Local Politics of Reconstruction along and across Azad Kashmir's Border with Pakistan

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Drawing on anthropological approaches to state borders as processes, this paper examines the political boundary between Pakistan and Azad Kashmir through the window of reconstruction politics after the 2005 earthquake in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Azad Kashmir. "The border" became inscribed into politics and power relations in Muzaffarabad through a locally contested reconstruction bureaucracy which provided Pakistan with the means to dominate reconstruction in Azad Kashmir. Activists from Muzaffarabad widely criticised this domination. However, local politicisation of reconstruction revealed contradictory effects of the border on power relations in Muzaffarabad. For most activists, the political relationship between Pakistan and Azad Kashmir was characterised by domination as well as complicity that undermined local concerns such as the reconstruction of their city. Therefore, they opposed their own government as well and transgressed the border into Pakistan through the creation of alliances with national politicians to put pressure on the government of Azad Kashmir. In taking advantage of power disparities between Pakistan and Azad Kashmir, these alliances not only confirmed but also undermined the nation state's domination over the region by manipulating and circumventing its reconstruction bureaucracy.
[Local politics; Azad Kashmir; border; reconstruction; Pakistan]

In Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administrated Azad Kashmir, I met with a local group of self-designated "political activists" who had just launched a "reconstruction campaign". Addressing the issue of state authorities' failure in providing for the reconstruction of the city that was destroyed by an earthquake four years ago, these political activists organised public protests and media meetings to which state officials were invited in order to explain and justify their lack of progress in reconstruction. Following the concerns and activities of these political actors in my ethnographic fieldwork[1], I also encountered the group's political allies, journalists and local politicians, and their opponents, state officials and national politicians. Through my interactions with state officials and their local critics, the issue, which came up frequently in conversations about the reconstruction of Muzaffarabad,

[1] I conducted fieldwork in Muzaffarabad between 2009 and 2011 and in two phases amounting to 15 months. Fieldwork was generously funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF) and the German Research Council (DFG).

was an urban development scheme commonly referred to as the "master plan". Specifying more than 100 projects, the master plan, I learnt, was the main guideline for the city's reconstruction[2]. Muzaffarabad, counting around 100,000 inhabitants, was one of the areas most affected by the earthquake. Thousands of people died largely as the result of building collapses and more than 10,000 families were left homeless. Against this background, both state officials and their critics agreed that, for a better future, Muzaffarabad required planning to mitigate the city's disaster vulnerability[3]. Although the basic version of the master plan had been completed and the required financial resources mobilised by the end of 2006, none of the proposed projects were implemented even three years later. The situation became only slightly better in the following months and years. During my last short visit to Muzaffarabad in March 2012, almost six-and-a-half years after the earthquake, a few projects had started but were still under construction.

Why did the implementation of the master plan stagnate, even though planning and money were available? Depending on whom I asked, either the nonchalant governments in Pakistan or Azad Kashmir, particular state reconstruction authorities, national or regional politicians and bureaucrats, the Chinese contractor companies or the time-consuming bureaucratic procedures, in general, were identified as the cause of the enormous delay. While state officials tended to blame one another, political activists and journalists from outside the administration and government frequently claimed that the general indifference of the state elite towards the local population was responsible for the precarious situation of their city[4].

While looking into the politicisation of the master plan delay and the trouble it caused among national, regional and local actors, inside and outside of state bureaucracy and government, I

[2] The master plan document contains an extensive urban development study, conducted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Evaluating the city's hazards, JICA prepared an urban land use plan and recommended several reconstruction and development measures for urban Muzaffarabad (JICA 2007). Based on these recommendations, Pakistan selected 104 projects for the Muzaffarabad City Development Programme (MCDP) which include the construction of roads, bridges, commercial and public buildings, and satellite towns for the relocation of the population living in high-risk areas, the drafting of building codes and settlement restrictions for public and private housing, etc. Although MCDP is, in fact, only a part of the "master plan", the term commonly refers to MCDP rather than the original JICA study.

[3] The earthquake occurred on October 8, 2005, with a magnitude of 7.6 on the Richter scale affecting parts of the Pakistani Province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the northern part of Azad Kashmir. People's general vulnerability to disasters was exposed through the widespread devastation in terms of fatalities and the scale of the damage to key infrastructure such as roads, water and power supply, government buildings, schools, hospitals and people's homes. Overall, the disaster caused the death of almost 80,000 people and left over three million people homeless (EERI 2006).

[4] Social actors critical to state authorities' performance in the reconstruction of Muzaffarabad frequently pointed to the continuing and even enhanced vulnerability of the city as a consequence of the non-implementation of crucial reconstruction measures. Muzaffarabad, located on the banks of the Neelum and Jehlum rivers, is surrounded by hills where landslides are frequent during the rainy season in winter. As the population of Muzaffarabad increased after the earthquake due to migration from the surrounding rural areas, so did the number of people (still) exposed to the city's hazards, which include earthquakes, floods, land- and mudslides.

found that "the border" between Pakistan and Azad Kashmir was key to understanding the politics of reconstruction in Muzaffarabad.

Historical Trajectories of Azad Kashmir

By emphasising "the border" with quotations, I intend to indicate that Pakistan and Azad Kashmir are separated from, yet connected with, each other via a political boundary that differs from "classical" borders between, and within, nation states. The political status of Azad Kashmir vis-à-vis Pakistan is highly ambiguous, since it has never been defined in "classical" legal terms. Azad Kashmir is neither a nation state nor a province of Pakistan, but rather a "provisional" political entity, which features aspects of both autonomy from and dependence on Pakistan. Despite its legal political ambiguities, the border between Pakistan and Azad Kashmir is territorially defined, materialised in the environment (through checkpoints and police), and clearly indicated on maps[5].

The ambiguities regarding Azad Kashmir's political status are historically related to Pakistan's territorial dispute with India about the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, of which the region had formed part. Reflecting Azad Kashmir's strategic geo-political and ideological location for Pakistan in the Kashmir conflict, the nation state's "internal" ambiguous boundary with Azad Kashmir is intimately linked to its "external" disputed border with India in Jammu and Kashmir (see Hussain 2005).

Shortly after the partition of the sub-continent and Pakistan's emergence in 1947, the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, which favoured the state's accession to Pakistan, established the "provisional government" of Azad (free) Kashmir. Initially, the Azad Kashmir government defined itself as a war council whose objective was the liberation of Jammu and Kashmir from the Maharaja's rule and, subsequently, after he declared the state's accession to India, from India's control (Rose 1992, 237). The military conflict between the "Azad forces", supported by Pakistani "invaders", and the Indian army lasted until a United Nations-negotiated ceasefire came into effect in January 1949. In this context, Pakistan and India also agreed to the United Nations' resolution on a plebiscite for Jammu and Kashmir. The plebiscite should determine the state's accession to either Pakistan or India.

The plebiscite, however, never took place and Azad Kashmir somehow became trapped in the historical legacy of what Pakistan considers to be the "unfinished partition" of former British India according to the "two-nation theory", which asserted that there were two separate Muslim and Hindu nations in the sub-continent. Although the "provisional government" of

[5] Whereas citizens of Azad Kashmir and Pakistan are not restricted in crossing the border, foreigners are required to obtain an entry permit from the Pakistan Ministry of Interior.

Azad Kashmir favoured accession to Pakistan, the government of Pakistan refused to recognise Azad Kashmir *de jure* as a part of Pakistan. The legal integration of Azad Kashmir into the nation state would have undermined Pakistan's demand for the plebiscite and, ultimately, weakened its strategy for obtaining all of Jammu and Kashmir[6]. According to official representation, Pakistan has been "administrating" Azad Kashmir until the plebiscite resolves the political status of Jammu and Kashmir, including Azad Kashmir. However, Pakistan has, in fact, been integrating Azad Kashmir into the nation state through various bureaucratic and constitutional measures of domination.

While refusing to recognise Azad Kashmir *de jure* as a part of Pakistan, Pakistan also denied the "provisional government" of Azad Kashmir recognition as an "autonomous" government for, and in, Kashmir. Consequently, the United Nations negotiated with India and Pakistan (rather than with Azad Kashmir) on Jammu and Kashmir and demoted Azad Kashmir's status to a "local authority" (Rose 1992, 336; Snedden 2012, 88–89). The Pakistan government agreed with this "demotion", since it "had assumed responsibility for all Pakistani aspects of the Kashmir dispute and wanted no local rival" (Snedden 2012, 89). Azad Kashmir's international marginalisation ultimately prepared the ground for its dependence on Pakistan and, subsequently, Pakistan's domination over Azad Kashmir by gradually integrating the region — "in practice but not in theory" — into the nation state[7].

Until the 1970s, Pakistan's Ministry of Kashmir Affairs "probably had the best claim to being the real head of the Azad Kashmir government" (Rose 1992, 238)[8]. Pakistan's bureaucratic domination over Azad Kashmir was frequently opposed as well as assisted by the fractious and, thus, manipulable Muslim Conference, whose leaders cooperated with the Pakistan government in order to weaken their political opponents (Snedden 2012, 96–97).

With the limited democratisation of politics in Pakistan, initiated by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the 1970s, political changes also occurred in Azad Kashmir. Under the "Interim Constitution Act" of 1974 a prime ministerial "democracy" was introduced in Azad Kashmir. Since then, Azad

[6] Given the state's majority Muslim population, Pakistan appeared to be confident about the plebiscite's outcome and Jammu and Kashmir's ultimate accession to Pakistan.

[7] In April 1949 the Azad Kashmir government signed the Karachi agreement with the government of Pakistan, which confirmed Azad Kashmir's status as a local authority vis-à-vis the nation state. In this agreement, Azad Kashmir delegated powers regarding military defence and international affairs (such as the negotiations with the United Nations on Kashmir) to Pakistan (Hussain 2005, 115–116; Snedden 2012, 90–91).

[8] According to the "Rules of Business" ordinances in the 1950s the Muslim Conference appointed the government of Azad Kashmir, comprising the president and ministers. Ultimately, the Azad Kashmir government, dominated by the Muslim Conference, was subordinate to Pakistan's Ministry. "All legislation [the government] passed only had the 'force of law' after it received [the Ministry's] concurrence" (Snedden 2012, 93). In addition to the powerful Ministry, Pakistan dominated Azad Kashmir by "lending" officers to the Azad Kashmir administration. Based on "mutually accepted traditions" (Snedden 2012, 93), these arrangements enabled Azad Kashmir to overcome its lack of experienced administrative personnel and, simultaneously, provided Pakistan with an instrument to control Azad Kashmir's administration.

Kashmiris have been participating in multi-party elections of the legislative assembly, from which the prime minister is elected among its members. The democratisation of politics in Azad Kashmir, however, was limited, since the various military and civilian governments in Pakistan after 1970 frequently infringed on Azad Kashmir's "internal autonomy" — not least because the Interim Constitution Act sanctioned such an infringement (Snedden 2012, 104–107). The Act institutionalised Pakistan's domination over Azad Kashmir by establishing the "Azad Kashmir Council". In contrast to the legislative assembly, the council, comprising the prime minister of Pakistan, the minister of Kashmir affairs, five members of the Pakistan national assembly, the president and prime minister of Azad Kashmir and six members of the Azad Kashmir legislative assembly, was authorised to legislate on "virtually everything of any importance" (Rose 1992, 204), including defence, diplomacy, finance, police, development, electricity, transport, communication, etc. (Snedden 2012, 104). Through these constitutional measures, Azad Kashmir was in practice — but not in theory — integrated, like a province, into the nation state, but, unlike a province, deprived of formal political representation in the national government and parliament of Pakistan[9]. In addition to the Azad Kashmir Council, Pakistan continued to dominate Azad Kashmir through bureaucratic measures, most notably the "lending" of officers to the Azad Kashmir administration. Pakistan appoints the most influential positions within Azad Kashmir's administration, including the chief secretary who acts as *the* intermediary between the government and the administration (Snedden 2012, 156)[10]. Azad Kashmir's unequal relations with Pakistan, hidden somehow behind "the border" and Azad Kashmir's consequential state-like appearance (i.e. the separate government, parliament, administration and judiciary), have set crucial conditions for political life in the region.

With reference to state and non-state, local, regional and national actors' practices and representations, this paper examines the border between Pakistan and Azad Kashmir as multi-layered, contradictory and conjunctural processes of separation and connection, negotiation and contestation. Drawing on anthropological approaches to borders and boundaries, I argue to combine the "'big picture' of 'national' and 'international' relations" (Donnan and Wilson 1994, 10) with the perspectives and practices of social actors who, in particular situations and

[9] Despite the Pakistan members comprising the minority in the council, they are able to dominate the council's decisions and procedures. The prime minister of Pakistan acts as chairman and nominates the five Pakistanis, whereas the legislative assembly (and not the prime minister of Azad Kashmir) appoints the six Azad Kashmiris to the council. Given the fractious and heterogeneous party politics in Azad Kashmir, the council includes Azad Kashmir members "from different political parties with varying political loyalties and aspirations in relation to Islamabad powerbrokers" (Snedden 2012, 104).

[10] In addition to the chief secretary, the Pakistan government also appoints the finance secretary, accountant general, inspector general police and the chief engineer of the Azad Kashmir administration (Snedden 2012, 162).

for particular reasons, engage with the Pakistan–Azad Kashmir border in particular ways. This paper may add to the "big picture", which more generalised reflections on historical and legal political trajectories fail to do, that is, an ethnographically informed analysis on how social actors "enact" the Pakistan–Azad Kashmir border through situational and strategic, symbolical and practical crossings and non-crossings.

Anthropology of Borders and Boundaries

In anthropology, political borders of (and within) states have long been distinguished from symbolic and social boundaries of groups (see Lamot and Molnar 2002). Thus, whereas borders were considered territorial limits defining legal political sovereignties and subjects (such as states and citizens), boundaries were conceived as social constructs producing symbolic differences and identities (such as class and gender, ethnic and religious groups) (Fassin 2011, 214). The theoretical and practical distinctions between state borders and boundaries of social groups were a critique of classical studies in anthropology that were less concerned with boundaries (and borders) themselves and more with cultural beliefs and social structures of groups that boundaries (and borders) enclosed, and thus frequently proceeded from the assumption that social and symbolic boundaries coincided with territorial borders, and vice versa (Alvarez 1995, 453; Donnan and Wilson 1999, 20; Fassin 2011, 214). Shifting from questions of what boundaries enclosed to questions of how boundaries occur, Fredrik Barth criticised conceptions of ethnic groups as culturally (and territorially) "bounded" communities by pointing to social actors' situational and strategic representations of, and practices within and across, boundaries (Barth 1969, 15; see also Donnan and Wilson 1999, 21). From this perspective, social groups' boundaries occur as two-sided processes of inclusion and exclusion, identification and categorisation, and self-ascription and ascription by others, in which social actors, for various reasons and in various situations, differentiate between "us" and "them" (Barth 1969; see also Donnan and Wilson 1999, 21–22). Challenging notions of social groups as territorialised national (and subnational) communities, this perspective also enabled transnational perspectives on social networks and cultural identities across the territorial and legal political limits of nation states (Alvarez 1995, 456–458).

The distinction of boundaries and borders in anthropology, however, restricted perspectives on how political borders of states and cultural boundaries of social groups are related (Fassin

2011)[11]. According to Donnan and Wilson, the literature on ethnic groups and boundaries, despite emphasising that boundaries are two-sided processes, concentrates "on one side rather than the other", on internal identification rather than external categorisation, and, thereby, tends to neglect the "constraint and shaping influence of wider structures, such as those of […] the state" (Donnan and Wilson 1999, 25). The anthropology of borders, as the authors argue, offers a way of extending the analysis of symbolic identifications of social groups to include territorial and legal political categorisations and, ultimately, of examining how these processes overlap and intertwine as well as diverge and collide. From the authors' perspective, despite (most) state borders being legally recognised and territorially defined (materialised in environments and indicated on maps), they are no more stable and no less processual than social groups' boundaries. State borders are also always symbolic boundaries: social constructions defining people and places in relation to states and producing differences between them. Nonetheless, "social relations, defined in part by the state", as Donnan and Wilson argue, also "transcend the territorial limits of the state and, in so doing, transform the structure of the state" (Donnan and Wilson 1999, 34)[12].

The processes of borders are not limited to transformations of territories and sovereignties. State borders are much more than territorial and legal political boundaries — "not just stretches of territory, but also places invested with subjectivity" (Radu 2012, 29). State borders are versatile techniques of maintaining and altering, imposing and contesting differences between "us" and "them", "here" and "there", rather than merely evidences for such differences (Green 2014, 356). The perspective on state borders as processes of "becoming" (Radu 2010, 409) refers to social actors' symbolic and material practices of "bordering" (Green 2014, 350) places and people and, thereby, clearly resonates with

[11] In contrast to symbolic boundaries of social groups, territorial borders and state boundaries have rarely been subject to anthropological investigation before the 1970s and often appeared as a mere backdrop to studies of other social processes (Donnan and Wilson 1999, 33). Exceptional in this regard is Abner Cohen's ethnography on "Arab Border-Villages in Israel" (1965) which examined how the "border situation" created by the establishment of the Israeli state transformed political practices and power relations in the local Palestinian society. In 1974, John Cole and Eric Wolf published "The Hidden Frontier", a historically informed ethnography on the different ethnic identities in two villages of Northern Italy. The two villages, one German-speaking, the other Romance-speaking, had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but were transferred to Italy after the First World War and, with the brief interlude of German rule during the Second World War, have been part of the Italian state ever since. Studying the dialectical relations between the two villages and between the villages and the two nation states to which the villages historically have belonged, Cole and Wolf examine how local and translocal processes, ethnic groups and state borders intersect (Cole and Wolf 1999, 4–5; see also Donnan and Wilson 1999, 32–33). The authors introduced a political economy approach to symbolic boundaries in anthropology, emphasising that state borders have crucial political, economic and social implications for local societies and, furthermore, that social actors also engage with state borders in various symbolical ways.

[12] The processes of negotiation and contestation of borders and legal political boundaries are particularly evident in situations in which social groups, represented by the state as "ethnic" minorities, represent themselves as "nations", and perhaps as nations in search of their own states. Thus, cultural boundaries may be transformed into, both, regional intra-state borders representing subnational groups (as ethnic minorities) and state borders representing national communities (Donnan and Wilson 1999, 8).

anthropological approaches of "the state" (Das and Poole 2004; Hansen and Stepputat 2001; Sharma and Gupta 2006) as "a multilayered, contradictory translocal ensemble of institutions, practices, and people" (Sharma and Gupta 2006, 6). According to Das and Poole, the practices, people and places related to the territorial (or social) margins of nation states "break open the solidity often attributed to the state" (2004, 20) by exposing ambiguities and contradictions of territorial and legal political boundaries in terms of inside and outside, public and private, legal and illegal. Thus, anthropology on the territorial "margin" of the state, as Das and Poole suggest, may reveal the border as an "active centre of complex negotiations of conflicting interests and contradictory imaginaries" (Gosh 2011, 58) and, thus, of processes which undermine entrenched (self-)representations of "the state" as a bureaucratically rationalised, centrally organised and territorially defined sovereignty. Blurring the boundaries between state and society, the processes of borders engage negotiations and contestations between various state and non-state, local and translocal actors and institutions (see also Vaughan-Williams 2012). Crossing and staying within state territories, as well as transgressing and complying with legal political categorisations, social actors, within and outside state bureaucracy and government, "enact" the borders of the state in various situations and ways. State borders may thus become internal and external, visible and invisible, territorial and symbolical, local and translocal, and "multiplied and reduced" (Balibar 1998, 220).

The approach to state borders as techniques and processes of negotiation and contestation of political power relations has been increasingly applied to the anthropology of South Asia in recent years, as the emerging scholarship on South Asian borderlands demonstrates (Gellner 2013; Gosh 2011; Ibrahim 2009; van Schendel 2005; 2013; van Schendel and de Maaker 2014). According to van Schendel (2013), borders in South Asia (as compared to Europe) are ethnographically rather understudied. Since many of the region's territorial and legal political borders are considered "sensitive", state officials have been restricting access to borderlands for anthropologists[13].

Piliavsky, however, illustrates in her ethnography on the provincial border between Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh in India that processes of negotiation and contestation occur "at" borders between as well as within nation states[14]. Criticising the conception of "borderlands" as

[13] With reference to the centrality of territory in state self-definition, van Schendel argues that "every modern state considers its borders to be problematic, vulnerable, and in need of special policy measures" (van Schendel 2013, 267). The territoriality of states in South Asia, where many of the region's borders are contested and militarised, however, seems to be particularly precarious and, thus, especially in need of military measures.

[14] Donnan and Wilson conceptualise political borders between, and within, states as related processes (1999, 8). Borders within nation states, however, have rarely been subject to anthropological investigations. Besides the

somehow territorially, socially and politically definable entities at the borders between nation states, she argues that South Asian borderland studies often ignore "the borders" as conceptual objects which enclose, divide and relate people and places and, thus, produce "border situations" also within nation states which neither in kind nor in degree differ from processes "at" international borders. With reference to provincial boundaries and consequential administrative and political divisions within states, she points to "the sense of border life" which also pervades state territories. Resonating with the perspective on borders as processes and techniques, she argues to conceptualise borders as "a mechanism in the set of categorical distinctions we call the state. Borders are structural entities and as such can generate different effects in different circumstances. They can enclose as well as relate; they can form barriers as much as frontiers; they can facilitate their crossing as well as enclose and divide, functioning equally well both as limits and prompts for movement" (Piliavsky 2013, 41).

The border between Pakistan and Azad Kashmir presents an interesting case "in between" the territorial and social margin of the Pakistani nation state. Located at the *Line of Control*, the international border between Pakistan and India in Jammu and Kashmir, Azad Kashmir's ambiguous legal political boundaries with Pakistan simultaneously include and exclude the region in and from the national territory.

With reference to the anthropological approach to borders (and boundaries) as techniques and mechanisms of power, this paper examines the questions of how "the border" occurs in political processes of reconstruction in Muzaffarabad, how "the border" becomes inscribed into politics and power relations in Muzaffarabad through state and non-state, local and translocal actors' practices of "bordering" (places and people), and the consequential struggles over power relations. Analysing the (sub-)national border between Azad Kashmir and Pakistan as processes of negotiation and contestation of power relations in Muzaffarabad, this paper may contribute to a more profound and locally anchored understanding of a widely understudied "border situation" in South Asia, frequently overshadowed by the "big picture" of the international Kashmir dispute.

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case examined by Piliavsky (2013) exceptions in this regard are also presented by the studies of Joshi (2013) and Erb (2014) on contested borders within the Indian and Indonesian nation states respectively. With reference to theoretical perspectives on external state borders, Erb analyses processes of internal state borders, arguing that the borders within states "can still be seen as places that threaten national and local security, that divide people who are considered wholly 'other', and that can become arenas of conflict causing grave insecurity to the people who inhabit them" (Erb 2014, 126).

Disaster and Politics

As an anthropologist I use the term "politics" rather broadly by referring to social actors' struggles over power relations within and outside the official domains of state government and bureaucracy (see Vincent 2002). In this paper, however, I am concerned with perspectives and practices of social actors, such as political activists, journalists, politicians and state officials, who are either represented or represent themselves as being involved with "politics" (*siyasat*). The emic term refers to "public" domains of government, administration and opposition against them. Compared to the majority of the city's poor and lower-class populations, it is Muzaffarabad's "political" elite, comprising members of the middle and the upper classes, who are involved with *siyasat* as parliamentarians, ministers, state officials, oppositional politicians or activists[15].

Borrowing from the anthropological literature on "natural" disasters, I understand the earthquake as an "empirical window" (Jenness et al. 2006, ix) into power relations in society which shape, and are shaped by, social actors' disaster vulnerabilities and strategies of recovering from destruction and death after the disaster (Oliver-Smith 2002; Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 2002). Inextricably linked with political processes, disasters reveal both effects of social inequalities and causes of struggles over power disparities in society.

In this paper I concentrate on "politics of disaster" (Olson 2008) in the context of state interventions for "reconstruction" and social actors' contestations of these interventions after the earthquake, and on political processes which affect state–society relations, and vice versa (Hilhorst 2003).

Exposing the state's failure in protecting its people from destruction and death, the disaster, as Olson argues, may undermine the political legitimacy of the government and administration (Olson 2008, 157; Olson and Gawronski 2003). But it may also create the opportunity for the state to exert influence on society by establishing the government as the principal provider of reconstruction to the people. Frequently, in cooperation with international organisations and institutions, allocating the required funds, an "enlarged state" (Simpson 2005, 230) emerges in order to rehabilitate its people from destruction and death. Thus, disasters often entail the emergence of "disaster bureaucracies" as the means by which states (including their regional, local and transnational allies) engage in the reconstruction of societies.

[15] I have examined elsewhere the political struggles of lower-class social actors in Muzaffarabad with regard to practices and representations of homes in the context of the state housing reconstruction policy and bureaucracy (Schild 2012).

The national and transnational interventions for "reconstruction" are thereby (almost) always connected with more extensive schemes to improve, rather than merely reconstruct, societies. The "will to improve" underlying rationalities and techniques of "government of population" (Foucault 2006, 140) in post-disaster contexts exposes how national and transnational interventions for "reconstruction" re-imagine societies along certain ideas and ideologies of improvement. Edward Simpson's "political biography" (2013) of the 2001 Kutch earthquake in Gujarat provides a nuanced analysis of "reconstruction" as conflictive processes in which urban dwellers, local activist groups, religious organisations, politicians, urban planners, state officials and villagers struggled for authority of their particular ideas and ideologies about how society should be reconstructed (see also Oliver-Smith 1996, 309–310).

The earthquake's aftermath in Muzaffarabad, as I argue, is shaped by similar "politics of reconstruction", although the various actors and institutions, described in this paper, disagreed on the implementation of reconstruction projects rather than the projected reconstruction of the city and its people. The political contestations of the implementation of projects still expose reconstruction as complex and conflictive processes. These political processes, as I demonstrate, affect and are affected by "the border" between Pakistan and Azad Kashmir in various ways through the practices of local and translocal, state and non-state actors who strategically "enact" the border and, thereby, draw and transgress boundaries between "us" and "them" and "here" and "there" in order to achieve particular objectives vis-à-vis others. Thus, borders and boundaries, as anthropologists have been demonstrating since the 1980s (Bode 1989; Oliver-Smith 1986), are crucial techniques of power and politics and in the aftermath of disasters. With reference to the reconstruction of Bhuj, the administrative capital of Kutch, Simpson illustrates, for instance, how the political boundaries between the region and the government of Gujarat were increasingly contested in the earthquake's aftermath. Criticising the government for neglecting the region, people demanded Kutch to become independent from Gujarat. Thereby, the protests in Bhuj drew attention to "the old idea that Kutch was not Gujarat" (Simpson 2013, 137) and the moment in history when the region became part of Gujarat in 1960. According to Simpson the "earthquake had once again brought to the fore questions of equality and representations within the political organisation of the new state. The earthquake brought to the surface lines of difference that decades of state-building had attempted to bury. A tragedy had befallen Kutch, and the state, an entity

people saw as charged with their protection, was either behaving like a buffoon or lacked compassion at the core" (2013, 137)[16].

The Reconstruction of Muzaffarabad

In Muzaffarabad, reconstruction had turned into a political issue for the above-mentioned group of political activists because of the slow implementation of the master plan. The local politicisation intensified as the group and its political allies started to address the issue of delay through public meetings and protest actions.

The most severe criticism was directed at the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA), a large centralised reconstruction authority based in Islamabad. Pakistan established ERRA after the disaster to administer the overall reconstruction of earthquake-affected areas in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. For the reconstruction of Muzaffarabad, ERRA officials prepared the master plan in consultation with Japanese engineers, while the Pakistan government mobilised the required financial resources in the form of a Chinese loan of 300 million US dollars. To coordinate the administration and accounting of the master plan projects, ERRA installed an office in Muzaffarabad.

Since the ERRA headquarters in Islamabad was out of reach for local political action, it was mostly ERRA's representatives in Muzaffarabad who were approached by local critics and asked to justify the delay of the master plan implementation. In December 2009 I had the chance to attend a discussion seminar on the issue organised by a group of political activists. For the event, the organisation invited the head of ERRA's master plan office in Muzaffarabad, an Azad Kashmir minister and ex-minister, the chairman of the city's Development Authority and several Azad Kashmir party politicians, along with representatives of the local media. Whereas the ERRA's representative justified the delay by referring to the time-consuming project approval procedures which he had to undergo for each planning step of every project with the many actors involved, the (ex-)officials from the Azad Kashmir government and administration identified the ERRA and its subsidiary as

[16] In another case of the imbrications of boundaries and borders with disasters, Simpson examines how in the earthquake's aftermath, religious antagonism increased towards Muslims in Kutch who were represented as being disloyal to India and actively fostering alliances with Pakistan. The Indian border with Pakistan, where Kutch is located, as Simpson demonstrates, crucially figured in these representations of "the transgressive and marginal non-citizen" (2013, 73) Muslims and the consequential activities of Hindu nationalist organisations in the borderlands. "In Gujarat, and within India more generally, Kutch in its entirety is regarded as a border region: a vulnerable zone at the edge of the nation. Therefore, and given the political climate at the time, the prevailing ethos of much of the intervention after the earthquake was to strengthen the border area against Pakistan – not by rolling out more barbed wire, but by attempting to create new citizens of various kinds, with loyalties that lead them to look affectionately to the east: towards Gujarat and the Indian nation" (Simpson 2013, 74–75).

culprits behind the slow implementation. ERRA, subordinate to the Pakistan prime minister, was accused of dominating reconstruction in Azad Kashmir but, in fact, lacking any real interest in reconstruction of Azad Kashmir and, therefore, delaying the master plan implementation in Muzaffarabad. Referring to the master plan office in Muzaffarabad, which was perceived to be subordinate to ERRA, the critics argued that ERRA and the Pakistan government sidelined the Azad Kashmir government in the implementation process. At the meeting the education minister critically addressed the issue of exclusion of her government from authority over ERRA and the reconstruction process respectively. She referred to her own department which was not consulted by ERRA for the reconstruction of schools in Azad Kashmir. Her criticism implied that, without authority, Azad Kashmir lacked the means to put the necessary pressure on ERRA that would prompt Pakistan's reconstruction authority to accelerate implementation. The delay was perceived as being caused by a general disinterest in Pakistan regarding the issues of the Azad Kashmir people in general and the people of Muzaffarabad in particular. The ex-minister and head of the opposition party repeatedly pointed to this fact by stating that *their* city was destroyed and that *their* people suffered, not ERRA and its officials based far away from the scene, in Islamabad. According to him and the other critics, ERRA and its master plan office in Muzaffarabad only served as a means for the Pakistani state elite to appropriate financial resources allocated for reconstruction in the city for their own purposes. Pakistan, which is in charge of the Chinese loan, was blamed for wasting Azad Kashmir's money, having established expensive offices which pay large salaries to its employees comprised mostly of retired Pakistani army officials.

Pakistan's domination in regards to financial issues had already been politicised in 2008 when ERRA announced that reconstruction projects in the Azad Kashmir cities of Bagh and Rawalakot, in addition to the master plan projects for Muzaffarabad, were to be covered by the Chinese loan as well. The master plan's budget for Muzaffarabad city was thus reduced from 300 million dollars to 190 million dollars. By this time, Zahid Amin, a local politician from Muzaffarabad, was chairman of Muzaffarabad's Development Authority. He was a major critic of ERRA and the budget reallocation. The master plan had been prepared according to the original loan of 300 million dollars. The cuts to the budget meant that many projects would have to be dropped (Naqash 2008b)[17]. Amin told me that he addressed the issue of financial exploitation in public on October 8, 2008, the earthquake's third

[17] The local politicisation of missing financial resources was intensified by rumours which began to circulate after the People's Party came to power in Pakistan in autumn 2008. It was suspected that Pakistan's president transferred so-called "earthquake money" from ERRA to the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), the People's Party government's welfare scheme.

anniversary, when a minister from Pakistan and officials from ERRA came to Muzaffarabad for the inauguration ceremony of the master plan. He further denounced the event as "fake" by pointing out that ERRA's master plan office had not yet done any work on the projects, with planning included. Consequently, Amin was removed as chairman by the Azad Kashmir government three months later. The removal, he is convinced, was due to his strong opposition to the Pakistan government and ERRA. After all, he publically denounced a minister from Pakistan. By means of political pressure and influence in the Azad Kashmir bureaucracy, Pakistan got rid of an unpleasing detractor.

These initial insights into the local politicisation of the master plan delay illustrate how Azad Kashmiris enact "the border" between Azad Kashmir and Pakistan and draw the boundary between "us" and "them", "here" and "there". Representations of the border in these situations point to relations of domination and dependence. Azad Kashmiris represent themselves as the dependent people, who are oppressed and betrayed by the powerful and self-serving Pakistan government. In the context of the earthquake's aftermath, Pakistan wields authority over Azad Kashmir by means of its reconstruction authorities, most notably ERRA and its subsidiaries, whereas the Azad Kashmir government is excluded from any powers. According to these representations, Pakistan neglects Azad Kashmir's urgent reconstruction needs in order to pursue its own financial interests. Azad Kashmir seems to be entirely at Pakistan's mercy. Since the region lacks representation in Pakistan's government and administration, its political means to affect Pakistan's decisions and activities (or inactivity) regarding reconstruction of Muzaffarabad are few. As the removal of an insubordinate Azad Kashmir bureaucrat illustrates, Pakistan, in contrast, has the power to interfere in the region's governmental affairs, by both formal and informal means of political pressure.

Reconstruction, however, offered opportunities for Pakistan to exert influence on Azad Kashmir by taking control of the reconstruction process, as well as for local and regional actors who address the issue of national domination and engage in politics which aim at changing the region's unequal relations with Pakistan. The earthquake's effects on the existing power relations were, to some extent, contradictory. Providing Pakistan with opportunities to strengthen its patron–client-like relationship with Azad Kashmir, reconstruction also exposed the patron's failure to look satisfactorily after his client. The master plan implementation delay also undermined Pakistan's legitimacy as the dominant actor of reconstruction in and of Azad Kashmir.

Expressing frustration regarding their economic and political dependence on Pakistan, Azad Kashmir politicians challenge Pakistan's hegemony. Their representation of Pakistani domination as limiting their scope of action, however, is also situational and strategic. The region's political relation with Pakistan is much more complicated and ambiguous than the sweeping accusations at ERRA or the government in Islamabad, which were put forward by these politicians. Their criticism is based on the assumption that the Pakistan–Azad Kashmir border essentially entails a relation of domination and subordination. Reconstruction is thus politicised within this dualistic political framework. There was, however, local criticism which contrasted this simplistic confrontation of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir, pointing to the locality of Muzaffarabad vis-à-vis the Azad Kashmir and Pakistan governments. Reconstruction in Muzaffarabad was perceived not only to be an issue of Azad Kashmir, which is neglected by the Pakistan government, but also to be a local issue of Muzaffarabad, which is also neglected by the Azad Kashmir government. From this perspective, the disinterest of both the Pakistan reconstruction authority and the Azad Kashmir government caused the delay of master plan implementation in Muzaffarabad.

This local concern was raised by, among others, a journalist from Muzaffarabad, Tariq Naqash, who frequently reports on Azad Kashmir for a Pakistani English-language newspaper. Though he admitted that some of the reconstruction affairs were beyond the authority of the Azad Kashmir government, he stressed in an interview with me that others were not. According to him, ERRA and the Azad Kashmir government were jointly responsible for the master plan delay. He harshly criticised the above-mentioned minister's statement about her department's exclusion by ERRA. According to him, the minister was not resolute enough in her actions taken against ERRA and, thus, failed to fulfil her duty as a representative of the affected people, which was to take care of their reconstruction needs[18]. It seems that the minister, by criticising ERRA for restricting Azad Kashmir's influence, attempted to avoid criticism directed at herself as a member of the government. A government devoid of crucial powers cannot be made responsible for failures. Thus, what she designated as "exclusion from authority", Naqash referred to as a "lack of interest" in reconstruction affairs. In quite similar words, an ERRA official, whom I visited in the Islamabad headquarters, represented the Azad Kashmir government's "exclusion" as the "refusal to take

[18] "While I had questioned ERRA I had not spared our own government, you know. They are equally to be blamed. They can not allow themselves of... like the Minister AJK [Azad Kashmir] says that 'I'm not aware what is going on'. Why you are sitting in the office? He [sic] should have [...] resigned, he [sic] should quit then. That lady belongs to an affected area. [...] If she says that 'I'm not aware'... Why you are sitting in the government for the past [...] three or four years? When did you raise voice against it?" (Naqash interviewed by the author, Dec. 26, 2009).

over responsibility". In his view, it was not ERRA which deprived Azad Kashmir of authority over reconstruction, but the government itself which attempted to abdicate responsibility.

ERRA officials and local activists alike argued that the Azad Kashmir government was involved in the master plan implementation. As the projects required the acquisition of government and private land, the Azad Kashmir government was responsible for providing the necessary plots to ERRA's master plan office in Muzaffarabad, but, apparently, failed to do so. According to these Muzaffarabadis, the Azad Kashmir government did not care about the reconstruction of their city because its politicians were not from Muzaffarabad, but from other constituencies in Azad Kashmir. Instead of pressing ahead with the reconstruction of the city and providing the required land, the ministers prioritised their own constituencies for reconstruction in order to seek re-election. The government thus complied with ERRA and the national government, not because Azad Kashmir is a powerless actor vis-à-vis Pakistan, but because in particular situations opportunism suits the politicians more than opposition against Islamabad does.

As evidenced by Azad Kashmir's historical trajectories, neither conflict nor complicity with the power holders in Islamabad is unusual for Azad Kashmir politicians (Rose 1992; Snedden 2012). Rather, it seems that politics in Azad Kashmir are profoundly shaped by frequent alternations of opposition and cooperation vis-à-vis Pakistan.

The complicity between national and regional actors was also the background of the local political alliance, which was launched by Zahid Amin after his removal as chairman of the city's development authority in order to pressure the Azad Kashmir government to take a more active part in the reconstruction of Muzaffarabad. Amin organised another public meeting on the delay of the master plan implementation. As a well-known politician he was able to mobilise about three hundred "people from the city" to join the event: journalists, politicians from different political parties, officers, religious leaders, representatives from different groups (such as the traders' union and local activist groups and non-governmental organisations), and the Azad Kashmir prime minister at that time, Raja Farooq Haider. The seminar's objectives, as he explained to me, were to sensitise the participants to the city's reconstruction concerns, to unite them for political action, and to assist (and pressure) the prime minister in acting on behalf of the city (and to oppose ERRA and the Pakistan government if necessary). According to Amin, Farooq Haider differed from his predecessors, insofar as he was, despite his rural constituency, comparatively open-minded about the city's reconstruction concerns. In cooperation with a local branch of an international non-governmental organisation, Amin finally realised the idea of a widespread Muzaffarabad

alliance and set up the reconstruction movement (*Tahrik-e-Tamir-e-Nau*). It engaged in political campaigns which attracted media attention, but, at the same time, also put a strong emphasis on informal lobbying. The participants were encouraged to approach their friends and relatives working in public institutions of Azad Kashmir in order to convince them of the necessity of pressing ahead with the master plan implementation.

Probably because the Pakistan government is beyond the scope of local political pressure, Amin and his fellows focused their activities exclusively on the Azad Kashmir government and administration. The movement's political actions, however, clearly pointed to the opposition between local interests and regional politics in Azad Kashmir. From the local perspective, the relations between Pakistan and Azad Kashmir are characterised not only by domination and dependence but also by cooperation and complicity, which go against local concerns such as the reconstruction of Muzaffarabad. The opposition between Azad Kashmir and Pakistan occasionally merges into cooperation, and local actors may ally themselves at times with their government and reject it at other times, thus drawing a boundary *within* Azad Kashmir.

Conflicting Bureaucracy

The political ambiguities of domination and subordination, opposition and cooperation, which characterise Azad Kashmir's relations with Pakistan, are also exposed by the wrangling over funds, authority and blame among the different officials involved in the "reconstruction bureaucracy". As anthropological approaches to "the state" suggest, state government and administration must always be thought of as "fragmented" and consisting of a contradictory ensemble of people, practices and representations (Gupta 1995; Mitchell 2006; Sharma and Gupta 2006). Despite their apolitical representation and supposed "rationality", bureaucratic procedures are closely intertwined with power relations. In the case of reconstruction in Azad Kashmir the bureaucratic "fragmentation" is closely associated with the region's ambiguous political status vis-à-vis Pakistan.

Whereas Pakistan's domination over Azad Kashmir with regard to the overall ERRA-controlled reconstruction administration is obvious, the particular case of the master plan in Muzaffarabad shows a much more complex picture of the national government's interference in the local reconstruction process.

It was the head of ERRA's master plan offices in Muzaffarabad who drew my attention to the complicated and extensive bureaucratic procedures involved in the master plan implementation. In addition to this office, two committees were established to approve and

monitor the project designs: one comprising of ERRA officials and another of representatives from the Azad Kashmir administration. ERRA officials frequently told me that the Azad Kashmir committee allowed for the participation of Azad Kashmir in the reconstruction of Muzaffarabad. However, this formal involvement of Azad Kashmir in the city's reconstruction masked the actual power relations that shaped the master plan implementation. By officially including the Azad Kashmir administration, the master plan bureaucracy aimed to conceal Pakistan's actual domination. Though Azad Kashmir was given the formal right to refuse designs for the projects, it was not in a position to overrule ERRA's decisions. The Azad Kashmir committee's seats were filled with heads of the state's departments and authorities, including administrative staff appointed by the Pakistan government, e.g. the chief secretary of Azad Kashmir, and the head of ERRA's master plan office in Muzaffarabad. Azad Kashmir's participation was restricted, since these Pakistani officials within the committee would most likely not oppose ERRA.

Interestingly, the master plan office, which was perceived by Azad Kashmiris as being subordinate to ERRA, was represented by ERRA as part of the Azad Kashmir administration. In an interview, however, the head of the office in Muzaffarabad contradicted this official representation by explaining to me that he had, in fact, two bosses. Admitting the close affiliation with Pakistan and ERRA, he described the office as an intermediary between ERRA and the Azad Kashmir government.

The ambivalence regarding authority reveals the reconstruction bureaucracy as conflict-ridden processes which entail frequent rivalries between national, regional and local actors over funds, responsibility and blame.

A case of such bureaucratic rivalry existed between ERRA's master plan office in Muzaffarabad and the city's Development Authority. Initially, the Japanese designers of the master plan selected the Development Authority as the main implementer. The local authority, however, was later sidelined by ERRA, which took control of the implementation process by establishing its subsidiary office as the chief implementer instead. Nevertheless, ERRA and its officials from Islamabad rely on the expertise and cooperation of the Development Authority, since it is in charge of overall urban planning and development in Muzaffarabad. The installation of the master plan office as the sole administrator of funds, planning and implementation displaced the local authority from its initial responsibility, ascribed to it by the master plan designers. The shifting of powers from the city's Development Authority to ERRA's master plan office caused tensions between the two authorities. One of the planned projects, the construction of satellite towns outside of

Muzaffarabad, is one example, where the rivalry between the two institutions turned into a problem for the overall implementation process. The satellite towns should provide living space for the people who dwell in highly hazardous areas and for those who are affected by other projects of the master plan. Though the Azad Kashmir government had already claimed most of the land, the infrastructural development of the areas has yet to take place. According to officials, the former inhabitants of the satellite towns' sites started to reoccupy their land by building simple shelters on it, hoping to obtain additional compensation for already acquired and compensated land. These officially termed "encroachments" provoked a conflict between the two authorities. Officials of the master plan office accused the Development Authority of not fencing the area appropriately. The local authority, on the other hand, accused the ERRA office of not giving it sufficient funds — either for the fence or for additional personnel to take care of the encroachments.

Whereas Pakistan officials frequently criticised the inactivity of the Azad Kashmir government and administration, blaming it for the lack of political will to acquire the required land for the master plan projects, Azad Kashmir officials often argued that due to the shortage of funds (which lie with ERRA) the reconstruction of Muzaffarabad could not proceed[19].

The conflictive reconstruction bureaucracy in Muzaffarabad reflects Pakistan's ambivalent political agenda towards Azad Kashmir. In fact, Pakistan is much interested in the state's political cohesion and solidarity, as these stem the drive towards secession and independence. Vis-à-vis India and "occupied" Indian Kashmir, Pakistan depends on "free" Kashmir's loyalty with the ideology of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan. Avoiding Kashmiri opposition to Pakistan's territorial claim over Kashmir, Pakistan has been integrating Azad Kashmir into the nation state. This practical infringement on Azad Kashmir's "freedom" contradicts official representation. However, to maintain the illusion of "free Kashmir", Pakistan attempts to conceal its efforts to dominate politics in Azad Kashmir. The "reconstruction bureaucracy" established by Pakistan after the earthquake reveals this duplicity[20]. Although Azad Kashmir

[19] In addition to the time-consuming project approval procedure, the head of ERRA's master plan office also blamed the Chinese companies for delaying implementation. The Chinese loan was bound to the condition that the Chinese government would choose the companies working on the master plan projects. Therefore, the contractors were not selected by a market-based procedure. The Chinese were thus blamed for demanding unreasonable rates for the projects and thereby protracting the contract negotiations and making them extremely difficult. This representation of the delay was challenged by a representative of a Chinese company which pointed to the poor performance of the master plan office and the National Engineering Services of Pakistan (NESPAK), ERRA's technical consultant. According to him, the office was not equipped with sufficient personnel and cars to adequately keep the pace of reconstruction. (I owe the insight regarding the Chinese contractors' point of view to my colleague, Stefan Urban, who talked to the representative of the company involved in the master plan implementation.)

[20] The Azad Kashmir council, comprising Pakistani and Azad Kashmiri politicians, reflects a similar duplicity structure with regard to legislation (see page 3).

officially participates in the master plan implementation, it generally lacks the means to challenge ERRA's authority over the process. The region's involvement in reconstruction is somewhat of a farce that supports the official representation of "free Kashmir" and, thus, conceals its practical subordination to Pakistan's reconstruction authority.

By formally including but simultaneously depriving Azad Kashmir of actual authority, the complicated and time-consuming procedures of the master plan implementation aim at strengthening Pakistan's (hidden) hegemony, rather than implementing the projects appropriately. This conflicting bureaucracy seems to be among the main reasons for the delay. The bureaucratic rivalries and conflicts over funds, authority and blame, however, indicate that Pakistan's domination over reconstruction is contested and negotiated within the master plan bureaucracy in Muzaffarabad. Whereas Pakistan is comparatively successful in preventing Azad Kashmir politics from crossing the border and reaching out into Pakistan, it fails to avert the bureaucratic struggles between national, regional and local officials in Muzaffarabad. As a consequence, the unequal power relations between Pakistan and Azad Kashmir are revealed in several conflicts; the national narrative of "free Kashmir", itself an effect of the border, is thus also proved wrong.

Shifting Alliances across the Border

Though the conflictive bureaucracy complicated the implementation of the master plan, its ambiguities and contradictions, nonetheless, allowed for political strategies to accelerate reconstruction. By creating alliances with Pakistan-affiliated individuals, local actors in Muzaffarabad attempted to avoid bureaucratic wrangling as well as struggles in Azad Kashmir's party politics, which obstructed the implementation of the master plan. These strategic border crossings take advantage of Pakistan's domination over Azad Kashmir in order to enforce local interests in Azad Kashmir's government and administration. Since the national government, however, frequently infringes on Azad Kashmir's political affairs, the scope of local political actions is thus rather limited.

Engaging in informal lobbying, the participants of the local reconstruction movement (*Tarik-e Tamir-e Nau*) approached particular networked individuals within the government and administration of Azad Kashmir. Initially, the movement focused on Azad Kashmir, but ultimately expanded the scope of action towards Pakistan when the opportunity arose to ally itself with Marvi Memon, an opposition politician and member of the national assembly of Pakistan. Memon actively supported the movement and took part in public actions, such as the march to Islamabad in October 2010. In this political protest march a few hundred Azad

Kashmiris demonstrated in front of the Pakistan Parliament against the delay of reconstruction. According to a local political activist, Marvi Memon (who headed the protest) managed not only to have the police grant the protestors access to the restricted Parliament area, but also to have the protestors' representatives discuss their concerns in a meeting with the Pakistan Minister of Interior. Through the alliance with Marvi Memon, the movement attracted public attention outside of Azad Kashmir, in Islamabad where the policies affecting the region are actually formulated and approved. The alliance with the Pakistani politician reflects the strategic effort not only to mitigate Azad Kashmir's lack of formal political representation in Pakistan in general, but also to strengthen Muzaffarabad's position within Azad Kashmir politics. The alliance was aimed at pressuring Pakistan and ERRA so that they acknowledge the interests of Muzaffarabadis regarding the reconstruction of their city and then represent these interests vis-à-vis the Azad Kashmir government.

Local attempts to forge alliances with influential persons from Pakistan, and even ERRA, already existed in the early stages of reconstruction. In 2006, political activism in Muzaffarabad was characterised by a strong opposition to the government of the then-prime minister of Azad Kashmir, Sardar Attiq. Attiq rejected the master plan for Muzaffarabad. Instead of rebuilding the city in situ, he entertained plans to shift the capital city near Bagh, where his own political constituency is located. Zahid Amin, the then-chairman of the city's Development Authority, supported the master plan and criticised the idea to shift the capital. He explained to me that ERRA by that time was with him and the city people. By means of an alliance with the deputy chairman of ERRA, he approached the Pakistan government directly to put pressure on Attiq's government. General Nadeem, the deputy chairman of ERRA, was a friend of Amin's. As he told me, they had known each other since the 1990s, when Nadeem was stationed as an army officer in Muzaffarabad. ERRA and the Pakistan government then approved the master plan and ultimately forced Attiq to do the same and to give up his plans of shifting the capital.

These examples of alliances between actors from Muzaffarabad and Pakistan reveal that local actors may take advantage of Pakistan's domination over Azad Kashmir. Out of consideration for the reconstruction of Muzaffarabad, they utilised Pakistan's political power to subjugate the Azad Kashmir power holders to the will of the national government, which in these particular situations was equated with local interests.

The alliances, however, were bound to two specific actors from Pakistan, Marvi Memon and General Nadeem respectively. After the latter left ERRA, the alliance broke apart. Amin later strongly opposed ERRA and the Pakistan government. As a consequence, he had to vacate his

office and, subsequently, started to politicise the city's reconstruction from outside the bureaucracy. Approaching the Azad Kashmir government and administration, Amin's reconstruction movement finally attracted the support of the then-prime minister, Farooq Haider, who reappointed Amin as chairman of the city's development authority. By 2010, Amin was again in a position to press ahead with the implementation of the master plan. He immediately took an active part in managing the coordination between ERRA, its master plan office in Muzaffarabad, the administration of Azad Kashmir, and the Chinese contractors. Within just a few months he started the construction of several projects. Again, the importance of committed individual actors within the bureaucracy was clearly evinced by the new and active part of the Development Authority in the master plan implementation.

Amin's commitment, however, strained the Development Authority's resources. He thus approached the chief secretary of Azad Kashmir and managed to get an additional budget for the authority's increasing expenses. Because of political discrepancies with Sardar Attiq, who, after Farooq Haider, became prime minister again, Amin bypassed Attiq's government and allied himself with the head of the Azad Kashmir administration. The chief secretary, who is appointed by the Pakistan government, approved the budget allocation for the Development Authority. Amin explained to me that even the prime minister of Azad Kashmir could hardly oppose the decisions of the head of Azad Kashmir's administration. Nevertheless, in a last-minute manoeuver the prime minister managed to stop the transfer of additional funds to the Development Authority.

Amin interpreted the interference in local reconstruction by the prime minister in the context of the upcoming elections in Azad Kashmir and the political struggles within the ruling Muslim Conference, dominated by the "Qayyum dynasty" and its allies. Sardar Attiq, the son of Sardar Qayyum (who had previously served as party president, Azad Kashmir's prime minister and president), leads the Qayyum block of the Muslim Conference. Zahid Amin, however, is affiliated with the "forward block", a party faction that frequently opposes the Qayyum block. Among other reasons, the conflict between the two factions already escalated during Attiq's first term in office because of the steps he took to relocate the capital. According to Amin, the "forward block", led by Farooq Haider, party president and member of the Legislative Assembly of Azad Kashmir at that time, had supported the city people's opposition to Attiq's plans (Naqash 2007). In January 2009 an alliance between the forward block of the Muslim Conference and oppositional parties of Azad Kashmir jointly issued a no-confidence motion against Attiq's government in the Legislative Assembly. Subsequently, Attiq was replaced as prime minister by the independent and compromise candidate,

Muhammad Yaqoob. As the Muslim Conference reunified, the Legislative Assembly dismissed Yaqoob, after only 10 months in office, and appointed Farooq Haider as the new prime minister. Haider's government, however, did not last for long either. He resigned from his office to avoid the parliament's vote on a no-confidence motion which was issued against him by his former intra-party rivals, the Qayyum block headed by Sardar Attiq. Although Attiq, who became prime minister again in July 2010, did not remove his political opponent, Zahid Amin, from the Development Authority, the power struggle between the Muslim Conference factions impeded its administrative performance in the process of the master plan implementation.

It was widely assumed that Amin planned to contest the upcoming elections of 2011 in the urban constituency of Muzaffarabad. Attiq's Muslim Conference, however, refused to support Amin as an official party candidate. Attiq presented his own son, Usman Attiq, as an official candidate in the city's constituency. The prime minister thus stopped the transfer of the additional budget to the Development Authority in order to minimise Amin's scope of political action. As chairman of the Development Authority, Amin was well positioned to launch his political election campaign in the city. Attiq feared that Amin's commitment regarding the master plan implementation would further increase his popularity in Muzaffarabad and the possibility that he (and not his son) would be elected as Member of the Legislative Assembly from Muzaffarabad. Attiq attempted to sabotage Amin's election by limiting the Authority's resources and agency. Thus, delaying the master plan implementation was a political strategy which aimed at preventing Amin from attracting attention and gaining public appreciation for his contribution towards reconstruction of Muzaffarabad.

Amin's alliance with the chief secretary, officially appointed by the national government, was an attempt to avoid struggles in Azad Kashmir's party politics. Again, Pakistan's domination was utilised to enforce local (and personal) political interests against the Azad Kashmir government — although the strategy was not successful.

Crossing the border from Azad Kashmir into Pakistan, local politics parallels Pakistan's frequent strategic manoeuvring across it. The political party struggles in Azad Kashmir are not merely "internal" affairs, but crucially determined by the involvement of "external" party politics from Pakistan.[21] Citing a former Azad Kashmir prime minister, Asif states that Azad

[21] With the coming to power of the People's Party in Pakistan in 2008, the government of Attiq's Muslim Conference, backed by the former national government of General Musharraf, became an oppositional government to Pakistan. As a consequence, political tensions between Muzaffarabad and Islamabad increased. It is widely believed that the new government in Pakistan attempted to destabilise and weaken Azad Kashmir. "They do not want a strong government [in Azad Kashmir]," a political activist from Muzaffarabad told me. The frequent changes of Azad Kashmir prime ministers, in general, during the legislative period from 2006 till 2011

Kashmir elections in general are "managed by Islamabad to ensure that 'the party affiliate of the ruling party in Islamabad comes to power in [Azad Kashmir]'" (Asif 2009, 37). Unsurprisingly, in the most recent elections held in June 2011, the People's Party branch in Azad Kashmir became the new ruling party. The victory was supported by Attiq's Muslim Conference, which collaborated with the People's Party and the government in Islamabad, most likely because the People's Party had supported Attiq earlier by replacing his intra-party rival, Haider, as prime minister. Consequently, Haider left the Muslim Conference and set up an Azad Kashmir branch of Pakistan's Muslim League (Nawaz), the People's Party's main political opponent in Pakistan. As a result of these political moves, the cleavages characterising official politics in Pakistan became (again) incorporated into Azad Kashmir's political landscape. Among the many ways in which Pakistan asserts itself in Azad Kashmir, Snedden concludes that it is the local "politicians [who] 'play' Pakistan's 'game', thereby strengthening Islamabad's position" (Snedden 2012, 215).

Conclusion

As anthropologists such as Edward Simpson most recently have been demonstrating (Simpson 2013), boundaries and borders within and between societies and states crucially figure in the aftermath of "natural" disasters because of social actors' often conflicting strategies of coping with destruction and death. In this paper I examined processes of "bordering" between Pakistan and Azad Kashmir in the context of reconstruction after the earthquake in Muzaffarabad. Struggles over reconstruction in Muzaffarabad, as I demonstrated, are related to the border through social actors' various representations and practices along as well as across it.

With reference to historical perspectives on the legal political ambiguities of autonomy and dependence, I argued that the political relations between Pakistan and Azad Kashmir imply domination and subordination as well as opposition and cooperation. Whereas domination was revealed after the earthquake in the ways in which Pakistan "administrated" reconstruction in the region by establishing its Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) as the head of the disaster bureaucracy in Muzaffarabad, opposition was evident in the criticism that the nation state's domination over reconstruction provoked among political actors in Muzaffarabad. The wrangling about funds, authority and blame among

— Sardar Attiq (July 2006–Jan. 2009), Yaqoob Khan (Jan. 2009–Oct. 2009), Farooq Haider (Oct. 2009–July 2010) and again Sardar Attiq (July 2010–June 2011) — and the removal of Farooq Haider, in particular, were supposed to be caused by Pakistan's interference in the region. Haider was well known for his opposition to the People's Party government in Islamabad. In the past, he had also frequently criticised ERRA for delaying reconstruction in Muzaffarabad (Naqash 2008a).

local, regional and national officials within the reconstruction bureaucracy exposed processes of contestation and negotiation of the border and consequential power relations. Despite providing Pakistan with a means to subjugate Azad Kashmir, it also enabled local activists and regional politicians to address the issue of Pakistan's interference in Azad Kashmir's "internal" affairs and, thus, to claim Azad Kashmir's (theoretical) autonomy from Pakistan in the face of the region's (practical) dependence on the nation state. Azad Kashmir politicians are "anything but passive subjects kowtowing to Islamabad" (Asif 2009, 38). Their agency vis-à-vis Pakistan, however, involved not only opposition *against* Pakistan, but also cooperation *with* Pakistan. Crossing the border into Pakistan, the complicity of regional power holders with the national government, as the politicisation of reconstruction in Muzaffarabad demonstrates, clashed with local concerns such as the implementation of reconstruction projects. Producing a boundary *within* Azad Kashmir, namely between "the local people" and "the regional government", the "vacillating" border is "both multiplied and reduced […] thinned out and doubled" (Balibar 1998, 220). Participating in these border processes, local actors criticised regional politicians' complicity with Pakistan and insisted on the Azad Kashmir government's loyalty with the people of Muzaffarabad. If necessary, as the "reconstruction movement" demanded, the state's loyalty with its citizens must go as far as opposing the nation state of Pakistan. Though local political actors maintained the Pakistan–Azad Kashmir border and insisted on the region's internal autonomy from Pakistan, they also crossed the border into Pakistan through the creation of alliances with particular Pakistan-affiliated individuals. In taking advantage of Pakistan's domination over Azad Kashmir, local activities across the border, however, not only infringed on Azad Kashmir's autonomy but also disrupted Pakistan's hegemony by revealing the nation state's "fragmentation". The ambiguous and contradictory politics in "the margin", as I would argue with reference to Das and Poole (2004), exposed multilayered and contradictory processes which undermined, most notably, dominant (self-)representations of "the Pakistani state" as a bureaucratically rationalised and centrally organised sovereignty. With reference to decentred perspectives on "the state" and "its" boundaries in anthropology, I approached the Pakistan–Azad Kashmir border as processes of negotiation and contestation between local and translocal, state and non-state actors (rather than between Pakistan and Azad Kashmir or "the state" and "the people"). Substantiating these theoretical perspectives, my ethnographic data illustrate how local alliances with national actors not only failed but also succeeded in manipulating Pakistan's techniques of "government of population" (Foucault 2006) in Muzaffarabad. Although local politics along and across the border were determined by Pakistan's domination

over Azad Kashmir and the national government's frequent interferences in the region's political affairs, they also sowed dissension and created confusion among national actors, through constantly shifting the border's sides, and, thus, at times, manipulated Pakistan's *overall* hegemony in Azad Kashmir and sabotaged "their" politicians' cooperation and complicity with the power holders in Islamabad.

The ambiguities and contradictions of the Pakistan–Azad Kashmir border, which figures in politics as both a "national" and "regional" state boundary, "are a necessary entailment of the state, much as the exception is a necessary component of the rule" (Das and Poole 2004, 4). Although the border refers to an exceptional legal political boundary in South Asia (Snedden 2012, 94), explainable by the specific historical trajectories of the Kashmir conflict between Pakistan and India, it also points to ordinary processes in "the social margin" of the state, and to ambiguities and contradictions that pervade the alleged certainty and consistency of the centre. Despite being material and territorial, borders between and within states (Piliavsky 2013) are always also symbolical and practical. They are created and recreated through the practices and representations of local and translocal, state and non-state actors who enact borders and draw and transgress boundaries between "us" and "them" and "here" and "there" in the context of contemporary struggles over power relations in society. The further ethnography of "politics of regionalism" in Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir may reveal similar local contestations and negotiations of national interferences in regional affairs. It is, however, yet to examine whether and to what extent the Pakistan–Azad Kashmir border resembles and differs from other borders of Jammu and Kashmir and borders within Pakistan and other nation states. Such examinations would advance the anthropology of borders and substantiate, most notably, the concept of borders as vacillating between national, regional and local, state and social boundaries.

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