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#### Glossary of Acronyms

AKDN	Aga Khan Development Network
AKRSP	Aga Khan Rural Support Programme
FIR	First Information Report
FWO	Frontier Works Organisation
GBLA	Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
KKH	Karakorum Highway
LSO	Local Support Organisation
MASO	Mountain Support Organisation
MQM	Mohajir Qomi Movement, later renamed as Muttahida Qomi Movement
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
PKR	Pakistani Rupee
PML-N	Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz
PML-Q	Pakistan Muslim League-Qaid
PPP	Pakistan Peoples's Party
VO/WOs	Village Organisations/Women Organisations
WFP	World Food Programme

#### Representations and practices of "home" in the context of the 2005 earthquake and reconstruction process in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir

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#### 1. Introduction

Natural disasters challenge society by confronting people with enormous devastation. In October 2005 such a disaster occurred when a major earthquake hit parts of Pakistan and nearby Azad Kashmir. Largely as a result of building collapse almost 80,000 people died and over 3 million people were left homeless. The widespread collapse of domestic dwellings revealed houses and homes as major sites of devastation, reconstruction and recovery. Dealing with the destruction of houses and the loss of homes entails a difficult and complex process encompassing and affecting social, economical as well as political domains of society.

In the process of reconstruction not only households participate, whose homes were destroyed, but also state authorities and international organisations which impact on reconstruction by targeting the house and home in policies. With reference to several case studies from my fieldwork in Muzaffarabad (the capital of Azad Kashmir) I examine how local people represent and practice home in the context of the earthquake. This general context ranges from traumatic experiences of destruction to the difficult reconstruction process of houses and interactions with the state housing policy. I argue that the destruction and reconstruction of houses after the disaster highlights multiple ways in which "home" (*ghar*) is re-constructed not only physically but also socially and politically. My examination of "home" is guided by the following questions: How do people represent their homes after the experience of (complete) destruction and the reconstruction of their houses? What ideologies, values and practices are linked to these categories "home" and "house" in general? How does the housing policy target houses and homes and how do these political objectifications figure in people's representations of home? How are homes practiced after the earthquake in the everyday family life of households? And, finally, how are representations and practices of home related to one another and shape this basic category of social life?

Regarding the post-disaster "home", it is often assumed that state and international relief and reconstruction programmes caused the separation of households and the decline of the "joint family system". Contrary to this oversimplification, my case studies reveal that representations of homes and the practices of everyday family life are far more multifaceted, although they are affected by the state's housing policy, but rather in fragmentary than consistent ways. Local representations of home are highly ambiguous and frequently contradictory because they are strategically articulated in particular situations and specific contexts with multiple references such as conflicting household ideologies and common practices as well as disaster-related experiences of disruption, reconstruction and the state's housing policy.

## 2. The 2005 earthquake and the vulnerability of homes

The current literature on the anthropology of disaster puts forward a political ecological approach to studying and analysing disasters in specific social contexts (Oliver-Smith 1999). Natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods, landslides etc. are neither exclusively natural nor social events, but complex incidences which occur at the interface of "nature" and "society" (Oliver-Smith 2002: 28). Thus, natural hazards do not inevitably constitute disasters. It is rather the social, cultural, political and economic context and the "historically produced pattern of vulnerability" (Oliver-Smith 1999: 29; Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 2002: 3), within this context, which turns the natural hazard into a disaster for a society.

As natural disasters are difficult to predict, anthropologists have been predominantly concerned with studying the post-disaster situation and the ways in which local people respond to a disaster and recover from it. Both, vulnerability (the scale to which people are, or have the potential to be, affected by a natural hazard) and social recovery and, thus, the ways people (can) deal with the consequences of a disaster, are interlinked and conditioned by social organisation, economic production, political power relations and cultural values (Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 2002: 8; Oliver Smith 1999: 29). Rather than single events, disasters are multidimensional and processual phenomena which encompass the social, political and economic context before, during and after the disaster's occurrence (Oliver-Smith 1999; Oliver-Smith 2002).

Because of the complex intersectionality of disasters and societies, the anthropological literature often refers to disasters as "empirical windows" on society. Disasters challenge society and thereby expose how social structures, political relations and cultural values function in ways more evident than under "normal" conditions.

[...] disasters disclose fundamental features of society and culture, laying bare crucial relationships and core values in the intensity of impact and the stress of recovery and reconstruction. (Oliver-Smith 2002: 26)

As Oliver-Smith and Hoffman (2002: 7-12) argue, the anthropological study of disasters provides deeper insights into human sociability in general.

The earthquake in the Pakistan Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (PKP) and the, so-called, State of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)<sup>1</sup> occurred on October 8, 2005, with a magnitude of 7.6 on the Richter scale. The disaster caused the death of almost 80,000 people and left over three million people homeless (EERI 2006). People's general vulnerability to the earthquake were clearly exposed through the devastation in terms of fatalities (largely as a result of building collapse) and the scale of the damage to key infrastructure such as roads, water and power supply, government buildings, schools, hospitals and people's homes (EERI 2006). Oliver-Smith (2002: 36) argues to conceptualise this vulnerability as "social, political and economic power relations [...] inscribed through material practices (construction urban planning, transportation) in the modified and built environments."

The fact that almost 400,000 houses were destroyed or damaged (to various degrees) and, as a consequence, many people died and were left homeless revealed that people's homes were extremely vulnerable to the earthquake disaster (ADB and WB 2005: Annex7). This vulnerability is clearly inscribed in the poor construction and hazardous sites<sup>2</sup> of houses in the city of Muzaffarabad. As the political ecological approach puts forward, disaster studies must be concerned with the examination of power relations and, thus, with the question of how vulnerability of groups as well as their power to determine the shape of reconstruction differ in a society (see Oliver-Smith 1999; Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 2002). Although I consider it important to analyse how the vulnerability of homes and the allocation of resources for housing reconstruction are unequally distributed among social groups, it is beyond the scope of this paper to examine these differences in detail. I focus here on the general vulnerability of homes

<sup>1</sup> Formally AJK is an independent state with its own government, parliament, and judiciary (only delegating defence, diplomacy, and currency control to Pakistan). But in fact, AJK is almost entirely dominated by Pakistan economically and politically. The Government of Pakistan allocates AJK's annual budget and appoints the most influential positions within the state's bureaucracy. Because of Pakistan's ideological stance on Kashmir as an integral part of the nation of Pakistan, opposition politicians critical of Pakistan's territorial claim over AJK and interference in the state's affairs are put under pressure by the military and intelligence agencies present in the area (ct. Rose 1992).

<sup>2</sup> The north of AJK and the earthquake affected Hazara District in the PKP are mountainous areas which are prone to landslides. In the 2005 disaster many houses and sometimes entire villages were destroyed by landslides caused by the earthquake.

which indicates some basic aspects relevant to my examination of "home" in the context of the earthquake and the reconstruction process.

First, the widespread destruction of houses reveals that homes and its residents, households, are among the most severely affected groups by the disaster. These households are confronted most with the consequences of destruction, the loss of human lives and property, and are mainly involved in dealing with these consequences and recovering from them. As a site of destruction, homes also play a crucial role in immediate disaster response, initial recovery and long-term reconstruction. Second, the destruction of houses reveals the strong association between notions of "home" and its locality in a "house". This close relation of home and house is of crucial importance for people in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. The destruction of houses, thus, provides an important framework of re-thinking, re-presenting and re-practising home. Third, a political effect of the destruction of houses was to make the "house" and "home" the objects of the state's reconstruction policy. The policy-related objectification of house and home affect people's notions and representations of home.

### 2.1 Households in the context of disaster

I conducted fieldwork in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Azad Kashmir, more or less continuously from October 2009 until May 2011. Muzaffarabad, a city with almost 100,000 inhabitants, was near the epicentre of the earthquake and, thus, one of the areas worst affected by the disaster. My fieldwork in Muzaffarabad commenced in 2009, four years after the earthquake. Although this clearly locates it in the context of long-term reconstruction, rather than in that of emergency rescue and relief, I encountered quite often narratives about the immediate disaster's aftermath which point to important meanings of home in relation to the traumatic earthquake experience of the destruction of houses and the loss of homes.

Many narratives of the earthquake tell about panic-stricken people who, first of all, rushed home in search of shelter and family members. The home (or what was left over from it) was *the* place to go in this situation of severe crisis. The home was maintained in the crises although it was "destroyed" insofar as the home lost its materiality and physical location: the house. In the days, weeks and months after the earthquake it was within these (maintained and modified) homes people managed the living in temporary shelters, such as tents and simple barracks, the cooking, sleeping and emotional care for traumatised household members. Later, homes and households engaged in the expensive and time-consuming reconstruction of their houses, which in many cases is still ongoing.

The intuitive orientation towards home in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake illustrates a "sense of belonging" to home as a place where people seek protection and emotional care. It is the home which turns out to be the most important source of belonging whereas other social affiliations and (more politi-

cised) religious and ethnic identities seem to be rather negligible in this particular situation of extreme distress.<sup>3</sup>

In Muzaffarabad (as well as in Azad Kashmir and Pakistan in general) home (*ghar*) is closely associated with the material object, the house. Compared to the English term "household", the Urdu term "home" (*ghar*) accentuates the location, the domestic dwelling which is ideally a "house" (*makan*) of a massive construction (stone, bricks, cement blocks or mud). This physical connotation reflects a particular ideal of the concept of "home" (*ghar*), namely the notion, that the "home" is located in a "house" which belongs (by legal title) to its members. The ownership of a home is expressed by the phrase *apna ghar* ("home of one's own"). Nevertheless, many homes exist without a house of their own (in a house for rent or a tent) and, though, are referred to as *ghar*.

The local Urdu<sup>4</sup> spoken in Muzaffarabad does not differentiate between "home" and "household". The term *ghar* denotes both "household" and "home".<sup>5</sup> People refer to *mera ghar* ("my home") as the place where they live, eat, sleep and work together with other people. The home/household is actively maintained by the performance of domestic work, *ghar ka kam* (literally translated as "homework"), and by financial contributions. The (financial) maintenance of the home is expressed by the phrase *ghar ka intezam calana* ("to run the home"). When people explicitly denote the household members the term *gharvale* ("people of the home") is used which can mean the nuclear, extended or the joint family (comprising of a married father and his married sons or several married brothers) living together in a common home.

Anthropology has been concerned with homes and, predominantly, households for many decades. Instead of producing a universal definition of "household" anthropology attempts to analyse households with reference to local perspectives and practices in particular situations and specific social, economic and political contexts. Thus, definitions of household, which emphasise rather household ideology and composition, household activities or locations of household, must be applied in sensitive ways to local contexts.

3 The (temporary) decrease in relevance of elaborated identities (in contrast to a less politicised sense of belonging to home) probably points to a prominent finding of disaster studies about the emergency and relief phase, which is often characterised by spontaneous solidarity and a temporary decrease of social differences (Henry 2006: 14).

4 The local language spoken in Muzaffarabad is called Pahari (or Hindko as the same language is called in the Hazara District of the PKP) which is assumed to be a Panjabi dialect and, thus, close to the Urdu language. Urdu as the official language of Pakistan is spoken by most of the people in Muzaffarabad. The Urdu term *ghar* is also used in Pahari language, though, it is pronounced little differently without the "h" and with a long "a", such as *gaar*.

5 Although in official Urdu a separate term for household exists (that is *gharana*), I almost never encountered people using this term in everyday speech.

Regarding the ideology and composition of households it is widely assumed that households often, comprise "families", either nuclear, extended or multiple families (ct. Hammel and Laslett 1974). Families are ideological groups which are tied together by kinship and marriage. Nevertheless, the household needs to be analysed separately from "family" since families may live in two or more households, or one household may comprise more than one family (as well as non-kin members). Goody (1972 cited in Sanjek 2002: 286), for instance, defines household activities in terms of either dwelling (sleeping), reproduction (eating) or production and economic contributions. The examination of households' locality mainly deals with the physical space, the house or domestic dwelling, which affects and is affected by households' everyday life and history (Sanjek 2002: 285-287).

I agree with Sanjek (2002) that anthropology must direct its efforts to analysing households by means of emic concepts. But in addition, anthropology must also admit and approach the problem that one conclusive emic definition does not exist. In every context, even within the household, people's views differ on what the household is. Women and men, young and elderly, marginalised and more dominant people perceive, interpret and represent the household in different ways and, thereby, challenge and dispute each others' notions of home and the practices linked with it (ct. Carr 2005). Household is not a distinct unit but a social, ideological and political space of constant negotiation and contest between different interpretations, interests and practices and, thus, a space of ambiguity and contradiction in terms of separation and solidarity, conflict and mutual support.

The household's composition, ideology, activities and location are relevant when examining the general characteristics of households in a particular context. Thus, "household" could be defined as the flexible and dynamic arrangement of people (composition) who are related by notions of "kinship" (family ideology) and cooperation (activities) for a common "home" in everyday life (locality). This preliminary definition of household provides a starting point for further elaboration of the concept which accounts for local variations and discrepancies in imagining, representing and practicing home.

## 2.2 Locality of belonging: dialectic of house and home

Home features a sense of belonging to a social group (household) and a locality (house). Because of this close association of home/household with house, the earthquake revealed that home is not only a place of intimate care and protection but can become a site of brutal destruction and danger<sup>6</sup>. Although the home basically continued to exist and was maintained by people during emergency, relief

6 After the earthquake many people feared (the destruction of) houses and, thus, preferred to live in tents, even though their houses were not destroyed.

and reconstruction, the destruction of the house (and the death of household members under its rubble) entailed a sense of disruption and *loss of home*, frequently expressed in terms of nostalgia. According to Simpson (2005: 220) nostalgia is a means of dealing with grief and the traumatic experience of disruption caused by disasters.

Lovell's account for studying and analysing how notions of belonging and locality are mutually constructed points to the dialectical nature-human relationship reflected in these constructions. She deals with locality as "natural" landscape, both in its unmediated form and its culturally mediated constructs such as architecture, which provide the material for articulations of belonging. Although she is not concerned with domestic dwellings as such, her account suggests analysing home as the sense of belonging to a certain locality which transforms social groups and their environment "in a process of mutual definition" (Lovell 1998: 12). The house is thus not a mere symbol of home but a participant in the relationship between people and the (natural and built) environment.

In a similar way, Wilford argues to take the materiality of the (built) environment seriously and, thus, to resist taking it as a mere representation of socially constructed meaning. According to his theoretical stance, labelled by him as "new materialist", meaning and materiality are dialectically related and bring each other into existence (Wilford 2008: 648; 659). Analysing the destruction of houses in New Orleans by the Hurricane Katrina, he puts strong emphasis on the house as a "mediator object" (Wilford 2008: 650) between society and nature and assumes that "perhaps nothing is more fundamental to the meaning of nature than the human abode" (Wilford 2008: 650). Ontologically, the house structures the meaning of nature for society. The building of a house attempts to control nature by constructing "an inside in opposition to an existing outside" (Kaika cit. in Wilford 2008: 651). In addition to nature/human the materiality of the house also shapes the ordering binaries of public/private, shared/intimate, self/other and mine/not mine. The house, thus, not only participates in the relationship of the household with the environment but also in the relationship between households as well as the household and the larger society (Wilford 2008: 651; 655). The materiality of the house is crucial in producing and maintaining these ordering concepts. In a natural disaster this materiality is transformed. The destructed house challenges society by disrupting the sense of order. The materiality of the destructed house thus becomes itself meaningful for the home. Through the rebuilding process of houses materiality participates in the re-constitution of the *meaning* of home itself. The destruction of houses reveals the dialectic of house and household, materiality and sociality. "Natural disasters disrupt the relationship between humans and things and thereby offer [...] a glimpse of both sides of the dialectic: the differentiation of humans and things alongside their integration" (Wilford 2008: 659).

Taking the dialectic of materiality and sociality into account, the rebuilding of a house can not simply entail the reconstitution of the home as it was prior to the earthquake. The collapse and rebuilding of domestic dwellings, inevitably, raise questions concerning the constitutive relation of houses and homes. In many cases, people do not simply reconstruct the house they lost in the earthquake but make modifications which, in turn, lead to modifications of the home itself. Reconstruction requires of people to rethink their previous houses *and* homes. This dialectic process can be problematic and create conflict among members of the household. But apart from presenting solely a threat to the reconstitution of home, reconstruction can provide the opportunity for people to modify their homes and the practices linked with it. In any case, people's perspectives and strategies related to the loss and reconstruction of houses highlight multiple ways the "home" is re-presented, re-imagined and re-practiced after the earthquake. The experience of destruction, immediate disaster response and long-term reconstruction, thus, induce the re-examination of this basic category of everyday life.

### 2.3 Reconstruction and the "enlarged state"

The household's characteristics of composition, ideology, activities and location, as examined above, are missing a relational political dimension. Households are always positioned within the structures of the larger society. They are socially, economically and politically related to other households, social and political groups as well as state institutions and international organisations. The context of reconstruction in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir clearly reveals that "the state" expanded (among other realms) into the realm of "home". Thus, the ways people imagine, represent and practice home are affected by political representations and practices of state policies.

In the disaster literature, reconstruction in general is characterised as a highly political and conflictive process which is not limited to the physical reconstruction of damaged infrastructure and simply returning to the 'normality' as it was prior to the disaster (see Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 2002; Henry 2006). The post-disaster situation presents, to some extent, a "new" situation for local societies. After a disaster international, national, state and non-state organisations enter the affected areas, first, to provide rescue and relief services and, later, reconstruction assistance.<sup>7</sup> These "external" actors and their ideological agendas

<sup>7</sup> With reference to the activities of state, non-state and international organisations the post-disaster context is conventionally categorised into the three phases of "rescue", "relief" and "reconstruction". In the short-term emergency phase activities are directed towards the rescue and immediate survival of people. Whereas in the relief phase, usually lasting several months, tent camps are established and people are provided temporary shelter, food, health care etc. Gradually, the relief distribution is stopped and people leave the camps

interfere in certain ways in a particular local context and, thus, affect its social, cultural and political configurations. Compared to short-term rescue and relief activities, long-term reconstruction projects are much more problematic and contested. Hence, "reconstruction" is by no means a self-explanatory term but subject to different interpretations related to the differing needs, interests and values of the various international, state, non-state and local actors. In the process of reconstruction state institutions, international organisations and NGOs participate alongside local political groups, families, households and individuals, trying to achieve their particular and sometimes conflicting reconstruction aims.

The new presence of "external" actors can reverse or strengthen existing relations of power. Former marginal actors can gain more influence due to new opportunities evolving from the access to external resources but they can also lose ground, due to the decrease of opportunities, and find themselves in a more marginalised position than before the disaster (Hilhorst 2003: 46).

As examined by disaster studies, the post-disaster situation often creates political opportunities for a state to expand its influence in a local context by positioning itself as the dominant actor of reconstruction (Simpson 2005: 220; Henry 2006: 13). In this way, a huge centralised bureaucracy of reconstruction develops, often in cooperation with the international system of relief which allocates the required funds. This "enlarged state" (Simpson 2005: 230) affects the existing state-society relations (Hilhorst 2003: 44-46; Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 2002: 10). Often pursuing a top-down approach and positioning people as passive recipients of reconstruction aid, state policies and administrative procedures confront people in various spheres of life, socially, culturally, politically and economically. They are targeted as beneficiaries or excluded from programs, thus, placed in competition with other potential beneficiaries. They are subjected to programs' terms and conditions, and confronted with specific dominant interpretations of reconstruction and related concepts of indigence and vulnerability (Henry 2006: 14-15).

The reconstruction context offers an opportunity to analyse the effects of "the state" on the everyday lives of people. Regarding the state housing policy after the 2005 earthquake, the question must be asked of how people's representations are influenced by the state policy's objectification of house and home. The households' re-examination of home in the process of dealing with the destruction and reconstruction their houses must be contextualized within the state's policy of housing reconstruction.

and return home. The phase of relief gives way to the long-term reconstruction phase, which in most cases lasts for years.

### 2.3.1 The housing policy

After the earthquake the government of Pakistan established a huge centralised bureaucracy to administer the reconstruction process in the PKP as well as in Azad Kashmir. The establishment of the so-called "Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority" (ERRA) clearly demonstrates that people are confronted with an "enlarged state" after the earthquake.<sup>8</sup> People's encounters with "the state" were in particular numerous in the context of housing reconstruction. ERRA set up a housing compensation program for a, so-called, owner-driven reconstruction of domestic dwellings. An inspection team comprising of army staff, and officials from local authorities, assessed the damage to houses classified as either slightly, partially or fully damaged. Ownership of the house had to be proven by the means of the land record. ERRA issued the compensation documents which entitled their holders to an amount of compensation according to the scale of damage to the house. Compensation was issued in four instalments with, at most, 175,000 rupees (approximately 2,000 USD) for a fully damaged house. The policy contained several restrictions. First, it held that a *roof* is entitled to compensation and, second, that a person is entitled to compensation only once, even though she/ he may own more than one house<sup>9</sup>. The amount of money was very low given the actual cost of building a house according to earthquake-resistant type of construction. The value of the compensation amount was further eroded because of rising inflation and the late payment of compensation, which was issued in instalments, paid over a period of two years.

Five years after the earthquake, many households have still not rebuilt their houses, mostly due to financial difficulties<sup>10</sup>. During the period of fieldwork, people stated that they have to spend at least 4 lakh rupees for the construction of a small house (two rooms, one kitchen, one bathroom) of the confined ma-

<sup>8</sup> Besides, by establishing ERRA to administer reconstruction in Pakistan as well as in AJK, Pakistan enlarged its influence in AJK. All the international funds were collected by the Pakistani government and managed by ERRA. Thereby Pakistan strengthened its political and financial grip over AJK and the reconstruction process respectively.

<sup>9</sup> A person who owned more than one house was allowed to make ownership over, for instance, to a (married) son or a daughter who, by this act, became entitled to compensation.

<sup>10</sup> The city dweller not only faced the financial difficulties of reconstruction, but also political restrictions on the reconstruction of houses. ERRA prepared a comprehensive Master Plan for the reconstruction and mitigation of the city's disaster vulnerability which included the acquisition of private land for the widening of streets and the construction of parks. In order to avoid the situation where newly reconstructed homes obstructed city projects, the construction of permanent buildings was banned for a year and a half. ERRA, instead, promoted the construction of so-called temporary shelters (SGI-sheet constructions).

sonry<sup>11</sup> construction type. In many cases, people lost, to a considerable degree, much bigger and more complex houses than a simple two room dwelling. Thus, in comparison with the value of the property destroyed, compensation amounted to no more than a small reconstruction subsidy. In fact, an ERRA official legitimised the program's low financial assistance by explaining to me that the amount was only a "reconstruction subsidy" which people, by mistake, perceived as full "compensation."

Once the implications of the housing policy became evident, reconstruction was clearly exposed as conflictive and contested. In the city of Muzaffarabad 2007. Most of the opposition against the ERRA was focused on the inadequacy of the compensation. In conjunction with this, the policy was also criticised because the roof and the legal ownership thereof were perceived to be objective criteria for determining eligibility for compensation. The policy targeted roofs rather than the people who live under that roof, and according to the policy's critics, thereby was completely failing to cater for the social realities. In fact, the "one-roof-one-compensation-logic" assumed that the physical "house" equated exactly with the social "home". It was taken for granted that *one* house represents *one* home. Against this logic, the critics pointed to the fact that in a house different homes exist. One roof can be the roof for more than one household. Thus, compensating a house does not mean compensating a household. To illustrate the argument, those interviewed often gave the hypothetical example of two married brothers who live with their wives and children in a house they inherited from their father. The two married brothers lived with their families in different parts of the house and with separate kitchens. The two families lived in separate households, although they lived in the same dwelling. According to ERRA's policy only one son was eligible for compensation. But what about the other son and his family who also lost their home? Thus, the policy was blamed for discriminating against more than one (nuclear family) household living together in one house. Accordingly, people demanded the married man (or married couple), who represents the nuclear family, to be compensated rather than the house.

ERRA never officially abandoned its housing policy. Nevertheless, the policy was in effect relaxed later on in so far as the authority went on to compensate married men (of the same house) who claimed ownership of a separate "house" which could have been only one room of a house, a simple construction for storage, or a building for livestock. This practice reveals that not only the policy's equation of "house" and "home" but the category of the "house" itself

<sup>11</sup> Confined masonry denotes an earthquake-resistant construction-type of reinforced concrete beams and columns which are added after the construction of the cement block walls.

is highly problematic. What is a "house"? In the context of the local living arrangements this question is not easy to answer as is shown by the example of the two brothers who lived in separate households in the house constructed by their father. The question inevitably arises whether the house is, in fact, two houses. Families often live in compounds of houses comprising a separate living room, bedroom, kitchen, bathroom and storage constructions. Are these, according to the policy, separate houses or not? If the bedroom of a married couple collapsed, but not the bedrooms of the parents, the brother etc., does the authority categorise this single construction as a house or a separate roof respectively?

I once talked to an ERRA official about such difficulties in determining a house. He appeared to be very convinced that there is no doubt about the house. He completely ignored my question of what a house is, possibly, because it struck him as absurd to question such a clearly identifiable object as a "house". He adhered unwaveringly to the "one-roof-one-compensation-policy" and the house/roof as the legitimate criterion for compensation. The cases which didn't adhere to this logic were denounced by him as deviant.

The approach taken by the ERRA does not allow for the "house" as an ambiguous and elusive category. This, as a consequence, created space for interpretations, strategies and corruption. According to those interviewed, discrimination and bribery were rife in the process of getting claims for compensation recognised. Thus, another conflictive dimension of reconstruction is evidenced. People were placed in competition for reconstruction aid whereas differences of access to social and economic capital were revealed. Without connections to the relevant officers in charge of the compensations and without financial resources people were more likely to be rejected as beneficiaries of the housing program. Thus, also mistrust and suspicion was created among families and neighbourhoods. Even today, people blame others for practices of bribery (*rishwat*) and favouritism (*sifarish*) in the context of aid distribution for reconstruction.

### 3. Representations of home

In the context of the earthquake home is re-examined on different levels and by different actors concerned with the collapse and reconstruction of domestic dwellings. It is not only those who lost their homes who are involved in the reconstruction of houses, but also state authorities (and, to some extent, international organisations and NGOs). People are targeted as beneficiaries of technical and financial assistance by means of categories such as "house", "home" and "household". A policy which deals with houses objectifies the "house" in a certain way and treats people according to its definition. Thus, local notions and practices of home must be contextualised within the political context of state housing programs.

In this section I examine different local representations of home in the context of the earthquake, the destruction and reconstruction of houses. I analyse, in particular, how these representations coexist, merge or confront the policy-related concepts and political practices linked to "house" and "home".

#### 3.1 Local representations of home: ambiguities and contradictions

In relation to the earthquake and its impacts on households it is widely assumed that the joint family system in the earthquake affected areas declined because of the nuclear family bias of the relief activities and reconstruction measures. Because reconstruction money and relief goods were distributed to married men, it is argued that formerly joint households comprising of a father and his sons (or several brothers) separated into single, nuclear family households.

The "one-roof-one-compensation" policy's practice differed from the official representation. In fact, compensation was more often issued to each married men in the house, rather than being awarded purely on a per roof basis. Thus, the policy was also perceived to be of a nuclear family bias.

Further, it is argued that the official policy discriminated against joint family households. Whereas nuclear families with a small number of household members (one couple with children) were compensated for their separate house, joint families, who lived under one roof, were given the same amount of compensation despite the larger number of household members (several married couples with children and, probably, the grandparents). This argument illustrates another way of criticising the housing policy for its focus on the problematic category "house" which fails to take account of social realities. The social reality at stake, in this criticism, is the joint family system which was neglected. Whereas in the policy's criticism, mentioned earlier, it is argued contrary and in favour of the nuclear family. The critics reject the equation of *one* house with *one* home, pointing to the existence of several homes in one house. The reality at stake in this criticism is the separated household of the nuclear family and not the joint family system. The two approaches reflect contradictory representations of households in the context of the housing policy. I will further examine this contradiction with reference to several case studies which reveal this contradiction as well.

During my research I heard the assumption about the decline of the joint family system expressed frequently, both in the media and in conversations with well-educated people in offices and universities. I decided to look into the issue of separation on the more empirical level of concrete households, common perspectives and daily practices. I came across several cases of local representations which seemed to corroborate the assumption about the decline of the joint family system. Married brothers who lived together in one house before the earthquake built separate houses for each brother, his wife and children after the

earthquake. Although the members of these households rarely explicitly stated that they separated the household because of the nuclear family bias of relief distribution, overall they represented separation of the household as coinciding with the aftermath of the earthquake and the reconstruction of houses. I frequently heard statements such as: *zalzale ke ba'd ham alag ho gae hain* ("we separated after the earthquake") and *ham alag alag rahte hain zalzale ki vajah se* ("we live separately because of the earthquake"). People often perceived living separately as being undesirable, and at the same time hold nostalgic views about communal family life, when they were all living together: *pehle ham sab akhat-e the* ("before, we were all together"). The earthquake is conceptually linked to the home by the means of correlated dual oppositions: before/after good/bad and together (*akhat-e*)/separate (*alag alag*).

The problem of this representation became obvious when I asked people to explain whether they separated *because* of the earthquake. I never got a plausible answer and instead often found people avoiding my questions or even feeling embarrassed by them.

### 3.1.1 Case study 1

The case of Akbar Sahib and his younger brother is illustrative in this regard. The two brothers migrated twenty years ago with their parents from Indian held Kashmir to Azad Kashmir. The father built a house in a refugee camp which he occupied with his two married sons. After the father's death the two brothers lived in the house until it was completely destroyed by the earthquake. As a further consequence of the earthquake, the refugee camp collapsed into the river and became uninhabitable. By the time I visited the family, the two brothers had almost completed the reconstruction of two separate houses in a new camp. As we were sitting on the veranda of the younger brother's house and talking about the construction work of the new house, I asked about the house the families occupied before the earthquake. Akbar Sahib explained that they all used to live together in one big house before the earthquake. But, he added with some regret, they separated after the earthquake when his brother and he reconstructed their own houses. When I asked about the reason for their separation Akbar Sahib referred briefly to the earthquake and the family's subsequent moving from one place to another until the government finally allocated them plots in the new refugee camp. I could not ask any follow-up questions because Akbar Sahib (who very obviously wasn't well disposed to discussing the issue any further) changed the topic of conversation instantly. His explanation was not very plausible. He could have reconstructed a house together with his brother. Thus, the explanation was rather an attempt to avoid the topic and his reaction demonstrated that the separation of households is considered a problematic and inconvenient issue.

Akbar Sahib's wife, Anser Bibi, presented me with a much more detailed picture of the household's history. Anser and I were sitting in her kitchen where she prepared the food. She told me about her life in general and, thereby, also touched the topic of separation. Her representation contradicted her husband's representation of separation as coinciding with reconstruction after the earthquake. She explained to me that they already lived separately before the earthquake. After the death of her parents-in-law, and almost five years before the earthquake, they arranged a second kitchen for her sister-in-law. They still lived in the same house built by Akbar Sahib's father, but she and her sister-in-law started to prepare meals separately. Compared to her husband, she didn't seem to regret the separation at all. On the contrary she explained, with reference to her sister-in-law, that it was a good thing for a woman to live with her husband and children in a separate household.

Since Anser Bibi and her husband had no children, after the death of his parents he took a second wife who moved into the house. Because of frequent quarrelling between her and her co-wife, an additional third kitchen was arranged. The second wife complained for several months that she was mistreated by Anser Bibi and her close relatives who lived in the same camp. Out of consideration for his second wife, Akbar Sahib decided to leave the camp. He moved together with his two wives to a rented house in the city area, but had returned to the camp just prior to the earthquake.

Akbar Sahib's younger brother was also planning a future independent of his elder brother before the earthquake. His wife, Rubina Bibi, told me that they had bought land in the city area. Since the allocated land in the camp was given to the refugees for temporary usage and therefore they didn't have legal title to it, Rubina Bibi and her husband planned to leave these uncertainties of the camp and to settle on their own land in the city where they would be able to build a more permanent and secure home. Instead, after the earthquake they sold the land, bought a car and moved to the new camp where they recently built a new house next to Akbar Sahib. Rubina Bibi attributed the reasons for selling the land to the earthquake. She explained they had been terrified by the devastation the earthquake brought and deterred from their previous plans of constructing a permanent and expensive house which they, possibly, would lose again in another earthquake.

Today the two brothers find themselves living next to one another. Before the earthquake, this situation would have seemed highly improbable. What Akbar Sahib represents and regrets as the separation from his brother after the earthquake, might as well, with reference to the more detailed account of Anser Bibi and her sister-in-law about the family's complex history, be interpreted as a kind of reunion of the two brothers after the earthquake. The construction of houses next to each other allows the two families to see each other frequently. In the context of their current living arrangements, the two brothers have, to some

extent, a closer relationship today than they would have had if the plans for their respective living arrangements had proceeded, uninterrupted by the earthquake.

### 3.1.2 Case study 2

In another case I was confronted with a quite similar contradiction concerning the representation of the household's history in the context of the earthquake and reconstruction. In my neighbourhood the Qasi family, comprising of four married brothers and their mother, lives on land inherited from the deceased father. Three of the brothers live in separate houses near the mother's living compound. The eldest brother, whose wife died in the earthquake, and who suffers from a severe eye disease, lives together with his mother, children and unmarried brother. When I met Nigat Bibi, one of the sisters-in-law, she told me that before the earthquake all brothers lived together with the parents in one big house (*barāghar*). She accentuated proudly that they jointly prepared the food on one cooking stove (*ek hi cula*). When referring to the housing compensation, she stated that they were compensated only once because they all lived under one roof (*eh hi chat*). It was only after the earthquake that they separated and reconstructed separate houses. She explained the separation with reference to the death of her sister-in-law in the earthquake. It was she who managed the joint household and the related housework tasks. In the wake of the earthquake they were unable to maintain the household as it had been previously. *Bartan bahut ziyyada hai!* ("the crockery is too much!"), she stated and, thereby, cited the logistics of cooking and washing up for such a large number of people as the main obstacles to maintaining the household in its pre-earthquake form.

I found Nigat Bibi's representation of the family's past challenged by other family members. Once, for instance, I was engaged in a conversation with Qasi Sahib, one of the married brothers (and Nigat Bibi's brother-in-law), and his cousin about the latter's challenging living conditions. Qasi Sahib told me that the cousin was very poor and didn't receive a prefabricated shelter provided to other earthquake-affected families because he couldn't afford the bribes involved. Qasi Sahib asked me to help his cousin by presenting the case to the authority's representative in charge of the shelters. I then started addressing the cousin directly about his case. In addition, he pointed to the housing compensation and stated that it was, like the distribution of the prefabricated shelters, highly unfair and discriminated against the poor. Among his wealthy relatives (the Qasi family) each of the four married brothers and their mother received separate housing compensation while he as a poor man didn't get anything at all. I was quite surprised because, by this time, I had thought the family had been compensated only once, as Nigat Bibi told me. I, then, turned to Qasi Sahib who confirmed his cousin's statement. Qasi Sahib specified that he and his brothers and mother had been living separately before the earthquake. They lived in sepa-

rate houses with separate kitchens and, consequently, they were compensated separately.

### 3.2 Situations and contexts of representations

People represent "separate" and "joint" family households in particular situations and local contexts. The anthropological literature promotes the analysis of representations as situational and context-specific practices. Because the situations and contexts of representing the home differ, so do the representations of home. Thus, the represented home is revealed as ambiguous and contradictory. To understand these ambiguities and contradictions, the context and situation in which certain representations are articulated must be taken into consideration. Although all the representations of home, discussed here, refer to the earthquake they focus on different experiences, cultural values, social practices and state policies coexisting in society.

#### 3.2.1 Household ideologies, practices and the experience of disruption

In case study 1 Akbar Sahib conceals the previous complexities of the household's situation and maintains a very simplistic representation of the household's together-past and separated-present whereby separation coincides with the earthquake. In his nostalgic view of the household's past Akbar Sahib doesn't refer to the household's actual organisation immediately before the earthquake but rather to the joint family household as the ideal of patrilocality. His wife's representation, on the contrary, is a very detailed account of the households' complex history. Her perspective on the home is more practically anchored and points to the pre-earthquake separation of everyday cooking, washing and cleaning between the two brothers' wives.

I learnt about this history in a situation when I did not question Anser Bibi directly about the earthquake. She told me her "life story" (as she called it) in a very informal conversation. The situation of conversation with Akbar Sahib was different. He was directly confronted with my question of why he does not live together with his brother (as he "should"). Although I did not intend to anticipate the patrilocal ideology and to put him in a suchlike situation he was forced by my questioning into explaining why he and his brother do not live in accordance with the joint family ideal. In this particular situation he maintained that the earthquake disrupted the joint household and hindered the brothers from living in accordance with the ideology of patrilocality. In so doing, he completely ignored the households' separation of kitchens which took place many years before the earthquake. The *one* house provided the basis on which he idealised the joint household of the past. It is the symbolic *one roof*, no matter how many *kitchens* it has, that represents in this situation the ideology of patrilocal residence: fraternal and paternal cohabiting, solidarity and cooperation in everyday life.

The difference between approaches to representing one's household, either orientated on ideology or the practice of housework, is to some extent related to gender differences and gendered practices linked to the home. The social division of work between the sexes attributes housework (such as cooking, cleaning and washing) to female household members. Thus, women, working at home, are probably more likely to representing home with reference to these daily practices. These practices are not only more relevant for most women's lives, than the ideology of patrilocality, from which they are mostly excluded by male representation, but are also very common, at least, in a city such as Muzaffarabad.

Nevertheless, an overall allocation of female perspectives in "practice" and male perspectives in "ideology" would be oversimplifying. Women's approach to home is not, inevitably, more "practical" than men's. The separate household represents as well as the joint household an ideal of how to organise daily family life. Like Anser Bibi, many women told me that they appreciate living in separate households comprising of the nuclear family<sup>12</sup>. Marginalised in relation to the dominant ideology of patrilocality the separate household represents a contrasting household ideal frequently expressed by women.

It would be wrong to state that the separate household represents a female ideal whereas the patrilocal joint household represents an exclusive male ideal. Case study 2 illustrates that women are also in certain situations likely to put forward nostalgic representations of a pre-earthquake joint household. Nigat Bibi's representation has a great deal in common with Akbar Sahib's ideological approach to the household's history in the context of the earthquake. She also refers to the glorious pre-earthquake past of the "one big house" when the (patrilineal) family was living together. To emphasise the solidarity among the female members she adds to the "one big house" the "one cooking stove", where the women had jointly prepared the food. Although women are often excluded from the representation of the patrilocal joint household it is also a female ideal of family life expressed by the means of the "one cooking stove".

The "one cooking stove" is revealed in Nigat Bibi's representation as a problematic and vulnerable space. Her account of the joint household is also practically anchored as far as she points to the fact that it was difficult to maintain a joint household because of the problems of performing and dividing household tasks effectively. Whereas, Akbar Sahib keeps the household members as actors completely out of the joint household, and instead explains its separation as determined by external circumstances under the catch-all title of "the earthquake" Nigat Bibi refers to internal dynamics of a household. The

12 The „nuclear family“ in Muzaffarabad, expressed in Urdu by the use of the English term "family", is connoted slightly differently from the "nuclear family" in western societies. It clearly includes the aged parents of a woman's husband as part of the separated household (of the nuclear family).

"one cooking stove" not just figures as the symbol of the female "joint household" but represents a dynamic social space to be actively managed and maintained by real women as participants and actors of the household.

The earthquake in Nigat Bibi's representation is revealed as a disruptive event for the household, manifested in the tragic death of her sister-in-law. Akbar Sahib's representation, is much more diffuse, but shares the overall experience of disruption regarding the household. Both, Akbar Sahib and Nigat Bibi express the loss of family's "togetherness" in nostalgic terms. Akbar Sahib's nostalgia about the joint household is not exclusively "ideological". He actively deals with the experienced loss of "togetherness" which equated with the collapse of the "one big house". As argued by Wilford (2008: 659), the transformation of materiality participates in the construction of meaning. Thus, the destruction of the house changes notions of home. The "one big house" does not only figure as a symbol of the ideal patrilocality but reflects a practical sense of "togetherness". Thus, the reconstruction of two separate houses changes the practical experience of being together and affects the everyday organisation of the two households.

**3.2.2 Strategic representations of home in the context of the housing policy**  
In her representation Nigat Bibi denies that her husband and his married brothers received separate housing compensations. She claims, instead, that the family was treated as a joint household living under one roof and that was why they were compensated only once. She draws implicitly on the housing policy which equated the "house" with the "home" and confirms her version of the joint household with reference to the "one big house" and the alleged fact of only one compensation amount the joint family received. Qasi Sahib, her husband's brother, completely contradicted her statement and pointed to the fact that the four brothers and their mother were each compensated separately.

I became aware of these details by accident rather than design. They were additional information which came up in the conversation about Qasi Sahib's cousin who was discriminated against by the officials in charge of relief distribution and housing compensation. In this particular conversation Qasi Sahib tried to legitimise his own case vis-à-vis his cousin's. While his cousin did not receive the appropriate assistance from the authorities and was disadvantaged by corrupt practices, he was treated correctly. The brothers and their mother were compensated separately because they lived in separate houses and separate households before the earthquake.

The compensation policy figures in Qasi Sahib's representation more explicitly. He draws on the policy's underlying assumption that one house represents one household which is then, according to the policy, eligible for compensation. Without running the risk of being accused of "cheating", Qasi Sahib can neither represent the family as a joint household nor as separate households who lived

in one house. To legitimise the fact that the brothers and their mother were compensated separately he must represent the households as separated regarding roof and kitchen.

Nigat Bibi's and Qasi Sahib's representation are both in line with the policy's one-roof-one-compensation logic, although they articulate by the means of this logic different versions of the pre-earthquake household. Qasi Sahib represents the households as "separate". He must strategically over-estimate the separation against the background of the compensation policy in order to legitimise separate compensation. Nigat Bibi, on the contrary, is not confronted that much with the compensation policy and practice of the state authorities. Our conversation is probably an opportunity for her to explain her people's "culture of the joint family" to a western woman about whose culture she assumes that families and even old parents live separate. Thus, she maintains, by means of the one-roof-one-compensation-logic, the joint family household as the way of living before the earthquake.

The housing policy implemented after the earthquake provide insights into the ways people's representations and practices of home are governed by the state's representations of home. The "enlarged state", as examined above, expanded into the "home", a domain which people clearly regard as "private" and, thus, separate from "the state". As the case of Nigat Bibi and Qasi Sahib illustrate, the state's housing policy is deeply inscribed in the representations of home. Although this inscription is rather implicit than explicit, it reflects the effect of a mechanism of government which Michel Foucault introduced as "governmentality" (see Foucault: 2006). Besides the reciprocal constitution of power and knowledge, governmentality points to the power/knowledge-mechanisms by which human conduct is governed by states, institutions, procedures, discourses etc. Foucault's interest is directed towards the question of how power/knowledge is materialised and manifested in the everyday lives of people. In other words, he attempts to conceptualise mechanisms of government which are neither limited to the state nor characterised entirely by coercion, direct control and regulation. According to his understanding, mechanisms of government cut across and expand into "private" domains of the family and household (Ferguson and Gupta 2002: 989; Lemke 2001: 191). As convincingly argued by Gupta, (1995: 377) "the state" is not a cohesive and unitary whole but constituted through "a complex set of spatially intersecting representations and practices." As Gupta demonstrates with reference to ethnographical examples, the state is encountered by people as fragmentary, disaggregated and inconsistent. Similarly, the effects of "the state" on people's lives and the ways policies "govern" people are fragmentary, inconsistent and often unapparent to people themselves. Although Nigat Bibi and Qasi Sahib's representations (unconsciously) adhere to the state policy's notion of home, their representations contradict one another. This indicates not only that the effects of power are fragmentary and

contradictory, but that "knowledge" or, more specifically, the mode of thinking "home" and "household" is restricted by the rationality of the housing policy and its attempt to objectify and standardise house and home.

### 3.2.3 Representations, practices and hidden strategies

Representations are always incomplete and politically restricted reflections of the practices and related (economic) strategies. According to the practice theory of Pierre Bourdieu (1976: 203-317), practical strategies are hidden by representations in order to "work" in daily life. Bourdieu states a difference between what people say about their practice and what they do in daily life. The practice deals in a strategic way with the manifold ambivalences, contradictions and constraints of everyday life. People develop and apply strategies with the help of their "practical sense" for daily situations and circumstances. Representations, in turn, are local theories of the practice, but, detached from the daily situations and circumstances of that practice. Representations, therefore, differ from the practice they claim to represent. This gap between theory/representation and practice/strategy is of crucial importance for social life. The representation hides the practice, but, this is why and how strategies developed by people (with the help of their "practical sense") are effectively applied in daily life.

The representations discussed pursue two main objectives which contradict one another. The representations of separate households tend to hide the economic strategy developed by actors in dealing with the compensation policy whereas the representations of joint households conceal the strategies applied in order to legitimise living arrangements which deviate from the dominant ideology of the patrilocal joint household.

The strategic representation of separate households conceals that it is, in fact, a strategy to claim separate compensation. This strategy of representation draws on a practice especially common in the city, but strategically overestimates households' division vis-à-vis the compensation policy. While the authorities were surveying the damage to houses and transferring money to the respective beneficiaries on "a one house, one home basis", it was economically advantageous to be of a separate home. This strategy was also applied in the protests against the housing policy. The critics pointed to the existence of separate households living under one roof and, thereby, aimed to shift ERRA's political practice towards compensating married men, and, thus, separate households of nuclear families, rather than roofs.

There is another criticism of the policy's equation of house with home which has a different objective. The detractors in the protests criticised the policy's neglect of separate households. Whereas this other criticism points to the discrimination of joint families by the policy and, thereby, tries to corroborate the assumption about the decline of the joint family system. The same rationale is present in the local representations which maintain that separation coincided

with the earthquake and/or the reconstruction of houses. These representations are either strategic insofar as they legitimise living arrangements which are no longer in accordance with the dominant ideology of the joint household. This strategy completely ignores the agency of households and their members. People themselves developed the strategic claim of separate households in order to be compensated more than once. The compensation (as well as the earthquake and reconstruction in general) was a means by which actors organised and reorganised their homes. The post-disaster situation allowed for opportunities to separate instead of maintaining the former joint household. But, separation of households was in no way an unavoidable consequence of the earthquake or the reconstruction policy. A household could have strategically represented itself as two separate households (to claim separate compensation) but then reconstructed a common house together.

The assumption about the decline of the joint family system in the earthquake-affected areas is an oversimplification. This perspective, far from describing a social fact, alludes to a general ongoing debate in society about the social question of how families do and should live together. In fact this debate around the "home" and "household" has been ongoing over several decades, and is not simply a product of the post-disaster situation. Modernity and the dominant ideology of the nuclear family, for instance, constitute a global trend to smaller household size (Sanjek 2002: 287) to which relief and reconstruction assistance more than likely contribute. But this trend also produces diversity and a context where different household and family values and practices of home coexist and sometimes contradict one another.

Anyhow, the earthquake and the consequences of reconstruction assistance must be contextualised in the wider social processes of change as well as in the daily practices and the concrete histories of households.

#### 4. Practices of home

Representations always coexist with actual practices. Because there is a difference between what people say about their practices and what they do in daily life, these practices are not revealed by representations. People don't theorise their daily practices. Thus, the ambiguous and contradictory representations discussed don't say much about how households practically organised their everyday life before the earthquake and how they (re-)organised it afterwards. To what extent are the members of a household together (*akhatē*) and, to what extent, are they separate (*alag alag*)? In which realms do households cooperate or divide housework tasks, financial contributions and responsibilities relating to the maintenance of their home?

Up to now I have discussed strategies of representations in the context of the earthquake and reconstruction and how the separation of households is ad-

dressed theoretically by local people with reference to household ideologies and practices, earthquake experiences and reconstruction policies. I now turn to the practice of separation itself. Since local theories of separation represent the actual practices always incompletely one must ask what "joint" and "separate" mean in practice to households and their members in the organisation of everyday life. I discuss, first, a household's history as social process and examine separation not as exceptional, but as a constituent aspect of this process. Second, with reference to some empirical examples I argue that this process is not linear but complex, insofar as "joint" and "separate" arrangements frequently alter and intersect within and between households. The practices of home reveal that the boundaries of separated households opposed to joint household are not clearly confined but highly blurred: "Separate" (*alag alag*) and "joint" (*akhatē*) are ambiguous local terms referring to many different practices and social relations within and between households in everyday life.

##### 4.1 The social process of home

I defined households as the flexible and dynamic arrangement of people related to each other by notions of "family", "kin" and cooperation for a common "home" in everyday life. These social relationships alter over time through births, marriages and deaths of household members and, thus, the circumstances and conditions of cooperation change. Households modify their living arrangements over time and adapt, for instance, to emerging conflicts, shifting responsibilities and new space requirements. Homes, thus, are subject to a social process which is referred to in the anthropological literature as the "developmental cycle" of households (Sanjek 2002: 286).

Marriages, for instance, alter the social composition in a household by introducing many new relationships between the recently married woman and her in-laws (father-in-law, mother-in-law, husband's brothers, husband's sisters, husband's brother's wife and children etc.). At the same time the relationship between the married man and the household alters due to newly acquired responsibilities vis-à-vis his wife and children. Alterations in the already complex social composition of household relationships are often problematic. Apart from frequent quarrels concerning the division and performance of housework, especially between the wife and her mother- and sisters-in-law, the household experiences after the marriage and birth of children tensions and conflicts regarding shifting responsibilities and loyalties. A married man is considered to be responsible for his wife and children and, to some extent, must shift his attention away from his parents, brothers and sisters. He lives together with his father in a joint household whereby they share the cost of running the house and kitchen like electricity, water, gas and food. But, apart from this, he is responsible for meeting all the additional expenses for his wife and children like clothes, education

and pocket money while the father has the same duty vis-à-vis his wife and children up to their marriage.

It is a common pattern that the elder married son separates from the parents' household after the marriage of his younger brother. Thereby he gets a piece of land allotted by his father in order to construct his own house. In other cases the separation of brothers coincides often with the death of their parents, especially the father. As the moving in of members, the loss of household members affect the social relationships and power relations within a household and the disputes, tensions and conflicts existing in it. In the context of the death of the father his sons are exempt from the subordination to the father's authority. This situation creates an opportunity to rethink and renegotiate the household's arrangement and organisation of daily life.

The social consequences of incidents such as marriage and deaths do not lead automatically to the separation of households. There are many more circumstances, tensions and conflicts which affect the decisions and actions taken by household members in order to separate. But, in any case, households separate sooner or later. Separation is a constituent aspect of the social process of joint households.

The earthquake, reconstruction of houses and the consequences of housing compensation must be contextualised in this social process, the practice and the concrete histories of households. Reconstruction and separation do not coincide ad hoc but are shaped by the pre-earthquake household situation and the scale of separation already carried out by then.

The disruption of the social process of homes by the earthquake became especially visible in the destruction of the houses and living compounds. These are closely linked to the household's history. When people talk about the houses they had lost in the earthquake I found them often contrasting their actual living arrangements by claiming a huge dimension and beauty of their former houses. While these houses are very much idealised the actual living arrangements or reconstructed (parts of) houses after the earthquake are decently described as operational. People express by the means of nostalgia, grief at what they have lost in the disaster and the impossibility of reconstructing within a few years a house that has, in many cases, taken them (and their parents) decades of effort, money, time and commitment. The house and living compound participated in the household's past and is a constituent part of its specific history and future. The construction of a house is processual in the way the home and household are processual. House and home, as I argued with reference to Wilford (2008), dialectically reflect one another. Thus, separation is also materially inscribed, although, it can take many forms and be carried out gradually and either physically by constructing a separate house or practically by separating the cooking and adding a kitchen construction to the already existing living compound.

#### 4.2 The intersection of "separate" and "joint" household practices

Separation as part of the social process of households is not strictly linear or circular. The term "developmental cycle" is somehow misleading because it suggests a simple cycle: households separate, grow to a joint household until they reach a certain size and separate again etc. I prefer the term process which includes the synchronic dimension. Households continuously oscillate between fission and fusion since "separate" and "joint" practices exist simultaneously within and between households.

The joint household features separate practices in terms of responsibilities and financial contributions. Each married man of a household is considered responsible by himself in providing, for instance, clothes to his wife and children. In the local language women express this dependency on particular men by the phrase *mangna* ("to demand"). A wife "demands" from her husband and not her father-in-law while an unmarried daughter "demands" from her father and not from her married brother. These ascribed responsibilities become blurred and ambiguous when, for instance, the father dies. The (married) brothers are in this situation obliged to provide the living for their unmarried sisters and younger brothers together. But, at the same time their main responsibilities towards their wives and children remain.

In a case from my neighbourhood, this ambiguity caused a conflict among the sisters and the wife of a man, which finally led to the separation of the household. The two married brothers were living in a joint household with their mother and sisters after the marriage of the younger brother. The recently married couple separated the cooking after several months and the young wife, Mariam Bibi, arranged the food for her husband and herself in a separate kitchen. She then became pregnant and joined the kitchen of the household of her in-laws again after the birth of her son. It was comfortable for her to have support in cooking, washing and cleaning since she was busy with her newborn. I visited the family frequently during this time and was quite astonished to find Mariam Bibi one day cooking on a gas stove at the corner of her dining room. Obviously, she had quickly arranged a kitchen. She told me that she had a dispute with her mother- and sisters-in-law. Since her husband was a short-tempered person the dispute turned into a fight between her husband and his elder brother. The latter took sides with his mother and sisters while her husband, in turn, was loyal to her. She had therefore separated her household once more and arranged a kitchen immediately. When I asked her about the cause for the argument with her in-laws she told me that her sisters-in-law had blamed her for having scorched the food. Mariam Bibi denied the accusation and acquainted me later on with her suspicions about the real cause of the argument. She believed that the sisters-in-law were in fact jealous and angry because she got a new outfit from her husband the same day while the sisters didn't. She condemned the

jealousy of her sisters-in-law and justified her privilege by explaining to me that, after all, she was the wife.

The separation which took place has a history. It is, of course, neither the scorched food nor the new outfit exclusively which led to separation. Nevertheless, I believe that "home" (*ghar*) is negotiated in the every day by the means of such arguments about loyalty and responsibility which lead to practical modifications of the household's organisation as the separation of domestic work. Such modifications, as revealed in this case, are sometimes carried out quite frequently. The frequent switching between a "joint" and "separate" organisation of everyday life demonstrates that "separation" is not an absolute decision and action conducted by household members once and forever, but, a rather flexible means for frequent re-modification of the household's organisation.

Immediately after the conflict the two families avoided interaction for several weeks. Thus, Mariam Bibi, once more arranges the cooking and housework separately from her in-laws. This situation was quite difficult for her since she now has a little son to look after as well. The sisters-in-law told me that they even ignored Mariam Bibi's son for about a week after the conflict. But they gave up ignoring him and start to look after him again. Mariam Bibi's situation has therefore relaxed to the extent that she can, from time to time, give her son to her sisters-in-law to look after while she is doing her housework. The absolute separation carried out right after the quarrel already diluted somewhat after a couple of weeks and the separated households again cooperate in certain situations. Although the separation concerning the housework is relatively strict the two households are involved in joint activities. Once, I visited the family and found the sisters-in-law busy cooking food for guests. They told me that Mariam Bibi's husband invited an officer and his assistant from a local state authority to his house. The authority was conducting a survey in the neighbourhood in order to identify beneficiaries for prefabricated shelters. Her brother, the sister explained to me further, will try to get himself as well as the mother and elder brother registered as beneficiaries for the shelters.

The cooperation between the two "separated" households was very close in this situation of interaction with a local state authority. The brother from the one household invited the guests to his own house whereby the food for the guests was prepared in the kitchen of the other household. The two households agreed to be represented by the younger brother and, thus, closely cooperated in order to get registered for the receipt of three separate shelters. Thus, separation is neither an absolute and irreversible decision nor a restricted practice from which cooperation and joint activities are entirely excluded.

#### 4.3 Home as resource of reconstruction and social recovery

Separate and joint households represent two extremes of an enormous spectrum of practices, dynamic social arrangements, and flexible organisation patterns of

households. This flexibility of households in re-arranging and modifying their daily life, both temporarily and permanently, turns out to be a very important resource in order to respond to the earthquake disaster and recover from it. With reference to another case study from my neighbourhood I briefly illustrate this flexibility apparent in the organisation of households in the context of the earthquake.

A joint family of parents, three unmarried daughters and a son as well as a married son with his wife and three children live together in a small rented house. The married son already lived separately with his wife and children in the same house before the earthquake while his parents and unmarried brothers and sisters lived in their village. During the earthquake the house in the village was destroyed and the family built a simple SGI-sheet construction. But, as the mother told me, their life in the mountainous village became very difficult in this type of house especially during winter. In addition to the difficult living conditions she told me about a conflict incident in the village in which her unmarried son was involved. The family decided to leave the village almost two years ago and moved into the small rental house of their married son's family in Muzaffarabad city. A return to the village is not a viable option for the mother. She told me instead that the household would try to buy some land in the city to build a house together someday.

The flexibility of "separate" and "joint" practices enables strategies for adapting and adjusting to new circumstances emerging from social crises like the earthquake. A household organisation can alter from a rather "joint" to a more "separate" arrangement of living, both temporarily and permanently. But, a family can as well dissolve their "separate" living situation, reunify in a "joint" household and plan a future together.

#### 5. Conclusion

The earthquake severely affected households by destroying their houses and, thus, revealed homes as major sites of devastation, reconstruction and recovery from the disaster. Reflecting an important "sense of belonging" to a locality in the built environment, the home is re-examined and re-constituted in the process of housing reconstruction. As local representations of home indicate, this process is ambiguous and contradictory. The ways people represent their homes in the context of the earthquake allude to the society's general struggles over different household ideologies, values and conflicting practices of home. These social struggles are re-exposed in the disaster's aftermath and merge with disaster-related experiences of disruption and grief, reconstruction of houses and interactions with the state housing policy.

Although represented as binary opposites "separate" and "joint" households in practice highly intersect diachronically and synchronically. Households sepa-

rate as part of a social process constituted by births, marriages and deaths of household members. Separate households participate in joint activities with other households as well as joint households divide responsibilities such as housework and economical contributions. The array of these practices of home as well as their local representations in particular situations and contexts are still to be compiled and analysed in more detail especially in reference to the disaster context and its effect on these practices and representations.

In this regard, I consider it especially important to examine further how people's vulnerabilities to the earthquake as well as their access to reconstruction resources differ according to their social, economical and political positions in the society. An analysis in this regard will provide deeper understanding of how people represent and practice home in relation to social, economic and political differences as well as how (disparately) people encounter and deal with the "enlarged state", evolved in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir after the earthquake.

With reference to the international and national states' disaster response, it is also crucial to ask of how people's vulnerabilities are reduced, reproduced or even exacerbated in the process of reconstruction. The financial difficulties of people in Muzaffarabad regarding the reconstruction of their houses indicate that the housing policy failed to reduce the vulnerability of those homes which lack necessary social, economic and political capital.

In addition to the structural vulnerability, my paper also points to the general questions of how people experience grief and cope with it in the disaster context. "Home" is an intimate place of affection, protection and mutual care where people, indeed, experience grief and the disruption of their lives most starkly but where they also cope with these traumatic experiences in the first instance. Thus, as my case studies evidenced, the experience of grief and the sense of loss of home are closely linked. Grief and disruption are frequently expressed by the means of nostalgia about the destruction and loss of the house as well as the separation of the family. By referring to the destroyed and lost house/home people demonstrate their grief. In the same way, by stating that family life profoundly changed after the earthquake people explain the sense of disruption experienced in the disaster. For coping with grief and disruption, the ambiguity of the category "home" as well as the flexibility of people's living arrangements are crucial. I believe that this ambiguity and flexibility provide important resources for households for adapting to changing circumstances, conflicts and crises such as a disaster. "Home" is re-shaped, strategically applied and politically exploited in the course of reconstruction, but, at the same time, enables ambiguous interpretations and flexible practices which, in turn, shape and contribute to the process of social recovery from disaster.

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## The anthropology of a "disaster boom" economy in western India

*Edward Simpson*

### 1. Introduction

Ten years or so ago, an earthquake in western India claimed around fourteen thousand lives. Many people I already knew from previous research in the region (specifically, the district of Kutch in the state of Gujarat) died, more lost relatives, homes and possessions.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, I chart some of the key moments in the life of the aftermath in order to highlight some of the contours of a 'disaster boom' economy from an anthropological perspective. Over the last decade, events in Gujarat have at times strongly resembled things that have happened after other disasters elsewhere. Immediately after the earthquake, traditional social distinctions collapsed; later there was mourning, nostalgia and a general reflection of regional identity; then came political protest and the reformation of social distinctions along the lines of caste, class and religion; but, perhaps most strikingly of all, the disaster gave birth to a consumer and then an industrial revolution.

Others of course have noted that catastrophe often leads to boom/revolution (Kendrick 1955; Seidensticker 1990 for instance). As a telling example, it is interesting to note that the anthropologists Barbara Bode (1989) and Anthony Oliver-Smith (1986) independently documented the changes, both subtle and stark, to follow an earthquake in Peru in 1970: the former writing with the subtitle 'destruction and creation', the latter with 'death and rebirth' to reflect the ethos of life after the disaster. In the conclusion of this chapter, I turn to examine the sociology of the destruction-boom sequence in the Gujarat case. Drawing on the political economy of John Stuart Mill (1848) and the neglected sociology of Samuel Henry Prince (1920), I suggest that, among other things, the moment of disaster is itself an accelerated moment of consumption, the veracity of which

<sup>1</sup> I conducted doctoral research in the region in 1997 and 1998, and have spent periods from as short as two weeks to as long as six months in Bhuj every year since the earthquake of 2001. This research was supported by a Nuffield New Career Development Fellowship (NCF/00103/G) and an award from the UK's Economic and Social Research Council on its Non-Governmental Public Action Programme (RES-155-25-0065-A).