Uzbek University.

In 2000 a young Osh Uzbek friend banged on my door late at night, escaping from a violent encounter with Uzbek border guards. "I respect Akaev enormously", he said in the conversation that ensued. "After 1990, which was very bad, if there had been rather than Akaev a Nazist president, it would have been terrible for us." As President Akaev's example shows, the political discourse and practice of the country's head of state could frame a political geographical imagination of the republic as shared space, an imagination that persuaded many Osh Uzbeks that they had a future in the country.

The Uzbekistan contrast

Perhaps surprisingly, events in independent Uzbekistan also contributed to a sense of Osh as shared space. In the early 1990s Osh Uzbeks looked enviously to Uzbekistan's perceived strong leadership and economic success. However, as they saw how the Uzbek state mercilessly ground down peasant farmers whereas the Kyrgyz state distributed land to people of all ethnic groups and left them in charge of their own farms, many concluded that life in Kyrgyzstan was better. Osh Uzbeks "have stopped believing in Uzbek TV showing all the pictures of new buildings", a Kyrgyzstani Uzbek journalist told me, because they know that these impressive structures "were built with the money stolen from the wretched cotton farmers". Similarly, an Uzbek businessman, originally from Uzbekistan, told me in 2009 that he moved from his own country to Osh because in Uzbekistan "if you started to make any money, officials swooped on you to suck it off you, the government was everywhere", whereas in Kyrgyzstan "people are not afraid of the government, it doesn't interfere, it lets you get on with your business".

Intellectually, Kyrgyzstan was certainly freer and Uzbek intellectual life in Osh enjoyed more creativity than that in Uzbekistan which was tightly shackled to ideological goals of the regime. At an international academic conference in Osh in 1999 that I participated in, a young Osh Uzbek scholar demolished the claims of a colleague from Uzbekistan whose work was significantly skewed by state ideology.

This relative intellectual freedom was not confined to university spaces, but permeated social life. Discussions of politics and religion at Uzbek social gatherings (such as the *ziofat* or *gap* single-sex feasting) was much freer in Kyrgyzstan than in Uzbekistan. In 1997 I saw an Uzbekistani guest at one of these storm out after being told by his Kyrgyzstani Uzbek hosts that people in Uzbekistan were intellectually 'retarded' due to the lack of freedom of conscience and expression! "I feel sort of oppressed there", a Kyrgyzstani Uzbek journalist told me in 2004 about visiting Uzbekistan, "as soon as I cross the border, I can't speak my mind".

Likewise, Uzbek-dominated mosques and madrassas multiplied in Osh. In 1999 Uzbekistan began a brutal crackdown on pious Muslims: people were arrested, tortured, harassed, and convicted of improbable crimes in ghastly show trials. "Do you see their eyes as they read out confessions?", one pious Osh Uzbek asked me in 2000: "it's like the Stalin period", he added, referring to the infamous show trials. Osh Uzbeks looked on appalled, and thanked God that they lived in a country where they could worship and study religion undisturbed.

This sense that Osh Uzbeks belonged in Kyrgyzstan not only on account of nativity but also because it offered a better future was, paradoxically, reinforced by the actions of Uzbekistan. In 1998 it began securitising its border, a process that started with the termination of cross-border bus routes, and went on to include the construction of a boundary fence, the closure of roads, a prohibition on Kyrgyzstani vehicles, and the demand for visas and travel documents (Megoran, 2004). This traumatised Osh Uzbeks who were less able to visit family and friends in Uzbekistan easily, but it also made them realise that their destiny lay in

Kyrgyzstan and with the Kyrgyz. As one Kyrgyz member of parliament put it to me in 2000, "the border crisis is good, it has shown our Uzbeks that their future is here".

This was brought home most directly in the (admittedly relatively rare) official verbal attacks on Osh Uzbeks by representatives of Uzbekistan. In a stinging barb on talented young Osh Uzbek journalist Alisher Soipov, Askarbek Kongantiyev accused him of treachery, avarice, libel, and stirring up trouble between ethnic groups and neighbouring states.(4) Soon after a string of such reports in the Uzbekistani media, Soipov was murdered. Some Osh Uzbeks suspected that the Uzbekistan government had a hand in this, and it illustrated for them how authoritarian Uzbekistan could be a threat to freer Uzbek life in Kyrgyzstan.

Thus through a combination of Soviet engineering, Central Asian cultural norms, economic exchange, the progressive policies of Kyrgyzstani politicians such as President Akaev contrasted with the divergent political trajectory of Uzbekistan, it is possible to narrate a history of peaceful coexistence and mutual interdependence of Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Osh.

Contested space—Uzbek model

If it is possible to narrate Osh's recent urban history as one of shared space and conviviality, it is equally possible to provide two parallel narratives of Osh as contested space, revealing Uzbek and Kyrgyz insecurities.

Osh Uzbek accounts of Osh as contested place often begin with claims about the Uzbekness of the Kokand Khanate that controlled Osh before the Tsarist conquest. For example, although acknowledging the polyethnic nature of the Kokand Khanate, Uzbek historians such as Sodiqov et al (2000) tend to describe it as one of 'the Uzbek Khanates'.

Osh Uzbeks' narratives of their city's ethnic history generally emphasise demographic claims about Stalin's National Territorial Delimitation (NTD) of 1924–27, which crafted the present-day political geography of the Ferghana Valley. Osh Uzbeks sometimes refer to the 1897 imperial Russian census. Although my interlocutors never quoted precise figures, this counted 32 436 'Turk–Tatar' speakers in Osh city (the mainstay of the ancestors of those in Osh who call themselves 'Uzbeks' today), but not a single 'Kara–Kyrgyz' (the Russian term for what would today be called Kyrgyz) speaker.(5) Nonetheless, NTD awarded Osh to the nascent Kyrgyz state, the Kara–Kyrgyz Autonomous Region (designated the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic in 1936). I long ago lost count of the number of times that Osh Uzbeks reminded me—bitterly or wistfully—of some version of this story of how Osh was wrenched from what they regard as its more obvious place in the Uzbek SSR.

For Osh Uzbeks, having, as they believed, been incorrectly and unjustly separated from the ethnic kin state to satisfy the ambitions of leaders of the nascent Kyrgyz state, Soviet town planning institutionalised an attack on the social geography that was core to Uzbek ways of life. In this 'urbicide', to use a recent analytical term from urban theory (Coward, 2004), beautiful madrassas and mosques at the heart of the city were closed or demolished. The heart of Uzbek Osh was further ripped out when Uzbek *mahalla* neighbourhoods were demolished to make way for ugly Soviet apartments and their Russian, and increasingly Kyrgyz, inhabitants. In the past Kyrgyz farmers had brought produce in by horse to sell at certain markets, and then returned to their homes in rural areas. Increased migration changed these dynamics as a permanent Kyrgyz urban population emerged from the traumas of Soviet-forced Kyrgyz sedentarisation. It increasingly seemed to Osh Uzbeks that 'their' city was being encroached upon.

(4) "Uzbek pro-government website slams Voice of America reporter", Press-uz.info (Tashkent), as reported by BBC Monitoring 3 September 2006.

(5) Source *Pervaya vseobshaya perepis' naseleniya Rossiyskoy imperii, 1897* (First general census of the population of the Russian empire), pages 60–61. As Silver (1986) reminds us, these data need handling with caution.

Displaced Uzbek residents who refused to take a new flat were given land on the outskirts of the town, land that did not fall under Osh's administrative jurisdiction, even though the inhabitants were functionally part of Osh. This would become an increasingly sore point as Osh Uzbeks alleged that more remote, noncontiguous Kyrgyz villages were included—that the gerrymandering of boundaries was a deliberate attempt to weaken the Uzbek minority by recording functional residents of the city as 'rural' dwellers. In the 1980s Kyrgyz in-migration rose, and Uzbeks thought themselves increasing victims of the abuse of power to further Kyrgyz ambitions at the expense of Uzbeks. The 1990 June riots were seen as the face of the naked aggression behind decades of anti-Uzbek town planning, but also as an important moment to finally defend Uzbek rights in Osh and stand up to unjust seizures of their land.

For Uzbeks in Osh, the Akaev period could also be read as one of insecurity and injustice. The in-migration of Kyrgyz accelerated with independence. What for Kyrgyz had seemed simply the natural logic of the nation-state system, that the titular minority should play a leading role in their second city, seemed to Uzbeks to be a takeover. They found Kyrgyz competing for, as they saw it, their land and for employment in the economic niches they had traditionally occupied. Uzbeks, in some sense, occupied a middle niche of economic activity: they were shopkeepers, businessmen, and skilled craftsmen. In the tier above them, top positions in local government, national banks, and state enterprises were now filled largely by Kyrgyz, and in the tier below, poor, unskilled, day-labourers, often from the rural areas, were also Kyrgyz. Many Uzbeks felt trapped in this position: looked down on by the new Kyrgyz elites in business and state employment, and excluded from the top positions, but resented by the new urban poor Kyrgyz underclass.

The end of the Soviet Union and the Red Army's role added to the Uzbek sense of vulnerability. Previously 'the Russians' had mediated relations, and in the 1990 clashes it was the Soviet army that had restored order: now, Osh Uzbeks felt more alone and vulnerable. Likewise, the police force and army became increasingly mono-ethnic, especially as the Russian officer class retired or emigrated. This heightened Osh Uzbeks' sense of insecurity—the largely Russian Soviet army had intervened to stop the 1990 violence: who would help next time?

This sense of vulnerability was further heightened by Uzbekistan's position towards the minority, which it viewed with suspicion. An ethnically Uzbek Kyrgyzstani recounted to me that he was sacked from an industrial plant in Kuvasoi (just over the border in Uzbekistan), being told, "You're from Kyrgyzstan—so go and find work in Kyrgyzstan." As Uzbekistan increasingly securitised its borders in the late 1990s (Megoran, 2004), Osh Uzbeks were rudely disabused of the comforting hope that they had a haven or protector in Tashkent. One night in 2000 I opened my door to an Osh Uzbek friend covered in mud and blood. It turned out that he had been beaten up by an Uzbekistani border guard. He reflected negatively on the future of Osh Uzbeks, his mind going back to the 1990 fighting and the ambiguous position of Uzbeks at the cusp of the two states: "If there is another war", he said, "and we go to the Kyrgyz, they will shoot us. But if we go to the Uzbeks, they will shoot us too!" The politics of nationalism in Kyrgyzstan and in Uzbekistan made Osh Uzbeks feel increasingly insecure.

The post-Akaev period saw this sense of vulnerability heighten. For Uzbeks the fall of Akaev boded ill. The nationalistic opposition who had been so critical of Akaev's slogan of "Kyrgyzstan is our common home" were suddenly in power. These included parliamentarian Adahan Madumarov, who was infamous amongst Osh Uzbeks for allegedly describing them as 'tenants' in Kyrgyzstan. The new government swiftly dropped the letter (and arguably spirit) of Akaev's "common home" slogan. A *Eurasianet* commentary in 2006 reported 'Uzbek leaders' as saying that "Bakiyev has shown little interest in continuing the Akaev line on inter-ethnic relations", as evidenced by downplaying of the People's Assembly, and the dismissal of ethnic Uzbek Anvar Artykov from his post of Governor of Osh region in December 2006, a move which meant that “no Uzbek leader has a strong relationship with Bakiyev” (*Eurasianet* 2006). Whereas Akaev depended to an extent on relationships with Uzbeks for influence in the south, Bakiyev, being a southerner, had his own networks and thus had little need of Uzbek support. Politically, Uzbeks were running short of powerful allies.

The sense of being displaced in their own city accelerated under Bakiyev. It extended to more than the economic sphere. Biard asserts (without providing evidence) that the appointment of ethnically Kyrgyz imams in Uzbek communities “regularly provokes the disapproval of believers, who perceive this gesture as the discriminating assertion of Kyrgyz superiority” (2010, page 329). Osh and Mezon TV, Uzbek-owned channels that broadcast in the Osh area largely in Uzbek, were accused of violating the language law and increasingly forced to include Kyrgyz-language programming (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2007). Even the simple act of watching television came to remind Osh Uzbeks that they were unable to use their language freely in their own spaces.

Former member of parliament Kuvanychbek Idinov is reported by responding to Uzbek minority claims about increased discrimination under Bakiyev by saying, “If people are dissatisfied with their life here, they can always move to another country” (Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 2006a). In such a political context, it is unsurprising that Uzbek reports of racist attacks and abuse grew. After the fall of Akaev I found that Osh Uzbeks—even strangers—volunteered stories about abuse and discrimination in daily life far more freely and frequently than in the past. “The everyday abuse we used to get in the Akaev period has been exalted into state policy under Bakiyev”, as one Osh Uzbek put it to me. Previously optimistic about the future, he had now given up pursuing his once promising career, his only remaining goal being to help his children emigrate: “This is a tinderbox and all it needs is one match to make the whole thing explode”, he warned me ominously in November 2009.

Contested space—Kyrgyz model

In a parallel but directly contradictory move to that of Uzbek historians like Sodiqov (see above), Kyrgyz accounts of Osh as contested place often begin with claims about the ethnicity of the pre-Tsarist Kokand Khanate. The Kyrgyz historian Kenensariev criticises the tendency of Uzbek historians to describe it as “Uzbek” (1997, pages 3–5). Instead he emphasises the political significance in the Khanate of the Kyrgyz and Kipchak tribes, and the absence of the ethnonym ‘Uzbek’ in important contemporary accounts of the period such as Mullah Niyaz’s *Tarix-I Shaxri* (Kenensariev, 1999, pages 32–33). “The Uzbeks are a new nation, they didn’t exist here before, but if you tell them that they get annoyed with you”, as a Kyrgyz history professor in Osh once put it to me.

Like Uzbek accounts, Kyrgyz popular narratives of Osh as contested space also spotlight national–territorial delimitation. Kyrgyz sometimes say that the 1897 census that recorded the total absence of Kyrgyz in Osh was flawed because it did not take into account the Kyrgyz who lived around Osh and traded in it but who were away in pastures when the census was taken. Kyrgyz often add that many Kyrgyz in Uzbekistan were erroneously designated Uzbek for political reasons. Efforts by leaders of the nascent Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic to secure Osh in NTD between 1924 and 1927 are interpreted as an Uzbek attempt to seize Osh. NTD’s ultimate awarding of Osh to the Kyrgyz is seen as a reflection of the proper understanding of local geography, a partial correction of the injustice of the 1897 census, and the rebuttal of territorial aggression by the large neighbour.

For Osh Kyrgyz the subsequent story of Osh as contested place can be told as their attempts to resist the perceived Uzbek threat to the territorial integrity of the Kyrgyz polity that was demonstrated during NTD. This was, after all, the *Kyrgyz* Soviet Socialist Republic, and their ancestors had herded livestock over this land for generations, yet as they moved into the city to increasingly take up roles in modern urban life, they had to compete against both Russian and Uzbek inhabitants. The languages of instruction in most schools in Osh were Uzbek or Russian, leading to resentment amongst many Kyrgyz parents who were thus unable to have their children educated in Kyrgyz. The poorer education afforded to Kyrgyz was perceived as a deliberate attempt to structurally disadvantage the Kyrgyz. With weaker educational attainment and a lower socioeconomic status, Kyrgyz moving into the city found that they were often the butt of slurs and jokes by Uzbeks.

It is instructive to consider that, upon achieving independence in 1991, the Kyrgyz ethnic group formed a minority in the two main cities of 'their' country: Bishkek, where Russian-speaking minorities formed more than half the population, and the wider urban Osh area, where Uzbeks appeared dominant. The psychological significance of this is immense: thrust into a new global system of territorial nation-states as the putative master of the 'Kyrgyz Republic', the 'nation' was not (numerically at least) in charge anywhere in the state except in some smaller towns and villages. Osh Uzbeks thus appeared to be a hindrance to the realisation of authentic Kyrgyz statehood.

This perceived threat had an economic dimension, too. In Osh, it seemed, Uzbeks controlled much of the economy, occupying visible economic niches such as traders and artisans. Kyrgyzstan swiftly went through rapid demographic change. Neoliberal 'shock therapy' dissolved the collective farm system, and as rural employment evaporated, poor young Kyrgyz people moved into Osh to seek livelihoods. At the same time, wealthier or more educated Kyrgyz migrated into Osh to staff and study at its expanding universities, or to replace emigrating Russians in state employment. These new migrants often found themselves squeezed into dilapidated Soviet-era apartment blocks vacated by Russians. Meanwhile, the Uzbek *mahalla* neighbourhoods were seen by many Kyrgyz as a visible threat. A female Kyrgyz friend told me of the inconvenience she faced by having to take detours around a central *mahalla*, as Uzbek boys would shout abuse and throw stones at her if she walked through it.(6) The *mahallas* were seen as threatening and hostile places, no-go areas for Kyrgyz in what was supposedly their own city.

To incoming Kyrgyz it seemed as if Uzbeks had some of the best land, the wealthiest businesses, and the best houses in the best locations—that the Kyrgyz were second-class citizens in their own state. Many regarded it as unjust that the titular majority of this new republic should play second fiddle to a minority who, as they saw it, had in 1990 so recently turned violently against them.

In Kyrgyz narratives of Osh as contested space Uzbeks played the role not only of impeding the development of Kyrgyz statehood, but also of fundamentally threatening the very territorial integrity of the state. They, so Kyrgyz often articulated, did this by refusing to acknowledge its Kyrgyzness. In 2004 Osh oblast's governor, Naken Kasiev, signed a resolution mandating that companies, administrations, and educational institutions conduct their affairs in Kyrgyz, and that all signs and advertisements be written in Kyrgyz (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2004). However, five years later an article in an Osh Kyrgyz newspaper lamented the failure of language laws in the republic, claiming that even some local government admininstrations in Osh oblast still regularly use Uzbek for official business (*Osh Shamy* 2009).

More sinister still was the supposed Uzbek plot to dismember Kyrgyzstan by seeking autonomy for an ethnically Uzbek Osh. One Kyrgyz news agency interpreted the issue of girls wearing Hijabs in three Uzbek-language schools in Southern Kyrgyzstan by suggesting that "these three Uzbek schools want to establish a caliphate in Kyrgyzstan".(7)

---

(6) Although she was probably unaware of this, single Uzbek women would report the same, but for my Kyrgyz friend her experiences were interpreted as an ethnic slur.

(7) "Kyrgyz region debates hijab-wearing in schools", Kyrgyz news agency Belyy Parokhod, as reported by BBC Monitoring 29 June 2006.

But it was periodic debates about the status of the Uzbek language in Kyrgyzstan that raised most heckles. A Kyrgyz official in a civil society NGO privately told me she thought that Osh Member of Parliament Davron Sabirov's aim was to make Uzbek a state language and then join Osh to Uzbekistan. Sobirov was accused in 1999 of inciting interethnic hatred in an election video, but later acquitted by a court. A 2006 demonstration by supporters of Jalalabad MP Kadyrjon Batyrov in support of better treatment of Uzbeks and official status for the Uzbek language likewise raised Kyrgyz fears of an attack on the unity of the state. At a meeting with the OSCE High Commissioner for Ethnic Minorities, Rolf Ekeus, State Secretary Adakhan Madumarov said Uzbek could not be granted official status because "we are a unitary state" and other minorities might demand similar rights (Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 2006b). For many Kyrgyz in the Akaev period (1991–2005), the perceived weakness of the Kyrgyz language indexed a weak state presided over by a weak leader who failed to protect the Kyrgyz nation (Megoran, 2004).

Geopolitical concerns added to these insecurities. Cartoonists in the Kyrgyz nationalistic press often depicted helpless little Kyrgyzstan squeezed between its big Chinese, Kazakh, and Uzbek neighbours, and the interests of powers further afield such as Russia and the USA. Kyrgyz intellectuals fretted over whether the country, with little wealth and a Russified elite out of touch with Kyrgyz traditions, was even viable as a state. Many Kyrgyz feared that their state might be dismembered by 'creeping migration' (Reeves, 2009) at the border, and the issue of ceding territory to China as part of a bilateral boundary delimitation agreement in 2002 caused so much popular anger that it precipitated the fall of the government.

But it was Uzbekistan that was regarded as the greatest threat: holding the country to ransom by withholding gas supplies, grabbing land along the boundary, violating Kyrgyz sovereignty by illegally snatching criminal suspects from Kyrgyz soil, abusing and shooting innocent villagers at illegally erected checkpoints, disrupting transport networks, and laying unmarked minefields at the border that killed and maimed with impunity (Megoran, 2004). Parliamentarian deputy Dooronbek Sadïrbaev, aligned to the nationalistic opposition, depicted border disputes with Uzbekistan as a military invasion of Kyrgyzstan, alleging that Uzbekistani forces were advancing on border posts and seizing huge swathes of Kyrgyzstani territory (*Asaba* 1999).

It was not only the Uzbek *state* that Kyrgyz feared. In 1999 the so-called Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), a Taliban-linked guerrilla movement of exiled Uzbekistanis, invaded Osh oblast from their Tajikistani mountain base. The poorly equipped Kyrgyz army struggled to contain this very real threat to the Kyrgyz state. In 2006 Kyrgyz police killed five suspected IMU militants who they alleged were planning an attack on the security forces in Jalalabad. They claimed that, although three of the dead men were Uzbekistani citizens, two were Kyrgyzstanis (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2006): treacherous citizens of Kyrgyzstan willing to join coethnics from Uzbekistan in murderous attacks on Kyrgyzstan.

Perhaps inevitably, Osh Uzbeks, with their dense social networks in Uzbekistan, were viewed with suspicion as a 'fifth column' and in some way party to what one Kyrgyz newspaper described as Uzbekistan's "anti-Kyrgyz policy".(8) After all, they tuned their radios and televisions not to Bishkek, but to Uzbekistan's slick channels that mixed glitzy pop music with nationalist state propaganda (Adams, 2010; Megoran, 2005). Numerous Uzbek-owned music shops and restaurants in and around the central bazaar played pop music all day, inscribing an Uzbek soundscape onto these Kyrgyz streets. When Kyrgyz saw young Osh Uzbeks singing along to hits like Yulduz Osmonova's, 'I'll surrender you to no-one, Uzbekistan!', they often worried whether they were more loyal to the dangerous neighbour than to distant Bishkek where many had never been. As it was only the now-departed Soviet

(8) "Islam Karimovdy taktan alyp tyshoby?" *Jangy Ordo* 19 (059) 27 May 2005, page 5.

army that had held back angry crowds of Uzbekistanis from crossing into Osh to help their coethnics during the bloody disturbances of 1990, this was more than just a fear about cultural identity. It is thus hardly surprising that amongst many Osh Kyrgyz there was a deep anxiety that their powerful, unpredictable, and assertive neighbour, with the help of Osh Uzbeks, would dismember their militarily weak and near-bankrupt country.

In Kyrgyz narratives it is striking how often the perceived wealth and privilege of Osh Uzbeks is sharply contrasted to the parlous state of Kyrgyz in Uzbekistan. The Kyrgyz newspaper *Agym* blasted the head of the OSCE office in Kyrgyzstan, Marcus Muller, for a statement that was seemingly sympathetic to Kyrgyzstani Uzbeks demonstrating in favour of language rights. Whereas "The Uzbeks are occupying a large financial and economic niche in the southern region", the paper wrote caustically, "It is known that ethnic Kyrgyz people in Uzbekistan have ten times more problems with their culture and language than the Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan."(9) *Agym* concluded that the only reason the likes of the OSCE can support "separatist and extremist" elements of the Kyrgyzstani Uzbek population is because the Kyrgyz government is too weak to silence them—they would not get away with that in Uzbekistan. As one Osh Kyrgyz put it to me in 2010, "here Uzbeks are free, they have every opportunity—universities, schools, television channels, and supermarkets, but Kyrgyz in Uzbekistan have nothing." Kyrgyz felt that whereas they had once dominated the Ferghana Valley, they had been treated unfavourably both in Uzbekistan and in Osh by the usurping, newly minted Uzbek nation and their foreign supporters in international organisations like the OSCE. They thus needed ever to be vigilant against Uzbek intentions and designs on their state.

Conclusion: contextualising the 2010 Osh tragedy

This paper has argued that the ethnic history of modern urban Osh can be understood according to three commonly encountered narratives of sharing and dividing space. These are the peaceful coexistence of kin nations in the same hometown; the aggressive Kyrgyz takeover of an Uzbek city; or an irredentist Uzbek attempt to capture a Kyrgyz city and fracture the nascent Kyrgyz state.

These narratives of Osh as shared or contested space are crucial to understanding the current conflict. They are, of course, artifice: the distillation of thousands of conversations and observations in the city over fifteen years. This paper is not suggesting that there are clearly bounded 'groups', each with a coherent story to tell. Every individual has his or her own story to tell, and none will fit these contours exactly. As Montgomery's (2007) sketch of the multiple ways of praying and moving around the city hints at, the boundaries around social groups are flexible and contextual. The meanings of being Uzbek and Kyrgyz are fluid and, as Graham and Nash caution when discussing Catholic and Protestant relations in Northern Ireland, "the microgeographies of segregation and struggles for territorial control are between communities that are themselves differentiated by class, lifestyle and gender" (2006, page 255). As critical urban theorist Holston argues powerfully, "cities are full of stories", but "Knowing them is always experimental" (1999, page 155). What is presented here is a series of experimental and indicative models, that necessarily simplify but nonetheless are deadly resonant.

Although the approach offered here runs the risk of simplification, nonetheless grasping the existence and interplay of these narratives enables us to understand what might otherwise appear unreasonable or even inextricable. For example, Kyrgyz narratives of Osh as contested space illuminate the visceral anger at OSCE and other foreign interventions after June 2010, and how Uzbek attempts to assert greater civil and linguistic rights in April and

---

(9) "Kyrgyz paper blasts OSCE for meddling in internal affairs", *Agym* newspaper Kyrgyzstan, as reported by BBC Monitoring 23 June 2006.

May 2010 within debates about a new constitution before then could rationally be interpreted as a grave territorial threat to the republic. Contrasting narratives of contest can explain how the police operation to restore order in June was seen by many Uzbeks as further evidence of Kyrgyz takeover, but why many Kyrgyz interpreted Uzbek resistance to it as evidence that they wanted independence.

It is crucial to grasp that the ways that Osh residents deploy these narratives are not necessarily contradictory, but may be parallel. The same person may use narratives of shared or contested space depending on context and company. The failure to grasp both their resonance and their flexibility is a flaw of most of the explanations offered of the current conflict, giving undue weight to one narrative at the expense of others.

For example, many people inside Kyrgyzstan, wholly understandably, see the conflict in terms of a continuation of the narrative of their side having suffered due to the aggressive territorial encroachment—the trespass—of the other. The government has blamed "some leaders of the Uzbek community and [ousted former President Kurmanbek] Bakiyev's clan" for cynically provoking violence between peoples who otherwise lived in peace (Government of Kyrgyzstan, 2011b). That the supposedly 'independent' reports of foreigners adopt the Uzbek side under the language of 'human rights' is likewise seen as no surprise but as evidence of previous, mendacious form.

Likewise, external accounts also miss the target to the extent that they fail to appreciate the interplay of the plurality of narratives. Thus explanations that fixate upon narratives of contestation (for example Walker, 2010) ignore those of coexistence and overlook the fact that contestation has only rarely and under exceptional circumstances led to lethal violence. However, rebuttals of such accounts that accuse them of writing out the history of coexistence in turn may underestimate the profound significance of Uzbek and Kyrgyz narratives of insecurity. For example, the idea that a previously cosmopolitan Osh has been fragmented when ethnicity suddenly "took hold" and in one weekend undid the city's "millennia-long history of co-existence" (Reeves, 2010) is potentially misleading. This romanticises a mythical past, and suggests that more tangible socioeconomic forces and historical trajectories belatedly took on an ethnic element. It is more helpful to consider ethnicity as a complex social process that has long been woven into the warp and weft of urban life in cities and towns like Osh.

What is not being claimed is that narratives of conflict and coexistence either cause violence or lead to peace. As Brass argues in the context of Indian Muslim–Hindu violence, riots are produced by precipitating events such as the killing of a prominent public person or an attack on a place of worship: "One reaction then leads to another, generating a chain, which if not immediately contained will lead to a major conflagration" (1997, page 257). Williams (2007) extends Brass's analysis by showing how the decisive intervention of political and religious leaders averted such violence when it might otherwise have been expected following acts of provocation in the Indian city of Varanasi in 2006. In Osh, as for Varanasi, narratives are resonant, discursive resources that can be drawn upon, invoked, or reworked to justify or condemn violence, capture meaning, apportion blame, sacralise loss, explain victimhood, and produce hegemonic consensuses which will influence power relations. As such, they are the context in which grievances are articulated, rumours sound reasonable, and apparently trivial incidents or innocent political moves come to be seen as dark provocations and existential threats to an entire society.

And it is here that there is a glimmer of hope, if it is even possible to speak of hope at the moment. It is true that narratives of contested place have proved most resonant and been mobilised to such devastating effect. Since June 2010, with the shoring up of exclusive neighbourhood spaces and the partial exclusion of Uzbek language and bodies from public space, Uzbek–Kyrgyz interaction and interdependence in Osh have diminished.

Economic practices and social interactions increasingly happen in mono-ethnic spaces and networks, and violence and intimidation are common along their interfaces. Pine claims that "cities are sites where new forms of citizenship are being constructed as multicultural populations come together" (2010, page 1103). There is precious little evidence of that in Osh at the present. Nonetheless narratives of cooperation remain part of the vocabularies and repertories of the peoples of Osh, however dormant. In its people, their languages, and their cultures, and with their dense social and economic links to other places, Osh remains a hybrid urban space in the way that towns in northern Kyrgyzstan and in Uzbekistan are not. Massey writes that the character of a city is constructed by links to places beyond it, and argues that a "progressive sense of place" can recognise that without being threatened by it (1994, pages 155–156). Through its extensive and multiple connections and networks radiating throughout the region, Osh is inseparably linked to the cultures, languages, and modern history of both Uzbekistan and wider Kyrgyzstan.

The Peace Research Institute of the Middle East has produced an extraordinary textbook in which Palestinian and Israeli narratives of the conflict are written, as the book's title has it, side by side. Their experience of training schoolteachers to use this approach led them to observe how "the habitual stance of simply ignoring one another's historical narrative gives way to a process of developing mutual respect and understanding of each side's 'logic', as a necessary (if not sufficient) step toward developing a better relationship with the 'other' and between the two peoples" (Adwan and Bar-On, 2012, page x). This paper is inspired by their 'dual-narrative approach', and is written by an outsider because there exists no collective of indigenous scholars in Osh that could undertake such a project at the moment.(10) Nonetheless, for reconciliation to occur so that the narrative of interethnic cooperation will again be one that can be told of Osh, both Uzbeks and Kyrgyz will eventually need to listen to and empathise with each other's stories of insecurity. Genuine reconciliation will be made possible not by one group using force to achieve 'security' at the expense of trapping the other group in fear and helplessness, but through listening, apologising, and forgiving. That is immeasurably harder than establishing 'order' and shoring up boundaries by gun or barricade, and recent events will make that painful and perhaps impossible for many people until justice has been done and been seen to have been done. But only by doing so will Uzbeks and Kyrgyz be able to free each other from the fear that imprisons both groups, and find ways to make the future chapters of Osh stories more of shared, than contested, space.

Acknowledgements. I would like to acknowledge the numerous people in Osh who have welcomed, assisted and cared for me over the course of this research. I am grateful to the ESRC and Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, for supporting doctoral and post-doctoral research and the British Academy for funding subsequent work with a Small Grant (SG:38394) and a Mid Career Fellowship 2011–12. The comments and advice of three anonymous referees, and Fiona McConnell and Alex Jeffrey, were helpful in revising the paper.

References

Adams L, 2010 *The Spectacular State: Culture and National Identity in Uzbekistan* (Duke University Press, London)

Adwan S, Bar-On D, 2012, "The dual-narrative approach: Jewish–Israeli and Palestinian pupils learn the history of the other party in the conflict", in *Side By Side: Parallel Histories of Israel–Palestine* Eds S Adwan, D BarOn, E Naveh (The New Press, New York) pp ix–xviii

Akaev A, 2003 *Kyrgyz Statehood and the National Epos "Manas"* (Global Scholarly Publications, New York)

Alimov K, 1994, "The rediscovery of Uzbek history and its foreign policy implications", in *The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* Ed. S Starr (M E Sharpe, New York) pp 217–236

---

(10) As such, this paper is a development of my agenda for peace research and practice in geography (see Megoran, 2011).

Allworth E, 1990 *The Modern Uzbeks* (Hoover, Stanford, CA)

Asaba 1999, “Sadyrbaev bir Akaevdi on Karimovgo almashpayt” [Sadyrbaev wouldn’t exchange one Akaev for ten Karimovs], 5–11 March, page 10

Asankanov A, 1996, “Ethnic conflict in the Osh region in summer 1990: reasons and lessons”, in *Ethnicity and Power in the Contemporary World* Eds K Rupesinghe, V Tishkov (United Nations University, Paris) pp 116–124

Biard A, 2010, “The religious factor in the reification of ‘neo-ethnic’ identities in Kyrgyzstan” *Nationalities Papers* **38** 323–335

Bond A, Koch, N, 2010, “Interethnic tensions in Kyrgyzstan: a political geographic perspective” *Eurasian Geography and Economics* **51** 531–562

Brass P, 1997 *Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ)

Brass P, 2003 *The Production of Hindu–Muslim Violence in Contemporary India* (University of Washington Press, London)

Coward M, 2004, “Urbicide in Bosnia”, in *Cities, War and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics* Ed. S Graham (Blackwell, Oxford) pp 154–171

Cowen D, Gilbert E, 2008, “The politics of war, citizenship, territory”, in *War, Citizenship, Territory* Eds D Cowen, E Gilbert (Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon) pp 1–30

Eriksen T H, 1993 *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (Pluto, London)

Eurasianet, 2006, “Ethnic Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan voice complaints over discrimination, corruption” *Eurasianet* 24 January, http://www.eurasianet.org

Government of Kyrgyzstan, 2011a *Comments by the Government of Kyrgyzstan in Response to the Report of the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission into the Events in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010* Government of Kyrgyzstan

Government of Kyrgyzstan, 2011b *Zaklyuchenie Natskomissii po Rassledovaniyu Iyun’skih Sobitiy na Yuge Kyrgyzstana* [The Conclusions of the National Commission of Inquiry into the Events in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010], Government of Kyrgyzstan

Graham B, Nash C, 2006, “A shared future: territoriality, pluralism and public policy in Northern Ireland” *Political Geography* **25** 253–278

Graham S, 2004, “Cities, warfare, and states of emergency”, in *Cities, War and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics* Ed. S Graham (Blackwell, Oxford) pp 1–25

Grundy-Warr C (Ed.), 1994 *World Boundaries 3: Eurasia* (Routledge, London)

Hammersley M, Atkinson P, 2007 *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* 3rd edition (Routledge, London)

Heathershaw J, Megoran N, 2011, “Contesting danger: a new agenda for policy and scholarship on Central Asia” *International Affairs* **87** 589–612

Holston J, 1999, “Spaces of insurgent citizenship” *Cities and Citizenship* Ed. J Holson (Duke University Press, London) pp 155–173

Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 2006a *Reporting Central Asia* no. 451, 7 June

Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 2006b, “Kyrgyzstan: how real are Uzbek minority concerns?” *Reporting Central Asia* no. 451, 7 June, http://www.iwpr.org

Jones J S, 2010, “Introductions”, in *Ethnography in Social Practice* Eds J S Jones, S Watt (Routledge, London) pp 3–12

Kamp M, 2002, “Pilgrimage and performance: Uzbek women and the imagining of Uzbekistan in the 1920s” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* **34** 263–278

Kenensariev T, 1997 *Kïrgïzdar jana Kokon Xandïgï* [Kyrgyz and the Kokand khanate] (Osh State University, Osh)

Kenensariev T, 1999, “Kokon Xandïgï jana Kïrgïzdar” [The Kokand khanate and the Kyrgyz], in *Tandalgan Makalalar: Yubileylik Avtorduk Jïynak* [Selected articles: a collection for the author’s jubilee] Ed. T Kenensariev, Osh State University Development Fund, Osh

Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission, 2011 *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry into the Events in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010* Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission

Light A, 2003 *Reel Arguments: Film, Philosophy and Social Criticism* (Westview, Cambridge, MA)

Liu M, 2012 *Under Solomon’s Throne: Uzbek Visions of Renewal in Osh* (University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA)

McConnell F, Megoran N, Williams P (Eds), forthcoming *Geographies of Peace* (I B Tauris, London)

Manley R, 2009 *To The Tashkent Station: Evacuation and Survival in the Soviet Union at War* (Cornell, London)

Massey D, 1994, "A global sense of place", in *Space, Place and Gender* Ed. D Massey (Polity Press, Cambridge) pp 146–156

Megoran N, 2004, "The critical geopolitics of the Uzbekistan–Kyrgyzstan Ferghana Valley boundary dispute, 1999–2000" *Political Geography* **23** 731–764

Megoran N, 2005, "The critical geopolitics of danger in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan" *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* **23** 555–580

Megoran N, 2006, "For ethnography in political geography: experiencing and re-imagining Ferghana Valley boundary closures" *Political Geography* **25** 622–640

Megoran N, 2007, "On researching 'ethnic conflict': epistemology, politics, and a Central Asian boundary dispute" *Europe–Asia Studies* **59** 253–277

Megoran N, 2011, "War and peace? An agenda for peace research and practice in geography" *Political Geography* **30** 178–189

Montgomery D, 2007, "*Namaz*, wishing trees, and vodka: the diversity of everyday religious life in Central Asia", in *Everyday Life in Central Asia: Past and Present* Eds J Sahadeo, R Zanca (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN) pp 355–370

Osh Shamy 2009, "Kyrgyz tiline kyr körsötkön törölör" [The leaders who threaten the Kyrgyz language] **30** 5 September**,** page 2

Pine A, 2010, "The performativity of urban citizenship" *Environment and Planning A* **42** 1103–1120

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2004 *Newsline* **8**(88, Part I) 11 May

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2006, "Kyrgyz police kill five suspected militants in Jalalabad" *Newsline* **10**(128) 17 July, http://www.refrl.org

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2007, "Regional media outlets accused of violating Kyrgyz language law" *Newsline* 11(213) 16 November , http://www.rferl.org

Reeves M, 2009, "Materialising state space: 'creeping migration' and territorial integrity in southern Kyrgyzstan" *Europe–Asia Studies* **61** 1277–1313

Reeves M, 2010, "A weekend in Osh" *London Review of Books* **32**(13) 17–18, http://www.lrb.co.uk

Robben A, 2007, "Ethnographic seduction, transference and resistance in dialogues about terror and violence in Argentina", in *Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader* Eds A Robben, J Sluka (Blackwell, Oxford) pp 159–176

Schoeberlein-Engel J, 1994 *Identity in Central Asia: Construction and Contention in the Conceptions of 'Ozbek', 'Tajik', 'Muslim', 'Samarqandi' and Other Groups* PhD dissertation, Harvard University

Silver B, 1986, "The ethnic and language dimensions in Russian and Soviet censuses", in *Research Guide to the Russian and Soviet Censuses* Ed. R Clem (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY) pp 70–97

Smith D, 1990, "Introduction: the sharing and dividing of geographical space", in *Shared Space, Divided Space: Essays on Conflict and Territorial Organization* Eds M Chisholm, D Smith (Unwin Hyman, London) pp 1–21

Sultanova R, 2011 *From Shamanism to Sufism: Women, Islam and Culture in Central Asia* (I B Tauris, London)

Tishkov V, 1999, "Ethnic conflicts in the former USSR: the use and misuse of typologies and data" *Journal of Peace Research* **36** 571–591

Uzbek Television First Channel, 2006, "Uzbek leader urges fighting Islamic group" (translation from Uzbek) *BBC Monitoring* CAU 041006 nu/atd

Vila P, 2000 *Crossing Borders, Reinforcing Borders: Social Categories, Metaphors, and Narrative Identities on the U.S.–Mexico Frontier* (University of Texas Press, Austin, TX)

Vollaard H, 2009, "The logic of political territoriality" *Geopolitics* **14** 687–706

Walker S, 2010, "Kyrgyz gangs accused of 'genocide' as death toll rises" *The Independent* 14 June, http://www.indepdendent.co.uk

Williams P, 2007, "Hindu–Muslim brotherhood: exploring the dynamics of communal relations in Varanasi, North India" *Journal of South Asian Development* **2** 153–176

© 2013 Pion and its Licensors