

**The Powersharing Dynamics of the Peacebuilding Process in Kosovo: Where Are the Local  
and Everyday People?**

By

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### Abstract

Twenty years after the first intervention by the international community to restore peace in Kosovo, peace prospects continue to be affected by the local's nationalist agendas and the international community's top-down peacebuilding approaches. This thesis examines neoliberal peacebuilding processes and its effects on establishing a holistic peace system in Kosovo. This thesis focuses on the 2008 powersharing arrangements resulting from Marti Ahtisaari's<sup>1</sup> *Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement* that led to the independence of Kosovo and the adoption of its new Constitution. In addition, this study examines the dynamics undertaken to create a cohesive integration peace plan to reconcile differences between both communities and to establish positive peace or social justice for all. Study findings suggest that the peacebuilding process in Kosovo is primarily based on intergroup powersharing arrangements between communities and conflict management processes that have contributed to negative peace. The thesis discusses the following issues: 1) the nature of the settlement plan to establish peace in Kosovo, 2) the strategy of the local and international community to integrate all of the communities together regardless of their ethnicity, and to devise a pathway to implement a holistic peace system and reconcile the differences between all communities residing in Kosovo, and 3) the current level of cooperation between Kosovo Albanians and Serbs living in Kosovo.

*Keywords:* Kosovo, neoliberal peacebuilding, powersharing, grassroots, positive/negative peace, ethnic communities.

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<sup>1</sup> See Marti Ahtisaari's "Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement" for an insightful understanding of the plan ([www.kuvendikosoves.org](http://www.kuvendikosoves.org)).

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## CHAPTER 1 – Introduction

### Introduction

Kosovo's fragmented sovereignty and the existence of negative peace (absence of war) can be traced back to the collapse of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) during the 1990s and after the complex peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding processes that came about as a result of joint international efforts to establish peace in the region (Zagar, 2000). The case of Kosovo was not different from other former Yugoslavian states in terms of the violation of human rights, the significance of identity and ethnic divisions as well as the struggle for power. The Kosovar Albanian ultimate demand for peace and independence was met with brutal force from the Serbian military that subsequently caused the death of 13,535 people between 1998-2000 (Humanitarian Law Centre, 2015). Subsequently, in 1999, it was the fear of social unrest and social injustice in the region that pushed the international community to transform the conflict through neoliberal peacebuilding approaches.

To resolve the Kosovo question and determine its final status, the international community adopted a neoliberal peacebuilding approach and appointed Martti Ahtisaari to start a negotiating process between Kosovo and Serbia's political elites. In addition, the process involved negotiations over the future of minorities in Kosovo with special emphasis on the Serbian community. The Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement led to the establishment of Kosovo as a new independent state and was adopted by Kosovo's institutions in 2008 while it was rejected by Serbia's. As far as the current political climate and social dynamics between the Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs are concerned, the settlement plan failed to establish "positive peace" or social justice (Galtung, 1996) and include a "sustainable reconciliation" process (Lederach, 1999, 2005). This unfulfilled, incomplete and improper peace

settlement has left Kosovo as a small unstable actor in the Balkans that will continue to suffer from a compromised and strained relationship with Serbia that remains its most influential neighbour. Subsequently, this thesis explores the Martti Ahtisaari peace plan, neoliberal peacebuilding, and the consociational powersharing process of ethnic elite accommodation in Kosovo. The primary question that this study asks is how Ahtisaari's Comprehensive Plan for the Kosovo Status Settlement plan contributed to implementing a holistic peace system to reconcile the differences between all communities residing in Kosovo.

### **Thesis Structure**

This thesis is organized into seven chapters, including the introductory chapter that briefly introduces the main theme of this study. Chapter two or the context chapter provides an overview of the conflict in Kosovo, including the country's transition to peace since the beginning of the international community's engagement in the peace process. In addition, this chapter presents all the different layers of peacebuilding in Kosovo; and, its social, political and conflict dimensions between communities in Kosovo. Subsequently, it provides a brief foundation for the study and what contributed to positive peacebuilding in Kosovo. Chapter three discusses the methodology adopted in the study and the research tools used.

In addition, chapter four presents a discussion of elements of negative peace in Kosovo and how Ahtisaari's Settlement Plan contributed or failed to establish a holistic peace process there. Unlike superficial peace, holistic peace refers to a whole peacebuilding process that succeeds to resolve the underlying causes of conflict and aims to reconcile differences between conflicting parties (Allen Nan, 2009; de Coning, 2018; Lederach, 1997, 2005). Chapter five focuses on the critique of neoliberal peacebuilding and the lack of local ownership in the process

to establish peace in Kosovo. In addition, it discusses critical and emancipatory peacebuilding as well as the key issues arising from Ahtisaari's Settlement Plan and its effects on today's relations between Kosovo Albanians and Serbians. Moreover, chapter six focuses primarily on powersharing arrangements – mainly imposed by external neoliberal peacebuilding actors – between Kosovo Albanians and other minority community groups residing in Kosovo. The Conclusions chapter offers a brief explanation of the key findings, the significance of the study and future research.

### **Contribution of PACS Theories**

Chapters four, five and six include a discussion of critical and emancipatory peacebuilding integrating the following: (1) Johan Galtung's discussion of positive and negative peace, (2) neoliberal peacemaking and local ownership or grassroots peacebuilding, and (3) powersharing or consociationalism. These theories also serve as the foundation for the empirical thesis chapters and are applied to the Martti Ahtisaari peace plan to understand the impact of the peacebuilding process. The Kosovo conflict along with its ongoing peacebuilding processes can be analyzed through numerous theories that include but are not limited to basic human needs, structural violence, identity and ethnicity, and ethnonationalism. This study is focused on the Ahtisaari Comprehensive Proposal so that the research emphasizes and explores the key issues arising from international and 'local' peacebuilding efforts to establish positive peace in Kosovo by outlining the main critical missteps that contributed to negative peace.

PACS scholars introduce a variety of peace approaches to transform conflicts that include research, intervention, dialogue approaches, community capacity building, humanitarian aid, economic assistance, the arts, theatre, and other humanistic methods (Reimer et al., 2015).

Transformation refers to change to bring about peace and justice. Ryan (2009) considers that the transformative approach is very important for conflict resolution, but he also suggests that such processes can be demanding and never-ending, therefore peace practitioners should know when to stop (p. 312). In addition, Reimer et al. (2015) contribute to our understanding of conflict transformation through research approaches arguing that the local community plays a vital role in designing and building on bases for conflict transformation practice through engaged research, participatory action research, and Indigenous peacebuilding approaches.

### **Language Use and Terminology**

**Kosova/Kosovo.** In order to avoid language biases, throughout this thesis I refer to “Kosova” (the Albanian version) as “Kosovo” that is related to the international language version of the name

**Communities.** There are many versions of the name used when referring to minorities in Kosovo. Such versions include “ethnic minorities”, “minorities”, “communities” or “ethnic communities”. I have decided to adopt the term “*communities*” for this study because Ahtisaari’s Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement refers to all ethnic groups in Kosovo as communities (a neutral standard). However, throughout the text necessary specifications are made for a certain group that is named based on their ethnicity/nationality, for instance, Kosovo Albanian community, or Kosovo Serbian community, or ethnic-minorities when referring to non-Albanians.

Moreover, in this study, the word ‘communities or ethnic-communities’ refers to groups of Albanians, Serbs, Bosnians, Romas, Ashkalis, Egyptians, Goranis and other communities that reside in Kosovo. All ‘ethnic-minorities’ include all communities besides Albanians that are

referred to as the majority. The Kosovo Government defines communities “as national, ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious groups traditionally present in the Republic of Kosovo that are not in the majority. These groups are Serb, Turkish, Bosnian, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Gorani and other communities” (Government of Kosovo, n.d).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented a short background of the conflict in Kosovo and defined the main research question for this thesis. The main objective of this thesis is to analyse Ahtisaari’s Settlement Plan for Kosovo and the peacebuilding process in Kosovo. Specifically, the research question asks how Ahtisaari’s peace plan contributed to reconcile differences between all communities in Kosovo and bring about social justice. Further, this chapter presented the structure of this thesis, the theoretical framework, and methodology.

From a theoretical perspective, this research uses critical and emancipatory peacebuilding theories specifically integrating Galtung’s concepts of positive and negative peace, neoliberal peacebuilding and local ownership and finally it offers a discussion on powersharing arrangements or consociationalism. Elements of neoliberal peacebuilding along with Ahtisaari’s Settlement Plan for Kosovo provide the groundwork of this study, which altogether generates a critique of neoliberal top-down approaches as tools for conflict resolution. Thus, to better understand the historical background of the conflict in Kosovo and the evolution of relations with Serbia and the Serbian community, the next chapter provides a general overview and the context for this thesis.

## CHAPTER 2 – Context

### Introduction

The aftermath of WWII brought about border and regime change in the Balkans. The new Yugoslavia was established under the communist leadership of Tito<sup>2</sup>, ultimately leaving Kosovo as an autonomous Serbian region under the 1974 SFRY Constitution. After Tito's death Albanians faced a limitation to their human agency as well as socioeconomic oppression and “structural violence” or hidden invisible institutional violence (see Galtung 1996) under the Slobodan Milošević regime of 1989-1991. The threat to the identity and basic human needs of the Albanian population in Kosovo beginning in the 1980s erupted in violence, which later led to the 1998-1999 war between the Kosovo Albanians and Serbians. Milošević endorsed and ordered ethnic cleansing as a tool to degrade the enemy and demonstrate Serbian power and control over the territory of Kosovo (Judah, 2008; Mojzes, 2011; Vetlsen, 2006). In 1999 this war involved the international community who provided humanitarian assistance and established peace in the region. Subsequently, the dynamics of the conflict in Kosovo engaged major international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU), as well as supporters and opponents of Kosovo's independence.

At the time peacebuilding and state building approaches were new territories for both the international community and the local community. Gurkaynak et al. (2009) suggest that when evaluating a conflict, the group's general beliefs (roots, linkages, conditions, norms, values), and the effects and staging of intervening should be considered. Similarly, in relation to Kosovo, the

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<sup>2</sup> Josip Broz Tito ruled the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) from 1944 until his death in 1980.

international intervention using a transformational process proved to be challenging and it lacked coordination among the international actors, and the local people (Annual Review of Global Peace Operations, 2009, 2012; Choedon, 2010; Friesendorf, 2011). Nonetheless, that did not stop the international community from assisting Kosovo in declaring its independence from Serbia. Kosovo's independence came about as a result of a number of factors, but it was finalized after Ahtisaari's Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement was put in place. The main points of Martti Ahtisaari's peace plan included safeguarding the rights of communities at the highest level of government.

To further analyze the impact of the peacebuilding process in Kosovo, it is important to present the demographics of this country. Kosovo has a territory of 10,905,25 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 1,798,506, and it borders with Serbia to the northeast, Montenegro to the northwest, Albania to the southwest and Macedonia to the southeast (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2018). Subsequently, Kosovo's minorities make up less than 10 percent of the total population. More specifically the 2011 census indicates that the Serbian community makes up 3.4 percent of the population while other communities such as Turks, Bosnians, Romas, Egyptians and others make up to 5.6 percent; this leaves Kosovo Albanians with 91 percent of the total population in Kosovo (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2016, p. 28). Interestingly, in terms of statistics, the European Center for Minority Issues (ECMI) in Kosovo presents rather different population percentages in comparison with Kosovo's Agency for Statistics. ECMI attests that the Kosovo Serbian community makes up 8 percent of the total population while other communities

make up about 5 percent, and Kosovo Albanians represent 86 percent of the total population (ECMI, n.d)<sup>3</sup>.

Kosovo has the youngest population in Europe as 53 percent of the population is under the age of 25 (EC Liaison Office to Kosovo, n.d, p. 3). This means that over half of the population were 5 years old or younger when the conflict occurred in Kosovo. Yet, all of the generations regardless of age and ethnicity are negatively affected by the political and social dynamics existing between the Kosovo Albanian and Serb communities coexisting in Kosovo. This intergenerational issue also showcases the point that older generations cannot let go of past experiences. They socialize the youth with their narratives and stories that create animosity towards the “other.” Consequently, conflict management attempts to contain the situation in Kosovo rather than using a holistic peacebuilding process and it has failed to consider effective elements of reconciliation through grassroots empowerment. Lederach (1999, 2005) notes that reconciliation is an essential part of building a sustained peace. He suggests that for ethnopolitical groups to arrive at reconciliation primarily means that they reconcile their differences and work towards building a better relationship by nurturing trust, promoting social justice and tolerance as well as addressing “the root causes of enmity before they can regenerate destabilizing tensions” (Lederach, 1999, p. ix).

### **The Limits of a Violent Peace: My Own Story - Part I**

I was born in a big loving family in extraordinary times when curfew was already in effect. I was the seventh child in our family. Two years later my brother was born. These were

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<sup>3</sup> This study explores policies examining Kosovo’s official documents and representation of communities, so as to avoid misrepresentation of data when referring to ethnic-minority population, I rely on data provided by the Kosovo Agency for Statistics as a formal source. See, <http://ask.rks-gov.net/en/kosovo-agency-of-statistics>.

times when fear and nationalism was injected into Albanian communities throughout Kosovo. During my childhood, to see armed men and tanks moving throughout the city felt like it was a very normal thing to happen. Back then I used to think that children like me living in other places of the world had a similar life. Oftentimes when I was going back home from school I would see (peaceful) protests and a lot of police cars, tanks, armed men in uniforms and snipers huddled on top of buildings waiting for violence to erupt so that they could shoot people. In these situations, I would just join the line of protestors and walk along in the direction that they were going until I would arrive at the crossroads that would take me home. When the war started everything closed down and our lives were put on hold as our rights to live did not matter. I was only ten years old when the war started, but those memories are still very present and fresh in my mind.

I remember how we lived in fear of death everyday. When the war erupted, I lived with my family at my uncle's house. As the war progressed Serbian paramilitary forces that threatened to kill us all frequently visited my uncle's house. Serbian police or paramilitaries always looked for men that they considered to be terrorists and Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) collaborators. Whenever they entered our house heavily armed they would ask, "where are men"? They would search the house without asking anyone. They would take items like cars, electronics, and other valuable objects with them. If they had found any men in our house they would take them prisoner or kill them on the spot. Often, they would sit in the living room and ask for an alcoholic drink while pointing their guns at us. Meanwhile we would sit in the same room and avoid making any eye contact with them and wait for them to determine our fate. My grandmother as the oldest woman in the house would answer their questions in Serbian and very often she would give them money or a piece of gold jewellery so they would not hurt or kill any

of us. Lucky for us that my parents were wealthy, and they had some cash handy as a form of bribery so that the intruders would not harm my family. Later my parents made a painful decision to live separately. My father and uncle's presence in the house were risking our lives too. Whenever Serbian police forces or paramilitaries would visit us they had to escape from the house and hide until it was safe for them to return home. My father, my two sisters and younger brother moved to a relative's house. Our relative's house was in a neighbourhood where the Roma community lived and at that time it was considered to be a safer place to hide. I was told that the Roma community was not targeted by Serbian paramilitaries therefore their neighbourhoods offered safety and refuge for my father and uncle to escape death. When we ran out of food reserves, my mother and my aunts used to go to the Roma neighbourhoods to buy food for us on the black market. Often, they were not able to find anything. Sometimes they would come back very late because they were trying to find alternative routes back home to avoid any contact with Serbian police or paramilitaries. Often people were shot in the streets for no reason at all. They just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

When my parents decided to separate until the war came to an end, I stayed with my mother at my uncle's house. My parents considered this to be a safer option as we had better chances this way not to have the whole family killed. On the other hand, we did not know the fate of my older siblings. Three of my older sisters were married with children and my older brother left Kosovo before the war started. Later we learned that he moved to Albania during the war and joined the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

This is my personal collection of dark memories from the war in Kosovo. Unquestionably, these images share the same themes; the war, the fear and the taste of freedom.

I remember when it was only three days after NATO started its bombing campaign against Serbia on March 24, 1999. Two days later we moved to my uncle's house. My parents thought it was safer there because my uncle's first neighbour was Serbian, and they thought that perhaps the Serb paramilitaries would not burn his house as that would risk his Serbian neighbour's house going up in smoke too. Subsequently, for the next three months, this house became a shelter for three more families; a place filled with both love and fear. Since the war started we all slept with our clothes on with one eye and ear opened so that we could be ready for anything. I slept in one room with my parents and my younger brother.

Sharing shelter with other families was very common during the war in Kosovo. It is also very common for one family to have a two or three-story house so that sharing it with other families during the wartime made these families (including our own) feel safer. This was also a common practice during WWII when Jewish people were persecuted by the Nazis. They were ordered to live in Jewish ghettos and depending on the size of the house or apartment several families used to live under one roof (Gutter, 2018; Leipziger, 2015). For example, Gutter (2018) explains that when he lived in Warsaw as a young Jewish boy his family shared the same apartment with seven other families (p. 26). Later as the situation in the Jewish ghettos deteriorated eight people would sleep in one apartment room (Gutter, 2018, p. 32).

It was night time and we were all sleeping, and I heard gunshots. It was coming from automatic weapons, so I jumped from my bed, and I laid down flat on the ground and covered my head. This is what I was told to do when we heard gunshots. Then we quickly ran and hid in the basement in case they decided to throw a hand grenade into our house from the top floor windows. More than 20 people were hiding in this basement, and yet there was dead silence. All I heard were noises coming from outside, gunshots and screams. I was scared, and here I was

waiting for two possible scenarios to happen. First, I waited for gunshots to stop and Serbian soldiers to go away from our neighbourhood, or second, I paused to hear their voices coming closer as they entered our house and probably tortured, raped, and killed everyone. This time we were lucky because it was the first scenario that came to pass. For some reasons we did not know why, they left, and we were still safe, but we knew this was not going to last for too long. Later, the same day my parents decided to leave the country and seek refuge. As we drove through the neighbourhood, I saw a scene of horror. Most of the houses in the neighbourhood were still burning. I saw dead bodies lying in the streets. One body was still burning. I can still see the flames coming out of the body of a man that probably was burned alive and was left to die on the streets. We did not go too far before we faced a living barricade made of Serbian soldiers. We were told to go back to where we came from, otherwise, they would kill us on the spot. As my father turned the car around, he told my mother that we are lucky they were not local police otherwise they would have recognized and killed us on the spot. We never tried to leave our hometown again. We lived in fear of death in our hometown for as long as the war lasted.

### **Kosovo's Fate from One Regime to Another**

Historically, Kosovo and Serbia have shared a heated relationship for centuries that has contributed to the destabilization of the Balkans. For Serbia, Kosovo is the *Heart of Serbia*; Kosovars perceive that Slavs occupied the land when they migrated there from other parts of Europe in the sixth century A.D. landing in their territory (Judah, 2008). Albanians have an Illyrian origin and are believed to have lived in the territory of Kosovo before the Serbians (Judah, 2008; Kühle & Laustsen, 2006; Mojzes, 2011). The origin of both of these ethnic groups helped to shape their identities in terms of culture, traditions, language and national symbols.

Other differences include language and religion as Serbians speak the Serbian language, and the majority are affiliated to Orthodox religion, whereas, Albanians in Kosovo speak the Albanian language and the majority are Sunni Muslims that converted to Islam during the Ottoman oppression of the region.

Certainly, five centuries under Ottoman oppression contributed to the process of shaping the identity of ethnic groups and the relevance of the cultural dimension in the Balkans. In addition, the Ottoman Empire rewarded those with equal rights that accepted and practised Islam as their faith, whereas those that did not convert to Islam faced limitations and were forced to move to the north including the Serbs who did not convert to Islam (Daskalovski, 2003, p. 15). After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, those that converted to Islam were seen as “leftover from a previous era” that would struggle to integrate into the new version of the Balkans (Charmichael, 2002, pp. 21-22; Guzina, 2003).

The main historical event that bonds Serbs to the land of Kosovo is the 1389 Battle of Kosovo where the Serbs faced off against the Ottomans. Even though the Serbs lost the eventual war, they take pride in winning this battle (Bose, 2010). This event tied Serb identity even more with the land of Kosovo and gave birth to modern Serbia (Carmichael, 2002; Judah, 2008; Kühle & Laustsen, 2006). From this historical event, Judah (2008) argues that the Battle of Kosovo was turned into a myth for Serbia, and Kosovo into a “sacred territory for the Serbs” (p. 24).

After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans during the 1912-1913 Balkan wars, the ethnic-national borders changed. Albanians were left out of Albania’s borders in 1912 with the agreement of the international community and regional powers. Consequently, the remaining Albanians lived in Kosovo under Serbia, in Serbia (south), Macedonia and Montenegro; Kosovo was given to Serbia as a sign of appreciation of its help in defeating the

Ottoman Empire (Judah, 2008). Subsequently, Albanians living in Kosovo desperately asserted their need for self-determination and their recognition as a nation.

Consequently, World War I and II brought about border and regime changes in the Balkans. After World War I, Serbs, Croats and Slovenes decided to come together and in 1929 established the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Zagar, 2000). As a result of new competing political ideologies and territorial aims, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia crumbled. After World War II communism took over in the region and Josip Bros Tito came to power. Under Tito's leadership in 1941, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) came into existence. The SFRY was made up of six republics: Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia, and the two autonomous regions that were attached to Serbia, Vojvodina and Kosovo. Apart from the different nations living under the same federal roof, there were about 20 different ethnicities that coexisted together. The civil registration census concluded in 1981 that only 5.4 percent declared themselves Yugoslavs while this number dropped to only 3 percent based on the 1990 census (Zagar, 2000, p. 131). The main ethnicities living in SFRY were Croats, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Muslims/Bosnians, Serbs, Slovenes and Albanians.

Tito's leadership managed to successfully accomplish: a) the peaceful co-existence of different nations/ethnicities for four decades within the same borders with a federal government that aimed to promote equality, democracy and sovereignty for the nations, and b) the economic development and equal employment opportunities that were created for all republics and provinces (Zagar, 2000). Subsequently, under Tito's Yugoslavia, Albanians living in Kosovo were granted autonomy but not the power of a republic in this federal structure. Albanians were recognized as a nationality within SFRY but not as a nation. After Tito's death, Kosovo demanded to be recognized as a republic, which was against the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution

stating that, “nations had the right to secession, whereas nationalities did not” (Detrez, 2002, p. 196). By not recognizing the legitimate right to declare Kosovo a republic and a nation in the Yugoslav Constitution, Albanians faced a limitation on their human agency as well as experiencing socioeconomic oppression and structural violence. Although the Yugoslav identity could not replace the deep-rooted identity of the nations that lived in this territory, it succeeded in keeping away virulent ethnic animosity until Milošević decided to openly use the ethnonationalist card to turn one ethnic group against the other (Carter, Irani & Volkan, 2009).

Under Milošević’s leadership, nationalism came to its peak. National symbolism was ever present and was used as a form of intimidation against “the enemy” (Judah 2008; Kühle & Laustsen, 2006; Wolff, 2003). Milošević manipulated the Serbians to believe in the idea of a ‘*Greater Serbia*’, whereas Albanians in Kosovo aimed to work for a ‘*Greater Albania*’ (Judah, 2008). Within these parameters, structural causes led to conflict, which are strongly related to threat and violation of people’s basic human needs and human security (Cavanaugh, 2000; Wolff, 2010). Soon enough ethnic, linguistic and religious splits existed between both groups “with virtually no overlap between them” that witnessed a strong Serb dominance over Albanians that would lead to war (Wolff, 2010, p. 97). Moving forward with some of the causes of the conflict in Kosovo, one can understand that little was needed to start the clashes between these ethnic groups. Each demonstrated a strong sense of identity and tried to preserve it with force. The emotional state of the Serbian and Albanian communities for their nations justified the atrocities they each committed later.

### **Unravelling the Kosovo Conflict**

When Milošević came to power in 1989, he oppressed the basic human needs of Albanians, prohibited teaching in the Albanian language in the high schools and closed the Albanian University as well as the only Albanian TV/Radio station. Human rights violations and freedom restrictions were effectively introduced immediately after he came to power. To achieve their basic human rights, Kosovo Albanians started to organize themselves. They formed parallel structures and in 1996 established the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) that motivated Milošević to lead a full war mission into Kosovo to suppress any form of self-determination by the so-called terrorist movement, the KLA.

In February 1998, the war started in the Albanian populated villages, while Milošević claimed that he was after KLA members and not civilians. As a result of the first bloody events in Kosovo, international organizations such as the Council of Europe (CoE) responded by adopting Recommendation 1360 (1998) that condemned the violence and extensive use of force against Kosovo Albanians. In addition, the 1998 Report for Human Rights in Kosovo drafted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), concluded that the Serbian military targeted “Kosovo Albanian men of fighting age, every one of them apparently perceived as a potential ‘terrorist’” including women as specific objects of violence targeting their gender and young children, “with the aim of terrorising and punishing adults and communities” (OSCE, 2003, n.p). The OSCE report also sheds light on the war crimes committed by the UÇK (KLA) against the Serb community during this time period (OSCE, 2003).

Given the nature of the ethnic conflict that unfolded in Kosovo from 1998-1999, the international community debated whether intervening in Yugoslavian matters would entail going against the UN Charter and against the territorial sovereignty of Yugoslavia. For example, the

United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted several resolutions “1160 (1998) of 31 March 1998, 1199 (1998) of 23 September 1998, 1203 (1998) of 24 October 1998 and 1239 (1999) of 14 May 1999” that merely condemned the violence emanating from the Yugoslav Army and the KLA against Kosovo civilians (Hampson et al., 2002, pp. 139-41; UNSC, S/RES/1244, 1999, p.1). The UNSC’s condemnations against violence were only kept in their reports as no decision for intervening was made due to Russia’s veto power in the UNSC. On the other hand, other international actors/organizations such as the US as well as NATO were more persistent in adopting a coercive approach to put an end to the violence. Yet, any attempt to solve the conflict without military intervention appeared to be impossible as Milošević showed no signs of backing down and resigning from office.

As the situation in Kosovo showed no sign of improvement, the negotiation process started in Rambouillet, France in February 1999 that established a Contact Group and provided the first sign of direct international involvement in the conflict with the aim of ending the violence in Kosovo. With immediate effect, the Rambouillet Accords requested that Milošević end the violence and approve the entrance of a peacekeeping force into the disputed territory. Certainly, Milošević refused to come to agreement with the international community and withdraw his troops from Kosovo that led to the use of coercive diplomacy and the launch of NATO’s air bombing campaign against Serbia (Judah, 2008; Hampson et al., 2002; Sobjerg, 2006; Thomas et al., 2006; Vetlesen, 2006).

The Independent International Committee on Kosovo (IICK) (2000) noted that from February 1998 to March 1999 the number of atrocities committed in Kosovo reached 1,000 and at the time were considered to be relatively low. When NATO began the air campaign against Milošević from March until June 1999, more than 10,000 Albanians were killed and about

863,000 civilians were forced to seek refugee protection outside Kosovo while 590,000 were internally displaced (IICK, 2000, p. 4). The NATO air campaign did not improve the situation in Kosovo instead it escalated the conflict. The international community was determined to put an end to the conflict and decided to send in ground troops on June 9, 1999. After Milošević's surrender, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 1244 (still effective), NATO stopped the air campaign against Serbia, and the international presence and peacekeeping process started in Kosovo.

UN Resolution 1244 (1999) provides one of the most significant attempts by the international community to resolve the Kosovo conflict. This resolution authorized the deployment of an international presence in the region and mandated the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and NATO-Kosovo Force (KFOR) to provide stability and security in Kosovo. In addition, UN Resolution 1244 called on the immediate end of violence in Kosovo and requested the Yugoslav troops to be removed. Specifically, UN Resolution 1244 confirmed the following: (1) under UN auspices the international civil and security presence was to be deployed; (2) a special representative was to be appointed "to control the implementation" of the international presence in Kosovo; (3) a mission was to be organized to demilitarize the KLA; (4) the international civilian organization was to perform administrative civilian duties and establish an interim administration; and, (5) the international civilian presence was established for a period of 12 months with the possibility to extend its mandate with the permission of the UNSC (UN, S/RES/1244, 1999, p. 6). Almost twenty years after its deployment in Kosovo and ten years from Kosovo's declaration of independence, UNMIK remains ever present; it operates on limited capacities/ functions and staff.

### **Initial Negotiations**

After the 1999 humanitarian intervention in Kosovo, the question of the territorial integrity of Kosovo remained vague for the international community as Kosovo was internationally recognized within Serbia's borders. Hence, the fate of Albanians in the hands of Serbia already proved to be fatal in preventing a solution due to human rights concerns and Kosovo's demands for independence. Subsequently, any solution with regards to Kosovo's status required the peacebuilding expertise of the international community, and the will of Kosovo Albanians and Serbs to negotiate a peaceful solution and reconcile their differences.

Weller (1999, 2008a, 2008b, 2009)<sup>4</sup> writing on Kosovo's conflict transformation process claims that negotiating the final status of Kosovo was a complex task for all of the parties involved in the process. The official process to determine the future status of Kosovo went through several phases, all in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1244 (1999). Subsequently, Resolution 1244 (1999) and the Rambouillet Accords proved to be the foundation for the final settlement plan and the Constitution of Kosovo was adopted in 2008. The initial negotiation phase "to determine Kosovo's Future Status" started in October 2005 with the approval of the UNSC to "appoint a Special Envoy to lead the Future Status process" (UNSC, S/PRST/2005/51, 2005, pp. 1-2). Following the green light to proceed with negotiations regarding Kosovo's settlement status, the UN Secretary-General appointed Finland's former President, Martti Ahtisaari<sup>5</sup> as Special Envoy to lead the negotiations over the settlement of Kosovo between Kosovo and Serbia (UNSC, S/2005/708, 2005, n.p). Later with the initiative of the "Contact

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<sup>4</sup> Throughout this thesis Marc Weller's detailed reports/articles (1999; 2008a; 2008b; 2009) on Kosovo's negotiations are used extensively. Weller was a legal adviser to the Kosovo delegation for several negotiation processes at Rambouillet and Vienna.

<sup>5</sup> Marti Ahtisaari is a Former Finnish President and was involved in the negotiation process during NATO's air campaign in 1999 against Serbia.

Group (France, Germany, Italy, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States)” the UNSC approved the establishment of a Troika group (UNSC, S/2007/723, p. 1). The Troika group was composed of “the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United States” (UNSC, S/2007/723, p.1), while the role of the Contact Group was to serve as the monitoring body for the Special Envoy and the negotiation process (Weller, 2008a, p. 24).

Prior to starting the negotiations for the final status of Kosovo, the international community and Serbian leaders were completely aware that “Kosovo would not settle for anything other than independence” and a solution imposed on the Kosovo Albanian population other than independence would result in an international catastrophe (Weller, 2009, p. 191). Consequently, Belgrade’s position over the status of Kosovo was based on international law and favoured “territorial unity over demands for self-determination outside the colonial context” and offered autonomous powers to Kosovo (Weller, 2008a, p. 30). In dealing with minority issues and territorial sovereignty, other propositions over the status of Kosovo included trading parts of Kosovo’s territory with Serbia with reference to exchanging the Northern territory of Mitrovica (inhabited by Kosovo Serbs) with Southern Serbia (inhabited by Albanians). This proposition was immediately ruled out by the conflicting parties involved in dialogue, including any possibility of holding a referendum on Kosovo’s’ final status due to the region’s demographics as more than 90 percent of Kosovo Albanians who were living in Kosovo would rule out any favourable solution for other communities that put pressure on the international community to draft a suitable plan (Weller, 2008a).

As the negotiations progressed and the parties presented their positions, the international community, especially the Contact Group played a major role in shaping the agenda. Weller (2008a) argues, “Kosovo had been advised by the United States and others to ‘negotiate

generously' if it wished to see its hopes for status fulfilled" (p. 33). As much as it was about finalizing the status of Kosovo, this negotiation process also served as a power brokerage game between the US and Russia and other international actors. In this regard, Bercovitch (2011) argues that international mediation often lacks transparency and genuine involvements to resolve the conflict as mediators often "have resources and an interest in the conflict or its outcome" (p. 68). Similarly, Zartman and Touval (2007) argue that most international mediations led by major powers are claimed in the name of humanitarian intervention and peacebuilding for global and regional peace, although the primary intentions are based on self-interest and power. Mac Ginty also points out that peacebuilding interventions "in intragroup conflicts are often 'supply-led' rather than 'demand-led' as the needs of the external actors are deemed more important than the parties" involved in the conflict (cited in Byrne, 2017, p. 338). So, what did it mean to 'negotiate generously' for the Kosovo Albanian side? How much did they have to give up to please the international community in order to achieve their ultimate goal of independence?

### **Representation by Delegations: A Top-Down Approach**

Negotiating the final status of Kosovo for the international community was a test of its knowledge and power to implement neoliberal peace through peaceful mediation efforts. The process of resolving Kosovo's status brought together major powers such as the US, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, and the Russian Federation as well as international organizations such as the UN and the EU, including the conflict parties Serbia and Kosovo.

Weller (2008a) suggests that the Kosovo side was very much prepared and invested in the process, and for each issue being negotiated their team included a minister that covered the area. Their delegation was known as an 'all-party unity team' and was composed of the President,

Prime Minister, the President of the Assembly, and leaders of the opposition represented in the Parliament (p. 27). In addition, Weller (2008a) notes that, “whatever the divisions between the various factions of Kosovo politicians, they were all unified in their unwavering demand for independence” (p. 32). Considering current political and social dynamics in Kosovo, especially with regard to Serb community issues, one can easily argue that the level of unity among Albanians in the centre is very low due to the fact that the deep-rooted causes of the conflict remain unresolved. The current cooperation between Kosovo Albanians and Serbs illustrates the failure of Ahtisaari’s proposal to address the identity needs of Kosovo’s communities.

Exploring the Serbian delegation, Weller (2008a) claims that it was not prepared to negotiate and most of the time it was “represented at ministerial level or below” (p. 28). Consequently, the talks about the representation of Kosovo’s Serb community raised concerns and the international community requested the establishment of the Community Consultative Council (CCC) to represent all the communities and to receive their input from the Kosovo delegation. Subsequently, local Kosovo Serbs felt neglected by the ‘Serb representation’ in the high-level talks during the process and joined the CCC “as Belgrade mostly focused on negotiating over North Mitrovica issues and not as much about other majority populated Serb municipalities in Kosovo” (Weller, 2008, p. 28). Adding to further confusion and fragmented sovereignty, Ahtisaari’s proposal, Article 13 Annex III Decentralization states that the municipality of Mitrovica shall be divided into two municipalities South Mitrovica and North Mitrovica, which blocked any potential solution to the problem (UNSC, S/2007/168/Add.1, 2007, p. 30). To date, North Mitrovica remains a major challenge for Kosovo authorities to control and exert the rule of law in the region mostly populated by Kosovo Serbs<sup>6</sup> that run

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<sup>6</sup> North Mitrovica is also populated by Kosovo Albanians, Bosniaks, Gorani, Ashkali, and the Roma are other minority groups. See *OSCE 2015 Northern Mitrovica Profile*. ([www.osce.org/kosovo/122119?download=true](http://www.osce.org/kosovo/122119?download=true)).

parallel institutions and are controlled by Belgrade's political agenda (Brand & Idrizi, 2012; GAP Institute, 2015).

### **The Main Provisions of Ahtisaari's Comprehensive Proposal: Neoliberal Peacemaking**

Martti Ahtisaari's proposal was presented to the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) and UNSC on March 26, 2007. The proposal was drafted based on negotiations that took place between 2005-2007 considering Kosovo's final status and the inclusion of all minorities in Kosovo's agenda for peace.

Ahtisaari concludes in his letter to the UNSG that, "after more than one year of direct talks, bilateral negotiations and expert consultations, it has become clear to me that the parties are not able to reach an agreement on Kosovo's future status" (UNSC, S/2007/168, 2007, p. 2). In this context I question how invested were the parties involved in the process negotiating to facilitate a positive peace because they failed to create the right environment for the conflicting parties to willingly agree to transform the conflict and find the right peacebuilding mechanisms to transform relationships such as seeking forgiveness and reconciliation that would contribute to a peaceful resolution between the Kosovo communities. In addition to his letter, Ahtisaari requested that the UNSG resolve the Kosovo issue because its future was in limbo and as such would endanger stability in the region. Further, in his letter, with regards to Kosovo's situation, he advised that, "I have come to the conclusion that the only viable option for Kosovo is independence, to be supervised for an initial period by the international community" (UNSC, S/2007/168, 2007, p. 2). Thus, Weller (2008b) argues that although the proposal "did not explicitly touch the issue of status, it provided Kosovo with everything it would need for statehood" (p. 1223). As anticipated, after having exhausted any possible agreeable outcome the

plan was rejected by Serbia insisting that Kosovo would be an autonomous region attached to Serbia, while Kosovo Albanians accepted the plan as it had elements of independence that they had always wanted. Ahtisaari finalized his letter directed to the UNSG requesting its endorsement and he considered that his “recommendation of independence, supervised initially by the international community, takes into account Kosovo’s recent history, the realities of Kosovo today and the need for political and economic stability in Kosovo” (UN, S/2007/168, 2007, p. 5).

Ahtisaari’s (UNSC, S/2007/168, 2007) main provisions for the Kosovo comprehensive proposal status included but were not limited to the following points:

1. Kosovo’s governance shall represent a “multi-ethnic society, governing itself democratically and with full respect for the rule of law and the highest level of internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms” (p. 6);
2. Rights of communities shall be represented and protected with the highest standards and mechanisms to ensure that they are not objectified with their use of “culture, language, educations and symbols. Albanian and Serbian shall be the two official languages of Kosovo, while other community languages — such as Turkish, Bosnian and Roma — shall have the status of languages in official use” (p. 6);
3. Decentralization in the proposal promotes the rights of the “Kosovo Serb community, which shall have a high degree of control over its own affairs” including “enhanced” and “extensive municipal autonomy” and competences (pp. 6-7);
4. The justice system in the proposal aims to establish a system that is “integrated, independent, professional and impartial” and “inclusive of all communities” (p. 7);

5. The Justice system would also protect and promote all of the ethnic groups religious and cultural heritage (p. 7);
6. “All refugees and internally displaced persons from Kosovo shall have the right to return and reclaim their property and personal possessions based upon a voluntary and informed decision” (p. 7);
7. The government would ensure and promote economic development in Kosovo and the settling of “disputed property claims” (p. 7);
8. The government would create a Kosovo Police Force and Kosovo Security Force that ensures security for all as well as having multi-ethnic composition (p. 7);
9. The implementation of the settlement plan is the responsibility of Kosovo – the Constitutional Commission (p. 8);
10. The International Civilian Representative as an EU body “shall be the ultimate supervisory authority over implementation of the Settlement” until “Kosovo has implemented the terms of the Settlement” (p. 8);
11. “The European Security and Defence Policy Mission shall monitor, mentor and advise on all areas related to the rule of law in Kosovo” (p. 8);
12. The NATO-led military mission (KFOR) shall continue its presence “to provide a safe and secure environment throughout Kosovo” (p. 8); and,
13. The OSCE shall play a monitoring role to assist in the “successful implementation of the Settlement” (p. 8).

Finally, Ahtisaari noted that, within 120 days of supervised independence the Assembly of Kosovo must adopt a new constitution and establish its new institutions (UNSC, S/2007/168, 2007, p. 9).

**Constitutional Framework for Powersharing, Lack of Local Ownership**

When referring to the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo and the functioning of Kosovo as a sovereign state, we find its basis in the one-sided accepted Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement. The constitution was drafted during the interim period of 120 days provided by the UN and the Contact Group that oversaw the process of Kosovo's state building. Weller (2009) argues that when the process to draft the constitution began Kosovo Albanians "were planning to generate their own constitutional process" moving in a different direction from Ahtisaari's proposal but instead they had to agree with the terms provided by the international community (p. 243). Providing that, Article 143 of the Constitution of Kosovo attests that this document was nothing but an extension of the comprehensive proposal and left very limited space for any amendments due to the powersharing arrangements made. After the international community finalized the oversight of Kosovo's independence in 2012, Kosovo's Constitution was amended, and this article was deleted. Thus, Chapter XIII, Article 143 of the adopted (original) text stated that:

1. All authorities in the Republic of Kosovo shall abide by all of the Republic of Kosovo's obligations under the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement dated March 26, 2007. They shall take all necessary actions for their implementation.
2. The provisions of the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement dated March 26, 2007, shall take precedence over all other legal provisions in Kosovo.
3. The Constitution, laws and other legal acts of the Republic of Kosovo shall be interpreted in compliance with the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement dated March 26, 2007. If there are inconsistencies between the provisions of this Constitution, laws or other legal acts of the Republic of Kosovo and the provisions of the said Settlement, the latter shall prevail. (Constitution of Kosovo, 2008, p. 55)

Addressing and securing minority rights in Kosovo through neoliberal mechanisms was considered to only be possible through constitutional powersharing. For example, Weller (2009) argues that the Constitution of Kosovo “represents the most advanced set of minority rights provisions in Europe or anywhere else” (p. 257). The Assembly of Kosovo (AoK) has 120 seats, from which 20 are guaranteed reserved seats for minorities (10 for Serbs and 10 for other communities). In addition, this constitutional act that guarantees seats for minorities also means that regardless of whether the political representatives of minorities pass the electoral margin, they can still take 20 reserved seats of the parliament (Constitution, 2008, p. 20). Other institutional representation and rights include the Committee on the Rights, Interests of the Communities and Returns, which has the status of a Standing Committee in the Assembly. This committee enjoys its rights to discuss and submit amendments on any draft law that touches on minority rights with the aim to ensure that the rights of minorities are in accordance with the constitution and their rights are protected.

In relation to constitutional changes, the minorities hold a blocking vote power granted by Kosovo’s Constitution. Based on Article 65 paragraph 2, the Constitution of Kosovo can be amended “by two thirds (2/3) of all its deputies including two thirds (2/3) of all deputies holding seats reserved and guaranteed for representatives of communities that are not in the majority in Kosovo; any constitutional amendment shall pass only if 2/3 of minorities approves it” (Constitution, 2008, p. 20) As the constitution protects each group’s identity and guarantees the rights of minorities, one can argue that the minorities (especially the Serb community) are using their rights strategically to prevent constitutional amendments and perceived threats to their ethnopolitical identity.

On the other hand, the lack of authority by Kosovo's Government to remove Serbian parallel structures in the municipalities with majority Serb populations has continuously exposed this community's distrust towards Kosovar institutions as well as the lack of Brussels's agreements to be implemented (KFOS, 2014). Ironically, Kosovo's Serb political elites do not recognize Kosovo's institutions, yet they hold several ministerial positions in the Kosovo government, including the position of Deputy Prime Minister. From general public observation, these political leaders often use these opportunities to challenge decisionmaking if major political agendas present a threat to their identity.

Consociational or powersharing features represented in the Constitution of Kosovo technically aim to manage the conflict, integrate the minorities and build trust among the various communities (see Lijphart, 1977, 1994). Yet, by taking a top-down approach to manage the conflict this model has failed to address identity differences and the root causes of the conflict. Consequently, the features of this form of powersharing have only contributed to distrust and political dysfunctionality. Other post-peace accord societies such as Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Kenya, Burundi, and Somalia, etc., have had similar outcomes based on the constitutional framework, where one ethnic group uses its constitutional powers to block the political agendas of others (Bose, 2010; Byrne, 2000, 2006; Jeong, 2005).

The failure to identify the deep underlying causes of the conflict and the relationship between both Kosovo's Albanians and Serbs prevents the transformation of a powersharing system into a mechanism for reconciliation. The Ahtisaari Comprehensive Proposal failed to consider some very important key factors in designing a comprehensive implementation to address each group's identities and basic human needs.

Following international intervention events in response to Kosovo's crisis, phases of intervention approaches illustrate a real disconnect between the real timing to intervene, and the failed measures to establish positive peace or social justice for all. Galtung et al. (2002) argue that when states decide to intervene they usually have their own national interest and do just enough to manage the conflict, so they can carry out their own agendas "solidifying their sphere of interest" (p. xiv). Subsequently, they suggest that in order to establish peace and reconciliation in post-peace accord societies the following is necessary, "healing the traumas and bringing about closure of the conflict" that in the case of Kosovo means that reconciliation takes place "between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo/a" (Galtung et al., 2002, p. xvi). Through a wide range of peacebuilding "transcended perspectives," Galtung et al. (2002) propose several approaches to establish positive peace that also undertake a grassroots conflict transformation approach to empower civil society initiatives for peacebuilding and "support local groups with communication hardware, elicit and collect people's ideas and present them to the government" (p. 243). This represents another conflict transformation approach that aims to represent the grassroots' voice through Track II diplomacy. Subsequently, Galtung et al.'s (2002) peacebuilding approach suggests the need to involve the grassroots level in order to facilitate a successful conflict transformation, which in the case of Kosovo has failed to materialize due to top-down neoliberal peacemaking approaches. This point contributes to the main research question that focuses on understanding neoliberal peacemaking in Kosovo that has contributed to negative peace.

**Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter was to unravel the complex historical background of the conflict in Kosovo, the engagement of the international community and peacebuilding initiatives to resolve the conflict and integrate communities in Kosovo. It was argued that the conflict between Kosovo and Serbia, and between Albanian and Serbian community in Kosovo is a multifaceted ethnonational and territorial conflict. Since 1998-1999 this conflict attracted the international community with the aim of providing humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts.

This chapter also considered obstacles for coordination and peacebuilding projects between international peacekeepers and local partners, which contributed to further chaos and confusion among the communities. In addition, the main peacebuilding efforts in Kosovo involved top-down approaches where only top elected political representatives were involved directly in the processes that ignored and neglected locally driven initiatives. Thus, the public (including all ethnopolitical communities) in Kosovo was informed only about the final arrangements and were provided with no space for any input or consultation.

The next chapter discusses the methodology used in this study and the process to collect and analyse data related to the research question that analyses the provisions of Ahtisaari's peace plan and its contribution to establish positive peace in Kosovo.

### CHAPTER 3 – Methodology

#### Introduction

This chapter reveals the methodology adopted for this thesis to analyze related policy documents to unravel some of the key issues related to the peacebuilding process in Kosovo. Using a qualitative research design provides a dynamic process of an open space to analyze in depth and critique materials “without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis” (Patton, 1990, p. 13). Moreover, to give this thesis more depth and to utilize a humanistic approach I use autoethnography as a method of linking my own stories to peacebuilding theories and to relevant policy documents. To integrate autoethnography and textual/policy analysis in each chapter I provide a piece of my story and relate it to the topic that is to be discussed in that chapter. This method provides richness to the study by displaying a glimpse of a grassroots outlook and the researcher’s perspectives vis-à-vis the research question. Subsequently, in this thesis, this method projects a dynamic analysis between *reflexivity* or my past experiences, *theories* of neoliberalism and *praxis* peacebuilding processes used in Kosovo. From this perspective Adams, Holman Jones and Ellis (2015) argue that “autoethnography is a method that allows us to reconsider how we think, how we do research, and how we live” (p.8). This form of writing and researching allowed me to focus and clarify better the objective of this study; which aims to learn about the peacebuilding process in Kosovo through the Ahtisaari comprehensive peace proposal and how that translated into either positive or negative peace.

Although the primary document to analyze in this study is Martti Ahtisaari’s Comprehensive Plan, this study also analyzes relevant agreements, reports, policy papers and research produced by international organizations, Kosovo institutions, and local and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). In total, this study analysed about 308 pages of 13

policy documents that are related to Kosovo's peacebuilding initiatives, human rights and constitutional affairs, and the intensification of the relationship between Kosovo and Serbia and their respective communities.

### **Methods: Autoethnography**

I have adopted an autoethnography method to write this thesis because I believe that sharing my personal narratives in the main findings chapters will provide this study with a personal dimension. Autoethnography is based on three important elements: auto, which refers to the "self", ethno, represents the "*cultural*" factor and graphy means *writing* (Adams et al., 2015; Ellis, 2004; Pensoneau-Conway, 2017).

To carry out this research project I have adopted some elements of autoethnography based on Adams et al.'s (2015) definition which include but are not limited to the following: a) the researcher's culture and experience, b) the "researcher's relationship with others", c) self-reflection or reflexivity, d) fluidity between theoretical discipline, "emotion and creativity", and e) proclamation of "social justice" (pp. 1-2). Subsequently, I rely on my personal memories and share my own experiences and stories through the autoethnographic research method, and as a third-party researcher, I let theorizing happen in other sections of chapters to reflect on everyday peacebuilding initiatives.

In this thesis, autoethnography or the life history methodology also provides more context for the analysis of the peacebuilding process in Kosovo (Adams et al., 2015; Clough, 2004; Goodson, 2013; Merrill & West, 2009; Mizzi, 2010; O'Neill et al., 2014). For example, Mizzi (2010) explains the importance of narrative voices or "multivocality" in autoethnographic writing and illustrates this concept with his personal narratives as a foreign aid worker in post-

conflict Kosovo. He suggests that there is “no single and temporally-fixed voice” while conducting autoethnographic research (Mizzi, 2010, n/p). In autoethnography, a researcher projects different voices or narratives by de/constructing the personal self in different phases and contexts (Mizzi, 2010). Adams et al. (2015) argue that autoethnography goes beyond methodology in the research process as it represents “a way of living” and a “*perspective of the self* in context and culture” (pp. 20, 103 original italics). Ellis (2004) also attests that from a research methodological viewpoint “autoethnography overlaps with art and science,” which in the research context empowers the researcher to become more evocative and creative (p. 31). On this note, autoethnography offers a hybrid platform between personal narratives and theoretical discipline.

In addition, autoethnography involves a process of critical self-reflection and therapy. Sikes (2012) argues that this process offers a broader knowledge and “insights into the research” (p. 130). In addition, I have used this study as a form of cathartic healing of myself by reflecting on and expressing my sentiments and concerns for the past, the present, and the future. I did not keep a journal before or during the war. I had to rely on my own memories to share my narratives in this thesis. Chang (2008) outlines the benefits of autoethnography as a method and personal memories in contextualizing self writing and self narrative. She emphasizes that “autoethnographers must be willing to dig deeper into their memories,” which contributes to a self-transformation process (p. 51). Chang (2008) and Chang et al. (2013) also attest that the autoethnographic research process often involves the contextualization of self-data (memory) and external data. External autoethnography information (data) is gathered from family, friends and/or relatives (Chang, 2008). In addition, Chang et al. (2013) argue that, “personal memory captures what you recall about your past and surroundings for the purpose of the study” (p. 75).

Considering that memory plays a very important role in autoethnography, Adams et al. (2015) suggest that “memory is fluid and fallible” and therefore to give the study more depth it is important to rely on other forms of observation and data (p. 95). In this context, the power of memory is crucial when writing autoethnography, as this will allow the writer to re-live those moments and take the reader on a similar journey. For example, Gutter (2018) a Jewish war survivor relies on his photographic memory to bring legacy to his experiences and explain the details of how he survived WWII in his book (pp. xix, xxiv).

From my viewpoint, telling my own stories through a peacebuilding lens presents a cultural dimension to this research and captivates the importance of storytelling “as a means of communicating intra- and intergenerationally” (Merrill & West, 2009, p. 35). Senehi (2000) argues that, “storytelling can and must be a significant part of the peacebuilding process” (p. 97). In addition, she argues that telling stories conveys “social construction of identity, knowledge, memory and emotion” (Senehi, 2000, p. 103). As a storyteller through this research, I also want to depict how my past experiences shaped my thinking as a researcher and the sense for freedom and peacebuilding approaches.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

While there are different ways to analyze agreements, policy papers, strategies and other relevant documents related to Kosovo’s peace settlement, in this study I mainly focus on the outcomes that these historical agreements have produced and to what extent the grassroots have been affected. Approaching this study from the perspective of power imbalance between those that produce public policies/agreements and those that have to live with their consequences, I came to terms with Ball (2006)’s argument that “certain policy texts may be collectively undermined or

may generate mass confusion and demoralization” (pp. 45-6), which in the case of Kosovo, social and political confusion have continuously challenged the everyday peace. Subsequently, Ball (2006) argues that policy texts emerge as a result of historical events and agendas and aim to redistribute voice (p. 49).

Subsequently, analyzing Ahtisaari’s peace allows for the process of analysis to expand beyond its content and reveal the logic behind patterns of social change. Moreover, using critical analysis of applied peacebuilding strategies in Kosovo allowed me to explore further into how PACS theories apply in the case of Kosovo and highlight social imperfections in the discourse of peace. This textual and theoretical analysis provides a contextual space for understanding and underpinning social interactions.

In addition, to provide a better structure that is “richly descriptive” I analyze existing secondary data by applying inductive and deductive approaches (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 15; Ritchie & Spencer, 2002). First, the reason for using an inductive process is that this study aims to identify specific patterns generated from secondary data (policy documents) and connect them to relevant PACS theories to achieve a better understanding of how praxis connects to theories, ultimately ending in two competing discourses, praxis vs. theory. Generally, inductive reasoning, first, relies on the researcher’s observation and data collection and then applies findings to existing theories or develops new theories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 17). In contrast, the deductive process relies on theories for the basis of research and applies the data collected to those theories to build the study. These processes allowed me to reflect on PACS theories to help to facilitate an indepth analysis and interpretation of collected materials. As a researcher, this method allowed me to expand my knowledge and perceptions as well as develop a broad scope of analysis and elucidate on the main research question (Axinn & Pearce, 2006, p. 197).

Speaking Albanian language allowed me to expand the research process in both the English and Albanian languages. I was able to obtain data from different libraries or online sources. In addition, my search was related to but not limited to keywords such as “Kosovo”, “Kosovo and Serbia”, “Conflict”, “Peacebuilding Process”, “Intervention”, “Ahtisaari Plan” “Dialogue/Negotiations”, “Mediation”, “Independence”, “Communities”, and “Peace polls”, etc. This rationale was used to focus on collecting necessary data centering the study solely on Kosovo and its peace development as the main theme in my research. In addition to an extensive library research, data was also collected from online sources from Kosovo and Serbian government official documents and policies, UN and EU resolutions and progress reports, policy papers, the reports of many local and international governmental organizations, multinational corporations and civil society groups, as well as news/press releases and videos.

Data collection was divided into three different time periods, namely (1) before the 1989-1999 Kosovo war, (2) after the war until the declaration of the independence of Kosovo 1999-2008, and (3) from the independence of Kosovo to 2018. Dividing the collection of data into three time periods assisted me in focusing on illustrating the peacebuilding process in Kosovo. Subsequently, this process built stepping-stones to select data relevant to the aforementioned research questions.

### **Limitations of the Study and Positionality**

**Limitations.** In order to provide a rich discussion and draw upon narratives of the Kosovo peacebuilding process, this research was based on secondary resources that extensively captured available online material. Thus, considering that the study aimed to critique the top-down peacebuilding process in Kosovo, relying only on secondary data may have affected the depth of

the research and disregarded the representation of the grassroots voice. I was limited by both time and the resources made available to me to conduct this research. Although I worked diligently in creating an exhaustive search of databases and analyzing the materials, I might have missed capturing a broader sense of other essential information such as one-on-one interviews with key informants to explore peacebuilding narratives in Kosovo.

**Positionality.** I am a member of the Kosovo Albanian community in Kosovo and I have experienced war. While I initially aimed to take a neutral stance in this study and represent all of the communities living in Kosovo, I believe that my personal experience to some extent could have impacted the process of expressing myself as a third-party researcher.

On a positive note, as a local person conducting this thesis research, the process empowered me to adopt a more personal dimension to emphasize the achievements and failures of the peacebuilding process in Kosovo and rationalize it through PACS theories. The ability to speak the local Albanian language played to my advantage as it allowed me to expand my search to collect and analyze data.

## **Conclusion**

In order to analyze the patterns of the evolution of the Kosovo peacebuilding process, this study uses a qualitative research design and offers a systematic analysis of the Martti Ahtisaari's plan through related PACS theories. In addition to an indepth analysis of Ahtisaari's peace agreement for Kosovo, I have adopted autoethnography as a primary research method. Autoethnography as a method provides a personal and human dimension to this research project. It also reveals peacebuilding scenarios in Kosovo upon my reflection of my past experiences. Accordingly, my narratives aim to present episodes of negative peace in Kosovo before and after the war. Hence,

it is common for PACS scholars when conceptualizing a deep analysis of conflict to draw on narratives or local conflict transformation and peacebuilding stories (Senehi, 2002, 2017a, 2017b). Therefore, bringing pieces of my stories together will open the space for our understanding of how peace evolved in Kosovo through my own eyes.

In addition, this study is based on the analysis of data produced by local Kosovo institutions (NGOs, civil society, think tanks, government, and media) and international organizations as well as missions that monitor Kosovo's progress towards conflict resolution, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

## CHAPTER 4 – Understanding Peace in Kosovo

### Introduction

Examining the 1998-1999 Kosovo conflict and its repercussions, it is important to also analyse the conflict and understand it through the lenses of positive peace or social justice. Johan Galtung (1967, 1996) a pioneer in peace studies first introduced the terms *positive* and *negative peace*. To begin with, he defines peace as “the absence of organized collective violence, in other words, violence between major human groups; particularly nations, but also between classes and between racial and ethnic groups because of the magnitude internal wars can have” (Galtung, 1967, p. 12). He later elaborates on the theory of positive and negative peace and argues that positive peace is the absence of physical violence (1996, p. 20), while he defines negative peace as “structural” or “cultural violence” at all levels (p. 45). Hence, negative peace presents more layers and is more complex as it involves different structural inequalities that include but are not limited to social, political, military, economic and cultural (Byrne & Senehi, 2012). These elements of negative peace or the absence of war underline some of the main causes of conflict that contribute to an unsustainable peace in Kosovo.

Elements of negative peace in Kosovo are represented in different layers that include but are not limited to cross-community issues, ethnic tolerance, political corruption and the lack of transparency, unemployment, gender inequality and the rule of law. Some of these elements, especially cross-community and human rights issues represent the foundation of the Ahtisaari comprehensive peace proposal, yet they lack real substance in dealing with the root causes of the conflict and the establishment of positive peace in Kosovo. Such layers represent basic human needs that if jeopardized can lead to conflict. In addition, Galtung (2009) suggests that in order to overcome negative peace and structural violence where human needs are jeopardized, people’s

basic human needs are non-negotiable, but one can negotiate the means to fulfil these basic needs (p. 524). Considering that the current situation in Kosovo is characterized by negative peace (absence of war) this chapter aims to analyze why, and how Martti Ahtisaari's peace plan contributed to establishing a positive or negative peace in Kosovo.

### **The Limits of a Violent Peace: My Own Story - Part II**

What is peace? Conflicted with memories of the conflict, for me, peace meant simply freedom, freedom from occupation. Yet, I always wondered why there was no positive peace in Kosovo. Perhaps I was considering a more inclusive peace that meant the positive integration of all communities in Kosovo's life, regardless of their ethnicity. I was looking for less corruption and better use of the rule of law. I was looking for a self-sustained inclusive and cohesive peace; and a self-sustained democratic society, where there would be no need for an international presence. Yet, freedom for Kosovo Albanians translated into enclaves for Kosovo Serbs. As the international community remained present in Kosovo for many years, I wondered why there was a lack of sustainable development in the country while hatred remained firmly entrenched between communities. Past conflict and humanitarian intervention events in Kosovo pushed me to pursue an academic journey in PACS. At the time, I did not know that what I had experienced in Kosovo after the conflict, in theory, was known as negative peace or the absence of war. In this new chapter of my life, I learned that social justice matters and accepting others is a first step towards building a holistic and sustainable peace. These thoughts correspond with John Paul Lederach (2005)'s argument and Kosovo's reality that "when relationships collapse, the centre of social change does not hold" (p. 75). Kosovo's relationships have collapsed and consequently, the centre of social change is not holding up.

During my recent visit to Kosovo, I used the opportunity to go back to visit my colleagues at the Assembly of Kosovo. I went there with a peacebuilder's mindset. In a friendly informal conversation with a Member of Parliament as we sat sipping coffee in a coffee shop, we discussed my studies and how I could compare peace in Kosovo with other places. Subsequently, I was trying to channel some of Lederach's peacebuilding ideas with Galtung's positive/negative peace definitions into the conversation. I also mentioned how important it was to move on from conflict narratives and lean towards forgiveness of one's perceived enemies. Forgiveness contributes to healing in post-conflict societies and this process may bring about positive conflict transformation to reconcile differences between rival communities (Lederach, 2005). My friend listened to me patiently as we drank coffee and she waited for me to finish my thoughts. She wondered how Albanians could forgive Serbs as Serbia had not apologized for the ethnic cleansing and rape-warfare it carried out during the 1998-1999 war. She said that it is difficult for survivors of war crimes to forgive perpetrators and if they receive amnesty for crimes then an illusion of peace will exist.

I explained to her that sometimes change should come from within the person and not necessarily from without. I asked her what we could do as a society to move on and accept everyday Serbs that are free of committing war crimes. She responded that innocent Serbs have the same rights and freedoms as other communities within a free and democratic Kosovo. She noted that most Serbs and their elected officials refuse to recognize a free and independent Kosovo. They are trapped in a parallel political system controlled by the Serbian government that frames the local narrative that is divisive. I sensed that she was voicing some problems that were rooted in the recent history of Kosovo that included structural violence with grassroots problems.

It is conversations like these with friends and relatives about the Kosovo situation that affirms my belief that Kosovo is built on layers upon layers of negative peace. In some villages or towns where war crimes have consumed the lives of people and they still count losses of life and deep psychic wounds, the sense of forgiveness for one's perceived enemy remains an abstract theme. People live between chosen traumas and chosen glories (Volkan, 1998).

Another memory that I recall that makes me reflect about negative peace in Kosovo was during a visit to North Mitrovica. A few years ago, I participated in a youth activity held in the municipality of North Mitrovica, besides the roundtable discussions and presentations assigned with the program, this activity involved a walk from South Mitrovica to North Mitrovica. A bridge that before the 1998-1999 war used to be one bridge now divides both towns. This bridge used to be a physical barricade between North and South that aimed to keep Kosovo divided between Albanians and Serbs. Before the conflict Albanians and Serbians used to cohabitate together in Mitrovica.

The feeling of walking from South to North Mitrovica gave me will always make me see another layer of negative peace in Kosovo. North Mitrovica had a vibe from the Milošević era. This walk took me back fifteen years and reminded me of the presence of the Serbian regime in Kosovo. As we passed the bridge we stepped into a Serbian enclave. It looked like the clock had stopped for those that lived in this area. The ethnonationalism was demonstrated and displayed through Serbian flags and Cyrillic posters exposed throughout the town. Yet, there was very limited economic or social development in the town. I felt that the people were trapped between two different worlds, that of Serbia in the North and that of Kosovo in the South. Life for Kosovo Albanians living in the south was moving at a faster pace compared to the lives of Kosovo Serbians in this region that had remained frozen. After this short visit, a question that

was stuck in my mind was why after all of the international funding efforts that poured into Kosovo and into other Serbian populated towns in the north that this place was still living with ghosts of the past?

After the conflict in Kosovo, other fellow Albanian citizens and I shared a common narrative that all Serbs regardless of who they are remain our enemies. But when I started working in the Assembly and met Serbs in different work and education projects I changed my beliefs and learned that we cannot pigeonhole all Serbian people as our enemies. I could put a human face on Serbs and not categorize them as war monsters. After all, not everyone held a gun and killed Kosovo Albanians. I believe that it takes people like us to start to change and accept each other. Although we never talked about war events, I think there is a silent agreement between everyday people that sometimes it is not good to discuss any subject that is related to the conflict and ethnonationalism as that will only make matters worse as the wounds are still too raw. As this vicious circle seems unstoppable I question how can we change the attitude of a whole society when politics and the past trick the future into quiescence?

### **Building Peace in Kosovo**

Kosovo's quest for peace continuously faced limitations because of the local community, regional and international endeavours. These limitations were related but were not limited to historical narratives, identity, nationalism, human rights abuse and violence, security, subjugation and corruption with all of these factors contributing to negative peace (see Galtung, 1996). There were countless efforts with the help and guidance of the international community to establish peace in Kosovo for more than twenty years, yet Kosovo's prospects to build peace have seen limited progress. Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that without the help of the

international community Kosovo's political fate would be disastrous. From a personal point-of-view, if the international community had not intervened in the conflict, perhaps I would not be writing this thesis and providing an autoethnography and analysis of peace prospects in Kosovo.

While building peace in divided societies requires peacebuilding expertise, implementing and maintaining the peace seems to be a real challenge for external interveners and the internal parties to the conflict. The Global Peace Index (2017) highlights a list of countries and their rankings in the positive peace index, and subsequently, out of 163 countries where positive peace was measured, Kosovo is ranked 124 (p. 15), which shows how far Kosovo is from ranking better in this category. In this context, the process of measuring positive peace was based on eight indicators: (1) well-functioning government, (2) sound business environment, (3) equitable distribution of resources, (4) acceptance of the rights of others, (5) good relations with neighbours, (6) the free flow of information, (7) high levels of human capital, and (8) low levels of corruption (Global Peace Index, 2017, p. 9). Even if the list of the aforementioned indicators was included in Martti Ahtisaari's Kosovo peace plan, what matters is creating the right environment to implement the peace plan and involve the everyday people.

Jeong (2005) argues that one of the reasons that too many peacebuilding projects lack sustainable effects is a failure to determine clear and compelling peace goals and to coordinate strategies to achieve them (p. 19). As a Kosovar that lived and worked in Kosovo during and after the war, and analysing the situation that now exists there, I can see a fragmented peacebuilding system in almost every component that is presented above. A facilitated peacebuilding process that would result in positive peace in Sandole (2010)'s term is known as "maximalist peacebuilding". In addition, he argues that it is the minimalist peacebuilding that,

“does not address underlying causes and conditions” of the conflict that leads to negative peace or the absence of war (Sandole, 2010, p. 11).

Ahtisaari’s main provisions for Kosovo’s settlement plan and the process of concluding Kosovo’s status failed to consider social inclusive emancipation by gaining popular consent. Rather the plan was introduced after it was fully accepted by the political elite. Although the rights of communities presented the core of the negotiations agenda for a possible political settlement agreement, the process failed to consider a positive flow to establish good ethnic relations between community groups. For the international community, it was important to reach an agreement leading to a possible settlement plan that guaranteed the rights of Kosovo’s communities and preserves their culture and identity rights. For Kosovo Albanians, a successful plan meant anything that would result in Kosovo’s independence from Serbia with support from the international community.

In the midst of ethnic hostility and the process to conclude Ahtisaari’s peace talks that failed to provide an adequate platform for representation of the grassroots, different organizations and civil society groups took the initiative to hold peace polls and discussions about how a peaceful independent Kosovo would look like for Kosovo Albanians and Serbs. In a long and detailed peace poll that took place in Kosovo and Serbia before the Ahtisaari peace plan was finalized, Colin Irwin (2005) presents evidence that Kosovo Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo and Serbia viewed and approached the problem of Kosovo very differently. He also attests to the importance of taking into consideration peace polls in a country like Kosovo because that benefits negotiators and political elites to get the support of the grassroots to establish an emancipatory sustainable peace (Irwin, 2005). For example, as Irwin (2005) reports, the list of priorities differed from one community to another. Eighty seven percent of Kosovo Albanians

agreed that finalizing “Kosovo’s final status” was very significant, whereas only 65 percent of Kosovo Serbs believed that this was the most important issue. As an alternative, 78 percent of this community voted for “Kosovo power supply” to be a very significant matter (Irwin, 2005, pp. 12-13). The results on this issue demonstrated that Kosovo’s final status was in the heart of Kosovo Albanian’s because this would determine the future of Kosovo’s independence from Serbia. In addition, 83 percent of Serbian Serbs voted for the need for “public and personal security in Kosovo” and only 72 percent viewed “Kosovo’s final status” to be very significant (Irwin, 2005, p. 15).

Consequently, Kosovo Albanians, Kosovo Serbs and Serbian Serbs clearly shared different views in terms of their highest priorities. As Kosovo Albanians wanted to secure their freedom from Serbia, Serbians wanted to feel secure in Kosovo. Similarly, the topic of “Serb and Albanian relations” was significant and was voted on by 38 percent of Kosovo Albanians, and by 69 percent of Kosovo Serbs (Irwin, 2005, pp. 12-15). Similarly, the topic “reconciliation” was also significant for the electorate with only 9 percent of Kosovo Albanians, 34 percent of Kosovo Serbs, and 57 percent of Serbian Serbs voting for this issue (Irwin, 2005, pp. 12-15). These numbers illustrate that Kosovo Albanians were not ready to let go of past conflict events and reconcile their differences with Serbians. In contrast, Serbs in Kosovo and Serbia shared a more open attitude towards building a better relationship with Kosovo Albanians and normalizing their relations with them. If the social mobilization and empowerment of the grassroots through peacebuilding initiatives was considered more seriously in the case of Kosovo the outcome could lead to the use of restorative justice and reconciliation among and between both communities.

**Martti Ahtisaari's Peace Plan for a Multiethnic Society**

This section focuses only on the first five points (see Context Chapter) of Ahtisaari's Comprehensive Proposal. These points are specifically linked to democratic governance, empowerment, and the rights of minorities living in Kosovo because these factors are considered significant in contributing to sustainable positive peace and social justice.

Referring to the first point that calls for an all-inclusive multi-ethnic state that promotes the rights and freedoms for all citizens, this statement aims to promote basic rights for all communities, regardless of their ethnicity. This component builds the foundation of modern democracy and formal representation of human rights with the highest western international standards. Consequently, in the case of Kosovo minority rights and their language have been manifested in every legislative component. In this context, the European Commission's Progress Report for Kosovo contained within legal parameters and acts attests that, "the legal framework broadly guarantees the protection of human and fundamental rights in line with European Standards" (EC, 2018a, p. 1). Thus, without proper implementation and the promotion of human rights, through a discourse perspective, these laws provide a superficial basis for promoting human rights and ethnic tolerance in Kosovo.

Although there is an improvement in the rule-of-law sector, Kosovo authorities are continuously faced with challenges to properly implement laws after they are adopted because there are "problems of political interference and corruption" (EC, 2018b, p. 3). Hence, another challenge for rule-of-law implementers remains the extension of control over the territory of Kosovo, especially in areas populated by Serbs, as they continue to live within their own enclaves. On a positive note, there is some limited progress on the judicial system that has taken a step forward towards inclusion of Kosovo Serb judges and prosecutors in Kosovo's judiciary (EC, 2018a, p. 1). Ahtisaari considered that it was important that Kosovo have a justice system

that is independent, promotes and protects the rights of all communities as a key basis for his Kosovo settlement plan, providing that at least 15 percent of judges, and not less than 3 should be represented from other communities (UNSC, S/2007/168/Add.1, 2007, Annex IV, p. 33).

Another important point from the comprehensive peace plan is with regards to the rights of communities use of language. For example, Ahtisaari proposed that Kosovo should have two official languages, Albanian and Serbian, and other communities such as Turks, Bosnians and Roma were to have the official status to use their languages at the municipal level. Although all of the communities in Kosovo make up around 10 percent of the total population, Ahtisaari's plan provided an excellent opportunity for positive inclusion and representation of minority rights. In addition to language rights, all of the communities regardless of their numbers were guaranteed rights to use their culture, education and community symbols in schools and in local municipalities. This freedom provided all of the communities the right to use their languages in primary and secondary schools. In addition, the Serbian community has its own University of Mitrovica-North to educate Serbian students. These components of everyday life in Kosovo are catalysts to create positive change in the education realm.

However, ECMI states that the Serbian community faces obstacles to accessing municipal services due to language barriers, claiming that at both the municipal and central state federal level there is a “lack of compliance by institutions with the Law on the Use of Languages” (n.d). However, positive change and community acceptance of different languages should provide the incentives for a joint governed peace from all structures that involves bottom-up (emancipatory peacebuilding) and top-down mechanisms (neoliberal peacebuilding).

Referring to the religious rights of communities under Annex V of the Ahtisaari peace plan defined as Cultural and Religious Rights, one can say that the Serbian community has been

“positively” discriminated against. Kosovo was established on the premise of secularism, yet in the Ahtisaari document the Serbian Orthodox Church is given enhanced privileges to ensure that the rights of this religious community are fully protected (UNSC, S/2007/168/Add.1, 2007, Annex V, pp. 38-43). However, giving special rights to the Serbian Orthodox Church and ignoring other religious communities could contribute to other communities’ frustration that they are being discriminated against (Dugolli et al., 2007, p. 6). Subsequently, Article 3, Paragraph 3.1 of Annex V obliges the Kosovo Police Force to secure the Serbian Orthodox Church at all times including, “its monasteries, churches and other religious cultural sites of special significance to the Kosovo Serb community” (UNSC, S/2007/168/Add.1, 2007, p.37).

Thus, what led to emphasising the importance of protecting Serbian Orthodox Churches came about as a result of mass protests that took place on March 2004 throughout Kosovo. During this mass demonstration – the largest after the 1999 international humanitarian intervention – Kosovo Albanians protested against Serbians and the international community. These protests resulted in violent attacks against Serbian Churches and the Serbian community. These violent events connect with Galtung (1996)’s discussions of cultural violence. He suggests that, “cultural violence serves to legitimize direct and structural violence” between communities and therefore becomes a catalyst for negative peace and social injustice (Galtung, 1996, p. 35).

Moving on with the rights of the Kosovo Serb community, Ahtisaari’s proposal also promoted decentralization of Serbian populated municipalities (UNSC, S/2007/168.Add/1, 2007, Annex III, pp. 22-33). This component aimed to further promote the rights of the Serbian community in Kosovo and give it control over its own affairs by enhancing its municipal autonomy. This peace component gave additional rights to Serbians to decide their own affairs such as education, and cultural and national matters as well as local finances. Such rights also

allowed Serbian populated municipalities to cooperate with institutions within Serbia and receive funding from them. The OSCE (2010) reports that the Serbian government provides financial assistance to the Kosovo Serbian community, specifically for education and health sector employees, and “former employees of the state-owned institutions and factories” (p. 5). In addition, they were given privileges to establish more municipalities and promote their rights. Currently, there are ten Serb populated municipalities in Kosovo. Consequently, these rights and privileges manifested in terms of local people demanding requests for even more autonomy.

The request from the Kosovo Serbian community and Belgrade to enhance municipal rights was formalized through EU mediated dialogue that aims to normalize the relations between Kosovo and Serbia. Specifically, in 2015 delegations agreed to create an Association of Municipalities with Serb majority populations that would further enhance their rights and give them more autonomy over their affairs. This agreement led to hostile exchanges within Kosovo’s Parliament due to the internal political disputes within Kosovo. The opposition used tear gas in the Assembly building to prevent the ratification of this agreement that immediately led to mass demonstrations in the streets of Prishtina (see Chapter 6 for details).

Considering the importance of both processes – the Ahtisaari Comprehensive Plan and the EU mediated dialogue – to establish peace through dialogue and reach mutual agreements, the consequences that sprang from these agreements demonstrated that at times the international community, mediators and parties involved in the overall dialogue process blatantly disregarded inter-ethnic dialogue.

Nevertheless, peacemaking mechanisms to promote friendship and good relations on the elite level in Kosovo by disregarding the grassroots contributed to greater structural violence, which in turn led to more hostility and division between Albanians in Kosovo and Kosovar’s

distrust towards any process to normalize relations with Serbia. Defining structural violence as a reflection of negative peace, Galtung (1996) argues that “structural violence is easily reproduced in the social system” (p. 122), which often disputes political elite and the grassroots between those that oppose any form of structural and cultural violence and those that contribute to factors of an unsustainable peace and structural violence. Subsequently, Mac Ginty (2006) argues from a critique of the neoliberal peacebuilding approach that peace projects that result from western-liberal approaches are imperfect and often contribute to “a negative rather than a positive peace” (p. 176). Consequently, structural violence becomes a vicious circle that never stops reproducing negative peace.

### **To Peace or Not to Peace?**

Both during and after the 1998-1999 conflict, Kosovo Albanians and the Serbian regime had several chances to reach an agreement and end their conflict on a positive note as well as establish good relations with each other. Two events stand out in terms of building a possible positive peace in Kosovo. First, during the Rambouillet talks and before NATO's humanitarian intervention the Western powers requested that Serbian President Milošević surrender. If he had come to an agreement to withdraw his troops from Kosovo, stop the violence and guarantee people's human rights, at the time, Kosovo would remain an autonomous region within Serbia. Second, the real chance to normalize relations between Serbians and Kosovo Albanians was during Ahtisaari's talks that aimed to conclude the future status of Kosovo. This time Serbians reverted to their diplomatic goal and position to accept no other solution than what was initially offered to Milošević. They rejected Ahtisaari's peace plan that would lead to Kosovo's independence. In this context, due to historical territorial claims, events that aimed to establish

peace instead contributed to hostility and negative peace among community groups living in Kosovo, especially between ethnic-Albanians and ethnic-Serbs. Consequently, major incentives by the international community to establish peace in Kosovo have proven to be rather superficial as the structural violence is ever omnipresent.

Subsequently, it is no coincidence that twenty years after the war in Kosovo the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić continues to visit areas inhabited mainly by Kosovo Serbs, the most recent being in North Mitrovica. In a public speech for his ethnic community, he confidently praised 1987 Milošević's famous speech. Milošević's infamous Kosovo speech was considered to be the primer and the starting point for the escalation of conflict in the Balkans. The speech at the site of the Battle of Kosovo enflamed Serb nationalist feelings and took a political stand against those that threatened Serbian identity and Yugoslav's existing territorial borders. Vučić claimed that,

Milošević was a great Serbian leader; his intentions were certainly the best ones, but our results were much worse. Not because he, or anyone else, had wanted it so, but because our wishes were not realistic, and we neglected and underestimated strivings of other nations. And therefore, we paid the highest and the most difficult price. (The President of the Republic of Serbia, 2018, n.p)

Vučić's visits to Kosovo on many occasions reflected nationalist sentiments and by no means expressed the point of view that Serbia was willing to ask for forgiveness for the war crimes committed in Kosovo. Hence, in order to show signs of national goodwill and to establish good relationships after conflict, apologizing for wrongdoings can be a constructive first step on the road to social justice or positive peace. Almost twenty years after the conflict, forgiveness has never been included in Serbia's political agenda towards Kosovo.

For several years Vučić was involved in the EU-mediated dialogue process between Kosovo and Serbia with the aim of normalizing the relationship between both countries. Thus, although he occasionally tried to please Europe and demonstrate Serbia's pro-western values, on some occasions, his politics have been controversial vis-a-vis Kosovo. His actions continue to provoke the situation in Kosovo and fuel Serbian nationalism. On multiple occasions, these provocations have confirmed that the relationship between Kosovo and Serbia is going backwards instead of forward. For example, in 2017 then Prime Minister Vučić ordered a train to travel to the North of Kosovo with Serbia's national symbols and the slogan "Kosovo is Serbia" in twenty-one languages emblazoned on it. As matters heated up between Prishtina and Belgrade's political leadership regarding these provocative actions, Vučić ordered the train to stop and return to Serbia without actually making it to Kosovo. Subsequently, Vučić claimed that his intention was not to provoke conflict as the Albanians in Kosovo had anticipated, instead, he claimed that his intentions were to build peace and mutual trust, and show the people in Serbia and Kosovo that there is freedom of movement between Serbia and Kosovo (New York Times, 2017).

Another challenge that Kosovo authorities face since the end of the war is with regards to Kosovo Serbs illegal parallel structures known as Interim Administrative Bodies. The Kosovo Serbs' drive to exert full control in the north of Kosovo is not new to both the local authorities and the international community that is present in Kosovo. These are very complex issues that the international community avoided in addressing during the negotiations (Weller, 2008a). These problems have existed since the end of the war and continued after the adoption of Ahtisaari's plan for Kosovo's peace settlement. Even the mayors of northern Kosovo

municipalities “exercise dual functions” and “refuse to be identified with any sign or symbol of the state of Kosovo” (GAP, 2015, p. 2).

Besides a clear division between communities in this area, criminal illegal activities consume the lives of everyday people. A recent example was when one of the leaders of the Serbian community in Kosovo that is also a former Member of the Assembly of Kosovo, Oliver Ivanović was killed by unknown perpetrators while going to work to his office in North Mitrovica in January 2018. He was a critical voice against the situation in the North of Kosovo and he continuously interfered in Belgrade’s politics regarding the Serbian community in Kosovo. In an interview with *Vreme*, a Serbian magazine, he voiced his concerns about human security in North Mitrovica. He claimed that people were not afraid of Albanians or Serbs, instead, they were petrified of gangs operating in their town. Although the Kosovo police who are mainly Serbians are present, it does nothing to control the situation (Vreme, 2017). In addition, the Kosovo police claimed that it would award 10,000EUR to anyone who comes forward with information regarding Ivanović’s assassination (Kosovo Police, 2018). Both of these issues certainly contribute to negative peace that promotes the absence of war (Galtung, 1996). It is undeniable that Kosovo’s society is challenged with very deep structural and ethnic-division problems. These divisions are both intra group and inter group divisions. Albanians in Kosovo are divided on issues especially vis-à-vis dialogue with Serbia, and so are Serbians in Kosovo and Serbia divided amongst themselves on numerous matters.

Every so often provocations also emanate from the Kosovo Albanian side towards Serbia. Recently, the President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaçi, who is also the head of the Kosovo delegation in EU-mediated dialogue with Serbia, visited the same spot where the President of Serbia also spent time a couple of weeks earlier where he held a speech. Thaçi’s visit to Gazivoda Lake,

located in the northern part of Kosovo, populated mainly by Serbs came about as a result of recent discussions about the demarcation of the border with Serbia that should eventually be resolved through the EU-mediated dialogue. However, this discussion has taken a different turn and Thaçi has suggested that this process will possibly involve a new redrawing of the border between Kosovo and Serbia. Hence, this “new redrawing” of borders translates into a possible exchange of territories between Kosovo and Serbia.

As the opponents of this presidential generated idea claim, Serbia is to receive the northern part of Kosovo, populated by Serbs, while Kosovo is to get the southwest part of Serbia that is heavily populated by Albanians. When Thaçi visited Gazivoda Lake his aim was also to convey a message to the Albanians that oppose his idea of new border demarcation with Serbia clearly indicated that his intentions are not to give Kosovo’s land to Serbia. Instead, he aims to ensure Kosovo’s full territorial integrity and sovereignty are not jeopardized under any circumstances. On the same day, he paid this unexpected visit to Gazivoda lake, a massive protest took place against Thaçi’s territorial claims and his flirting with Serbia in the capital city of Kosovo, Prishtina (Bota Sot, 2018; Reuters, 2018).

Weller (2008) argues that during the settlement of Kosovo dialogue it was proposed to the conflict parties to consider exchanging territories between Kosovo and Serbia (p. 60). Weller does not imply that Serbia was to give any territory to Kosovo. He briefly explains that it was discussed that the price of Kosovo’s independence and its *de jure* recognition from Serbia was to trade the northern part of Kosovo, which is populated mainly by the Serbian community. Both sides immediately turned down this proposal (Weller, 2008a, p. 60). Now, it is the President of Kosovo that willingly claims that he is going to request that the southwest part of Serbia be transferred to Kosovo during EU talks. In addition, he ambiguously claims that Kosovo will not

give any territories to Serbia, including the northern parts of the country that are populated by Serbs. Unquestionably, the President's public claims confirm the chaos and confusion that has swamped the dialogue process between Kosovo and Serbia. In addition, in response to ongoing territorial claims, the Kosovo Democratic Institute (KDI) published a public opinion poll confirming that 77.6 percent of citizens would oppose "the exchange of territory between Kosovo and Serbia as part of a potential agreement" (KDI, 2018b, n.p).

Based on the Kosovo Constitution generated from Ahtisaari's peace plan, Chapter I, Article 1 under Basic Provisions states that, "the Republic of Kosovo shall have no territorial claims against, and shall seek no union with, any State or part of any State" (Constitution of Kosovo, 2008). This paragraph of the Constitution of Kosovo clearly demonstrates that any territorial claim is unconstitutional and therefore should not be considered valid by any of the conflicting parties. Hence, these political/territorial claims emanating from the leadership of Kosovo or Serbia continue to confuse the public and contribute to negative peace.

Following the latest developments that either maintain or deteriorate peace efforts in Kosovo, it is broadly understood that the process of dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia has been victimized by Serbia's needs to fulfil certain criteria to become a full member of the EU. Any decision resulting from pressure from a neoliberal peacebuilding discourse in this situation contributes to more chaos and negative peace. In addition, in order to become a fully-fledged member of the EU, it is mandatory for Serbia to meet all conditions set by the EU community acquis for membership to approximate and harmonize its legislation and acts with those of the EU. This process is known as open negotiations to complete/close 35 chapters of the EU community acquis to become an EU member state (EC, 2017; Serbian Ministry of European Integration, n.d). The last chapter, number 35 aims at normalizing "relations between Serbia and

Kosovo” finalised with Serbia’s possible recognition of Kosovo and demarcation of its border with Kosovo (Serbian Ministry of European Integration, 2015). In the EU-mediated agreement to swap territories between Kosovo and Serbia, EU officials have claimed that they will support the parties involved in the dialogue in terms of any mutual agreement that they can reach that will contribute to improving their relations (Bytyci & Sekularac, Reuters, 2018).

Historically, Kosovo-Serbia relations have failed to consider promoting an effective relational transformation. For centuries their relations have been labelled as chaotic and distrustful ranging from political, social and economic contentions. Recently, four mayors of northern Kosovo municipalities resigned from their duties as a form of protest against the decision of the government of Kosovo to increase importation tax from 10 to 100 percent for Serbian and Bosnia and Hercegovina goods (Office of the Prime Minister, 2018a, 2018b; Zivanovic, Balkan Insight, 2018). In addition, the government of Kosovo decided that any goods that do not address Kosovo by its constitutional name and use “Kosovo and Metohija”, “Kosovo - UNMIK” or “Kosovo- Resolution 1244” to be removed from retailers across Kosovo and banned from entering the Kosovo market (Kosovo Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2018). This decision came about as a result of the failure of Kosovo to receive membership in the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) due to an aggressive Serbian lobbying against Kosovo’s membership in this organization (Isufi & Zivanovic, Balkan Insight, 2018; Koleka, Reuters, 2018). Consequently, as a form of revenge, the government of Kosovo decided to punish Serbia by applying drastic economic sanctions and increasing its local production and consumption. In this regard, Kosovo Customs asserts that annually Kosovo imports from Serbia about EUR 400 million and exports only EUR 40 million (Telegrafi, 2018b). As these measures taken by the government of Kosovo are aimed at promoting national and economic interests, and

boosting Albanian nationalism, on the contrary, it does not help to integrate or secure the rights of the Serbian community in Kosovo. In fact, decisions like this driven by nationalist feelings contribute to further animosity and intimidation of ethnic minorities in Kosovo.

From the beginning the peacebuilding process in Kosovo failed to tackle grassroots problems between Kosovo and Serbia and instead managed to establish conflict management processes among the political elites to prevent war or negative peace. Subsequently, Sandole (2010) argues that negative peace “stops short of dealing with the underlying, deep-rooted causes and conditions of the conflict which might escalate, or has escalated, to the violence that negative peace measures would address” referring to it as a form of conflict management or minimalist peacebuilding (p. 9). Consequently, he states that most neoliberal peacebuilding interventions are minimalist, i.e. in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Northern Ireland, Cyprus, and South Africa positive peace has failed to materialize because liberal peacebuilding did not address the deep root causes of those conflicts effectively (Sandole, 2010, p. 35).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter underpinned some of the indicators of negative peace in Kosovo by analyzing the discourse of peace and what makes peace really peaceful and holistic for all. In addition, this chapter examined different steps to peacebuilding in Kosovo and suggested that the international community’s interest from the beginning was to focus on state building and managing conflict rather than on much needed reconciliation. The peacebuilding process that emerged in Kosovo through Martti Ahtisaari's settlement plan managed to establish Kosovo as an independent state with negative peace repercussions for the citizens living in a liminal peace state.

This chapter also presented Galtung's (1996) concepts of positive and negative peace. Positive peace means the absence of all forms of direct and indirect violence, the term negative peace comes in multiple layers, each contributing to forms of indirect violence (Galtung, 1996). Galtung (1996) defines indirect violence as structural violence that is political repression or economic exploitation. He also defines cultural violence that emerges across grievances in religion and ideology, law, language and art, media and education (Galtung, 1996, p. 2).

In the case of Kosovo, hitches and glitches in terms of the peace prospects have consumed most of the chances of establishing positive peace in Kosovo. Among the first holistic opportunity to establish the foundation for positive peace is Martti Ahtisaari's comprehensive plan for a peace settlement in Kosovo. However, in several ways, this peace settlement plan contributed to further chaos, confusion, and distrust between the communities. Although many positive indicators to create a positive peace were included in the implementation of Ahtisaari's settlement plan, the very essence of it was based on two conflict management foundations. First, the peace plan sought to give Kosovo and Kosovo Albanians what they desperately desired, namely an independent Kosovo that would be recognized by the majority of Western powers. Second, the settlement plan sought to ensure that the rights of minorities would be protected by legislative and constitutional inclusive mechanisms. In the peacebuilding discourse, this peace plan is also known as a *one size fits all* or IKEA a peace plan (Mac Ginty, 2011). IKEA superficial peacebuilding approaches refer to external actors imposing Western values on post-peace accord societies and pushing them to implement and promote human rights with international standards, democratic state-building, fair elections and a quota system, stability and security, and the establishment of free market capitalism (Mac Ginty, 2011). It was superficial as

it only aimed to achieve conflict management between the political elites rather than creating conflict transformation and reconciliation among the grassroots in a deeply divided society.

This chapter also argued that reconciling differences and seeking forgiveness are among the first steps to build sustainable peace in war-torn societies. In the case of Kosovo, Serbia has not asked for forgiveness from Kosovars for the war crimes it committed during the 1998-1999 war. Perhaps such an act of apology would be a first step towards improving relations and building trust among the communities, instead of adopting imposed agreements and not being able to implement or ratify them. Lederach (2005) argues that building peace and reconciling differences in war-torn societies means, “dealing with the worst of the human condition, the effort to repair the brokenness of relationships and life itself” (p. 160). Thus, reconciling differences, healing, and forgiving remains an essential first step to establish a self-sustained peace.

One can argue when exploring the peace agreement from a discursive viewpoint that Ahtisaari’s settlement plan ticks all the right boxes in terms of establishing positive peace in Kosovo. Yet, what it lacked was empowering the voice of locals to establish a holistic peace. The plan aimed to promote the rights and freedoms of all of Kosovo’s communities based on international standards, but it failed to promote reconciliation and any form of cooperation. If I had to provide a metaphor for the peace process, it would be like cooking, one has all the right kitchen tools, yet one does not have the ingredients to cook the meal.

## CHAPTER 5 – Neoliberal Peacebuilding Versus Grassroots Conflict Transformation

### Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss neoliberal peacebuilding that took place in Kosovo from 1999 to today, with special emphasis on Martti Ahtisaari's comprehensive settlement plan. While this chapter acknowledges the importance of the international community's contribution to establishing peace in Kosovo, at the same time it presents a critique of neoliberal peacebuilding that is usually led through a top-down approach neglecting the grassroots in the process.

Neoliberal peacebuilding nowadays reflects global governance goals to establish human rights, security, elections, security reform, and democratic societies (Hyde & Byrne, 2015). Similarly, Roberts (2011) emphasizes that neoliberal peacebuilding “reflects Western concerns about the relationship between security and development long before the concerns of local people are presented and acted upon” (p. 3). These processes involve the adoption of new democratic reforms and removal of old power and authoritarian practices (Mac Ginty, 2006). Subsequently, the discourse to encounter these peace goals for newly established democratic societies is rather authoritarian as the international community adopts a carrots and sticks approach to creating and implementing Western driven peace processes (Richmond, 2011). A carrots and sticks approach in foreign policy refers to forms of rewards or punishments introduced by the international community to conflicting parties through different policy reforms to push them to behave in line with Western thinking and democratic values. These authoritative structures that form to transform conflicts and establish peacebuilding in newly liberated societies are often seen as neglecters of everyday people and promoters of elite group interests instead (Ozerdem & Lee, 2016). In contrast, grassroots peacebuilding aims to give voice to people and empower them through inclusive peace discourses (Lederach, 2010).

Although the effects of positive change might be difficult to measure, peacebuilding initiatives carried out by the UN, NATO and more recently the EU have adopted top-down approaches and elite powersharing arrangements in order to manage the conflict in Kosovo (Richmond, 2010). Subsequently, if the elites rather than the grassroots are paving the way for dialogue then the essence of cross-community inclusion will be lost on the way to managing conflict instead of building sustainable peace.

### **The Limits of a Violent Peace: My Own Story - Part III**

Driven by atrocious actions carried out by the Serbian army against civilians, NATO decided to give an ultimatum to Milošević to withdraw the Yugoslavian army from Kosovo otherwise NATO would start an air campaign against Serbia (NATO, 1999; Weller, 2009, pp. 150-164). Milošević did not surrender so NATO mounted an effective air campaign against Serb ground forces, military positions and installations. NATO's actions against Serbia meant an end to the war and ultimate freedom. Only with the help of the international community and through NATO's military campaign could my family and fellow Albanians finally hope for freedom and living in a peaceful society.

As the war progressed in villages we could feel that it would soon approach our town too. The Serbian military expanded further its offensive ethnic cleansing strategy. I can recall my parents preparing for the war because they bought a lot of food and stored it in the basement – food that we never ate because when the war started in the cities we left our house to find a safer place to live in, and everything that we left behind was burned to the ground. On March 18, 1999, we were impatiently waiting to hear the results of the Rambouillet peace talks that concluded with Serbia's refusal to sign the agreement. It was March 23 and I could hear my

parents' excitement about NATO's bombing of Serbia that would be launched on March 24. They were excited that the war was going to end soon. Everyone around us seemed to have a prognosis that the war would not last more than, three days, and Serbia would surrender. A historical date was approaching; Kosovo was finally going to be free from Serbia.

On March 25, instead of waking up in a free Kosovo; I woke up to a new fearful chapter in the war's never-ending saga, and it was not what everyone around me had anticipated. The initial excitement had now turned to fear for one's life. Serbian troops entered the city and burned around 500 stores and houses in the Old Bazaar and they killed several people. We did not know what was going to happen next. They kept saying that if NATO continued bombing Serbia, then Serbians would never surrender. The next day in another part of the city, the New Bazaar was burned to the ground. Over two days the whole city was in flames and my parent's lost properties and two of their businesses that they had been building for decades. They turned into ashes in a matter of hours. Despite the pain of losing their properties, they kept saying "we hope this war will not take any life from us"! A month later, we soon lost our house too. As our house burnt down my hopes to play, grow, and spend time there with my family burnt down as well. It gave me this disheartening and sick feeling that everything was turning into ash, including our memories and dreams. We had a taste of being homeless and feared where we would live in the future. Yet, that was not the most important thing. The real struggle was to survive the war. When they burnt our house, I happened to be at my uncle's home, but I heard this story many times. My mother, my sisters and my aunts were there when paramilitaries surrounded and broke into our house. They forced them to go out of the house, they used violent force against them, separated them and told them to walk in different directions while shouting "go to Albania, that is where your home is"! Fortunately, they did not kill them as they

threatened to do so. They were lucky! On that same day, they killed four neighbours. A man that used to own a baking store was burned in the oven. Just next door to our house, two brothers and their sister were killed on the spot, while most of the houses in the neighbourhood were burned to the ground. Filled with pain, resilience, and hope we were waiting for our fate to be determined by others. We knew that if death was to come, that would come from Serbian military forces. If life was to flourish it would be possible if the international community intervened.

On June 10, 1999, we heard that NATO had agreed to deploy ground troops in Kosovo and start a humanitarian mission with the aim to put an end to the war. Two days later on June 12, they established military bases in the main cities of Kosovo. Meanwhile, we were impatiently waiting for when KFOR troops would enter our hometown. As the situation was getting worse, our town was burning in every corner, and we were told that Serbians had planned to carry out the biggest massacre possible to scare local Kosovars— a full on mission of ethnic cleansing. We knew that if KFOR made it on time, we would be safe. Fortunately for us that is exactly what happened. On June 14, Italian NATO forces entered and liberated our town. Immediately, all of us were filled with a wild desire to celebrate our freedom. We were all shouting with happiness, “NATO, NATO, NATO”! We were tremendously thankful that we got to live on that day. We were alive!

### **Defining Neoliberal Peacebuilding**

Galtung (1996) defines peacekeeping (managing conflict), peacemaking (building bridges) and peacebuilding (transforming relationships and structures) as a means of resolving the conflict.

Galtung explains that peacekeeping aims to “control the actors so that they at least stop

destroying things, others, and themselves”, peacemaking looks to “transform attitudes and assumptions” between conflict parties, and peacebuilding seeks to “overcome the contradiction at the root of the conflict formation” (p. 103).

Peacebuilding in contemporary terms is associated with UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali *Agenda for Peace* that he published in 1992 and that includes the indisputable role of international organizations such as the UN, EU, World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank that commonly share liberal views. The role of the UN in the peacebuilding agenda was defined for the first time by the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, “as action to identify and support structures, which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict,” and he also defined UN peacemaking as “tasks of seeking to prevent conflict,” and trying “to bring hostile parties to agreement by peaceful means” (UN A/47/227, 1992, par. 21 & 34). This was the beginning of the UNs peacebuilding agenda towards frozen conflicts in Lebanon, Cyprus, and Northern Ireland and later in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Colombia.

Richmond (2011) presents a critique of neoliberal peacebuilding and discusses critical and emancipatory peacebuilding instead. He contends that the neoliberal peace reflects, “Western-led” approaches to build and sustain peace, an ongoing encounter “to unite the world under a hegemonic system that replicates liberal institutions, norms, and political, social and economic systems” (p. 1). Thus, spreading liberal democratic peace through Western values often faces critiques for being superficial when the Global North intervenes in post-peace accord societies (Mac Ginty, 2011). Emancipatory peacebuilding, in essence, brings another layer to our understanding of PACS research as well as the emancipation of, and the participation of locals (state and non-state) at all levels of peacebuilding efforts (Thiessen, 2011). In this thesis, the

critical and emancipatory peacebuilding school of thought aims to tie together the four main theories used in the analysis of the neoliberal peacebuilding efforts in Kosovo.

Emancipatory peacebuilding presents another critical framework towards understanding neoliberal peacebuilding that in essence emphasises top-down peacebuilding and endorses peacebuilding approaches that aim to establish social justice and equality through human security in post-peace accord societies (Richmond, 2007, 2010). Richmond (2007) argues that emancipatory peacebuilding offers an indigenous approach that reflects local incentives for a just peace (p. 460). As a manifestation of the critique of neoliberal peacebuilding, emancipatory peace showcases the prospects of successful peacebuilding and its failures to materialize positive peace through local initiatives, which often are met with local resistance and friction towards international interference and questions vis-à-vis the liberal vision for peacebuilding versus the locals' vision for peace (Hyde & Byrne, 2015).

Moreover, Creary and Byrne (2014), Hyde and Byrne (2015), Mac Ginty (2006, 2011), and Richmond (2010, 2011) argue that neoliberal peacebuilding is rather technocratic and a top-down approach that often ignores the local customs and grassroots approaches to peacebuilding as well as local people's knowledge, epistemologies, and resiliency. Consequently, Pugh (2011) argues that the international community's approaches towards peacebuilding fail to produce stability and sustained economies (p. 316). Both Richmond (2009, 2010, 2011) and Pugh (2000, 2011) have noted that according to several qualitative studies the international community has failed to construct local satisfaction through neoliberal peacebuilding efforts in Kosovo and other post-peace accord societies such as Bosnia Herzegovina, and East Timor.

Liberal peacebuilders consider conflict transformation and cooperation with local populations as a two-sided benefit suggesting that the spread of Western democratic values

contributes to stable societies and boosts their economies while “local elites have access to more of the resources” and by agreeing to implement Western peace agendas that will help them preserve their political power (Narten, 2010, p. 370). In addition, one of the key challenges for peacebuilders is to fully understand the conflict and the parties involved, their language, culture and the mindset of locals. For instance, in the case of Kosovo, Blumi (2003) argues that UNMIK had limited knowledge about post-war Kosovo and it only tried to operate in the central level in the main cities by neglecting locals in other areas of Kosovo (p. 221). This neoliberal governance model demonstrates that the early stage of peacebuilding in Kosovo sprang from a top-down approach.

Ozderem and Yong Lee (2016) note that the key features of neoliberal peacebuilding in post-peace accord societies are the promotion of democracy, the promotion of free elections, a market economy, the rule of law, human rights, reforms of the security sector, and government reforms (p. 41). This form of neoliberal peacebuilding is often referred to as “the IKEA model of peace” (Mac Ginty, 2006, 2011). Paris (2010) and Jeong (2005) argue that holding democratic elections in post-peace accord societies is a very common strategy to commence peacebuilding efforts. Subsequently, Paris (2010) suggests that neoliberal peacebuilding besides being superficial has been challenged locally in almost every intervention because “peacebuilders exercised expansive powers that they effectively squelched genuine political participation and local-driven reforms” (pp. 342-343).

### **Introducing Neoliberal Peacebuilding in Kosovo**

The 1995 General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina or the Dayton Agreement that ended the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and sought to bring peace to the

Balkans failed to include Kosovo in the talks. During the Dayton dialogue, Albanians hoped to be included in the process and get the attention of the international community in order to claim their basic human needs and human rights within Yugoslavia. However, the Dayton Agreement's focus was to resolve the Bosnia and Herzegovina conflict, so the international community failed to consider Kosovo's plea for more autonomy. Kosovo Albanians soon recognized that it was difficult to get the attention of the international community through nonviolent resistance and peace movements led by the undisputed Albanian leader, Ibrahim Rugova. The current President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaçi, who was then a representative of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA, alb. UÇK) in his biographical book writing about the Rambouillet talks states, "the stark truth for us was that in order to be taken seriously we had to have a fighting force" that is how the Kosovo question received the attention of the international community (Boyes & Jagger, 2018, p. 28). The negligence of the international community in recognizing Kosovo Albanians need to fulfil their basic rights led to the establishment of the KLA. Milošević sensing that Kosovo Albanians were organizing and establishing their own army invaded Kosovo with a full military force and a mission to attack terrorist groups and ethnically cleanse a population that had always presented trouble for Serbian ethnonational identity in the region.

Given the nature of the conflict that unfolded in Kosovo as a result of attacks on civilians, international organizations and human rights observers immediately condemned the brutal actions of the Serbian army and the KLA (CoE doc.1360 (1998); UNSC docs. 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998)). These condemnations did not persuade any of the warring parties to seek a cease-fire. Instantly, the international community recognized the Kosovo crises and by December 1998 the OSCE-Kosovo Verification Mission was deployed to Kosovo in order to monitor the situation and verify human rights violations (OSCE, 1999). However, due to deterioration of the situation

and the failure of the Rambouillet Accords, the mission withdrew from Kosovo. While NATO actively carried out its air campaign against Serbia, the fate of civilians in Kosovo remained in the hands of paramilitaries for three months,

Until the UN approved the deployment of multinational UN peacekeepers and NATO ground troops (including Russian troops) to restore peace under Resolution 1244, world powers were divided among those that endorsed a military intervention and those that opposed it claiming that it was a violation of international law to intervene in the internal matters of Yugoslavia. Among the opponent group, Russia “constantly reiterated its conviction that there could be no military, but only a political solution to the conflict” (Wolff, 2003, p. 87). The US and Russia’s position on the issue was also a matter of demonstrating their power and extending it over the Balkans as well as imposing or resisting Western liberal values with coercive measures. However, Milošević showed no signs of withdrawal from Kosovo so that any attempt to solve the conflict without military intervention appeared to be impossible. Consequently, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1244 to establish the United Nations Interim Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the deployment of NATO troops there.

It is important to acknowledge the role of the US and the UK as the main sponsor of the Kosovo peace accord and recognition of its independence. The US was officially involved in Kosovo matters since it opened its first US Information Service Office in Kosovo in 1996. Since then the US has actively taken charge of almost every segment of political, social, military and financial matters relating to Kosovo. To date, the US has invested around \$2 billion in Kosovo (US Embassy Kosovo, n.d.). In 2008 it also joined the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) in its first mission with EU Common Security and Defense Policy mission (US Embassy Kosovo, n.d.).

**Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding Approaches in Kosovo**

When it comes to peacebuilding and conflict transformation in Kosovo, the coordination of the international community with the locals was key because their aim from the beginning was the consolidation of statehood. The engagement of the international community shaped the peacebuilding agenda in Kosovo from the beginning and continues to do so even ten years after independence and almost twenty years after the conflict.

**The role of UNMIK.** Following the approval of the UN Security Council under Resolution 1244 to establish an international presence in Kosovo through UNMIK (under the UN) and KFOR (under NATO) – Kosovo’s conflict was managed with major difficulties. Although the implementation of a transformative process is questionable, it is important to acknowledge and emphasize the efforts of UNMIK through its presence in managing peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts in Kosovo.

Viewed within the context of the international community’s accomplishments in Kosovo, UNMIKs role was very challenging as it encountered persistent difficulties in promoting human rights, security and state-building (Pula, 2003; Jeong, 2005; Richmond 2011). Besides the continuous problems encountered with locals to restore peace, there was a lack of coordination between different international partners present in Kosovo (Pula, 2003). Kosovo used to operate under the laws and policies of Yugoslavia. Nonetheless, the international presence in Kosovo helped to fill the institutional vacuum bringing law and order to the country, and managing the chaos. In addition, Resolution 1244 that defined UNMIKs mandate was “to provide transitional administration while establishing and overseeing the development of provisional democratic self-governing institutions to ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants in Kosovo” (UNSC, S/RES/1244, 1999, p.3).

The administration and development of provisional democratic self-governing institutions empowered UNMIK with legal powers. Thus, Jeong (2005) argues that it is essential to bring law and order to post-peace accord societies, and often the international presence as was the case in Kosovo was threatened by the lack of the rule of law, a political vacuum, lack of food and other elementary resources (p. 58). In fact Richmond (2011) debates the role of the international presence in Kosovo and argues that for Kosovo Albanians their claim for independence was reinforced through UNMIK's mission and "liberal peacebuilding became statebuilding and national liberation" (p. 80). Nevertheless, UNMIK and its partners acknowledged that the time would come when they would have to leave Kosovo in the hands of Kosovars. Therefore, it was imperative for UNMIK to bring together all of the state mechanisms that would become part of the apparatus for the rule of law, human rights protection, and the possibility of creating a sustainable peace.

Although Kosovo declared its unilateral independence in 2008, UNMIK is still present in Kosovo and operates with limited capacities under status-neutral. Since the declaration of independence, the role of UNMIK remains "to promote security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo and in the region" (UNMIK, n.d). Recently the former US Ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, acknowledged the role of UNMIK in establishing peace in Kosovo and requested that the Security Council reviews its mandate and "develop an exit strategy" claiming that Kosovo's success has been recognized by a majority of the Security Council members while UNMIK's mandate has not changed since Kosovo's independence (Telegrafi, 2018a).

One of the reasons that has kept UNMIK in Kosovo is Russia's position in the UNSC and its alliance with Serbia. These two powerful actors continuously state that if UNMIK pulls out of Kosovo, the Serb community will not be in a safe place. In a response to the US position to

withdraw the UN mission from Kosovo, Marko Djuric, Director of the Kosovo Office stated that Serbia will oppose this plan and reach out to its allies to support its opposition to any plan that withdraws UNMIK from Kosovo. He claimed that, “the withdrawal of the UN Mission at the moment would be a recognition of failure and capitulation in the struggle to achieve some of the key goals for which the UN was established” (Serbian Government, 2018, n.p). For those who oppose the peace plan, approving the withdrawal of the UNMIK presence under Resolution 1244 will reflect another international step towards the recognition of Kosovo as an independent sovereign state.

The UNMIK mandate continued to be questioned and limited in scope as it continuously captured Kosovo’s sovereignty under UN Res 1244. In March 2011 Kosovo and Serbia reached an agreement on Regional Cooperation and IBM technical protocol. The highlight of this agreement was reference regarding Kosovo as a name or entity for international organizations or states that operate in a status-neutral manner to refer to it with an asterisk *Kosovo\**. The asterisk refers as “*this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence*” (EU, 2012). This agreement which is considered to be part of the technical dialogue, instead of simplifying the road for Kosovo to receive global recognition, it solidified it by placing a heavy burden on it and dragging it towards a UN status-neutral box.

**The Role of the EU.** The strategy of EU enlargement in the Balkans and the fear of an outburst of another conflict between Kosovo and Serbia pushed the EU to take a proactive role in Kosovo in consolidating its politics and laws based on European standards as well as normalizing relations with Serbia (Papadimtriou & Petrov, 2013). In post peace accord Kosovo, the EU has played a very important role as a catalyst for conflict transformation. As part of the

EUs mission to transform the Kosovo conflict it has worked to: 1) monitor independence, 2) provide rule of law expertise, and 3) facilitate dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia.

The EUs first major peacebuilding project mission in Kosovo was under the International Civilian Representative for Kosovo or the International Civilian Office (ICO). As foreseen with Ahtisaari's peace plan, the EU appointed its representative to monitor the implementation of the plan from Kosovo institutions, and this mission was completed successfully in 2012 by ending Kosovo's supervised independence (ICO, 2012).

The EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) promotes the rule of law as well as Kosovo institutions "on their path towards increased effectiveness, sustainability, multi-ethnicity and accountability, free from political interference and in full compliance with EU best practices" (EU External Action, n.d/a). The EULEX has also faced many challenges in its international mission in Kosovo. Its mandate is tied to three political/legal components, namely UN Resolution 1244, Ahtisaari's plan, and Kosovo's constitution. To add more confusion to its mission and legitimacy, EULEX has a status-neutral position towards Kosovo. EULEX has been criticized by the locals, the European Parliament, former EULEX officials, and other international organizations present in Kosovo for its failure to carry out its mission successfully (Weber & West, 2014, p. 6). However, these problems did not prevent the EU and Kosovo authorities from extending and approving its mandate in Kosovo until 2020.

EU efforts to establish sustainable peace are also pushed forward through promoting dialogue between Kosovars and Serbs. The EU facilitated dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia also known as the Brussels Dialogue commenced in March 2011. In the beginning, it covered technical issues such as freedom of movement, telecommunications, recognition of travel documents, and electricity sharing among others. As negotiations progressed, the parties engaged

in the dialogue managed to reach agreements for most technical issues that were tabled, meanwhile, the EU through its enlargement process in the Balkans in 2013 opened 35 chapters to negotiate the accession of Serbia into the EU (Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d).

Thus, the technical agreements reached so far have been defined as ambiguous and failed to be implemented by both sides (KDI, 2018a). This clearly demonstrates that the Brussels agreements, Ahtisaari's plan, powersharing mechanisms and Kosovo's legislation complement each other with the aim of managing the conflict while failing to be accepted and promoted by everyday people.

The EU and the parties involved in the dialogue have concluded technical cooperation and have agreed to move to the next level to normalize their relationship and possibly reach a final mutual agreement. So far, this dialogue process has only involved a top-down approach and has been criticized for lacking transparency and local ownership (KDI, 2018a).

### **Mediation as a Neoliberal Peacebuilding Approach**

Political elites and the international community often use mediation and dialogue as tools to restore and build peace in broken societies (Byrne, 2017). Neoliberal organizations such as the UN and EU recognize direct negotiations as a catalyst for positive change and sustainable peacebuilding. The international community remains enthusiastic about peacebuilding engagement efforts especially when some kind of intervention has taken place to stimulate conflict transformation. Similarly, Bercovitch (2011) argues that, "mediation has been, and remains, one of the most significant methods of managing conflicts" (p. 16).

Kosovo's conflict was transformed through three internationally mediated processes. The international community supported all three processes with very low motivation from the

disputing parties (Bieber, 2015; Weller, 2008a, 2009). Serbia perceived this diplomatic approach to be a disadvantage from the beginning. The Rambouillet talks were concluded in Paris and were among the first international mediation processes to restore negative peace in Kosovo. The Contact Group comprising the US, the UK, France, Italy and Russia supported the process. These talks emerged as a form of conflict prevention yet failed to produce peace results (NATO, 1999; USIP, 1999). Second, Ahtisaari's mediated peace plan was sponsored by the UN to manage the conflict by suggesting a settlement with extensive minority rights and was accepted only by Kosovo Albanians (Assembly of Kosovo, 2008, p. 2; Weller 2008a). Third, the EU facilitated ongoing technical and political dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, and the parties have shown signs that they are willing to reach agreements on paper but are not interested in their implementation on the ground (Emini & Stakic, 2018).

In all three mediation processes the international community propelled Kosovo and Serbia to agree to readily support the peace agenda leaving them with limited choices. Zartman and Touval (2007) attest that the purpose of mediation is to resolve conflict in a way that is acceptable to conflicting parties and serves the interests of dialogue facilitators (p. 437). However, the process of resolving the conflict in Kosovo was subject to coercive external mediation instead of peaceful dialogue to reconcile differences and establish a sustained and holistic peace. For instance, when the conflict parties were negotiating Ahtisaari's settlement plan "the Serbs perceived Ahtisaari as biased," which "discouraged the Serbian delegation from fully engaging in the negotiations" (Fridl, 2008, p. 67). In contrast, Boyes and Jagger (2018) suggest that Ahtisaari believed that the most important thing to negotiating Kosovo's settlement plan "was to be able to create an agreement that was so good that Serbs too felt they could live with it" (p. 161). While Ahtisaari's ambition was to propose a peace plan that would enhance and

secure the rights of minorities in Kosovo, the drive to promote positive change and establish a just peace between both communities was sadly absent.

Kosovo is a multi-faceted conflict. During the three international mediation processes, Serbia was invited to negotiate in two roles, first, as a [former] mother country to Kosovo and second, as an external ethnoguarantor for the Serbian community. Byrne (2000, 2001, 2006, 2017) defines the role of external ethnoguarantors in conflict resolution and mediation as essential to transforming protracted ethnopolitical conflicts if they work together on solutions with the elites and the grassroots. He suggests that external ethnoguarantors share strong ties with ethnic groups in protracted ethnopolitical conflicts and they become peacemakers or peace breakers depending on their national and strategic interests (Byrne, 2000, 2001, 2006, 2017). For example, in the case of Kosovo, so far Serbia has played the role of destabilizer rather than a promoter of peace in the region. Other examples of the role of external ethnoguarantors involved in international mediation processes are those that took place in Northern Ireland and Cyprus.

In the Northern Ireland conflict, the British and Irish governments played an important role in working together to enforce agreements on Catholics and Protestants to resolve the conflict (Byrne, 2000). In the Cyprus conflict, Turkey and Greece were signatory parties and guarantors for the 1960 London-Zurich Agreement, however, both parties were embroiled in the conflict supporting their ethnic allies based on national interests and they failed to find a common solution (Byrne, 2006). In the Cyprus and Northern Ireland conflicts, the internal communities lacked political tolerance. In Northern Ireland, Byrne (2006) argues that the external ethnoguarantors, Britain and Ireland, collaborated together to resolve the conflict between Catholic nationalists and Protestant loyalists, while in the case of Cyprus Turkey and Greece failed to cooperate together to guarantee the peace agreement.

### **Local Ownership as a Grassroots Peacebuilding Approach**

On reviewing the impact of peacebuilding and reconciliation in post-peace accord societies, peace scholars like John Paul Lederach and Roger Mac Ginty argue that a bottom-up grassroots approach is essential to reconcile differences and transform peaceful relations. For example, Lederach (2010) argues that, “the signing of peace accords never ends violence” (p. 31). In addition, he suggests that for a successful and sustainable peacebuilding outcome, it is necessary that the process includes both a bottom-up approach (the grassroots) and a top-down approach (political elites and the government). He illustrates the web making peacebuilding approach with a vertical line and argues that the grassroots and the government should meet somewhere in the middle that crosses the horizontal line that is built on meaningful elements such as “ethnicity, religious, racial, or linguistic” parameters (Lederach, 2005, p. 79). In this context, Lederach (2005) explains that if these elements (government, grassroots and other social agents) meet in the middle, the process will stimulate the creation of relationships that will lead to social change.

Social change or social justice processes in intractable conflicts provide a path for the empowerment of grassroots through locally driven initiatives. These cross-community initiatives if pushed and endorsed from the top-down and bottom-up can produce social justice or positive peace. Byrne (2002) argues for example, that in intractable ethnic conflicts it is very difficult to reconcile differences because they are identity-based conflicts and identity is “non-negotiable” and reciprocated trust is necessary to reach reconciliation and establish social justice (pp. 139-40). Byrne and Keashly (2000) also suggest the need to build “a multi-modal, multilevel contingency approach to conflict intervention in protracted ethnopolitical conflicts” by involving all actors at all levels in peacebuilding efforts (p. 115).

From a grassroots peacebuilding viewpoint, Mac Ginty (2011) argues that, in order to accomplish sustainable peace, the participation of locals in the peace process is essential. He

refers to a neoliberal-hybrid form of peacebuilding that includes both external and local efforts to involve multiple layers of local actors and networks. Most importantly dialogue processes should expand and empower locals through different peace initiatives. Similarly, Thiessen (2011) points out the importance of emancipatory peacebuilding and suggests that a combination of local and international actors in peacebuilding is necessary for positive conflict transformation. A key element to emancipatory peacebuilding in the case of Kosovo would be the empowerment of locals through different peacebuilding programs and initiatives. These programs would enhance their knowledge, skills, and input throughout peacebuilding initiatives.

Mac Ginty (2006) suggests that external peacebuilding interventions must meet and complement local needs (p. 172). If the local peace vision does not fall in the same space with international provisions for peace, the produced incompatibility between locals and international incentives may lead to local distrust and dissatisfaction. Nevertheless, the critical role that the international community plays in managing conflict and restoring peace in Kosovo should be delivered equally to all communities. However, the international community often chooses ethnic elites to deliver their peacebuilding model while satisfying everyday citizens comes with a heavy burden in terms of time, cost, expertise, and resilience.

The local ownership of peacebuilding is often impaired by neoliberal peacemaking efforts (Autesserre, 2014). The neoliberal top-down approach intimidates the locals and jeopardizes reconciliation efforts that come about from local ownership (Autesserre, 2014). Autesserre (2014) attests that locals “perceive interveners as arrogant, resent the imposition of foreign initiatives – whether or not those promote liberal values and models – and feel no ownership over the international programs” (p. 112).

### **Local Ownership Versus Local Distrust**

In the case of Kosovo, local ownership, to a great extent, has been undermined with neoliberal peacebuilding tasks that have focused mainly on a democratic top-down peacebuilding agenda. These processes often are met with local resistance. For example, in 2004, the Albanian led demonstration involved about 51,000 demonstrators protesting against the Serbian and international community “falsely” accusing Serbs of drowning three children in the Ibar River in North Mitrovica as well as accusing the international community of negligence (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

Robinson (2007) also raises another example of Kosovar frustration against the international community and argues that the Ahtisaari plan was met in 2006 with major demonstrations between locals and international peacekeepers. He contended that the leader of the Self-determination Movement or in Albanian *Lëvizja Vetëvendosje* (LVV), had spoken against the settlement plan claiming, “It divides Kosovo into two entities: one with an Albanian majority, ruled by the EU; the other with a Serb majority, ruled by Belgrade” (Robinson, 2007 cited in Narten, 2008, p. 384). While Ahtisaari’s negotiation process has managed to unite the political elite within the top level to reach a final settlement for Kosovo, the imposed peace plan has also frustrated locals because it has neglected reconciliation.

The largest political social movement then called *Lëvizja Vetëvendosje* (LVV or VV) is now an opposition political party, flourished as a result of the international peacebuilding agenda in Kosovo. Its foundation was based on the failure of the international community and Kosovo political elites to include the grassroots in the peacebuilding process to establish social justice (Vetëvendosje, 2017, para. 37, 39, 40, n.d/b, translated from Albanian). In fact, VV was a reflection of local frustration against the international presence in Kosovo. It challenged and questioned any decision that came around as a result of cooperation between Kosovo elites and

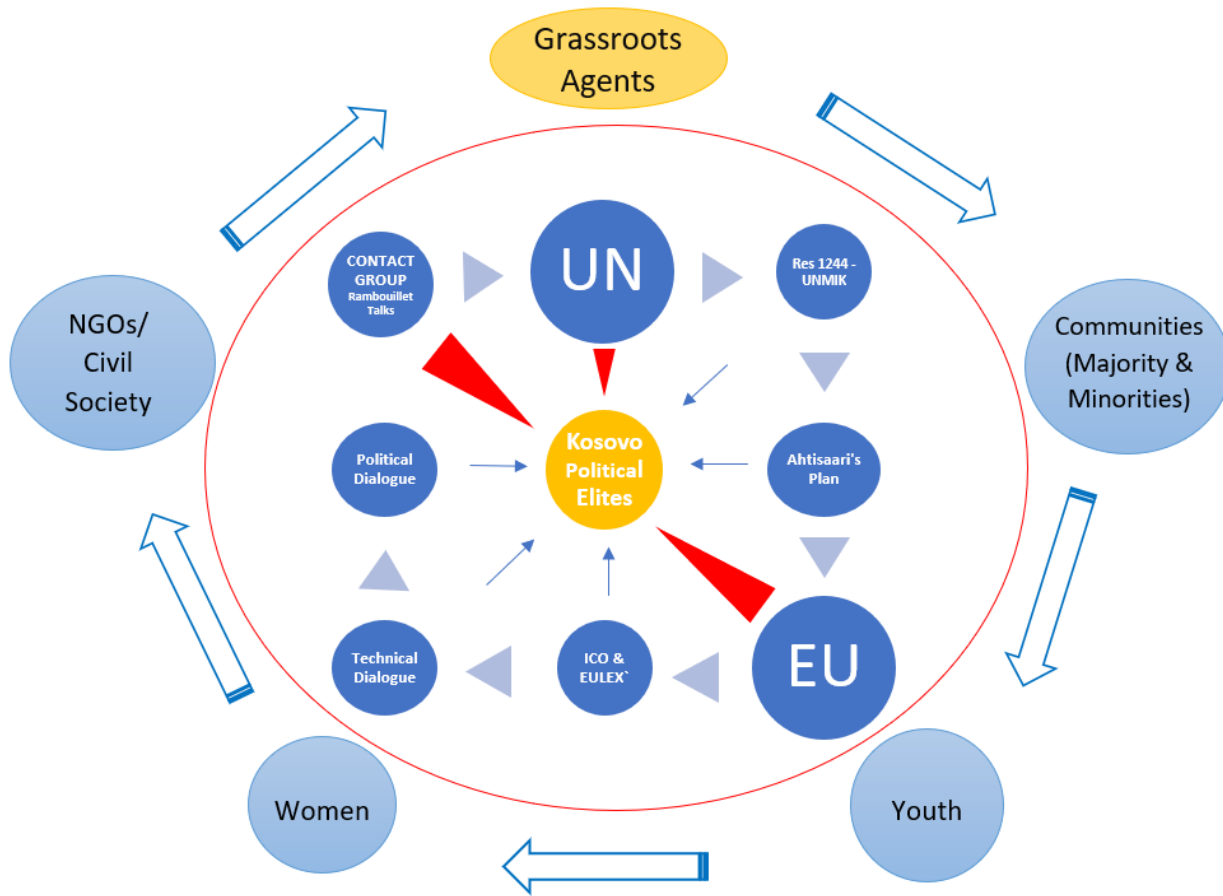
the international community. Its main slogan was *No Negotiations, Self-determination*. In addition, it opposed any cooperation or dialogue between Kosovo authorities and Serbia whereby Kosovo would not be treated as an equal peace partner by the international community and Serbia (Vetëvendosje, n.d/a, translated from Albanian). VV to date continues to oppose the process while Serbian parallel structures are still active, and Kosovo remains under resolution 1244 and UNMIK (Vetëvendosje, n.d/a, translated from Albanian). After Kosovo's authorities accepted Ahtisaari's plan the declaration of independence and the adoption of a new constitution soon followed. The opponents of this peace process including VV claimed that the settlement plan would "divide the population institutionally and territorially upon ethnic basis. Ahtisaari's plan has nothing to do with 'human rights' but leads to deep decentralization based on ethnicity before sovereignty" (Vetëvendosje, n.d/b, n.p, translated from Albanian).

Ten years after Kosovo's independence the disconnection in local peacebuilding between local communities is very visible. The peacebuilding process failed to engage the grassroots in the process, reconcile their differences and establish positive peace or social justice. As conflict transformation efforts should come in the form of emancipatory peacebuilding, on several occasions local political elites also lacked any incentives to work for reconciliation among local communities even though they were advised by the international community that these efforts should emanate from local leadership (EP & AoK, 2013). For example, one of the interparliamentary meetings between members of the European Parliament and Kosovo Assembly held in 2013 "encouraged local responsibility and ownership of the reconciliation process" (EP & AoK, 2013). Five years later, in 2018, at a meeting between the delegations of the same institutions, the EU delegation continued to call on Kosovo institutions to find the right mechanisms to establish trust and promote ethnic tolerance between communities, as well as life

improvement especially for the Roma, Ashkali and the Egyptian communities living in Kosovo (EU-KSAPC, 2018). This behaviour showcases the continuous lack of local leadership in taking any initiative to foster a program or strategy to reconcile the differences and promote intercommunal harmony, respect and tolerance between Kosovar communities.

While the Serb communities continue to live in their established enclaves especially in the north their political representatives with little or no hesitation occupy political seats in central institutions and avoid reconciling differences with the ethnic majority Albanians preferring to continue to work in line with Belgrade's political agenda (OSCE, 2015). In this context, the failure to include reconciliation efforts in Ahtisaari's peace plan was also noted in Dugolli et al.'s (2007) report. The report states that, "reconciliation would oblige all communities to engage in the process as mandatory for the fulfilment of the settlement" (Dugolli et al., 2007, p. 4). However, before the final settlement for Kosovo could be completed, the option for reconciliation would prove to be timely, costly and would exhaust the patience of Albanians who instead opted to declare their independence.

As a result, the process to create a peace plan was a less complicated strategy on paper to consolidate peace and democracy through powersharing arrangements. Neoliberal peacebuilding aims to achieve democratic state-building and liberalize elites by avoiding local driven initiatives and their legitimacy over their communal lives (Roberts, 2011, p. 16). The lack of an effective emancipatory peacebuilding process that would involve all peace agents (everyday people, the middle-tier and government) reflects today's situation in Kosovo.



**Figure 1: Neoliberal Peacebuilding Circle in Kosovo**

Figure 1 above illustrates the neoliberal peacebuilding circle in Kosovo sponsored by international actors and organizations such as the UN and EU, which failed to consider and implement a holistic peace process for all of the people in Kosovo. The peace circle above showcases different initiatives to build peace in Kosovo that was accomplished through the political elites, by avoiding local peacebuilding agents such as the grassroots and middle-tier leaders. Neoliberal mechanisms that were used to establish peace and dialogue in Kosovo have turned into a vicious peacebuilding circle by creating “more of an elite dialogue rather than a process that addresses the needs of citizens” (KDI, 2018a, p. 19). All of the political regimes in power have behaved properly towards the international community not rocking the boat, and

have complied with their demands to promote a neoliberal peace process with components of democracy, the rule of law and equality, yet, the results of these efforts to establish a self-sustained and just society have seen very limited progress (EC, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2014, 2016, 2018b).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter discussed some neoliberal peacebuilding patterns that were implemented in Kosovo and proved to be a highly complex and problematic task for the international community. The international community lacked incentives and programs to initiate a holistic peace in Kosovo and help its authorities to configure a congruent state-building system. Neoliberal peacebuilding comes with a set of principles that aims to rebuild democratic societies with high standards of human rights and equality. Establishing the rule of law, and creating new institutional mechanisms were among the first pillars of the peacebuilding process to be introduced in Kosovo.

However, the international community and everyday people face different challenges while attempting to restore these liberal standards in post-conflict societies (Richmond, 2011). The international community endorsed a top-down peacebuilding approach in Kosovo, which included political elites yet disregarded the grassroots and middle-tier elites. Lederach (1999, 2005) suggests that a middle-range peacebuilding intervention approach that is both top-down and bottom-up should be considered for any effective conflict transformation process to be successful. The top level includes the government and the elite groups, whereas the bottom level includes the grassroots that play a very important role in the conflict transformation process and should not be silenced (Lederach, 2005). The middle tier elite (professionals) connected to both

levels can then create a web of relationships that empowers everyone involved in the process (Lederach, 2005). Lederach (1999) reminds us that peacebuilding solutions “must be rooted in the soil where the conflict rages and must be built on the contextualized participation of people from that setting if reconciliation is to be sustained” (p. 107).

Bottom-up peacebuilding requires all pieces of peace to come together, meaning the conflict parties and communities must succeed in finding their local voice, show resilience, and reconcile their differences through peacebuilding and reconciliation mechanisms, which more often than not are ignored in international neoliberal peacebuilding. Mac Ginty (2014) refers to other forms of bottom-up peacebuilding as “everyday peace” mechanisms that involve situations where deeply divided ethnic groups decide to work together and prevent conflict on a daily basis (p. 553).

Moreover, the international community from the beginning faced coordination issues with other organizations involved in resolving the Kosovo question. The locals questioned the international community about their incentives to restore a just peace. The struggle for progress for the international community in Kosovo is very visible as the Albanian and Serbian communities in Kosovo remain ethnically divided, the rule of law and economic development have seen limited progress and there is very limited reverence towards the international presence in Kosovo (Richmond, 2011, p. 79).

Neoliberal peacebuilding efforts in Kosovo also involved several phases of negotiations that were directed by international actors such as the Contact Group, the UN and more recently the EU. If one compares the first time the conflict parties negotiated within the ongoing Brussels dialogue process one can see an improvement in the way the parties are managing their peace agenda. For example, during the Rambouillet talks, both the Kosovo and Serbian negotiation

teams negotiated with the international mediating team in separate rooms that resulted in failure, while the ongoing EU facilitated dialogue has both parties seated at the same table negotiating together to resolve their technical and political issues (Boyes & Jagger, 2018; EU External Action, n.d/b; Weller, 2008a). Both of these elite based dialogue processes ignored any input from the grassroots. The effort to develop a sustainable peace in Kosovo has resulted in the international community and the political elites building negative peace and separating the communities through powersharing arrangements.

This chapter has argued that the international community was aware that there was a power struggle among ethnopolitical elites in post-peace accord Kosovo. It considered that a satisfactory peacebuilding process for all would unfold if the communities received constitutional rights and Kosovar Albanians got independence. Each negotiation phase involved the international community using some kind of carrot and stick approach to force the protagonists into accepting an outcome favoured by the international community. For instance, Kosovar and Serbia leaders today sit at the same table and dialogue with each other about improving their relationship. Both countries are doing so in order to reap the rewards that they will receive from the EU in the name of goodwill and in appreciation for building democratic societies. The EU is using the enlargement strategy as a potential reward to induce and coerce Serbia and Kosovo to sit at the same table and dialogue with each other (Bieber, 2015). This compromise is a closer step for Serbia towards its eventual membership in the EU. For Kosovo, it means a wide range of things starting with visa liberalisation to membership in the EU and finally a seat in the UN as an equal world state member.

## **CHAPTER 6 – Powersharing: An Elite Conflict Management Tool**

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of consociational or powersharing arrangements as a result of neoliberal peacebuilding activities in Kosovo. The powersharing arrangements in Kosovo are explored through a close examination of Kosovo's Constitution that followed in the wake of the Martti Ahtisaari peace plan. Constitutional arrangements have contributed to a superficial peace in Kosovo leading to intensifying the sectarian ethnic division between both communities.

The main question that this chapter addresses is how does powersharing arrangements introduced by Ahtisaari's peace plan contribute to building a holistic peace in Kosovo? The chapter discusses powersharing and consociationalism in post-peace accord societies and the impact it has had on establishing a just peace while aiming to promote human rights and equality in Kosovo. Ahtisaari's long-term goal was to help shape the development of a multi-ethnic Kosovo, and he felt that the best tool to do so was through the establishment of a consociational democracy.

To understand the discourse on the powersharing arrangements in Kosovo, three key elements of consociationalism are analysed, namely (1) executive powers, (2) proportionality and veto powers, and (3) segmental or municipal autonomy (Lijphart, 1997). Considering that the smooth transition of power between both communities was challenged by local elites and everyday people three consociational features, in essence, have contributed to more animosity, division, and political extremism in Kosovo.

**The Limits of a Violent Peace: My Own Story - Part IV**

When I imagined our freedom and I dreamed of an independent Kosovo, I pictured the country to be a nation of political and social harmony. I would never have imagined that Kosovo Albanians would be divided in reaching, ratifying and implementing agreements that came down to promoting and extending the rights of other communities. I would never have foreseen that Kosovars would use recalcitrant behavior toward one another.

Since the conflict ended and with the assistance of the international community, Kosovo politics and its peacebuilding process has been nothing short of a muddled mess. The latest controversy is the external pressure from the international community on Kosovo's authorities to reach and implement two very important agreements, namely the demarcation of the border with Montenegro (already ratified by the AoK) and the approval of the creation of an Association of Serb-majority Communities (EC, 2018c; Zeqiri et al., 2016). These two agreements imposed by the international community in post-peace accord Kosovo have managed to divide ethnic Albanians to produce a major political obstruction. In addition, the so-called "harmful agreements" have inspired the leaders of opposition political parties to lead nonviolent social movements protesting against the agreements. The political leadership has been questioned as well as the power of the international community's presence in Kosovo. A petition was signed by 205,254 people in Kosovo against the creation of the Association of Serb Municipalities in Kosovo and the demarcation of the Border with Montenegro (Maliqi, Kallxo, 2015)

October 2015 marked one of the deepest divisions between the government and the opposition in Kosovo's Assembly since its independence. What we would consider to be a normal day working in the parliament turned out to be the beginning of a political embarrassment that demonstrated the fallacy of a defective neoliberal constructed democracy. Although I worked there as a civil servant, understandably any political situation would affect

not just our workplace but also our lives as everyday citizens outside of the Assembly building. The opposition prevented all the sessions and voting to proceed in the Assembly proving that political life in Kosovo was anything but normal. The police fired tear gas into the Assembly to demonstrate against the Kosovo government that had recently signed both international agreements without consulting the parliament endangering the territorial sovereignty of the state.

One day, while I was working in my office and a parliamentary session was proceeding, I heard MPs and police officers making noises in the hallway and instantly my eyes and throat started burning. I knew it was from tear gas because it was used in nearly every plenary and presidential meeting to oppose the government's agenda. Of course, we had to immediately vacate the premises. Whenever this happened, I asked myself how Kosovo and its citizens became victims of this political obstruction in Kosovo while the much needed steps to implement pieces of peace remained challenging for Kosovo's political leadership. Perhaps they were trying to bite off more than they could chew? The use of tear gas reminded the older generations (including myself) of the war, so why would the opposition use it against its own government when it reminded us of Serb forces using it against Kosovars during the war? Why is peace intermingled with violence? I felt once again that any issue connected with Serbia and the Serbian community managed to bring chaos into our lives, while Kosovars continue to value the preservation of their identity and nationalism with power.

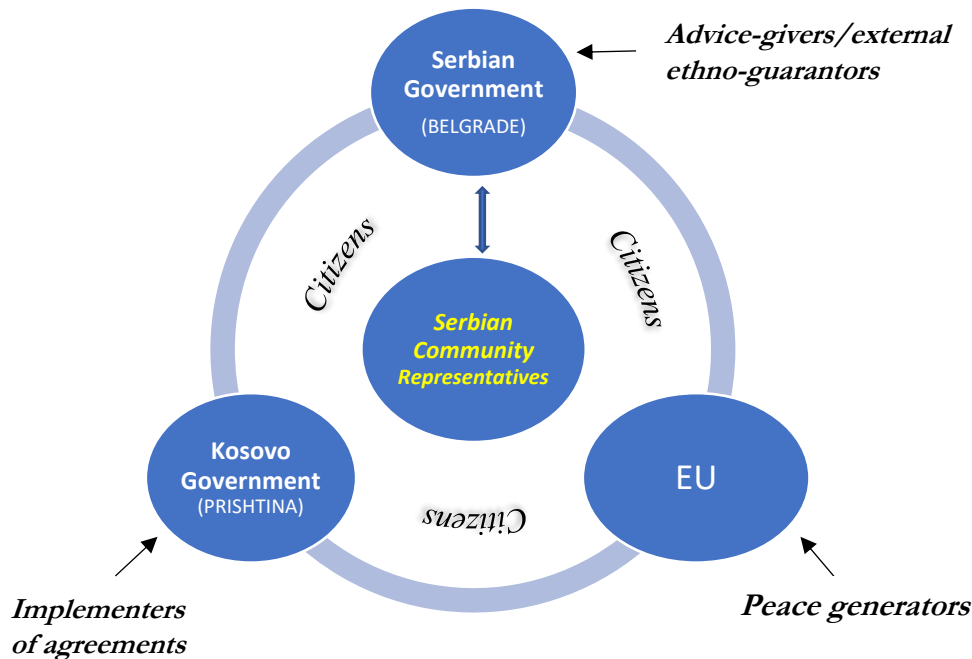
When Milošević came to power nationalism swept the region. To intimidate the Albanian population and demonstrate power, in the beginning of 1990s Serbian authorities used poisonous nerve gas in primary and high schools throughout Kosovo. My sister and her schoolmates were poisoned and were sent to the hospital. Due to health concerns, my parents took my sister to Ljubljana, Slovenia for treatment. They were told by doctors that this gas was produced by the

Yugoslav Army to be used as a military tool against the enemy. I was very young to remember, but my parents often shared their stories how our lives were affected when Milošević decided later to close Albanian schools in Kosovo, which triggered mass demonstrations throughout Kosovo. Later the Albanian community organized an independent parallel education system in private homes, mosques and community centres. Similar to many other Albanian families, my parents turned our house into a school. Four classes and some fifty high school students were taught in our house in two shifts. My mother and grandmother used to bake and serve food for students and teachers. My parents also told me that many times Serbian police forces would enter our house unannounced and with force to see if we were hiding students and teachers. Lucky they were never successful in finding anyone else besides the family there. Students had learned how to escape, run away from the house and hide in the neighbourhood when situations like this occurred. This fear followed us until the war ended. Yet, more than twenty years after the war somehow history has repeated itself! I would never think that someday I would have to run away from tear gas thrown by Kosovo Albanian politicians against their political leaders that aim to follow a “democratization” process that is in line with the international community and disregard grassroots political approaches.

The [un]conventional challenges to the political leadership posed a threat to newly established democratic values in Kosovo. The international community through its neoliberal peace agendas managed to divide the political elites into those that were invited to negotiate and accepted everything that was served to them on the plate, and those that were left out of the process and observed it like the rest of the population. What was happening in the Assembly and outside of it in the form of a massive nonviolent grassroots movement provided a clear picture of how divided the society in Kosovo really was, and continues to be. One set of people accepts

what the government offers in terms of public information, and the other set supports the opposition that highlights the government’s lack of transparency with regards to the dialogue process in Kosovo.

When Kosovo Albanians were fighting to prevent the implementation of the agreement that sought to guarantee more rights and autonomy to the majority populated Serb municipalities, Serbian MPs in the Assembly were not focused on the task. Hence, in an exchange for their vote on the Demarcation of the Border with Montenegro they asked for the government’s support to vote on the creation of the Association with Serb-majority Municipalities (Zëri, 2018). The Serbian community’s fate was being determined by other more powerful actors involved in the Kosovo question and who were determining community rights between the Kosovo Albanians (the implementers), the Serbian Government (advice-givers), and the EU (peace generators).



**Figure 2: Circle of Power**

The multidimensional circle in Figure 2 above illustrates the triangle of decision-making between the political elites (Kosovo and Serbia) and the EU. This circle also outlines the connection between Kosovo Serb political representatives and Belgrade and the fact that Kosovo Serbs are responsive only towards their external ethnoguarantor (Serbia). Kosovo Serb political representatives disregard any form of impartial engagement and cooperation with their Kosovo Albanian representatives. The circle also represents the triangle of power between the people, the government and the international community, suggesting that the citizens are left in the middle of these processes with no choice but to accept what is served up to them.

### **Defining Powersharing or Consociationalism**

In ethnically divided societies peace and democratic pluralism is a newly introduced concept. Scholars like Arend Lijphart, Brendan O’Leary, John McGarry, and Stefan Wolff argue that powersharing is a common feature of conflict management (negative peace) in divided societies. Powersharing in political terms is often referred to as “consociational democracy” (Lijphart, 2004, p. 97) and is predisposed to establishing “segmental autonomy” for minority inclusion (Lijphart, 1977, p. 41). Lijphart notes that segmental autonomy means “rule by the minority over itself in the area of the minority’s exclusive concern” (1977, p. 41), which in turn creates division between the majority and the minority.

O’Leary (2005) defines consociationalism as the “prescribed method of conflict regulation of the international community” (p. 3), where from the consociationalist’s viewpoint the option of adopting consociational democracy in divided societies is often a choice between powersharing provisions and “worse alternatives” (p. 9). Subsequently, Lijphart (2004) argues

that powersharing establishes group autonomy and rights for ethnic groups to run their community's affairs. From this logic, powersharing aims to bring the ethnopolitical elite together to work and establish a form of cooperation that is convertible in the context of local political and ethnic dynamics to manage conflicts. From a critical viewpoint, consociational features in new democratic post-peace accord societies introduces another layer of disconnect between communities by mainly involving the elite in the peacebuilding process and decisionmaking mechanisms (Byrne, 2001, 2006).

Bose (2002) argues that, "consociation tends to reify ethnic/national identities and entrench cleavages and divisions" (cited in Jeong, 2005, p.96). In addition, if the trust has not been established between ethnic communities powersharing may contribute to further division between them and allow structural violence to permeate the society (Jeong, 2005, p. 96). Some examples of successful consociational democracies exist in countries like "Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Austria" (Jeong, 2005, p. 97). Yet in countries like Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Lebanon, Israel/Palestine, Rwanda, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Nigeria, and Kosovo powersharing was introduced as a form of elite accommodation or conflict management without building trust first and tackling the identity needs of groups so that the process failed to bring about reconciliation among ethnic communities (Bieber, 2013; Bose, 2007; Wolff, 2006, 2010).

In the case of Kosovo, elite powersharing was introduced primarily through Martti Ahtisaari's Comprehensive Plan and Kosovo's new constitution. The powersharing political process aimed to include minorities in the decisionmaking processes at all state levels (legislative, executive, judicial, and local). Extending and protecting minority rights within the constitution led to a superficial strategy to reconcile power differences and to shape trust (Bieber,

2013a, 2013b). For example, Bieber (2013b) argues that in regard to Kosovo and its Serb community, consociational powersharing has led to the “de facto partition of Kosovo and territorial fragmentation” referring to Serb municipalities that refuse to recognize the state of Kosovo by relying on Serbia as their mother country (p. 143). The sections below provide a discussion of political engineering, the drafting of the Kosovo constitution and powersharing arrangements, and its impact on the peacebuilding process in Kosovo.

### **Drafting the Kosovo Constitution: Disregarding Local Ownership**

The initial assumption that the Kosovo conflict could be resolved through international mediation and a settlement plan only proved suitable for one side (Kosovo). In the preceding process to negotiate a peace plan that would please all sides in a final agreement, Weller (2009) argues that Serbia was mostly involved in negotiations about topics on “decentralization and protection of historic monuments” (p. 203). Given the 120 days interim period to draft the Kosovo constitution, the limited time provided little space to hear the voice of the people with regard to dealing with how the accord would impact their lives.

Considering that the basis of Ahtisaari’s proposal could not be altered especially with regards to the ethnopolitical communities, there was not much to change in the main principles of the constitution, especially with regards to powersharing arrangements. The general principles of the constitution were discussed with the public, but the final draft “was only made public” after the declaration of independence (Weller, 2009, p. 249). Some recommendations and suggestions that originated from the public were integrated into the constitution, but Weller (2009) leaves it vague about what exact input people made and what changes were considered because the constitution could not disrupt or interfere with Ahtisaari’s proposal. In contrast, the

GAP Institute's (2010) policy briefing reported that the general public including Members of Parliament (MPs) did not have any input to amend or suggest changes to any of the draft laws that were foreseen to come into force as a result of Ahtisaari's package (p. 1).

From a public peace discourse, Irwin (2013) completed public peace polls that enquired of all the communities living in Kosovo and Serbia about their views with regards to Kosovo's planned independence. He concluded that the voice of the people was not heard and that the actual power rested in the hands of local political elites that eventually became political instruments of international allies such as the U.S., NATO, the EU and Russia (p. 302).

The follow-up process that took place after Martti Ahtisaari's proposal was approved was a superficial plan to finalize the process towards independence established by the international community, without genuinely leaving space for local people's voices to be heard so that they could have essential input into the process.

### **Powersharing Features**

Powersharing in post peace accord societies aims to distribute power among communities and possibly integrate all communities together (O'Leary, 2005). Powersharing is one of the main tools of neoliberal peacebuilding that functions as the basis of key international human rights instruments (Byrne, 2001). This form of conflict management in protracted ethnopolitical conflicts often comes with consequences as it aims to enhance the rights of minorities at the expense of the majority in order to provide a system of checks and balances between communities (Byrne, 2006). Although in theory, this reflects key features of positive change, in conflict societies it becomes a major hurdle if reconciliation and trust building is not reinforced with the peace package. Similarly, Lijphart (2004) argues that powersharing arrangements in

ethnically divided societies offers a solution to reduce tensions between communities by guaranteeing their rights and accommodating their political representation in the government (p. 96).

Powersharing is introduced by the international community as a form of reducing the domination of the majority over other ethnic minorities (Wolff, 2006, 2010). In the case of Kosovo, powersharing or consociationalism was introduced through Ahtisaari's settlement plan and cemented within the constitution. Ahtisaari also provided provisions to compose a Kosovo Constitutional Team that would specifically engage in writing the constitution. Consequently, Ahtisaari's plan suggested that the constitutional team consist of 21 members of whom 3 would be Serbian community representatives and 3 would be from other communities (UNSC, S/2007/168/Add.1, 2007, Art 10, p. 6). The constitutional package embodied elements of enhanced rights for communities, especially Serbs giving them executive rights, legislative and veto powers, cultural privileges and municipal autonomy (Constitution, 2008; UNSC, S/2007/168/Add.1, 2007). As reflected in the case of Kosovo's powersharing mechanisms, Lijphart argues that consociationalism is "complemented by three secondary instruments: mutual veto, proportionality, and segmental autonomy" that take away rule by the majority (1977, p. 36). It is important to analyze each set of powers granted to the Kosovo communities to better understand powersharing arrangements in Kosovo.

In addition to powersharing arrangements, cultural privileges for ethnic-minorities are also safeguarded with the constitution. Cultural rights and privileges for minority communities, especially the Serbs, are granted autonomy to govern over their religious and municipal affairs. Both religious and municipal affairs come with extensive rights in terms of education, language, health, and financial affairs (UNSC, S/2007/168/Add.1, 2007). For example, from a legal

discourse perspective, language rights are broadly covered for non-majority communities. In addition, the Serbian community makes up about 5 percent of the population of Kosovo so that the Serbian language is the second official language in Kosovo and the Serbian community also has an independent Kosovo TV channel in the Serbian language whereas other ethnic communities' language is officially used only at the municipal level.

**Executive powers.** Whether a country is a monarchy or a republic the angles of constructing its decisionmaking system are based on how political power is distributed among leadership and the communities they represent (Lijphart, 1977, 1994). Strengthening the notion of peacebuilding in post-peace accord societies often means to share the power between ethnic majorities and ethnic minorities (Jeong, 2005). Executive powers often make or break the positive evolution of democracy in deeply divided societies (Lijphart, 1977). Critics of “power sharing refer to powersharing arrangements as ‘rudderless’ or ‘leaderless,’ and they complain of ‘stalemated,’ ‘deadlocked’ or ‘blocked’ decisionmaking” (O’Leary, 2013, p. 3). In Kosovo, communities are granted executive powers by the constitution. These executive powers include creating the positions of Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers and Deputy Ministers (Constitution, 2016). Specifically, the Constitution of Kosovo under Article 96 Paragraph 3 and 4 sets out the following:

3. There shall be at least one Minister from the Kosovo Serb Community and one Minister from another Kosovo non-majority Community. If there are more than twelve Ministers, the Government shall have a third Minister representing a Kosovo non-majority Community.
4. There shall be at least two Deputy Ministers from the Kosovo Serb Community and two Deputy Ministers from other Kosovo non-majority Communities. If there are

more than twelve Ministers, the Government shall have a third Deputy Minister representing the Kosovo Serb Community and a third Deputy Minister representing another Kosovo non-majority Community. (Constitution, 2016)

Article 96 Paragraph 3 and 4 of the Kosovo Constitution define the system of the government of Kosovo that has to function as a grand coalition government based on ethnic division, and by all means, to accommodate non-majority representatives with decision-making powers. Based on the formal legal provisions of executive rights for communities, this form of government undeniably features consociationalism. None of the ministers (including minority representative ministers) hold veto powers, as they are an integral part of the government. Elements of cross-ethnic powersharing also exist on the municipal level in municipalities with at least 10 percent minorities. The Constitution under the direct supervision of the President of Kosovo also provides minorities with the right to run a Consultative Council for Communities that empowers them to carry their community agendas through exchanges with the government of Kosovo and propose “legislative or policy initiatives” (Constitution, 2016, Art 60, p. 18).

Following these mechanisms for minority inclusion that are represented through constitutional powersharing, Kosovo’s authorities face consistent political challenges to engage Serbian representatives in decisionmaking processes and comply with Prishtina’s political agenda instead of Belgrade’s. As there is no strategic imperative to shift the positionality of the Serb community towards Kosovo’s political agenda Bieber (2013b) argues that, “municipalities adjacent to Serbia boycott Kosovo institutions and the government, and its Serb ministers have only limited authority and credibility in the parts of Kosovo populated by Serbs” (p. 135). As both sides seek to improve the lives of their communities and promote social justice and reconciliation, they should formally use these political executive powers. They are mostly

utilized to advance their political agendas against each other. Further, there has been no agreement and cooperation between political representatives of Kosovo Albanians and Serbs communities so that, “all institutions and powersharing arrangements have been a direct imposition rather than internally driven compromises or settlements” (Bieber, 2003, p. 323).

**Proportionality and veto power.** Kosovo has a parliamentary political arrangement based on a system of checks and balances where the main power rests with the parliament that represents the people. Based on the constitutional framework the Assembly of Kosovo (AoK) has 120 seats. Article 64 presents the powersharing distribution between different communities living in Kosovo based on the following criteria: (1) 100 seats are reserved for Albanian political parties that win enough votes to get seats in the Parliament, (2) 10 seats are reserved seats for the Serbian minority, and (3) 10 seats are reserved for other minorities such as Bosnians, Turks, Gorani, and the Roman, Ashkali, Egyptian (RAE) communities (Constitution of Kosovo, 2008, p.20). This form of proportionality introduces another layer of consociationalism in the political and electoral system of Kosovo that contributes to a superficial peace. To be a part of the grand coalition and have guaranteed seats in the parliament justifies “a share of power at the expense of the rule of law and thereby increases political cynicism in the electorate” (O’Leary, 2013, p. 402). In addition, granting constitutional and legislative rights to minorities is very common in post-peace accord societies suggesting that such a system tries “to overcome ethnic cleavages based on cultural, linguistic, religious, ethnic, and/or racial identities” (Jeong, 2005, p. 95).

Minorities are represented in the AoK through multiple mechanisms. For example, Serb MPs reserve the right to have one of their MPs serve as Deputy President of the AoK. In addition, other communities also have access to the position of Deputy President as the position is rotated every six months. Moreover, in terms of community rights, the AoK has a permanent

Parliamentary Committee on Rights and Interests that exclusively looks after the rights of communities. Upon the request of members of this committee any draft law must pass through this committee and be voted on for further amendments or recommendations. The role of this committee has also been integrated into the political system to create another layer of checks and balances within the Assembly.

Power divisions between the ethnic majority and ethnic minorities can be changed only with constitutional amendments. Thus, Article 65, Paragraph 2 of the constitution provides that any amendments to it must pass with a vote of two-thirds of the majority community and two-thirds from other minorities represented in the AoK through guaranteed reserved seats (Constitution, 2008, p. 20). This is one of the key powers that representatives of non-ethnic Albanians hold to push forward or block certain agendas that may pose a threat to their identity and nationalism. Considering the importance of veto power, it is important that politicians representing certain communities approximate their political agendas with representatives of other communities and avoid use of veto power to “minimize disputes” over issues that may pose a threat on peace prospects (McEvoy, 2013, p. 200).

While the constitution cannot be changed without the approval of two-thirds of non-ethnic Albanians, this rule also applies for laws with vital interests that aim to protect the rights of minorities and maintain a multi-ethnic state that function on premises of consociationalism. Specifically, laws proposed for amendments need votes of both the majority and the minorities to and cannot be “submitted to a referendum” are as following:

- (1) Laws changing municipal boundaries, establishing or abolishing municipalities, defining the scope of powers of municipalities and their participation in intermunicipal and cross-border relations;
- (2) Laws implementing the rights of Communities and their

members, other than those set forth in the Constitution; (3) Laws on the use of language; (4) Laws on local elections; (5) Laws on protection of cultural heritage and special protected areas; (6) Laws on religious freedom or on agreements with religious communities; (7) Laws on education; and (8) Laws on the use of symbols including community symbols and public holidays. (Constitution, 2016, Art 81, pp. 26-27)

The power of minorities is also extended with their representation in the judicial branch. Article 103, Paragraph 3 of the constitution states that, “at least fifteen percent of the judges of the Supreme Court, but not fewer than three judges, shall be from communities that are not in the majority in Kosovo” (Constitution, 2008, p. 36). In addition, this rule establishes that throughout Kosovo where courts function under the jurisdiction of Kosovo, at least two judges from other communities should be represented (Constitution, 2008, Art 103, p. 36). The powersharing arrangements embedded in legislative and electoral proportionality demonstrates that these neoliberal modifications did not help to moderate politics and promote social justice. In the judicial branch there is a clear “over-representation of ethnic minority judges” in the system (Korenica & Doli, 2010, p. 182).

In the public sector, powersharing or proportionality is also rooted within Ahtisaari’s peace plan and formalized with the constitution. It promotes interethnic tolerance and intercultural dialogue. Yet communities are encouraged through institutional mechanisms to apply for public sector positions, especially in law enforcement services (Constitution, 2008; OPM/OCA, 2013).

**Segmental/municipal autonomy.** Municipalities populated by non-ethnic Albanians, especially those populated by Serbians are granted extensive municipal rights through decentralization. In essence, decentralization means transferring power in Kosovo from central

government to local municipalities inhabited by minorities. Similar to other community rights, these rights are based on Ahtisaari's peace plan. However, decentralization in Ahtisaari's peace plan is quite vague because it has led to more confusion on the Albanian side as well as encouraging greater aspirations for Serbia to extend its powers through supporting Serbian ethnic groups in Kosovo. In terms of municipal governance and political affairs, Article 62 of the constitution stipulates that in municipalities where more than 10 percent of the population are non-ethnic Albanians, the Deputy President of the Municipal Assembly should be the representative of minority communities (2008, p. 19).

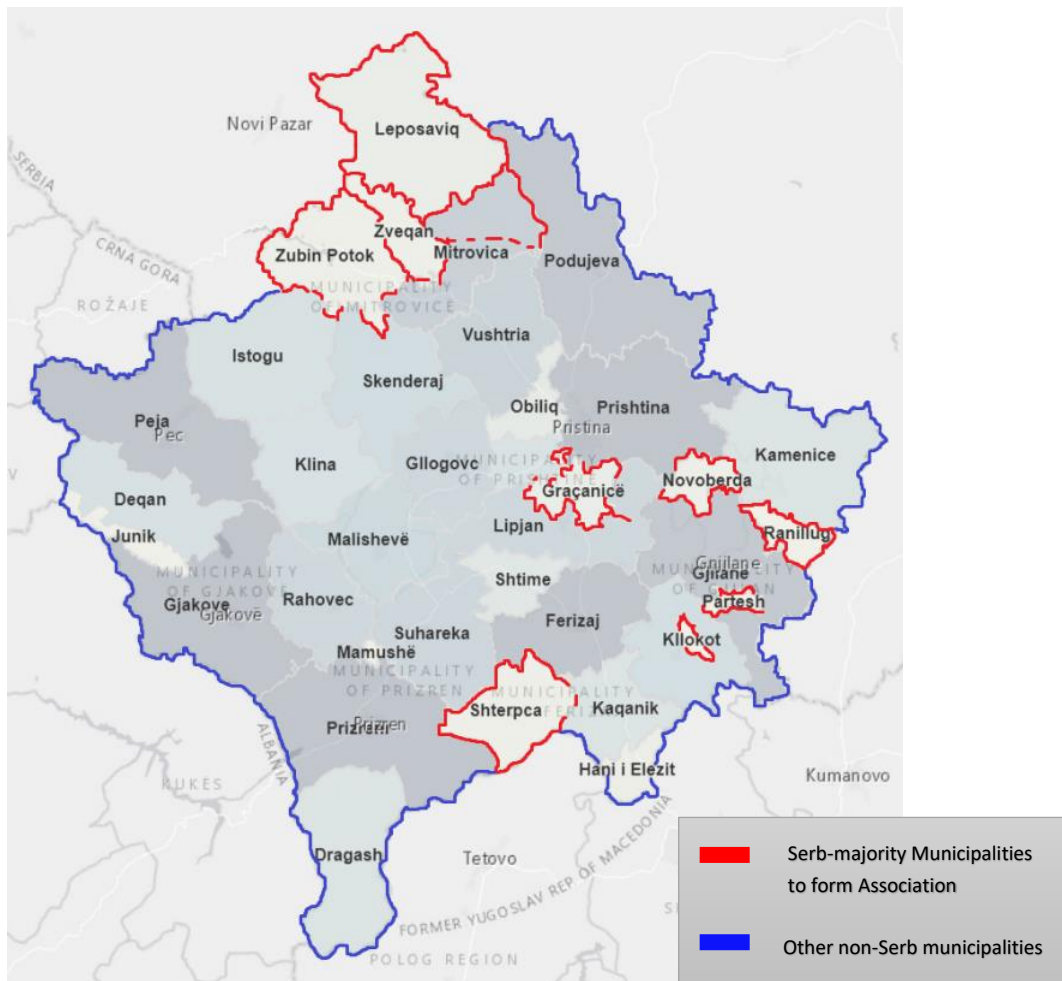
There is a visible resistance from Kosovo Albanians especially from the opposition to enhanced municipal decentralization, where these powers are perceived to have contributed to the fragmentation of the statehood of Kosovo. Even before Ahtisaari's plan was accepted by Kosovo Albanians, the opposition (then called the self-determination movement) strongly opposed any form of decentralization that would give more powers to majority Serb populated municipalities at the expense of weakening the central government. They argued that Serbia's power and influence in Kosovo would be further legitimized because "decentralization brings division, and division brings war. While not letting realization of decentralization we stop Kosovo's division, and war" (Vetëvendosje, 2006, p. 5, translated from Albanian). The opposition within Kosovo is very vocal against the creation of the Association of Serb-majority Municipalities believing that the association will pave the way for more autonomy and isolation of minorities instead of integrating them into the system and public life within Kosovo. This paves the way for the formation of Serbian enclaves and the continued operation of Serbian parallel structures.

The decentralization process was part of Ahtisaari's peace plan that led to the Serbians desire to establish their own municipal association that was mutually agreed on in 2013 during the Brussels talks between Kosovo and Serbia (EU, 2013). Ten Serbian populated municipalities are included in the Association. While the agreement was reached between the Serbian and Kosovo governments, the latter does not have the right legal mechanism to support the creation of the Serb Association. The Constitutional Court of Kosovo decided that, "general principles/main elements are not entirely in compliance with the spirit of the Constitution" and once the right amendments were made, Kosovo's institutions could go ahead and establish the association of Serb-majority Municipalities (Constitutional Court, K0130/15, p. 40; Tahiri, 2015).

The key features of the association range from technical to political, legal, financial and organizational (EU, 2013). As an agreed upon item by both governments in the Brussels Agreement, the creation of the Serb Association would ensure that the Serb community would have enhanced rights in every level of local self-governance with almost no accountability towards central government. In this form of "segmental autonomy" the minority would rule over its own affairs (Lijphart, 1977, p. 41). Essentially, the enhanced rights provided through the creation of the Association empowers Serbia through financial and political inducements to be more proactive towards Kosovo's Serbian communities, while also distancing ethnic Serbs from formally recognizing Kosovo's statehood.

The establishment of the association of Serb-majority Municipalities illustrates segmental autonomy or community fragmentation in Kosovo and is outlined in the map in Figure 3 below. The map also shows the land that the Serbian community inhabits in Kosovo that is rather extensive considering that it makes up about 5 percent of Kosovo's total population. The

Albanian political elite disputed the creation of a Serb-majority Association for these municipalities. This led to the opposition’s use of violence in Kosovo’s Parliament. The opposition members threw tear gas towards the government’s cabinet. This behavior led to a mass demonstration, and the signing of a petition by over 200,000 people. While the EU facilitated dialogue aims to establish better relations between Prishtina and Belgrade “the association clearly perpetuates a strong role for Serbia in the affairs of Kosovo’s Serb community” (Zeqiri, Troch & Kabashi, 2016, p. 10).



**Figure 3: Map of Members of the Association with Serb-majority Municipalities**

Note: Adapted from <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=f918393918f64194b>

42123a738d77320. Printed with permission. Copyright © ESRI, HERE, Garmin, FAO, USGS, NGA, and the GIS User Community. All rights reserved. Modifications include blue and red outlining of different areas on the map.

Initially, Ahtisaari's Comprehensive Plan projected to weaken central government while enhancing the power of municipalities in relation to minority communities (UNSC, S/2007/168/Add.1, 2007, Annex III, pp. 22-33). Thus, minority municipalities in Mitrovica North, Gračanica and Sterpce (with a majority of Serbs) were able to govern their own health, educational, financial, religious and cultural affairs, as well as appoint their own police commanders (UNSC, S/2007/168/Add.1, 2007, Chap III, Art 4). This act empowers Serb municipalities, yet different rules apply to other municipalities populated by Kosovo Albanians because municipal affairs are run according to the law in place for local governance. This leaves the state itself with little authority over the affairs of its local municipalities. In addition, the plan has managed to further separate the communities while giving the right legal and political tools to Serbs to better organize themselves in enclaves and run a parallel political system with Serbia, which is a continuous major concern in relations between Kosovo and Serbia (ECMI & ERAC, 2018, p. 7). Ahtisaari's efforts to establish a smooth running multi-ethnic state with enhanced municipal rights have backfired because they have contributed to more isolation, hostility, and less cooperation. In addition, the Serbs are so keen to create the Association of Serb Municipalities to give these municipalities more rights and freedom from central government.

### **Albanian, Serbian or Kosovar Identity? One Identity Fits All!**

In protracted ethnopolitical conflicts where self-determination becomes a zero-sum game for locals and the international community is involved in engineering peacebuilding, powersharing

between ethnic communities proves to be the best solution in terms of conflict management (O'Leary, 2013). Introducing powersharing in these societies comes with incentives to accommodate the basic needs and demands of ethnic minorities as well as granting "group autonomy" through constitutional reforms (Lijphart, 2004, p. 97).

Powersharing through constitutional provisions became the only conflict management tool to build ethnic tolerance and community relations in Kosovo. O'Leary (2005) critiques Lijphart's main ideas on consociational powersharing, suggesting that countries that are smaller in size and with less powerful elites are prone to agreeing easier with international agendas for powersharing, as they "feel externally threatened" (p. 30). Hence, given the diverse views on how Kosovo's peace was constructed, Kosovo Albanians demanded no other solution than independence. Yet the international community offered a realist approach to peacebuilding introducing neoliberal standards that promoted minority human rights within the highest democratic standards that influenced the transformation of ethnonational identity.

Ahtisaari's peace plan facilitated the creation of a multi-ethnic state while removing Kosovo Albanians and Serbs sentiments and desires to attach themselves to strong nationalism. The Comprehensive Plan worked to separate Kosovo Albanians from the idea of unifying with Albania and instead it promoted new state symbols that would entice them to identify only with Kosovo as a multi-ethnic state. Ideally, all of the community's could now share responsibilities and power under one nation. Article 1 of the Ahtisaari's plan, later reflected in the constitution states that, "Kosovo shall have its own, distinct, national symbols; including a flag, seal and anthem, reflecting its multi-ethnic character" (UNSC, S/2007/168/Add.1, 2007, Art 1, p.2). This provision led to the creation of a new *Kosovar* identity to unify all ethnicities under the roof of one consolidated state.

The construction of this new national identity for all of the communities at least in the short run did not manage to establish new national norms and values to unify the people. In addition, the new identity provisions reflected the common Yugoslavian nationality that was used in the former Yugoslavia for citizens of the federal republics to endorse the identity of all ethnicities under one nation. To date, the majority of people living in Kosovo align with and identify as Albanian, Serbian, Bosnian, Turks, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian because of their nationalist feelings. This confirms that technically ethnic identity is instrumental and fluid and can be changed but nationalism cannot as it is embedded in historical narratives and bloodlines (Volkan, 1998). Consequently, Ahtisaari's powersharing provisions have managed to further reinforce nationalism and empower political parties that promote virulent ethnic nationalism as well as ethnic divisions among communities. New generations must be able to adapt and identify themselves as Kosovars within a multi-ethnic state while changing the ethnic narratives to interethnic tolerance and reconciliation.

## **Conclusion**

The central focus of this chapter was to explore Kosovo's constitutional framework that became effective after the declaration of independence in 2008. Institutional arrangements and minority rights within a multi-ethnic state based on tolerance and a powersharing model dominated Ahtisaari's peace package. The uncertainty of state-building and everyday challenges that pose threats to peace prospects in Kosovo have contributed to less trust among communities while encouraging virulent nationalism and aggravated political cleavages to triumph.

Lijphart (1997)'s idea of consociational democracy or powersharing in plural societies was used to analyze Kosovo's powersharing and constitutional framework through the following elements:

(1) mutual veto or 'concurrent majority' rule, which serves as an additional protection of vital minority interests, (2) proportionality as the principal standard of political representation, civil service appointments, and allocation of public funds, and (3) a high degree of autonomy for each segment to run its own internal affairs. (p. 25)

Each powersharing element in the Kosovo constitution aims to enhance the rights and privileges of minority communities. We can summarise key features of the executive, legal, segmental discourses that have compromised peace for everyday people.

Executive powers come in the form of proportionality. However, it is important to note that this form of powersharing allows Kosovo's federal government to only form a multi-ethnic grand-coalition cabinet that includes ministers and deputy ministers that represent Serb and other communities in Kosovo. However, the representatives from Serb communities in these executive positions are limited and are less credible due to Serbia's direct control over their community affairs.

Proportionality and veto powers are key features of powersharing arrangements in post-peace accord societies. The Constitution of Kosovo, following Ahtisaari's plan, guarantees and reserves 20 seats for MPs representing ethnic minorities. Proportionality is also regulated in the representation of ethnic minorities within parliamentary committees, the judicial branch, law enforcement, and the civil sector.

The rights of communities are also constitutionalized through veto powers. For example, Kosovo's constitution cannot be amended without the approval of two-thirds of MPs

representing ethnic minorities. This rule also applies to amendments of laws with vital interests on issues regarding community rights and privileges, language and cultural heritage, municipality boundaries and powers, local elections, use of symbols, religious freedom and education. Basically, these laws ensure that Kosovo continues to promote ethnic tolerance, the rights of ethnic communities and community affairs with the highest international standards primarily outlined in Ahtisaari's peace plan.

Municipal autonomy enhances municipal rights especially for Serb-majority municipalities and brings another layer of consociational democracy to Kosovo. Municipal rights are regulated with decentralization, a constitutional term that refers to municipal autonomy. Segmental autonomy means "minority rule: rule by the minority over itself in the area of the minority's exclusive concern" (Lijphart, 1977, p. 41). During the Brussels talks Kosovo and Serbia agreed to establish an association with Serb-majority communities to empower and provide autonomy to Serb-majority municipalities. These municipalities can exclusively take charge over their own community affairs by deciding how to run political, security, educational, financial, cultural, and health issues. This agreement managed to split Albanian political elites with the opposition eventually leading mass protests against the government and firing tear gas canisters in the parliament. The opposition insisted that the creation of a Serb association with extensive autonomy rights would contribute to further dividing the communities and would open more doors for Serbia to interfere in Kosovo's political affairs by inciting and controlling its minorities. Subsequently, the agreement was sent to the Constitutional Court for interpretation, and parts of it were ruled to be unconstitutional.

The discussion of the key elements of consociationalism operating within Kosovo clearly illustrates that Ahtisaari's peace plan and constitutional framework focused on sharing power

among all of the ethnic communities. However, it failed to address the legacies of the war. The peace plan established the foundation of the new state, but it translated into a prescription for conflict management rather than embedding conflict transformation and reconciliation processes and practices among all of the ethnic communities residing in Kosovo.

## CHAPTER 7 – Conclusion

### Introduction

In this conclusions chapter, I want to briefly summarize the main arguments of this thesis. As this thesis unfolded, in the first chapter, I discussed the structure of this study and an overview of the conflict. In the second chapter, I examined the context of the conflict in Kosovo, the background of the conflict, and the main points within Ahtisaari's settlement plan. The third chapter focused on the methodology adopted for this research. The literature was reviewed in chapter's four, five and six connecting relevant PACS theories with pieces of peace in Kosovo. In the fourth chapter, I examined conflicting issues that resulted from Ahtisaari's settlement plan that are managed but have produced negative peace or the absence of war in Kosovo. From a theoretical perspective, this chapter discussed Galtung (1996)'s concepts of positive peace (social justice) and negative peace (absence of war). As Kosovo's peacebuilding process is a reflection of negative peace, I explored past and current issues that have contributed to the absence of war and the missing pieces of peace. The fifth chapter presented my reflection of neoliberal peacebuilding processes in Kosovo that have failed to embrace the grassroots. This chapter focused on the importance of local ownership and reconciliation efforts to establish positive peace. Finally, the sixth chapter concentrated on elite powersharing or consociationalism and examining these applied peacebuilding tools in the case of Kosovo that essentially represents conflict management incognito.

In this final chapter, I wish to highlight some key findings. In addition, this chapter also discusses some recommendations for future research.

**Key Findings**

The findings that emerged from this study are organized under the following topics: a) Ahtisaari's Settlement Plan's contribution to negative peace, b) neoliberal peacebuilding that disregards local ownership and grassroots, and c) powersharing arrangements that ignore conflict resolution.

The study and practices of peacebuilding integrates strategies that contribute to conflict transformation and that often demands the interaction of multiple peace agents. Ahtisaari's peace plan established a multi-ethnic state integrating all of Kosovo's communities together in a multi-ethnic society that in essence really provided a one-dimensional approach to peacebuilding. It was based on conflict management rather than conflict transformation. It failed to reconcile the differences between all of the communities, especially between Albanians and Serbs coexisting in Kosovo and establish social justice for all. In addition, international peacebuilding efforts in Kosovo, including Ahtisaari's Settlement Plan lacked credibility and realistic approaches to integrate all of the communities and engage them in peacebuilding processes. Moreover, Ahtisaari's peace package lacked the development of community-based decision-making and the empowerment of local peacebuilding initiatives. Finally, the plan did not plan for how communities would reconcile their differences that ultimately contributed to the emergence of a superficial peace in Kosovo.

In this context, it was argued that long-term community integration and the establishment of positive peace requires the parallel construction of peace, which means, community trust-building should go along with state-building. Reconciliation should start with forgiveness generated by the political elites moving into the grassroots; war crimes need to be acknowledged and inter-ethnic hate speech condemned; and the collective healing of past traumas and the promotion of ethnic-tolerance for all communities should be the focal point for local and central

political agendas through storytelling processes used at the local level and a truth and reconciliation commission at the macro state level. Lederach and Lederach (2010) argue that collective resiliency; reconciliation and individual and collective healing of past traumas are very important to building sustainable peace. In addition, they claim, “healing represents the journeys to touch, reclaim, name and project voice” (Lederach & Lederach, 2010, p. 204). Therefore, the empowerment of the grassroots supported by emancipatory peacebuilding projects represents important elements in building positive peace in post-peace accord Kosovo.

Other findings on neoliberal peacebuilding efforts in Kosovo offer insight into how events unfolded during the peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes in Kosovo. International peacebuilding intervention in Kosovo targeted communities with incompatible peace agendas because neoliberal peacebuilding more often than not undertakes top-down elite-based processes while neglecting the grassroots. These external efforts to establish peace in protracted conflicts emerging from violence often provoke the locals and lead to hostility towards the international presence. For instance, the heavy international presence in Kosovo and the unanswered question about Kosovo’s future status in 2004 led to local Albanian’s frustration that resulted in violent riots throughout Kosovo that targeted mainly ethnic-Serbs and the international community.

The UN Ambassador Eide to Kosovo reported on these events indicating the “dissatisfaction of the majority of the population” that required replacement of “priority-based and realistic standards policy” (Weller, 2009, p. 188). Ambassador Eide suggested that there was no right time to start discussions on Kosovo’s future status, as this was “inevitable” (Weller, 2009, p.188). These violent events led to Ahtisaari’s settlement plan and Kosovo’s unilateral declaration of independence. The process involved only the political elites from the beginning of

the negotiating process until its finalization. The grassroots from all of the ethnic communities in Kosovo were neglected. On the other side of the coin, Serbian political representatives from Belgrade negotiated the fate of local Serbs. The role of Serbia in this process was to serve as an external ethnoguarantor for the Serbian community living in Kosovo negotiating their fate with the Kosovo government. Serbia did not agree to grant Kosovo more than provincial autonomy and did not approve the final settlement plan, as it had endorsed the independence of Kosovo.

It is clearly important to strengthen democratic governance, human rights and the rule of law in Kosovo through different international neoliberal initiatives. Without the international community's support in imposing democratic governance on Kosovo, the fate of Kosovo's people would be much worse if they were left in the hands of Serbia. However, from the beginning neoliberal interventions and mediation efforts to establish peace in Kosovo adopted a top-down approach to manage conflict among the various ethnic elites. First, UNMIK established elite based cooperation among the elites to fill the political vacuum and establish the rule of law. Second, the International Civilian Office that oversaw the independence and implementation of Ahtisaari's package adopted as elite based conflict management replaced Ahtisaari negotiation process. Finally, the ongoing EU-facilitated dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia to normalize their relations and to sign a "possible" peace agreement involved only high-ranking politicians from both countries. The teams leading the dialogue are responsible for producing confusing agreements while presenting the results of the meetings in the manner that they wanted their respective publics to see and understand, which ultimately led to even more chaos and confusion.

In these very important peacebuilding processes that are considered historical in the development of Kosovo as a democratic multi-ethnic state, they failed dismally in securing the

inclusion and involvement of the beneficiary local communities. Self-sustaining and emancipatory peace means that, “liberal peacebuilding cannot succeed unless it achieves broad consensus among its target population” (Richmond, 2007, p. 459) and must interrogate “who peace is for, and what it means” as peace processes should contribute to everyday emancipatory peace that reflects social inclusivity and “recognise local ownership, human rights, culture, social and grassroots resources for self-government” (Richmond, 2009, pp. 558, 565). While the communities in Kosovo have not managed to establish any line of communication, the elite level is pushed by the international community to improve state relations through dialogue. The agreements reached by the elites as a result of this top-down approach lack transparency and implementation. For a sustained peace process to emerge in Kosovo it is necessary to adopt a holistic peace whereby all agents of peace should be involved in the process, this involves bottom-up and top-down approaches that meet in the middle and generate an integrative system of peacebuilding (see Lederach, 1999, 2005).

Powersharing or consociationalism was introduced as the foundation of state building in Kosovo. This arrangement was adopted with Ahtisaari’s Settlement Plan and finalized within the constitution to distribute the power between all of the communities living in Kosovo. Although the consociational powersharing system protected and enhanced the rights of ethnic minorities with the highest international standards it did not contribute to positive peace. The powersharing arrangements ensure that ethnic-minorities are accommodated with rights and privileges in almost every component of social/political life, yet some of these rights are considered to be non-proportional. To explain Kosovo’s consociational democracy process, Lijphart (1977)’s model was adopted because it explains basic principles of powersharing that include grand-coalition (executive powers), proportionality and veto power, and municipal autonomy. These three

elements of powersharing did not nurture the integration of the ethnic communities in Kosovo, especially the Serbian community. Instead it helped the Serbian community to run parallel structures and to operate out of its own enclaves. Further, while the ethnic communities are represented through a grand coalition in the Government of Kosovo, these positions are not used to benefit the communities. These political positions are often used for individual privileges and power. In addition, strengthening minority representation through constitutional powers that were provided to promote a system of checks and balances rather than minority inclusion has not worked. In essence, this neoliberal state-building design aimed to create the conditions for self-sustaining institutions, which have so far functioned on a superficial basis is not contributing to the improvement of the lives of the beneficiary communities.

The most problematic aspect of consociational democracy in the case of Kosovo has been the creation of the Association with Serb-majority Municipalities. Ahtisaari's Comprehensive Plan that envisioned decentralization and extensive rights for municipalities with a Serb-majority population led to the segregation of the Serb community and more confusion arising among Kosovo Albanians. The opposition in Kosovo claims that the creation of the Serb association would alienate the Serb community further. Kosovo is striving to find the right mechanisms to establish a self-sustainable and all-inclusive peace, yet more autonomy for the Serb municipalities means less cooperation with central government and with other ethnic communities that will ultimately lead to more intrusion from Serbia into Kosovo's internal community affairs. The formula to share power between the communities and enhance the rights of ethnic minorities, with special emphasis on the Serb community, has contributed to political, deadlocks as well as the de-facto partition of Kosovo.

## **Future Research**

Changes in the nature of war, human rights, geopolitics and peacebuilding have empowered scholars and peacebuilders from interdisciplinary fields to contribute significantly to strive for social justice through research and practice. This thesis intends to contribute to our understanding of the multi-layered negative peace that has evolved in Kosovo as well as to the motivation of scholars and local peacebuilders through different projects to contribute towards positive peacebuilding in Kosovo. Future research should generate awareness about the role of neoliberal peacebuilding and its challenges in establishing positive peace or a just peace in societies like Kosovo to educate local and international policymakers about adopting comprehensive mechanisms and better alternatives to nurture peacebuilding processes that are based on grassroots reconciliation, people's resiliency, and bringing the local back in. Moreover, more research is needed to strategize how Kosovo's authorities could adopt an emancipatory agenda for peacebuilding using local mechanisms without relying too much on the assistance and support of the international community.

From a praxis viewpoint, I believe that every peacebuilding project can be referenced as a learning curve and tool for the international community, civil society and locals to use. Every experience, good or bad, should be acknowledged and supported with better peacebuilding tools and field research that will benefit broken societies. Finally, as this study was limited by relying on my memory for the autoethnography parts and on secondary data for the textual/policy analysis it recommends the use of participatory action research that focuses on giving voice to the unspoken, hidden or structural violence that currently exists in Kosovo. The conflict has the potential to be transformed through peaceful mechanisms merely by assessing and accepting the

importance of local ownership and ensuring local input into facilitating and nurturing positive attitudes between ethnopolitical communities residing in Kosovo.

### **Conclusion**

The thesis highlighted some key factors that have contributed to the birth of negative peace in Kosovo through Marti Ahtisaari's Comprehensive Proposal for the Final Settlement of Kosovo. Consequently, this study has assessed the potential of peacebuilding efforts through a bottom-up approach by considering PACS theories, policy papers and reports generated from civil society as well as micro and macro factors that essentially have contributed to social injustice and have undermined reconciliation efforts between Kosovo's ethnopolitical communities.

The different international partners peacebuilding initiatives in Kosovo provide evidence that the absence of war or negative peace is still in play in Kosovo. Every effort to normalize the relations between Kosovo and Serbia have led to question marks from their respective communities while their leadership continues to reach/adopt agreements that lead to more public confusion, less trust and tolerance, and perhaps deeper segregation and division. Therefore, while the political elite remains resilient in pleasing the international community to normalize interstate relations through dialogue, the process itself empowers top level political officials to make decisions without consulting their grassroots constituents, while grassroots communities only hope that their respective leaders will manage to approximate their decisions and policies towards future and faster integration into the EU.

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