National and Regional Security on Contemporary Security Challenges in the Balkans: The

Republic of Kosovo Perspective

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Title suggestion

National and Regional Security and Defence Challenges Hamper the Euro-Atlantic

Aspirations of Kosovo

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June, 2023

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis entitled, "National and Regional Security on Contemporary Security Challenges in the Balkans: The Republic of Kosovo Perspective" is my original research and has not previously been submitted by me for a university degree at another university. To the best of my knowledge, all the primary and secondary sources used have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

The Western Balkans region is an 'unresolved conflict for the Euro-Atlantic community. The case of Kosovo, the newest established independent country in Europe, is a complicated situation with regard to its security and conflict management in the whole of the region. The relentless conflict dates back centuries, but the 20th century witnessed major world and regional wars. The violent clash between Kosovo Albanians and the repressive regime in Belgrade escalated in the late 1990s that led to the intervention of NATO and its Kosovo Force (KFOR) established in the territory of Kosovo under the UNSC Resolution 1244 to maintain peace and stability in the country and the region. Eventually, Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008, which supposedly brought stability to the region as the last part to secede from Former Yugoslavia, but to this day, Serbia and its allies, including Russia, contest Kosovo's independence. The qualitative and quantitative research shows that non-recognition by some NATO and EU countries further impeded Kosovo's internal and international integration, universal recognition, and membership in international organizations. The study acknowledges the development in Kosovo and anticipates the progress in Kosovo to improve due to its security sector reforms conducted in line with and aligned with the developed democracies incorporating the best practices for multiethnic and professional security and defence institutions. Nonetheless, while the research recognizes the assistance from the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the EU rule of law mission in Kosovo (EULEX), it is the rule of law area that remains a challenge for Kosovo, which poses direct threats to democracy and development.

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While the geopolitical position makes it vulnerable, and its non-universal recognition hinders its capacity to address complex security encounters, Kosovo strives to expand its bilateral and multilateral cooperation. At the same time, the international community's presence in Kosovo has played an invaluable role in the last twenty-four years in Kosovo and the region. The strategic aim of the Republic of Kosovo is to join NATO and the EU with the ultimate goal of enhancing its own but also exporting peace, security, stability, and reconciliation.

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Abstract in Hungarian

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I am deeply grateful to my professor and supervisor, József Lajos Németh, and to his family, his dedication and support got me here in front you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BiH – Bosnia and Herzegovina
CFSP – EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSDP – EU's Common Security and Defence Policy
DCAF Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces
EU European Union
EULEX – The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
EUSR EU - Special Representative
FSK – Kosovo Security Force
ICJ – International Court of Justice
ICO International Civilian Office
IPA- Instrument for Pre-accession
ISG – International Steering Group
KAF – Kosovo Armed Force
KCSS – Kosovo Center for Security Studies
KFOR- NATO Kosovo Force
KIA – Kosovo Intelligence Agency
KIPRED- Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development
KLA- Kosovo Liberation Army
KPC- Kosovo Protection Corps
KP- Kosovo Police
KSC- Kosovo Security Council
KSF- Kosovo Security Force
LDK- Democratic League of Kosovo
MCAD - Military and Civilian Advisory Division
MFA Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MIA – Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo
MKSF- Ministry of Kosovo Security Force
MoD- Ministry of Defence
MP – Member of Parliament
NALT – NATO Advisory and Liaison Team
NAT – NATO Advisory Team
NATO- North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO- Non-Governmental Organisations
National Security Strategy – NSS
OSCE- Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PDK - Democratic Party of Kosovo
PfP- Partnership for Peace (NATO)
SAA – Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SSR-Security Sector Reform
SSSR-Strategic Security Sector Review
UDI - Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UK-United Kingdom
UNDP-United Nations Development Programme

UNHCR- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMIK- United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNSCR- United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNSC- United Nations Security Council
UN- United Nations
USA- United States of America
USSR- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
US - United States of America
WB – Western Balkans

CHAPTER I - Kosovo's Security and Defense from Domestic and Regional Perspective

1.1.Introduction

Although there is no compromise as to what really constitutes the Western Balkans, it is generally accepted to comprise of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, and Serbia. Traditionally, the Western Balkans held vital geo-strategic importance for European and the transatlantic security. The Western Balkans (WB) has generated a great history of troublesome since the Romans, pre-World War I and during and after the World War II.[1] Since the 1990s, the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have maintained active civilian and military operations in the region, ostensibly pursuing peace and stability. A brief fact sheet includes the military intervention of the international community; in 1995 in Bosnia and in 1999 Kosovo, NATO intervened against Former Yugoslavia[2], then trouble followed in North Macedonia followed by the Ohrid Agreement in 2001[3], independence of Montenegro in 2006, Kosovo in 2008, Albania and Croatia's NATO membership in 2009, and Croatia's EU membership in 2013. Secessionist aspirations drive similar multiple recurring conflicts in the Caucasus in Georgia, Azerbaijan, and North Russia, threatening the Western Balkans' stability by a chain of effects. In recent times, rising tensions have driven aggressive military spending among local state actors in the Western

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[1] "Balkan Wars: European History." Britannica. May 13, 2022. Accessed on June 2, 2022. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Balkan-Wars .

[2] "The 1990s Balkan Wars in Key Dates." Voice of America. November 22, 2017. Accessed on May 20, 2022. https://www.voanews.com/a/timeline-of-balkan-wars/4129662.html .

[3] "A brief history of the Balkans." UNHCR. The UNHCR briefly highlights the history of the Balkans from the 1978 when the Great Powers of Europe redrew the map of the region at the Congress of Berlin till the conflict in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (now North Macedonia) of 2001. Accessed on May 28, 2022. https://www.unhcr.org/3c4581977.pdf .

Balkans.[4] Even before the launch of the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the major players in the WB, Serbia and Croatia had increased their military spending. Croatia is a NATO and EU country but Serbia is perceived as a destabilizing factor and a very pro Russia regime and country. Serbia's military expenditures frighten its neighbors because within two years 2018-2020, its defense budget doubled from $700m to about $1.5bn.[5] Despite sustained NATO presence in the region, the balance of peace remains fragile while historical tensions continue smoldering.

   The current literature and findings apply theories of conflict resolution and management to the case of Kosovo and the Western Balkans to derive recommendations that can improve the sustainability of peace building efforts and towards enhanced national and regional security through cooperation rather than confrontation.

   For purposes of illustration, the following are maps of the Western Balkans and Kosovo with its surrounding neighboring. The map on the left is the locator map while the map on the right shows the Kosovo with its major population cities and the surrounding countries. [6]

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[4] Gadzo, Mersiha. "What is Serbia trying to achieve with its military buildup?" Aljazeera. Oct 6, 2021. Accessed on October 8, 2021. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/6/the-situation-is-dangerous.

[5] Ibid.

[6] CIA. The World FactBook "Kosovo". 2022. Accessed on June 20, 2022. https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/kosovo/map .

Map 1. Locator map of Kosovo and its Neighbouring Countries.[7]

1.4 Literature Review

The Europeanization[8] and renationalization[9] frameworks have always driven security policies in the Western Balkan region.[10] After the collapse of the Soviet Union, most Central and

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[7] Ibid.

[8] According to scholars, "Europeanization studies focus on the impact of EU membership on member states…[and] is inspired by the focus on the domestic state-related sources of European decision making and their consequences on the nature of EU institutions and policies." Graziano, Paolo and Maarten Vink, "Europeanization: Concept, Theory, and Methods". Research Gate. January 2013. Accessed on May 20, 2020.

Eastern European countries set national goals of building democratic states based on free-market economies, the rule of law, and to reach membership in European and Euro-Atlantic organizations. Simultaneously, once they discarded the limited sovereignty created by bloc-politics, the states began reasserting their national interests in addition to their individual foreign and security policies. Therefore, they returned to the pre-WWII national development efforts.[11]

The Europeanization and renationalization processes develop at different rates in each country due to differences in the social structures, legal systems, cultural traditions, quality of democratic practices, and economic transparency. For example, in independent countries, the

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303484310_Europeanization_Concept_Theory_and_Methods .

[9] The WB countries have strived to harness the past as a tool for the needs to create narratives for the present. According to Tamara P. Trošt a and Lea Davidb, the "history was renationalized for the purpose of constructing nationhood in the post-Yugoslav region, across the main points of construction: the "rediscovery" of national roots in the middle ages, the reinterpretation of the Holocaust and relativization of fascism, anti-Communism and the erasure of the common memory of Yugoslavia, and selective interpretation of the 1990s wars." "Renationalizing Memory in the Post-Yugoslav Region." September 2021. Accessed on October 12, 2021. ResearchGate. Journal of Genocide Research. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2021.1968852 .

[10] Dunay, P., 1994, September. 'Stability and Instability in Europe: The Contribution of Hungary'. In ECPR Standing Group on International Relations' Inaugural Pan-European Conference, Heidelberg (pp. 16-20).
Alecu de Flers, Dr. Nicole, Dr. Patrick Müller. "Applying the Concept of Europeanization to the Study of Foreign Policy: Dimensions and Mechanisms." Institute for European Integration Research – Vienna. 2010. Accessed on October 25, 2017. https://www.ies.be/files/M%C3%BCller-B3.pdf.

[11] Gyarmati, István and Darko Stančić (Editors). "Study on the Assessment of Regional Security Threats and Challenges in the Western Balkans." Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). 2007. Accessed on November 20, 2020. https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/gyarmati-stancic-study-western-balkans-2007.pdf .

renationalization process only required establishing the rule of law and a free-market economy to facilitate the creation of equitable and sustainable foreign policies. However, countries in the process of gaining independence after the collapse of a federative state system required a re-establishment of all social and institutional processes associated with independent statehood. For the first group of countries, the dominant concern was an external integration of the nation into the European community, and the best example from region would be Slovenia which was the first to join Euro-Atlantic institutions. The second group, however, dominated, focused on internal integration with localized changes to the social system driven by nationalism while trying to detach from the past. As an example, the former Yugoslav republics and territories started as simply as changing the street names, "starting from the early 1990s, councils and committees at the city, local, regional, and national levels began changing names of streets, squares, cities, schools and public institutions to erase traces of the Yugoslav past for the sake of claiming national continuity."[12]

The fall of Yugoslavia was a side effect of the Cold War's end. For most of its existence, Yugoslavia relied on a double consensus. The first was between Southern Slavic nations and ethnicities that preferred joint but multinational regimes due to the shared cultural and linguistic identity. The standard internal identity was partly attributable to the history of threat from Italian, German, and Soviet imperialism. Secondly, the winners of WWI and WWII had an implicit agreement to support the growth of Yugoslavia after Versailles and Yalta.[13]

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[12] P. Trošt Tamara, and Lea Davidb. "Renationalizing Memory in the Post-Yugoslav Region." September 2021. Accessed on October 12, 2021. ResearchGate. Journal of Genocide Research. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2021.1968852 .

[13] Nation, R. Craig. "The Balkans in the Short 20th Century." War in the Balkans, 1991-2002, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2003, pp. 43–90. JSTOR, Accessed 7 Jul. 2022. http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12133.6.

In recent years, increased interference by international powers like the EU, the US, China, and Russia have heightened regional ethnic and religious suspicions, with some conflicts leading to violence. The climate of ethnic, political, and religious rivalry has eroded the effectiveness and authority of multilateral security organizations, thereby creating a power vacancy. Furthermore, the international community's failure to either criticize or fully endorse Kosovo's declaration of independence continues receiving widespread critique from Serbia and its allies, namely Russia.

The political climate in the Western Balkans has become more hostile in recent years, manifested by a rise in bilateral tensions and nationalist, pro-war rhetoric. Furthermore, the region features rising political polarization, which is replicated in the individual countries, as embodied by the increase in street protects against governing authorities.[14] The fragmented relations and unstable peace are driven by the fact that most metrics of the region's consolidation are externally based on the initiatives and pressure from the international community. Considering the historical tensions regarding individual states' sovereignty, societies in the region find it difficult to internalize the changes. The stunted regional consolidation is also evident in Central and Eastern European countries following the Cold War, although at different degrees. The Euro-Atlantic community and eligibility drove reforms to integrate the states into the more extensive geopolitical system for North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) membership, which have driven the domestic reforms. On the other hand,

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[14] Ivković , Aleksandar . Protests in Serbia, Albania and Montenegro continue, demonstrators take more radical steps." European Western Balkans. 17.03.2019. https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2019/03/17/protests-serbia-albania-montenegro-continue-demonstrators-take-radical-steps/

the Western Balkans states continue facing severe structural challenges associated with underdevelopment and a failed state phenomenon[15] that will take decades to resolve.

Hostile policy enactments catalyze Kosovo's security dilemma regarding Serbia's approach. Especially lately due to Russian war against Ukraine the fear in Kosovo has augmented with all the hostility coming from Belgrade. As a reminder, Serbia is the only country in the region and one of the few in the world that has not imposed any sanctions against Russia. Serbia considers an obligation to Russia's support on Kosovo's status.[16] There are close ties between Russia and Serbia. With the recent developments, Serbia could be the "Trojan Horse" of Russia to Europe. Considering the past, Kosovo has all the reasons to fear Serbia and its destabilizing mechanisms and attitude towards the countries in the region.

On the one hand, Kosovo does not hold inherent hostilities against Serbia despite centuries of hostilities; and on the other hand, it has no resources to build a credible military threat against Serbia even if it wanted to. However, Serbia has the military might to intimidate and threaten Kosovo, with the latter having no way to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity on its own. Nevertheless, Serbia's current President has vowed not to initiate aggression against Kosovo. If Serbia chose a conventional military approach, then they would likely seek to annex Northern Kosovo as it would be impossible to gain the support of other Albanians across the

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[15] Gyarmati, István and Darko Stančić (Editors). "Study on the Assessment of Regional Security Threats and Challenges in the Western Balkans." Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). 2007. Accessed on November 20, 2020. https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/gyarmati-stancic-study-western-balkans-2007.pdf.

[16] "Serbia will not impose sanctions against Moscow, president says." Reuters. February 25, 2022. Accessed on February 27, 2022. https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/serbia-will-not-impose-sanctions-against-moscow-president-says-2022-02-25/

country. Kosovo would also be unable to gain support and organize a defense as Serbians also populate part of Kosovo and are part of every institution. Thus, Kosovo relies heavily on the United States and its EU partners for its security and even existence.

The precarious regional peace and growing nationalistic agendas have catalyzed a militarization, ranging from funding allocations to military and weapons procurement programs to controversial actions that seek to create armed forces in sensitive geopolitical areas.[17] The regional security issues are worsened by the continuing historical reunification programs, dynamic global security environment, and proposed land swaps. Due to lack of means and intent, there is a danger of new wars threatening the region's stability similar to the early 1990s. Although to non-regional countries the recent wounds of war makes another war seem practically nonexistent, there is still a risk of internal armed conflicts based on historical ethnic and geopolitical tensions. Furthermore, state institutions' weakness is linked to all current and potential security threats as they cannot create and guarantee processes regulating economics and politics while mitigating nationalism among and between ethic groups. Additionally, effective and sustainable state institutions guarantee individual states' accession into the broader political and economic system, such as the EU. This security uncertainty also persists within respective countries preventing regional reconciliation and cooperation.

As Boris Bizumić argues, it is unfeasible to comprehend the causes of ethnic conflicts in former Yugoslavia without considering the causes of ethnocentrism.[18] Indeed, individual

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[17] Kulenovic, Sasa "Western Balkans and the Return to Arms: Can the EU stabilize the region?" Vocal Europe. 2019. Accessed on March 20, 2020. https://www.vocaleurope.eu/western-balkans-and-the-return-to-arms-can-the-eu-stabilize-the-region/.

[18] Theories of Ethnocentrism and Their Implications for Peacebuilding* Boris Bizumić

governments have systematically exploited the background of regional tensions to feed ethnocentric in-group and out-group dynamics.[19]

The Western Balkans has been a busy ground for the international missions' presence on the ground, particularly since the end of the Cold War. The United Nations has been on the ground for decades, unfortunately having relatively limited authority in the region due to its lack of coercive power while on the ground mission. Although coercion has not lacked and had been applied in the Western Balkans, such military interventions have continuously been contested in terms of legality. In the Kosovo example, the NATO military intervention has divided the legal scholars who tend not to speak with one voice in terms of the legality of the military intervention in Kosovo. As the Responsibility to Protect Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty notes, the Kosovo case has been acknowledged by the legal scholars. It has established a ground for arguments not only for the regional security dilemma but also for the "humanitarian intervention" dilemma.[20] In the beginning, NATO functioned as the enforcers of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) decisions and peace. The UNSC operated on the assumption that groups could only achieve peace if they did not deprive others of it. Its relevance was challenged in the aftermath of Operation Allied Force as it had no UNSC sanctions. Such is the case in Kosovo, where the pre-emptive military intervention tends to view the UN as a conflict management apparatus.

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[19] Ibid

[20] "The Responsibility to Protect Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty." The International Development Research Centre. Canada. December 2001.Accessed on January 20, 2018. https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/18432/IDL-18432.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y.

Furthermore, the UN regulations only allowed military interventions in cases of aggression against a member state, which Kosovo was not.[21] Therefore, some argue that the UN not only knowingly ignored UN procedural rules and the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, but they also legitimized Kosovo's secession from Serbia. With the bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), and Kosovo, NATO erased legal precedent and fulfilled the international community's desire for retaliation against Serbia for hostilities against the Kosovo Albanians.

After the 78 days of NATO bombing, the UN adopted the UNSC Resolution 1244 (UNSCR 1244) of 1999. This Resolution aimed to resolve the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo while maintaining the sovereignty of its neighbors.[22] It outlines the conditions for the cessation of hostilities and the institutional development roadmap based on a transitional administration in Kosovo.

On their part, some argue that the Kosovo institutions opted to declare independence from Serbia in direct contravention of international legal practices, the Rambouillet Accords, UNSCR 1244, and the international community's wishes. With the international recognition of the selected state, much political elite in the region felt that NATO had aimed to create a puppet state. Consequently, many attempted to view that all the UN peace building missions became suspicious. Nonetheless, the Republic of Kosovo has been recognized by more than one hundred UN member states.

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[21] Russia in 2003 and its foreign policy: Excerpts from the report by
  the Foundation for Prospective Studies and Initiatives. Russia in Global Affairs, January/March
  2003. Accessed on November 25, 2016. https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/russia-in-2003-and-its-foreign-policy/.

[22] Gyarmati, I. and Stancic, D., 2007. Study on the Assessment of Regional Security Threats and
  Challenges in the Western Balkans. DCAF, Brussels.

Because of the crisis and the direct involvement and intervention of the West, the peace, stability, and performance of the WB have a direct influence on geopolitical stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. Furthermore, the strategic location of Western Balkans along an alternative energy route makes the region significant for European nations as they seek to reduce reliance on Russian oil. Further concerns around regional peace revolve around the possibility of a land swap or "border correction" between Serbia and Kosovo and the potential regional outcomes. The latter can spark a chain of reaction from neighboring countries even though it may not happen between Kosovo and Serbia.

This chapter has not and is not intended to illustrate all the findings for the thesis. However, it introduces the reader to the topic and some central literature reviews that have significantly impacted the thesis and the arguments associated with the results. The dissertation will be followed by chapters and sections that will incorporate other literature and authors whose findings and views would enrich this dissertation.

The literature review on the national security of Kosovo is significantly lacking, particularly domestic primary sources. Nonetheless, the literature on regional security of the Western Balkans is well established, and the arguments are augmenting. For the topic chosen, the perceived shortcomings of the ideological methodologies formed the pre-conditions for developing new theories of international security. Such views shall be elaborated in the following sections. One of these frameworks is Weaver and Buzan's Regional Security Complex Theory. In Regions and Powers: International Security Structure, Weaver and Buzan note that there are global and regional powers at a systemic level. The United States is the current global power, with Russia, EU, Japan, and China as great powers and six regional security complexes.[23]

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[23] Buzan, B. and Weaver, O., 2003. Part 1. Introduction: Developing a Regional Approach

Lukin identifies Regional Security Complex Theory as the most effective framework for analyzing international policy. The primary premise in the methodology is that despite globalization, most threats to global security have territorial dimensions, with the threat level depending on geographical distance.[24]

1.5 Problem Statement

The internal problems in Kosovo are predominantly based and cause by the issues it has with Serbia. These crisis date back centuries ago, but evidently the confrontation dates to the World Wars period in which mistrust began to develop between the Albanians (the majority of Kosovo) and the Serbs. After the Balkan Wars and the First World War, Kosovo was annexed Serbia and Montenegro, then the Yugoslavia Kingdom, but the area was occupied by the Albanian people.[25]

The Yugoslavia Kingdom settled 10,877 Serbs 60,000 in Kosovo between the World Wars. Turkish medieval landlords took the land assigned to them, including 330 new villages, 46 educational centers, and 32 churches.[26] Albanians claim that the land in question was rightfully theirs and that the inhabitants were illegitimate occupants under the previous regimes. 910,000 Serbs and Montenegrins were assassinated in the area during the Second World War, first, under Italian occupation of 1941–1943, and later, under the German occupation of 1943–5, while

to Global Security. B. Buzan and O. Wæver, Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security, pp.3-26.

[24] Lukin, A.L., 2011. Teoriya kompleksov regional'noy bezopasnosti i Vostochnaya Aziya [The theory of regional security complexes and East Asia]. Regionovedcheskiye issledovaniya, Oykumenanauchno-teoreticheskiy zhurnal, 2, p.17.

[25] Abazi, Enika, and Albert Doja. "Time and narrative: Temporality, memory, and instant history of Balkan wars." Time & Society. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0961463X16678249.

[26] Ibid

70,000 were displaced to Montenegro.[27] Kosovo/Albanian agreement persisted. After 1945, due to the rising natality rate among Albanians, coupled with the mass migration of Serbs and Montenegrins, there were significant demographic changes in Kosovo. The proportion of the population of Serbia and Montenegro in Kosovo decreased from 47% in 1948 to 14.8% in 1981[28]. The dilapidated economy in the late 1980s compelled Croatia and Slovenia, which were the wealthiest Yugoslavian nations, to call for monetary independence.[29] Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Macedonia followed the same trend in calling for an independent financial control that became recognized internationally.

Meanwhile, Serbia was in conflict with all the 5 nations, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Kosovo, and Serbia commenced the conflicts in Croatia and Slovenia, which were the richest republics within Yugoslavia. They were contributing significantly to the Yugoslavia Central Banks, which had international debts evaluated at $6 billion in 1985 and the 1986 re-evaluation showed that it was more than $21 billion.[30]To the south of Yugoslavia, aggression against Albanians in Kosovo throughout 1990s and lack of regional or international community involvement in solving the crisis on time seems to be the root of the ongoing Balkan crisis and Kosovo's political instability. It is a historical and political wonder that Serbia is obsessed and stuck with Kosovo's political status while it had not such issues with other former entities within Yugoslavia. Serbia claims Kosovo its own cradle of civilization since the Battle of Kosovo 1389, which was not fought only by Serbs.

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[27] Ibid

[28] Ibid

[29] Ibid

[30] Ibid

Between 1971 and 1981, because of ethnic tensions and economic strife, over 30,000 Serbs and Montenegrins left Kosovo complaining of physical assaults and harassment by ethnic Albanians who had demographically controlled Kosovo and some neighboring regions of southern Serbia.[31] Around the same time, a massive proportion of ethnic Albanians, mostly because of the poor economic conditions and political pressure, had also emigrated. Ethnic Albanians were regarded in Tito's Yugoslavia for perhaps the first time as a distinct national entity. They were permitted to use their dialect and were entitled to be taught in their language.[32] The region of Kosovo and the district of Vojvodina acquired an independent position under the 1974 Constitution. However, massive unemployment, extreme poverty in Kosovo and growing nationalism among Kosovo Albanians led to protests in 1981 by students from Pristina University.[33] The resounding demand was that Kosovo should become a full democracy. Serbian security forces crushed the protests, with many injured, murdered, or imprisoned. The interests of ethnic Albanians were progressively undermined after this. Many Kosovo Albanians were incarcerated mostly in the 1980s for actions in favor of their democratic status. Some have been calling for integration with Albania as an alternative.

The period between 1990 and 1992 marked the climax of Yugoslavian collapse as political mistrust based on ethnic differences in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Croatia, and Macedonia ensued. Foremost, the referendum for Slovenian independence in 1990 did not settle

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[31] Serwer, Daniel. "Kosovo and Serbia: Loveless Marriage, Difficult Divorce." From War to Peace in the Balkans, the Middle East and Ukraine pp 71–90. First Online: 29 November 2018. Accessed on September 27, 2020. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-02173-3_5.

[32] Ibid

[33] Ibid

well with Serbia controlling the Yugoslavia nations.[34] However, Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence in June 1991, which sparked a reaction from Serbia that sent the Yugoslavia People's Army from Croatia to Slovenia, close to Italy's border, which brought a military standoff. In 1992, Bosnian Serbs declared their independence in Bosnia and Herzegovina after a heated political skirmish with most of the parliament, which Bosnia supported. In 1991, Macedonians declared their independence, which the U.S. supported. Moreover, international organizations and many countries recognized the autonomy of the newly announced independent states in the Balkans, except Russia and Serbia that were losing influence in the region.[35]

Since the early 2000s, the EU has been the primary motivation for achieving regional integration, security, peace, and regional stability. In evaluating each state's success, it supported the emerging regional approach to the Western Balkans, coupled with aspects of 'own merits' and 'catch up.' Indeed, all the initial Yugoslav nations and Albania had declared themselves as potential EU member countries that had the vital goals in fielding a foreign policy.[36] With this in mind, it is rational that the EU Contingency Strategy is a highly efficient platform for enhancing reform processes intended to create environments for viable peace and economic growth in the Western Balkans region. Hence, from defining peace as the absence of visible violence (i.e. the minimum goal of the first phase) to defining peace in more comprehensive terms of the rule of law, democracy, human rights, cooperation and development, it can be argued that the instruments of the EU have brought a new quality and sense to the concept of peace in the

[34] Abazi, Enika, and Albert Doja. "Time and narrative: Temporality, memory, and instant history of Balkan wars." Time & Society. Volume 27 Issue 2, July 2018. Accessed on January 12, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0961463X16678249. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0961463X16678249.

[35] Ibid

[36] Ibid

Western Balkans.[37] In addition to the Copenhagen criteria of 1993 as specific requirements for states aspiring to enter the EU (economic, political and institutional criteria), several EU mechanisms (mainly the Stabilization) for the institutionalization of their ties with countries in the region have provided a set of additional criteria for Western Balkans countries.[38]

Moving back to the issue between Kosovo and Serbia. Serbian agitation activities have decreased marginally on other topics. Serbian occupants constantly hampered the resettlement of displaced Albanian persons (IDP) to suburbs in northern Mitrovica throughout the extensive period of observation. The Albanian community had few reasons to participate in anti-Serbian protest activities in 2008 and 2009, unlike the Serbs. It is possible to characterize the few riots as reactions to Serbian unrest.[39] Conversely, the Albanian ability to revolt can be caused for rather heterogeneous causes, as the events in 2010 illustrate. Protests have been launched, for example, against the Belgrade-organized polls in Northern Mitrovica, as well as to celebrate the defeat of Serbia to Turkey in a basketball game, which triggered Serbian rebuttal and eventual violence on the Ibar river.[40] In the small and large Serbian group jurisdictions of Klina and Istog, Serbian

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[37] Abazi, Enika, and Albert Doja. "International representations of Balkan wars: a socio-anthropological approach in international relations perspective." Cambridge review of international affairs 29.2 (2016): 581-610. Accessed on January12, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2016.1191345 .

[38] Osland, Kari M., and Mateja Peter. "The double proximity paradox in peacebuilding: implementation and perception of the EU rule of law mission in Kosovo." European Security. April 28, 2019. Accessed on January 25, 2021. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09662839.2019.1649658.

[39] Abazi, Enika, and Albert Doja. "Time and narrative: Temporality, memory, and instant history of Balkan wars." Time & Society . Volume 27 Issue 2, July 2018. Accessed on January 12, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0961463X16678249. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0961463X16678249.

[40] Ibid

relocation ventures have faced Albanian resistance and advanced to some degree until 2014[41].

After the eruption of unrest of Kosovo Serbs in the north in 2011, the Albanian opposition activity seems to be primarily a counter to the Serbian resistance to the recognition of the sovereignty of Kosovo, which many believe is affecting the further advancement of Kosovo.

Pressure towards Serbian communities from Serbia entering nationwide or religious sites in Kosovo for memorial service days or religious festivals is a periodic alternate trend. These visits are perceived as provocations from Kosovo Albanians. However, these Albanian demonstrations have not been registered for all the years in Serbian separatist regions. In sum, the number of protest activities in Serbia and Kosovo from 2008 to 2014 was comparable, and the development of protests on both sides was very prone to political changes. Besides, for those groups during the six years studied, consistent resistance to any other group relocation remained at similar levels.[42] However, contrary to this, the cumulative data incidence rate from 2008-2014 offers a more distinct image of Serbian- Kosovo Albanians mass protests. In these sectors, perceived inequality surrounding public services often tends to be a cause for protest.[43] Albanian riots, on the other hand, mostly take place in the regions where they are in the great majority. However, as mentioned, Serbian relocation is another motivating factor in many other cases for strategic gain;

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[41] Żarna, Krzysztof. "Activity of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (1993–2017). An assessment." Polityka i Społeczeństwo 16.04 (2018): 65-75. Accessed on March 25, 2020: https://repozytorium.ur.edu.pl/server/api/core/bitstreams/0b87850b-e9bb-4a46-aa6e-8ec80b9140c2/content.

[42] Abazi, Enika, and Albert Doja. "Time and narrative: Temporality, memory, and instant history of Balkan wars." Time & Society. Volume 27 Issue 2, July 2018. Accessed on January 12, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0961463X16678249. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0961463X16678249.

[43] Ibid.

this was also the case for the few Albanian disturbances in southern communities with greater Serbian concentrations.

The section displaying Albanian demonstrations in the north focuses mostly on the Ibar River Bridge in Mitrovica, which divides Albanians and Serbs physically but mostly symbolically. These demonstrations are, in most cases, linked to Serbia's influence on the other side of the river with Serb dominated regions. Additionally, Belgrade has extended and enhanced its influence on Kosovo through Serbian political parties in Kosovo, which Belgrade utilizes as its political instruments in Kosovo. Such examples have manifested disturbance in Serbian communities in the northern part of Mitrovica, a Serb populated area and south of the Ibar River. The mechanism of pressure has penetrated so far and deep as to the Serbs who work for and in Kosovo institutions. In particular, extreme pressure has been applied to young people working in security institutions. KSF Soldiers were forced to resign from serving in this force.[44]

The political and security situation in Kosovo remains a significant regional and global peace concern as there is no imminent end to the instability and discontent among the local and regional leaders. The high level of mistrust between the Albanians and the minority Serbs in the north of the country remains a concern, and has been particularly evident since the war of 1999. However, understanding the attempts by global and regional communities to quell the condition is understood in a mixed manner that does not explain the in-depth lack of political stability in Kosovo despite peacekeeping endeavours and the formation of the transitional governments.

Understanding the establishment of Kosovo, the role of individual nations, regional, and global communities in their formation and existence is the focus of this paper. This chapter links the political instability of Kosovo to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the conflict with Serbia, and

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[44] The author worked in MKSF, and was well aware of it, as well as it was on the daily news.

the role of international organizations in Kosovo. Furthermore, this chapter attempts to answer whether conflict management in Kosovo by international organizations had a spillover effect in the Balkan region and beyond.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

The research shows a very pessimistic and a gridlock situation for the following years. Due to the lack of, and a slow process, progress of WB towards the Euro-Atlantic integration and membership into NATO and EU, regional security challenges in the Balkans are becoming more complex, affecting the Euro-Atlantic community, as well.

My hypothesis is concentrated on the following issues:

1. The Euro-Atlantic integration of Kosovo (NATO and EU) is not expected until the 2030s. Mainly, because there are significant external and internal problems, slowing down Kosovo's progress and the integration process in an enormous way and

2. Kosovo's defense and security, prosperity and its Euro-Atlantic integration is closely correlated with its dialogue and relationship with Serbia. Externally, promoting good neighbourly relations is a key factor for Kosovo, particularly with Serbia.

3. It is time and there is a plausible possibility to create and execute successfully a roadmap or model to achieve regional peace and stability and succeed towards the integration of Kosovo in the Euro-Atlantic integration community while achieving a final agreement with Serbia. There are templates from the regions not too far from the WB from where to learn and establish regional cooperative initiatives.

1.5 Research Questions & Objectives

- Understanding and comparing the national security with the regional one will improve Kosovo's security.

- Will Kosovo's intentions of good neighbourly relations with Serbia help in its national security and towards its Euro-Atlantic aspirations, and join NATO and EU?

- Kosovo does not have well consolidated democracy and party system and political parties and party elites, and will this stall democracy in Kosovo.

- The lack of good governance in Kosovo correlates directly with economic underdevelopment and translate directly to a deprived defence and security capability.

- Instability in Kosovo or in any adjacent country in the region have an impact of a spillover effect.

- Kosovo must pursue a more offensive foreign policy to counter the Serbian national foreign policy towards Kosovo and the region.

- The European Union failing the Balkans once again.

- NATO is dwindling on its "Open Door Policy," and the Western Balkan countries are going backwards on their reforms.

- Russia is enhancing their influence in the Balkans utilizing the vacuum and the security gaps in the region.

- The US foreign policy under the Biden administration will change towards the Western Balkans and/or towards Russia, which will subsequently impact the entire region.

- Kosovo's national security strategy must reflect and take into consideration the regional impact and regional security environment.

- Has the international community justified its two and a half decades of presence in Kosovo?

- How do the international and regional organizations in Kosovo justify their failure to the taxpayers of EU citizens and the citizens where they come from?!

- Does Kosovo have ownership in security and defence processes and reforms and to align its policies with EU and NATO?

- Will the obliviousness from NATO and EU, towards the regional countries, cost the region and Europe once again at this troubling period?

- Is regional security a factor for national stability in Kosovo?

- How is the security environment in the Western Balkans?

- Are weak defence capabilities of Kosovo everlasting inferiority in comparison to other neighbouring countries?

- Is national extremism increasing due to the lack of Euro-Atlantic perspective of Western Balkans and the war of Russia against Ukraine?

1.6 Research Methodology

The research method adopted for this study is the literature analysis method. The literature analysis method entails performing a literature search of credible academic sources on a subject or topic and using the content to describe a similar issue. The information from the sources does not form the data for the study, but it serves as a reference point for arguments for or against the hypothesis a writer is presenting. Besides, the process is qualitative, which means that the author is not testing the hypothesis, but they justify claims from the literatures' point of view. For this thesis, the process involved studies selecting papers that meet criteria that include language, year

of publication, research method, and topic. The sources used include scoping reviews and literature reviews researches conducted and published within the recent years, but to reinforce the arguments, the years of published works will not be limited. Moreover, articles written in the English language were featured in the study, while the selection process involves sources in the Albanian language to reflect the current, updated information, and local perspective. Furthermore, the eligibility process involved choosing from various research methods that include scoping reviews and literature reviews from political science journals and social science with reliable publishers.

Literature extraction was a systematic process that involved five factors consisting of publication features, the authority of the articles, research methods used in the studies, and the related topic of interest in the Western Balkans region. Publication characteristics, including the date, language used, accessibility of the item, and type of publisher, are essential in filtering the sources. All papers used in the study are relevant and relatively recent. Besides, most of the sources are written in the English language, accessible, and the sources are from reputable organizations. Again, considering the authority of the items matter. Literature used in the study includes peer-reviewed journals whose authors have professional experience and education on the subject matter. The study excludes literature from sources that lack credibility, such as websites, blogs, newspapers, podcasts, and vlogs, unless they are official and found in multiple open sources.

Moreover, the method of study used by the authors of the articles was essential in data extraction. The consideration of the study design used in the papers involved reading the abstract to grasp the methods used by authors. Suitable studies included scoping and systematic reviews. At the same time, real life interviews have been conducted with numerous personalities from EU

and NATO organisations and countries. Also, national personalities in Kosovo have been interviews some of whom contributed significantly and some did not want to be quoted on the paper but confirmed most of the findings and statements made by foreign diplomats and personalities. Grey literature and literature review studies were also part of the literature considered by the researcher in order to support and enrich the arguments.

CHAPTER 2 – Theoretical Framework

2.1 Theoretical Application in the Security Context of Conflict Resolution in Kosovo

The collapse of the Soviet Union catalyzed a change in the global security system and a review of the previous theoretical assumptions in international security analysis. Up to about a decade ago, most of the Western world's conception of the conflict situation in the Western Balkans was based on concepts such as confederalism, federalism, or other variants of self-government with less geopolitical significance. For example, Yabanci (2016) contrived the conflict in terms of Europeanization, i.e., inclusion in a larger Euro-Atlantic geopolitical sphere where national borders would have less significance. The authors' recommendations influenced the broader paradigm of "liberal peace," which were the ideological aspects of transition theory.[45] Most western political theorists assume that the rule of law, democracy, and free markets form the foundations for sustainable peace.

Consequently, liberal peace recommended internationally-brokered peace negotiations, with treaties enforced by peacekeeping forces or military interventions, and the nullification of hostile

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[45] Campbell, S., Chandler, D. and Sabaratnam, M. eds., 2011. A liberal peace?: the problems and practices of peacebuilding. Zed Books Ltd.

local actors. During the Cold War, states retained control over conflict management with the USSR and US rivalry preventing mutual destruction. However, subsequent developments in the region ultimately

2.2 Liberalism in Conflict Resolution

Liberal peace and democratic transition share common ancestry in the concept of "democratic peace," where two democracies do not declare war on each other.[46] In the post-cold war period, it drove what seemed to be a global disposition for a liberal democracy hegemony. However, liberal peace has multiple critiques due to its application failures. Similar to the transition theory, liberal consensus advocated for formalized institutions and processes, which did not always work. For example, liberal peace led to the rise of authoritarian regimes in countries such as Tajikistan, Angola, Rwanda, Iraq, and Afghanistan, perpetuating human rights abuses that they aimed to resolve.[47] Even interventions considered successes, such as the Western Balkans, the regional order has not generated stability and cohesiveness.[48]

Liberal applications of conflict resolution in the Western Balkans have traditionally involved the reformation of autonomous self-governing institutions in secessionist jurisdictions. For

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[46] Visoka, G. and Richmond, O., 2017. "After liberal peace? From failed state-building to an emancipatory peace in Kosovo." International Studies Perspectives, September 2016.pp.110-129. Accessed on November 12, 2017. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308385108_After_Liberal_Peace_From_Failed_State-Building_to_an_Emancipatory_Peace_in_Kosovo.

[47] Bechev, Dimitar.,"Turkey's Policy in the Balkans. Continuity and Change in the Erdoğan Era."Südosteuropa Mitteilungen, 05/2020. Accessed on May 20, 2021. https://www.sogde.org/site/assets/files/3449/soe_focus_5_2020_turkey.pdf.

[48] Ibid

example, a 1997 proposal by the Minsk Group defined Narogo-Karabakh as a distinct territory within Azerbaijan, with its citizens receiving a wide range of rights.[49] The inaction reinforced the notion following Kosovo's 2008 Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Serbia. These ideologies have a core shortcoming in that they presume the existence of liberal states as a pre-requisite for liberal peace. Scholars and legislators assumed a converging and mutually-beneficial dynamic that would transform conflicts and regimes. However, the actual outcomes were increased fragmentation following partial transitions in some states and contested or consolidating authoritarianism in others.

Liberal peace as a conflict management methodology has long faced criticisms due to its inability to foster lasting cooperation and integration. Manipulation of mass perception through "fake news" eroded the notion of transparent information sharing, where different political views can be discussed and reconciled.[50] There have also been compromised in the public's confidence in the integrity of liberal institutions within democratic states as there are gaps in elections and judiciary. Meanwhile, regional powers like Turkey, Russia, and China have rejected liberal norms when resolving internal conflicts and tried non-liberal techniques such as nationalism.[51]

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[49] Knudsen, Rita .Augestad, "Privatization in Kosovo:'Liberal peace'in practice." Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding, September 2013, pp.287-307.Accessed on March 12, 2017. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271625605_Privatization_in_Kosovo_'Liberal_Peace'_in_Practice.

[50] Richmond, O.P. and Mac Ginty, R., "Where now for the critique of the liberal peace?." Cooperation and Conflict, May 2014. , pp.171-189. Accessed on March 2017. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270609953_Where_now_for_the_critique_of_the_liberal_peace.

[51] Cooley, L., 2018. The European Union's approach to conflict resolution: Transformation or regulation in the Western Balkans?. Routledge.

2.3 Realism in Conflict Resolution

Realism was the dominant framework in international relations, with multilateralism subject to competing interests. Additionally, conflict was managed through high-level diplomacy and military deterrence. The decline of the Soviet Union and its ideological motivations gave states increased incentive to collaborate rather than confront each other. In Kosovo's case, Liberalism led to the rise of a false democracy as the newly formed state tried to conform to international expectations.

2.4 Regional Security Complex Theory

 The Western Balkans has robust security dynamics, especially among Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia and three actors within Bosnia; Serbia, Slovenia, and Croatia. The interplay between these interlocking triangles leads to conflict expansion across state borders. Buzan and Waever note that even if states in the region created permanent alliances, they would be based on religious differences. Kosovo, Turkey, Albania, and some parts of Bosnia are predominantly Muslims, while Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia favour Christianity. This increases the complexity of potential modelling conflict in the Western Balkans as the number of participants rises.

Regarding international outcomes, the future of some protectorate within Kosovo and Bosnia remains uncertain. The way a sovereign people decide to construct their identity and the external perceptions of this identity influence the security dynamics with their neighbors and the broader region.[52] For example, Kosovo has constructed its identity as a majority Albanian state that allow

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[52] Dimitrova, R., Buzea, C., Taušová, J., Uka, F., Zakaj, S. and Crocetti, E., 2018. Relationships

political freedom from Serbia. Since this contradicts Serbia's narrative of Kosovo as part of the country, they automatically become political enemies.

2.5 Copenhagen Perspective on Kosovo

Geopolitical developments in the post-Cold War era highlight the state's decline as holding a legal monopoly on violence. Sovereigns no longer have this power and have to consider the international community's potential reaction.[53] In this context, the Copenhagen School of thought holds that war as a form of intense conflict is an inherent part of human interactions. Conflicts usually result in violence, which leads to further and larger violence, thus creating war. Consequently, the action becomes another avenue for political maneuvering. Carl Schmitt frames politics as a process of separating allies from foes and notes that "the political enemy need not be morally evil".[54] The distinction works to highlight the final level of intensity in grouping and dividing rhetoric. It marks the extent to which a group associates or dissociates on national, religious, ethnic, or economic lines that may interact to generate different relationships. Therefore, there may be an ethnic or religious opposite that is not simultaneously political but become political when the differences become large enough to categorize some as friends and others as enemies. The state retains the authority to define an enemy as the only competent

between identity domains and life satisfaction in minority and majority youth in Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Kosovo, and Romania. European Journal of Developmental Psychology, 15(1), pp.61-82.

[53] Jolicoeur, P. and Labarre, F., 2014. The Kosovo Model: A (Bad) Precedent for Conflict Management in the Caucasus?. Connections, 13(3), pp.41-58.

[54] Schmitt, C., 1996. The Concept of the Political. Trans. George Schwab. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

political entity, i.e. it holds jus Belli.[55] Each state then has the responsibility to ensure security

and peace within its borders, thereby facilitating sustainable social and economic institutions.

Schmitt argues that the need to create normality implies a stronger or weaker standing based on

specific policies or judicial efficiency. In some situations, the political apparatus of a state can

become inefficient as the conventional legal and constitutional processes cannot be applied

leading to war as a conflict resolution mechanism.

   Perennial conflict in the Western Balkans can be seen as a practical manifestation of the

Copenhagen school of thought, which was a direct critique of liberal peace, which was perceived

as a failure in multiple European and Asian countries. Rather than leaving control of conflict

resolution to numerous external actors such as the EU or Euro-Atlantic stakeholders, countries

often prefer to retain autonomy in determining conflict resolution mechanisms. Moreover, states

often define the enemy along historic, ethnic, religious, or ideological lines, thereby sustaining

fragmentation. Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008 and the subsequent inaction by the

UN or Euro-Atlantic community reduced the incentive for other Western Balkan countries to

participate in externally mediated conflict resolution. The Kosovo model of conflict management

faced extensive criticism from the international community to protect self-determination in areas

of strategic interest to Western powers.

  Arguably, the precedent of abusing established UN procedures and multilateral agreements has

sparked self-determination among other minority communities in the former Soviet Union thus

perpetuating security tensions. Despite the UN considering Kosovo's UDI as an evolution of the

legal principle of uti possidetis, Hensel, Allison, and Khanani (2006) concluded that applications

of the that the uti possidetis principle did not prevent the development of territorial disputes.

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[55] Ibid

Consequently, while the international community's recognition of Kosovo as a sovereign state resolved short-term hostilities and fulfilled a need for retaliation, it did not resolve the historical tensions which persist today.

The Copenhagen school of thought proposes that a state-nation can have politicized, non-politicized, and securitized challenges corresponding to four processes: politicization, depoliticization, securitization, and desecuritisation. Groups can securitize an identity through speech, which infuses the identity with political meaning and can be depoliticized through speech, distancing the group from such representation. Speech is essential in the subjective social constructions of security and security policies. Consequently, security becomes a speech act that inflates an emergency problem beyond everyday politics into an area of security, thereby justifying extreme measures that would not be acceptable under normal circumstances.

The Copenhagen School framework defines the scope of securitization and violation as the goal of war (violence at a particular scale) rather than the point where people die. This definition does not preclude the identity violation in situations, such as also against refuge asylums resulting in death. Rather than social security and a state's identity, Copenhagenists consider the question of identity and war. This conceptualization serves to confirm Clausewitchz's formulation of war as a continuation of politics. An obvious case for applying the Copenhagen continuum is Kosovo, where multiple national identities have been securitized to serve political motives. Serb and Croatian national identities, Muslim religious identity, and Bosniak political identity (Boguslow 2019). In contrast, Albanian and Macedonian ethnic identities underwent securitization.

Popov[56] was the first to formalize the notion of ethnic identity-based politics. In identity-based conflict management, the ethnic identity is viewed as a fundamental right while a threat to the group's identity is presented as a safety risk for the group's existence.[57] Moreover, the concept delineates two primary needs; a need for shared identity and safety. Rothman notes that identity-based conflicts tend to have deep subjectivity and irrationality, contributing to their recurrent nature. In the-secessionist conflicts, at least one party identifies as belonging to a culturally distinct ethnic or religious group. The region's conflicts are based on the ethnic identities of actors in the different areas. In Kosovo's cases, the minority Kosovars, predominantly Muslims, perceive their identity as under persecution from the Serbians. However, Serbians consider Kosovo's secession as a loss of their state sovereignty and culture. The speeches of leaders from both sides, who participated in the last war, help to maintain the rhetoric of persecution and escalation of hostilities. In Kosovo, as of 2020, the president's and the prime minister's posts are held by former militants who fought under the Kosovo Liberation Army but after the war founded different political parties; Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj and President Hashim Thaci are political opponents: Thaci initially supported an initiative to adjust the borders with Serbia, while Haradinaj strongly opposes it. The Western countries supporting Kosovo's independence have continually called for a mutually binding agreement. The Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, a former ultranationalist, insists that any sustainable solution has to be achieved through compromise. Despite public acknowledgments of Serbia's lack of control over

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[56] Popov, M., 2017. Resolving Identity-based Conflicts in the North Caucasus. Periodica Polytechnica Social and Management Sciences, 25(1), pp.70-77.

[57] Rothman, J., 2017. Re-Envisioning Conflict Resolution: Vision, Action and Evaluation in Creative Conflict Engagement. Routledge.

Kosovo, Serbia's President has stated the country won't settle unless they can receive compensation[58].

Serbia has been incredibly vocal against the desired transformation of the NATO-sponsored Kosovo Force (KFOR) to a military force known as the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) and would not help towards the resolution of the conflict with Serbia. The stance also stems from differences emphasized in historical political rhetoric. Kosovo has significant importance to Serbian cultural and religious history as it hosts numerous medieval Serb Orthodox Christian monasteries. Additionally, Serbian nationalists consider a 1389 battle against Ottoman Turks to represent its national struggle for sovereignty. On the other hand, Kosovo's majority ethnic Albanians, predominantly Muslims, view Kosovo as their jurisdiction and accuse Serbia of repression and occupation. These differences prompted the 1998 ethnic Albanian rebellion that catalyzed NATO intervention in 1999.[59]

Nevertheless, conflict management in the Western Balkans has become a function of states rather than institutions or international legal conventions. Kosovo's UDI did not catalyze the expected regional stability or emancipation it sought. For example, due to its disputed sovereignty, Kosovo is excluded from specific international organizations like the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) or the International Olympic Committee (IOC). This failure spurred the resurgence of Realpolitik, where conflict interventions depend on national interests and political will. For example, the Western critique of various dictatorships in the Arab world prompted uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East. The EU cannot shape

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[58] "German diplomat says time is right for Serbia-Kosovo talks." The Associated Press. April 23, 2021. https://apnews.com/article/europe-belgrade-kosovo-heiko-maas-serbia-d042d17f48edb8dcd240fa5c0b31eea7

[59] Jolicoeur, P. and Labarre, F., 2014. The Kosovo Model: A (Bad) Precedent for Conflict Management in the Caucasus?. Connections, 13(3), pp.41-58.

the region's strategic environment based on their interests as members are reluctant to participate in military interventions as a form of conflict management.[60] Consequently, nation-states rise to fill the conflict management gaps per their interests and willingness to intervene.

2.6 Human Security Framework

Traditionally, national security has meant protecting national territory via military forces. The core feature has been security competition based on might. The notion of human security as a multidisciplinary paradigm for evaluating global risks from the individual level. In this respect, the UN General Assembly resolution 66/290 of 2012 marked a milestone in the reformation of international multilateral security practices. The resolution identifies human security as the optimal approach for identifying and resolving chronic challenges to the survival and dignity of their people.[61] Under this framework, governments are responsible for protecting their citizens' survival, dignity, and livelihood. At the same time, the international community only intervenes upon official requests to complement their capacity to respond to emerging threats. Therefore, the practical application of human security requires increased collaboration among state actors in a multilateral context.

Human security is people-centred and appraises the varied conditions that threaten the dignity, survival, or livelihood of a people. It also acknowledges the complex and interlinked nature of the problems that face people in their pursuit of sovereignty. By including all actors needed to resolve an issue, the application of Human security ensures coherence, reduces

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[60] Ibid

[61] Fakiolas, E.T. and Tzifakis, N., 2019. Human security in EU strategy: reflecting on the experience of EUPM in Bosnia and Herzegovina and EULEX in Kosovo. Journal of Contemporary European Studies, 27(3), pp.303-316.

duplication, and fosters integrated solutions that provide sustainable improvements in people's lives. Human security adopts a prevention-oriented philosophy that seeks to ascertain the root causes of problems and building resilient solutions. It recommends the creation of early warning systems that can mitigate existing threats and prevent future problems. Finally, human security recognizes the powerful impact of communal participation and engagement by empowering people to articulate and respond to their needs.[62] Additionally, top-down processes and institutions such as the rule of law, good governance, and norms are necessary pre-requisites for applying human security.

Human security has emerged as a useful framework in post-conflict situations, as evidenced by its use in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Timor-Leste, and Afghanistan. In these jurisdictions, human security has facilitated extensive developments in democratic institutions, human rights protection, and civil society assistance. An evaluation of the underlying goals of international interventions in Kosovo, including the donor community, UNMIK, and EULEX, reveals that they are based on the idea of human security.[63] The international community's ratification of Kosovo's UDI and NATO's continued presence in the region was perceived as a defence of human security, which is a global concern. However, the UN's administration of Kosovo generated conditions that later constrained social cohesion, institutional integrity, and local sovereignty. The international community delayed transferring power to local institutions for over four years (1999-2003) and made little effort to promote local engagement in reconstruction efforts. The hesitance stemmed from uncertainty regarding Kosovo's political status and the fear that the Serbs would perceive any power transfer as a threat. UNMIK's unveil of Standards for Kosovo in December 2003 paid attention to critical

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[62] Ibid

[63] Ibid

areas such as functional democratic institutions, the rule of law, freedom of movement, and maintaining regional stability.[64] However, the issue areas remained ambiguous about achieving long-term stability in Kosovo, leading to questions about whether they indicated conditional sovereignty or a delaying strategy that sustained short-term negative peace.

An evaluation of the process of determining Kosovo's final status highlight limited local ownership. The process began in 2005 with the appointment of Marti Ahtisaari as a mediator between Serbia and Kosovo. Negotiations concluded without a satisfactory resolution, and Ahtisaari recommended 'supervised independence' where Kosovo would enact decentralized institutions for the Serbian community under EU monitoring. However, Ahtisaari's complete review of donor-driven social agents in the proposal's creation did not adequately represent the people who would be affected by its implementation. The decentralization of Serbians also created opportunities for continued fragmentation. Serbia maintained a strong anti-recognition stance and capitalized on decentralization to expand enclaves and create continuous territory by integrating the enclave borders. It was, indeed, an issue that even after thirteen years after independence the problem has only escalated and the enclaves have been misused for the issue and the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia to stagnate.

The experiences of post-conflict Kosovo show the challenge of balancing short-term social needs with long-term political objectives. While the latter integrates maintaining physical security, developing political institutions, and economic reconstruction, new regimes often face immediate social challenges such as relocating people, providing adequate living conditions, and health services. As seen in Kosovo, multilateral governments usually try to achieve all goals simultaneously. Since they focus on short-term peace maintenance, international administrations

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[64] Ibid

neglect economic development, facilitating sustainable institutions and processes. The experiences also highlight the shortcomings of a top-down approach to global, regional security. It led to an alienation of democratically elected representatives from their expected state responsibilities, thereby leaving local needs unresolved.

2.7 Kosovo's Future as a Sovereign State

Conforming to its anti-recognition stance, Serbia continuously projects Kosovo as the primary security threat in the Western Balkans in almost all dimensions, including military force. In contrast, Kosovo has opted not to view Serbia similarly. The policy may be driven by, I) fallacious assumptions, ii) deterrence provided by the KFOR that reduces the fear of invasion, or iii) recommendations provided by some Western governments that encourage the evolution of the Kosovo Security Force into the Kosovo Armed Forces. However, creating a nationalized military force would not solve the problem irrespective of the fragile truce mediated by the European Union.

As a sovereign nation, Kosovo has the right to create a military body to protect its territorial integrity. However, despite the ongoing transformation of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) to Kosovo Armed Forces (KAF), Kosovo lacks the constitutional provisions for formalizing the goal. Changes to Kosovo's constitution require approval by minority communities in parliament, including Serbian representatives. It is a process known as double majority voting as it would require 80 members of Parliaments's votes and the majority of votes from the minorities who have twenty reserved seats out of one hundred and twenty. It would be counter-productive for these representatives to vote for such changes without support from Belgrade. Therefore, Kosovo's nationalization of the KSF to the KAF remains hostage to Belgrade's approval.

Moreover, historical, ethnic hostilities have prevented Kosovo from achieving the integration of Serbian minorities in the KSF.

2.8 Conflict Management in Western Balkans

The legacy of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) directly set a precedent for conflict management in other regions. In 2008, Georgia felt that its territorial integrity was threatened as it faced secession requests from Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The pre-emptive attempt at forced reintegration of these regions aimed to prevent copycat separatism. According to Russia's perspective, Russia's subsequent intervention exposed western duplicity when NATO refused to recognize the sovereignty of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

The UNSC's resolution following Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) shows the regional mistrust for multilateral agreements and interventions. For example, S/1808/2008 sought to position the UNSC as the main conflict resolution entity with different instruments for different countries.[65] However, it also illustrates the breakdown of traditional liberal policies in the post-conflict phase. While NATO has claimed to maintain an open-door policy that allows qualifying candidates membership, the case of Kosovo and other Balkan countries reveals it to be a farce as an international intervention only occurs in regions of strategic interest. This has reduced trust for international and transitory governments that lack a nuanced view of the region's historical security issues. Most non-NATO countries view the

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[65] "Resolution 1808 (2008) Adopted by the Security Council at its 5866th meeting," United Nations Security Council. 15 April 2008. UN Security Council, Security Council resolution 1808 (2008) [on settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict and extension of the mandate of the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). https://www.refworld.org/docid/4808a6582.html.

organization with suspicion as a vehicle of Western interests in the region, which limits potential collaboration opportunities.

Western influence in the Western Balkans has always aimed to develop independent political institutions that can develop and implement peaceful resolutions for emerging political conflicts. However, the top-down approach employed after the fall of Yugoslavia placed excessive dependency on the international community's authority to forestall potential conflict escalations. The lack of a conflict resolution mechanism stunted local institutions' independence in the post-conflict world as they had no authority to act. [66] Since the multilateral administration had a broad scope in peacebuilding and democratic political institutions, local stakeholders shunted the political decision making. This led to the local administrations depending heavily on the international administration, which was meant to be transitory. Since multiple international geopolitical players (EU, US, and Russia) have interests in the region, it led to excessive external influence over local politics.

Consequently, the Balkans can be viewed as a continuation of the Yugoslav wars where local actors had powerful international allies that made them less likely to compromise on core issues. From the start, Croatia expected Germany's support, while Serbians relied on Russian support, and Muslims sought help from the US. Therefore, external players had a major impact on the region's security posture as none of the conflicting parties would compromise as it would risk sending a message of weakness in the post cold-war era.

Currently, the security sub-complex of the Western Balkans has two main parties: the first is the historical triangle between Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks, while the second group

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[66] Hehir, A., 2019. Lessons Learned? The Kosovo Specialist Chambers' Lack of Local Legitimacy and Its Implications. Human Rights Review, 20(3), pp.267-287.

revolves around Macedonia with Serbia, Bosnia, and Albania as the primary combatants. Essentially, the Balkans represent a situation where formal and informal alliances influence national or ethnic identities. For example, the Islamic arc around Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, and Kosovo directly resembles the Orthodox alliance by Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, and Republika Srpska. However, the countries still have internal challenges that prevent sustainable conflict resolution. Many former Soviet countries lack consensus about the core values, guidelines, and goals of political and economic systems and their position in the Euro-Atlantic region.

Furthermore, societies are still divided along ethnic or religious lines despite living within similar political jurisdictions. The situation is worsened by limited freedom of the media which often works to disseminate government propaganda. This is evident in Serbia's continued portrayal of Kosovo as a major security threat in the region.

2.9 Conflict Management in Kosovo

Kosovo's post-conflict environment has featured ongoing ethno-political tensions. While it may seem paradoxical that Serbia cannot resolve the Kosovo problem without heavy costs to its geopolitical reputation, the consolidation of Kosovo's security architecture would facilitate more positive outcomes for Serbia. First, it would facilitate Kosovo's integration into the international community and NATO. NATO membership would allow them to develop the military under Alliance guidance to forestall the potential threat to Belgrade. Second, the inclusion of local Serbs in the national armed forces would foster trust among members of this ethnicity about the military's non-aggressiveness similar to that given to Kosovo police. The process would also require Serbian officers' consultation in defense planning to mitigate the potential threat against

Serbia, thereby contributing to the larger strategic goal of Euro-Atlantic integration. Finally, through stabilizing relations with Serbia, Kosovo would facilitate regional peace to contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts.

As the responsibility for security and conflict management shifts from multilateral international government to localized state actors, Kosovo should improve their military strength as a pre-emptive measure against Serbian aggression. Since state actors have the constitutional right to define their political enemies, ethnic and religious-fuelled tensions in the Western Balkans are likely to continue. Moreover, the failure of a top-down government implemented via liberal peace necessitates the development of local government and legal institutions necessary for the protection of human security. Therefore, Kosovo should encourage local ownership and responsibility for the maintenance of peace rather than relying on the international community to stall hostilities. Due to increased militarization in the region, Kosovo needs to expand its military presence to protect its territorial integrity and sovereignty. However, they should maintain the non-aggressive stance towards Serbia as the latter has a much larger military funded by Russian outfits. Additionally, both sides' leaders should work to change the identity-related political rhetoric that divides the region's people leading to worse economic and political outcomes.

To promote domestic engagement and avoid citizen dependency in the post-conflict era, the core principles should be local ownership, collaboration, and participation. Remarkably, the seclusion of some groups such as former combatants works to alienate them, leading to sabotaging behavior that threatens progress. In Kosovo, the perception of Serbs not sufficiently incorporated in the peacebuilding process destroyed local legitimacy as it was primarily founded on international ideals of 'stability' and ethnic security rather than equitable security. This has led

to continued opposition from ethnic Serbs, who mainly follow the interests of the larger Serbian community in Belgrade.

Moreover, the exclusion of local citizens also meant that reformation policies were inadequate to resolve the people's problems as they adopted a top-down approach. A reformation of these errors in the post-conflict era can help in stabilizing both Kosovo's national security and the regional stability of the Western Balkans. Inclusive negotiations with all affected stakeholders, including the potentially hostile Serbians should form the foundation for positive dialogue. Inclusion also fosters engagement and participation which is essential in reducing reliance on the international political apparatus.

CHAPTER 3 – Kosovo's Domestic Security with Regional Impact

3.1   Introduction

Kosovo is a country with a dominant Albanian-speaking population in the Western Balkans that declared its independence from Serbia in 2008. The freedom came after a period of a fierce war between Kosovo Albanians and the Serbian military forces in 1998-1999. Since 2008, more than one hundred nations have recognized the sovereignty of Kosovo, including the United States and many European Union (EU) and NATO member states.[67] Serbia, however, together with China, Russia, and other nations, including some EU and NATO countries, does not recognize the sovereignty of Kosovo.

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[67] "International recognitions of the Republic of Kosovo." The Republic of Kosovo Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora. Accessed on February 20, 2021. http://www.mfa-ks.net/en/politika/483/njohjet-ndrkombtare-t-republiks-s-kosovs/483.

Map 3.1 European countries recognizing Kosovo as an independent state[68]

[68] "International Recognition of Kosovo." Pappr. 2023. Accessed on June 3, 2023.
https://www.mappr.co/thematic-maps/international-recognition-of-kosovo/.
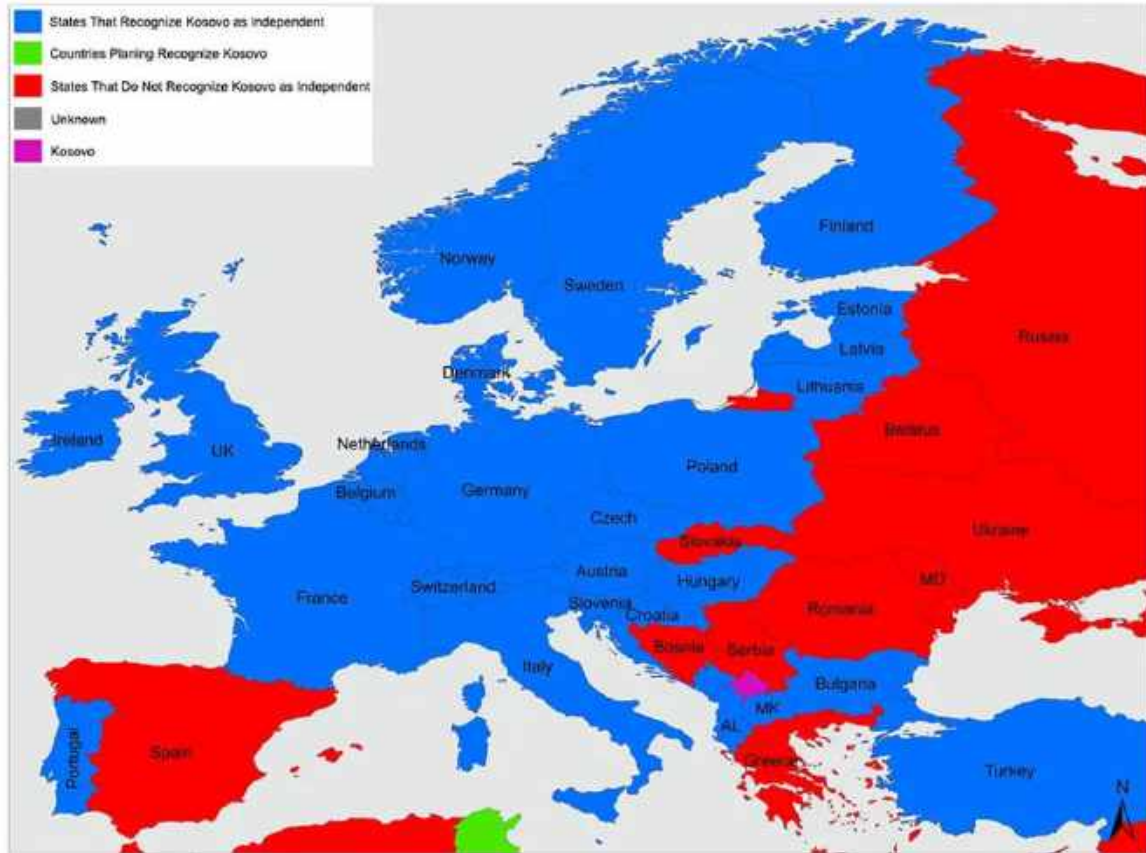
The following recognition map depicts the fact that Kosovo is recognized by the majority of the countries around the world, and that Kosovo's recognition is greater from outside of the continent of Europe.

Map 3. 2 Kosovo's Recognizers and Non-Recognizers[69]

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[69] Ibid.
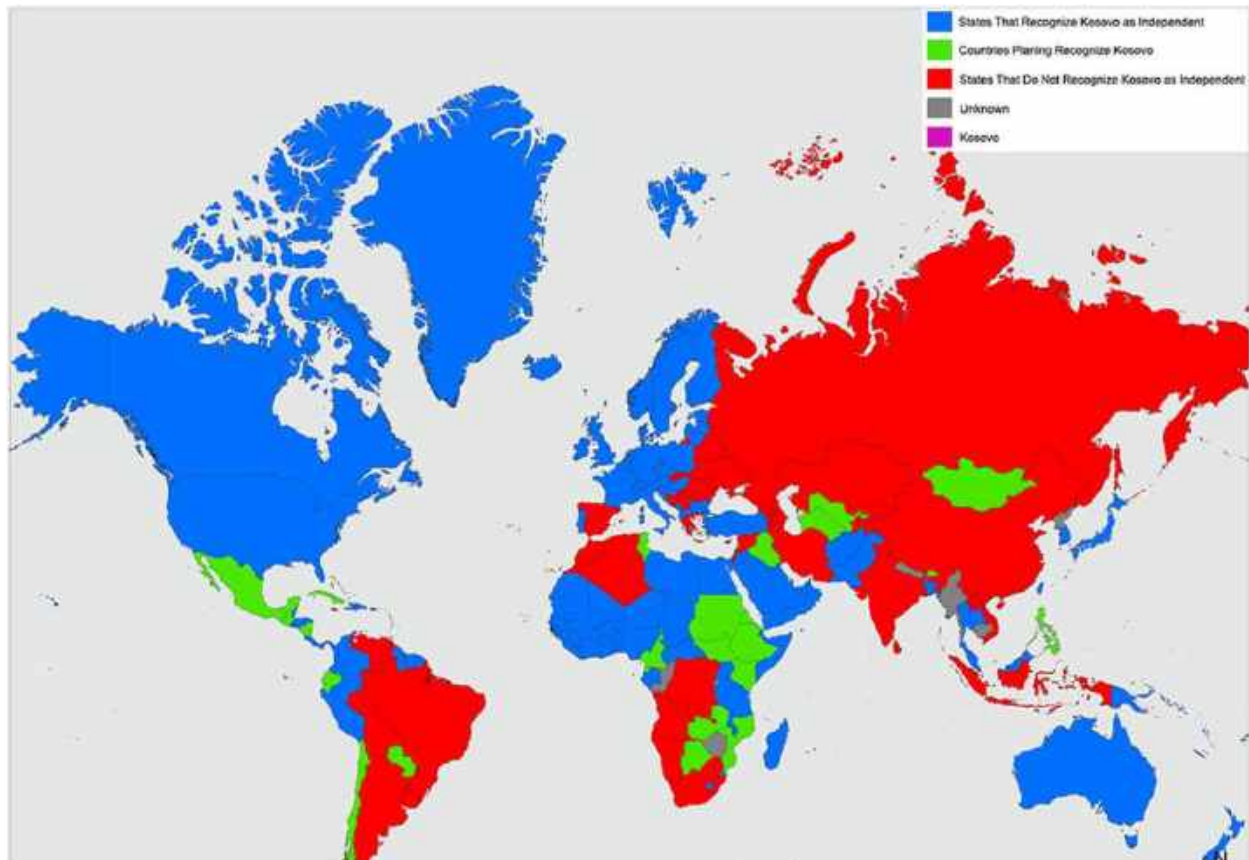
Although the nation has its independence with a government in place, its primary challenge is political instability characterized by a diverse interest in its domestic affairs, regional and global affiliations. The unstable political situation in Kosovo originates from conflict with Serbia that dates back from the collapse of Yugoslavia and the unmonitored succeeding independence of the Balkan nations. Kosovo is still struggling to establish its full sovereignty and live free from the influence of Serbia on its socio-economic and political activities. Kosovo's political system is established in a way that guarantees the representation of minorities in the Parliament and the political and administrative sphere.

3.2 The Disintegration of Yugoslavia

The complex root of Yugoslavia's disintegration, a state that existed for over 70 years ago, involves various factors, and several highly significant issues are of vital value to understand Yugoslavia's disintegration. It is argued that the reasons behind the breakup of Yugoslavia varied from the cultural and religious dissection between the ethnic groups,[70] but Yugoslavia's disintegration resulted from an economic and political level as one of the causes. Uneven level of development existing between the regions of the more developed and less developed republics due to the failure of mechanism established to facilitate the bridging of the gap between the north and south by ensuring a continuous supply of resource to the less developed republics contributed to the break up.[71] However, developed republics and regions, according to the policies put in place, had to abide by the policy of contributing a certain percentage of the gross material product to the main channel known as Federal Fund for the Development of Less Developed Republics and Regions, but this faced challenges.[72] Additionally, despite such policies, the differences in development levels continued to widen tremendously, resulting in dissatisfaction living within a common state.[73] Furthermore, the gap between the regions' gross material product considered least developed, Slovenia, and Kosovo recorded an increase of 8:1

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[70] "The Breakup of Yugoslavia, 1990–1992." Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute. United States Department of State. Milestones: 1989- 1992. Accessed on December 2020. https://history.state.gov/milestones/1989-1992/breakup-yugoslavia.

[71] Bianchini, Stefano, and Mikhail Minakov. "State-Building Politics after the Yugoslav and Soviet Collapse–The Western Balkans and Ukraine in a Comparative Perspective: An Introduction." Southeastern Europe 42.3 (2018): pg. 291. ResearchGate. Accessed on January 20, 2020. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330309369_State-Building_Politics_after_the_Yugoslav_and_Soviet_Collapse_-_The_Western_Balkans_and_Ukraine_in_a_Comparative_Perspective_An_Introduction.

[72] Ibid. Pg. 292.

[73] Ibid. Pg. 293.

in 1989 compared to 5:1 in 1955. Moreover, in 1990 both Slovenia and Kosovo represented 8%

of the total population each. Still, Slovenia contributed 16% of Yugoslavia GMP and over 25%

of the total exports and imports, while Kosovo contributed only 2% of Yugoslavia GMP and 1%

of both imports and exports. [74] Consequently, more developed regions felt exploited because

there is an obligatory transfer of their resources to the less developed regions to enhance or

attempt to balance the development. On the same note, less developed felt exploited because they

considered having a right to receive development aids due to unfavorable trade terms resulting

from their poor economic structure. Conversely, the introduction of the institutional arrangement

by the 1974 constitution greatly contributed to Yugoslavia's disintegration in that it enhanced an

economic nationalism resulting in uncoordinated investment strategies, unwanted duplication of

plants in various sectors.[75] Additionally, the institutional arrangement also resulted in the

fragmentation of the Yugoslavia market, as proved by the falling share of inter republican trade

throughout the 1970s. [76] Likewise, the economic crisis after 1979 affected Yugoslavia's

economy, resulting in hyperinflation in 1989, creating a regional conflict of interest; moreover,

monetary restrictions greatly weakened the federal government's control over economic policies.

[77] Therefore, challenges affecting the more developed republics' contribution to less developed

republics, institutional arrangements introduced by the 1974 constitution, and strict monetary

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[74] Ibid. Pg. 294.

[75] Bianchini, Stefano, and Mikhail Minakov. "State-Building Politics after the Yugoslav and Soviet Collapse–The Western Balkans and Ukraine in a Comparative Perspective: An Introduction." Southeastern Europe 42.3 (2018): pg. 296. ResearchGate. Accessed on January 20, 2020. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330309369_State-Building_Politics_after_the_Yugoslav_and_Soviet_Collapse_-_The_Western_Balkans_and_Ukraine_in_a_Comparative_Perspective_An_Introduction.

[76] Ibid. Pg. 297.

[77] Ibid. Pg. 299.

restriction affecting federal control are some of the economic factors that led to Yugoslavia's disintegration.

The level of local interdependence between regional disparities, inadequate factor market, and substantial autonomy, which are included in economic policies, negatively impacted the level of local interdependence facilitating Yugoslavia's disintegration. For example, banks in the region relied on a common currency to prevent them from weakening in the period of a war. Moreover, the region had common trade policies in which the Balkan states exchanged goods and services under common trade tariffs. In essence, Yugoslavia, to some extent, was an artificial entity, which interfered with the republican local interdependence level. [78] Moreover, the absence of an effective institutional framework holding the Yugoslavia economy affected republic's interdependence levels; furthermore, in the 1970s, there was a progressive decline in the share of inter republic trade. Indeed, this affected the local interdependence level between republics in Yugoslavia.[79] Additionally, the absence of a unidirectional trend in inter republic trade, which was accompanied by a continuous decline over the past 20 years, affected Yugoslavia countries' interdependence level.[80] (Becker, pg846) and the republics embraced integration among themselves than they recognized the international community to the extent that domestic trade. In the year 1987 foreign trade exceeded in all republics in Yugoslavia, indicating the poor level of interdependence between republics in Yugoslavia.[81] Therefore, regional disparities, inadequate

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[78] Becker, Joachim. "In the Yugoslav mirror: The EU disintegration crisis." Globalizations. Taylor and Francis Online. 14.6.Pg. 842. (2017. Accessed on December 2018. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14747731.2017.1330984.

[79] Ibid. Pg. 845.

[80] Ibid. Pg. 846.

[81] Ibid. Pg. 849.

factor market, Yugoslavia being an artificial entity, and poor integration between Yugoslavia and foreign countries weakened local autarky and interdependence.

   The structural problems of Yugoslavia were evident in late 1980s. The death of Tito on 4th May 1980 and the weakening of communism contributed to Yugoslavia's disintegration. The death of Tito, according to international political observers, resulted in the removal of what they consider as the main Yugoslavian unifying force, and ethnic tension started to grow.[82] Subsequently, there was the emergence of the crisis in Yugoslavia, which had a connection with weakening of communist states found in Eastern Europe to the end of the Cold War resulting to loss of the greatness of Berlin wall in the year 1989 and had an impact to Yugoslavia's crumbling.[83] Additionally, the common problem in the Serbian self-governing province of Social Autonomous Province Kosovo (SAP) continued to sprout rapidly.[84] Therefore, Tito's death and weakening of communism led to the loss of Yugoslavia's unifying force, the emergence of the crisis, and the problem between ethnic Serbs continuing to sprout rapidly and contributing to Yugoslavia collapse.

3.3 Economic Factors

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[82] Pinterič, Uroš. "Understanding Political and Economic Transition in Post-Yugoslav Serbia and Slovenia." Toruńskie Studia Międzynarodowe 1.10 (2017). Pg.155: 155-165. Accessed on September 28, 2020. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331781550_UNDERSTANDING_POLITICAL_AND_ECONOMIC_TRANSITION_IN_POST-YUGOSLAV_SERBIA_AND_SLOVENIA.

[83] Pinterič, Uroš. "Understanding Political and Economic Transition in Post-Yugoslav Serbia and Slovenia."

[84] Ibid. Pg. 157.

The varying degree of development between the republics and regions that are more developed and less developed is the starting point for understanding the economic factors that have led Yugoslavia to break up.[85] In order to bridge the divide between the north and the south, structures have been constructed to ensure the continuous transfer of resources to less developed regions. The main channel was the Federal Fund for the Development of Less Developed Republics and Territories, to which all more advanced republics had to contribute a certain amount (less than 2%) of their respective Gross Material Products (GMP).[86]

Despite these policies, in the most and least developed regions, Slovenia and Kosovo, the difference between GMP per capita increased from 5:1 in 1955 to 8:1 in 1989, while disparities in development levels actually widened. Slovenia produced 16 percent of Yugoslav GMP in 1990, with 8 percent of the general population, and contributed more than 25 percent of Yugoslav GMP.[87] Hence, the uneven distribution of economic outputs became a factor in the calls for disintegration with loud calls coming from the more prosperous provinces.

The history of these concerns is a long-lasting conflict over who 'exploited' whom. On the one hand, the more developed republics felt exploited because of the compulsory redistribution of resources that remained outside their direct control and were so often used in unproductive and wasteful sectors and other policies that had hindered their own development and growth to their disadvantage (for example the retention of foreign currency earnings from exports and

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[85] Lazarević, Žarko. "Disparities and Economic Nationhood in Yugoslavia." Nationalism and the Economy: Explorations into a Neglected Relationship (2019): Pg.114.

Hiswi, Putti Ananda. "Democracy in Slovenia: Slovenia's Entry into the European Union after the disintegration of Yugoslavia." JURNAL ILMU SOSIAL 1.1 (2020): Pg.92. Accessed on November 22, 2021. https://doi.org/10.14710/jis.1.1.2020.92-116.

[87] Ibid. Pg.94

tourism).[88] On the other hand, the underdeveloped republics felt exploited and thus assumed that they were entitled to aid money because of the unfair trade conditions arising from the existence of their economies. A significant percentage of production in primary commodities characterized by under productivity and high capital/output ratios in combination with distortions of relative prices led to more widespread price controls on basic commodities than on manufacturing industries, lowering their prices in general.[89] Although the discussion has been going on for years, one of the two views is not backed by any conclusive facts.

The structure of Yugoslavia consisted of previously separate eight federated entities, which were roughly divided along ethnic lines, including six republics that is Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia, and the two autonomous provinces found within Serbia that is Vojvodina and Kosovo.[90] Conversely, due to the constitution of the year 1974, the central government influence over the provinces reduced greatly, which gave them a long-sought autonomy. Consequently, the government of SR Serbia had restrictions towards making and carrying decisions that apply to the province, and this greatly contributed to Yugoslavia's collapse.[91] Subsequently, provinces that involved the Yugoslavia presidency's voting process were always not cast in favor of Serbia. Equally, most Serbs view Kosovo as the nation's cradle, and Serbs would do everything within their capability not to lose Kosovo. To

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[88] Lazarević, Žarko. "Disparities and Economic Nationhood in Yugoslavia." Nationalism and the Economy: Explorations into a Neglected Relationship (2019): Pg. 115.

[89] Ibid.Pg.115-116.

[90] Zekanović, Igor, and Rajko Gnjato. "Disintegration of the former SFR Yugoslavia and changes in the ethno-confessional structure of some cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina." RUDN Journal of Economics. ResearchGate 26.4 (2018): Pg. 685. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331853687_Disintegration_of_the_former_SFR_Yugoslavia_and_changes_in_the_ethno-confessional_structure_of_some_cities_of_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina.

[91] Ibid. Pg. 687.

some extent, this action contributed to Yugoslavia's dissolution.[92] Therefore, the constitution of 1974 not favoring Serbia, the voting process, which was always not in favor of Serbia, restricting Serbia to make and carry out a decision over the provinces, and Serbia not ready to lose Kosovo, are some of the structural problems that contributed to the war in Kosovo.

  The institutional structures adopted by the 1974 Constitution, transferred substantial discretionary powers in terms of credit allocation, fiscal policies, prices and to a lesser degree, the use of the foreign exchange to the individual republics. Thus, the republics and autonomous territories gained the right to 'sovereignty' over their respective republics are another factor leading to the disintegration of the Yugoslav economy.[93] [94] The condition strengthened aspects of corporate nationalism, leading to uncoordinated investment policies, needless duplication of plants in many industries, and the regional autonomy and Yugoslav market fragmentation, as demonstrated by the decreasing share of inter-Republican trade in the 1970s.[95] In addition to the fragmentation of the commodity market, there were also barriers to the mobilization of labor and capital across republican boundaries, as well as a poor inter-republican integration of companies, most of which existed only within the territories of their republics. The post-1979 economic crisis, which eventually led the Yugoslav economy into a deep recession that culminated in hyperinflation in 1989, gave further impetus to regional conflicts of interest. It was only in 1990,

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[92] Ibid. Pg. 689.

[93] Rrahmani, Bashkim. "Kosovo Judicial Position from the Second World War until 1974." Journal on European History of Law 11.1 (2020): Pg.170. Accessed on November 3, 2021. http://historyoflaw.eu/english/JHL_01_2020.pdf.

[94] Smajljaj, Avdi. "Ethnicity Based Democratic Constitutional Structures: the Cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Kosovo." Journal of Balkan and Black Sea Studies. Vo1.11. 2020. Accessed on March 20, 2021. https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/balkar/issue/54477/659604.

[95] Ibid. Pg.111.

however, that these tensions sharpened, mostly for political reasons.[96] This situation led the

federal government the accept certain compromises—initially concerning monetary

restrictions—which marked the beginning of progressive weakening of federal control over

economic policies. In the second half of 1990, along with the political differences between the

nations, there was a lack of satisfaction with the continuation of the federal stabilization policy

(successfully introduced in the first half of 1990). These policies was believed to be contrary to

the interests of all the more advanced republics, as major exporters, were adversely affected by

the fixed exchange rate and were in a pressing situation. [97] [98] Serbia did not pass sales tax

revenue to the federal budget in September 1990; the 'trade war' erupted in October. Serbia

levied special taxes on Slovenian and Croatian goods (corresponding to the implementation of

trade tariffs) and restricted payments to those dualities. In December 1990, when the Serbian

National Bank exceeded the credit limits for expansion set by the National Bank of Yugoslavia, a

raid on the monetary system took place. In the autumn of 1990, the 'currency war took place

between the republics: due to rising withdrawals from bank accounts, following the general

shortage of foreign exchange.[99] In the black markets of the neighboring republics, commercial

banks started to negotiate the terms of foreign currency trade and foreign currency acquisition.

By the end of 1990, laws had been introduced by almost all republics that were not in accordance

with federal laws. In January 1991, with the extreme abuse of fiscal duties toward the union, the

fiscal system had essentially disintegrated, and Croatia and Slovenia definitely stopped paying

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[96] Ibid. Pg. 111.

[97] Ibid. Pg. 114.

[98] Lazarević. Pg.119.

[99] Smajljaj. Pg.114.

federal taxes in February-March.[100] Consequently, the country remained in economic turmoil as most members were advancing their calls for liberal currencies that also meant financial independence from Yugoslavia. Thus, the call for currency freedom by most Balkan nations meant that many of them, including Croatia, Slovenian, Macedonia, and Kosovo, were on their way to secession. [101] [102]

The adverse economic developments exposed were followed (and accompanied) by the deterioration of the political turmoil, recurrent clashes between republican governments and continuing disputes over the correct compromise between Serbian demands to maintain the union and other republics' attempts to create a loose commonwealth of independent states. In the spring of 1991, the Yugoslav Prime Minister's last effort to arrive at an agreement on a shared set of economic policies that would allow Yugoslavia to remain united failed.[103] The war began in June 1991, Slovenia and Croatia became independent states in October, and Yugoslavia ceased to exist with its formal recognition by the European Community in January 1992.[104] If it had not been for the progressive deterioration of the political situation, it could be argued that such economic conditions alone would not have contributed to disintegration. But these economic factors have become an additional and important justification for secession in conjunction with unfavorable political developments.

3.4 Turmoil and Lack of Peace and Coexistence

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[100] Ibid. Pg. 115.

[101] Smajljaj. Pg.115.

[102] Lazarević. Pg.121.

[103] Lazarević p.122.

[104] Ibid. p.122.

The period between 1971 and 1981 marked ethnic conflict and economic strife. It is claimed that the early 1990s confrontation caused over 30,000 Serbs and Montenegrins to leave Kosovo, complaining of physical confrontations and harassment by ethnic Albanians who demographically controlled Kosovo and some neighboring regions of southern Serbia.[105] Around the same time, a massive proportion of ethnic Albanians, mostly because of the poor economic condition, had also emigrated. The Kosovo Albanians were regarded in Tito's Yugoslavia for perhaps the first time as part of the vast nation of Kosovo.[106] Tito permitted Kosovo Albanians to use their dialect and ensured that they were entitled to learn in their language. The Kosovo region and the Vojvodina district attained an independent position through the 1974 Constitution.[107] However, widespread unemployment, high poverty levels in Kosovo, and growing nationalism by Kosovo Albanians led to protests in 1981 by Pristina University students.[108] The resounding demand was that Kosovo should become a full democracy. Serbian security forces crushed the protests, with many, injured, murdered, or imprisoned. The interests of ethnic Albanians were progressively undermined after this. Many Kosovo Albanians were incarcerated mostly in the 1980s for actions in favor of their democratic status. Some have been calling for integration with Albania.[109]

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[105] Iliev, Andrej, Ferdinand Odzakov, and Aleksandar Glavinov. "History and perspectives of Kosovo conflict in Southeast Europe." (2019): Pg. 103. Accessed on March 12, 2021. https://eprints.ugd.edu.mk/23111/2/Geopolitics%20PRINT_HISTORY%20AND%20PERSPECTIVES%20OF.pdf.

[106] Ibid. Pg. 104.

[107] Abazi, Enika, and Albert Doja. "International representations of Balkan wars: a socio anthropological approach in international relations perspective." Cambridge review of international affairs 29.2 (2016): 581-610. Accessed on January 12, 2021.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid.

Tito, a communist nationalist, achieved mass support after WWII by pledging to protect the rights of each state while increasing the prosperity of Yugoslavia. In the process of changing the pre-existing regional conflicts, he formed a one-party union of six republics, which he governed with an 'iron fist' restricting any sense of national identity.[110] Although it just seems like a strategy that would unite the country by establishing a Yugoslav ethnicity, which indeed united all the South Slavs within one worldview, Tito defied that result. By remaining peaceful in the Cold War and obtaining assistance from the West and oil and natural resources from the Soviet Union[111] he was also active in strengthening Yugoslavia's prosperity and economic situation.

For Yugoslavia, the era from 1953 to his death in 1980 was a reasonably peaceful and stable times, but his reforms to the system were too late. Nationalist philosophies among the citizens were prevalent. In Kosovo, the Albanians self - associated from the Serbian province. Slovenians, on the other hand, have questioned the underfunding and infrastructure.[112] The leaders of the Croatian Party caused many people to challenge the political balance between politicians and the public, the 'Croatian spring; and Montenegrins proposed that Montenegrin would itself become a language. Collectively, these indicate that within the ethnic groups, a feeling of patriotism was fermented as they all pursued freedom. By granting greater autonomy to the metropolitan republics in the 1974 Constitution and allowing them to have more freedoms, Tito ensured that his multinational state remained consistent and content. Tito managed to hold violence at bay by delegating authority to each of the republics, despite the demonstrations.[113] Had the pre-WWII regime implemented a similar form of governance, then maybe the

[110] Ibid.

[111] Abazi and Albert, p.252a

[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid.

confederate nationalities through difficult times would not have escalated to armed confrontation.

Literature fails to link the fall of Yugoslavia to the inabilities of international organizations to prevent the occurrence of spillover effect in the Balkans and the other parts of the world. For instance, corruption and mistreatment of Albanians in Kosovo by Serb officials deployed in early 1990s to manage institutions in the province caused anger amongst the locals. Coupled with the low economic development of the nation, oppression due to prolonged confrontations and wars that had threatened human security in the Balkans, Albanians went into a confrontation with the Serbian regimes as they began to push for their independence in the late 1990s.[114] After the 1998 -1999 war in Kosovo, international missions were deployed in Kosovo; peacekeeping mission by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), United Nations (UN), and the European Union (EU) had begun in the region, but without a sustainable goal for peace and economic development. Most peacekeeping operations in the area were complete (or nearly finished) in the early 2000s, with the exception of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), which had been operating in Kosovo since 1999.[115] Accordingly, UNMIK is the longest UN mission in the Balkans, the mandate of which has changed in nature together with the reforms to Kosovo's

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[114] Dijkstra, Hylke, Ewa Mahr, Petar Petrov, Katarina Đokić, and Peter Horne Zartsdahl."Partners in conflict prevention and peacebuilding: How the EU, UN and OSCE exchange civilian capabilities in Kosovo, Mali and Armenia." ResearchGate. September 2017. Accessed on December 13, 2020. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319465384_Partners_in_conflict_prevention_and_peacebuilding_How_the_EU_UN_and_OSCE_exchange_civilian_capabilities_in_Kosovo_Mali_and_Armenia.

[115] Mustafa, Artan. "Kosovo's social policy during self-management, UNMIK and independence: Persisting high inequality and social exclusion." International Journal of Social Welfare 29.1 (2020): Pg. 97.

legal status made in 2008.[116] There were many processes taking place at this point in the Western Balkans. In particular, most of the UN missions have been replaced by regional organizations' missions and activities (primarily the EU).[117] Additionally, certain internal political conditions have changed dramatically, opening room for the official start of the democratic revolution (more specifically in Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro). Furthermore, countries in the region had clearly identified their primary foreign policy priorities with regard to the achievement of EU and NATO membership, with the exception of Serbia in the case of NATO, but there have also been some negative trends (due to unsolved bilateral disputes).[118] It must be noted that the efforts of international community failed in two cases to stabilize or avoid the war in Kosovo and the conflict in Macedonia. Nevertheless, the EU, along with the UN, has emerged in these two cases as the key mediators in the process of meeting the interests of the various ethnic groups in Kosovo and Macedonia.

In terms of the Common Security and Defence Policy CSDP campaigns, six military and civil operations have been launched in the Balkan States throughout the last 15 years. Four of those six CSDP missions were civilian operations and two were military operations. In March 2003, the main EU operation was deployed in Macedonia (CONCORDIA) at the invitation of the Macedonian Government to assist with the implementation of the Ohrid Framework

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[116] Gold, Johannes. "Measuring Interethnic Relations: A Quantitative Approximation on the Relations between Albanians and Serbs in post-UNMIK Kosovo (2008–2014)." Forschungen zu Südosteuropa: p.3. Accessed on December 21, 2020. https://bib.irb.hr/datoteka/881678.Goll_Mlinaric_Gold_2016_Othering_and_Right-Wing_Extremism_in_SEE_Societies.pdf#page=2.

[117] Ibid. Pg. 5.

[118] Gold. Pg.5.

Agreement.[119] [120]Similarly, the primary CSDP (civilian) mission initiated by the EU was EUPM BiH. Via peace-building operations including EUFOR ALTHEA and EULEX in Bosnia and Kosovo alike, the EU remains present in the Former Yugoslavia.[121] The two types of mutually reinforcing practices (CDSP and pre-accession) are an essential component of a 'dual-track approach' in which the acts under the oversight of the Council of the EU and, consequently, of the European Commission meet to achieve a positive result. In particular, this is also the case in Macedonia, Kosovo and in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A decade of unsuccessful UN peace operations was punctuated by Operation Allied Force. It was not legally approved by the UNSC, as a case of humanitarian intervention in Kosovo, legitimizing war. Although it does not legalize it, Yevgeni Primakov, former Russian Prime Minister worried that a unilateral decision in favor of military action would confirm a trend to substitute the United Nations as an apparatus for conflict management.[122] Primakov maintained that the use of force is only permissible in cases of legitimate violence against a Member State of

[119] Börzel, Tanja A., and Sonja Grimm. "Building good (enough) governance in postconflict societies & areas of limited statehood: The European Union & the Western Balkans." ResearchGate. January 2018. Accessed on December 15, 2022. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322239421_Building_Good_Enough_Governance_in_Post conflict_Societies_Areas_of_Limited_Statehood_The_European_Union_the_Western_Balkans.

[120] Woelk, Jens. "From Enlargement Perspective to "Waiting for Godot"? Has the EU Lost Its Transformative Power in the Balkans?" Highs and lows of European integration. Springer, Cham, September 1, 2018. SpringerLink. Accessed on January 10, 2020. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-93626-0_3.

[121] Börzel and Sonja. Pg.124.

[122] Panagiotou, Ritsa. "The Western Balkans between Russia and the European Union: perceptions, reality, and impact on enlargement." Journal of Contemporary European Studies (2020): P.6. Accessed on January 30, 2020. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14782804.2020.1798218.

the United Nations, which was not the case with Kosovo.[123] Not only did NATO deliberately refuse to comply with agreed UN procedural rules and contemporary international law (particularly the 1975 Helsinki Final Act), but it reinforced the idea and acted as if Kosovo was a sovereign state. The opponents of the intervention argue that NATO not only obliterated international legal customs with the assault on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and Kosovo, but also responded to a particular urge of the international community and its constituents to retaliate against Serbia for the violence it had approved against the minorities in Kosovo.[124]

3.5 UN, NATO, EU and the US Role in Kosovo

3.5.1 Brief Background on the Road to Kosovo's Independence

UN, NATO, EU, and the US have been involved in Kosovo in various roles concerning leadership and management to bring peace in the region and create a strong government system.

Unlike other entities of former Yugoslavia, Kosovo struggled on its efforts towards gaining support to declare its independence. It was not till the civil and ethnic tensions of 2004 that the international community took seriously the unsolved status of Kosovo. Taking into account these concerns, in May 2005, The United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan appointed Mr. Kai Eide of Norway as a Special Envoy to carry out a comprehensive review of the situation in Kosovo and whether the conditions are mature enough for a political process regarding the future status of Kosovo within the framework of the UNSC resolution 1244.[125] Indeed, the UN

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[123] Ibid.

[124] Dijkstra et al. Pg.12-13.

[125] Annan, K. A. "Letter dated 7 October 2005 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council". 7 October 2005. Accessed on November 18, 2020.

Secretary General saw through his promises and commended the status talks on Kosovo's future political stats. Only after 14 months of UN-led negotiations with Serbia regarding the future status of Kosovo, results reflected the compromises between Kosovo and Serbia, and were noted on the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement, proposed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the future status of Kosovo, Mr. Martti Ahtisaari.[126] Special Envoy Ahtisaari proposed that Kosovo become independent, subject to a period of international supervision. Based on this Proposal, Kosovo declared its independence on February 17, 2008. Additionally, it was renowned the international presence and oversight on the independence. The Ahtisaari Plan proposed that Kosovo become independent but subject to a period of international supervision. Based on this principle and the binding commitment that Kosovo made to implement fully the Ahtisaari Plan it welcomed a period of international supervision.[127] The Constitution was drafted in accordance with the Settlement incorporating all the relevant principles of the Ahtisaari Plan. Additionally, an International Civilian Representative (ICR) was appointed by the International Steering Group (ISG). The ISG was a group of states that have recognized and supported the independence of Kosovo comprising 23 European Union countries, the United States, and Turkey, and it was set up upon the request of Kosovo's leaders to supervise Kosovo's independence. The ICR, indeed, was the same person as

https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Kos%20S2005%20635.pdf.

[126] "Secretary – General Appoints Former President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland as Special Envoy for Future Status Process for Kosovo." United Nations, Secretary-General SG/A/955. Nov. 2005. Accessed on 12 January 2021. https://press.un.org/en/2005/sga955.doc.htm.

[127] "Report of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Kosovo's future status." United Nations Security Council. 26 March 2007. Accessed on 12 November 2020. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Kosovo%20S2007%20168.pdf.

the Council of the European Union appointee, known as the European Union Special

Representative (EUSR). The mission and the directive of the ISG were to oversee the

International Civilian Office's (ICO) in Pristina mandate of full implementation of the

Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement of UN Special Envoy Martti

Ahtisaari.[128]

3.5.2. UNSC Res 1244 - United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and Military Presence

Since 1999 the United Nations mission, known as the United Nations Interim

Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), has been present in Kosovo, which is under the

mandate of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 adopted on June 10, 1999.

However, since its independence on February 17, 2008, the role and the tasks of UNMIK is "to

ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants of Kosovo and advance

regional stability in the western Balkans"[129] has been diminishing and it is almost non existence

in terms of influencing or administering in Kosovo. The Republic of Kosovo is building up its

own institutions and is being a promoter for a peaceful and normal life for all citizens of Kosovo

and at the same time is progressing in terms of regional cooperation with all the neighbouring

countries.

3.5.3 NATO's Continuing Mission in Kosovo

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[128] "International Support for Kosovo". US Department of State. Accessed on November 2020. https://2009-2017.state.gov/p/eur/ci/kv/c27789.htm.

[129] United Nations Mission in Kosovo – UNMIK. Accessed on February 15, 2023. https://unmik.unmissions.org/.

Under the same United Nations Security Resolution 1244 an international military presence was mandated to be positioned in Kosovo in June 1999. This presence was provided by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)-led Kosovo Force (KFOR), composed of more than 30 national military contingents from NATO Allies and partner countries.[130] NATO has been leading a peace enforcement operation in Kosovo in support of wider international efforts to build peace and stability in the area and currently contributes towards maintaining a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement for all citizens in Kosovo, regardless of their ethnic origin. Respectfully, the KFOR's current role is to:

deter renewed hostility and threats against Kosovo by Yugoslav and Serb forces;

establish a secure environment and ensure public safety and order;

demilitarize the Kosovo Liberation Army;

support the international humanitarian effort; and

coordinate with, and support, the international civil presence.[131]

3.5.4 The European Union Involvement in Kosovo & European Union Rule of Law – EULEX

The European Union (EU) has been involved in various ways and activities to make peace

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[130] "NATO's role in Kosovo." NATO. Updated on 16 November, 2020. Accessed on December 1, 2020. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_48818.htm.

[131] "NATO's role in Kosovo." NATO. Updated on 16 November, 2020. Accessed on December 1, 2020. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_48818.htm.

with its neighbors, facilitate trade, and to ensure a strong government to exist that maintains peace in the region, and strengthen the rule of law.

The European Union facilitated the resuming of talks between Kosovo and Serbia to maintain peace between the two. EU indeed facilitated a dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia aiming at normalizing relations between Prishtina and Belgrade, for numerous years. However the talks stagnated in 2018 since Kosovo imposed 100% tariffs on Serbian goods in response to Serbia's efforts to undermine Kosovo's international legitimacy.[132] In essence, the EU has played major roles in Kosovo's postwar period by creating a rule of law mission known as EULEX launched in the year 2008 to monitor and advise on the rule of law, having some executive functions.[133]

EULEX is another mechanism in support of Kosovo, according to the Ahtisaari Plan, The Republic of Kosovo is an aspirant country to EU, thus it has invited a European Union (EU) mission, EULEX, to enforce the rule of law in Kosovo, to monitor, mentor, and advise Kosovo police, justice, and customs officials, and to support Kosovo on its path to European Union integration in the rule of law area.

Nonetheless, EULEX has its reputation shaken by scandals and most Kosovars consider that this mission has not fulfilled its mission nor has it established the rule of law in Kosovo as expected. The mission has been accompanied by its own corruption and mismanagement that snt an appalling message to Kosovars while attempting to discredit its own whistle blowers

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[132] Bergmann, Julian. "Same table, different menus? A comparison of UN and EU mediation practice in the Kosovo-Serbia conflict." International Negotiation . February 23, 2018.:Pg. 237. Accessed on June 18, 2020. https://brill.com/view/journals/iner/23/2/article-p238_5.xml.

[133] Ibid. Pg. 238.

discouraged the whistle-blowers in Kosovo as high level crimes went unpunished. EULEX, one

might argue, did not have time to be successful while was preoccupied with its own issues.[134]

   Moreover, the EU provided over €1.4 billion assistance to Kosovo from 2007 to 2020 and

chipped in availing emergency support to address COVID-19 pandemic issues accordingly to

promote and improve the health of citizens in Kosovo. Furthermore, the EU regarded Kosovo as

its potential candidate holding membership status and signed the association and stabilization

agreement (SAA) with the EU back in 2014.[135] However, Kosovo's EU membership bid is

obtaining momentum that is enhancing its negotiations. Conversely, the biding of Kosovo's EU

membership is complicated because five EU members do not recognize the biding process.[136]

Consequently, Kosovo's instant and major goal due to its relationship with the EU is to gain visa

free entry of its citizens into the EU'S Schengen area and enhance individuals' free movement,

enabling them to travel without their passports being checked between most European

countries.[137] It is quite unfortunate that Kosovo is the only country in the Western Balkans that

does not own the status of free movement of its citizen to countries within the EU even though

Kosovo fulfilled the requirements to have this status in 2018, according to EU official

assessment.[138] Nevertheless, some observers defend that the EU's stand of continued denial to

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[134] Geci, Sinan. Note: While conducting PhD studies wrote a two part paper on "The EULEX in
   Kosovo: Why the Biggest EU Mission became the Biggest EU Failure? – Part two: Problems of
   EULEX." Biztonsag Politika. Biztonsagpolitikai Szakportal. Accessed on February 23, 2019.
   https://biztonsagpolitika.hu/balkan/the-eulex-in-kosovo-why-the-biggest-eu-mission-became-the-
   biggest-eu-failure-part-two-problems-of-eulex.

[135] Ibid, Pg. 243.

[136] Ibid. Pg. 244.

[137] Ibid. Pg.246.

[138] Obradovic-Wochnik, Jelena, and Anneliese Dodds. "Environmental governance in a contested
   state: the influence of European Union and other external actors on energy sector regulation in

grant Kosovo visa liberation has undermined the block's credibility and influence in the country greatly.[139] Therefore, the EU has been involved in Kosovo by enhancing peace and solving disagreements with its neighboring countries, providing financial support, andgetting Kosovo ready on its way to become as one of its members. However, this is complicated as Kosovo face many challenges.

3.5.5 The US Involvement in Kosovo

The US, by a large margin, enjoys popularity in Kosovo because it strengthens the leadership, provides security, and in fact, Kosovo considers the US as a security guarantor. The US has been involved in Kosovo in many ways, making it more popular in Kosovo than any other nation or international organizations.

The United States is majorly the significant source of foreign aid assistance to Kosovo. Foreign aid assistance that the United States provides to Kosovo aims to uphold the implementation of an agreement resulting from the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo. In essence, foreign assistance aid enhances the improvement of transparent, trustful, and responsible governance amidst other various goals, respectively.[140] Moreover, the United States provides financial assistance to

Kosovo." Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy. Research Gate. September 2015. Pg.936.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282840256_Environmental_governance_in_a_contested_stateThe_influence_of_European_Union_and_other_external_actors_on_energy_sector_regulation_in_Kosovo.

[139] Ibid. Pg. 940.

[140] Ryngaert, Cedric, and Sven Sobrie. "Recognition of states: International law or realpolitik? The practice of recognition in the wake of Kosovo, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia." Leiden journal of international law. June 2011.Pg. 467. Accessed on July, 5, 2020.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/231975787_Recognition_of_States_International_Law_or

Kosovo through $ 49 million Millennium Challenge Corporation to boost Kosovo's economic

status making it stable and strong in providing various services to its citizens that require

finance.[141] Additionally, Millennium Challenge Corporation is a threshold program that was

launched in the year 2017 to focus on good governance and energy efficiency and reliability.

Furthermore, the threshold program had the intension to assist Kosovo to befit comfortably,

enabling it to participate fully in larger compact of program.[142] Nevertheless, the Millennium

Challenge Corporation board greatly plays a major role in determining that Kosovo is effectively

comfortable taking part in a compact program and is in progress.[143] Therefore, the United States

is involved in Kosovo by providing foreign aid assistance by implementing agreement in the

Kosovo and Serbia's dialogue. The United States took a determined position to help Kosovo and

Serbia reach an agreement that would help towards a final normalization agreement. Finally,

after years of ongoing with little or no results under the EU mediation, the deadlock was broken

by the US. On September 4, 2020, an economic but also very political one, agreement was

signed, in the Oval Office at the White House in the presence of President Trump, by Serbian

President Aleksandar Vučić and Kosovo Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti. The agreement aims "to

pursue economic engagement was coupled with a second announcement that Serbia would move

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_Realpolitik_The_Practice_of_Recognition_in_the_Wake_of_Kosovo_South_Ossetia_and_Abkhazia.

[141] Ibid. Pg. 468.

[142] Ibid. 473.

[143] Ibid. 475.

its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, and Kosovo and Israel have moved to normalize ties and establish diplomatic relations."[144]

The United States has bold cooperation with Kosovo on transnational threats and security issues. The United States indeed has created cooperation with Kosovo with the aim of combating threats and bolstering security between the two countries making citizens feel safe and secure.[145] Moreover, Kosovo is a transit country where to some extent is regarded as a source country for trafficking in human, contraband, and other illegal activities. The cooperation created by the US and Kosovo aims at controlling these illegal activities. Additionally, the United States has been involved in transitional cooperation with Kosovo because, according to observers, Kosovo has a strong legal framework that can enhance it to counter-trafficking, smuggling, and other illegal trans-border crimes, respectively.[146] Likewise, the United States is at the frontline urging officials in Kosovo to implement various domestic laws of the country by first earnestly investigating, prosecuting, and convicting criminals involved in drug trafficking and trying to improve victim support. Equally, the issue of how to combat terrorism and violent extremism is a vital area of the US-Kosovo security cooperation. Similarly, the United States supported Kosovo's mission of 2010 whereby 400 citizens traveled to Syria and Iraq to support Islamic states in preventing terrorist growing recruitment efforts by tightening Kosovo's legal framework

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[144] Salama, Vivian. "Kosovo sign economic normalization agreement in Oval Office ceremony" CNN. September 4, 2020. Accessed on September 4, 2020. https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/04/politics/serbia-kosovo-agreement/index.html.

[145] Elbasani, Arolda. "State-building or state-capture? Institutional exports, local reception and hybridity of reforms in post-war Kosovo." May 2020. Pg. 149. Accessed on March 14, 2020. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341474032_State-building_or_state-capture_Institutional_exports_local_reception_and_hybridity_of_reforms_in_post-war_Kosovo.

[146] Ibid. Pg. 150.

aiming to combat recruitment process, foreign fight travel, and terrorism financing.[147]

Additionally, the United States strengthened Kosovo's strategy plan of countering violent

extremism accordingly.[148] Consequently, the United States is playing a big role in supporting

Kosovo law enforcement and judicial institution, which greatly facilitates the process of

combating terrorism and violent extremism. Subsequently, the United States Department of

Antiterrorism Assisting Program has chipped in by proving suitable training and capacity

building to aid Kosovo police's Counterterrorism Directorate and Border police unit to increase

peace and security by reducing terrorism and decrease illegal activities at the border.[149]

Additionally, the United States and Kosovo signed an extradition treaty in March 2016.[150]

However, in the same year, established diplomatic and an effective logistical support system to

repatriate about 110 Kosovo citizens from Syria who were mostly women and children who had

got caught in the so called Islamic State territories.[151] Therefore, the United States has been

involved in Kosovo in many areas.

   The congressional system of the United States has also played great roles in Kosovo in various

ways. Congressional involvement and interest in Kosovo predate Yugoslavia's disintegration.[152]

In essence, through resolutions, various hearings, and congressional delegations, most congress

members brought up the status of ethnic Albanians in Yugoslavia. Additionally, congressional

members involved in heated debates concerning intervention during the era of the Clinton

administration and presenting allegiance to George W Bush to consider and back up Kosovo's

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[147] Ibid. 155

[148] Ryngaert, et. al, pg476.

[149] Ibid. pg478

[150] Ibid. pg479

[151] Elbasan, pg158.

[152] Ryngaert, et. al, pg478.

independence and supporting continued financial assistance to Kosovo.[153] Moreover,

congressional support and interest in Kosovo have continued whereby there were several hearing

in 116th congress, which addressed Kosovo in part and as a whole. Furthermore, in April 2019,

there was a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearings concerning Kosovo wartime victims.[154]

Likewise, there are recent hearings concerning Western Balkans issues held by the senate armed

services committee and the senate foreign relations committee's subcommittee to preside on the

issue of Europe and Regional Security Cooperation. The US Congress has been involved in

Kosovo by enhancing the issue of transitional justice in Kosovo, providing strong political

environment.[155] Subsequently, Congress has been involved in the fight against corruption, to aid

efficiency inequitable distribution of resources to citizens to improve living standards in Kosovo,

and has spearheaded the rule of law without victimization to enhance the prevailing of

democracy effectively in Kosovo. Nonetheless, Congress has effectively played the role of

combating human trafficking across Kosovo's border and fighting against organized crimes in

Kosovo in order to promote peace and security.[156] Hence, the United States Congress has been

involved in and for Kosovo by fighting for Kosovo's independence, ensuring effective prevail of

security in Kosovo and fighting against corruption, while ensuring justice prevails in Kosovo.

Bipartisan congress representatives have supported the euro Atlantic integration of the Republic

of Kosovo and have urged their secretaries of State to assist Kosovo towards this strategic aim.

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[153] Ryngaert, et. al,pg481.

[154] Ibid. Pg485.

[155] Ibid. Pg. 487.

[156] Ibid. Pg. 490.

3.6 Regional Organizations' Evolvement in the Western Balkans

The Balkan region has experienced war, political instability, and underdevelopment since the 19th century. However, of greatest interest is the period between 1980 and the year 2000 that marked the fall of Yugoslavia, the independence of former republics, the Kosovo declaration of independence, the wars, peace keeping missions by international organizations, and their failure to establish long lasting political solution in the region. Foremost, the key building blocks of Europe's Cold War security architecture were NATO, OSCE, the United Nations, and Council of Europe that lasted comfortably into the 1990s. However, they had to recreate themselves into new and efficient tools and policies to meet the challenges of a changed security environment in the Balkans. Moreover, in this evolving security infrastructure, the EU conceived that they held particularly a clear position, to conceive and develop a predominantly economic union whose past political achievements were all but astronomical achievements. Clearly, however, the EU had grown to become a more powerful political player within Europe or even beyond, based on both its economic power and the appeal it has for many Central and Eastern European nations that are interested in joining the organization. Such nations included the newly formed democracies in the Balkans. The EU has been a driving force to positive changes in those countries, which sought membership into this union.

The EU, along with the intervention of the UN, played a dominant role in the second phase of the stabilization and development (political, economic, and democratization) of the Western Balkans region. The current era is distinguished by two types of operations that include, EU peacekeeping operations within the framework of its Security and Defense Strategy and activities within the scope of the EU enlargement policy, which, in some cases, are mutually supportive.[157]

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[157] Abazi and Albert, Pg.582.

EU peace-building efforts include military and (mainly) civilian missions aimed at institution-building/reinforcement, security sector building and reform, economic rehabilitation, democratization, and the rule of law.[158] As will be listed below, enlargement policy practices are often covered by the terms Europeanisation and harmonization policy. In a wider sense, therefore, steps in the form of the harmonization policy and the Europeanisation procedure can be seen as an essential component of the Western Balkans peacebuilding process. Some scholars tend to believe that the form of involvement of the EU in the Balkans varies considerably from that of its missions in other parts of the world, arguing that the Balkan operations were more complex, provided that the EU's contribution to the Europeanisation of the region was essentially long-lasting, while missions elsewhere tend to be based more on an in-and-out model.[159] Hence, the EU mission in the Balkans was a Europeanization strategy through the establishment of institutions within the new nations to ensure that they achieve political stability.

In the post-Yugoslav period, International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) incorporated an essential policy component of conditionality. From the vital policy, it is arguable that various fronts of the transnational justice were essential constituents of peacebuilding insertions by external players.[160] In this context, some scholars argue that the EU's conditionality policy would be more successful if the requirement of a sufficient degree of cooperation with the ICTY had been more specifically substituted by the implementation at national level of the deliberative democratic frameworks, which would have had a positive impact on cross-ethnic

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[158] Ibid.

[159] Börzel and Sonja, p.118; Abazi and Albert, p.241b; Woelk, p.29.

[160] Żarna, Krzysztof. "Activity of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (1993–2017). An assessment." Polityka i Społeczeństwo. April 16, 2018. Pg.65. Accessed on March 25, 2020: https://repozytorium.ur.edu.pl/server/api/core/bitstreams/0b87850b-e9bb-4a46-aa6e-8ec80b9140c2/content.

relations and regional integration.[161] The EU has sought to influence the transition of domestic

systems in the Western Balkans, which has so far yielded very modest results in case of Kosovo,

Bosnia, Macedonia and Albania, in order to improve peace and stability in the region and to

provide opportunities for growth. For both Serbia and Croatia, the issue of

restricted/slow progress in implementing the transformative force of the EU is also perceived. At

the outset of the intensive and highly organized enlargement process, significant problems had to

be resolved by the EU and other actors still existing in the region in order to begin real

democratization as a prerequisite for the other economic ties.[162] Different capacities have been

demonstrated by the states of the country, which is evident from their present role on EU

membership and the stage of their association agreement processes. Thus, although the EU has

an approach to ensure progressive democratization in the Balkans, the results of the process are

minimal as they have a large void to fill in their mission in the region, which is a sign of failure.

  In the 2002 European Council meeting in Copenhagen, the EU Member Countries claimed

that, under some conditions, the Western Balkan States had a strong European perception. The

stabilization/development process of the Western Balkans is therefore characterized by the

development and implementation of instruments aimed at fostering sustainable peace through

cooperation, progress and, finally, EU integration.[163] The EU Regional Approach, introduced in

1997 in an atmosphere still characterized by post-conflict, weak, unorganized ties between

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[161] Żarna, Krzysztof. "Activity of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
(1993–2017). An assessment." Polityka i Społeczeństwo. April 16, 2018. Pg.65. Accessed on March
25, 2020: https://repozytorium.ur.edu.pl/server/api/core/bitstreams/0b87850b-e9bb-4a46-aa6e-
8ec80b9140c2/content.

[162] Woelk, p.32

[163] Börzel and Sonja, p.120.

nations in the region and a widerspread mistrust, was the first example of this approach.[164] The

strategy was aimed at Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia,

Macedonia and Albania and could essentially be called the first cohesive EU program for the

Western Balkans ('South-Eastern Europe' was the term used at the time).[165] The strategy was

two-fold and included, on the one hand, each country's bilateral ties with the EU and, on the

other, the establishment of regional cooperation. However, the attempts to achieve the two has

been futile as hostility is high amongst some countries that should be forming the regional

corporation. For instance, Kosovo remains unrecognized as a sovereign country by many nations

due to the approach adopted by the EU and NATO that are counterproductive. Thus, although

the EU has a structure for the Balkan peace, their efforts are failing as the mistrust between the

Balkan nations is beyond the scope of EU mission in the region.

What followed was the Stabilization and Association Phase (SAP) launched in 1999, the goal

of which was/is to provide opportunities to Western Balkan countries within the range of

potential future EU membership if, in a number of areas, comprehensive transformations are

achieved. Regional cooperation and better mutually respectful relations, being attentive to the

fragility of inter-state (but also intra-state ethnic) interactions, have been emphasized as an

integral part of this EU policy. As stated in the Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans of

2003, the EU also stressed the significance of regional cooperation as a requirement for states

in the region to develop closer relations with EU institutions. The EU sought to accomplish two

goals by working through a mess of instruments (CSDP peace and reconciliation operations and

conditionality policy): first, to remove the possibility of conflict recurrence, which could annul

all peacebuilding attempts made in the previous phases; and second, to prevent major disruptions

[164] Börzel and Sonja, p.120; Woelk, p.29).

[165] Börzel and Sonja, p.122.

on its boundaries or, possibly, to put imbalances within its own territory.[166] The policy of "sticks and carrots" sometimes was dissatisfactory to the countries in the region and quite often not popular. In the case of Kosovo, the EU popularity is decreasing and is not as attractive as one might think; thus, euroscepticism is increasing mainly due to inactivity and lack of interest from EU.

3.7 Managing new Circumstances in Kosovo

Due to conflicts of interest between the peacekeeping units, which included the UN and NATO, the Kosovo security management deteriorated. KFOR has kept a good reputation in the last two decades and remains as one of the most trustworthy institutions in Kosovo. According to the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies report of 2018, KFOR remains the second most trusted institution after the Kosovo Security Force.[167] Above all, when it came to maintaining territorial integrity, the Western powers in the UNSC, were not worthy of faith in holding their promise.[168] The intentions and obligations of temporary or transitional governments to the prerequisites of international conflict management will henceforth appear suspicious to major powers.

The UNSC released Resolution 1244 (UNSCR 1244) on 10 June 1999 to address the humanitarian catastrophe taking place in Kosovo. The principles of ceasefire agreement and the potential establishment of institutions based on the democratic international administration in Kosovo have been laid down.[169] The resolution was ultimately the legal agreement reached

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[166] Żarna, p.65

[167] Kosovo Security Barometer. Eighth Edition. Kosovar Centre for Security Studies. November 2018. Accessed on 12 January 2021. http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/barometri2018-eng2_477654.pdf.

[168] Panagiotou, p.4.

[169] Dijkstra et al., p.14

between the five permanent UNSC members. The goal of the UNSC was to address the humanitarian crisis while maintaining the territorial integrity of the FRY that is, Serbia and Montenegro, including Kosovo, at the same time.[170] UNSCR 1244 provided for the 'creation of significant autonomy and self-government in Kosovo, awaiting final resolution, taking complete explanation of Annex 2 and the Rambouillet Agreements (S/1999/648)'..[171] The Rambouillet Agreements of March 1999 assured the territorial sovereignty of Serbia, as provided for in Chapter 1 (Constitution) of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's authority over the constitutional order of Kosovo.[172] Furthermore, Chapter 7 refers to the invitation of the parties, including Kosovo, to reaffirm the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Yugoslavia.[173] However, NATO and EU had fallen from the procedure and rules guiding the UN member states on involvement in regional conflict. The condition seemed to play against their mission in Kosovo and became a window for breaching the set guidelines in secession politics.

After abdicating to NATO's Allied Force activity, Serbia embraced UNSCR 1244. Serbia was supposed to accept the principles of Rambouillet by virtue of the relation formed in UNSCR 1244 (that Serbia renounced in 1999).[174] It also meant that there was an obvious consistency in

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[170] Holohan, Anne. "Peacebuilding and SSR in Kosovo: an Interactionist perspective." Global crime.Taylor and Francine Online. June 27, 2016. Accessed on May 12, 2017. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17440572.2016.1197508.

[171] Osland, Kari M., and Mateja Peter. "The double proximity paradox in peacebuilding: implementation and perception of the EU rule of law mission in Kosovo." European Security. April 28, 2019. Accessed on January 25, 2021. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09662839.2019.1649658.

[172] Holohan, p.337; Osland and Mateja, p.495.

[173] Ibid. Pg.495.

[174] Dijkstra et al., p.17.

the willingness of the global community to maintain the FRY's territorial integrity.[175] Any debate

on the future of Kosovo as part of, or separate from, the FRY would have to bring both concepts

into account in the sense of security, as given by, and in the context of, institutions established

under international administration. Two worldviews are included in the wording of the

agreement: national rights (with a focus on constitutional order) and civil rights (with an

emphasis on self-determination of Kosovars within the FRY).[176] The latter was ordered first by

the international community to be carried out and then transferred to the local jurisdiction. The

relationship between the local (now indigenous) administration of Kosovo and Belgrade has

formed the political settlement between the parties. It can therefore be viewed as an effort by

"post-modern" states to ease the indignation of "modern" UNSC members at NATO's

interference in Kosovo.[177] At the same time, UNSCR 1244 is a peacebuilding strategy

implemented by the UNSC on Kosovo and a measure to establish relations between NATO/US

and Russia following NATO bombing.[178] Hence, UNSCR contributed to NATO's fault in

breaking the essential laws of peacekeeping that would help to convince Russia and other

European nations to recognize the legitimacy of Kosovo as a democracy.[179]

   Instead of addressing these issues, on 17 February 2008, Kosovo institutions unilaterally

declared their independence from Serbia, according to some in direct contravention of

international legal practice, in breach of the principles of the Rambouillet Agreement, in breach

of UNSCR 1244 and against the will of the international community. However, the majority of

democracies recognized Kosovo's independence: the United States, France, Turkey, the United

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[175] (Osland and Mateja, p.497.

[176] Oslon and Mateja, p.497.

[177] Dijkstra et al., p.17.

[178] Panagiotou, p.6; Osland and Mateja, p.501.

[179] Osland and Mateja, p.501.

Kingdom, Germany, Australia and Belgium all formally acknowledged Kosovo after a week. The number of countries that recognized the sovereignty of Kosovo stands at over 100. In February 2008, Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) did not doom post-Cold War conflict management per se; instead, it is to blame for the rapid recognition of independence by the major Euro-Atlantic forces. Russia and China thought they had been double-crossed. The global community has kept the principle of national sovereignty untouchable in the nine years between UNSCR 1244 and Kosovo's UDI. Now, the same major powers have promptly acknowledged the independence of Kosovo.

Legally, the recognition of Kosovo's UDI was yet another extension of the global legal concept of uti possidetis, which enabled Yugoslavia to dissolve (not the breakaway of the sovereign provinces). Some major powers, in acknowledging the independence of Kosovo, actually decreed that the concept of uti possidetis also extends to the non-autonomous province of the FRY.[180] Any members of the international community may have thought that by acknowledgment, continued peace could be ensured. The infectious influence of the Kosovo UDI has spread exponentially, not only in the former Yugoslavia but also in the former Soviet Union, to other minority groups seeking self-determination.[181] In its implementation, the uti possidetis concept did not preclude the occurrence of disputed territories or challenges. Approximately half of the world's nations, including several NATO countries, have supported Kosovo's request for recognition. Thus, despite the global recognition of Kosovo's independence, the UDI process had a spillover effect in the former soviet states and the Balkan region. There were attempts to

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[180] Doli, Dren. "Kosovo's Quest for Statehood: From Unilateral Secession to Recognition." The International Element, Statehood and Democratic Nation-building. Springer, Cham, 2019. Pg. 100. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05995-8_5

[181] Ibid. Pg. 100

compare Catalonia with Kosovo, but the latter has claimed and proved in front of the

International Court of Justice that it is a sui generic case and cannot be compared to any other

nation in the world.

3.8 (Non)Conventional threats towards Kosovo

Kosovo's peace has internal and external threats. Internal threats arise from Kosovo Serbs

that form part of the minority communities in the northern section of the country. However,

external threats arise from nations that have an interest in Kosovo and those that have a direct

conflict with the nation, mainly Serbia. Besides, Russia and China are superpower nations that

do not recognize the sovereignty of Kosovo and they have their interests on the peace deals. To

reiterate the fact that Kosovo is under international protection, UN and NATO, but also from

allies that remain close to Kosovo and not only defend but promote the sovereignty. The threats

are eminent to Kosovo as follows.

The Kosovo Serbs would want to join Serbia, and the UNSC has been unable to deal with this

'new' problem. The Kosovo conflict management model tends to be fundamentally flawed in that

it has violated UN processes and the values of multilateralism as a platform for marginalized

minorities and as an equalizer of state power.[182] Multilateral conflict resolution, by its very

nature, helps states to preserve harmonious ties because it provides predictability. Since the

Kosovo Model has been corrupted by the defection of Western powers from those values,

predictable results are no longer provided. It now seems unnecessary, even imprudent, to bring a

conflict or a crisis before the UNSC.[183] Besides, the unresolved conflict between Kosovo and

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[182] Serwer, Daniel. "Kosovo and Serbia: Loveless Marriage, Difficult Divorce." From War to Peace in
the Balkans, the Middle East and Ukraine.

[183] Serwer, pg.74.

Serbia over the independence of the former remains the greatest potential for uncertainty in the Balkans and a hindrance to the European integration of both.

   Although Belgrade and Pristina are always at ease since 1999 and have reached some practical resolutions to promote trade, border control and many other common problems via EU-led negotiations, the rift between them should continue till the two parties find an agreement resolving two main sets of issues. The first concerns the non-recognition by Serbia of the autonomy of Kosovo and the concurrent unwillingness by Kosovo to recognize Serbia.[184] The second concern is the fear that the Serbian minority populations in Kosovo will be regulated through displacement.[185] Since there is no obvious deadline in reaching a final agreement, which is already years overdue, in the conflict involving Kosovo and Serbia there are justifiable reasons to believe that the entities will arrive at a common vision of ending the quarrel. Officials in Belgrade and Pristina have started openly discussing the contours of a new possible agreement in recent years.[186] Recognition of Kosovo's independence in return for important provisions, such as the formation of highly autonomous districts for Serbs in northern Kosovo and for Albanians in Preshevo, Serbia, may be one road to compromise. Another one will see a redrawing of boundaries, although more divisive so that governments interchange authority over the two regions.[187] The challenges and barriers, however, remain substantial. Much of the population is

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[184] Maloku, Edona, Belle Derks, Colette Van Laar, and Naomi Ellemers. "Building national identity in newborn Kosovo: Challenges of integrating national identity with ethnic identity among Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs." Understanding peace and conflict through social identity theory. Springer Link. June 18, 2016. Pg.247. Accessed on November 12, 2019. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-29869-6_16.

[185] Ibid. 247.

[186] Ibid. 245.

[187] Serwer, Pg.79.

committed to an unrelenting tough stance in both countries, motivated by years of reckless

populist rhetoric, and Serbia's constitution needs acknowledgement of Kosovo to be ratified in a

vote. Besides, the delegations are not on the same wavelength on top of that. Washington,

Brussels and the European capitals have been following sharply different negotiating tactics and

agendas in recent negotiations, creating uncertainty and little real progress.[188] Thus, hostility

from Serbia and lack of proper conflict resolution between Kosovo and Serbia is making Serbia a

threat to the nation's peace and stability. Also, this frozen conflict has prevented Kosovo from

joining international organizations particularly due to Serbia's lobbying against Kosovo.

The international community has five options in helping Kosovo achieve peace with Serbia.[189]

Foremost, evaluate if there is consensus to change their shared stance in order to specifically

concentrate on finding a settlement based on common acceptance, a condition the five EU states

ignore. Besides, the EU should encourage mediators to facilitate an agreement that is widely

acceptable to almost all of the people of Kosovo and Serbia as feasible, thereby giving priority to

any resolution accepted by the states, particularly territorial redistribution, given that it is

consistent with international human rights and humanitarian law. Moreover, the EU should

collaborate with the United States to persuade the government of Kosovo to establish a

sustainable negotiating position built on the notion that recognition is achievable, but

compromises are needed. Alternatively, the EU and the United States could help create lines of

contact between the states, including classified and informal avenues, so that they can

confidently discuss different potential solutions without fear of imminent reprisals or

demonization.[190] When there is any news of "secret" meetings between the two parties the

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[188] Ibid. Pg. 79.

[189] Maloku et al., pg.251; Serwer, pg.83; Doli, p.103.

[190] Doli, Pg.103-04.

opposition in both sides try to crucify the actors involved. One strategy is to promote Belgrade to subtly express that it would be ready under right conditions to accept Kosovo's independence, a move that cannot be taken publicly at this point.[191] Lastly, the EU and the United States can emphasize the need for practical agreement by stressing that Belgrade and Pristina should counter persistent misconceptions about the conflict and possibilities for settlement in both nations and engage with their national population in a more concerted manner.[192]

   The stalemate over the independence of Kosovo is expensive for both sides and for political security. Pursuing Serbia's development, Kosovo has been denied recognition by five EU member states, four NATO members – four of which are the same EU member states - and approximately half of the world's nations (or, in some cases, withdrawn earlier recognition).[193] As a consequence, Kosovo is not e member of any of those organisations, the UN, NATO and the EU. The EU has asserted that the settlement of the Kosovo conflict is a required (although not sufficient) prerequisite for Serbia's inclusion in the union.[194] The continuous failure from these countries to resolve the issues and boost their dialogue it will only accelerate frustration. As long as the impasse continues on the ground both sides can be tempted to extend their power and authority on areas where they can influence their ethnic groups. Belgrade could reaffirm some of its influence over the local municipalities of the Serbian population in northern Kosovo and beyond the border; in return, Pristina might forcefully absorb some regions, force the other Serbian authorities out of its jurisdiction, challenge the position, and protection of the feudal Serbian Orthodox landmarks, or promote separatist movements in the Preshevo valley populated

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[191] Ibid. 104.

[192] Serwer, pg.83.

[193] Ibid. Pg.84.

[194] Maloku et al., pg.241.

by ethnic Albanians.[195] In the long run, whichever stability and protection option the Serbs of Kosovo and the Albanians in Serbia have, good relations between their respective capitals are being kept hostage. The major challenge is finding a solution that rewards Serbia for widening recognition, a move suspended partly due to the prevalent perception among Serbs that Kosovo is an illegal faceoff and its independence is not legal.[196] Since the constitution of Serbia demands that Kosovo's independent legitimacy be ratified by a referendum, any compromise would have to involve universal approval by a plurality.

The widely negotiated agreement which contributed to the independence of Kosovo in 2008 tried to reconcile the advantages and commitments in between the two parties. While Kosovo achieved independence with an introductory phase of foreign oversight, it had to decentralize its governance and grant extra privileges to its Serb-majority jurisdictions, including the reception of financing by Serbia.[197] The situation gave mediators a complicated puzzle involving a compromise development that varies from that plan, opposed by Serbia, and yet finds an agreement where everyone benefits and sacrifices something else in rough proportions.[198] However, in seeking a solution to the problem, complexity is important, but there are prudent reasons for hope. In both countries, some politicians want a settlement and understand the consequences of willingness to negotiate. Serbia has one significant admission to make: to accept the independence of its previous territory.[199] With one or two compromises, Kosovo might potentially balance this move. One compromise would involve surrendering a wider decentralization or more independence to its Serbian minority, but Belgrade must also offer

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[195] Maloku et al., pg.249.

[196] Ibid. pg.251.

[197] Doli, p.112.

[198] Ibid.

[199] Ibid. Pg.113

better conditions to populations in Preshevo Valley in southern part of Serbia that is a home to significant Albanian communities. The other would be for both states to exchange territories around their borders, exchanging Preshevo for towns in northern Kosovo. However, some European governments assume that the reshuffling of borders might establish a precedent of destabilization that would escalate as a spillover elsewhere in the Balkans and probably beyond.[200] Autonomy is a safer solution, and the best option for several European governments, among any other alternative. Several successful European models of substantial territorial autonomy for regions where the hand of the central government is barely felt, such as the Åland Islands in Finland, Trentino-Alto Adige in Italy and the Basque Country in Spain.[201] The parties do not hold that opinion.

While both Kosovo and Serbia are critical of autonomy and land exchanges, autonomy tends to elicit the strongest negative reactions on both sides. The report of the Crisis Group indicates that these come primarily from the leaders of Kosovo, who see it as a prelude to independence or a blueprint for the form of gridlock plaguing neighboring Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the majority of initiatives involve the officials of both institutions and the three major ethnic communities to agree.[202] This might make land swaps, which traditionally Serbian leaders have often tended to favor, the only feasible route to resolution, if there were no change of heart. If that is the case, it would be up to European officials to determine whether to stand in the way of such an agreement, as some have indicated they have done before.[203] The condition is possible

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[200] Abazi and Albert, p.251.

[201] Ibid. 252

[202] Ibid. 257.

[203] Abazi and Albert, p.257.

because member states have significant control over aspirants such as Belgrade and Pristina as facilitators to European integration.

3.9 Kosovo and Serbia caught in the Normalization Process

Kosovo and Serbia are not capable to solve their issues alone. Both countries are engaged in an endless dialogue for almost a decade. The dialogue is facilitated by the EU but also supported by the United States. The EU is an appropriate regional player, able to help the parties find agreement in five ways.[204]

The EU Member States should, first, evaluate their joint position on the goals of the Belgrade-Pristina negotiations. To date, the EU has already prevented from expressly stating that recognition by its five member states that do not recognize the independence of Kosovo, is a priority. It is still worth investigating, although their perspectives are influenced by internal politics and are reluctant to reflect change. Germany should examine whether the non-recognizers would also be willing to relax their posture in order to promote talks as the EU member state that has most aggressively tried to activate the stalemate. Furthermore, although the EU and its member states which express support for a better outcome, they could withdraw any reluctance to consider an agreement including a border adjustment, given that it is compatible with human rights and humanitarian law, and should clearly indicate that it will not hinder the EU accession process in this regard. Border alternation is introduced a few times and has been on and off the table in recent years. The idea has been launched through non-papers as well, mainly to test and draw attention to the region, but rejected to have originated in EU or an

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[204] Maloku et al., pg.251; Serwer, pg.83; Doli, p.103.

EU Member State.[205] According to the daily newspaper, Koha, the non-paper's authenticity could not be proven but it was confirmed by some diplomats that the items pointed out are in line with what is expected to be discussed during the upcoming dialogue meetings. In brief, the non-paper highlights very sensitive items that can be a concern for Kosovo:

An "autonomous district of northern Kosovo" would be established in Kosovo consistent with the laws and the Constitution of Kosovo. The Serbian Orthodox Church will have a "privileged status", while Serbia, after the ratification of the legally binding Agreement, is obliged that "it will not hinder Kosovo's membership in international and regional organizations."[206]

Alternatively, the EU member states could express how they have read the agenda of the EU Special Representative to facilitate any future conflict settlement that is compatible with human rights and humanitarian law to be addressed. Upon the facts, the guidelines require the special representative to pursue a final but legally biding agreement while addressing "all core issues" and to strive towards a resolution that supports the discourse of "political security" read by many to prevent discussion of land swaps. However, the reading would seem to reject the likelihood that mutual agreement on defensible borders could contribute to higher stability by resolving the key outstanding disputes in the region, by laying the foundations for good ties between Belgrade and Pristina, and by eliminating a hurdle to the integration of both Kosovo and Serbia into

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[205] "Exclusive, Kosovo and Serbia will recognize each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.' Koha. April 26,2021. Accessed on April 26, 2021. https://www.koha.net/arberi/268451/ekskluzive-kosova-dhe-serbia-do-tia-njohin-integritetin-territorial-dhe-sovranitetin-njera-tjetres/.
Holroyd, Matthew. Milos Milic. "EU, France and Germany play down Serbia-Kosovo deal reports." Euronews. April 28, 2021. Accessed on April 28,2021. https://www.euronews.com/2021/04/28/eu-france-and-germany-play-down-serbia-kosovo-deal-reports.

[206] Ibid

regional organizations and institutions, such as the EU, which seems a priority and a national objective from both countries.

The EU, however, cannot and should not attempt to achieve a final agreement between the two countries by itself. The EU should collaborate with the U.S. as a third alternative to help Pristina integrate an amicable manner in talks as Prishtina tends to be more responsive to the US's role and approach. As of recent developments, there is nothing that can be done as long as the delegation from Kosovo cannot speak with a unified voice and representing a unified government. This is a challenge and a set back as of late 2020 and early 2021 is that its president is charged formally with crimes and his party is in chaos; the country's biggest and most prominent opposing party; and the newest government has declared that the dialogue is not a priority while is preparing to re-engage in negotiation with Serbia. The new government in Kosovo, led by Prime Minister Albin Kurti, leader of the Self-Determination (Levizja Vetvendosje) has reiterated the fact that dialogue cannot and will not be ignored but is not the utmost priority. In his recent visit to Brussels, Mr Kurti noted that dialogue will resume but not urgently as he requests from Serbia to admit and face its crimes and distance itself from the past regime. [207]

Prishtina's politicians and the nation itself trust Washington more than any European player for several reasons; including the involvement of the U.S. in the 1999 war and in the 2008 declaration of independence, and thus the U.S. would definitely have to take a leading role in

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[207] "Kurti Says Kosovo Will Not Open Dialogue With Serbia Next Month." Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty. April 28, 2021. Accessed on April 29, 2021. https://www.rferl.org/a/kosovo-kurti-no-dialogue-with-serbia-next-week/31228072.html.

ensuring Pristina explain its bargaining and dialogue framework. This should be endorsed by the EU.

The fourth choice requires discussions requiring a number of secure platforms, including those far from the public eye, where leaders can pursue solutions without fear of being suspected of betraying the national interest. This does not mean to reach and sign any secret deals, because all must be transparent, but they should be able to discuss openly and frankly without the media pressure and the public opinions judging their discussions. Other opportunities for parties to talk forthrightly in the presence of trustworthy debaters should complement the rhythm of task forces and conference meetings held in Brussels. This is a requirement because of the delicacy of the key issue of recognition, as well as whatever Prishtina might need to give in exchange, which has been asked regularly from Belgrade. As well as its participating countries and allied nations such as Norway and Switzerland, the EU should provide diplomatic means for parallel path negotiations.

Indeed, the new Prime Minister of Kosovo, Mr. Albin Kurti, has underlined the importance of a transparent agreement while not ignoring the past crimes in Kosovo. He had stated in recent past that he is not for a "dialogue that has a director and a screenwriter"[208] Instead, he refused to rush into the dialogue and meet President of Serbia, Alexander Vucic, as proposed by the EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, and the EU High Representative, Mr. Josep Borrell. Mr. Kurti made it clear to EU and insists on four main principles in order to recommence the dialogue with Serbia:

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[208] "Kurti reiterates that dialogue is not his priority: I am not for a dialogue that has a director and a screenwriter."(Translated) Kosova Press. March 22, 2021. Accessed on March 25, 2021. https://kosovapress.com/kurti-perserit-se-dialogu-seshte-prioritet-i-tij-nuk-jam-per-dialog-qe-ka-regjisor-dhe-skenarist/.

- Principle 1 is the acceptance of reality, we can not go back to independence. Kosovo's independence according to Ahtisaari, and the opening of this package means the opening of the list of wishes and detachments that would call unforeseen events.

- The second is the acceptance of the truth. Serbia must admit the crimes of the past. To prevent genocide, NATO had to bomb Belgrade because it was his regime that committed genocide in Kosovo. By not distancing itself from war crimes, Serbia is identifying in them.

- Third is the equality of representatives, at every table we sit as equals.

- The fourth principle is that citizens should be the ultimate beneficiaries.[209]

Being under pressure, how long will Mr. Kurti abide by these principles remains to be seen in the near future, but it seems that so far he has the credibility and the legitimacy to stand by his commitment. Overtime though, he will and is seeing the internationals community's pressure to dialogue with Serbia and pursue a policy of consensus and compromise.

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[209] "Kosovo wants normalization with Serbia, but four principles must be followed to resume dialogue." TiranaPost. April 29, 2021. Accessed on April 30, 2021. https://tiranapost.net/kosova/kosova-e-do-normalizimin-me-serbine-por-kater-parime-duhen-ndjekur-per-ri-i497143..

CHAPTER 4 - Kosovo's Core Security and Defence Institutions and their Role

4.1 Security Sector Architecture of the Republic of Kosovo

Although there are numerous institutions that form the core of the security and institutions in a country, in Kosovo it is perceived that all aspects of security and defense fall under the Ministry of Defense.

KSC has by law obligation to draft strategies, it has never done so. Not because it did not want to, although in has never imposed itself and cite the laws under which it is obligated, but the MoD has taken predominance as the core institution and all others are adjacent to and peripheral to it. [210]

Although during the process of the Strategic Security Sector Review from 2012 to 2014, The interministerial working group had discussed and agreed on the future Security Sector Architecture of the Republic of Kosovo consisting of existing institutions, acknowledging their crucial e contributions to the security of the Republic of Kosovo. The following table was proposed and adopted by the Steering Committee.

Table 4.1 Future Security Sector Architecture of the Republic of Kosovo[211]

Supervisory Level	Executive Level	Security Institutions Level

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[210] The Author has been a civil servant in the Ministry of Defense and been part of the Strategic Security Sector Review, Defense Strategy, Defense White Book, and National Security Strategy. All these initiatives have been taken and led by the Ministry for the Kosovo Security Force / Ministry of Defense of Kosovo.

[211] "Analysis of the Strategic Security Sector Review of the Republic of Kosovo" Republic of Kosovo. March 2014. Accessed on October 12, 2018. https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/en/blog/analysis-of-the-strategic-security-sector-review-of-the-republic-of-kosovo-11-03-2014 /.

- Assembly Committee on Security	- Kosovo Security Council	- Kosovo Armed Forces
- Assembly Committee for Defense	- Ministry of Foreign Affairs	- Kosovo Police
- Assembly Committee on Intelligence	- Ministry of Internal Affairs	- Kosovo Intelligence Agency
	- Ministry of Defense	- Emergency Management Agency
	- Ministry of Justice	- Correctional Service
	- Ministry of Finance	- Kosovo Customs
		- KSC Secretariat
		- Civil Aviation Agency

As illustrated above, the Kosovo Security Council has the highest role in the security architecture.

The Kosovo Security Council (KSC) was established in 2008 with an advisory role on all matters relating to the security of Kosovo and as a significant step towards ensuring that security institutions were established in Kosovo. The legal framework of the Kosovo Security Council (KSC) are mandated by the Constitution and the Law on the Establishment of the Kosovo Security Council Law No. 03/L-050.[212]

What is interesting about this institution is that it is the highest in the hierarchy of security institutions while it acts as the lowest one. The following articles are taken from the law to depict the magnitude of this institution in the Republic of Kosovo. For example,

[212]"Law No. 03/L-05 On the Establishment on the Kosovo Security Council." Republic of Kosovo Assembly. 2008. Accessed on January 2019. https://ksk.rks-gov.net/assets/cms/uploads/files/Legjislacioni/Law%20on%20Establishment%20of%20the%20Kosovo%20Security%20Council%202008_03-L050_en.pdf.

Under Article one:

1.1 The Kosovo Security Council shall have an advisory role on all matters relating to the security of Kosovo and its contribution to regional stability.

1.2 The Kosovo Security Council shall recommend security policies and security strategies

Under Article 3, Composition of the KSC:

3.1 The Kosovo Security Council shall be composed of the following permanent members with executive authority:

a) the Prime Minister;

b) the Deputy Prime Minister(s);

c) the Minister for the Kosovo Security Force, or in his or her absence, the Deputy Minister;

d) the Minister of Foreign Affairs, or in his or her absence, the Deputy Minister;

e) the Minister of Internal Affairs, or in his or her absence, the Deputy Minister;

f) the Minister of Justice, or in his or her absence, the Deputy Minister;

g) the Minister of Economy and Finance, or in his or her absence, the Deputy Minister; and

h) the Minister of Returns and Communities, or in his or her absence, the Deputy Minister.

3.2 If none of the Kosovo Security Council's permanent members with executive authority belongs to the Kosovo Serb Community, the Prime Minister shall appoint one additional member among the Kosovo Serb Ministers as an additional member of the Kosovo Security Council with executive authority.

3.3 Additional non-permanent, Ministerial executive members may be appointed by the Chair of the Kosovo Security Council on an ad hoc basis.

3.4 The Kosovo Security Council as permanent members shall also include … members in an advisory capacity[213]

Despite such a capacity provided by law, the Kosovo Security Council, not its supporting body, the Kosovo Security Council Secretariat have exercised its legal and constitutional rights to its fullest. A flagrant example would be that under Article 2 Competences, the KSC "shall, in coordination with the President of the Republic of Kosovo, develop and review the Security Strategy of Kosovo" and under Article 16, the KSC Secretariat as a supporting must be responsible for "coordinating the development of Kosovo's security strategy and policies, including also capacity building, policy and research instruments."[214] The main duties, such as drafting and coordinating the strategies have been silently transferred to the Ministry for the Kosovo Security Force / Ministry of Defense or the latter have "illegally" assumed those responsibilities.[215]

4.2 The Build Up Process of The Kosovo Security Force Towards a Defense Force

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) played various roles in Kosovo by ensuring that a strong government with a good security system was maintaining peace in the region to prevent the government's collapse. NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) launched in the year 1999 constituted 50,000 troops, respectively. Kosovo Force aimed at facilitating peace support operation and has a mandate under the UNSC resolution 1244. In essence, currently, the

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[213] Ibid, KSC

[214] Ibid.

[215] The Author has been a civil servant in the Ministry of Defense and been part of the Strategic Security Sector Review, Defense Strategy, Defense White Book, and National Security Strategy. All these initiatives have been taken and led by the Ministry for the Kosovo Security Force / Ministry of Defense of Kosovo. Documents will be provided if needed.

Kosovo Force plays the role of maintaining safety and security efficiently, supporting and enhancing the citizens' free movement, and ensuring the Euro Atlantic integration.[216] Moreover, due to Kosovo's security situation improvement, the defense ministers of NATO in the year 2009 decided to shift the Kosovo Force posture towards a deterrent presence. However, NATO also initiated a transitional phase of transferring some of the Kosovo Force functions to the Kosovo police to enhance proper security in Kosovo effectively.[217] Moreover, many analysts support the idea that the Kosovo Force is of great importance as it continues to provide regional security in Kosovo. Furthermore, Kosovo Force indeed has played a major role in initiating the development of lightly armed Kosovo Security Forces and bringing it to proper full operational capacity.[218] Consequently, Kosovo Security Forces is vastly non conventional military force and is instead mandated with emergency responses in Kosovo and in the region. There is a recurring issue requiring how the Kosovo Security Force can transform into a regular army.[219]

Likewise, in December, the year 2018, lawmakers in Kosovo decided to amend existing legislation to transform KSF. This action resulted in sharp objections from Kosovo Serb leaders and Serbia.[220] Additionally, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg did not recommend the measure taken to transform Kosovo Security Force as he called ill timing to jeopardize

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[216] Chandler, David. "Kosovo: Statebuilding Utopia and Reality." Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding. ResearchGate. September ,2019. Pg. 545. Accessed on March 20, 2022. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335806599_Kosovo_Statebuilding_Utopia_and_Reality.

[217] Ibid. g. 549

[218] Ibid. Pg. 550.

[219] Bid. Pg. 555.

[220] Sherifi, Shkendije Geci. "The role of international organizations in the development of security sector in Kosovo: Advantages and constrains." Honvédségi Szemle–Hungarian Defence Review 147.1–2 (2019): Pg.84. Accessed on June 10, 2021.. https://kiadvany.magyarhonvedseg.hu/index.php/honvszemle/article/view/29/27.

cooperation with NATO. Furthermore, he expressed concern cautioning that the decision is not inclusive.[221] NATO was involved in Kosovo by enhancing proper security issues effectively and by creating security units such as Kosovo Force and Kosovo Security Force. NATO helped in the standing down of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) while helping in the standing up of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF), and a civilian body (Ministry) to administer the KSF.[222] NATO is continuing with commitment to support the KSF beyond the declaration of full operational capability (FOC- NAC declared FOC on 9 July 2013) through a NATO Liaison and Advisory Team (NLAT) which is distinct from KFOR. NATO has established a NATO Advisory Team (NAT) also in order to assist in establishing a civilian-led organization that exercises civilian control over the KSF. As of today, NATO continues to evolve and help in capacity building in Kosovo security organizations through the NATO Advisory and Liaison Team - NALT (NATO).[223] Hence, NATO evolved and adopted its presence based on new circumstances in Kosovo.

On November 19, 2015, the prime Minister of Kosovo, Isa Mustafa, sent a letter to Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General, suggesting a next level up of cooperation between Kosovo and NATO.[224] This step up relationship is recommended and has its basis on the

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[221] Ibid. Pg. 88.

[222] "NATO's role in Kosovo." NATO. Updated on 16 November, 2020. Accessed on Dec 1, 2020. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_48818.htm.

"North Atlantic Council visits KFOR, confirming NATO's commitment to Kosovo." NATO. 27 October, 2017. Accessed on Dec 12, 2020. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_148027.htm?selectedLocale=en.

The Prime Minister of Kosovo, Isa Mustafa, Letter addressed to Jens Stoltenberg, Secretary General of NATO. Republic of Kosovo. Ref.192/2015. Prishtine, 19 November 2015.

Note: Cannot find the document on the website but as a Head of Euro Atlantic Integration Section in

Strategic Security Sector Review of 2014 final report.[225] Such an enhanced interaction and cooperation would consist of tailored or individual cooperative relationship with NATO in order to enhance Kosovo's relationship with this organization. The areas of cooperation includes intensive political dialogue between the two, a liaison office in NATO HQ, increase and integrate the existing NATO teams in Kosovo, capability building, education and training, access to peace and security as well as scientific related programs- Public Diplomacy Division, Science for Peace and Security, and Building Integrity Programs.[226]

More than a year later, NATO's Secretary General replied positively to Kosovo's request. On the Letter sent to Kosovo, the North Atlantic Council agreed to enhance the interaction with Kosovo emphasizing the importance of development of Kosovo and the Western Balkans to the Alliance.[227]

Despite the exchange of letters between the Government of Kosovo and NATO, there has not been much going on. It must be noted that Kosovo institutions do lack human and administrative capacity and capability to be proactive and maximize the potential and the possibilities within the eight broad areas of activities that Kosovo can benefit from.

MoD, I have seen the Letter and its content is public and can be found given reference in detail in open sources.

Geci, Sinan. Author of this thesis. Appointed as a Drafter of the Final Report of the Strategic Security Sector Review in the Republic of Kosovo by Decision of the Head of the Steering Committee of the Government of Kosovo, Minister Agim Çeku, 2013.

[226] Ibid.

[227] Letter of NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg addressed to Kosovo's Prime Minister, Isa Mustafa, 5 December 2016, SG(2016)0357

Note: Cannot find the document on the website but as a Head of Euro Atlantic Integration Section in MoD, the author have seen the Letter and its content is public and can be found given details in open sources.

In fact, the findings and an analysis was presented to the Ministry of Kosovo Security Force senior staff in February 2017. Thereafter, a few interministerial meetings were held and came up with ideas and programs and areas of possible cooperation with NATO.[228] As far as the public is concerned, there is no formal working group, nor there is a Point of Contact selected in order to explore the possibilities of the enhanced interaction between Kosovo and NATO. The latter has a focal point of contact, but the fact remains that NATO will and can do so much as the host nation is capable and eager to absorb.

On a positive note, due to the regular engagement of the United States in Kosovo and its efforts to professionalize Kosovo Security Force, one of the national strategic aims of the Republic of Kosovo became a reality; from a security consumer to become a security provider. Kosovo is perceived as place consuming security due to the international military presence. However, as of recent development, Kosovo, and its security force respectively, will participate in providing peace and security globally under the Iowa National Guard. This is more a bilateral cooperation and partnership achievement with the United States and the National Guard of the State of Iowa,[229] rather than a NATO initiative or partnership Kosovo, and its security force, has

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[228] As head of Euro Atlantic Integration office in the Ministry, the author drafted and presented a metrix/table to the senior staff in the Ministry and found support to initiate an interministerial Working Group (WG). It has not been formalised but the WG was convened due to personal networking established during the SSSR process. The meetings of representatives from core security sector institutions took place in the Ministry for the Kosovo Security Force, inviting partner countries (the US Embassy) and incorporating the NATO Advisory and Liaison Team in Kosovo. The Initial meeting took place on March 8, 2017.

[229] "KSF soldiers make history in their first engagement in International peacekeeping and Security in the World." Kosovo Ministry of Defense. 25 January, 2021. Accessed on 25 January, 2021. https://mod.rks-gov.net/?page=1,24,3383#.YCBOAOhKg2w.

established a State Partnership with the State of Iowa from the United States since 2011 and a very successful one.

4.3 KSF's core came from the KLA: then an Emergency Response Force to an Army

The global community tried to establish peace and enhance Kosovo's security and defense by demilitarizing Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and establishing the Kosovo Protectorate Corps. In 1993, the KLA (in Albanian UÇK-Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës) was founded by individuals who claimed that only by force could Kosovo confront the regime of Milosevic and his repression and only then gain its independence. At the initial phase of its existence, the KLA was quickly branded 'terrorism' by the international community.[230] However, quickly enough that changed and one of its founders, Hashim Thaçi, was recognized by the global community during the peace negotiations in Rambouillet in February 1999, and therefore had become legal participant in the treaties. The KLA and other rebel forces were called upon, following Resolution 1244, to demilitarize. By 20 June 1999, the UÇK had signed the Demilitarization and Transformation Undertaking between the KLA and KFOR.[231] During the process of transition, veterans of the KLA had to be integrated into society or merged into the modern police force and the Kosovo Protectorate Corps. An interim option pending the final status arrangements was the Kosovo Protectorate Corps.[232] The mandate was to provide disaster response services, conduct search and rescue operations, provide humanitarian assistance capabilities, assist in demining, and contribute to infrastructure and community reconstruction. It was deliberately designed as a

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[230] Triantafyllou, p.354.

[231] Triantafyllou, Pg.357.

[232] Ibid. Pg. 357.

civil emergency corps and in the areas of defense or law enforcement was not mandated.[233] Instead, the international community used it as a KLA containment technique. On the other hand, the KLA, out of pride, wanted to see the Kosovo Protectorate Corps as a de facto army.

   After independence of Kosovo in 2008, the security and defense architecture had changed. As part of the implementation of new safety systems in Kosovo, the Ahtisaari Comprehensive plan provided the local governments and the international community with the most significant starting point for security and defense. Kosovo introduced its first national protection plan in July 2011.[234] The Plan outlines a full variety of challenges for national security and the value of cross-agency and international collaboration.[235] It said nothing, but was too broad and generic for specific guidelines about how security agencies are to evolve in order to respond to the defined challenges. A plan had been developed, but the approval of the Kosovo Security Force was pending. Consequently, the creation of modern defense systems had no national direction. [236] NATO agreed to grant KFOR the mission "to support the development of professional, democratic and multiethnic security systems," as per the Ahtisaari programme, during the meeting in June 2008 of the NATO defense ministers. In actual fact, this meant support for the stand down of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) and the stand up of the Kosovo Security Force and its ministry. [237]The organizational strategy of KFOR has further established these activities. The UNDP also promoted the establishment of efficient democratic security and support systems supervision within Kosovo.

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[233] Ibid. Pg. 361.

[234] Proroković and Ivona, Pg. 171.

[235] Ibid.

[236] Proroković and Ivona. Pg. p175.

[237] Ibid. Pg. 178

The Ahtisaari proposal suggested the disassembling of the KPC, and NATO was tasked with this mission. A defense unit composed of about 2,500 active workers and 800 reserves was formed instead of the protectorate corps .[238] It was a compromise between taking care of a significant number of retired officers and soldiers and forming a new neutral, non-army, security force that was non-military per se. Former members of the corps therefore comprised the half of the current army reserved. At least half of 2,500 participants came from the corps. Members not employed by the Kosovo Security Force should be resettled, reintegrated or withdrawn. A local affiliate under the UNDP oversight has implemented a relocation initiative sponsored by a NATO Trust Fund.[239] On 20 January 2009, the Security Force began functioning and KPC was officially disbanded on 14 June 2009.[240] In parallel, the Kosovo Security Force was established to maintain crucial emergency capability. As previously noted, the corps was made up of the previous KLA. The process of the standing up of the Kosovo Security Force included a rigorous vetting so only the best and those without a criminal background, health, age, and or other issues that were adopted in the process of selecting and hiring for KSF. The decision as to which of the former KPC members was to serve in the Kosovo Security Force was the first step towards forming the new force. The method of assessment and recruitment was not easy, however.[241] For one, several workers filled positions with not enough experience.[242] At the end, after the screening is over, unselected members were allowed to partake in the initial preparation in order to minimize controversial and unselected people's growing dissatisfaction. In view of the history

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[238] Ibid. Pg.177.

[239] Triantafyllou, Pg.361.

[240] Ibid.

[241] Triantafyllou, p.362.

[242] Ibid. Pg. 363

of some prospective recruits, that was a possibility. It was also impossible to ensure a clean past for the officers of the police.

Initial operating capability was hitting the Kosovo Security Force by mid-September 2009. However, under the support and mentorship of NATO, the North Atlantic Council declared that the KSF had reached full operational capability in July 2013. [243]

The current security force's primary duty is to respond to civil crises. More precisely, the mandate covered participation, including peace support activities, in crisis management operations.[244] This shall comprise activities outside the jurisdiction of the Republic of Kosovo where requested. It shall provide assistance to civilian authorities to respond to and to other catastrophes and emergencies even in the form of regional or international response efforts.The force's main skills are the demolition of, Hazardous material and toxic materials, firefighting and search and rescue.[245] In compliance with the Athisaari Programme, the Security Force is lightly armed and does not have any heavy guns, such as tanks, heavy artillery or air capability. KSF is divided into three brigades, which entails a number of crisis response units. The Rapid Reaction Brigade is supposed to support other authorities in Kosovo if joint operations are to take place abroad; the Operation Support Brigade, and the training and doctrine Brigade TRADOC.[246]

The organization and titles of the Kosovo Security Force are very close to those of the ordinary military division. It splits its roles into its core, allowing and reinforcing abilities.[247] The Land Forces Command (LFC) serves as Headquarters of the Military, oversees, and manages

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[243] NATO's role in Kosovo. NATO. October 20, 2020.
https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_48818.htm.

[244] Terzie and Feim Pg.79.

[245] Ibid. Pg. 80.

[246] Ibid. Pg. 82

[247] Triantafyllou, Pg.377.

three brigades: the Operational Support Brigade (OSB), the Rapid Response Brigade (RRB) and the Training and Doctrine Command. The OSB is made up of approximately 800 individuals and is responsible for the core skills of each organization.[248] At the hierarchy of the KSF is the Minister at the Ministry for the Kosovo Security Force, an integrated ministry, comprised of both civilian. However it is comprise at about 60 per cent or more civilian staff. At the same time, the Minister is a representative of the Kosovo Security Council.

By April 2011, more than 2,000 veterans of the Kosovo Security Force had been trained. However, because of the lack of a regulatory system, the reservists had not been recruited at a regular basis. To date, the Force has proved operational has carried out many operations in the country and several actual operations, including assistance to Albania during the 2009 floods.[249] The overarching goal is to ensure that the security force achieves maximum operational capability, ensuring that "the KSF has developed to a point where it has sufficient capacity and self-sustaining capabilities, to standards set by NATO, to perform its function in its core capabilities and to be able to continue its development.[250] " NATO has established standards in a variety of different ways. The organization should follow current civil principles as far as possible, where applicable. These are, however, to be extended to the military. It is unknown if this means that there are no acceptable criteria to be used in the assessment of the Kosovo Security Force or if those standards exist without the details being circulated in the region.[251] In any case, the advancement of the Kosovo Security Force into an armed force is on its way, but NATO and its Force – KFOR- are and remain neutral for the time being.

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[248] Ibid.

[249] Grasten and Ntina, Pg.590.

[250] Ibid. Pg. 590.

[251] Grasten and Ntina, Pg.594.

4.4 Kosovo's lack of Ownership in Building Security and Defence Capability

Threats cannot be deterred by Kosovo alone. The EU and UN are appropriate players that can strengthen the defense and security of Kosovo in different ways as follows. The Republic of Kosovo had begun the transformation process of the security and defence in 2012. The process is known as the Strategic Security Sector Review. The SSSR ensures that the defense sector is turned into a structure that is aligned with political standards and good governance. In practice, preparation and facilities, emphasis on capacity building. In the case in Kosovo it was closely related to the expertise of advisors. However, there were many issues in Kosovo related to the security capabilities.

In Kosovo, for instance, the Kosovo Security Force as non conventional military, but more of an emergency response force, and the Kosovo Security Council are relatively civil institutions with civilian capability. However, the international assistance provided to these institutions was mostly military.[252] Beginning in 2008, the Military and Civilian Advisory Division (MCAD) was made up entirely of all military officers, the bulk of the NATO Advisory Team at the ministry level (NAT) had also had a military history and the Security Council's advisor had been a military until July 2011.[253] They were great officers and have contributed enormously, however not all of them had expertise in the fields of authority of the e.g Police Service or of the Kosovo Security Council.

For example, assistance has been offered in fields such as staff, plans and policies, the budget, human rights and the legislation. More specifically, assistance has been delivered at ministerial level by individuals who, in many instances, do not have knowledge of ministerial work.[254] The

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[252] Proksik, Pg.435.

[253] Ibid. Pg. 435.

[254] Gajić, Pg.6.

utilization of military assistance may also become ineffective and an expensive means of investing money, hindering the efficacy of the funded systems. That may even contribute to democratization being placed aside, even though it is so inadvertently, since political oversight, monitoring and responsibility of the armed services, if they are an army or not, are civilian activities.[255] It is also important to be able to provide coaches, instructors and advisors with a greater variety of competencies than is currently the case. One of the problems is that donors can lack those powers and the recipients cannot be beggars and choosers. The creation of this form of capability should also be a priority for donors. However, in all fairness, the Swedish government had nominated a civilian consultant to the Secretariat of the Kosovo Security Council but at the Ministry of the Kosovo Security Force it was the uniforms of the partner and contributing countries that dominated the offices. The Swedish example with the SKSC should have taken into serious consideration and discussed for NAT.[256] One way to simplify such a process might be to make a detailed inventory, in advance, of the competencies required for each particular job. However, the contributing nations kept sending their officers based on their own preferences rather that what the Ministry or Kosovo needed.

Nonetheless, there are exceptions. The United Kingdom, Germany, and Turkey sent bilateral advisors to the Ministry of Kosovo Security Force. The United States also had a highly specialized Ministry of Defence Advisor (MODA) but after a few years they withdrew from this particular bilateral support.[257] There were no particular reason but mainly because the aim was achieved and that the bilateral cooperation continued.

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[255] Ibid. Pg. 9.

[256] Ibid. Pg.16.

[257] The author worked at the Ministry of the Kosovo Security Force/Ministry of Defense.

Language skills are linked to the competence of mentors and advisers. Several admissible as evidence out that language barriers complicate the role of advisers and mentors. The degree of English among mentors and advisors, as well as those providing assistance, is causing difficulties. There are also a few advisors who speak either Albanian or Serbian; especially those contributing countries from Albanian and Croatia. This variations influence the efficacy of the assistance granted.[258] Although very difficult to achieve, it would also be advisable to hire mentors and consultants who can learn not only English but also local languages. Although this would be a great asset to both the advisers and the ones receiving the advice, it is not feasible. Most of the advisors were positioned on a mandate of one year or less.

The distribution of language courses to personnel within the Council and the Security Force was provided either by internal capacity or bilaterally from the contributing nations. Although there are many positive results, the Ministry for the Kosovo Security Force has failed miserably. It has spent a significant amount of money of its own but also of its partner countries in language courses for officials who at the first place were hired under the condition they speak and the English language. The nepotism and clienteles' was evident in particular in senior positions. Most of the public servants were supposed to meet language criteria before being employed. The language criteria, however, was not required for the uniformed/ military personnel who were selected from the KPC to join the KSF.

Collaboration and coordination of aid in defense sector and operations is essential for an improved output, but in reality, it is difficult to achieve. The differing agendas between donors are one of the key reasons for this. In addition, the willingness of the receiving nation to absorb

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[258] Ibid. P.g.18.

the assistance is a complicating factor.[259] This also appears to be the situation in Kosovo, as many analysts have pointed out that there is a lack of cooperation between all the various parties providing assistance, not only to the Kosovo Security Force, but to the security sector as a whole. There is a lack of coordination even amongst partners on the ground who understand and know the reality on the ground. A concrete example of this is the coordination and partnership between KFOR and EULEX crisis.[260] When the Kosovo Security Force was created, there was no discussion of its mandate between the Government, the KFOR, the EU and the Kosovo Police.[261] This culminated in overlapping responsibilities between the police and the Security Force in the field of emergency responses. One of the duties of the Kosovo Security Force, for example, is to perform an explosive ordnance disposal operation, while the Kosovo Police are responsible for looking for weapons and for protecting and examining the scene.[262] It is also uncertain who holds the primary responsibility for the detection of explosives. It would seem normal if KFOR and EULEX, respectively, helped the security forces and the police to find a solution to the conflicting tasks.[263] Instead, the tension tends to be enhanced by the respective mentors and advisers, which is not beneficial to seeking a solution to the issue.[264] If, as proposed, the security forces are assigned the mission of controlling riots, the need for collaboration between the police and the security personnel will expand more, and so will the necessity for cooperation amongst KFOR and EULEX. The Republic of Kosovo has appreciated all the assistance it has received. However, Kosovo has not been capable to channel and to find a proper way to only ask what it

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[259] Gajić, Pg.18.

[260] Fakiolas and Nikolaos, p.310.

[261] Ibid. Pg. 311.

[262] Proksik, Pg. 435.

[263] Fakiolas and Nikolaos, Pg.314.

[264] Proksik, Pg.435.

needs and what is compatible with NATO and partner countries. The receiving of various equipments and capabilities will only end up costing Kosovo more either getting rid of it or by trying to have an integrated mechanism and capability throughout its security sector agencies and mechanisms. This is an indication that administrative or public sector knowledge is what Kosovo lacks.

In order to support this claim another concrete and explicit example would be necessary. The SSSR process is adopted in April 2014. It began in 2012 and Kosovo was able to enter the transition phase for its military capability and the establishment of the MoD only in 2018. There is no excuse that there was no international support for this transition because the US and other actors were involved and were fully aware of the whole process. Throughout the process, the Defense Institute Reform Initiative from the United States was involved, from day one till the approval of the findings and they informed their government about their findings and experience in Kosovo. Perhaps the international community was kind and not blunt enough but they indicated that Kosovo was not ready yet for any transformation or transition and that usually means human resources and administrative capacity has not been ready. Another crucial factor is the financial constraints which are also correlated with lack of human and administrative.

The Republic of Kosovo only in 2018 did it manage to adopt the laws to transform the Ministry of Kosovo Security Force into the Ministry of Defense. On October 18, 2018, the Kosovo Assembly adopted the laws to transform into full army of the Kosovo Security Force within a comprehensive transitional phase of ten years.[265] It was approved by absolute majority and all major political parties in Kosovo, and the strategic partners of Kosovo supported this move.

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[265] Hasani, Laura., "Kosovo approves new army despite Serbia opposition." Aljazeera. 14 Dec 2018. Accessed on November 12, 2020. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/12/14/kosovo-approves-new-army-despite-serbia-opposition.

This move, however, did not come without consequences. Although it had the US backing and support, there were NATO members which did not agree with this step of transformation and wanted their voice to be heard. As expected, Serbia was furious. Russia backed those concerns and it went as high as the United Nations Security Council. The Kosovo move received reassuring and supporting voices, in particular from the United States and the United Kingdom and not only. Both those countries claimed that nothing extraordinary happened and Kosovo only exercised its sovereign right. The supporting representative emphasized that the transition of the Kosovo Security Force should be done in a way that respects the rights and interests of all communities in Kosovo, and continue as a force that incorporates multi-ethnicity and professionalism. Furthermore, Kosovo was encouraged to maintain close coordination with NATO as it moves forward with its security sector reform efforts and its transition period. Working closely with NATO means greater benefits for Kosovo to ensure a NATO-interoperable force that serves and reflects all of Kosovo's communities.[266]

The Republic of Kosovo The adoption of the new laws was at the right time because it was given sufficient times to the Serbian community and their elected members of parliament to amend to constitution but no success. At the same time, NATO KFOR is reducing its number gradually, but adjusting their presence accordingly to conditions rather than calendar driven adjustments.

The Kosovo Security Force has evolved in the last decade and a half. From a defense unit composed of about 2,500 active workers and 800 reserves in 2008, to 5000 active component

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[266] "Peacekeeping Chief Urges Serbia, Kosovo to Avoid Exacerbating Tensions after Decision to Transform Security Force into National Armed Forces." United Nations. SC/13626. December 17, 2018 Accessed on March 10, 2019. https://press.un.org/en/2018/sc13626.doc.htm.

and 3000 reserve.[267] What is crucial to add is that the lawmakers changed the core competences of the force, the emphasis on the duty to defend to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Competences and Duties

1. The Kosovo Security Force shall defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity, citizens,property and interests of the Republic of Kosovo.

2. The Kosovo Security Force is a multi-ethnic, professional, armed and authorized military force to serve in the country and abroad, in accordance with given constitutional and legal competences.

3. General duties of Kosovo Security Force are:

 3.1. to defend sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Kosovo;

 3.2. to provide military support to civilian authorities;

 3.3. participation in international operations.[268]

In addition, in 2022, the Kosovo Assembly amended and adopted the new law for the Kosovo Security Force, which under the Article 23, item 3 it states that "the structure and number of members of the active component and the reserve component of the KSF is

determined based on the Strategic Security Sector Review and according to the needs of the state determined by the Government of the Republic of Kosovo."[269]

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[267] "Law no. 06/l-123 On Kosovo Security Force." Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo. 04 January 2019. Accessed on January 25, 2019. https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=18375.

[268] Ibid.

[269] Ligji NR. 08/L-157 Për Ndryshimin dhe plotësimn e Ligjit Nr. 06/L- 123 Për Forcën e Sigurisë së Kosovës. English translated Law NO. 08/L-157 Amending and Supplementing Law No. 06/L- 123 For the Kosovo Security Force. Republic of Kosovo Ministry of Defense. 30 November, 2022.

Although NATO has regularly reassured its presence in Kosovo is condition based and not calendar based[270], its personnel has been reducing by its member states adjusting the presence in Kosovo. This may create a security vacuum in Kosovo, thus the latter must plan and review its security sector once again to avoid any vacuum.

NATO has reduced its numbers 50 000 in 1999 when it entered Kosovo (these boots on ground came from NATO member states but also from non-NATO countries under unified command and control. By early 2002, KFOR was reduced to around 39 000 troops. The improved security environment enabled NATO to reduce KFOR troop levels to 26 000 by June 2003 and to 17 500 by the end of 2003. By June 2008 KFOR was reduced to 14 759 troops, and by June 2009 down to 13 829 troops. Now in 2010 according to the latest information released on 26 February, KFOR had 9 923 troops in Kosovo. By 1017 and 2022, NATO KFOR's total strength has been 4 352 and 3 747[271] respectively, as shown on the chart below. The leading contributor is Italy with 715 soldiers, followed by the United States with 561 soldiers and Hungary the third contributor with 469 (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, nato.int).[272]

Accessed on January 10, 2023. https://mod.rks-gov.net/desk/inc/media/5c420a0f-d7d5-4fe5-a088-516d39a23480.pdf.

[270] What is NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR)? SHAPE NATO. August 16, 2022. Accessed on September 5, 2022. https://shape.nato.int/news-archive/2022/what-is-natos-kosovo-force-kfor.

[271] "Key Facts and Figures." Kosovo Force (KFOR). October 2022. Accessed on December 22, 2022. https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/10/pdf/2022-10-KFOR-Placemat.pdf.

[272] The author worked in the Kosovo Ministry of Defence as the Head of Euro-Atlantic Integration Section and followed the placemat of NATO Force in Kosovo regularly.

Chart: NATO KFOR troops in Kosovo from 1999 to 2022

Years	1999	2002	2003	2008	2009	2010	2017	2022
Personnel	50000	39000	17000	14759	13829	9923	4352	3747
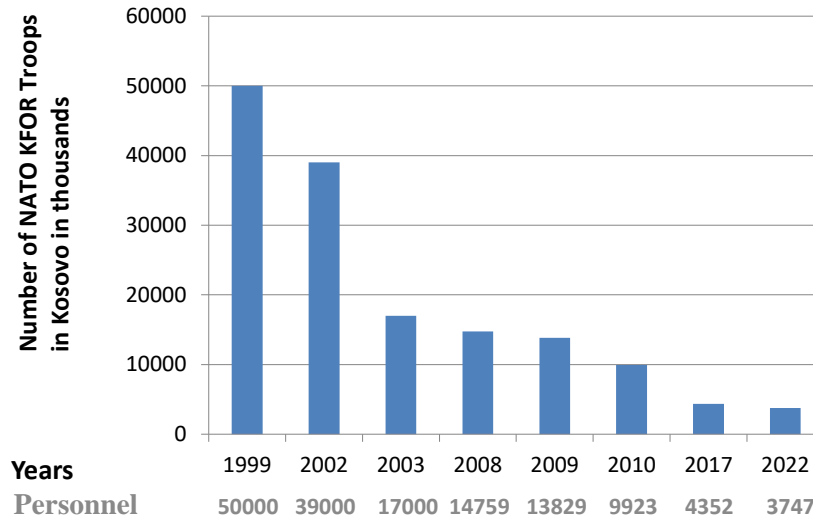
Figure 4.1- 27 Troop Contributing Nations KFOR Total Strength: 3,747 as of October 2022

	Albania	61		Latvia	136
	Armenia	40		Lithuania	1
	Austria	244		Moldova	41
	Bulgaria	30		Montenegro	1
	Canada	5		North Macedonia	65
	Croatia	147		Poland	247
	Czech Republic	8		Romania	65
	Denmark	35		Slovenia	97
	Finland	20		Sweden	3
	Germany	68		Switzerland	186
	Greece	113		Türkiye	335
	Hungary	469		United Kingdom	41
	Ireland	13		United States	561
	Italy	715			
				Total	3,747

4.4 Conclusion

  Even in the build up of sustainable security and defence institutions in Kosovo depend on the

success of the dialogue with Serbia. The Serbian political party, Lista Srpska, has the maximum

of ten seats guaranteed by Kosovo Constitution, and is under the direct influence of Belgrade.

Thus, a legally binding normalization agreement between Prishtina and Belgrade would

ultimately mean a normalization situation in Kosovo. The quest for a deal is thwarted by

widespread disinformation in the public domain of the Balkan states, which is primarily the

responsibility of Belgrade and Pristina. Both also motivated their people for years to believe that

strategic conquest without significant concession was inevitable, but kept reassuring their nations

that certain lines will not be breached. Nonetheless, the only practical way to reach a

compromise is to cross certain lines. Serbs and Kosovars are predictably hesitant to accept

concessions that are at least symbolically painful, after constantly being told that they can get

anything for nothing. In addition, they are unable to make an educated choice between the

established order and its substitutes. Perhaps unintentionally, the European and other players led

to this circumstance by suggesting a chance to implement a win for either group by trying to

exert undue influence on its competitor, or by providing inducements to it. The special

representative could begin to make it clear whether European agitation will not end the conflict

and that mediation between the parties is really the only way to achieve a diplomatic resolution.

    No one wants nor will tolerate a violent confrontation between the two countries. Kosovo

does not have nor will it have a military capability to confront or deter Serbian aggression, thus,

diplomatic means remains the most effective mechanism of Kosovo government. Keep working

towards Euro Atlantic integration and membership to enjoy peace and security under one

architectural security and defense organization, as is NATO.

CHAPTER 5 – The main International Organizations' Contribution in the build-up of Political and Security Capacities in Kosovo

5.1 Introduction

The Western Balkans has been a busy ground for the international missions' presence on the ground, in particular since the end of the Cold War. The United Nations has been on the ground for decades; unfortunately having relatively limited authority in the region due to its lack of coercive power. The legal scholars tend to not speak with one voice in terms of the legality of the military intervention in Kosovo. However, different organisations with different missions, such as the United Nations – though UNMIK, the European Union – through EULEX, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization – through KFOR, have assisted Kosovo in establishing its own security and defence, rule of law enforcement institutions via sharing their augmented experience daily, trainings and capacity building approaches.

5.2 United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo – UNNMIK

The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo has been deployed in 1999 and currently, as of February 2023, has personnel of 352. Out of those 352, 18 are uniformed and the rest are civilians. Its annual budget 2021 to 2022 was $ 44,192,100 [273]

The UNMIK's existence came into being because during the 1998-1999 war. Due to an ongoing war, the international community was appalled by the humanitarian situation in Kosovo. There were numerous attempts to seize fire. In beginning of 1999 the international community invited the delegation from then-Yugoslavia and the representatives from the ethnic Albanian

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[273] UNMIK Fact Sheet." United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. Updated June 1, 2023. Accessed on March 20, 2023. https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/unmik.

majority to convene in Rambouillet to stop the fighting and and reach an agreement; an agreement known as the Rambouillet Accord. This Agreement proposed to halt the fighting in Kosovo seeking a political solution to establish a peaceful environment in Kosovo and in order to contribute to the peace and stability in the region (Rambouillet Agreement, 1999, state.gov). Kosovo delegation accepted the agreement, while Yugoslavia refused to accept its terms because its content held more rights to be given to the Albanian Kosovars than then Yugoslavia was prepared to give to them. Yugoslavia believed the accord was too generous to the Albanians in Kosovo and they believed that the agreement will lead up to the independence for Kosovo.[274]

The Yugoslavia's refusal to sign the agreement led to a 78 day NATO air campaign (March to June 1999) to stop a humanitarian catastrophe and the gross violation of human rights that was unfolding in Kosovo. Only after a Military Technical Agreement on June 9, 1999 was signed between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 9 June,[275] did NATO halt the air campaign. On June 10, the international community through the "UNSCR 1244 welcomed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's acceptance of the principles for a political solution, including an immediate end to violence and a rapid withdrawal of its military, police and paramilitary forces and the deployment of an effective international civil and security presence, with substantial NATO participation."[276]

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[274] Kissinger, Henry. "Why I've Changed my Mind About Sending in the Combat Troops." Independent. April 13 1999. Accessed on January 20, 2020. https://www.independent.ie/opinion/analysis/why-ive-changed-my-mind-about-sending-in-the-combat-troops/26153102.html.

[275] Military Technical Agreement between the International Security Force ("KFOR") and the Governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia. NATO's Role in Kosovo. 9 June 1999. Accessed on August 2020. https://www.nato.int/kosovo/docu/a990609a.htm.

[276] "Kosovo Air Campaign (March-June 1999)." Updated 17 May. 2022. Accessed on August 15 2022.

The UNSCR 1244 had specified the conditions for demilitarization of Kosovo Liberation Army. Notably, item 9 (b) and 15, of the United Nations Security Resolution state:

9. (b)"[d]emilitarizing the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and other armed Kosovo Albanian groups as required in paragraph 15 below;

15. Demands that the KLA and other armed Kosovo Albanian groups end immediately all offensive actions and comply with the requirements for demilitarization as laid down by the head of the international security presence in consultation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General;

The KLA political leaders insisted to save the core of the KLA, thus creating the Kosovo Protectorate Corps. This organization was established by the UNMIK Regulation 1999/8 consisted of 3000 active and 2000 reserve members, but it absorbed a substantial KLA manpower.

The UNMIK Regulation 1999/8 states:

> The Kosovo Protection Corps shall be established as a civilian emergency service agency, the tasks of which shall be to:
>
> (a) Provide disaster response services;
>
> (b) Perform search and rescue;
>
> (c) Provide a capacity for humanitarian assistance in isolated areas;

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https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49602.htm#:~:text=The%20same%20day%2C%20UNSCR%201244,civil%20and%20security%20presence%2C%20with.

(d) Assist in demining; and

(e) Contribute to rebuilding infrastructure and communities.[277]

UNMIK is authorized by the Security Council resolution 1244 of the United Nations and continues to have mission towards promoting security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo, so that the Kosovo people could enjoy extensive autonomy. Originally, "the Council vested UNMIK with authority over the territory and people of Kosovo, including all legislative and executive powers and administration of the judiciary."[278]

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[277] "On the Establihsment of the Kosovo Protection Corps." Regulation No. 1999/8 UNMIK/REG/1999/8. 20 September, 1999. Accessed May 10. 2022. https://unmik.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/regulations/02english/E1999regs/RE1999_08.htm.

[278] UNMIK Fact Sheet." United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. Updated June 1, 2023. Accessed on March 20, 2023. https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/unmik.

5.3 The European Union Rule of Law Mission to Kosovo - EULEX

Under the Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union, the EULEX mission in Kosovo launched in 2008 is considered as the largest EU civilian mission. The EU's EULEX "mission is to support selected Kosovo rule of law institutions on their path towards increased electiveness, sustainability, multi-ethnicity and accountability, free from political interference and in full compliance with international human rights standards and best European practices."[279]

The EU Mission for the rule of law in Kosovo is quite expensive for European Union citizens' taxpayers; for example from 15 June 2021 until 14 June 2023 the budget for EULEX has been EUR 173 693 683.[280]

However, this mission had a bad start right away. The domestic media started criticizing it, but to give more credibility to this criticism is when the international media began reporting the ineffectiveness of the mission to strengthen the rule of law in Kosovo applying EU values on Kosovo. Instead, EULEX became a target of ruthless criticism that by 2011, the EU rule of law mission " has achieved little. Few prominent investigations have been opened, and the local judiciary has not improved appreciably. The difficult context party explains this failure, but the

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[279] "Factsheet" European Union Rule of Law Partners for Justice. August 31, 2022. Accessed on November 28, 2022. https://www.eulex-kosovo.eu/?page=2,60.

[280] " Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/904 Amending Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo * (EULEX KOSOVO)." The Council of the European Union. 3 June 2021. Accessed on December 10, 2022. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021D0904&rid=5#:~:text='%20The%20financial%20reference%20amount%20intended,be%20EUR%20173%20693%20683.

main causes are internal – incompetence, weak management and possibly even disloyalty to the mission's mandate." [281]

However, this failure cannot be attributed solely on EULEX, certainly not on the first few years from its start. Kosovo had been governed exclusively by UNMIK which was heavily staffed by non-professionals whose mission seem to the prevention of any real political progress in Kosovo. Therefore, the EU mission rule of law, inherited a system where cases had been piled up unsolved during the many years that Kosovo was under the UNMIK administration. The judiciary system in Kosovo and the rule of law agencies and institutions were not adequately trained and lacked professionalism during UNMIK years.[282]

The European Union and Kosovo have signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement, opening a new phase in the EU-Kosovo relationship despite being in a far distant form EU membership. The agreement is signed in 2015[283] and yet Kosovo received negative reports from

[281] Capussela, Andrea. "Eulex in Kosovo: a shining symbol of incompetence." The Guardian.09 April, 2011. Accessed on June 15, 2022. Eulex in Kosovo: a shining symbol of incompetence | Andrea Capussela | The Guardian.

[282] Sinan Geci, "The EULEX in Kosovo: Why The Biggest EU Mission became the Biggest EU Failure? – Part two: Problems of EULEX" Biztonsag Politika, Biztonsagpolitikai Szakportal, Accessed on February 23, 2019. https://biztonsagpolitika.hu/balkan/the-eulex-in-kosovo-why-the-biggest-eu-mission-became-the-biggest-eu-failure-part-two-problems-of-eulex.
An in-depth research of the problems and failures of the EULEX mission in Kosovo, please refer "The EULEX in Kosovo: Why The Biggest EU Mission became the Biggest EU Failure? – Part two: Problems of EULEX." 2019. Accessed on February 23, 2019.
https://biztonsagpolitika.hu/balkan/the-eulex-in-kosovo-why-the-biggest-eu-mission-became-the-biggest-eu-failure-part-two-problems-of-eulex..

[283] "Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) between the European Union and Kosovo signed." Council of the EU. 27 October 2015. Accessed on July 20, 2018. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/10/27/kosovo-eu-stabilisation-association-agreement/.

the EU institutions. It is evident that Kosovo has been facing some challenges in the area of the rule of law, but for decades it had been the sole responsibility and the main pillar of the international community. The EULEX in Kosovo had specifically been tasked to:

(f) contribute to the fight against corruption, fraud and financial crime;

(g) contribute to the implementation of the Kosovo Anti-Corruption Strategy and Anti-Corruption Action Plan.[284]

As an illustration, the European Commission Kosovo Report 2016, demanded that Kosovo meet minimum standards for whistleblowers. Kosovo was critiqued for not doing enough to protect the whistleblowers and they were even subject to attacks and open to denunciations. The report underlined that the "current law [of Kosovo] on informants is not in line with international standards as it does not meet minimum whistle blowing mechanisms or protection requirements."[285]This approach from the EU while not reflecting on its mission at all and a clear discrepancy between what they preach and what the apply on their own mission, and a double standard, to this day continues question their credibility. [286]

Indeed, the Transparency International published an article reflecting the concerns from Kosovo citizens and non-governmental organizations requesting from and denouncing the

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[284] "Council Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP of 4 February 2008 on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo." Council Decision. 2008. Accessed on December 20, 2017. http://www.eulex-kosovo.eu/eul/repository/docs/WEJointActionEULEX_EN.pdf.

[285] "Commission Staff Working Document Kosovo* 2016 Report" European Commission Report. September 11, 2016. Accessed on December 28, 2017. https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2018-12/20161109_report_kosovo.pdf.

[286] "EULEX needs to support not intimidate whistleblowers." Transparency International. 12 August 2015. Accessed on January 20, 2018. https://www.transparency.org/news/pressrelease/eulex_needs_to_support_not_intimidate_whistleblowers.

European Union Rule of Law Mission to abide by its standard and protect its own whistleblowers and not intimidate them. As far back as 2014, the mission spent more time and was preoccupied with its own rule of law issues and trying to cover up its own internal incompetence and protect its reputation rather than help Kosovo's rule of law institutions. Namely, the EULEX prosecutor Maria Bamieh, openly alleged the mission for unlawful actions and requested continuously internal investigations which were not taken into consideration by EULEX.[287] As a whistleblower for unlawful activities in the EULEX mission, it cost her the job. Prosecutor Bamieh, a British lawyer, since 2014 "has publically accused two top EU officials of taking bribes from criminals in turn for dropping three prosecutions, including murder case – and says she has more evidence about the mismanagement of EU fund."[288] The hypocritical approach towards its own staff and therefore towards Kosovars and Kosovo institutions has hurt Kosovo's image and it has somehow legitimized the wrongdoings. It served as an amnesty for the locals who were engaged in corruptive undertakings EULEX mission began to be as an added on problem to Kosovo rather than help Kosovo fight corruption and other negative phenomenon.[289]

[287] "Corruption perceptions index 2016." Transparency International. 2016. Accessed on December 28. 2017. https://www.transparency.org/en/news/corruption-perceptions-index-2016.

Sinan Geci, "The EULEX in Kosovo: Why The Biggest EU Mission became the Biggest EU Failure? – Part two: Problems of EULEX" Biztonsag Politika, Biztonsagpolitikai Szakportal, accessed February 23, 2019. https://biztonsagpolitika.hu/balkan/the-eulex-in-kosovo-why-the-biggest-eu-mission-became-the-biggest-eu-failure-part-two-problems-of-eulex.

[288] "Maria Bamieh: The British Lawyer Claiming To Expose Corruption at Heart of EU Mission to Kosovo." Independent. 6 November 2014. Accessed on December 18, 2017. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/maria-bamieh-the-british-lawyer-claiming-to-expose-corruption-at-heart-of-eu-mission-to-kosovo-9844893.html.

[289] EULEX in Kosovo: Why The Biggest EU Mission became the Biggest EU Failure? – Part two: Problems of EULEX" Biztonsag Politika, Biztonsagpolitikai Szakportal. Accessed on February 23,

Just recently the Maria Bamieh case resurfaced again as she never stopped fighting the case against the EULEX. In fact, she continued to blame the mission and the central institutions at the EU for in ignoring her evidence of EU corruption and was fired for it. She argues that the UK government officials told her to ignore apparent evidence of collusion at the EU's EULEX and failed to support her to expose the wrongdoings and the EU corruption in Kosovo. She was paid £423,000 by the Foreign Office.[290]

Therefore, the EU rule of law mission, EULEX, does not seem to have fulfilled its mission completely in Kosovo. This does not necessarily mean to discontinue the mission's mandate in Kosovo. However, its mission, management and competency, and credibility must be revisited and reviewed so that Kosovo can maximize the benefits from this mission towards its EU integration process and the EU taxpayers' money does not go to waste.

5. NATO Force Kosovo– KFOR

One of the international organizations that always scored the highest, even compared to domestic institutions, among the Kosovars' positive perception is NATO Force in Kosovo, KFOR.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization Force in Kosovo, KFOR deployed into Kosovo on 12 June 1999, after a 78-day air campaign against Milosevic's regime by the Alliance in March

2019. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/maria-bamieh-the-british-lawyer-claiming-to-expose-corruption-at-heart-of-eu-mission-to-kosovo-9844893.html.

[290] "Foreign Office to pay £423,000 to whistleblowing lawyer who lost job." The Guardian. 03 July, 2022. Accessed on November 5, 2022. https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jul/03/foreign-office-to-pay-423000-lawyer-who-lost-job-maria-bamieh.

1999 to halt and reverse the humanitarian catastrophe that was then unfolding in Kosovo.[291]

To this day KFOR remains neutral and its mandate originates from the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1244 of 10 June 1999 and the Military-Technical Agreement between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbia.[292]

NTAO in Kosovo continues to provide and maintain a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement for all people and communities in Kosovo, based on the following mandate:

- deter renewed hostility and threats against Kosovo by Yugoslav and Serb forces;

- establish a secure environment and ensure public safety and order;

- demilitarize the Kosovo Liberation Army;

- support the international humanitarian effort; and c

- oordinate with, and support, the international civil presence.[293]

Although NATO through KFOR is responsible for defence issues in the territory of the Republic of Kosovo, it also supports the development of the Kosovo Security Force.

NATO and its partner countries have continued to support Kosovo and the KSF through a NATO Liaison and Advisory Team (NLAT) which is distinct from KFOR as well to the Ministry for KSF via the NATO Advisory Team (NAT) in order to assist in establishing a civilian-led organization that exercises civilian control over the KSF. As of August 2016, the North Atlantic Council of NATO has decided that the two above teams merge into one called the NATO

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[291] NATO's role in Kosovo" NATO. 20 Oct. 2022. Accessed on March 15, 2023. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_48818.htm.

[292] Ibid.

[293] Ibid.

Advisory and Liaison Team (NALT) which continues the support.[294] This is an astonishing evolvement of NATO and its contribution to Kosovo. This new component of NATO, NALT, "reports directly to the NATO International Staff. Currently, it has a team of about 45 military and civilian personnel from 13 Allied and partner countries. It provides practical assistance and advice to the security organisations in Kosovo in areas such as logistics, procurement and finance, force development and planning, as well as leadership development. In order to fulfil its mission, the Team is currently designed along three lines of development: Strategy & Plans, Operations, and Support."[295]

5.4.1 NATO - Post 2016

It was reported than on 11 July 2012, then Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi submitted a request for Kosovo to join Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme. This would mark formal partnership and official relationship between Kosovo and NATO. [296] However, there is no public document to be found. Another attempt was made in 2015, from Prime Minister Isa Mustafa, [297]

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[294] NATO Advisory and Liaison Team Establishment Ceremony, NATO, 26 Aug 2016. Accessed on November 25, 2017. https://jfcnaples.nato.int/kfor/media-center/archive/news/2016-2/nato-advisory-and-liaison-team-establishment-ceremony.

[295] NATO's role in Kosovo" NATO. 20 Oct. 2022. Accessed on March 15, 2023. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_48818.htm.

[296] Živković , Vukašin. "NATO perspective of Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina." European Western Balkans. 08 February, 2019. Accessed on September 28 2019. https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2019/02/08/nato-perspective-kosovo-bosnia-herzegovina/.

[297] Letter from the Government of Kosovo to Secretary General of NATO" The Prime Minister Isa Mustafa. 19 November, 2015. The author possesses the Letter as he worked in the Ministry of Defense as the Head of Euro-Atlantic Integration Section, and initiated in March 2017 the Interministerial Working Group to implement the cooperation with NATO through NALT.

only this time it was tried to find modalities attributed to NATO's neutrality approach towards Kosovo's independence. Also because as it stands today, there are four NATO members, which also are members of the European Union, Spain, Greece, Slovakia and Romania which have not yet recognized Kosovo's independence. The content of the letter sent to Secretary General of NATO is visibly constructed in a way based on recommendations not to ask formal partnership due to the neutrality stand of NATO towards a potential cooperation between NATO and Kosovo and the resistance from non-recognizers to establish formal relationship but rather it is a tailored cooperation with Kosovo.

The new level of cooperation led to enhanced communication, increased visits by senior NATO officials and the participation of KSF officials in NATO training programmes through the NATO Advisory and Liaison Team (NALT) which was tasked as the focal point to coordinate practical cooperation activities between NATO and Kosovo. Even though the reply form the North Atlantic Council[298] did offer Kosovo access to the programmes leading up to a NATO partnership or membership, it provided a great base to start a tailored cooperation for different projects via the Public Diplomacy Division and the NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme, as well as benefit from the Building Integrity Programme.[299]

Whereas this was a good start for more and intensive Kosovo-NATO interaction and much needed reforms of Kosovo's democratic institutional structures, proof of a continuation of such activities is hard to find. Therefore, for Pristina the 'enhanced interaction' framework merely constituted a tick of the political box and attempting to gain some political capital, but it did not

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[298] "Letter of NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg addressed to Kosovo's Prime Minister, Isa Mustafa," NATO. 5 December 2016, SG(2016)0357

[299] "What kind of partnership with Kosovo?" Policy Paper by Kosovar Centre for Security Studies. January 2017. Accessed on April 2017. https://qkss.org/images/uploads/files/NATO_ENG_%284%29_799612.pdf.

actually change much in bringing Kosovo closer to the Alliance. In order to do that, Kosovo should have undertaken a proactive approach to deepen the cooperation possibilities within this framework. Kosovo began with some activities with NATO, but it is evident that Kosovo did not materialize and fully utilize this framework of cooperation.[300]

The key message was the neutrality and it was mentioned that NATO supports KSF with the then mandate.[301] Therefore, when Kosovo moved on and adopted laws on the transition of the Kosovo Security Force into armed forces did so with the blessings and endorsement of its closest allies, in particular the United States and the United Kingdom and some others,[302] NATO did not take it lightly. The transition of the KSF does not transform into an army overnight, but instead it is a ten year comprehensive transition plan. Since NATO makes decisions based on consensus and there are four non recognizers within NATO, the Secretary General stated the following, "I regret that this decision was made despite the concerns expressed by NATO. While the transition of the Kosovo Security Force is in principle a matter for Kosovo to decide, we have made clear that this move is ill-timed. NATO supports the development of the Kosovo Security Force under its current mandate.

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[300] The author worked in the Ministry of Defense as the Head of Euro-Atlantic Integration Section, and initiated in March 2017 the Interministerial Working Group to implement the cooperation with NATO through NALT.Unlike NALT, Kosovo commenced the work with a voluntarily convened group and NATO had appointed NALT as a focal point for all the activities.

[301] Joint press conference with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and Mr. Isa Mustafa in Kosovo 03 Feb. 2017.

[302] "Peacekeeping Chief Urges Serbia, Kosovo to Avoid Exacerbating Tensions after Decision to Transform Security Force into National Armed Forces." United Nations. SC/13626. December 17, 2018 Accessed on March 10, 2019. https://press.un.org/en/2018/sc13626.doc.htm.

With the change of mandate, the North Atlantic Council will now have to re-examine the level of NATO's engagement with the Kosovo Security Force."[303]

Although based on some information from NATO officials (anonym as the official is a high ranking official at NATO) NATO has halted the cooperation within the Enhanced Interaction framework.

Nonetheless, bilateral support and cooperation has continued and in some areas it has expanded. The Republic of Kosovo with its forces participated in a mission to the Falkland's Islands attached to the British Army.[304]

5.5 Buildup of Political Capacities in a Political Settlement Established by the International Stakeholders

The international community directly and indirectly assisted Kosovo to move from a war torn country to a developing democracy which is comparable and more advanced in some areas than some of the neighboring countries.

A safe and secure environment is crucial in any society to function, as Németh, József Lajos and Boldizsár, Gábor argue that "in statebuilding efforts and activities security plays a central role, which is not surprising, if the basic approach is accepted: missing or eroded state

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[303] "Statement by the NATO Secretary General on the adoption of the laws on the transition of the Kosovo Security Force" NATO. 14 Dec. 2018. Accessed on 15 December 2018. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_161631.htm.

[304] "The First KSF Contingent Returned From a Mission to the Falkland`s Islands." Newsletter Ministry of Defense. February 2023 Accessed on February 28. https://mod.rks-gov.net/desk/inc/media/0b16bf28-faf6-43f4-910a-9fca876964c7.pdf. .And this was the second mission for the KSF after joining along the US army in a mission to Kuwait. Ibid.

service branches are unable to provide an adequate level of security."[305] This is the case particularly in Kosovo where the international engagement in peace settlement and the ongoing involvement has maintained a peaceful and secure environment in the post-conflict state-building situation. The involvement of the international community in Kosovo has promoted reconciliation, addressing grievances, and building trust among communities. Ultimately, the international community's successful post-conflict state-building process in Kosovo has required a long-term commitment from all stakeholders involved because the situation has implicated actors that are malign and not contributing to the peace and security in the region. This is the case when recently Russia is attempting to expand conflict and spread the attention to other regions besides Ukraine. This approach is utilizing Serbia which is the most pro-Russian country in the region and Europe and has not imposed any sanctions on Russia which has launched an unprovoked military attack against Ukraine.

The international presence in Kosovo has established the foundations for a political settlement and good governance in the making. It has created an environment where democracy evolved and a multi- party political system erected the pillars of a new democracy in the region.

Kosova's course of political transformation in post-communist era has to an extent diverged from the experience of transformation that other states and republics within states in Central and Eastern Europe have gone through. Kosova would not be ruled by elites elected by its people, but instead its situation worsened for it went from being under the Yugoslav communist regime into being under the direct Serbian dictatorship in post 1989 era. After years of oppression and

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[305] Németh, József Lajos ; Boldizsár, Gábor

The Importance of Statebuilding: Additional Contributions from a Military Perspective
HADTUDOMÁNYI SZEMLE 14 : 3 pp. 5-15. , 11 p. (2021) Accessed on December 3, 2022.
 https://folyoirat.ludovika.hu/index.php/hsz/article/view/5172/47.

discrimination from Serbia, finally beginning in the late 1999 after the war that broke out in early 1998 between the Serbian military forces and ethnic Albanians was over, there have been signs of political revitalization as Kosova shifts towards political pluralism. In the post-war period Kosova became a quasi- independent entity (under the protection of the United Nations run by the UN Security Council Resolution No. 1244) that has created a favorable position for democratization process of political parties, assisted by the international community. Indeed, new political parties have been instituted which comprise of young and pragmatic elites, creating a new class of intelligentsia in Kosova, and serve as a challenging force to the uncontested post-communist party. This new intelligentsia attracted popular support for they emerged as a result of their contribution by means of confrontation with the Serbian military oppressing forces in Kosovo to liberate Kosovar Albanians from the Milošević regime. Due to the fact that Kosovo did not gain immediate independence after the war against Serbia, Kosovar Albanian political parties' elites have focused their legitimacy on the future of Kosovo as an independent state, which has led to many criticism addressed against each other while competing for an independent Kosovo.

5.5.1 Main Kosovar Albanian Parties before Independence - 2008

Before the independence in 2008, Kosovo had four main Albanian parties; the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), and the Reformist Party ORA ("Time").

In present time, the dominant party is the LDK considering that it is the oldest and most mature political party having been in power most than all others.

but because it has lacked a clear majority vote since the end of the war, it has formed the government of Kosovo in coalition. One of the LDK's founders and leader for a decade and half was Dr. Ibrahim Rugova. The PDK emerged after the war of 1998-1999 as a deradicalized political force after Kosovo Liberation (Albanian: Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës –UÇK) moderate leaders sought to gain representation in the political process of unresolved status of Kosovo. UÇK was disarmed due to the KFOR/UNMIK demands under the UNSC Resolution 1244, thus its leaders needed to advance their long goal of independence. The AAK, also came into existence after the environment for political pluralism was favourable, and it was founded in the same manner as the PDK. ORA, on the other hand, was founded by a moderate and a famous Kosovar Albanian publicist and politician, Veton Surroi.

Before the communism as a dominating ideology ended, Kosovar political elites comprised of communist leaders. These elites had legitimacy in Kosovo and were recognized as a political force and representatives of Kosovar Albanians by the central government of Yugoslavia and its six republics. After the collapse of communism, the incumbent political elites tend to overemphasize their historical role in establishing the independence of Kosovo; especially, the closest associates and pro Ibrahim Rugova (the late President of Kosovo) hold that their party started the non-violent struggle against the Belgrade regime for the independence of Kosovo. However, the PDK elites, the opposition party, strongly argue that the fact that Kosovo today is not under the Serbian direct control is a merit of Kosovar people. Despite their criticism towards each other, there are circumstances of depolarizing efforts by all political elites, especially this is evident when the issue of final status of Kosovo arises.

5.5.2 The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) [306]

The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) has been the largest political party since its formation in 1989. The LDK is founded in Ghandian principles of non-violent struggle against the aggressive Serbian regime. This struggle was headed by Dr. Ibrahim Rugova, born in Cerrcë, Istog (1944- 2006). He graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Prishtina in Albanian Studies in 1971 and received his doctorate in 1984. He was a specialist in literary history and the leader of the LDK until his death in 2006. The word 'League' was purposely selected to transfer historic resonance of the League of Prizren (created in 1878 in attempt to create a unified Albanian region) to the goal of the LDK.[307]

The LDK labels itself as modern and democratic while combining tradition with the future of Kosovars towards a sovereign state. It possesses "a liberal orientation favouring a free market economy…European integration, education (in one's native language), authentic, development of culture, fair social policy, accessible healthcare, and guaranteeing minority rights").[308]

Even though other political parties have existed, the LDK has always captured the majority of votes since its formation. Its goal, pursued by Rugova, "has been a three- fold one: to prevent violent revolt; to 'internationalize' the problem, which means seeking various forms of international political involvement (ranging from diplomatic mediation to the setting up of a UN

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[306] "History." The Democratic League of Kosova. Accesed on 5 March, 2016.
(Albanian: "Historiku"]. http://ldk-kosova.org/historiku.html.

[307] "Biography of Ibrahim Rugova." Trepça. Accessed on 21, January, 2016.
[Albanian: "Biografija e Ibrahim Rugoves"].
http://www.trepca.net/2002/03/020 304-biografia-Ibrahim-Rugoves.htm.

[308] "Kosovo." European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity. 2004. Accessed on September, 2016.
http://www.europeanforum.net/country/kosovo

trusteeship over Kosovo); and to deny systematically the legitimacy of Serbian rule, by boycotting elections and censuses and creating at least the outlines of the state apparatus of a Kosovo 'Republic.'"[309]

The LDK has aimed to establish the historical aspirations of Kosovars to create an independent Kosovo. It organized and declared the Kaçanik Constitution (in Albanian "Kushtetuta e Kaçanikut") in 1990. It also organized the referendum on self-determination in 1991, in which over 90 percent of the Kosovar Albanians voted for independence. This party organized parliamentary and presidential elections in 1992 and in 1998 winning a clear majority [310]. Though Rugova was the President of Kosovo 'Republic' residing in Kosovo, the government headed by Bujar Bukoshi resided in Germany prior to the war in 1999.

The LDK established a parallel system to open schools, healthcare centers and municipal governments that would be separate from Serbian institutions. This system was run by a voluntary taxation system, which "normally referred to the 3 percent suggested contribution requested by Kosovo Albanians working abroad, but the bulk of the Republic's income was actually raised inside Kosovo. By September 1994, the government-in-exile had raised less than a third of the amount raised inside Kosovo."[311]

In 1992, the LDK conducted an underground assembly election. Twenty-two parties with 490 candidates participated in these elections. The LDK won of 76.44 percent, a clear majority in the self-proclaimed national parliament. While in 1998, the LDK won 85.5 percent.[312]

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[309] Malcolm, Noel. Kosovo: A Short History. London: Macmillan, 1998.p. 348.

[310] "History." The Democratic League of Kosova.

[311] Clark, Howard. Civil Resistance in Kosovo. London: Pluto Press, 2000.p. 103.

[312] "History." The Democratic League of Kosova.

However, due to the increasing criticism addressed towards Rugova and the emergence of pragmatic leaders, Rugova's fame began to decrease enormously by early 1999. Even though the elections of 1992 and 1998 were multi party elections and the LDK had won, the post 1999 epoch presented a real challenge to the legitimacy of the Rugova's LDK. The municipal elections held in October 2000 were a disappointment for LDK for it won only 58 percent of the popular vote. More dissatisfying results for LDK came from the assembly elections held in November 2001 during which the LDK won only 45.7 percent. In addition, during the October 2004 assembly elections, the LDK did not experience a damaging drop but only 0.3 percent (45.4% in 2004) less than in 2001 elections.[313]

The LDK's popularity after the 1999 declined as a result of fundamental change in political arena. However, the reason that it still is the largest party was not because people had a positive opinion of LDK but because some former UÇK uncompromising leaders had dominated the political life, which upset Kosovars.[314] In the post 1999 period, the LDK lost its unchallenging prestige as it failed to attain its first priority of national liberation of Albanians; thus, its credentials as the most effective party in promoting Kosovar Albanians' rights have been open to doubt and suspicion which resulted in support for more radical movements toward the Kosovars' goal of independence.

[313] "Election Results in Kosovo." Statistical Office of Kosovo. 18 January 2004. Accessed on 27 January, 2016. http://www.ks-gov.net/esk/index_english.htm.

[314] "Kosova: Historical Elections." International Crisis Group: Working to Prevent Conflict Worldwide. Prishtina/Brussels, 21 November, 2001. Accessed on January 12, 2017. [Albanian: Kosova: Zgjedhje Historike]. https://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/report_archive/A400582_13032002.pdf.

5.5.3 The Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK)

The Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) was founded in September 1999. The PDK is the second largest party in Kosovo that has ties to the popular liberation movement known as the Kosovo Liberation Army (UÇK), which was a militant resistance to Serbian oppression of Kosovar Albanians in the early 1990s. The emergence of PDK came as a result of the historical war of the UÇK to expel Serbian occupation out of Kosovo. Since the international community is present in Kosovo as a guaranteeing force and the development of democratic institutions, the conditions were favourable for PDK – formed by a prominent members of the UÇK- to engage in political activity (PDK: Party Program). In Addition, the UÇK's reasons of change from guerilla war to pluralist politics was because its leaders were "looking toward representation in the protectorate's new political process."[315]

Former leaders of the UÇK hold the highest-ranking positions of the PDK. Hashim Thaçi was an UÇK leader known as "Gjarpër (The Snake)" and is the leader of the PDK since it was founded. Thaçi was born in 1968 in Burojë, (northwest of Drenica region). Before he attended postgraduate studies in the University of Zurich, in History of South East Europe and International Relations, Thaçi was a student of Faculty of Philosophy, Department of History in Prishtina.[316]

According to R. Craig Nation, the UÇK as a militant force emerged in 1993 due to the political vacuum created by the suspension of Kosovo autonomy by Serbia, the imposition of

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[315] Cohen, Lenard J. Serpent in the Bosom: The Rise and Fall of Slobodan Milošević.
Revised Edition, U.S: Westview Press, 2002. p. 357.

[316] "List of the Deputies of the Kosovo Assembly." Assembly of Kosovo: Provisional.
Institutions of Self-Government. 05. April 2006. Accessed on January 15. 2016.
http://www.assembly-kosova.org/?krye=deputet&lang=en.

Rugova's passive nonviolence to solve the Kosovo issue, and the international preoccupation with other republics of former Yugoslavia; Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina declared independence from Yugoslavia in 1991 but were erupted in war.[317] This radical wing of Kosovo national movement combined Enverist radicals with roots in the political contestation of the pre-1989 era, and also embedded post-1989 Kosovar Albanians who had fought alongside Croats and Muslims in Bosnia against Milošević. In particular, Dr. Lenard J. Cohen notes that "what is clear, is that the UÇK was a marginalized and passive organization until the Kosovo issue was once again ignored by the international community during the Bosnian peace negotiations in Dayton during November 1995.[318]"

Like other non-Serb Kosovar parties, the PDK is in favour of and had fought for an independent Kosovo. Considering the multi-ethnicity in Kosovo, Thaçi has proposed an approach of "adapting the Macedonian Ohrid Model for regulating interethnic relations in Kosovo."[319] Besides independence, the PDK's main objectives as a party are to create ethnic tolerance and European integration of Kosovar society. In addition, other "commitments [of the PDK] are improving the infrastructure, healthcare and education of the population, care for elderly, creating jobs, the emancipation of women…[and] on improving small and medium sized enterprises and farmers."[320]

Nonetheless, the PDK is perceived as a radical party, which has prevented this party of gaining support internationally and locally. The PDK's leader Hashim Thaçi, as the

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[317] R. Craig, Nation. "War in the Balkans, 1991-2002". Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College, 2003 SSI. Accessed on February 1, 2017 http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub123.pdf.

[318] Cohen, 2002, p. 280

[319] "Kosovo." European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity. 2004.

[320] Ibid.

representative of the UÇK, had participated in the Rambouillet, France, in 1999, which gave him legitimacy in the post-war period and support for heading a transitional government in Kosovo. As the UÇK leader, Thaçi became a political actor as he was regarded as the political figure without whom the Rambouillet meeting in France would not have been meaningful and acceptable for the Kosovar Albanians. Thaçi, since Rambouillet, had posed a challenge to Rugova's political leadership. Rugova had not willingly accepted Thaçi to be his partner representing the Kosovar Albanian side in negotiations in Rambouillet in 1999. Rugova desired to maintain his legitimacy and legacy but Thaçi and the international community requested that UÇK be represented.[321]

The political attention that the UÇK had acquired as a major political force by the international community to end the conflict with Serbia became a threat to Rugova's reputation and legacy. Rugova had claimed that his primary goal was to liberate Kosovars from the Serbian regime. However, when other political figures and especially when Thaçi was to become the Prime Minister, since at the end of the war the UÇK became as Lenard Cohen suggests a de facto "ally" of NATO, and was to establish a government, "Rugova and his LDK party continued to challenge the political ascendancy of Thaçi and the UÇK."[322]

Expecting to win with a confidence that as a former armed force with the prestige of victory, the PDK gained only 27.3 percent of the votes in the Kosovo municipal elections held in October 2000. Rugova's LDK, despite the fact that he had met with Milošević in Belgrade during the allied bombing campaign won more votes than Thaçi. These results came as a shock to many, especially the PDK leaders, but "they did not count on the disillusioning effect of widespread corruption, racketeering, and inefficient local administration, as well, perhaps, on a

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[321] Kosova: Historical Elections, 2001

[322] Cohen, p. 353

backlash occasioned by the traumas of the war."[323] In addition, during the assembly elections held on November 21, 2001, the PDK obtained 25.7 percent of the votes. Furthermore, the PDK with its moderate elite that was adopted by Thaçi as he established discipline and control of the party. The PDK witnessed slightly higher and better results during the assembly elections held in October 2004, with an increase of 3.2 percent - 28.9 % in 2004 while 25.7 % in 2001.[324]

Thaçi realized his lack of control over certain former UÇK commanders, and tended to reconstruct the image of the PDK as responsible and reliable party to lead Kosovo. Evidently, PDK nominated Flora Brovina – Kosovar Albanian doctor, former political prisoner in Serbia, poet and the president and founder of the League of Albanian Women in Kosovo – as the president of Kosovo in 2001 elections.[325] Despite winning only around 30 percent of the popular votes, the PDK is presently the most powerful opposition in Kosovo.

5.5.4 The Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK)

The Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) is the third largest Kosovar Albanian party. The leader of the AAK, Ramush Haradinaj, is an ex-commander of the UÇK during the war in Kosovo in the Kosovo's western Dukagjini region. He was born in 1968 in Glogjan (Dukagjini region). Haradinaj like nearly all Kosovars went to a mixed-ethnicity school, but he could not attend university because numerous of his family members had fallen foul of the Serbian authorities, which controlled the University of Prishtina.[326] However, after the war Haradinaj attended the University of Prishtina and has a degree in law.

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[323] Nation, p. 328.

[324] "Election Results in Kosovo." Statistical Office of Kosovo. 18, January, 2004.

[325] Kosova: Historical Elections, 2001

[326] Sullivan, Stacy. "Profile: Ramush Haradinaj." Kosova Report: The Latest News and Daily

The AAK emerged as one of the radical wings of the Kosovar Albanian movement, UÇK. After UÇK's formal social integration in mid-1999, to rival formation were created, Thaçi's PDK and Haradinaj's AAK. The latter was founded in May 2000 in alliance with five other parties under Haradinaj's leadership.[327] The appearance of this new political party challenged not only the LDK but also the PDK for it exemplified that the latter was not the only party derived from the UÇK that can achieve Albanian aspirations. The AAK proved to be a modern political party and gained respect and support under its motto, "not left, nor right, only straight."[328]

Facing identical challenges as the PDK, the AAK tended to distant itself from radical forces. In 2001, two of the five parties that had founded the AAK withdrew from the coalition with the AAK for they were more conservative and nationalist. Presently, the AAK is known as a more moderate "pro European party in the center of the political spectrum, which is in favour of ethnic cooperation. Economic priorities set by the party are the creation of new jobs, promotion of small and medium sized business, infrastructure, and privatization"[329]

In order to attract more voters, the AAK launched criticism towards other parties as not effective in leading the people of Kosovo. In particular, in a meeting in the city of Klinë, Haradinaj addressed the participants proclaiming, "should anyone ask why the AAK is the best, I would invite you not to say that we are patriots, because we are all patriots and we all love Kosovo. [But] answer that the AAK works more than other parties, that the members of the AAK

Political Analysis from Kosova. March, 2005. Accessed on February 20, 2017. http://kosovareport.blogspot.com/2005.

[327] Kosovo: Historical Elections, 2001

[328] Ibid.

[329] "Kosovo." European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity. 2004.

wake up earlier than member of the other parties, and we do more than the others for you [for Kosovars]. I can say that I personally work harder than Thaçi and harder than Rugova."[330]

Unlike the PDK which engaged in political arena, as Lenard J. Cohen suggests (stated earlier) to gain representation in post-war UNMIK controlled political process in Kosovo,[331] the AAK saw the political conditions as an opportunity to create a new alternation to politics. It claims to be founded under the idea of unifying political force of national political parties to achieve the objectives of the people of Kosovo.[332]

The AAK has put enormous efforts to expand its influence by embracing different respected and popular political figures. In particular, the AAK invited the famous and tireless former communist leader of Kosovo, Mahmut Bakalli, to join this party. Nonetheless, like Flora Brovina of the PDK, Bakalli persisted that regardless of his membership by AAK he remained independent. He noted though that the AAK had become a mature political party, but he advised this party to focus on practical issues instead of being characterized by excessive self-esteem and exaggerated flattery over the independence issue.[333]

The AAK is exceptionally limited in its geographical base. Very much like the LDK and PDK, the AAK had looked forward to free elections with confidence that Kosovars would vote this party to fulfill their expectations, primarily due to its history. To its members' disappointment in October 2000 municipal elections, the AAK won only 7.7 percent of the popular votes. During the assembly elections held in November 2001, the AAK got hold of 7.8

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[330] "Kosovo." European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity. 2004.

[331] Cohen. p. 357.

[332] AAK's History, 2004

[333] Kosovo: Historical Elections, 2001

percent of the votes. Additionally, in October 2004 assembly elections the AAK witnessed a slight increase of popularity by winning 8.4 percent of the votes.[334]

Even though many argue that Haradinaj, like Thaçi, is identified as the hero of Kosovar Albanians, neither one of them has achieved to seize the majority of the votes in Kosovo. Haradinaj was mistrusted as doubts were raised exposing him as having been associated with individuals over suspected as criminals and extremists that downsized his popularity among the electorate.

5.5.5 The Reformist Party (ORA)

The fourth largest Kosovar Albanian party and the youngest is the Reformist Party ORA. The leader of ORA is Veton Surroi, born in 1961 in Prishtina. He graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature in Mexico City.[335] He worked as a journalist for the Kosovar daily "Rilindja" [Rebirth of Renaissance]. Being the son of an ambassador of the former Yugoslavia, Surroi has an affluent and keen observation of Kosovar politics and party activities. He is one of the founders of the first opposition group in 1999 in Kosovo known as the Association of a Yugoslav Democratic Initiative (UJDI) an oppositional body with left-democratic approach, which was aspired to be an equivalent to the East German New Forum.[336] In addition, he was the founder and editor in chief of the independent weekly "KOHA" [Time] in 1990, which by 1997

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[334] "Election Results in Kosovo." Statistical Office of Kosovo. 18, January, 2004.

[335] "Biography of President [Veton Surroi]." ORA. March, 2006. Accessed on April 20, 2008. http://www.totalstudio.net/ora/kryetari.htm.

[336] Clark, Howard. Civil Resistance in Kosovo. London: Pluto Press, 2000.p.54-55.

was the biggest Kosovar Albanian daily newspaper "Koha Ditore."[337] He is known for being one of the members of the Kosovar Albanian negotiating team to Rambouillet, France, in early 1999.

ORA is founded in summer 2004 by Surroi. It stands for an independent, free and democratic Kosovo. According to its Party Program, ORA supports a state which is to serve its citizens and which everyone has equal opportunities. One of its goals is to establish a free society in Kosovo, which is a fundamental principle for Kosovo to function as a European state with democratic values. It supports free market economy, while respecting social values within the principle of equal opportunity for every citizen.[338]

Despite Surroi's reputation as an active participant in political and social events, ORA did not achieve a lot of success before the Kosovar electorate. During the assembly elections in October 2004, ORA managed to secure only 6.2 percent of the popular votes.[339]

This is evident that Surroi with his bold statements is more famous as a critic, undermining everyone's legitimacy and values. Bold statements have created a sense of dislike by Kosovars towards Surroi, especially they feel insulted when Surroi criticizes and accuses political figures who have gained the respect of the people. For example, Surroi criticizes individuals who have reputation for having worked to make the independence issue reality. However, in an interview for Gazeta Express Surroi claims that the election results showed merely the fact that ORA did not extend its election campaign to the whole territory. He pointed out that ORA was "at an

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[337] Ibid

[338] "Biography of President [Veton Surroi]." ORA. March, 2006.

[339] Election Results in Kosovo, 2004.

intersection of dilemma whether to launch a full electoral campaign or to focus on the [party] structure. We did not have time, or chance, or energy, to perform both simultaneously"[340]

5.6 Party Elites, Alternative Challenging Forces, and Democratization - Pre-1999

Political culture in Kosovo has incorporated different phenomena, such as historical, ethnic and political that has affected values and attitudes of Kosovar society. There has been a strong tradition of mistrust in Kosovo due to oppression and domination by authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. Kosovar society has been democratic deficit not only due to the direct control of Belgrade but also because it has been ruled by political party elites who have not encouraged pluralism.

In the post-communist era, numerous political parties were operating in Kosovo. However, the legacy of communism was carried out further in time while concealing it under the name of nationalism and national aspirations. In particular, in a similar fashion as communist leaders, post-communist leaders controlled and manipulated the population, especially through media. In addition, Bujku (Farmer) was under direct control of the LDK. The Kosovar Albanians depended on receiving news from Radio Zagreb, BBC, the Voice of America, or Deutsche Welle. As satellite TV spread, as Howard Clark notes, the most popular news bulletin was the Albanian TV (located in Albania). But the issue was that the LDK was in control of both Bujku and the Tirana broadcast, which served to promote LDK ideas of encouraging Kosovar Albanian perseverance, while at the same time hyperbolizing any sign of international support.[341]

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[340] "Conditional Independence? Yes." Gazeta Express. 21 December 2005. Accessed on August 20, 2009. [Albanian: "Pavarësi të Kushtëzuar? Po"]. www.gazetaexpress.com.

[341] Clark, p. 109

Veton Surroi, in addition, was the strongest challenger to the LDK's media domination, and reopened KOHA (Time) to stimulate deliberation and inform Kosovar Albanians of the reality. Clark addressing the monopoly of the media quoted Surroi saying, "[p]ublic opinion has become numb to the non-differentiated information it receives. For years it is said that every part of the world is discussing about Kosovo and that Kosovo receives support from all sides of the world. It has become the same whether Kosovo is supported by a Dutch village or by the foreign ministry of a Security Council member state."[342]

Due to planless and aimless politics of Rugova to meet his promises, some Kosovar Albanians began questioning the whole Rugova nonviolent notion. Serbian authorities were getting stronger in Kosovo as they were not being challenged by any means. The Serbian authorities had begun adopting laws against Albanians, dismissing Albanian civil servants and teachers. Approximately, 6,000 schoolteachers were dismissed in 1990 for participating in protest against Serbian policies, and the rest of the teachers were fired when they refused to comply with a new Serbian curriculum that "eliminated the teaching of Albanian literature and history."[343]

Furthermore, in 1991 a new Serbian law would provide Serbs and Montenegrins who would return to Kosovo with five hectares of land, free of charge. By the end of 1994, approximately 6,000 refugees had been sent to Kosovo from Croatia and Bosnia. In 1995, as Croatian armies took offensives against the 'Krajina' region which was Serb dominated, Belgrade had planned to send 20,000 of these refugees to Kosovo. Even though Krajina Serbs did not wish to be sent to Kosovo, "the official total of Serb refugee-colonists in Kosovo had risen to 19,000, by the

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[342] Clark, p.110

[343] Malcolm, p. 349

summer of 1996."[344] According to Europe Since 1945: An Encyclopedia, these refugees were not only given land but also jobs from which Albanians were deprived of, and were offered Albanian houses as well.[345]

While Serbs were being brought into Kosovo, Rugova and LDK were preoccupied defending the parallel system. Simultaneously, Kosovar Albanians were forced into exile due to unbearable and discriminatory measures undertaken by the Serbian regime. Malcolm reports that "surveys of Kosovo Albanians in Western European countries yielded the total of 217,000 in early 1992, and 368,000 in 1993."[346] Furthermore, unbearable conditions took a new level as Serbian authorities could summon an Albanian and question him/her for up to three days without representation under a procedure notoriously known as "informative talks." Serbian laws permitted arrests and imprisonment for as long as two months of "anyone who has committed a 'verbal crime' such as insulting the 'patriotic feelings' of Serbian citizens."[347] Serbian rule of Kosovo was leading to the need of a national movement to challenge that authority as fundamental human rights were violated in Kosovo.

As hundreds of thousands of Kosovars were forced to leave Kosovo, once again it was proven that Rugova was not capable of fighting the Serbian regime. One might dare say that with his passive resistance, Rugova was creating a favourable terrain for the Belgrade regime for ethnic cleansing without the need for bloodshed as was occurring in Bosnia. Ironically, in an interview in 1999, written by Lenard J. Cohen, Rugova stated, "[my] aim was to save my people.

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[344] Ibid, p. 353

[345] "Kosovo." Europe Since 1945: An Encyclopedia. Ed. Bernard Cook. Vol. 5. New York: Garland Publishing, 2001.

[346] Malcolm, p. 353

[347] Ibid, p. 349

Then came the exodus. I went crazy. It looks as though the Serbian plan would become reality: a Kosovo without Albanians, a Serbian zoo."[348]

One of the most proactive wing supporter, Adem Demaçi- who is regarded as the Albanian Mandela for being in jail for 28 years for his political nationalist views- criticized abrasively Gandhian strategy claimed by Rugova. He argued that Rugova and his aids spent their time preserving and protecting "the legitimacy of the parallel system," while not giving priority and not even "enough confronting Serbian control of the province."[349] Similarly, Rexhep Qosja asserted that Albanian resistant movements were unavoidable, but he demerits Rugova for not mobilizing the Albanian resistance in 1990 when the spirit and morale of the people for independence was high.[350]

5.6.1 The Emergence of a Liberation Movement (UÇK)

The people inside Kosovo and the majority of diaspora became frustrated as human rights violations mounted every day. The nonviolence and non-allowing to be provoked notion of Rugova being ridiculed. The first initiative for 'active nonviolence' was taken by students in the fall of 1997, but Rugova persisted on his approach turning "Nelsons eye" (term used by Howard Clark)[351]. However, by the end of 1997, not only the "passive nonviolence" notion was challenged but also the whole nonviolence idea to liberate the people from a regime that had begun killing and massacring people in other parts of former of Yugoslavia.

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[348] Cohen, 360

[349] Ibid, p. 237

[350] Ibid, p. 237

[351] Clark, Howard. Civil Resistance in Kosovo. London: Pluto Press, 2000.
   Cohen, Lenard J. Serpent in the Bosom: The Rise and Fall of Slobodan Milošević.
   Revised Edition, U.S: Westview Press, 2002.

The new nationalist liberation movement, known as the KLA (In Albanian UÇK) that had been operating underground, appeared before the public on November 28, 1997 on Albanian National Day. This radical voluntary recruiting force had, as Lenard J. Cohen notes[352], the potential for becoming a major agent of transformation in Kosovo. Prior to this appearance, the UÇK had carried out several guerrilla attacks on Serbian police stations and patrols. They used the burial of the teacher, Halit Gecaj who was killed in his office, to let people know of the existence.

In early 1998, Kosovars witnessed the unmasked regime of Belgrade whose objectives of killing were transferred from Bosnia to Kosovo. The first massacres launched by the Serbian regime took place in Drenica, in the villages of Likoshanë and Qirez. In Likoshanë, ten Ahmeti men and a guest in their home were executed as they had stayed inside their home thinking they had nothing to hide. Also, their neighbor and his son were killed, as they were defenseless, "the only 'weapons' they had were a hunting rifle and an axe."[353] In Qirez, the police shot the father of the Nebiu family in the leg, killed one of his sons and his pregnant daughter-in-law. The other son was taken into custody and returned his corpse the next day. His four other sons were executed outside their home with five others from Qirez, two of whom had been seen in police custody. Although there had been a clash between UÇK and the police, the Amnesty International determined that the deaths occurred after the UÇK withdrawal. Clark observes that the "the shock wave was heightened because the Ahmeti family had been following the advice given by CDHRF [Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms] and others over the years, making no attempt at self-defence."[354]

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[352] Ibid.

[353] Clark, p. 173

[354] Ibid, p. 174

Another incident occurred a week later. The Serbian police launched an attack in early March against Jashari family in Prekaz (after failing an earlier mission in January 1998, when the Jashari family refused to give up to the Serbian police demands and surrender). The Serbian police determined not to fail again, their "attacks culminated in the March 5, 1998…of some 51 people, including 29 members of the extended Jashari family [whose member was one of the founder of the UÇK] group in the central Drenica area."[355]

To make matters worse, Rugova had announced the presidential and parliamentary elections for March 22, 1998. Opposition and criticism was launched against Rugova, including the vice-president Hydajet Hyseni not to hold the elections because of the conditions created by the Serbian police. By refusing to listen to any opposing and contesting views, Rugova strengthened his personal control and went ahead as planned. Further, Rugova for some time now "apart from his Friday press conferences, Rugova seemed increasingly remote from his own population…Somehow the more Rugova refused to answer his critics, the more presidential his aura became."[356]

5.6.2 Post 1999 Environment

Because not only the Albanian parties but also Serbian parties and UNMIK are concentrated on the talks over the final status of Kosovo, Albanian party elites play an enormous role in such debates. The four largest Kosovar parties identify themselves by their leaders, regardless of their internal structures. As Augustine Palokaj claims "[r]egardless of the different styles and methods by which these leaders run their parties, regardless of whether there is or is not internal pluralism

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[355] Cohen, p. 281

[356] Clark, p. 199

within these political parties, the citizens of Kosovo and international leaders identify these parties by the names of their leaders, without exception"[357]

After the end of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bombing against Serbian military forces that lasted from March 24 to June 10, 1999, political elites in Kosovo entered a new and open rivalry. "I don't understand Rugova and his attitude. I can't understand the boycott he is conducting against his own people…it's not good when a politician is afraid of his own people" proclaimed Thaçi after the late return of Rugova from Italy.[358] In addition, Surroi had been citied by journalists before the war was over questioning Rugova's legitimacy. He regards Rugova as an individual who made too many compromises with the Serbs, thus the power was shifting to individuals such as Adem Demaçi who demanded Kosovar rights and was linked with and a representative (for some time) of the UÇK.[359] Michael Ignatieff states Surroi's comment to Richard Holbrooke in December 1998 at Prishtina airport that Rugova was a coward.[360]

As Kosovar Albanians were driven out of Kosovo, Rugova was, as he claimed, captured by Milošević's military forces. However, under the Italian government pressure, Rugova flew to Rome on May 5, 1999. When the war was over and the NATO troops were stationed in Kosovo, Rugova had returned to Kosovo but re-returned to Rome immediately. In fact, "[w]estern commentators typically found Rugova an unlikely leader figure. Repeatedly they wrote him off in 1998 and again during 1999…he had a period under house arrest, was filmed on TV smiling with Milošević while Kosovo was being ethnically cleansed, later seemed undecided whether to

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[357] Palokaj, Augustine. "LDK's Profiling Key to Successful Functioning of Kosovo." World News Connection. 3 February 2006. Accessed on November 15, 2009. http://toolkit.dialog.com/intranet/cgi/present.

[358] Cohen, p. 360

[359] Ignatieff, Michael. Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond. Canada: Viking, 2000.p.28

[360] Ibid, p. 53

live in Italy or Kosovo and on his return to Kosovo behaved more like a constitutional monarch than a practical politician."[361]

One might ponder how a popular leader so unpopular in mid-1999 becomes again popular, especially after deserting his people. Massimo D'Alema, the former Prime Minister of Italy, in an interview given to B.B.C Albanian, he narrates the experience he had pressuring Serbia to allow Rugova to go to Italy. For Italy and for the international community, the safety of Rugova was a necessity for the post- war Kosovo, as he says, "I was certain that Rugova was the main figure to administrate Kosovo in the post- war period. I was concerned that in the post- war Kosovo there might be predominant extremist and Islamic groups."[362] D'Alema adds, "I cannot release all the details, but the operation [to release Rugova] was not undertaken accidentally. It was a political decision by our side about which we even informed and received the approval of the Americans …not a humanitarian one as the newspapers in Italy published."[363] Hence, Rugova did not enjoy immediate post- war legitimacy, but it seems a though the international community used him in order to promote their agendas.

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[361] Clark, p. 202

[362] D'Alema, Massimo. "D'Alema Speaks for BBC Albanian." BBC Albanian. 29 December 2005. [Albanian: "D'Alema Flet për BBC Shqip"]. Accessed on November 25, 2009. http://www.bbc.co.uk/albanian/news/2005/12/051229_dalema_guri.shtml.

[363] Ibid.

5.6.3 Kosovo Status Talks Intensifies Elite Adversary

Since the party elites have all staked their claims to legitimacy on the question of the future of Kosovo, it is imperative that they meet their promises to their electorate. The party elites have competed restlessly, but this contestation is a democratic process that somehow gives hope that democracy is evident in Kosovo. The question of status, however, also depolarizes the political elites, at least for the sake of Kosovo. Some political actors tend to blame the present situation in which Kosovo is in as its destiny is being decided. As Veton Surroi stated during an interview by Gazeta Express that if the two major political actors, Rugova and Thaçi, had been united Kosovo would not be in this undecided status, but it would have been independent. The preparations for status are a direct result of elite failure during the 1999 Rambouillet talk. "That was it,"[364] Surroi uttered.

However, Surroi said that he would sit around the same table with Rugova, whom he had called an autistic and incapable, to talk about the future status of Kosovo for the sake of the people. But Rugova won the largest number of votes and people have trusted him to form the government and be the head of the Kosovar delegation, Surroi noted, and "he has headed our country for 16 years. If nothing else, it is a duty that history owns him and he owns it to history to be the head of the process."[365]

Thaçi, on the other hand, besides questioning Rugova's legitimacy since 1999 he has a common antagonist as Surroi, Nexhat Daci. The latter is regarded as an obstacle to democratization of Kosovo. During the first session of inauguration of the post- war Assembly of Kosovo, Thaçi wished to protest openly for not inviting the Jashari family in the ceremony, but he was interrupted by Daci. As Behxhet Begu reports, "here started the aggressive political war

[364] Gazeta Express, 2005

[365] Ibid.

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between Nexhat Daci and Hashim Thaçi"[366] Similarly, Surroi's attitude toward Daci is one of

loathing. He claims that it is not personal hatred but "Daci for me is a negative phenomenon for

democratic development in Kosovo."[367]

During the first post- war mandate, the LDK had run Kosovo in coalition with the PDK.

After 2004 elections, PDK along with ORA had decided not to enter the coalition with LDK but

be the official opposition. Daci, already cooperating with Haradinaj who is the rival of Thaçi,

convinced Rugova to form the government in coalition with Haradinaj's AAK and personally led

the negotiations with Haradinaj.[368] The latter has gained a reputation of enlarging political

professionalism. However, his extradition to the Hague after short period of holding the position

of Prime Minister, though released while awaiting the trial has kept a low profile for he was not

allowed to get involved in any public political activity (until recently).

5.6.4 Post Rugova Political Scene

The death of Dr. Ibrahim Rugova on January 21, 2006 created a leadership vacuum at this

very crucial time about the future status of the UN-run Kosovo. He had kept united the

negotiating team for the talks of the future of Kosovo in an authentic manner. As soon as the

news came out that Rugova was diagnosed with lung cancer, the Kosovar elite showed

immediate concern of his replacement. As Xhavit Haliti, a member of the PDK and a participant

in Rambouillet, has put it, "after 15 years as an authoritarian leader of LDK, he still does not

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[366] Begu, Behxhet. "Nexhat Daci-Alchemist." GazetaJava. 3 March 2006.
   [Albanian: "Nexhat Daci- Alkimistë"]. Accessed on January 15, 2010.
   http://gazetajava.com/artman/publish/article_398.shtml.

[367] Gazeta Express, 2005

[368] Begu, 2006.

have a successor. Even though Daci has constitutional rights to take the role of acting president, PDK may resist his participation in the negotiating team"[369] Not just PDK, but also ORA would reject Daci's participation.

After the death of Rugova there have been numerous elite changes in different governmental positions. Some argue that the AAK leader, Haradinaj who just recently was permitted to engage in public and political activities was "promised" to be acquitted by the Hague should he create a technical government by mid- summer 2006. During frequent meetings with the Big Diplomatic Office (referring to US Mission Office in Prishtina) Haradinaj has changed his opinion of Daci. Holding similar views as Surroi and Thaçi though not for similar purposes, Haradinaj began criticizing Daci, "whom [Haradinaj] had given a war time shirt of his brother as a gift some time ago."[370]

Daci, in fact, is being accused of mismanaging the parliamentary budget. Surroi declares that he formally requested from Guardia di Financa to investigate the Assembly of Kosovo. This initiative of Surroi to ask the UNMIK chief Soren Jesen Pettersen to start an investigation was also supported by PDK.[371] The PDK along with ORA accused Daci for buying a car worth 236,000 euros and spending 500 euros a day to visit his luxury houses in Brezovicë. In addition, Enver Robelli exposes corruption with unease, "it is terrible and tragic for Kosovo that the day

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[369] Xharra, Jeta and Artan Mustafa. "Partitioned Albanians Could Make Talks Difficult." Balkan Investigative Reporting. 13 October 2005. Accessed on January 20, 2010.
[Albanian: "Përçarjet e Shqiptarve mund të Vështirësojn Bisedimet"].
http://www.birn.eu.com/insight_03_4_alb.php.

[370] Tahiri, Ramush. "Tremor that Will Cause Earthquake." World News Connection.
3 March 2006. Accessed on February 12, 2010. http://toolkit.dialog.com/intranet/cgi/present.

[371] Etemaj, Burim. "Dialogue with Veton Surroi." Epoka e Re. 21 December 2005.
[Albanian: "Flet Veton Surroi"].Accessed on November 10, 2009.
http://www.totalstudio.net/ora/intervistat/vs/EPOKAERE_Vetoni_21_Dhjetor.doc.

has come when the renowned German newspaper compares the son of the late Kosovo president to Marko Milošević (son of former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milošević)"[372] The details are posted by Mekuli Press Information Agency exposing 13 individuals who are accused of 1.4 million euros. The implicated individuals are from the presidential office: Presidential Secretary, Mujë Buja, who is close to Naser Rugova, who is of Rugova's family, together with the chief of security Qefser Bohollin; the adviser of security, Ramë Maraj. Also, Rugova's sister-in-law, Lumturije Shabani; Prosecutor Nexhat Shatri, who is the brother of the Minister of Economy Haki Shatri. Nexhat Shabani, Rugova's brother-in-law, and Ukë Rugova, the president's son.[373] So this scenery is set up so that corruptive affairs were happening in the eyes of the international organizations and these consequences will follow years to come.

Even though Surroi has tried to fight corruption through political influence, he himself is also accused. Xhemi Zeqiri says that as the wealthiest politician in Kosovo (40 Million Euros at that time), Surroi has been unscrutinized. For example, in 1994 Surroi had reopened the weekly Koha Ditore founded by Open Society Fund- Soros.[374] Zeqiri advices, "Veton Surroi for 16 years has received donations in the name of Kosovo. While the people were impoverished, and tortured, he became richer. He was getting rich during the Serbian occupation and now under UNMIK. That is why he is so politically moderate [or politically accommodating]."[375]

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[372] Robelli, Enver. "Decision from Hill." World News Connection. 7 March 2006. Accessed on November 30, 2016. http://toolkit.dialog.com/intranet/cgi/present.

[373] "Presidentship, 13 Persons Accused of 1.4 Million Euros." Mekuli Press Information Agency. March 2006. Accessed October 12, 2009.[Albanian: Presidentigate, 13 Persona të Akuzuar për 1,4 Milion Euro"]. http://www.mekuli.com/shqip.html.

[374] Clark, p. 110

[375] Zeqiri, Xhemil. "Confine Veton Surroi Before Fleeing to Vienna!." Institute of Political and Social Prognosis. 23 February 2006. Accessed on December 10, 2009.
[Albanian: "'Lidheni' Veton Surroin se mos ikën në Vjenë!"].

It is evident that Kosovo was experiencing democratic deficit. In addition to criticism that occurs among the top political elites, criticism towards the party elites came from women also. According to European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity, female political participation in Kosovo is relatively high. Kosovo was headed in the right direction of pluralism and women empowerment because, "not less than 35 % of the member of parliament (for example in Albania only 5.7%) and 28% of the local councilors are women."[376] Nonetheless, in this historical moment for Kosovar Albanians women demand to be more directly involved in the process of negotiations for the future of Kosovo. "This is a violation of women's rights" says Nita Luci. Women are marginalized as a category considered to be socially, politically, and economically less constitutive than men in Kosovar society, continues Luci[377]

Having to deal with corruption at the state level creates doubts within the society whether the politicians in power are capable and credible to lead a nation of two million people. The people of Kosovo demand that their money not be misused and stolen. Also, in order for a society to fully integrate into the European family, that society must provide equal opportunity for women especially when the whole future of a nation is at stake. The political parties in Kosovo continue their rivalry during the Vienna talks about the status of Kosovo and after the declaration of independence. One would think that political party rivalry is healthy for democratic development but very often this rivalry is at personal level rather than at official or professional level.

http://www.lajme.net/lexuesit.php?lexuesit=0000001376.

[376] "Election Results in Kosovo." Statistical Office of Kosovo. 18, January, 2004.

[377] Luci, Nita. "Gender is not Considered Socially Constitutive in the Process." Java. 30 March 2006. Accessed on March 27, 2010. [Albanian: "Gjinia nuk Po Mirrët si Një Proces Konstitutiv i Shoqëris"]. http://gazetajava.com/artman/publish/article_434.shtml .

5.6.5 Conclusion

Kosovar Albanian political parties are identified and addressed by the internal and international political actors by their leaders. This has created public ambiguity, but it has created a political aura and an opportunity for these leaders to enhance their 'party discipline.' Leaders such as Ibrahim Rugova went as far as eliminating internal pluralism within the LDK. Before he was diagnosed with cancer, Rugova had already been suffering from the 'leadership syndrome.' Not surprisingly he did not resign from his position as a President of Kosovo and did not choose a successor at a time when Kosovo not only did it need the healthiest politicians and analysts but the sharpest and the most intelligent ones.

Since their leaders identify political parties in Kosovo, they are extremely limited in their geographical base (perhaps less the LDK). Depending where the leader was born that that party would gain the most or the second most votes than anywhere else in Kosovo. Thus, party support is regionalized. The Region where the party leader was born usually wins most of the votes, or the second most votes. Ramush Haradinaj born in Deçan won in this municipality 39.41% of the votes, more than anywhere else in Kosovo. Hashim Thaçi born in Skënderaj won in this municipality 84.94% of the votes, more than anywhere else in Kosovo. Ibrahim Rugova born in Istog won in this municipality 59.96% of the votes, the second highest percentage (Suharek was the highest). Veton Surroi born in Prishtina won 14.24%, the second highest percentage of votes than anywhere else in Kosovo -first was Gjakovë with 16.67%.[378] (Statistical Office of Kosovo, 2004 Elections).

Status talks ha dpresently predominated political arena, and since all the parties have risked their claims to legitimacy, political parties of Kosovo have neglected practical issues of

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[378] Statistical Office of Kosovo, 2004

employment, economic growth and security (individual security). Most of the Kosovars identify unemployment as the main problem in Kosovo.

Fatmir Limaj, member of the PDK has attempted to downsize the claims by party elites that they brought Kosovo to this day of freedom. Since it is a personal and party standing to enter history by signing the independence of Kosovo, party elites have neglected the merits of the people. Limaj in an interview for RTK (Radio and Television of Kosovo) in February 2006 argued: "Kosovars are free not because of political parties or political elites, but because of their desire to live freely, thus the leaders that are to sign the independence of Kosovo must remember that it is the Kosovar people who are to be praised."[379]

Bearing in mind the assessment and criticism that party elites throw at each other demonstrates that democratization has been a difficult process but evident, nonetheless. Individuals like Bajram Kosumi (from AAK), the former Prime Minister who was stagnant in the political process of Kosovo and in meeting the political standards enforced by the international community in order to create better conditions for the minorities resigned due to party pressure. Gen. Agim Çeku, who was the General of Kosovo Protection Corps, replaced him. It may not have been the preeminent political move in Kosovo to select a general to form a government, especially at this moment of trying to integrate the minorities, who detest Çeku, into the Kosovar society. It is a change for the higher quality of work, nonetheless. Daci, the Speaker of the Parliament, also due to criticism and accusations and pressure from within the LDK resigned.

Kolë Berisha replaced him. Such recent dramatic and dynamic elite changes in Kosovo through democratic means show that democracy is maturing in Kosovo.

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[379] Limaj, Fatmir. "Status Talks: The Future of Kosova." Radio and Television of Kosova. 9 February, 2006.

5.7 The Main Political Parties and Elites in Kosovo after the Independence in 2008

The Republic of Kosovo attained independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008. The country previously suffered political crises, which undermined the established of political structures. Subsequently, attaining independence coincided with the urge to build strong institutions contributing to Kosovo's peace and stability. Multiparty democracy emerged as one of the immediate structural changes in the country's governance system. On attaining independence, two parties were in power, including the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) and the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK). The rationale for instituting the two parties to the nation's leadership was that they were the most opposing parties at the time.[380] Additional political parties existed in the country, including Vetëvendosje (LVV) which right after Kosovo's independence was not part of the Assembly. Other parties include the Future of Kosovo (AAK), the New Kosovo Alliance (AKR). One of the strategies for achieving stability pursued by the political parties that have been in power since Kosovo's independence is the country's recognition and international subjectivity while promoting and maintaining regional cooporations and stability. In other words, none of the political parties in Kosovo promoted hate or expansionist ideas. All the politicalparties post independence have positioned pro- West and have working towards European Union and NATO integration. For instance, in 2022, Prime Minister Albin Kurti announced Kosovo's application for membership in the Council of Europe and the European Union. Kurti's government has further disclosed its intentions to apply for

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[380] Kropiak, Katarzyna. "The Politics of Nation–Building in Kosovo after 2008." Studia Środkowoeuropejskie i Bałkanistyczne. 2017. 135-150. Accessed on December 10, 2021. https://www.ejournals.eu/SSB/2017/Tom-XXVI/art/11290/.

membership in NATO.[381] The aspirations are similar to those of Hashim Thaçi's government and all the other government leaders, who pursued pro-Europe and pro-American policies.

However, concerns remain that Kosovo's multiparty system has yet to consolidate the country's democracy and institutions. According to Tadić and Elbasani, Kosovo's political culture emerged during communism or due to and right after the war. All these events were characterized by undemocratic principles, which might have potentially informed the foundations and operations of the political parties.[382] The run-up to independence was further marked by an urgency for Kosovo to form more political parties in preparation for a multiparty democratic system.[383] As a result, their political elites emerged abruptly and often accused being associated with crime, corruption, nepotism, and clientelism. The rampant emergence of political parties has further seen immature political elites ascend to the peak of state positions instantaneously, such as the current prime minister and the majority of his cabinet who never held any state posts besides being very active oppositions for over a decade, and very often involved in violent demonstrations who took the streets for any reason and made it a populist cause. Subsequently,

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[381] Krauthamer, Ky. "Transitions Online_Conflict & Diplomacy-Serbia Smiles as Kurti Loses Favor in Washington." Transitions Online 05/11 (2020): 1-3.Accessed on January 8, 2021. https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=853631.

[382] Tadić, Katarina, and Arolda Elbasani. "State-building and patronage networks: how political parties embezzled the bureaucracy in post-war Kosovo." Southeast European and Black Sea Studies. Research Gate. 2018 p. 185-202.Accessed on September 22, 2021. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325436628_State-building_and_patronage_networks_how_political_parties_embezzled_the_bureaucracy_in_post-war_Kosovo.

[383] Krasniqi, Valon. "The Impact of the Electoral System on the Party System-The Case of Kosovo." Europolity-Continuity and Change in European Governance 13.1 2019: 39-80. Accessed on January 19, 2022. http://europolity.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/VOL-13-Krasniqi_Europolity.pdf.

an in-depth assessment of these aspects of Kosovo's political parties is necessary because it will have an impact on the future of the country and the region depending the policy they pursue. Additionally, it is essential to analyze Kosovo's political parties' role in democratization.

5.7.1 Kosovo's Political Parties' Ideologies

After the independence, Kosovo's political parties also began facing hot topics when running around and asking for the vote of the people. Political ideology is considered one of the most significant elements of a political party. According to Maliqi and Ilazi[384], it helps distinguish a party's perceptions and approaches to governance and is used as a tool for political persuasion during elections. Traditionally, parties are classified as either right or left. Parties pursuing the right spectrum political ideology tend to proclaim the preservation of their countries' pasts. The political parties also pursue the formation of smaller governments, free markets, and privatization and are against the rights of abortion and same-sex marriages.[385] Leftists' approach promotes a greater governance role and increases the government's role in the markets. The political ideology also emphasizes higher taxation to sustain social programs and promote the rights of minorities, women, and LGBTQ.[386] Despite these classifications, political

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[384] Maliqi, Agon, and Ramadan Ilazi. "The Emerging Cracks in Kosovo's Euro-Atlantic Consensus: Erratic geopolitics and the future of liberal-democratic norms." August 24, 2021. Accessed on September 20, 2021. https://qkss.org/en/publikimet/the-emerging-cracks-in-kosovos-euro-atlantic-consensus-erratic-geopolitics-and-the-future-of-liberal-democratic-norms.

[385] Tavits, Margit, and Natalia Letki. "When left is right: Party ideology and policy in post-communist Europe." American Political Science Review. 103.4 2009: 555-569. Accessed on April 20, 2020. https://econpapers.repec.org/article/cupapsrev/v_3a103_3ay_3a2009_3ai_3a04_3ap_3a555-569_5f99.htm.

[386] Inbar, Yoel, David A. Pizarro, and Paul Bloom. "Conservatives are more easily disgusted than liberals." ResearchGate. 23.4 2009: 714-725. Accessed on January 15, 2020.

parties today tend to merge aspects of both ideologies to broaden their support bases. Some even attempt and attract people from opposing axes just to gain as much votes as possible moving away from its core believes and values. Political parties that emerged from communist countries and were part of a federation, such as Kosovo, lack these distinctions, which may also be common among states with a long tradition of political pluralism.

   For instance, despite forming the first government between 2007 and 2010, PDK and LDK were not guided by a particular ideology. Instead, they focused more on state-building and staying in power.[387] According to Maliqi and Ilazi, one of the dangers of lacking a political ideology is the enhanced likelihood of governance crises. The rationale is that before ascending to power, parties with political ideologies tend to assess them in the purview of the Constitution.[388] Subsequently, hurried decisions are prevented, and constitutional crises are averted. The view was fulfilled when Kosovo's Constitutional Court ruled in 2010 that the two parties in government violated the Constitution by instituting two positions held by the President of Kosovo and the President of LDK.[389] Subsequently, LDK left the government, leading to an institutional crisis that forced the country into parliamentary elections in February 2011. Some blame the coalition partner for the political crisis as they are not ideologically compatible to

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247497267_Conservatives_are_More_Easily_Disgusted_than_Liberals.

[387] Krasniqi, Valon. "The Impact of the Electoral System on the Party System-The Case of Kosovo." Europolity-Continuity and Change in European Governance 13.1 (2019): 39-80. http://europolity.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/VOL-13-Krasniqi_Europolity.pdf.

[388] Maliqi, Agon, and Ramadan Ilazi. "The Emerging Cracks in Kosovo's Euro-Atlantic Consensus: Erratic geopolitics and the future of liberal-democratic norms." (2021).

[389] Mansfield, Nicolas. "Creating a Constitutional Court: Lessons From Kosovo." East-West Management Institute Occasional Paper Series. 2013. Accessed on November 30, 2019. https://ewmi.org/sites/ewmi.org/files/OrgFiles/EWMIOPSKosovoConstitutionalCourt.pdf.

govern and put blames on the self-preservation politics of Hashim Thaçi of PDK[390], whose party was in governing coalition. Pursuing an ideological stance would have spared Kosovo the unplanned parliamentary election. Following the February 2011 elections, a new coalition government comprised of the PDK and AKR was formed. However, the parties once more ignored the centrality of political, ideological ties among political parties seeking to create a coalition government. Instead, there was more focus on attaining a majority in Parliament. As a result, while the coalition held a strong position in Parliament, there was a lack of unity in government decisions.[391] Subsequently, the then Prime Minister Thaçi insinuated that in the future, PDK would seek to create coalitions with parties that had closer ideas to his party's.[392] The decision was late as it came after the June 2014 elections. In this regard, it reflected a lack of commitment toward ensuring that political ideology guided government formation. Similar outcomes characterized the later elections, which none concluded the four year constitutional mandate.

Consequently, there are concerns that such chaotic formation of coalitions without considering the involved parties' ideologies negatively impacts Kosovo's government's output. In their study, Maliqi and Ilazi[393] highlight the negative consequences of unharmonized political parties' ideologies on social and economic development. Subsequently, there is an emphasis that

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[390] Visoka, Gëzim. "International governance and local resistance in Kosovo: the thin line between ethical, emancipatory and exclusionary politics." Irish studies in international affairs (2011): 99-125.

[391] Krasniqi, Valon. "The Impact of the Electoral System on the Party System-The Case of Kosovo." Europolity-Continuity and Change in European Governance 13.1 (2019): 39-80.

[392] Lutfiu, Nuredin, Agon Halabaku, and Valbona FISHEKU-HALABAKU. "Consolidating Democracy in Kosovo: The Effective Functioning of Basic Institutions." Prizren Social Science Journal 5.2 (2021): 93-100.

[393] Maliqi, Agon, and Ramadan Ilazi. "The Emerging Cracks in Kosovo's Euro-Atlantic Consensus: Erratic geopolitics and the future of liberal-democratic norms." (2021).

Kosovo's political parties should pursue known political ideologies to help them enter coalitions with like-minded formations when forming the government. Apart from the ideological model, there are equal concerns over additional factors that compound this shortcoming.

In this sphere of arrangements in terms of governing parties, the international administration also played a role. It would be argued that the political parties formed from 1999 to 2008 were only capacity built by United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) on enhancing economic and social development[394] and even act as transitioning parties as they had no decision making power in the central government. Nonetheless, there were insignificant directives for building their ideological stances. Subsequently, the parties continue to operate on a foundation that prioritizes power acquisition to control development but with no objective ideology to guide this undertaking.[395] Equally based on these ideological differences, successive governments in Kosovo have been unable to incorporate measures to enhance their integration into the European Union. Tadić and Elbasani[396] observe that Kosovo's foreign policy is at stake with the persistence of these ideological incompetencies among the political parties and their continued formation of coalitions. It can thus be concluded that the envisioned creation of a

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[394] Krasniqi, Valon. "Political parties ideologies in Kosovo." Revista de Ştiinţe Politice. January 2016. 108-119. Accessed on March 22, 2017. https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA455056958&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1&it=r&linkacces s=abs&issn=1584224X&p=AONE&sw=w&userGroupName=anon%7Ef13a9dc9&aty=open+web+ entry.

[395] Zejnullahi, Veton. "Political Parties in Kosovo, Organizational Structure and Their Internal Democracy." European Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies. December 2016. Accessed on April, 26, 2017. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318536703_Political_Parties_in_Kosovo_Organizational_ Structure_and_Their_Internal_Democracy.

[396] Tadić and Elbasani

united multiethnic Kosovo through multiparty democracy only informed the creation of charismatic and clientelist formations with no ideology.[397] Also the legal famework in Kosovo makes it much more difficult as it is mandatory to have minorities represented in the central government and legislative bodies no matter who they are loyal too as the law does not forbid anti-state political parties to pursue office and governance.

5.7.2 Patronage and Clientelism among Elites in Kosovo

The institutionalization of democracy through the introduction of multiparty systems was expected to enhance oversight over the government in Kosovo. However, political elites exploit their leadership positions to fortify their power through patronage and clientelism. Tadić and Elbasani[398] refer to a 2016 leaked conversation among Kosovo's political elites in their study. From the conversations, the governing parties' leaders recruited political loyalists and militants into the public enterprises and civil service. Similar appointments were also evident in the judiciary, the police service, and the universities in the country. The tapped conversations mainly indicted the leadership of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK). The politicians further mocked the minority parties, indicating that leadership or winning elections was a zero-sum game. The conversations exposed the deeply entrenched political patronage and the political elites' disdain for internationally recognized ideals of democracy and state-building. According to Bliznakovski,[399] the events were unexpected, given the global efforts, through UNMIK, EULEX to create governance structures within the multi-ethnic Kosovo. The expected outcome

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[397] Krasniqi.

[398] Tadić and Elbasani.

was a professional Weberian bureaucracy.[400] Under such a bureaucratic approach, the governing

parties should have limited power over the civil service. Similarly, the judiciary should be

independent of political interference, which extends to appointing judicial officers and have a

clear division of power, and therefore, not influence one another. In this regard, the country

experiences state capture perpetrated by the ruling parties.[401] As a result, it is necessary to

investigate why political patronage and control by dominant parties continue unabated in Kosovo

and is happening also by the current government which came to power swearing that clientele

and corruption will be eradicated not only mitigated. While previously, LVV loudly claimed that

officials with corruptive cases over their shoulders have no place in the government, now that

they govern they go as far as defending their "appointees" and attack the judiciary for pursuing

selective cases. One such case would be the Berisha case, the Kosovo Ambassador to Croatia

who is suspected as involved in a scandal allegedly benefiting six hundred thousand euros from

the GEN (electricity) company in Belgrade and they suspect that the ruling party has been

financed secretly.[402]Although there is a criminal charge filed against the Ambassador, the current

government instead of releasing him, they are defending him.

The post-communist Kosovo was infiltrated with patronage networks before UNMIK and other

intervening actors arrived. On arrival, UNMIK sought to establish order and hierarchy within the

existing patronage networks, for which made decisions and allocated resources. However,

instead of pursuing the bureaucratic structures introduced, elites within these formations,

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[400] Tadić and Elbasani.

[401] Ibid.

[402] "Suspicious Millions of Euros: Two investigations on Berisha, Kurti determined to defend the
Ambassador." Gazeta Nacionale. February, 2023. Accessed on March 22, 2023.
https://nacionale.com/politike/miliona-euro-te-dyshimta-dy-hetime-mbi-berishajn-por-pushteti-i-
kurtit-i-paluhatur-ne-mbrojtje-te-ambasadorit.

including LVV, continued rewarding their loyalists with jobs and government contracts.[403] Such patronage was further enhanced by consistently sidelining more accountable politicians. In this regard, a leadership crisis persists, and patronage expand, given that only politicians pursuing patron-clientelism survive the existent political parties' expectations. The trend continued post-independence as it underpinned the political parties' growth. Subsequently, the state has become a predatory elite project where they extract resources and orchestrate their patronage networks.

Patronage perpetrated by the elites is further sustained by the loose legislation and inconsistent procedures that characterize recruitment into public service. Kmezić[404] attributes the inconsistencies to the involvement of multiple international actors in formulating the policies. In addition, different legal traditions usually present compatibility challenges. For instance, while Kosovo's employment law was anchored on the Civil Law System before independence, the UNMIK legislation was on British Common Law.[405] For instance, the Civil Service Law introduced by UNMIK regulated staff in the executive, judiciary, assembly, schools, police, and hospitals, while Kosovo's Law had a narrow definition of civil servants. Subsequently, it became more difficult to implement the new policies. Moreover, the post-independence regulations on civil servants' recruitment displayed additional challenges. For instance, Bliznakovski argues that they lacked job specifications for civil servants. As a result, political discretion has emerged as a

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[403] Tadić and Elbasani.

[404] Kmezić, Marko. "Rule of law and democracy in the Western Balkans: addressing the gap between policies and practice." Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies. January 2020: 77-192. Accessed on June 29, 2020. https://www.researchgate.net/journal/Journal-of-Southeast-European-and-Black-Sea-Studies-1743-9639.

[405] Tadić and Elbasani. p. 191

norm on this front.[406] Subsequently, political parties' leaderships have found infiltrating civil

servants' recruitment processes easier. Additional views on this challenge are evident in Beha's

study,[407] which further observes that the misuse of political discretion is evidenced in political

actors' strategy of obfuscating formal rules to include political cronies in the civil service. As

indicated, such obfuscation of recruitment in public service is sustained because the political

parties are personality-driven networks that must buy loyalty. In this regard, the parties provide

an existing ground for perpetrating clientelism.

  Another approach purposively pursued by political parties to enhance patron-clientelism is

poor coordination. Political parties are tasked with developing laws necessary for enhancing

service delivery, and employment laws are not an exception. Since Kosovo's independence,

successive governments have been adamant about developing policies to improve civil servants'

recruitment coordination. Instead, they have worked consistently to consolidate power around

themselves. In instances with new laws, they only exacerbate the legal discrepancies that worsen

recruitment inconsistencies in the country. The challenge is further compounded by the fact that

political parties in governance are unwilling to cooperate with the international bodies involved

in institutionalizing employment in the civil service.[408] The weak local institutions further

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[406] Bliznakovski

[407] Beha, Adem. "Consociational democracy and political engineering in postwar
Kosovo." Nationalities Papers. May 2019: 674-689.Accessed on June 15, 2020.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333322577_Consociational_Democracy_and_Political_Engineering_in_Postwar_Kosovo.

[408] Doli, Dren, Fisnik Korenica, and Artan Rogova. "The post-independence civil service in Kosovo:
A message of politicization." International Review of Administrative Sciences. December 2012:
665-691. Accessed on November 25, 2016.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258182926_The_post-independence_civil_service_in_Kosovo_A_message_of_politicization.

enhance the challenge, given that their capacities are yet to be enhanced by the existing

legislation. In this regard, the self-satisfaction of the political parties in strengthening institutions

that might challenge their patronage is exposed. As a result, there is a need for initiatives pursued

by the political parties to reduce their tight control over recruitment. [409]Similarly, the country is

unlikely to achieve its developmental goals, to the detriment of the citizens who are leaving the

country on daily bases.

5.7.3 Internal Political Parties' Democracy in Kosovo

Political parties are agents of democracy. Subsequently, the baseline expectation is that they

practice democratic principles within their ranks. According to Tadić,[410] political parties in

emerging democracies tend to experience challenges with their internal democracy. Some

undemocratic principles consistent with such parties include the concentration of power in the

hands of one or few leaders and the lack of internal elections. A lack of internal party democracy

silences divergent views that might benefit governance. It further constrains the emergence of

alternative leadership within political parties. In this regard, the affected country's leadership

alternatives are compromised.[411] According to Beha, internal party democracy in Kosovo is

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[409] Ibid.

[410] Tadić, Katarina, and Arolda Elbasani. "State-building and patronage networks: how political parties embezzled the bureaucracy in post-war Kosovo." Southeast European and Black Sea Studies. Research Gate. 2018 p. 185-202.Accessed on September 22, 2021. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325436628_State-building_and_patronage_networks_how_political_parties_embezzled_the_bureaucracy_in_post-war_Kosovo.

[411] Tansey, O. (2007). Democratization without a state: Democratic regime-building in Kosovo. Democratisation. February 2007: 129-150. Accessed on December 20, 2016.

compromised by elite dominance, non-competitive elections of party leadership, and

discrimination in candidates' selection.[412] As indicated in the previous section, there are also

elements of patron-client relations in the parties where the patron holds excessive power. The

patron in such incidences also disregards democratic reforms likely to guarantee continuity.

From this perspective, it is evident that political parties are personality-driven eliminating

competition and adversaries.

  Legal possibility for party factions is another strategy for enhancing internal party democracy.

Nonetheless, it is hardly practiced in Kosovo's context. For example, PDK's statute has no

provision for having a party faction. Instead, it prefers disciplinary processes against party

members opposed to the party position[413] aiming to enhance party discipline. In this regard, it

gags members who could have different opinions from sharing their position. Similar trends are

evident in LDK, AAK, and Vetevendosje (VV), where possibilities of party factions are not

envisaged in their guidelines. In AAK, parliamentarians are briefed on the party's position before

attending sessions, which implies that contrary opinions are not permitted.[414] At LVV, the party's

General Assembly monitors parliamentarians to determine whether they conform to the party's

position. The assembly then institutes disciplinary proceedings against members who fail to

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https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46283798_Democratization_without_a_State_Democratic
_Regime-building_in_Kosovo.

[412] Beha, Adem. "Consociational democracy and political engineering in postwar
Kosovo." Nationalities Papers 47.4 (2019): 674-689.

[413] Krasniqi, Valon. "The Impact of the Electoral System on the Party System-The Case of
Kosovo." Europolity-Continuity and Change in European Governance.

[414] Sejdiu, Mehdi, and Alban Haliti. "The lack of political ideologies in Kosovo's political
parties." Savremena politika i upravljanje. Vol. 3 (1) 2017. 29-45. Accessed on November 5, 2020.
https://www.academia.edu/31503394/The_lack_of_political_ideologies_in_Kosovos_political_partie
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defend the party's position. In this regard, all four main parties in Kosovo discourage the emergence of political factions. Moreover, infrequent party meetings further compromise the democratic right among members to articulate their contrary opinions. For instance, there are incidences that PDK's leadership has failed to convene party meetings for over a year. The move is considered a conscious effort to silence members with contrary opinions in order to maintain status quo[415] of dominance.

Public criticism of a political party by its members is equally considered an integral aspect of democracy. In Kosovo, the PDK statute prohibits members from criticizing the party's position. Members are prohibited from attending events that contradict the party's political stand. In LDK, members who disagree with the party's positions are prohibited from attending party meetings.[416] Disciplinary procedures can be instituted against such members. While there is no mention of similar provisions in AAK's statute, members are disallowed from contradicting the party's president's position on governance.[417] However, LVV allows members to express their views before a party decision is declared[418] but must maintain the party line afterwards. The views are restrained once the party communicates its position. In this regard, LVV equally constrains public criticism in two ways. First, contrary views will persist despite the party identifying a particular position. Secondly, politics and governance are dynamic, and opinions will change with time.[419]

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[415] Zejnullahi, Veton. "Political Parties in Kosovo, Organizational Structure and Their Internal Democracy." European Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies.

[416] Beha.

[417] Tansey.

[418] Beha.

[419] Zehjnullahu.

Members of parliament play a representation role. Subsequently, their voting patterns are expected to represent their constituents' interests. Kosovo's political parties operate against this expectation. For instance, in LVV, parliamentarians are expected to vote by instruction on issues on which the party has a pre-determined view. While there are incidences that MPs have voted differently, this is restricted.[420] LDK pursues a similar strategy by discussing its position with its elected members before voting. The decision is made through coordination in the party's platform and involvement of the party's experts and presidency.[421] There are, however, incidences in that parliamentarians have voted against the party position. Burema highlights an incidence when Lufti Hazari, senior LDK official, asked that Kosovo's borders with Serbia be revised despite LDK's position that such alterations were unnecessary.[422] There was equally an incidence when four LDK MPs questioned the privatization of the Post and Telekom of Kosovo. AAK's statute does not mention its position on members voting against party position. Nevertheless, there are incidences that its members have voted against the party's position. No sanctions have been imposed on the MPs who pursue a contrary opinion. Nonetheless, LVV introduces rule barring MPs from voting against the party position in parliament and is less tolerant.

Political parties in Kosovo are yet to fully implement democratic principles as envisioned when the country attained its independence. The political parties are devoid of political ideologies. Subsequently, the country is embroiled in leadership crises as parties with conflicting

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[420] Tadić, Katarina, and Arolda Elbasani.

[421] Ibid.

[422] Burema, Lars. "Decentralization in Kosovo: Defusing ethnic tensions or furthering ethnic isolation?." Decentralization and local development in South East Europe. 2013: 100-117.Accessed on September 20, 2016. https://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/europe/%20balkans/kosovo/218-setting-kosovo-free-remaining-challenges.pdf.

views continue forming coalitions. In this regard, there is a need to enhance the parties'

capacities to develop ideologies. Subsequently, they will be persuaded to form coalitions with

political parties whose ideologies converge for the governments to last. Patronage and

clientelism also remain a challenge that needs immediate interventions. Kosovo's political

parties must equally practice internal democracy principles to attain accountability and enhance

the country's relevance in regional and global politics.

5.7.4 Conclusion

In addition to changing circumstances at global level, the Republic of Kosovo is confronted

with a specific security situation, which is a function of the fact that it is still in the process of

consolidating its statehood as it is not part of the United Nation, the European Union, NATO,

Council of Europe and OSCE. The Republic has developed a successful partnership with the

international presence in Kosovo consisting of the International Military Presence represented by

NATO/KFOR, the European Union Mission in the field of rule of law (EULEX) and not so

much cooperation with the UNMIK due to its nature and association with the strict mandate of

the UNRES 1244.

Bearing in mind that conflicts and developments in Russia and Ukraine may and does have

a security impact on the national security of Kosovo, it is evident that the security of Kosovo and

the region is closely connected to and dependent upon the security of the region and wider

Europe because of its proximity and the past experiences where the whole of Europe had to

engage in the post Yugoslav disintegration process. NATO intervention in 1999 against the

Milosevic's regime to halt the genocide and the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Therefore, the

cooperative security must be seen as a mechanism to overcome the legacy of the past and

minimize regular tensions between Kosovo and Serbia, in particular in the Northern Kosovo where Belgrade has a greater impact as the majority of the population are Serbs and the dominant party is conducted and orchestrated by the regime in Belgrade. These constant tensions between Serbia and Kosovo are having an impact and a chain or reaction on all the neighbouring countries which comprise of ethnic Albanians and other communities. Evidently, a secure Europe means a secure Western Balkans where peace and prosperity triumphs everything else in this particular security sensitive times.

The vision of the Republic of Kosovo, therefore, is to live in peace where stability and security lead to prosperity. At the same time, the Republic of Kosovo demonstrates its pro-western and Euro-Atlantic aspirations by participating in joint missions abroad with Western allies while aligning its policies with the West, be that towards Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine or other stands. As an illustration, Kosovo, namely Ministry of Defense and Kosovo Security Force, attend regularly the meeting of the Contact Group for the Defense of Ukraine under the chairmanship of the US Secretary of Defense.

Recently, the Republic of Kosovo is taking concrete steps in joining the Council of Europe since Russia is no longer a member Kosovo has high hopes. It also desires to maintain peaceful relations with its neighbors and wishes to become the premier Disaster Response and Search & Rescue provider for its immediate region.[423] Last but not least, the Republic of Kosovo aims to establish e formal relationship with NATO, laying the ground for a long term role in contributing to Collective Security and Smart Defense, regionally and globally, but it is facing some serious setbacks due to some harsh criticism on Kosovo government, from its biggest supporter, the United States.

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[423] The author possess the Letter as he worked in the Ministry of Defense as the Head of Euro-Atlantic Integration Section and was part of the Search and Rescue Training Centre Working Group

While Kosovo attained its independence in 2008, internal governance and diplomatic challenges have persisted. Internal governance challenges are mainly compounded by the weak political parties founded during communist times and the legacy that followed. The parties also lack ideologies and are personality-driven but they are also rather leader driven and leader identified. Apart from patron-clientele relations in the parties, the political elites are perceived as corrupt by the citizens. Subsequently, there is a need to address these shortcomings for the country to attain good governance. The ripple effects of the poor leadership perpetrated by the parties' leaderships are evident in the insistent diplomatic challenges with Serbia and other countries, including Russia. While additional interventions have been adopted to this effect, Serbia still opposes Kosovo's recognition and conducts and pursues a very aggressive policy towards Kosovo utilizing every means possible, including the ethnic Serbs living in Kosovo and as far as threatening with military high alert combat ready close to the border with Kosovo. Subsequently, Kosovo's foreign security and defense policy and its Euro-Atlantic aspirations are undermined very often by its domestic policies and immature approaches.

CHAPTER 6. Foreign Security and Defense Policy in Kosovo and its Euro-Atlantic

Aspirations

6.1 Introduction

A country's political leadership significantly influences its relations with other governments and international organizations. As indicated, political parties in Kosovo are yet to attain the expected levels of democratic practices as witnessed among their Western counterparts. Nonetheless, successive governments formed by coalitions of these political parties in Kosovo have consistently pursued the country's foreign security and defense policy. According to Marleku, Kosovo's pursuit of foreign security and defense policy is justified, given the pre-

independence conflicts with Serbia.[424] Similarly, the country is yet to be fully recognized as independent. As a result, the country strives to achieve diplomatic recognition by consolidating internal and external sovereignty. In their study, Seymour argues that the lack of universal recognition threatens Kosovo's political existence. In this regard, its territorial integrity could be easily compromised.[425] The diplomatic recognition challenge further undermines the country's aspirations to join the Euro-Atlantic community, the United Nations, and other international organizations. The challenge is further compounded by the fact that Kosovo is yet to get the full support of the UN Security Council members, including Russia and China. The lack of universal recognition further undermines Kosovo's foreign contractual capabilities.

Kosovo does not possess all the statehood attributes as its neighbors do, including internal and external sovereignty. Internally, the country grapples with the refusal of Serbs in the northern part to be integrated into Kosovo's political system. Externally, countries such as China, Russia, Spain, and Serbia oppose Kosovo's independence.[426] Subsequently, Kosovo's main foreign policy objective remains wider international recognition of its independence. The view was validated by various foreign policy documents implemented by the country immediately before and upon the declaration of independence in 2008. The Ahtisaari Plan, the basis for Kosovo's declaration of independence, is one such document.[427] The plan terminated UNMIK's mandate and increased

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[424] Marleku, Alfred. "Small states foreign policy: the case of Kosovo." Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations. Fall 2012: 79-97. Accessed on May 19, 2017. https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/19298.

[425] Seymour, Lee JM. "Legitimacy and the Politics of Recognition in Kosovo." Small Wars & Insurgencies 28.4-5 (2017): 817-838.

[426] Krasniqi, Valon. "Political parties ideologies in Kosovo." Revista de Ştiinţe Politice 49 (2016):108-119.

[427] Marleku, Alfred. "Small states foreign policy: the case of Kosovo." Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations 11.3 (2012): 79-97.

the role of the EU Rule of Law (EULEX) in Kosovo to bring the country closer to EU. Subsequently, it inherited all the contractual obligations of UNMIK, which had previously entered various international agreements with international organizations and countries on behalf of Kosovo.[428] Nonetheless, the continued existence of UNMIK also posed duality in Kosovo's foreign policy as it continued representing the country in the Security Council Meetings on Kosovo. Subsequently, the Ahtisaari plan failed to guarantee the Republic of Kosovo's exclusive representation of the territory in international affairs. In this regard, more foreign policy directives became a necessity at independence.

6.2 Kosovo's Recognition Strategies

The Foreign Affairs and Diplomatic Service of Kosovo was formed in March 2008. Subsequently, parliament ratified the Law on Foreign Service of the Republic of Kosovo to operationalize the Ministry (Marleku 91). In December 2008, another foreign policy act, the Law on Consular Service of Diplomatic and Consular Missions of the Republic of Kosovo, was passed. According to Newman and Visoka (376), the accelerated passing of these laws was meant to enhance Kosovo's global recognition by facilitating the establishment of embassies and consulates globally. As a result and additional acts, the Regulation on Foreign Service and the Regulation on Consular Service, were by parliament in 2009. The resultant institutional structure informed the opening of 22 Kosovar Embassies and 14 consular missions globally by 2013. Similarly, the resultant structures facilitated Kosovo's start of a visa regime for citizens of 87 countries. The countries included Russia and China, which opposed Kosovo's independence.[429] Kosovo's foreign policy's focus on accomplishing international recognition is further reflected in

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[428] Krasniqi, Valon. "Political parties ideologies in Kosovo." Revista de Ştiinţe Politice.

[429] Ibid.

its Ministry of Foreign Affairs priorities. The first mission is to enhance the recognition of Kosovo's independence and establish diplomatic relations with other countries. The Ministry's subsequent strategic plans have further emphasized the need to cultivate close ties with the United States and the need for strategic partnerships with the EU and NATO.

Although the Ministry of foreign affairs lack visual explanation and are difficult to get information from, the website lacks a lot of basic information but only briefly describes the vision Kosovo. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora of the Republic of Kosovo aims "to strengthen the international subjectivity of the Republic of Kosovo, expanding and deepening bilateral relations and becoming part of multilateral organizations that are of interest to the citizens of the country and the strategic goals of the Republic. This is intended to be achieved through the improvement of foreign service, lobbying strategy and diplomatic, cultural and economic promotion.[430]

There is equal emphasis on Kosovo's membership in international organizations, good neighborly relations, and cooperation. The relations are expected to be pursued through bilateral and multilateral agreements. The Ministry of foreign affairs also relies on the highlighted acts of parliament to represent and protect Kosovo's interests and its citizens abroad. In this view, Kosovo's foreign policy since its independence continues to prioritizes the country's recognition to increase its international subjectivity and consolidate statehood.

Consequently, Kosovo embarked on identifying countries indirectly recognizing its independence. The intention, in this regard, would be to convert the de facto recognition into de

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[430] "Summary of the Foreign Policy." Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora. Accessed on February 22, 2023. https://mfa-ks.net/permbledhje/.

jure recognition. According to Broers,[431] de-jure recognition usually precedes diplomatic ties. Subsequently, Kosovo first identified all countries with open-ended or hostile views toward its status. The approach further involved identifying countries willing to cooperate with Kosovo indirectly. The countries pursuing such cooperation with Kosovo included those with diplomatic communication and other forms of corporation with the country.[432] Serbia and some European states fit this description. According to Cottey,[433] pursuing de facto recognition informed Kosovo's relative peace with Serbia. For instance, there are several cases where Serbia has recognized representatives from Kosovo and negotiated agreements. The negotiations have further informed Kosovo and Serbia's agreements on border management. Further, liaison officers have been posted to both countries' capitals.[434] In this regard, while Serbia does not officially recognize Kosovo's independence, but it is willing, or coerced, to establish diplomatic ties with the country. Kosovo has further leveraged this strategy to ensure that it established diplomatic relations with European countries reluctant to recognize its independence. Some

[431] Broers, Laurence. "Mirrors to the world: The claims to legitimacy and international recognition of de facto states in the South Caucasus." Brown J. World Aff. July 16, 2018: 145-156.Accessed on March 28, 2020. https://bjwa.brown.edu/20-2/mirrors-to-the-world-the-claims-to-legitimacy-and-international-recognition-of-de-facto-states-in-the-south-caucasus/.

[432] Krasniqi, Valon. "Political parties ideologies in Kosovo." Revista de Științe Politice

[433] Cottey, Andrew. "The Kosovo war in perspective." International Affairs. April 28, 2009: 593-608.Accessed on January 12, 2017. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2009.00816.x.

[434] Bashota, Bardhok, and Afrim Hoti. "The Role of the EU in Facilitating a Hard Implementation Dialogue: Normalization of Kosovo-Serbia Relations." Southeastern Europe. February 2021: 1-29. Accessed on December 2, 2021. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349034156_The_Role_of_the_EU_in_Facilitating_a_Hard_Implementation_Dialogue_Normalization_of_Kosovo-Serbia_Relations.

countries include Romania, Greece, and Slovakia[435] and it is contradictory to above mentioned

argument as there are five EU countries that do not recognize Kosovo, thus out of all EU

member states only 23 recognize Kosovo. The ties significantly bolster Kosovo's aspiration to

join the European Union. In addition, it has enhanced Kosovo's national security as the countries

have entered a military corporation with Kosovo through bilateral relations. The economic

corporation realized in these relations further enhances Kosovo's diplomatic relevance in the

region. Subsequently, Kosovo's ties with countries that do not recognize its independence can be

translated as a mechanism for achieving regional ties and build trust among them.

   Kosovo also pursues ties with countries that pursue a passive and negative position on its

independence. In most incidences, countries in this category oppose Kosovo's recognition based

on various factors, which they believe could negatively impact their diplomatic position,

interests, and their domestic turbulences in the future. For example, Ker-Lindsay and

Armakolas[436] identify Cyprus and Spain as some of the countries in this category. Subsequently,

they oppose Kosovo's integration into the EU and hardly pursue diplomatic conversations with

the country. In this regard, Kosovo's intended ties with the EU countries are difficult to make at

almost every stage as some of thos countries are NATO members too and create an impasse for

Kosovo in some integration processes. The challenge is further compounded by powerful

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[435] Ker-Lindsay, James, and Ioannis Armakolas. "Kosovo, EU member states and the recognition-engagement nexus." The Politics of Recognition and Engagement: EU Member State Relations with Kosovo. January 2020: 1-17. Accessed on April 2, 2021. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334278635_Kosovo_EU_Member_States_and_the_Recognition-Engagement_Nexus.

[436] Ker-Lindsay, James, and Ioannis Armakolas. "Kosovo, EU member states and the recognition-engagement nexus." The Politics of Recognition and Engagement: EU Member State Relations with Kosovo (2020): 1-17.

countries outside the EU, which rely on their political and economic aptitudes to challenge Kosovo's recognition as an independent country. For example, Russia, China, are among the countries in this relations category with Kosovo which are also permanent members of the Unted Nations Security Council and without their green light Kosovo cannot be part of the UN.

Kosovo also pursues proactive engagement with regional and international organizations. According to Saliu,[437] since its independence, Kosovo has focused on establishing diplomatic missions in cities hosting international organizations. The follow-on memberships to these organizations increase Kosovo's international legitimacy and independence. The organizations further allow Kosovo to use its structures to pressure countries without recognizing its independence. For instance, the relationship with the European Union through the Stabilization and Association Agreement has enabled Kosovo to consolidate its status among the member countries. For instance, study observes that the presence of Kosovo's diplomatic representation in Brussels has helped facilitate the country's recognition by the EU parliament.[438] In this regard, it received equal attention as other states in the integration process. Kosovo has further presented its attempts to join the EU as advantageous to other smaller nations with a similar desire the joining the regional body.

Lastly, Kosovo's foreign security and defense policy adopts public and digital diplomacy. According to Seymour,[439] over the years, the international presence has portrayed Kosovo as a conflict-stricken country with little hope for peace and diplomatic prosperity. The public

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[437] Saliu, Hasan. "International image of the country through strategic communication, Case of Kosovo." Journal of Media Critiques 3.9 (2017): 65-76.

[438] Newman, Edward, and Gëzim Visoka. "The foreign policy of state recognition: Kosovo's diplomatic strategy to join international society." Foreign Policy Analysis 14.3 (2018): 367-387.

[439] Seymour, Lee JM. "Legitimacy and the Politics of Recognition in Kosovo." Small Wars & Insurgencies 28.4-5 (2017): 817-838.

diplomacy approach pursued portrays the country as stable and investment friendly.[440]

Marleku[441] refers to this approach as a people-to-people targeted, as opposed to government-targeted diplomacy. There is equal reliance on professions such as art and media to visit countries targeted for diplomatic ties. The rationale is to leverage these professions to shape the public's perception of Kosovo's societies. The public diplomacy approach is expected to shape the government's views on Kosovo and recognize it as an independent state. Digital diplomacy focuses on enhancing Kosovo's existence on the internet and other digital platforms. Business, college, and government web pages are the mediums of such diplomatic approaches. Diplomats adopting this approach further use social media platforms to increase the size of their audiences. Kosovo's nationals in the diaspora equally participate in this form of public diplomacy. One of the common ways to achieve recognition through this strategy involves celebrating Kosovo's public events in various countries' capitals globally.[442] In this regard, Kosovo's governments pursue various tactics to enhance the country's foreign security and Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

However, various shortcomings have also been experienced in execution Kosovo's foreign and defense policy. The PDK and LDK regimes faced hurdles in implementing Kosovo's foreign policy as few countries than anticipated recognized the country's sovereignty. According to Krasniqi,[443] the shortfalls were mainly a result of the ruling parties' overfocus on power-sharing. Subsequently, Kosovo's quest for recognition was mainly pursued by the country's sponsors and supporters. However, opposition parties' criticism of the government for its failure in this realm led to the approval of the Strategy for the Achievement of Full International Recognition of the

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[440] Krasniqi, Valon. "Political parties ideologies in Kosovo." Revista de Ştiinţe Politice.

[441] Marleku, Alfred. "Small states foreign policy: the case of Kosovo." Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations 11.3 (2012): 79-97.

[442] Ibid.

[443] Krasniqi, Valon. "Political parties ideologies in Kosovo." Revista de Ştiinţe Politice.

Republic of Kosovo in June 2011.[444] The strategy paper identified the shortcomings and obstacles that stifled Kosovo's international recognition. In this view, the country's foreign affairs ministry remains active and at the forefront of pursuing Kosovo's international recognition. The strategy also approaches the supporters and strategic partners, weak recognizers and non recognizers.

Kosovo's security is also threatened by the strained relations with the neighboring Serbia, and due to its proximity by other geopolitical factors. For instance, the strategic location of the Balkan region potentially poses tensions between the United States and Russia alongside China.[445] Subsequently, long-term security and defense policy is a necessity. Kosovo confronts this challenge by establishing strong foreign relations with the United States, EU, NATO, and other neighboring countries. Furthermore, due to the aggressive nature and the sphere of influence in the region, NATO must extend cooperation and partnership to the countries in the Western Balkans and bring them under their sphere of influence. Notably, "NATO must encourage the drive of internal reforms and democratic development as well as to mitigate the extension of Russian influence in the region."[446] In this view, apart from recognition, a nation-state's security is also reliant on the nature of relations it has with global powers, neighboring

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[444] MFA of Kosovo. "Strategy for the Achievement of Full International Recognition of the Republic of Kosovo." Internal policy document (2011).

[445] Ponomareva, Elena, and Dušan Proroković. "NATO vs. Russia: Impact on Balkan Regional Security." Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade; Faculty of Security Studies at the University of Belgrade, 2021. 117-137.

[446] Geci, Sinan. "NATO – Russia Relations Correlated with the Euro-Atlantic Perspective of Western Balkan Countries." 2016. Accessed on November 5, 2018. http://biztonsagpolitika.hu/publikaciok-2016/sinan-geci-nato-russia-relations-correlated-with-the-euro-atlanticperspective-of-western-balkan-countries http://www.aos.sk/casopisy/reflexie/vojenske_reflexieXII_2.pdf.

countries, and international organizations.[447] The United States is regarded as a hegemon from the power politics perspective due to its global influence and military power. Therefore, Kosovo maintains tight diplomatic ties with the United States. The country is also cautious towards states with problematic ties with the United States, including Iran, Syria, North Korea, Venezuela, and Cuba.[448] In this regard, it seeks to establish long-term ties with the United States to guarantee security. Similarly, Kosovo has established strong ties with the EU and has registered its interest in joining the formation. Previously, Kosovo has engaged the EU in pursuing diplomacy with Serbia.[449] It has further ratified the union's governance and human rights principles. As indicated, five members of the EU are yet to recognize Kosovo as an independent country, which stifles its efforts to join the regional body. In this view, Kosovo appreciates regional integration to enhance its long-term security. Membership in NATO is another strategic foreign policy goal pursued by NATO. The security formation is the main guarantor of Kosovo's security. At some point, there were 50,000 NATO troops in Kosovo. The alliance trains Kosovo's security forces to be interoperable with NATO troops. Subsequently, membership in NATO will guarantee the country's security in the long term. The country further has regional allies, including Albania and Turkey. The ties are historical, political, and religious. Subsequently, Kosovo has successfully escalated these relations to military cooperation. As a result, Kosovo's long-term security policy also involves military partnerships with neighboring allies and the pursuit of diplomatic ties with former Yugoslav republics.

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[447] Krasniqi, Valon. "Political parties ideologies in Kosovo." Revista de Ştiinţe Politice.

[448] Ibid.

[449] Newman, Edward, and Gëzim Visoka. "The foreign policy of state recognition: Kosovo's diplomatic strategy to join international society." Foreign Policy Analysis 14.3 (2018): 367-387.

6.3 Serbia's Non-Recognition of Kosovo

Another front where a policy framework is necessary for Kosovo's foreign relations is its ties with Serbia. Serbia does not recognize Kosovo's independence. Subsequently, Serbia's allies, including China, Russia, Greece, and Spain, have been reluctant to recognize Kosovo as an independent state. Previously, Serbia contested Kosovo's independence at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) but was unsuccessful as the ICJ ruled that Kosovo's declaration of independence was not in violation of the internal law. As a result, the EU started facilitating technical dialogues between the two countries in March 2011. The dialogue resulted in various agreements and led Kosovo to formulate a foreign policy document, the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations. According to Bashota and Hoti,[450] Kosovo's foreign security policy with Serbia, given that it established parameters that dismembered the Serbian security structures in Kosovo. As a result, personnel in the structures were absorbed into Kosovo's institutions. In addition, the policy further increased the autonomy of the Serb-dominated municipalities in northern Kosovo. Subsequently, it presented a win-win formula for both states, thus enhancing their security.

Nonetheless, challenges still persist between Serbia and Kosovo's diplomatic relations. According to Obradović-Wochnik and Wochnik,[451] Serbia's non-recognition of Kosovo impedes both countries' delayed accession to the European Union. The lack of recognition further informs

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[450] Bashota, Bardhok, and Afrim Hoti. "The Role of the EU in Facilitating a Hard Implementation Dialogue: Normalization of Kosovo-Serbia Relations." Southeastern Europe 45.3 (2021): 1-29.

[451] Obradović-Wochnik, Jelena, and Alexander Wochnik. "Europeanising the 'Kosovo question': Serbia's policies in the context of EU integration." West European Politics. September 2012: 1158-1181. Accessed on January 29, 2020. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254272160_Europeanising_the_'Kosovo_Question'_Serbia's_Policies_in_the_Context_of_EU_Integration.

destabilization within the Balkans, a factor responsible for tensions in northern Kosovo. It further

hinders regional economic cooperation, a significant element of the European Union.

Subsequently, there are attempts by France and Germany to ensure that the differences that

persist between Kosovo and Serbia are addressed.[452] The two countries' proposals are anchored

on the attempts to stabilize the Balkan region and to ensure that normalcy is restored in the

relationship between the two countries, especially because of Russia's ongoing war with

Ukraine.[453] These recent attempts to restore peace between the two countries emulate the Basic

Treaty signed by the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic in

1972. In this regard, the emphasis is on ensuring de-facto recognition of sovereignty. Therefore,

Serbia should recognize Kosovo as a de-facto state, accepted and formally recognized.[454]

Another element of the Basic Treaty that should further be reflected in the Serbia-Kosovo

agreement is that there should be no more prejudices on the fundamental or status questions

about Kosovo. In this regard, there is an increased likelihood of peaceful coexistence in the

Balkans.

Concerns also arise that despite Kosovo's independence, Serbia has been adamant that

international organizations should not recognize it. Accordingly, constraining Kosovo's

membership in international organizations will likely see enhanced and continuous conflicts

between Serbia and Kosovo.[455] As a result, experts urge Serbia to abandon the obstruction and

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[452] Ibid.

[453] Vulović, Marina. "The Brussels Dialogue. Gaining New Momentum, but Still Hindered by
Tensions between Serbia and Kosovo." Südosteuropa Mitteilungen. January 2023: 56-66. Accessed
on March 17, 2023. https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=1105019.

[454] Obradović-Wochnik, Jelena, and Alexander Wochnik

[455] Vulović, Marina. "The Brussels Dialogue. Gaining New Momentum, but Still Hindered by
Tensions between Serbia and Kosovo."

instead recognize some aspects of Kosovo's statehood. Furthermore, permanent representation should be established at each of the government's capital. In this regard, normal relations within the neighborhoods can be attained.

The Brussels Dialogue equally emerges as one of the agreements yet to be implemented in Serbia-Kosovo relations. The dialogue determined that the Serb majority occupied regions within Kosovo. Subsequently, Kosovo was directed to create Association of Serb-majority municipalities in Kosovo.[456] Kosovo was further expected to ensure that Serbian culture and heritage within Kosovo would be protected. Subsequently, the relations between the two countries would result in enhanced foreign security and defense policy in Kosovo as it would reduce the likely conflicts in the Balkans.

However, the European proposals for Serbia-Kosovo's peace have also met opposition. While the parties hardly contest the text, the implementation process poses a serious point of contention. The issues reflected in the proposals are not to be implemented in a particular order. As a result, Serbia and Kosovo have often opted to start the implementation at conflicting points, thus limiting the attainment of the desired foreign security and defense policy.[457] For instance, Serbia has in the past emphasized the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-

[456] Mucaj, Florent, and Pěrparim Gruda, Lex Localis. "Constitutional and Legal Dilemmas for Establishing the Association of Kosovo Serb Majority Municipalities." July (2020): 603-624. Accessed on May, 13, 2021. https://www.proquest.com/openview/9b9184ca35044b0d1b16aa9e34d18e6c/1.pdf?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=55210.

[457] Prelec, Marko, and Naim Rashiti. "Serb integration in Kosovo after the Brussels Agreement." Balkans Policy Research Group. March 19 2015: 1-49. Accessed on June 12, 2018. https://balkansgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Serb-Integration-in-Kosovo-After-Brussels-Agreement-2.pdf.

majority Municipalities (A/CSM) as the priority in implementing the agreements. On the other hand, Kosovo prioritizes the de-facto recognition of its independence by Serbia. Subsequently, resistance persists in Belgrade and Pristina[458] throwing the ball at each other's court. Similarly, Serbia's parliament has previously discussed strategies to isolate Kosovo from joining the EU and to curtail any form of association that would increase the country's economic status.

6.4 Public Opinion in Shaping Political Culture

Since the Dialogue is under the auspices and mediated by the European Union, then the union must do more to offer not only facilitation but also incentives for the two perspective EU countries. The EU has been a driving force for reform in the Western Balkan countries, but the citizen's perception towards the EU has been shifting, and not towards a positive trend, because the process seem never-ending. Below are some tables illustrating the public opinion in Kosovo and Serbia towards EU and other countries conducted mainly by the Kosovo Centre for Security Studies regarding the Western Balkan Security Barometer.[459]

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[458] Mucaj, Florent, and Përparim Gruda.

[459] "Citizens' Perception on Kosovo's EU Integration Perspective and Regional and International Cooperation" WBSB Survey in Kosovo Country Report #3 Kosovo Centre for Security Studies. 2022. Accessed on March 20, 2023.
https://qkss.org/images/uploads/files/Barometer_2021_Kosovo_3_Eng_%283%29.pdf .

Table 6.1 Perceptions for 2020 and 2021 on EU's Readiness to Accept Kosovo

Do you Think That EU is Ready to Accept Kosovo as a Member State?	Don't know/no opinion	Yes, in the near future	Yes, but not in the near future	No, it is not willing to accept
2020	7%	38%	39%	16%
2021	6%	34%	41%	20%

Source: Kosovo Centre for Security Studies. [460]

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[460] "Citizens' Perception on Kosovo's EU Integration Perspective and Regional and International Cooperation" WBSB Survey in Kosovo Country Report #3 Kosovo Centre for Security Studies. 2022. Accessed on March 20, 2023. https://qkss.org/images/uploads/files/Barometer_2021_Kosovo_3_Eng_%283%29.pdf .

While in Kosovo the pro-Western and pro Euro-Atlantic structures attitude is highly positive, in Serbia is quite the opposite. Kosovo is thankful to the European countries for their support during the war and aftermath, and is one of the countries whose population is most pro US in the world. In fact, such attitude is acknowledged by the State Department in its Integrated Country Strategy stating that "Kosovo remains among the most pro-American countries in the world, despite being located at the center of a region increasingly crowded by malign influence and actors. The United States' assistance and engagement will reduce vulnerabilities and close space for malign actors to gain a foothold in Kosovo.[461]

It is the opposite in Serbia where the Serbs are anti- US and against the West mainly due to the NATO interventions in the 1990s. However, the pro-Russian sentiments are incredibly strong. Russia is one of those malign actors which benefits from an escalation of the situation in the Western Balkans. Every time there is an escalated situation or crisis in Kosovo, Russia jumps in to utilize this situation to its advantage blaming the West while supporting Serbia. In the recent situation in Kosovo North where Prishtina attempted to establish the conditions for the new elected mayors to sit in their municipality buildings, the Serbs violently opposed such policy. NATO soldiers intervened, and tenths of them got injured in the process, to calm the situation down while blocking of four town halls as violent Serbian protesters were against Albanian elected mayors in a majority Serbian populated municipalities.[462] Russia, as always, uses these opportunities to its advantage and attacks the West. The Russian Foreign Ministry was up in arms about the situation stating ""We call on the West to finally halt its deceitful

[461] "Integrated Country Strategy." State Department. March 17, 2022. Accessed on November 20, 2022. https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/ICS_EUR_Kosovo_Public.pdf.

[462] "NATO soldiers injured in Kosovo clashes with Serb protesters." Aljazeera. 29 May 2023. Accessed on May 29, 2023. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/29/nato-troops-form-security-cordons-in-kosovo-as-serbs-protest .

propaganda and stop blaming the incidents in Kosovo on desperate Serbs, who are trying to defend their legitimate rights and freedom peacefully and without weapons"[463] NATO forces in Kosovo were attacked and injured portraying the situation and the protests as not peaceful at all. NATO updated the opinion about the unprovoked attacks that " the number of peace-keepers wounded during yesterday's unprovoked violence in the municipality of Zvecan is 30. 11 soldiers from the Italian contingent and 19 from the Hungarian contingent sustained multiple injuries, including fractures and burns from improvised explosive incendiary devices. Three Hungarian soldiers were wounded by the use of firearms."[464]

   This unrest is supported and encouraged by Belgrade which is shaping the anti-West sentiments in Serbia. Even in last year's election it was predicted that only pro-Russian political parties have a chance to win the elections in Serbia, and that pro-Russian narrative has been created and and continues from the current political elites in Serbia. The opposition parties are weak to counter Belgrade's official position and argue that Vucic has full control of the media shaping the pro-Russia sentiments. The war in Ukraine has only made Vucic stronger, the opposition in Serbia declared. The leader of the biggest opposition coalition United Serbia, Dragan Djilas, had claimed that " the war has diverted public attention from what is happening in Serbia and of course, with media support, enabled Vucic to blame the crisis for everything that is

[463] "Russia Tells West to Stop 'Propaganda' Over Kosovo Clashes." The Moscow Times. May 30, 2023 Accessed on 30 May, 2023. https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/05/30/moscow-hit-by-swarm-of-drones-in-wartime-first-a81324.

[464] "KFOR Update on Unprovoked Attacks in Zvecan." JFC Naples NATO. May 30, 2023. Accessed on May 31, 2023. https://jfcnaples.nato.int/kfor/media-center/archive/news/2023/kfor-update-on-unprovoked-attacks-in-zvecan.

wrong in Serbia"[465] Moreover, it is obvious that, "Serbia's ultimate aim in Kosovo is nearly identical to Russia's aim in Ukraine: to compel a weary West to countenance the partition of an independent country, thus validating aggrieved nationalist narratives. Kosovo's partition would advance Putin's hope of a trade of Russia's recognition of Kosovo's independence in exchange for international recognition of Russia's claim to Crimea at the UN Security Council."[466]

According to a study on the "Public Perception of Serbian Foreign Policy in the Midst of the War in Ukraine" Serbians still see Russia as an ally. Accordingly, as depicted on the chart below, "The Closest Foreign Policy Partner of Serbia" Russia dominates the public opinion in Serbia as the friend and an ally.[467]

[465] "In Serbia, pro-Russian is seen as the Winning Election Stance." Associated Press. March 31, 2022. Accessed on September 15 2022. https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-presidential-elections-moscow-elections-d20d885ffd7a86605b05ef97b3e1c4bc.

[466] Joseph, Edward P. "The Kyiv-Kosovo Catalyst: Ukraine's Recognition of Kosovo Can Affirm Western Order in the Balkans and Across Europe." February 18, 2023. Accessed on February 28, 2023. https://saisreview.sais.jhu.edu/kosovo-ukraine-recognition-serbia-negotiations/ .

[467] Vuksanovic,Vuk. Luka Steric and Maja Bjelos. "Public Perception of Serbian Foreign Policy in the Midst of the War in Ukraine." Westrern Balkans Security Barometer Country Report. Kosovo Centre for Security Studies. December 2022. Accessed on February 20, 2023. https://qkss.org/images/uploads/files/WBSB-2022_Serbia-Report-1_Dec-2022_%281%29.pdf.
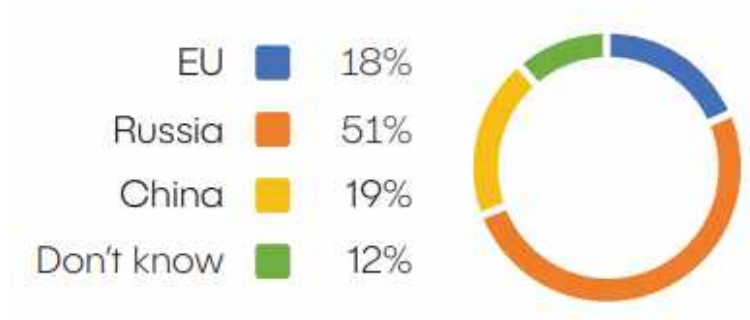
Figure 6.1 – "Public Perception of Serbian Foreign Policy in the Midst of the War in Ukraine."[468] Western Balkans Security Barometer Country Report

Serbian citizens also perceive the West's policy towards Serbia as non- friendly. About 65.8% think that the Russian attitude Towards Serbia is friendly and only 3.8% perceive it as an enemy. About 62% think that China also has positive policy towards Serbia while 2.7 as an enemy. On the other hand, only 3.8% believe that the US has a friendly attitude towards Serbia and 46.3% as an enemy; and 14.3% believe that the EU is friendly and 20.4 as an enemy. The figures are slightly different when it comes to NATO although the organization is composed of EU countries, the Unites States and Canada. Only 1.8 % of Serbian citizens believe that NATO has a friendly attitude towards Serbia while 64.8 % believe it has an enemy. [469]

This indicates that there significant level of anti-Western sentiment in Serbia could be not only because of the NATO intervention against Yugoslavia in 1990s, but mainly because it may be fueled by pro-Russian propaganda. It highlights the position of the political elite which is

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[468] Ibid.

[469] Vuksanovic,Vuk. Luka Steric and Maja Bjelos. "Public Perception of Serbian Foreign Policy in the Midst of the War in Ukraine." Westrern Balkans Security Barometer Country Report. Kosovo Centre for Security Studies. December 2022. Accessed on February 20, 2023. https://qkss.org/images/uploads/files/WBSB-2022_Serbia-Report-1_Dec-2022_%281%29.pdf.

pro-Russia and the media and information sources that are shaping the public opinion in Serbia. If the majority of Serbs are receiving their news from sources that are sympathetic to Russia and are exposed to daily propaganda characterizing a more favorable view of Russia and its actions in Ukraine.

These opposing perceptions need to be narrower in the near future in order to bring both Kosovo and Serbia closer because the public opinion and attitude in their respective counties towards the Western countries or towards Russia and China are creating battle fields of clashes in certain areas in the Western Balkans.

According to the Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group, the Western Balkan countries tremendously remain in favour of membership to the European Union. The figure below illustrates it in percentage wise:[470]

Figure 6.2 – Illustrating the WB people in favour of EU
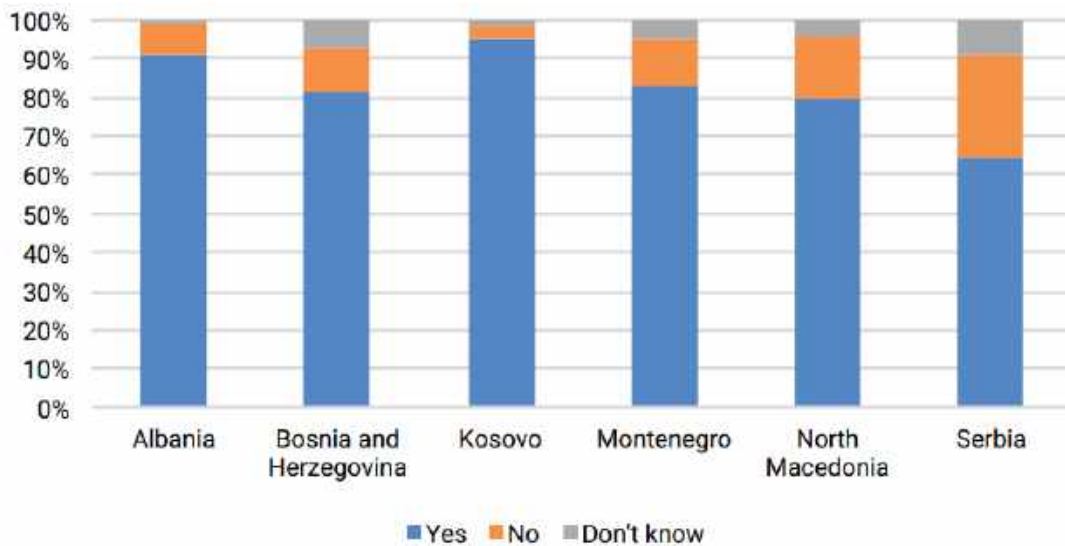
Are you in favour of your country joining the European Union?

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[470] "Between a rock and a hard place: Public opinion and integration in the Western Balkans."
Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group. December 2020. Accessed on April 15, 2022.
https://www.epc.eu/content/PDF/2020/Between-a-rock-and-a-hard-place-English.pdf.

This study also depicts the Kosovars' optimistic attitude towards EU while a little pessimistic but promising in Serbia.

Nonetheless, the EU has to keep up its part of the promise it made to the Western Balkan countries. The EU was drafting strategies to incorporate some of the countries form the region into EU by 2025, and recently the EU has changed its approach once again.

In 2022, the Council of the European Union yet again came up with tailored partnership while there seems little hope for full membership of Western Balkan countries to the EU. Instead, the EU "formally approved the Strategic Compass, a document laying out the plan of action for strengthening the EU's security and defense policy by 2030…. Western Balkans is mentioned in several parts of the document, which proposes a "tailored partnership" with the region.[471]

6.5 Conclusion: Recommendations for Normalized Relationship Between Kosovo and Serbia

The Western Balkan countries in a way have been spoiled by always looking from external actors and stakeholders for assistance and help with their ongoing grievances. The mediators have to be from Brussels and Washington. The initiatives have to come from Brussels and supported financially from Brussels. Understandably, this approach has been necessary to build trust and restructure and rebuilt a war torn region. However, it has exterminated local and regional ownership to solve the issues in a democratic and non-confrontation way.

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[471] "Tailored partnership with the Western Balkans part of the EU's new Strategic Compass." European Western Balkans. March 22, 2022. Accessed on September 12, 2022. https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2022/03/22/tailored-partnership-with-the-western-balkans-part-of-the-eus-new-strategic-compass/.

To normalize relationships and build good neighborly relations between Kosovo and Serbia an attractive initiative must be pursued. Such an initiative should aim to mitigate populism and weaken current populist leaders in both Serbia and Kosovo. An initiative such as the Open Balkans would bring the leaders from Serbia and Kosovo together and either one would look weak in the eyes of their populations. These kind of initiatives are multilateral and neither leaders from Kosovo and Serbia need to seat face to face as more countries are present which would mitigate adversity among neighboring countries in Western Balkans.

There are many arguments, particularly from Kosovo against such initiative, but regional initiatives such as the Open Balkans do not replace the integration into the EU. The EU integration process seems endless at the moment and in no form would the Open Balkans initiative substitute the integration and membership into EU. They can be complimentary and would build a road map and a path to smother integration into the EU institutions. There are other initiatives not far from the Western Balkans to learn from and surely these countries would appreciate the opportunity to share their historical knowledge.

6.5.1 The Visegrád Group Cooperation Model: Implementation in the Western Balkans

The fall of communism in Europe saw a litany of political, economic, and social realignments in Europe. The Soviet Union, which was the symbol of communism in the continent, came tumbling down, breaking the institutions of communism it had helped build in the previous years. Communism undermined the ability of the countries to thrive and to remain afloat.[472] This

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[472] Fuchs-Schündeln, Nicola, and Matthias Schündeln. "The Long-Term Effects of Communism in Eastern Europe." Journal of Economic Perspectives, vol. 34, no. 2, 2020, pp. 172–191., Accessed on October 15, 2020. https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jep.34.2.172.

turbulence-induced revolutionary changes within the sociopolitical and economic fabrics of the neighboring countries and generally others within Europe. Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, and Slovakia were not left out. In 1991, they came together to reinforce their pursuit to revolutionize their political, cultural, and social makeup to align with the changing times in Europe.[473] The countries came together to cooperate on the need to transform to market-based economies as they shared similar sociocultural aspects and goals. The Visegrád Group, as this cooperation was called, was formed in the Hungarian town of Visegrád famous for its conferential significance in the unification of the region in the past. This group was formed in 1991 after the fall of communism and its main promoter, the Soviet Union. More specifically, the main aim of the group was to define the joint economic, diplomatic and political future for the member countries, giving them a life beyond the defunct Soviet-led economic philosophy.

The reasons for the formation of the group, however, far outweigh the need for socio-economic and political revolution. The countries have been undergoing perennial conflicts, leading to splits and territorial wars.[474] They needed a unifying factor to stabilize the region and ensure peaceful cooperation between the then three countries. The bloc was thus a pedantic move to sell the notion of unity in purpose and promote togetherness.[475] This would come in handy in handling the split between Czech and Slovakia, maintaining the two countries in the bloc. In the

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[473] Nič, Milan. "The Visegrád Group in the E.U.: 2016 as a Turning-Point?" European View, vol. 15, no. 2. December 1, 2016, pp. 281–290., Accessed on February 14, 2018. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1007/s12290-016-0422-6.

[474] Miszewski, Dariusz, et al. "Central Europe after 1918. A Short outline1." Security and Defence Quarterly, vol. 19, no. 2, 2018, pp. 13–38., https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0012.1470.

[475] Deutsche Welle. "This Is How the Visegrad Group Works: DW: 07.02.2019." DW.COM, n.d., accessed on November, 30, 2020. https://www.dw.com/en/this-is-how-the-visegrad-group-works/a-47402724.

understanding that the decisions of one country bound all the other four, the V4 member states surged in unity, leaving no stone unturned to pursue common interests and promote progressive cultural, political, and economic progress.

For over two decades, the group has been instrumental in championing joint change and progress of the member countries. Initially, the countries involved in the agreement were only three, i.e., Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. After the split of Czechoslovakia, the membership of the block rose to four, and the group metamorphosed into V4, depicting the number of members.[476] The Visegrád Group has been more than regional cooperation for its member countries. It has been crucial in realigning the post-communism central and Eastern Europe, significantly influencing regional development and molding diplomatic relations and political ideologies on matters of geopolitical concern.[477] One of its major achievements would be the transformation of the member economies from communist economic practices to a market-based system that has been instrumental in regional economic transformation. All the member countries have grown to become significant economic powerhouses in central and Eastern Europe.

The Visegrád Group has been immensely instrumental in influencing the alliances of member countries. Most specifically, it has been the basis of members' decision to join the European Union and a significant determinant of their political and economic ideologies. As regional cooperation, the group promotes investment in central and Eastern Europe, pursuing radical initiatives that set it apart from the others around the world. With an annually rotated leadership

[476] Neuman, Marek. "The Visegrád Group as a Vehicle for Promoting National Interests in the European Union: The Case of the Czech Republic." Politics in Central Europe, vol. 13, no. 1, 2017, pp. 55–67., https://sciendo.com/article/10.1515/pce-2016-0022.

[477] Dangerfield, Martin. " 'Fading Nation-States? The Impact of European Integration on Central and Eastern Europe.'" 2011, pp. 1–18.

and specific targets, the group seeks to ensure inclusivity and uniform sociocultural and economic change. Every leadership is charged with specific responsibilities, enabling the group to achieve new heights under each tenure. It continues to champion democracy and the rule of law in these countries, despite the push and pull with the European Union on some of these areas. One of the most notable areas that the group has been instrumental in championing that stands against the wishes of the European Union is migration. The V4 has been vocal against migration, terming it a disturbance to the wellbeing of the receiving countries and viewing it as a threat to security.[478] Such common stances demonstrate the intricate level of cooperation in the group, underscoring its role as a policy driver in Europe.

Like most regional cooperations, the Visegrád Group has ventures jointly undertaken or enjoyed by the member countries. The International Visegrád Fund, for instance, was institutionalized under the group's flag to pursue non-governmental initiatives that grow its member countries. These initiatives are undertaken in light of the prevailing needs of society. Most importantly, they are chosen from those that matter the most to progressive societal development of member states. The role of such initiatives in further cementing the unity of the member states cannot be underrated. Whereas the countries were forced to pursue self-independence, such initiatives introduced by the cooperation brought them back together, fostering peace and development. The role of such initiatives in promoting cultural and political integration is paramount not only in Europe but also elsewhere in the world.[479] Most importantly,

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[478] Bauerová, Helena. "Migration Policy of the V4 in the Context of Migration Crisis." Politics in Central Europe, vol. 14, no. 2, 2018, pp. 99–120. Accessed on February 12, 2023. https://sciendo.com/article/10.2478/pce-2018-0011.

[479] Wike, Richard, et al. "Political and Economic Changes across Europe." Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, 10 Dec. 2020, Accessed on June 25, 2021.

initiatives like development kitties and scholarships have been crucial in bringing together countries that share a tumultuous past like colonialists and their subjects. Such kitties are points of common interest for both sides and have the potential to redefine the relationships between the countries in question. They view each other as allies rather than enemies.

Other critical areas of cooperation pursued by the group include military and security.[480] As a roadmap towards comprehensive and unified regional development, the group has been instrumental in promoting socioeconomic and political reforms critical in fast-tracking development. It thus continues to be a force to reckon with in central Europe and one of the late 20th century inter-country regional cooperation that has been instrumental in driving change in the world.[481] Its core areas remain the promotion of trade through ideological and policy modeling and consolidation of socialist economic practices in Central Europe.[482]

6.5.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Cooperation

The Visegrád Group, as earlier indicated, is instrumental in the transformation of central Europe from communist ideologies and practices. The need to break away from the retrogressive communist practices in the world in the late 20th century necessitated aggressive revolutionary changes to economic and political practices.[483] This meant redefining policies and actively

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https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/10/14/political-and-economic-changes-since-the-fall-of-communism/.

[480] Deutsche Welle. "This Is How the Visegrad Group Works.

[481] Nič, Milan. "The Visegrád Group in the E.U.

[482] Inotai, András, and Magdolna Sass. "Economic Integration of the Visegrád Countries." Eastern European Economics, vol. 32, no. 6, 1994, pp. 06–28., Accessed on July 2, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1080/00128775.1994.11648548.

[483] Office of the Historian. "Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, 1989." U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of State, https://history.state.gov/milestones/1989-1992/fall-of-communism.

pursuing market-centered economic designs.[484] It is from this that the Visegrád Group's main achievement stems. One would not be faulted to argue that the group has helped transform the economic models of the countries involved and empowered them to pursue economic success. The central European economies are particularly some of the fastest-growing economies in Europe, with Poland's economic growth rate in the last two decades standing at 4.5%, the Czech Republic 2.6%, Slovakia 4.1%, and Hungary 3.7%.[485] The economic models adopted in the bloc have been pivotal in defining the success amassed by the aforementioned countries in the years succeeding the collapse of communism in Europe, catapulting them to the front of economic competitiveness in the continent.

   Away from the towering economic benefits, this cooperation has encouraged and strengthened the political ties among the member countries. The turbulent period of the fall of communism in Europe would have easily polarized the diplomatic relations between these former communist sympathizers.[486] The institutionalization of the group immediately after this great fall meant that these border countries pulled their act together and faced their challenges in unity. The fact that the group leadership is rotated annually also cements its role as a political equalizer and a tool for peace. To a significant extent, it is from the trust and confidence embodied in the member countries from the cooperation that the block undertakes joint military and security endeavors.

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[484] Abramitzky, Ran, and Isabelle Sin. "Book translations as idea flows: The effects of the collapse of Communism on the diffusion of knowledge." Journal of the European Economic Association . September 2013. Accessed on March, 2017. https://ranabr.people.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj26066/files/media/file/book_translations_as_idea_flows.pdf.

[485] Deutsche Welle. "This Is How the Visegrad Group Works.

[486] Mărcău, Flavius Cristian. "Short analysis of the fall of communist regimes in central and Eastern Europe in 1989 and the domino effect." Astra Salvensis-revista de istorie si cultura 5 (2015): 158-162.

The cooperation has cemented the relationship between these neighbors, building a strong alliance of common ideologies that help steer unified growth. The diplomatic benefits accrued from the cooperation are also a significant boost to economic growth as it encourages cross-country trade within the V4 and with other E.U. countries. More specifically, the bloc has been significant in removing the barriers to trade between member countries and opening up opportunities for the same in other economies. In 1995, most of the V4 countries exported only less than 30% of their goods to the other E.U. countries. By 2004, this value had shot to over 70%.[487] This boost has been pivotal in redefining the economy of the V4 countries after the fall of communism.

The block has also reinforced the voice of the former communist states, shielding them against intimidation and unfairness. The four countries forming the Visegrád bloc initially lacked significant continental influence. Coming together has reinforced their continental strength, increasing the magnitude of their voice in matters of continental or global concern. Slovakia, for instance, has a stronger voice under the Visegrád Group than it has when it is a standalone country. This also applies to the other three member countries. Visegrád gives them a voice on matters of geopolitical influence, stamping their role as policy shapers and market influencers of the larger Europe. Under the flagship of The V4, the four countries have reinforced their bargaining powers, entering into partnerships with the five states forming BRICS, i.e., Brazil,

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[487] Balaz, Vladimir, et al. "The V4 Countries and the E.U.: A Comparative Perspective." A Quarter Century of Post-Communism Assessed, PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2016, pp. 129–159. Accessed on August 28, 2022.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312032501_The_V4_Countries_and_the_EU_a_comparative_perspective.

Russia, India, China, and South Africa.[488] The fundamental shift to the market economy has also seen the member countries increasingly get involved with the E.U., more than doubling the exports to these countries in the years following the fall of communism.[489]

Initiatives like the International Visegrád Fund have also been beneficial to the four countries. This fund is critical in promoting initiatives like education, supporting NGOs, other public institutions, municipalities, private companies, and non-profit organizations in member countries.[490] Students from specific countries within Europe and member countries are given scholarships to study in the region's institutions of higher learning, which further promotes regional development. Military alliances also improve security in the countries within this radius, shielding them from acts like terrorism to a significant extent. Such pursuits are taken in line with the security advancements of NATO and the E.U. Most specifically, the V4 pursues NATO's smart security, among other initiatives undertaken to improve security in the region. Political goodwill from member countries and alignment with the policies of NATO and the E.U. are important in fast-tracking harmony in military policies and operations in the continent.

Despite these benefits, the cooperation has equally been a stumbling block to the region's progress. Member countries' hard stance on immigrants has been, for instance, an obstacle to

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[488] Kugiel, Patryk. Ed. "V4 goes global: Exploring opportunities and obstacles in the Visegrad Countries' cooperation with Brazil, India, China and South Africa." Warsaw: Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych . March 2016. Accessed on September 19, 2022. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340363315_V4_Goes_Global_Exploring_Opportunities_and_Obstacles_in_the_Visegrad_Countries'_Cooperation_with_Brazil_India_China_and_South_Africa_Ed_Patrik_Kugiel.

[489] Balaz et al.

[490] Ministry of Education, Youths and Sports. "International Visegrad Fund." MŠMT ČR, Accessed on March 30, 2020. https://www.msmt.cz/eu-and-international-affairs/international-visegrad-fund?lang=2.

European Union's resolutions to host migrants and those seeking asylum.[491] The bloc, therefore,

becomes a protective coating that shields the E.U. from effectively influencing the policies of

member countries. It cushions them from the repercussions of failure to adhere to the

resolutions.

Achieving the main goal of the Visegrád Group has been a challenge, especially from the

leadership standpoint. Some member countries have significantly lagged for lack of proper

leadership.[492] This mounts pressure on the bloc to devise ways through which these countries

may be helped to level the playing ground for the others. Sociopolitical diversity and economic

strains also significantly set back the achievement of these goals. Generally, the health of the

bloc is subject to political stability and sound diplomatic relations between member countries.

However, as neighbors, conflicts of interest are common occurrences.[493] More specifically, the

sociocultural and territorial strains that led to the split of Czechoslovakia are a significant setback

to the group. Other strains, particularly pegged on the diversity in the relationships pursued by

the member states, are also a significant setback. Slovakia and the Czech Republic prioritize

France and Germany, while Poland and Hungary challenge Brussels.[494] This creates a split

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[491] Pace, Roderick. "Immigration-Integration: A New Opportunity for the E.U.?." Small States and the European Migrant Crisis: Politics and Governance. April 2021: 43-66. Accessed on January 12, 2023. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351116971_Immigration-Integration_A_New_Opportunity_for_the_EU.

[492] Nič, Milan. "The Visegrád Group in the E.U.: 2016 as a Turning-Point?" European View, vol. 15, no. 2, December 1, 2016, pp. 281–290., Accessed on February 14, 2018. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1007/s12290-016-0422-6.

[493] Ibid.

[494] Bayer, Lili. "Unity of Central Europe's Visegrad Group under Strain." POLITICO, 4 Sept. 2017. Accessed on April 3, 2020. https://www.politico.eu/article/unity-of-central-europes-visegrad-group-under-strain/.

within the group, complicating its achievement of purpose. These strains undermine the achievement of the goals of the group, therefore consolidating the challenges that engulf its walk to the realization of its purpose.

The economic disparities of the member states of the group are also a significant setback for the achievement of the goals of the group. Primarily, Poland has a population of about 38 million, Czech Republic 11 million, Hungary 10 million, and Slovakia 6 million.[495] The market seizes, and the economies of these countries also vary in this regard, bringing about an economic imbalance that undermines equality. Regional cooperation groups significantly suffer this setback, especially in trade. Member states whose social, economic, and political powers far outweigh the others may benefit more than inferior economies. The superiority complex that results in such groups, therefore, significantly undermines the realization of the goals of formation of such groups. This brings in the aspect of imbalance, which may make some member states proud and may intimidate others.[496] It should, however, be noted that regional integration brings in the politics of income inequalities in member countries.[497] Such politics have been experienced in the larger European Union in the recent past, which culminated in the

[495] Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. "Visegrad Group Countries: Selected Indicators of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." Apr. 2019, pp. 1–49. Accessed on September 19, 2022. https://stat.gov.pl/files/gfx/portalinformacyjny/pl/defaultstronaopisowa/6261/1/1/v4_en_web.pdf.

[496] Kahanec, Martin, et al. "Slovakia and the Czech Republic: Inequalities and Convergences After the Velvet Divorce*." Changing Inequalities and Societal Impacts in Rich Countries: Thirty Countries' Experiences, Oxford University Press, Oxford, January 2014, pp. 569–591. Accessed on August 30, 2022. https://academic.oup.com/book/27221/chapter-abstract/196732500?redirectedFrom=fulltext.

[497] Azis, Iwan Jaya, and Jayant Menon. Regional Cooperation and Integration in a Changing World. Asian Development Bank, 2013: 1-54. Accessed on May 25, 2022. https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/30224/regional-cooperation-changing-world.pdf.

withdrawal of the U.K. from the regional bloc. Brexit, as this was called, had serious effects on the member states, complicating trade and relations within the union, particularly the free movement of labor and goods across borders. Such challenges affect the Visegrád group as well. Countries like Poland and the Czech Republic lead in the group's economic muscles.[498] A small country like Slovakia may therefore be intimidated by the economic powerhouses of the group, undermining the benefits they accrue from such a cooperation. Those with higher stakes have more influence and may therefore intimidate those with inferior economic muscles. With the region's murky political past, such supremacy battles may thrust the V4 into worse situations or even possible damage to the progress already made.

6.5.3 Usefulness and Application to the Western Balkan Countries

The onset of the Visegrád group, as earlier noted, was the collapse of communism in Europe. It, therefore, came in as a bridging factor that would take over the communist agenda that once stitched them together. As a cooperative bloc of the former communist nations, Visegrád Group became a cementing factor that harnessed the shattered communities and gave them a new perspective of life. The group's approach to inclusivity and diplomatic relations through common goals remains a heritable trait that can be copied by countries in similar situations to steer them to success. The benefits accrued from the cooperation, including but are not limited to diplomatic ties and socioeconomic and political cooperation, should be learning points for countries in the Western Balkans.

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[498] Dangerfield, Martin. "Economic Relations Between Visegrad Group Countries and Russia: How Much Has Changed?." University of Pittsburgh. 2015. Accessed on October 24, 2022. http://aei.pitt.edu/78981/.

A regional bloc would be a suitable platform to iron out the differences in the Western Balkan countries, especially involving Serbia and Kosovo. Like countries in the Western Balkans, some member states in the Visegrád bloc underwent territorial turbulences in the years following its formation. Czech and Slovakia, for instance, were born out of the separatist advocacies within the previous Czechoslovakia. A tug of war between the neighboring countries before and immediately after the formation of the Visegrád Group complicated cooperation in the region.[499] The bloc was, therefore, crucial in ironing out issues arising and bringing the countries together for a common purpose. The Czechoslovakia split, which occurred in 1993, two years after the formation of the group, was thus a perfect litmus test on the role of regional cooperation in fostering peace and political stability. Such cooperation may help calm down the political tensions between Kosovo and Serbia, which have been stuck in the desire for autonomy and territorial wars. Such blocs have been found to contribute significantly to conflict resolution.[500]

A small, but hopefully with potential to grow, initiative has been taken in the WB. Such initiative is named the "Open Balkans." Since Serbia is already a member of the proposed Open Balkans, it would be prudent to have Kosovo join this new bloc. The block would be a significant unifying factor drawing from the successes accrued in the V4 especially Czech and Slovakia. The shared goals between the two countries in the Open Balkans like in the V4, would help settle the political strains complicating the relations between Serbia and Kosovo.

Countries like Kosovo and Serbia need socio-economic and political integration as a basis towards promoting cordial relations. In the case of the V4, the Visegrád group has been at the forefront in championing this achievement. As a remainder of communist Europe, the region

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[499] Nič, Milan. "The Visegrád Group in the E.U.: 2016 as a Turning-Point?"

[500] Lee, Jong-Wha, and Ju Hyun Pyun. "Does trade integration contribute to peace?." Review of Development Economics 20.1 (2016): 327-344.

faced autonomy challenges within itself, with people regrouping based on culture. Minority groups felt left out and therefore sought autonomy from their mother countries.[501] This risked differential integration of the region and complete deviation from its economic pursuits. The Visegrád group, therefore, came in as a cementing factor, an umbrella that brought them together despite their differences.[502] The realization of common problems and challenges stitched them together and gave them a reason to cooperate. A more expansive Open Balkans, particularly including the warring Serbia and Kosovo would in a similar manner, help promote peaceful coexistence. Such integrations have been tried and tested, with positive outcomes in Africa and elsewhere in the world.[503] They have been stamped as better options for solving conflicts between countries as compared to the intervention of international players like the United Nations. Such integrations have particularly showed progressive results in the Burundi peace process; the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR); the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC); the AU regional cooperation initiative for the elimination of the LRA (RCI-LRA); and the IGAD mentoring initiative in South Sudan.[504] Drawing from the successes of these peace initiatives, Serbia and Kosovo would immensely gain from a regional

[501] Wal, Jessika ter, and Edwin Poppe. "Changes in National and Ethnic Stereotypes in Central and Eastern Europe." Comparative Perspectives on Racism, Routledge, 2019, pp. 191–210.

[502] Bayer, Lili. "Unity of Central Europe's Visegrad Group under Strain." POLITICO, 4 Sept. 2017. Accessed on April 3, 2020. https://www.politico.eu/article/unity-of-central-europes-visegrad-group-under-strain/.

[503] Akoth, Mercy. "The Role of Regional Integration in Promoting Peace and Security: A Case of East African Community." University of Nairobi, 2017. Accessed on January 30, 2021. http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/102236.

[504] De Coning, Cedric. "Regional approaches to peacebuilding." United Nations University Centre for Policy Research. February 2015. Access on November 12, 2021. https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:3224/unu_cpr_regional_approaches_to_pb.pdf.

socioeconomic integration especially from the standpoint of political relations. They require socioeconomic integration to fast track peace, stability and ultimately security. Socioeconomic and political integration through a regional bloc would help sort out the conflicts between the two countries and foster peace between them, promoting trade and social interactions.

Improved cooperation in aspects like trade can be used as proactive peace pursuits. Improved international trade means that countries and states are more dependent on each other. As a market for goods, these countries become keener when dealing with each other, taking care not to disrupt tranquility which may jeopardize business transactions. Many regional blocs come with free trade offers. The Visegrád group has been particularly instrumental in promoting free markets in the region.[505] This has been significant in modeling the economies of the member countries to move away from communist economic practices, which significantly undermine their development and progress.[506] The shared trade priorities have been fundamental in promoting the creation of an enabling environment by member countries. Trade thus becomes an important binder for the once warring nations of Central Europe and can be an important learning point for the Western Balkan countries. Similar benefits have been accrued from other regional blocks across Europe and the world. Countries under EU membership have particularly

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[505] Bieszk-Stolorz, Beata, and Krzysztof Dmytrów. "Influence of Accession of the Visegrad Group Countries to the E.U. on the Situation in Their Labour Markets." Sustainability . August 2020: 1-17. Accessed on November 12, 2022. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343759841_Influence_of_Accession_of_the_Visegrad_Group_Countries_to_the_EU_on_the_Situation_in_Their_Labour_Markets.

[506] Svobodová, Libuše, and Martina Hedvičáková. "Doing business in the countries of Visegrad group." Procedia Economics and Finance. December 2015: 453-460. Accessed on March 20, 2017. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314545788_Doing_Business_in_the_Countries_of_Visegrad_Group.

and significantly enjoyed peace from trade relations forged from the regional bloc.[507] A regional

trading bloc that includes Serbia and Kosovo and other neighboring countries will spread the

effects of the stand-off between the two countries to other neighbors and hence increase the

pressure to resolve their differences for the sake of improving trade.

It would be prudent to design the bloc to ensure free movement. Ideally, the already existing

Open Balkan aims to achieve such goals among member countries, i.e., Serbia, Albania, and

North Macedonia.[508] While it would be prudent to fit this regional block within the needs of the

would-be member states, the promising returns, particularly on free movement as to be practiced

within the Open Balkan bloc, should form part and parcel of the group. There is a need to

promote economic cooperation as it is fundamental in influencing peace in the long run.[509] In

many regional blocs around the world, the reduction of the bureaucracies involved in crossing

borders have been significantly reduced. In the European Union in particular, this is one of the

most notable strategies meant to promote efficient supply of labor across member states.[510] More

specifically, the elimination of the bureaucracies involved in the movement of people and goods

from one country to another within the bloc is a promising prospect for the member states of the

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[507] Martti Ahtisaari. "The Role of the European Union in Conflict Resolution." Irish Studies in International Affairs, vol. 28, Royal Irish Academy, 2017, pp. 195–199. Accessed on April 18, 2018. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3318/isia.2017.28.13.

[508] Kovac, Danijela. "'Open Balkan' for Easier Business in the Region." WB6 CIF, 2 Aug. 2021, Accessed on October 10, 2021. https://www.wb6cif.eu/2021/08/02/open-balkan-for-easier-business-in-the-region/ .

[509] Lee, Jong-Wha, and Ju Hyun Pyun. "Does trade integration contribute to peace?." Review of Development Economics. Wiley Online Library. January 28, 2016: 327-344. Accessed on February 15, 2023. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/rode.12222.

[510] Martti Ahtisaari. "The Role of the European Union in Conflict Resolution."

Open Balkan bloc. This practice should be incorporated in the objects of formation of the regional cooperation bloc that will include Kosovo and Serbia.

While trade will be crucial in inculcating individual responsibility for peace and regional cooperation, free movement of people will be a catalyst for social interaction and integration, while ultimately, achieve peaceful coexistence. Travel restrictions have significantly undermined socialization and trade the world over, especially during this Covid-19 period.[511] Most specifically, visa requirements and lengthy bureaucracies make it challenging for citizens to travel from one country to another. Travel restrictions contribute significantly to trade losses directly through limitations on who can get into a country and indirectly through the time wastage so experienced. Within the Open Balkan bloc, citizens only need an Identity Card to cross the borders of member states.[512] This drastically reduces the time wasted crossing into another country and ultimately promoting the free flow of people and goods. It should, however, be noted that such movements may be privy to insecurity. This is a call for strategic political cooperation to ensure criminals do not cross into the member states from within or outside the block. This would also mean further cooperation among countries increasing the areas of cooperation.

Countries in the Western Balkans should pursue regional blocs for sociological, political, and economic reasons. By so doing, they will be pursuing peace, stability, and growth of trade

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[511] Söderlund, Bengt. "The Impact of Travel Restrictions on Trade during Covid-19." VOX, CEPR Policy Portal, 4 Nov. 2020. Accessed on May 12, 2021. https://voxeu.org/article/impact-travel-restrictions-trade-during-covid-19 .

[512] Čeperković, Marko, et al. "Balkan futures: Three Scenarios for 2025." European Union Institute for Security Studies. September 2018. Accessed on January, 25, 2021. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329569461_Balkan_futures_Three_scenarios_for_2025.

among member countries. This is crucial in fast-tracking peace within the region and, ultimately, economic growth. The Visegrád Group and the Open Balkan block is a good place to benchmark what this regional bloc should look like. Generally, however, it should pursue the ease of doing trade, free movement of people across the borders, and eventually deepened regional cooperation.

The arguments that the Open Balkans is a mechanism that might substitute for the EU integration and a deviation from that strategic aim are not valid. However, as argued, the V4 have a cooperation bloc among themselves but it has not prevented them from joining EU and, indeed, NATO membership and integration. In, fact, it prepared them in joining those organizations.

6.6 Interviews with Dignitaries, Security and Defense Institutions and Experts

Throughout my Ph.D studies, and especially during my research for the dissertation, I have consulted, talked to, and have both formally and informally interviewed different domestic and foreign personalities. Luckily, most of the interviews have been permitted to be recorded for the purpose of fact gathering accuracy. Some of the interviews are anonym but given reference from which institutions the come from. Many consultations with high ranking officials are not published due to their job description sensitivity.

The content of the questions were structured; however, the dialogue occurred had no limits and included many follow up questions for discussions that enriched the content of this dissertation. The following questions were posed to all the respondent interviews to enrich the arguments collected for research purposes, and are shown on the following tables explicitly showing the questions sent to respondents and the participants' list.

Table 6.2- Ph.D Thesis Interview Questions

Sinan Geci

Ph.D Candidate at the National University of Public Service – Budapest, Hungary

https://doktori.hu/index.php?menuid=192&lang=EN&sz_ID=22010&popup=1

Supervisor & Mentor: Dr. József Lajos Németh

As part of the Ph.D. Thesis, I plan to approach the relevant Kosovo institutions with a series of questions. Also, the same/similar questions will be posed to the international actors related to and deal with Kosovo, mainly the EU and NATO institutions, as well as NATO - Advisory and Liaison Team (NALT). The NGO-s focusing on security and defense will be contacted with similar questions.

The following questions will be distributed, and/or follow ups:

1. Does the dialogue with Serbia aim to reach a dynamic transformation of geopolitical circumstances in the Western Balkans? If Yes/No, how and why?
2. How would your organization/institution consider the security situation in Kosovo?
   - What would you regard as external and internal challenges of Kosovo that are languishing the integration process?
3. Kosovo has claimed that its strategic goal is to join the Euro-Atlantic institutions!
   The 2025 has been an ambiguous target date - by the European Commission - for the WB towards EU accession, but what will Kosovo have to do to be ready for EU & NATO membership by 2025?
4. Having into account the four NATO member states that do not recognize Kosovo's independence, is there a model for Kosovo to follow to be able to advance its relationship and status with NATO through initiatives, such as the Partnership for Peace?
   Has the Enhanced Interaction between Kosovo and NATO been employed to its

fullest? (Question for NATO and Security & Defence dignitaries: How many activities within the Enhanced Interaction have taken place in 2020?)

5. Is the EULEX delivering on its pledge towards strengthening the rule of law in Kosovo?

6. For how long do the international (uniformed) organizations intend to stay in Kosovo? Is EULEX's mission condition based or calendar based? If condition based, what conditions need to be met?

7. Does Kosovo have the ability to perform administrative and technical tasks to align and implement the policies with the Euro-Atlantic institutions (EU and NATO)?

Table 6.3 - Time Table for the Interviews

Date and time	Dignitaries & Institutions to participate	NUPS Part	Platform Used	Length of Interview
May 17, 2021	EULEX Kosovo Information	Sinan Geci Student at the NUPS sinani2000@hotmail.com	Note: They replied to my initial email and asked for the questions to be sent, but never sent back their answers	
May 16, 2021	NATO KFOR	Sinan Geci Student at the NUPS sinani2000@hotmail.com	Note: Never replied.	
May 24, 2021 May 26, 2021	Kosovo Prime Minister's Office	Sinan Geci Student at the NUPS sinani2000@hotmail.com	Via email and phone and social apps Note: They	

			stated will look into it and never sent their reply.	
July 13, 2021	Kosovo's Ministry of Defense	Sinan Geci Student at the NUPS sinani2000@hotmail.com	Via Email. Received the reply	
May 24, 2021 August 2021 October 2022.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department for NATO and Security Policies	Sinan Geci Student at the NUPS sinani2000@hotmail.com	Via Email. They never replied. Had informal talks with MFA officials	
June 22, 2021 June 24, 2021	Mentor Vrajolli, Executive Director at Kosovo Centre for Security Studies	Sinan Geci Student at the NUPS sinani2000@hotmail.com	Via Email and social apps. Received the reply	
May 26, 2021	Ambassador Lulzim Peci, Executive Director Founder and Senior Fellow. Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED) - NGO	Dr. József Lajos Németh Professor at the NUPS, Budapest Supervisor and Mentor to the Ph.D student nemeth.jozsef@uni-nke.hu Sinan Geci Student at the NUPS sinani2000@hotmail.com	Conducted via Microsoft Teams – recorded interview and conversation	

May 28, 2021	Mr. Christian Boatswain Deputy NATO Advisory and Liaison Team to Kosovo.	Dr. József Lajos Németh Professor at the NUPS, Budapest Supervisor and Mentor to the Ph.D student nemeth.jozsef@uni-nke.hu Sinan Geci Student at the NUPS sinani2000@hotmail.com	Conducted Via Whatsapp App (voice call and not recorded)	
June 4, 2021	Mr. Mr Szabolcs HORVATH Members of Cabinet of Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi Mrs. Denise MONAS Assistant to Mr Szabolcs HORVATH	Dr. József Lajos Németh Professor at the NUPS, Budapest Supervisor and Mentor to the Ph.D student nemeth.jozsef@uni-nke.hu Sinan Geci Student at the NUPS sinani2000@hotmail.com	Conducted via Microsoft Teams – recorded interview and conversation	
June 10, 2021	Ambassador Márkusz László Former Ambassador to Kosovo	D Dr. József Lajos Németh Professor at the NUPS, Budapest Supervisor and Mentor to the Ph.D student	Conducted via Microsoft Teams – recorded interview and conversation	

		nemeth.jozsef@uni-nke.hu Sinan Geci Student at the NUPS sinani2000@hotmail.com		
June 15, 2021	Ms. Balajthy Henrietta Hungarian Mission to NATO	Dr. József Lajos Németh Professor at the NUPS, Budapest Supervisor and Mentor to the Ph.D student nemeth.jozsef@uni-nke.hu Sinan Geci Student at the NUPS sinani2000@hotmail.com	Conducted via Microsoft Teams – recorded interview and conversation On Sep 02.2021 16:00	
	Kosovo Security Council Secretariat – Contacted Mr. Bekim Podrimqaku. Acting Secretary of Security Council, and Director of Security Analysis Department	Sinan Geci Student at the NUPS sinani2000@hotmail.com NOTE: Interview conducted with Mr. Podrimqaku only at the capacity of Professor for Security Studies and Political Science.	Part one conducted on May 26, 2021. Part 2 conducted in October 2022.	

	Parliament of Kosovo Contacted Mr. Haki Abazi, Head of Commission for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Committee		TBD No official response	
August – September 2021 October 2022.	Members of Parliament who would remain anonymous due to their positions but have assisted me in understanding the most contemporary security and defense issues, intelligence situation in Kosovo from the Kosovo Assembly's point of view.	Sinan Geci Student at the NUPS sinani2000@hotmail.com	Regular contact via telephone.	
August – September 2021 October 2022.	Hysen Gecaj (Ret. Colonel. MoD) Security and defense analyst and expert on the media.	Sinan Geci Student at the NUPS sinani2000@hotmail.com	Via phone and social apps Regular contact for security and defense matters.	

Even though some institutions did not reply officially, this does not mean the research has not been conducted through informal and unofficial means in order to be acquire updated information.

All the respondents expressed the importance of the dialogue at every stage of development and correlate with every process and there is no way escaping from it. It is required more ownership

for the sake of both countries and stability in the region. The WB region is important for the EU because some of them are EU candidates while other potential EU candidates. The sooner a final agreement is reached the better as it would accelerate the integration process. The sooner it is resolved, the better for Kosovo to secure its place in the international community. This would unlock the possibility to join organisations such NATO and the EU because there are non-recognizers within both organisations and the dialogue would help in this regard.

Indeed, the dialogue began as a technical one and ended up a heavy political dialogue. Some of the respondents as the former Hungarian Ambassador to Kosovo rightly point out that the dialogue is a pre-condition for the integration into EU for both Kosovo and Serbia. It is a direct condition for Serbia to find a solution for the "Kosovo issue," while it an indirect condition for Kosovo for the dialogue to be successful. He continued his argument that the strategic aim of the dialogue would be to "liberate" Serbia form the Kosovo issue and therefore from Russian and Chinese influence and the final agreement would mitigate Serbian dependency on Russia and China.[513]

While the dialogue is mediated and supported from the United States, the dialogue's ultimate goal is about solving bilateral relations between two countries which are neighbours and do not recognize each other.[514] The dialogue is emphasised as the main political discourse occupying the lives of Kosovars. It is perceived as the only way to advance the statehood of Kosovo and clear the path towards NATO and EU integration for Kosovo. Thus, from Kosovo's perspective "the aim of the dialogue is to overcome all obstacles related to the past and move to the

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[513] Interview with the former Hungarian Ambassador to Kosovo, Márkusz László. June 10, 2021.

[514] Interview with the former Kosovo Ambassador, Lulzim Peci, and Executive Director Founder and Senior Fellow Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED).

prosperous future primary means."[515] Consequently, it would focus the countries of the region towards a common economic and democratic development instead of consuming the potentials that cause political tensions threatening regional security and stability impacting NATO and EU.[516]

The respondents expressed their concern with the northern part of Kosovo and the unrest it produces with the potential to escalate quickly. Although NATO and the EU have been providing assistance in the area of security and the rule of law, the EU has expressed its concern in regards to domestic issues such as organized crime, illegal migration that conditioned Kosovo's visa free travel to the EU. The situation in Kosovo has labelled for decades as "stable but fragile." It is considered stable mainly due to the presence of the NATO soldiers in Kosovo and all the incidents have been managed by the Kosovo police, EULEX and NATO KFOR in Kosovo. While it is considered fragile because the situation could deteriorate and escalate rapidly, it is under KFOR's mandate and role to assess the security situation in Kosovo.[517] Although KFOR is stationed in Kosovo with around four thousand soldiers, and under the Unites Nations Security Resolution 1244 is responsible for a safe and secure environment in Kosovo, the rearmament of Serbia poses a threat. Kosovo regards it a potential threat and as Ambassador Márkusz László argues such "armament of Serbia, in a strategic aspect poses a threat to Kosovo as long as there is no formal agreement between Kosovo and Serbia."[518]

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[515] Interview with the Mentor Vrajolli, Executive Director at Kosovo Centre for Security Studies. June 24, 2021.

[516] Interview with the Kosovo MoD, the reply was sent in writing. July 13, 2021.

[517] Interview with Christian Boatswain, Deputy NATO Advisory and Liaison Team to Kosovo. May 28, 2021.

[518] Interview with the former Hungarian Ambassador to Kosovo, Márkusz László. June 10, 2021.

Moreover, there are other actors mingling in the area and in between Kosovo and Serbia with malign intentions. Since the EU and NATO are not unified in regards to Kosovo's independence, Russia uses Serbia as a harbour to weaken the West's unity and strengthen their influence in the neighboring countries.[519] In fact, Ambassador Peci reinforces this point that even mutual recognition between Kosovo and Serbia would not solve everything immediately stating that "recognition itself does not solve all the problems because Serbia, for example, recognizes Bosnia and Herzegovina and vice versa but to this day Serbia undermines Bosnia and Herzegovina's statehood, and regularly interferes in domestic politics. Thus, for the West sometimes 'Stabilitocracy' is more crucial for the region.[520] Such approach seems to have a counter effective in deep political and social reforms in the WB.

The EU enlargement strategy for the Western Balkans is selective from Kosovo's point of view. As Serbia is an EU candidate country, Serbia must reach a comprehensive and a legally binding normalization agreement with Kosovo. According to this EU strategy, for Kosovo, reaching an agreement with Serbia seems to be the means to remove barriers to EU. It puts a lot of pressure on Kosovo for compromise with Serbia and its main obstacle remains to be at the Brussels headquarter for not having a unified voice towards the region. At the same time, the EU's mission on the rule of law, EULEX, has been regarded as an unsuccessful mission. Its contribution has been noted and the Kosovo authorities have invited and prolonged its mandate but EULEX's "contribution in strengthening rule of law have been extremely minimal. One of the key reasons for this was its lack of defined mandate which came as result of EU adopting

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[519] Interview with the former Kosovo Ambassador, Lulzim Peci, and Executive Director Founder and Senior Fellow Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED).

[520] Ibid.

neutral stance towards Kosovo's statehood status."[521] At the same time, the mission seems exhausted and obsolete and " one of the reason why EULEX continues to remain to Kosovo is not related to rule of low. Instead, it is mainly related to the lack of consensus by EU members to conclude its mandate."[522]

Granting that Kosovo's clear roadmap towards EU, and especially NATO membership and integration is hindered by the non-recognizers within those organisations. Nonetheless, some processes such as the Stabilization and Association have been reached with the EU, but such a model for Kosovo's path towards NATO does not exist. The only cooperation to Kosovo offered from NATO is through the Enhanced Interaction Framework. This collaboration was put on halt from NATO after Kosovo decided to upgrade the laws on the Kosovo Security Force in 2018. NATO's engagement in Kosovo is based on three important pillars:

1. KFOR, mandated by the UNSC 1244

2. NALT, NATO Advisory and Liaison Team

3. Enhanced Interaction Framework led by NATO HQ.[523]

KFOR continues its engagement in Kosovo separate from NALT, which continues to support the Kosovo Security Force development based on the pre-transition mandate, mainly in the area of military support to civilian authorities. The third pillar, though, is broader than NALT activities as it incorporates all security organisations. The security experts have been critical on the government for not using all the potential to take the cooperation with NATO to another level. It would enhance the national capabilities and get Kosovo closer to NATO when the non-

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[521] Interview with the Mentor Vrajolli, Executive Director at Kosovo Centre for Security Studies. June 24, 2021.

[522] Ibid.

[523] Interview with Christian Boatswain, Deputy NATO Advisory and Liaison Team to Kosovo. May 28, 2021.

recognition from Member States is no longer an obstacle. According to security and defense experts, the current government of Kosovo is only aggravating the potential partnership with NATO.

The Kosovo security institutions believe that the situation in the region is impacted by the global security environment which is unstable, uncertain, complex and unclear. This environment is characterized by the confrontation of national interests of large states, the rise of regional powers open conflicts, territorial, ethnic and religious disputes, natural and biological threats. Even the Republic of Kosovo is vulnerable to these threats, especially due to its geographical position and the strategic importance of the Western Balkans for the European Union, NATO, but also for other regional powers. The region itself is not immune to other malign factors, such as the destabilizing activities of foreign intelligence services, cyber attacks, natural disasters, trafficking in human beings, narcotics and small arms as well as organized crime. At the same time, Kosovo has domestic issues that seriously threatens the security environment, such as corruption, political instability, insufficient economic development, and unemployment.[524]

The presence of NATO and EU bodies in the region is a contributing factor in maintaining regional peace and stability, but it has not diminished all the factors that may lead to an escalation of the situation, mainly due to constant intervention of Serbia. The latter's anti-Kosovo diplomatic campaign, Serbia's parallel structures in Kosovo, the disloyalty and disturbance towards the institutions of Kosovo from a part of the Serbian community in the North of Kosovo due to pressure from Belgrade has been a constant security concern. [525]

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[524] Ibid.

[525] Interview with the Kosovo Ministry of Defense. July 13, 2021.

According to Mentor Vrajolli, the Executive Director at Kosovo Centre for Security Studies, most of the proclaimed threat that Kosovo face are those which can be considered as securitized ones. Most noteworthy are those related to the northern Kosovo where the rule of law must be enforced, and the "vast majority of the incidents that have occurred in this part of the country over the past years have not derived by the dissatisfactions of the local population towards the current state. They were rather committed by parallel structures which have been mainly established and controlled by the Serbian authorities in Belgrade whose aim is to present Kosovo as a destabilized country in the international arena."[526]

Despite these factors, the EU has provided incentives for the WB countries and have been presented with a perspective to join Euro-Atlantic institutions. The accession requirements and criteria for the Kosovo institutions seem demanding. Nevertheless, Kosovo institutions believe that due to a long and good tradition of a very intensive cooperation with NATO, it has benefited a lot from this cooperation, including the recognition of the administrative and technical procedures needed for the harmonization and implementation of Euro-Atlantic integration policies in Kosovo.[527] The EU also believes that it has contributed towards the capacity building in Kosovo, and region, through pre- membership mechanisms, such as the Instrument for the Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) supporting reforms in the WB with financial and technical assistance."[528]

The local institutions, experts and analysts, believe that Kosovo institutions have been offered

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[526] Interview with the Mentor Vrajolli, Executive Director at Kosovo Centre for Security Studies. June 24, 2021.

[527] Interview with the Kosovo Ministry of Defense. July 13, 2021.

[528] Interview with Mr. Mr Szabolcs Horvath, Members of Cabinet of Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi. June 4, 2021.

capacity building training and education and the human capacity and capabilities are there but not at the desired level. Membership into EU and NATO is a long and unclear road in the short and midterm, and provided that the government of Kosovo continue to pursue and promote the strategic aim of Euro-Atlantic integration, the administrative capacity is there to carry on the responsibilities that come with joining them. After all, the European Union has acted on EU values while NATO has trained and mentored based on NATO standards that ultimately have been incorporated in the Kosovo institutions.

6.7 Conclusion and Scientific Achievement

Kosovo's Euro-Atlantic aspirations pose multiple challenges to its foreign security and defense policy. First, the country exists in a region where powerful countries oppose its recognition to its detriment. As a result, it has resorted to identifying and implementing tactics necessary for enhancing its relevance that has resulted in positive outcomes making Kosovo known but not necessarily gain more recognition. The first tactic involves forging diplomatic relations with individual states and pursuing necessary adjustments as expected by the states to achieve recognition. The second tactic involved identifying countries that had indirectly recognized their independence. The intention, in this regard, would be to convert the de facto recognition into de jure recognition. The third strategy involved pursuing ties with countries with a passive and negative position on their independence. In most incidences, countries in this category oppose Kosovo's recognition based on various factors, which they believe could negatively impact their diplomatic position, their interests, and their domestic policies in the future. The fourth strategy, Kosovo pursued ties with countries that sought a passive and negative position on its independence. In most incidences, countries in this category oppose Kosovo's recognition based

on various factors, which they believe could negatively impact their domestic politics, and diplomatic position at the global level.

Serbia's non-recognition of Kosovo presents the most complex challenge to foreign security and defense policy. It delays both countries' accession to the European Union. It further informs destabilization within the Balkans, a factor responsible for tensions in northern Kosovo. The non-recognition also hinders regional economic cooperation to the detriment of the two countries and members of the European Union. The attempts by Germany and France to intervene have nonetheless been undermined by Kosovo's and Serbia's political interests. Subsequently, there are challenges in implementing the Brussels Dialogue alongside other agreements reached in the past between the two countries. Similarly, countries and regional interests further compromise the intentions to solve Serbia's non-recognition of Kosovo.

What is essential to point out in this thesis is that the lack of European Union integration has created a gap which has been utilized by malign actors in the region. The EU accession criteria are difficult to meet for many WB countries commencing with the basic one, such as the political stability. The European Council adopted essential criteria for all candidate countries willing to join the Union, known as the Copenhagen criteria established in Copenhagen in 1993 which are the following:

- political criteria: stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;
- economic criteria: a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competition and market forces;

- administrative and institutional capacity to effectively implement the acquis* and ability to take on the obligations of membership.[529]

Although a candidate country may meet all the criteria, it is the Union's decision to bring new members in, and there is no automatic accession. The EU decides based on its capacity to integrate and accept new members into the Union.[530]

On the other hand, NATO has enlarged based on an open door policy and been able to absorb new members into the Alliance based on complementary criteria as the EU. Countries willing to join NATO must meet the following five requirements:

1. New members must uphold democracy, which includes tolerating diversity.
2. New members must be in the midst of making progress toward a market economy.
3. The nations' military forces must be under firm, civilian control.
4. The nations must be good neighbors and respect sovereignty outside their borders.
5. The nations must be working toward compatibility with NATO forces.[531]

For instance, while 22 EU member states recognize Kosovo's statehood, another five do not recognize the country's independence that hinders countless processes for Kosovo and the region. As a result, Kosovo still faces significant challenges ahead in attaining the desired foreign security and defense policy. All the interviewees have expressed the challenges ahead for Kosovo posed by the non-recognizers in the European Union and NATO, respectively. Besides meeting the accession criteria and the requirements, Kosovo's complexities are multi-folded due

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[529] "Accession criteria." European Commission. Accessed on March 29, 2023. https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/glossary/accession-criteria_en.

[530] Ibid.

[531] Cronk, Terri Moon. "Nations Undergo Rigorous Process to Join NATO." U.S. Department of Defense. June 3, 2022. Accessed on September 20,2022. https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3052427/nations-undergo-rigorous-process-to-join-nato/ .

to non-recognizers and the consensus decision making in these organizations. The four NATO non-recognizers are Greece, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain, while the EU non-recognizers are the four EU countries plus Cyprus. Many argue that this non-recognition of Kosovo from EU and NATO member states have provided Serbia with arguments for non recognizing Kosovo and at the same time has helped Putin's Russia to further devide the West. As Edward P. Joseph puts it "the implications of Kosovo's limbo status flow to the war in Ukraine. The accelerating instability in the Balkans validates Putin's contention that Western order is illusory and arbitrary. The position of the non-recognizers also allows Putin to apply Kosovo as a "precedent" to dismember Ukraine, while he and other Russian officials accuse the West of dismembering Serbia."[532] Indeed, if NATO and EU member states are democratic countries promoting democratic and western values and if some of those members dispute Kosovo's independence, then it can easily be argued why Belgrade cannot contest Kosovo's independence. Thus, a divided Europe in regards to Kosovo's status not only hinders Kosovo's and the regions' Euro-Atlantic path, but it further accommodate the Vucic regime in Belgrade and Putin's in Moscow. Only a stable, secure and a prosperous Western Balkans would complete a safe and a secure architecture of the whole of Europe.

In conclusion, this thesis has provided scientific achievements by introducing a few steps and alternatives to the conventional belief of solving the issues over the never ending dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia mediated by Brussels and supported by Washington. Thus, both the US and the EU must provide opportunities for the WB to take ownership of the process rather

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than attempting to impose one solution after another through an endless process to reach a normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia. Thus:

This thesis has provided contextual as well as empirical analysis of the conflict management in Kosovo taking into account historical and the legal setting.

This thesis has exemplified the complexity of the Western Balkans where to this day, after more than two decades, there are still thousands of international civilian and uniformed personnel striving to maintain a peaceful and stable region and at the same time uphold the rule of law. Kosovo is one of those Western Balkan countries enduring itself in a complex security environment caught up in the intersection of interests between the West and the East.

This thesis provides a way out of the status quo. Avoiding a "quick fix" solution for Kosovo and its challenges, this thesis provides examples of cooperation and recommendations for the Western Balkan countries to pursue, in particular for Kosovo and Serbia. A multilateral initiative where neither Kosovo nor Serbia feels left out of their ultimate goals, which is NATO and EU for Kosovo, while EU for Serbia would be a way out of this political enpasse.

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