

**THE ROLE OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE INTER-ETHNIC CONFLICTS
PREVENTION**

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LIST

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. BACKGROUND..... | 3 |
| 1.1 Inter-ethnic relations and prospective causes of inter-ethnic conflicts within the north part of the country | 3 |
| 1.2 Conflict resolution..... | 6 |
| 1.3 Citizenship and ethnic minorities in Kyrgyzstan | 6 |
| 2. THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT..... | 8 |
| 2.1 How can the Government influence the inter-ethnic relations?..... | 8 |
| 3. CSOs INSTRUMENTS FOR THE CONFLICT PREVENTION | 10 |
| 4. INTER-ETHNIC CONFLICT IN ISKRA VILLAGE | 11 |
| 4.1 Conflict Background | 11 |
| 4.2 Early Warning for Violence Prevention (EWVP) – Project of the Foundation for Tolerance International | 11 |
| 4.3 Conflict sides..... | 12 |
| 4.4 Dungan community | 13 |
| 4.5 Kyrgyz Community..... | 13 |
| 4.6 Role of Aksakals and Dungans elderly – representatives of civil society..... | 14 |
| 4.7 Who could contribute to the conflict resolution? | 14 |
| 5. CONCLUSION | 16 |

1. BACKGROUND

Kyrgyzstan is familiar with both – external and internal conflicts. While the first kind of conflict is often associated with the southern part of the country, the second one can occur everywhere within the country. Small community disputes take place in localities where people of different social or economic status live together. Especially the differences between ethnic identities may cause problems. Despite several violent and non-violent conflicts that have emerged within the country since 1991, the government hasn't been able to manage them. Not only the Kyrgyz government dispose with adequate conflict management instruments. Local NGOs sector is also able to use mechanisms to prevent ongoing conflicts. While the government hasn't been using its conflict management instruments effectively during the last decades, some of local NGOs have been more successful. What could be the prospective causes for inter – ethnic conflicts in the northern part of the country? What are the instruments of civil society for conflict prevention? My purpose is to be able to answer these and more questions after I will have done my research.

1.1 Inter-ethnic relations and prospective causes of inter-ethnic conflicts within the north part of the country

Theoretical basements for inter-ethnic conflict issue are not the main objective of this short research, as well as the account of all theoretical methods, which civil society dispose by resolving such conflicts. I will try to emphasize the most important factors of ethnic resentment in the northern region of Kyrgyzstan, and focus on the particular case in order to show what kind of actions can be implemented by civil society in the certain conflict situation.

Kyrgyzstan has experienced the violent and non-violent conflicts after the fall of the Soviet Union. Although these days some scholars suggest that the ethnic resentment is particularly manipulated by the state structures and political elites (Marat 2005, Megoran 2004), the fact that a lot of open inter-ethnic conflicts have taken place within the country is doubtless. As e.g. Brubaker suggests, “the reason why many recent world conflicts have been labeled “ethnic” conflicts is because in the post-Cold War setting, mobilization of resources for political struggle is not anymore done on the grand ideological antagonism of the left and right. Nowadays there are many more actors that are interested in “ethnicizing” political violence, such as incumbents, kin states, organizations, politicians and the actors of political struggle themselves”. Brubaker notices that in such cases “ethnicity” as such is not a source of

conflict, rather conflicts or violence for specific political interests are being deliberately framed in ethnic terms.¹ While these scholars are focusing on the source and origin of the ethnic resentment, I would like to immerse into the effective forces, which can solve the inter-ethnic conflict per se.

McGlinchey (2003) is trying to emphasize that post-Soviet ethnic-based grievances have not produced violent conflict, a fact that is particularly notable given Kyrgyzstan's experience with ethnic rioting in June 1990. He also mentions "recent calm, however, does not mean that ethnic tensions have disappeared over the past decade. The report of Foundation for Tolerance International organization (2006) also noted that despite the several disputes from last decades, the physical violence against persons, both from the side of the population and from the government, remained limited in the country. Many scientists suppose that the experience and consequences of violent conflict from early nineties will keep away the risk of another violent conflict. Although the violent conflicts have not been numerous within the country, there have emerged numbers of smaller inter-ethnic disputes in last years. The possibility that local dispute can trigger conflicts in other areas and develop into larger-scale violent conflicts, is the main reason why the civil society and state should cooperate in the area of conflict prevention. Bearing in mind that the daily conflicts among diverse social communities can bring the useful development of society through the clashes of different opinions, however, it is always essential to prevent the violent conflicts and prepare the space for open discussion between communities.

The problem of the ethnic resentment and inter-ethnic conflict in transition countries, such as Kyrgyzstan, has complicated background. There are various explanations how political change or transition period in semi-authoritarian societies can affect and exacerbate the ethnic relations².

Horowitz (in Tesař, 2007) tried to summarize the causes of ethnic conflicts. Among other reasons, he highlights economic competition, struggle for power among ethnic groups and failure of mutual adherence between groups as one of the most important factors. Passing by the ethnocentrism and the xenophobia, I would like to focus on these causes, which Horowitz mentioned. Some scholars are convinced that ethnic conflict can follow the change in ethnic structure e.g. when the economic conditions or political rights of old-time residents in one place are worse than these of new migrants, the first group can perceive the conditions of

¹ R. Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 11

² For more details see Karakulova, 2006

ethnic competition as unequal, it can lead to open inter-ethnic conflict (Tesař, 2007). How can this correspond to the situation in the northern part of Kyrgyzstan?

For instance, there has been huge internal migration during the last years especially from the southern regions. New migrants are partly Kyrgyz but also belong to other ethnic groups. There are common disputes over the distribution of land resources; the lack of productive land can be one of the economic factors of conflicts. Mr. Kashkaraev, the former analyst of the Foundation for Tolerance International organization mentioned in our interview, “*inter-ethnic conflicts in Kyrgyzstan are caused by lack of economic opportunities*”.

According to classification of Foundation for Tolerance International (2006), the three types of conflicts are noted in the northern Chui region “on basis of lack of land, of political events, and of attempts to impose rules.” These factors correspond with the Horowitz inter-ethnic conflicts causes. In the last years Kyrgyzstan experienced several conflicts on this basis in the northern part of the country. Confrontations in Moskovskiy, Panfilovskiy and Jayilskiy rayons where internal migrants seized lands and claimed “more rights” to land ownership than people of non-Kyrgyz ethnicities could serve as a good example of the first type of conflict. We can also classify the attacks of Kyrgyz people on Chinese migrants (especially the disputes about the places in the local markets), which are related to inter-ethnic conflicts, caused by economic disparities or unequal opportunities.³ The second basis is characterized by events when influential groups or individuals of one ethnicity provoke nationalistic feelings against people of a particular ethnic group in case of participation of a person of this particular ethnic group in a political event. The third basis – here we can highlight the most known conflict in Iskra village (case study in chapter no.4) and also a conflict in Voznesenovka village between ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic Kurds in November 2005; or expression of inter-ethnic resentment which took place in the northern part of country in recent years e.g. after March events (2005) in Novopavlovka village, where the ethnic Turks found leaflets on their doors that said: “Down with Turks, go away from our land. We will burn you if you hesitate.” During the power vacuum that followed the ouster of Akayev’s regime, looters targeted also many ethnic Russian businessmen. According to analysts of FTI (2006), conflicts of this kind are the most

³ Kyrgyz public does not welcome Chinese migrants in Kyrgyzstan. There have been numerous instances of brutal, even fatal attacks against Chinese migrants by locals. The frequent cases of Kyrgyz labor migrants being attacked in Russian cities by skinheads has led many Kyrgyz to blame Chinese migrants for taking jobs in Kyrgyzstan and squeezing out the local population.” The Jamestown Foundation, 2008, [28/06/2008].

difficult to analyze due to their long background and numerous facts presented by different sides and with different interpretations⁴.

There a significant question arises. Are above-mentioned conflicts motivated primarily by ethnic resentment or by other factors? The answer for this question is valuable because only with detailed information about every conflict we can develop the effective instruments for their resolution. Describing how conflicts come into the actual being is the fundamental part of the resolution. Whoever is trying to participate in the conciliation – state or civil society – they are always has to be informed about the development of conflict situation.

1.2 Conflict resolution

Almost all works concerning the conflict resolution try to describe how to deal with the ethnic claims. These works are focused on solving the problems rather than on prevention of such situations. Tesař (2007) sorts conflict resolution by effort to dismantle, restrain or face up to ethnic difference, because ethnic differences are the fundamental feature of inter-ethnic conflict. As other authors complement to this division, we can “eliminate, control or admit these ethnic differences”⁵. The elimination of these differences can be achieved whether in the non-violent or violent ways; in non-violent way e.g. with assimilation or integration. The rest of approaches – controlling and admitting - includes e.g. hegemonic and coercive control over the ethnic differences or consociationalism and power sharing⁶. To act upon such approaches is not easy, rather that these methods function better in the conditions of a high level democracy, economy and independent jurisdiction. In contradiction, inter – ethnic tensions are often taking place whereas the state is not strong in its position, has serious economic problems and weak jurisdiction. Which kind of the methods can civil society and the state apply for inter – ethnic conflict prevention is indicated in the next chapters.

1.3 Citizenship and ethnic minorities in Kyrgyzstan

There was established the titular ethnic group of Kyrgyz ethnicity after 1991. Although the constitution ensures the same rights for all ethnic groups within the country, we can observe

⁴ In view of the fact that all above described disputes took place more than 2 years ago, we can approve with the above-mentioned McGlinchey’s presumption that the trend of conflict potential is decreasing. However, this apparently calm situation can be also caused by the lack of information because there are no longer such detailed monitoring activities.

⁵ See McGarry and O’Leary 2003; Schneckener and Wolf, 2002 (in Tesař, 2007)

⁶ Consociationalismus is trying to implement the highest level of political equality among social communities sharing one state (for details see Lijphart, 1977).

that the reality seems to be different. The national policy of the post-soviet government has had connotation to soviet nationality policy. The Soviet idea of ethnic homeland as intrinsically connected to nationality provided grounds for political actors in the newly independent Central Asia to establish firm connection between titular ethnic groups with state structures. Exclusion of non-titulars from the echelons of power has been both direct and tacit (Karakulova, 2006). The favoring towards some ethnic groups by former president Akayev was more than obvious during his reign. Establishing the Russian as second state language or setting up the two German National Cultural Regions in 1992 are clear examples. Although some ethnic groups profited from the situation after 1991, other did not; e.g. Uzbek community, which these days represents according to some estimates, 20% of the country population, did not get any concessions. The equal political rights are not ensured for all ethnic groups in the country. It is not only the experience of Uzbek people, but also of other ethnic groups. Many of them experienced some problems with state institution while trying to obtain citizenship, trade certificate, asylum etc.

Many scholars consider Akayev's nationality policies as both "national minority-friendly" and "nationalizing" at the same time, with the Kyrgyz as the "core" nation⁷. The well-known concept of former president Akayev was "Our Common Home which could be considered as an attempt to reduce inter-ethnic resentment through the concepts of national ideology." The opinions about success of this concept are inconsistent among scientists. While Mamedov (2005) tries to emphasize the positives of this concept "it recognized the existence of national minorities as such and cooperated with the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Variety of ethnocultural organizations was brought together under the Kyrgyzstan People's Assembly, which could guide the government in nationality policy" and attached importance of this concept to nationality policy, Marat (2005) mentions also the negative sides "this campaign was primarily directed to the Russian-speaking and ethnic Uzbek minorities. While the civic formula gained popularity, attempts to incorporate all ethnic groups into a common idea about the Kyrgyz state inevitably exacerbated neo-nationalist political movements in the country." However, for many, "Kyrgyzstan is Our Common Home" remained a mere slogan, which did not transcend nationalizing developments into republic and the ones, which was largely ignored by officials, some of

⁷ Marat, 2008; Karakulova. 2006

them quoted: “Kyrgyzstan is our common house, but all non-Kyrgyz are lodgers in it”⁸. There were several examples how the titular ethnic group was favored beginning with e.g. getting the high-level jobs in government only those who had the knowledge of Kyrgyz language and ending with “ethnicprivatization” (redistribution of 50% country’s privatized land to ethnic Kyrgyz) in the 1992.⁹

2. THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT

2.1 How can the Government influence the inter-ethnic relations?

Although the state disposes of the different instruments for controlling the inter-ethnic relations, the most important are constitution and legislatives of the country. In these places we can find the attitudes of state towards its citizens and in more details towards different ethnic groups. Through these documents the government may give full access to citizenship and connected rights without any regard to ethnocultural identity. As Mamedov (2005) mentions: “the commitment may remain symbolic because legal guarantees cannot directly influence informal politics such as clan and kinship ties”.

According to the Kyrgyz Constitution there is an equal position for all ethnic groups within the country. Literally, “the people of Kyrgyzstan are striving to ensure the national revival of the Kyrgyz, the protection and development of interests of all nationalities, which together with the Kyrgyz constitute, the people of Kyrgyzstan.” The role of state language is described in article 5. Both, Kyrgyz and Russian, have the status of official language. There is also noted, that the state must guarantee conditions for the use and learning of all other languages. The basis for a prevention of some kind of discrimination create the articles 15.3 and 16.9 which contain the topics about prohibition of discrimination based on origin, race, nationality, language and creed as well as the propaganda of racial, national, religious and linguistic hatred or superiority.

Since 1991 the state has done many steps in order to protect or favor the different ethnic rights but at the same time many contradictory acts. As Mamedov (2007) mentions, many steps, which were taken in post-soviet period, weren’t according to the commitments in constitution.

⁸ Adakhan Madumarov, the current First Vice Prime Minister, was quoted in “Obrashenie Uzbekskoi Obshestvennosti uga Kyrgyzstana. [Appeal by the Uzbek Community of the Southern Kyrgyzstan to the President Kurmanbek Bakiev, Against Ethnic Persecution], Ferghana.ru, 2006 [8/1/2006] (in Karakulova, 2006)

⁹ For more details see Karakulova, 2006

Conflict management must be considered as one of the most important part of the government politics. State has to focus on the national institutional mechanisms and practices, including existence of the specialized bodies and national strategies, to fight discrimination and foster inter-cultural and inter-ethnic partnerships and dialogue. Although the government has been aware of these instruments, it hasn't used them effectively during the recent decades.

There is the example how the government supported inter-ethnic harmony in the country in past: "A couple of years ago the government began implementing an ethnic tolerance programme in schools, as well as broader educational programmes that can promote the idea of a multi-cultural Kyrgyzstan, but this has now all been forgotten; it should be revived," Valeriy Vishnevskiy, a chair of the Slavic Fund, and a member of the Assembly of People of Kyrgyzstan (Eurasianet, 24/2/2006). This quote also reminds the fact that recent president is weaker in area of nationality policy than Akayev was and doesn't pay the adequate attention to promotion of inter-ethnic harmony in the country.

Several state agencies are in charge of dealing with ethnic issues¹⁰

Assembly of People of Kyrgyzstan (PAK), established in 1994, has a status of a consultative advisory council under the president of the Kyrgyz Republic on interethnic relations and national policy. The PAK has two branches, one in Osh and another in Jala- Abad, and 31 cultural and public organizations.

The Committee on Human Rights of the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic deals inter alia with questions of religious tolerance and religious minorities.

The Institute of Ethnic Policy (IEP) conducts research and various projects and publishing activities, the aims of which are inter alia to promote good inter-ethnic relations and support ethnic and cultural variety in Kyrgyzstan. The IEP' was established in January 2003 on the basis of the Informational and Research Center of the PAK, with PAK and the Social Fund on Support of Development Programs as its founders.

¹⁰ According to Ethnic Minorities in Kyrgyzstan: Recent Developments Mission Report by the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) and Memorial, October 2006

3. CSOs INSTRUMENTS FOR THE CONFLICT PREVENTION

The civil society represents the supranational sphere of political and social participation in which citizens groups, social movements or individuals engage in dialogue, debate, confrontation, and negotiation with each other, and with various governmental actors - international, national and local, as well as the business. It is necessary to distinguish the civil society from the non-governmental organizations in general. While the civil society includes all the interest groups - community-based organizations, political parties, free media, political groupings, private sector, active citizens and their activities, the non-governmental organizations; such as actors in civil society, trying to promote democratic reforms and liberalize the government by raising public awareness, monitoring national and international laws on human rights and democratic governance and fighting repression and corruption (Schulte, 2008). The extent and ways of how the civil society works, largely depends on the will of state. The more democratic features the state has, the more alternatives and opinions can take place within its society. The civil society in Kyrgyzstan has had an open field of activities in the beginning of nineties. Liberalization of all vital aspects in this period was one of the main features of Akayev's policy. Kyrgyzstan experienced several years of liberalization after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and had the reputation of being one of the most reformist governments in Central Asia. However, since the end of the 1990's, the government became steadily more authoritarian and Akayev's attitude to alternative political opinions has complicated the civil society activities.

With the overturn of Akayev's government on March 24th, Kyrgyzstan has found itself in a new situation with a strong potential for conflicts between different population groups striving for political, and economic power. The former clear division in society between the pro-government and pro-opposition actors became obscure.¹¹ There were many expectations, that Akayev's downfall would have created more opportunities for a positive change, however, Schulte (2008) states "NGOs were not able to consolidate and address the political and social backlash that took place after the March 2005 events. They were incapable of influencing the outcome of important political processes, such as constitutional reform and parliamentary elections in 2007, to ensure the respect of democratic principles and the legislation. So today, the democratization strategy of the international community, where NGOs have been

¹¹ Conflict Prevention in Southern Kyrgyzstan, Foundation for Tolerance International, 2005

considered major and effective advocates for democratic reforms has not been achieved in Kyrgyzstan.”

The civil society can play a significant role in opening up the channels for the dialogue between the parties of conflicts; however, it is always easier, if the conflict takes a non-violent form. One of the most important things in the process of conflict prevention is to know the social environment and its conflict potential in details. I would like to show, what kind of instruments the participants of civil society could dispose by resolving violent conflicts on the particular case in Iskra village.

4. INTER-ETHNIC CONFLICT IN ISKRA VILLAGE

4.1 Conflict Background¹²

In February 2006 the inter-ethnic conflict between ethnic Kyrgyz and Dungans took place in Iskra village (Chui oblast). On 4 February, around 150 ethnic Kyrgyz of this village gathered on Fabrichnaya Street and gave an ultimatum to elders of Dungan nationality with the demand that some of the Dungan families leave the village within 24 hours. The cause of this conflict was a clash between Kyrgyz and Dungan youth in relation to pushing out of Kyrgyz student from the game computer place by Dungan youth. At the start seemingly insignificant conflict overgrew later in the serious one. The scope and intensity of the conflict between Kyrgyzs and Dungans in Iskra village was unprecedented for both ethnic groups living in Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzs and Dungans have never clashed before.¹³

4.2 Early Warning for Violence Prevention (EWVP) – Project of the Foundation for Tolerance International

This project has been supporting by UNDP and OSCE during 2005-2007. The Foundation for Tolerance International organization implemented this project all over the country. The purpose was to prevent all possible violent conflicts in Kyrgyzstan, not only inter-ethnic but also other kind of community disputes. There were 30 monitoring points all over the country and they reported short messages about potential conflicts situations every week. This information was published in weekly bulletins and created the basement for analysis and

¹² Based mainly on information from Weekly Bulletins Vol. 31, 32, 33, Foundation for Tolerance International. The Kyrgyz Republic, 2006.

¹³ E. Marat: Chinese Migrants face discrimination in Kyrgyzstan. The Jamestown Foundation. Issue Vol.5, No. 38. 2008

recommendations, which the three analysts (participants of this project) of FTI organization referred to participants of the particular disputes. Mentioned project was very successful, as also Mr. Kashkaraev, one of the FTI analysts, thinks. Quoting him, this project was very useful and really solved several conflicts within the country. In our interview Mr. Kashkaraev also mentioned his participation in Iskra Village conflict. He took a share in writing recommendations for the resolution of this dispute. When I asked him, what he would do in different way after years, he answered, that in this particular conflict were the recommendations drawn in good way. He also noted that the analysts were only observing the conflict, not directly participate in it and he considered it as the very good methods because people were telling their stories in different way to them sometimes.

4.3 Conflict sides

Trying to identify the characteristics of conflict sides, we can look at following propositions. We can split up the communities in the northern Kyrgyzstan in many different ways according to belonging to some group of people who share the special interest, values or common vision of themselves (in-groups).

For instance:

- Ethnic identity
- Russian x Kyrgyz (or other) language speaking
- Clan belonging
- Socio-economic status
- Political opinion
- Religion belonging
- Urban x Rural population
- North x South division
- ... etc.

As we can see, there are many potential causes of the communities' conflicts in the northern part of the country. The cause of a conflict can lie for example in. economic disparities, however, when the dispute once takes place between two different ethnic groups, it is usually called "inter- ethnic conflict". The conflict in Iskra village also started as the common dispute between two groups of youth (of different ethnicity), but the dispute between teenagers extended into mass mutual insults, physical attacks and destruction of property by the Kyrgyz and Dungan. While someone has been talking (in case of Iskra village conflict) about the inter-ethnic resentment as the cause of this conflict, the other has been commenting the

situation as the routine brawl between teenagers. There is always place for various interpretations and different point of views.

Passing by the cause of the conflict, as the result we could observe the violence and media informed the public about that. However, as was mentioned, sometimes it can be interpreted in various ways. It is very easy, when someone wants to exploit the conflict situation there is possibility to accommodate the situation to someone's need. It is not intention of this research to show, how can be the ethnic issue "constructed" by people or groups of different interests, however, it is necessary be aware of this possibility. How Marat (2006 B) has written about the Iskra conflict "this conflict could be inspired by some "third forces" interested in destabilizing domestic security. The definition of the "third forces", however, varies between drug barons, state officials, and members of the former government."

Early Warning Center, which has been monitoring the situation in Iskra for long time, evaluated the conflict as the one based on basis of attempts to "impose rules".

4.4 Dungan community

Dungans are ethnic Chinese from northwestern China and practice Hanafi Sunni Islam. They live in a number of other former Soviet states as well. In the mid-nineteenth century, thousands of Dungans fled to Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Russian-inhabited territories following a failed revolt against the Chinese Emperor. Despite intensive russification during Soviet times, the Dungans preserved a strong religious identity and live in distinct communities and collective farms, mostly in rural areas. Dungans also kept primordial traditions of peasantry up to the present day. In Kyrgyzstan, they are known as hard-working peasants who grow high quality rice, fruits and vegetables. Dungan agricultural products dominate in many local food markets. Because of farming and peasantry, Dungans are among the wealthiest rural dwellers, but also the most conservative in terms of inter-ethnic integration. Most Dungans still value intra-ethnic marriages (Marat, 2006). The Dungan population involved in the conflict consists exclusively of residents of Iskra village (Chui rayon).

4.5 Kyrgyz Community

The majority of conflict participants originally come from the four Kyrgyz villages (and these people belong to local clans). Forcible actions were undertaken by groups of rural youth. The

participants in the violent act on 5-6 February were young people aged 16 to 30. These young people have strong leadership abilities (skills of psychological influence on groups of people), popularity among local youth and authority among co-villagers.

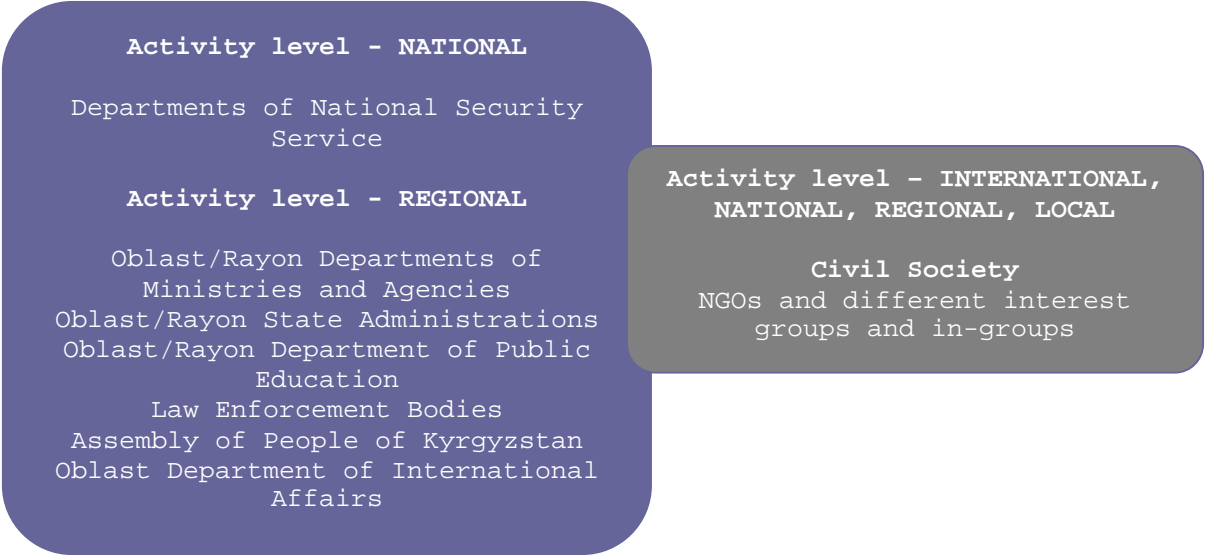
4.6 Role of Aksakals and Dungs elderly – representatives of civil society

The conflict in Iskra village showed that the traditional role of local aksakals (Kyrgyz elderly) in communities disputes resolving. Also the cultural misunderstanding between Dungs elderly and Kyrgyz elderly caused that the situation was more complicated than ever. According to weekly bulletin (WB Vol. 32), the role of Kyrgyz aksakals is still fundamental for resolution of community problems. However, we can observe the increasing influence and role of Kyrgyz youth now. On the contrary, the role of Dungan elderly decreased in the eyes of the Dungan community because of previously inter-ethnic disputes in 2004, which the Dungan elderly weren't able to solve. The traditional role of elderly (in both sides) is important in common daily life of the communities, especially when the conflict takes place. There is advantage of their presence and e.g. the NGOs should use the opportunity to work with local authorities of this type.

4.7 Who could contribute to the conflict resolution?

When the violent conflict once took place, the law enforcement bodies could only suppress the violence and in this moment emerges the really important task. How to solve the situation after the conflict? Here comes the role of civil society, especially of the NGOs. As usually used instruments of the civil society can be considered the subsequent ones: the negotiation and facilitation of conflicts, influencing the local authorities or government policies, technical support, monitoring the situation, analysis, research etc. The above-mentioned analysts of the FTI organization elaborated the recommendations for following situation in Iskra village. It was necessary to ensure the peaceful co-existence of the both conflict sides. What kind of instruments did the civil society use here? The analysts of Foundation for Tolerance International organization used the recommendations for particular institutions and organizations as the main one. We can see what kind of institutions, structures, bodies and organizations could participate in the resolution of conflict and after-conflict situation

(according the recommendations of EWVP analysts and other source of information).¹⁴ All the mentioned organizations and bodies we can split up in two parts – state and civil society and both can aim at the conflict resolution at various levels – international, national, regional, local.



The analysts of FTI had to learn more about the conflict background and on the basis of the conflict side’s demands and potential risks for next dispute they settled the recommendations. For instance, to the government the analysts recommended to provide safety guarantees to those Dungans who moved away from Iskra during the conflict and want to come back. Then, because of the obvious problem in education of young people, they recommended to introduce a standard system where children could choose between classes in state and official languages¹⁵. This type of change should ensure the Department of Public Education. More detailed recommendations you can find in Weekly Bulletins of Early Warning for Violence Prevention (FTI, 2006).

¹⁴ As the sources were used: The Weekly bulletins Vol. 31, 32, 33, Foundation for Tolerance International (FTI), 2006

¹⁵ Kyrgyz mentioned the fact, that they prefer schools with the Russian language and the nearest one is in the Iskra village, where the clashes between the Dungan and Kyrgyz children often occur. Weekly Bulletin Vol. 31., Foundation for Tolerance International. The Kyrgyz Republic, 2006.

5. CONCLUSION

In this short research I was trying to highlight, how can the civil society and the state help to prevent the inter-ethnic conflicts. As it was emphasized above, this kind of conflicts can not be necessary caused by ethnic resentment, ethnocentrism or inter-ethnic cultural differences, much often it takes place because of socio-economic or political reasons which are only accelerated by the ethnic difference. It is very difficult to measure, how much the participants of the conflict consider themselves as the participants of inter-ethnic conflict. When we can designate the dispute between two young boys and their crews of different ethnicity, as inter-ethnic dispute? There is always necessary to find the roots of the conflict and thoroughly examine the conflict background.

As I have mentioned above, the issue of inter-ethnic clashes can be manipulated by interests of different groups (in-group, interest group), but the purpose of this research is focused on the conflict resolution and conciliation when it once takes place. The role of civil society in inter-ethnic conflict prevention has been undisputed; the developed methods of mediation, facilitation and prevention have had positive implication on many disputes in various place of this world, including the Kyrgyz Republic (e.g. in *Early Warning for Violence Prevention* project). However, the effort of any prevention or resolution always requires the certain cooperation with state structures. The civil society can give the recommendations but also has to lobby for its assertion, and this is the part, when the state will is playing the main role.

The Kyrgyz Constitution gives the protection of the Kyrgyz citizens. The state is bound to ensure the equal rights and safety to its citizen regardless the ethnicity and at the same time also try to prevent any kind of conflict that could threat the inter-ethnic peace within the multiethnic country. Despite the fact that there have been developed some instruments in past (during the Akayev's period) which have supported the inter-ethnic peace; the political changes after "tulip revolution" have brought into the power the politicians who have not paid the attention to improving inter-ethnic relations. There are several activities, which the state can use for improving the ethnic relations. However, the most important is the upbringing of the next generations. The upbringing in the multi-ethnic environment and regarding and emphasizing the multiethnic issue in the education system may fundamentally contribute to improving the ethnic relations in the country.

On the case of the inter-ethnic conflict in Iskra village was described the particular instruments that can the civil society (NGOs and different in-groups) implement in order to prevent inter-ethnic disputes. The non-governmental organizations are not the only one who

can contribute to the resolution with the special programmes and methods. The civil society as a whole can develop the useful activities, which can be the part of common daily life within the communities.