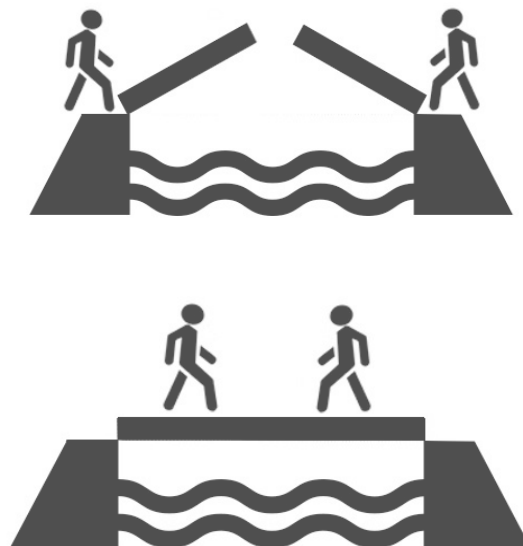


Bridging S e p a r a t e d Communities With the Use of Common Instrumental Goals

The Case of Kosovo Community Reconciliation and
Development Programme



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Bridging Separated Communities With the Use of Common Instrumental Goals: The Case of Kosovo Community Reconciliation and Development Programme

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Preface and Acknowledgements

Being a master student of Human Geography (specialization: Conflicts, Territories and Identities) at the Radboud University Nijmegen has been for several reasons a great and unforgettable experience. The academic environment was very stimulating and the post-graduate courses offered by the Centre for International Conflict Analysis and Management gave me a solid basis—particularly in the field of peace and conflict studies. Something I have learned in this period is that every violent conflict is a complex and multilayered phenomenon, which has to be thoroughly analysed in order to be properly understood. Moreover, during the study trip to Northern Ireland I had the opportunity to see for myself how easily people involved in a conflict start perceiving their neighbours not as persons but as dehumanized enemies. This experience and the knowledge gained over this year were very useful for the last and most important part of my studies: the field research in a conflict zone and the writing of the master thesis.

I spent almost three months in Pristina as an intern at Partners Kosova – Centre for Conflict Management. I was especially interested in cooperating with this organization because of a specific programme it has been implementing (in cooperation with the Serbian NGO Fractal), where development is used as a ‘tool’ for the promotion of cooperation between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo. In the whole period I managed to interview several project participants of both ethnicities in various locations in Kosovo.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the respondents for being patient, hospitable and for making me understand the dynamics of the conflict and how such projects can be useful for reconciliation. Particularly, I would like to thank Florent, Shukrije and Dafina, from Partners Kosova, and Žarko, from Fractal, for all their good advices and help to support my research project, as well as Amanda, the Serbian student and intern who assisted me during the interviews. Thanks must be given also to my fellow geographers Rodrigo and Marco for commenting the thesis. Finally, I wish to thank my supervisor, dr. Gearoid Millar, for motivating and leading me as well as for his many constructive comments. I would like to extend this gratitude to my second reader, dr. Willemijn M. Verkoren, for devoting her valuable time to reading my thesis. The help of all those whom I may forget to mention but whose contributions were important for the realization of my study deserve to be credited as well.

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List of Acronyms

CRIP – Country of Return Information Project
ESI – European Stability Initiative
ICG – International Crisis Group
IDMC – International Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDPs – Internally Displaced People
K-Albanians – Kosovo Albanians
K-Serbs – Kosovo Serbs
KCRDP – Kosovo Community Reconciliation and Development Programme
KFOR – Kosovo Force
KLA – Kosovo Liberation Army
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
OSCE – Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PK – Partners Kosova
UN – United Nations
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMIK – United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
WG – Working Group

1 Introduction

The territory of modern-day Kosovo has been for centuries the theatre of violent conflicts between Serbs and Albanians (Judah, 2008). Yet, the ‘apples of discord’ are not Kosovo’s natural resources or strategic position (Anscombe, 2006, p. 759) but the control of the land’s symbolic value (Judah, 1997, Judah, 2008). The conflict is fuelled by narratives which make each side believe that it is exclusively entitled to this territory. For the Serbs Kosovo is of special importance because on its grounds the medieval Serbian state and Serbian Orthodox Church were developed and this is where the legendary battle of Kosovo Polje between Serbs and Ottomans took place (Heraclides, 1997, p. 318). Although the defeat of the Serbs brought several centuries of oppression, this very suffering reinforced their will to return and retake control of what would amount to a ‘Serbian Jerusalem’ (Judah, 2008, p. 18; Judah, 1997, p. 26).

However, the Albanians also believe that they own this land because—according to their popular narrative—they were in Kosovo before the Serbs. They claim their ancestors were the early Illyrians and Dardanians—who inhabited this territory before the Romans (Pulaha in Hazrl, 2010, p. 50)—and have reinvented certain heroes and myths as unifying national symbols of resistance against foreign oppression (Babuna, 2000, p. 67). Kosovo is further revered by the Albanians for being the cradle of their national movement, which emerged here in 1878 (Skendi, 1953, p. 220). As a consequence, irrespectively of which nation holds a more historically accurate point of view, the crucial thing to keep in mind is that Kosovo had and still possesses an enormous symbolic value for both parties to the conflict, which seriously constrains its resolution.

Both ethnic groups have intermittently played the role of victims and perpetrators; and both sides have committed atrocities. After the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century the cycles of revenge became almost a routine and persisted throughout the World Wars and sporadically after the establishment of Yugoslavia (See Judah, 1997; Dempsey, 1998; Hagen, 1999; Judah, 1999; Babuna, 2001). Violence against Albanians in Kosovo intensified with the rise to power of Milošević (Pula, 2004, p. 806-13; Gray, 1999, p. 133; Ogden, 2000, p. 118) and peaked in 1998/9 with the war and large-scale campaign of ethnic cleansing (Özerdem, 2003, p. 81). Albanians were the victims of Serbian oppression, but after Serbian security forces withdrew they became perpetrators, thus causing a new wave of retaliatory violence and forced migration (Judah, 2008, 91-2). Against this backdrop of long-lasting animosities it is no surprise that both parties involved in the conflict have developed very negative feelings towards each other.

Many challenges lie ahead post-war Kosovo, but especial attention must be given to the persistently tense relationship between Kosovo Serbs (K-Serbs) and Kosovo Albanians (K-Albanians) (International Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC], 2010) and to their stagnant economy featuring a very high unemployment rate (Country of Return

Information Project [CRIP], 2009, p. 34-5; Bardos, 2008, p. 63). Since the deployment of international missions in the decade after the war there has been less violence, but the society remained extremely polarized. Many Serbs living in Kosovo were internally displaced and the patterns of return show that they generally avoid multi-ethnic areas and prefer to settle in Serbian populated enclaves or in the north (Smit, 2004, p. 194-6; Englbrecht, 2004, p. 142-3). Although in the last years (according to the interviewees) there have been certain improvements regarding the freedom of movement of K-Serbs and the general security situation, there is still not much contact between K-Albanians and K-Serbs despite their physical proximity. In Galtung's (1969) terms the situation could be regarded as some degree of negative peace. Furthermore, Kosovo's high level of unemployment and stagnant economy (CRIP, 2009, p. 34-5; Bardos, 2008, p. 63) could further destabilize a country already struggling on its difficult road to peace.

In this context, NGO projects such as the Kosovo Community Reconciliation and Development Programme (KCRDP)—which has been implemented by two NGOs in various towns and villages across Kosovo and is analysed in detail in this study—can theoretically reduce interethnic polarization and lower the high unemployment rate. The idea behind the KCRDP is that in order to achieve certain common instrumental goals such as establishing small businesses the two opposing ethnic groups have incentives to cooperate and this can give them the chance to interact and build a relationship with each other. At the same time these initiatives are supposed to help the local economy and create employment opportunities. The main aim of my research project is to understand if and how this programme can contribute to the peace process and what motivates people to cooperate.

Since my research project has been motivated by the long-lasting conflict between K-Serbs and K-Albanians, by analysing the usefulness of the KCRDP approach I would like to contribute to devise solutions which could facilitate long-term peace in the region. Certainly it is not my aim to get involved in 'which side is right' debates and to avoid it I try to give both ethnic groups an equally valid standing; I use bilingual names for towns and villages where the programme is being implemented and do not express my opinion regarding the independence of Kosovo. I am aware of the fact that my study has a limited range because of three reasons: the analysed programme is relatively small, I spent only few months in Kosovo and the results of the interviews and my participant observation could be partially biased. However, by describing all the details and making explicit the context of this study I try to maximise the chances that the collected information will be scientifically and socially relevant and a good starting point for further and more extensive research.

1.1 Research Goal and Research Questions

The main aim of this research is to understand whether and how interethnic cooperation for the achievement of a common instrumental goal (on the KCRDP case) can contribute to peace and what is the main motivation for the two groups to cooperate. This research goal is reflected in the following research question:

If and how can the KCRDP contribute to the peace process and what does motivate K-Albanians and K-Serbs to cooperate?

Particular attention is given to the instrumental use of development as a unifying factor, which in theory has the potential of promoting interaction between the two ethnic groups. Below, I divide the central research question in several more detailed sub-questions.

To understand the impact of the KCRDP I evaluate the past and current relationships between the opposing sides, which have been involved in the conflict in Kosovo:

- What are the relationships and level of cooperation between K-Albanians and K-Serbs in the towns/villages of Kosovo where the KCRDP is being implemented?
 - How have interethnic relationships been changing since before the war, during and after it?
 - Which are the main obstacles to interethnic cooperation?
 - To what extent are people in Kosovo willing to interact with the opposing ethnic group?

I analyse how the KCRDP can contribute to peace:

- Is the KCRDP a valuable and sustainable way for diminishing tensions between the two sides involved in the conflict? How? Why?

Another goal of my study is to understand what motivates people involved in a conflict to cooperate:

- What has motivated K-Serbs and K-Albanians to cooperate in the KCRDP? How? Why?

1.2 Scientific and Social Relevance

The relatively stagnant situation in the Kosovo peace process worsened by a high level of unemployment could, as I argue in this thesis, provoke a re-escalation of the conflict with dramatic consequences on regional stability. By researching how to creatively tackle these

two problems simultaneously, I want to contribute to the creation of scientifically and socially relevant knowledge and insight, which could be of use in Kosovo and other post-conflict environments. In this study theory supports practice and *vice versa* (i.e. the theoretical and practical parts of the thesis coexist in a 'symbiotic' relationship) with the aim to provide a complete analysis of the researched phenomena.

Finding out whether the KCRDP can influence the achievement of peace as well as the motivations that lead K-Albanians and K-Serbs to cooperate has the potential to contribute to the development of science in this multidisciplinary field of studies—especially when compared to already existing theories. Several authors (Kelman's, 2008, p. 23; Nadler & Shnabel, 2008, p. 41-3; Pettigrew, 1998, p. 66-67; Nadler, Malloy & Fisher, 2008, p. 6) state that intergroup cooperation aimed to achieve common instrumental goals benefits the peace process. I rely on this and other similar theories to better understand my case of study, whose validity I will test through the collection of qualitative evidence. Overall, by analysing the KCRDP, which attempts to bring about reconciliation and economic development, I hope to partially fill an existing theoretical gap. As Arbour (2007, p. 4-10), Junne & Verkoren (2005a, p. 4) and Nagy (2008, p. 278-9) have argued, not enough research has been carried out concerning the economic aspect of the reconciliation process or the role of development in post-conflict situations.

The gained knowledge of this study could have a positive influence on the resolution and prevention of violent conflicts since it will indirectly address various central societal problems (particularly in Kosovo): conflicting interethnic relations, segregation, unemployment, etc. The paper will stimulate a debate on the importance of economic development in peacebuilding; how common instrumental goals can bring together opposing sides; the role of local communities in post-conflict environments; and the impact of KCRDP-like projects. The analysis of the KCRDP will not only be useful for the planning and implementation of similar programmes in Kosovo, but also in other post-conflict areas.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis has eight chapters, which are divided into several sub-chapters with the aim of allowing the reader to get a systematic overview of the researched topic. In this introduction I have briefly described the background and general outline of my study, presented the main goal and questions and explained why this research is scientifically and socially relevant.

The second section concentrates on various dimensions of the Kosovo conflict. At the beginning I explain the intertwining of history and myths revolving around the conflict as well as the narratives that have motivated K-Serbs and K-Albanians to keep the conflict alive and which have made it intractable. Next, I focus on how the conflict has evolved in

the last century (from the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire until the rise of Milošević, passing through the vicissitudes of the World Wars and the creation of Yugoslavia) and in what way the cycles of revenge contributed to the escalation of violence in 1998-99. Then, attention is given to post-war Kosovo, the deployment of international missions, its declaration of independence and to how people's everyday life is influenced by problems of the legal status of the country and unemployment. I also examine Kosovo's society focusing particularly on the relationship between K-Serbs and K-Albanians.

In the theoretical chapter that follows I focus on theories relevant for understanding my case study. First, I analyse the role of emotions in intractable conflicts, how they influence people's perception of reality and contribute to create distorted images of the enemy. Afterwards, I consider definitions of 'reconciliation', 'conflict resolution', and 'instrumental reconciliation', which emphasize the importance of cooperation, trust and relationships in the peace process. In addition, I underline theories highlighting the role of cooperation for the achievement of common instrumental goals in order to increase trust and ameliorate intergroup relationships (e.g. the Contact Hypothesis and Instrumental Reconciliation). These are particularly useful for comprehending my case study (the KCRDP), which as well uses common instrumental goals (economic development projects) to promote interethnic cooperation. In the next section, I elaborate on the role of development in post-conflict situations and on why guaranteeing employment is critical for peace and stability. I explain how aid functions, why it is 'supply-driven' and in which way it should change in order to be more effective. Moreover, attention is given to the local community and to approaches, which aim to include it in the peace process. Yet, I also pay attention to the way NGOs work in post-conflict environments and on how they should integrate local resources.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the KCRDP, which has been planned and implemented by Partners Kosova (PK) and Fractal¹ in several Albanian and Serbian areas in Kosovo. I present the goals and structure of the programme and I shortly describe the leading organization. Thereafter, I describe the six KCRDP locations (three K-Albanian and three K-Serbian), including their interethnic history and the progress in the implementation of single individual (mono-ethnic) and joint (interethnic) development projects.

In the fifth chapter I focus on methodology in order to explain and substantiate my choices for the research project. First, I describe why and how the KCRDP is a case study and then I continue with sampling. In the next sub-chapter I concentrate on qualitative research methods, which enabled me to get a fuller picture of the studied phenomena: interviews, participant observation and content analysis. I take care to present the steps that I followed to increase the credibility and replicability of my research as well as to expose its strengths and weaknesses. In the last two sub-chapters I identify and analyse the

¹ Know also as 'NGO Fractal'.

main difficulties and limitations of the research project as well as its biases, which could have had an impact on the research findings and the validity of this study.

In the sixth chapter I scrutinize data collected through interviews and participant observation during the fieldwork in Kosovo. First, I illustrate the characteristics of K-Albanian and K-Serb respondents (age, occupation, residence, etc.). Thereafter, I describe the interethnic relationships before, during and after the war (including the current situation) in order to grasp how things have evolved. I continue with the analysis of the different types of intergroup cooperation (based on economic interest) and I examine the potential for future collaboration between K-Serbs and K-Albanians. Afterwards I try to understand whether respondents think that interethnic development projects can have a positive influence on reconciliation. In the following sub-chapters I examine the obstacles to interethnic cooperation and the incentives and conditions which motivate participants to collaborate with the opposing side. In the final part I look at possible changes in the project and at the collaboration between project beneficiaries and NGOs.

The next chapter of this thesis is a discussion where I link and analyse the main findings from the analysis of my results with the theoretical framework. I explore what keeps people divided in the Kosovo conflict and how contact provided by the KCRDP influences the peace process. Then I focus on the incentives that motivate the two sides to collaborate in the programme. Lastly I concentrate on whether local efforts can be useful for the resolution of the conflict and to what extent the KCRDP can be considered a locally owned process. The eight and last chapter aims to summarize the main findings of the study.

2 The Kosovo Conflict

2.1 History and Myths on the Conflict

The Kosovo conflict could be defined as an intractable conflict because it has persisted over centuries.² Both parties—K-Serbs and K-Albanians—perceive it as a ‘zero-sum’ game and it has become embedded into the identities of this territory’s inhabitants. The symbolic value of the land for both Serbs and Albanians is impressive and each of them passionately claims it arguing it has ‘always’ been their own (Heraclides, 1997, p. 318-22; Burg, 2005, p. 201). The conflict in Kosovo is—along with others that contributed to the disintegration of Yugoslavia—a very good example of how flammable “extreme politics infused with history” can be (Anscombe, 2006, p. 759). In this section I focus on the conflicting narratives upon which Serbs and Albanians rely to ground their particular entitlements to Kosovo. In this context, the historical accuracy about past events that could settle disputes such as ‘who came here first’ is not as important as what people believe to be true (Judah, 1997, 26).

2.1.1 The Serbian Narrative on Kosovo

At first sight Kosovo does not strike the beholder as a particularly valuable territory worth the worries of Serbia because of its small size, relatively few economic prospects (excluding some mineral deposits in the north) and poorly advantageous strategic position. Yet, the Kosovo’s importance is not measured by any of these criteria (Anscombe, 2006, p. 759). For Serbs Kosovo represents “the cradle of their civilization and their Jerusalem” (Judah, 2008, p. 18) where they started to perceive themselves as a nation beginning in the Middle Ages. Kosovo is the centre of ‘Old Serbia’, where the medieval Nemanja Dynasty flourished between the 12th and 14th centuries; and the place where the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate (at Peć/Pejë) and several important churches and monasteries are located (counting Gracanica and Decani among the most famous) (Heraclides, 1997, p. 318). It the Serbian Orthodox Church’s inseparable association with the very idea of the Serbian nation what makes Kosovo—notorious for its religious sites—so essential. The Nemanja Dynasty amalgamated the Serbs’ religious identification with Orthodoxy and so allowed this church to become a symbol of their resistance and take the role of their protector and representative after the Ottoman Empire conquered these territories (Judah, 1997, p. 23-5).

There is another particularly important site for the Serbian nation in Kosovo: Kosovo Polje (The Field of Blackbirds). There is where the historical battle between Serbs and Ottomans took place in 1389 and where the Serbs were defeated (Heraclides, 1997, p. 318). This

² The topic of intractable conflicts is more extensively addressed in the sub-chapter: *Emotions and Dehumanization in Intractable Conflicts*.

tragedy—so the narrative goes—brought upon the Serbs several centuries of oppression under the Ottoman Empire that was shaken off until 1912, when the region was finally reconquered and integrated into the Kingdom of Serbia (Kaser & Halpern, 1998, p. 89). Although various myths and legends surround the battle of Kosovo Polje, few—if any—historical records can give a reliable account of what really happened. It is well documented, for example, that the leader of the Serbs (Lazar) as well as the Sultan (Murad) died (Judah, 2008, p. 20-2). As for the rest of the story, what in fact occurred that day is not as important as what is believed to have occurred (Judah, 1997, p. 26). For generations of Serbs, “the myth of Vidovdan, the heroic death of Prince Lazar, the mythical figure of the Kosovo maiden who fed wounded soldiers with wine and bread” (Hazrl, 2010, p. 47) were passed down as a crucial baggage of their identity, their *raison d'être*. “In Serbian epic poetry—which, along with the church, helped nourish national identity for so long—the Kosovo cycle became central” (Judah, 1997, p. 26) and Serbs started seeing themselves as victims entitled to future glory and a great Serbian state (Judah, 1997).

According to the Serbian narrative, after the defeat of Prince Lazar and the Serbian exodus from Kosovo into northern regions of the Balkans, other ethnic groups flocked into Kosovo. The settlement of ethnic Albanians, who converted to Islam, was seen by many Serbian historians as a threat to Serbian culture, religion and nationality or even as genocide of the Slavic population (Samardzic in Hazrl, 2010, p. 47). From the Serbian perspective Kosovo Albanians were migrants introduced by the Ottoman Empire to prevent Serbs from returning (Anscombe, 2006, p. 770). Moreover, Albanians were not entitled to this land and could be legitimately removed when the occasion arose and so the Serbian state would rebound to acquire its original size. It is important to emphasize that the idea of an extended Serbian state was common long before Milošević figured. The blending of history, myths and historical facts has been a long-standing Serbian practice (Judah, 1997, 27-30). However, this ‘habit’ is not exclusively Serbian, as also other nations present in the region (Croatians, Albanians, Bulgarians, Romanians and Hungarians) had their historical territorial ambitions and their own visions of what their greater state should look like (See Judah, 2008, 2001; Fenenko, 2002; Nakarada, 1991; Hagen, 1999)

Finally, deservedly or not, it is indisputable that Kosovo has a significant symbolic value for the Serbian nation. Serbia’s strong connection with Kosovo is being constantly revived and traced centuries back to the Nemanja Dynasty, the Serbian Orthodox Church, and the Battle of Kosovo Polje. For Serbs Kosovo is, as they call it, the ‘cradle’ of the nation. This has been a powerful reason for them to take part in the conflict.

2.1.2 The Albanian Narrative on Kosovo

Albanians in Kosovo have developed their own nationalistic narratives in order to demonstrate that it was them who inhabited this area originally and that they (and not the Serbs) are entitled to this land. These narratives evolved as a counterbalance to the Serbian extremely one-sided 'truth' and were promoted by Albanian political and cultural leaders. They argued that there was an ethnic and cultural continuity between medieval Albanians and the early Illyrians and Dardanians (Pulaha in Hazrl, 2010, p. 50). These tribes lived on the territory of Kosovo before the Romans and Slavs invaded their land (Judah, 2008, p. 18). Drawing upon these narratives, Albanians started using the term 'occupation' to rally ethno-mobilization against Serbs, just as Serbs were using it against Albanians in Kosovo (Hazrl, 2010, p. 50).

Albanians also confounded myths with historical facts to unify and mobilize their nation against what they considered Serbian oppressors. Albanian nationalistic historians reengineered the Battle of Kosovo Polje (which was used by Milošević to mobilize Serbs against Albanians) to depict its heroes as Albanians and its traitors as Serbs (Hazrl, 2010, p. 50). Albanians even exhumed Skanderbeg³ to brandish him as a national hero—even though he fought against the Ottoman Empire and Islam in the 15th century (Judah, 2008, p. 26-7). It seems curious that such a character was chosen as a symbol to unify Albanians who are 70% to 80% Muslims⁴ (Babuna, 2000, p. 67). However, this was possible because Albanians, in contrast to Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims living in the same region, identify more along the lines of common language, culture and patriarchal values than religion (Babuna, 2000, p. 67; Hazrl, 2010, p. 51). For this reason when the myth of Skanderbeg was revitalized, the religious affiliation of the hero was overlooked and it became part of the Albanian narrative and a symbol that galvanized them against the enemy. Controversially, 'Skanderbeg' was also the name of the Albanian 21st Waffen Mountain SS division that committed atrocities against Serbs during World War II (Hazrl, 2010, p. 51; Babuna, 2000, p. 69).

³ A statue of Skanderbeg riding his horse is located also in front of the Kosovo governmental building in Pristina.

⁴ Albanians are divided in three religions. Although the majority are Muslims there are also Catholics and Orthodox (Babuna, 2000, p. 67).



Figure 1: Map of Kosovo and surrounding region (Source: Heraclides, 1997, p. 319).

Despite the fact that Albanians have made up the majority in Kosovo only since the early 18th century, Kosovo has special value for the Albanian nation because it was in one of its towns, Prizren, where Albanian nationalism first sprang (Heraclides, 1997, p. 318). In 1878 Albanian leaders gathered to establish the ‘Albanian League for the Defence of the Rights of the Albanian Nation’ in order to secure the territorial integrity of their country foreseeing the imminent disintegration of the Ottoman Empire (Skendi, 1953, p. 220). Their fear was that if they did not act on time their lands would be stolen by other Balkan (particularly Slavic) nations. At first the so-called ‘League of Prizren’ was supported by the Ottoman Empire, but when the League’s separatist tendencies got stronger and it took over the administration of Kosovo, Turkish troops decided to crush it in 1881 (Judah, 2008, p. 36). Even though the lifespan of this political entity was short, its symbolic value was enormous, as it represented the first time in history that Albanians came together to defend their national interest in Kosovo. It showed that religion did not divide Albanians and that they were prepared to act as one against an external enemy (Trix, 1995, p. 284).

In sum, it is clear that because of demographic, historical and symbolic reasons Kosovo is very important not just for Serbs but also for Albanians. Not only do Albanians represent the ethnic majority in Kosovo but it was here where the Albanian nation took its first steps with the League of Prizren. Moreover, in their attempt to counter Serbian accounts, Albanians have mirrored Serbs and interpreted history in a way that suits them best by

creating their own narrative. They have drawn a straight line linking them to the early tribes who inhabited this land; reengineered the battle of Kosovo Polje; and chosen Skanderbeg as a national hero symbolizing their fight against oppression.

2.2 The Kosovo Conflict in the Last Century

In this sub-chapter I focus on the more recent history of the conflict in Kosovo, which can still be remembered by old generations of Serbs and Albanians. Although violence between the two sides goes back beyond the past century, I concentrate on the last 100 years because what happened in this period contributed to the escalation of violence in the last two decades (reaching its peak in 1999 with the outbreak of war). The 1999 war was fuelled by numerous past resentments, grievances and cycles of revenge from the last century, which were mixed with nationalistic narratives on Kosovo (mentioned in the previous section) and exploited by populist leaders. Therefore, in order to understand the context of my case study, the current interethnic situation and why the conflict is regarded as intractable, I present the historical events and injustices that culminated in the last bloody escalation of the conflict between K-Serbs and K-Albanians. I narrow my focus to the issues which I consider important in the context of my study.

2.2.1 Perpetuating Interethnic Violence During the Two World Wars

At the end of the 19th century the Ottoman Empire was partially disintegrated and the historical territorial ambitions of the Serbian state materialized when few decades later (in 1912) it succeeded in seizing Kosovo (Hagen, 1999, p. 57). At this time Serbs made up around 25% and Albanians approximately 50% of the population (Dempsey, 1998, p. 96). However, Albanians, with their nascent nationalism, were relatively organized in resisting Serbian attempts to invade Kosovo, which resulted in severe bloodshed. On their part, Serbs expelled the Ottoman Turkish elites and many Muslim Albanians (Hagen, 1999, p. 57-8). Later, in the period comprised by World War I the Serbian state was briefly occupied by the Austro-Hungarians, Germans and Bulgarians and the Albanians took advantage of these occupations to take their revenge against the Serbs by collaborating with the occupying military forces (mostly by attacking weakened Serbian units) (Judah, 1997, p. 34; Judah, 1999, p. 7). But violence was not one-sided, for during the war and immediately after, Slavic Christians (mostly Serbs and Montenegrins) carried out terrible atrocities on Muslim Albanians and other non-Christian ethnic groups (Hagen, 1999, p. 57-8).

When World War I came to its end, Kosovo as a Serbian province became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. In this newly established state, Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia were not recognized as a separate nation and their territories were referred to as 'Old Serbia'—Kosovo, and 'South Serbia'—Macedonia. Serbs oppressed

Albanians, prohibited their language and forced them to emigrate (Babuna, 2001, p. 68). Furthermore, Serbian authorities tried to repaint the demographic picture of Kosovo by promoting immigration of Serbs and by the beginning of World War II their proportion had increased to 38% of the population (Dempsey, 1998, p. 69; Sell, 2002, p. 74).

World War II was another ‘opportunity’ for revenge and for the cycle of violence to be continued. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was defeated by the Axis powers in 1941 and the population trend in Kosovo changed. The province came under the rule of Albania until the end of the war (Dempsey, 1998, p. 96). During this time Serbs settlers were forcefully displaced out of Kosovo and thousands massacred by Albanians (Judah, 1999, p. 8; Judah, 2008, p. 47). As it has been already mentioned the Nazis established an SS division (called ‘Skanderbeg’) among the Kosovar Muslims that perpetrated atrocities against Serbs (Hagen, 1999, p. 58). During this period a great number of Albanians migrated from Albania into Kosovo to fill the void left by Serbs who escaped (Dempsey, 1998, p. 96).

The violence between Albanians and Serbs has been ongoing since the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and it has escalated during the First and Second World Wars. Both sides have at certain moments been victims or perpetrators and atrocities have been committed by both groups. Every chance for revenge has led to a renewal of the cycle of violence. The conflict over Kosovo is undoubtedly an intractable conflict with a historical dimension that cannot be neglected.

2.2.2 From the Establishment of Yugoslavia to Milošević

With the end of World War II and the defeat of the Axis powers, Tito decided that the only way to rebuild Yugoslavia was to “draw a line under the past” (Judah, 1997, p. 36). The social climate of communist Yugoslavia strictly suppressed any open discussion on the killings and crimes committed during the war by Croats, Albanians, Serbs, etc. The main slogan of the newly established and very future oriented state was ‘*bratstvo i jedinstvo*’ (brotherhood and unity) and this context left no room for discussions about the painful common history. A new identity was being created and according to the ruling Communists, ‘Yugoslavs’ could not afford to revive past animosities between nations that were living in the same state (Hazrl, 2010, p. 42). Therefore, the ethnicities and nations involved in the conflict could not mourn their victims and the pain could not be healed (Judah, 1997, p. 36).

Immediately after the war K-Albanians fought for nearly one year against their reincorporation into the Yugoslav state and in this period they were subject to many atrocities (Hagen, 1999, p. 58; Babuna, 2001, p. 96). Subsequently, after Yugoslavia’s break-up with the Soviet Union, K-Albanians became even more suspicious in the eyes of Belgrade. This was because of the kinship ties of K-Albanians with Albania (Mulaj, 2008, p.

1105), which was in this period still a close ally of the Soviets (Birch, 1971). Kosovo institutions were dominated by Serbs and Montenegrins and Albanian villages were often raided for weapons (Judah, 2008, p. 51). Moreover, a policy of 'Turkification' was promoted among K-Albanians with the aim of weakening their national identity. They were educated in the Turkish language and encouraged to migrate to Turkey. Relying on the excuse of fighting Albanian nationalists' irredentism, the secret police headed by the Serbian Minister of the Interior used a strategy of intimidation that forced about 200.000 Albanians to leave (mostly to Turkey) (Mulaj, 2008, p. 1105).

However, in 1966 Ratković, the Serbian Minister of the Interior who led the oppressive policy towards Albanians was dismissed (Nakarada, 1991, p. 374) and the violent Albanian demonstrations of 1968 persuaded Tito to change the status of Kosovo and grant it provincial autonomy (Hagen, 1999, p. 58). This compromise responded to the demands of the demonstrating students who were asking for Kosovo to be granted the status of republic. At this time the University of Pristina was established (Judah, 2008, p. 53) and because of more liberal policies K-Albanians "expanded their demographic influence into the province's economic and cultural life" (Ronayne, 2004, p. 58). As result of their newly gained rights and the general amelioration of their life conditions, the 1970s were the 'golden age' for K-Albanians (Judah, 2008, p. 55-7). In the subsequent 20 years they tried to take as much advantage as possible of their relative autonomy (although severely constrained by their economic weakness and the dependence on Serbia) while simultaneously pushing for even more rights (Hagen, 1999, p. 58; Ronayne, 2004, p. 58).

After the death of Tito, the most important revolt took place in Kosovo in 1981. The main demands were the republic status for Kosovo and the release of political prisoners, which persisted despite the improvement of economic conditions. This uprising was suppressed by force and the authorities declared a state of emergency. Yet, the discontent continued throughout the 1980s causing several problems to Belgrade (Babuna, 2001, p. 72; Judah, 1999, p. 8-9; Pula, 2004, p. 801). It is worth mentioning that in 1979 the per capita income in Kosovo was 30% of the national average, and the growth rate of Kosovo's "social product," (the measuring standard of economic output in Yugoslavia) was over 50% below the Yugoslav average. Furthermore, unemployment was souring and at some point it affected 60% of the population (Pula 2004, p. 801). The poor economic conditions of the population certainly contributed to the escalation of protests and violence.

In the 1980s—parallel to the revolt of Kosovo Albanians—there was also a noticeable revival of Serbian nationalism (Babuna, 2001, p. 72). In 1986, a memorandum written by a committee of Academics at the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences became public and shocked the whole country. Although the main purpose of the memorandum was to examine the conditions of contemporary Serbia and how Serbs were living in general (Judah, 1999, p. 9), it was just a "dull analysis of Serbian problems" (Judah, 1997, p. 38). Among other things it criticized Yugoslavia for not being centralized enough, but it conceded a great deal of importance to the Kosovo question and to what Kosovo meant to

the Serbian nation. In the memorandum the 1981 demonstrations in Kosovo were seen as a “declaration of large-scale war against the Serbian people” (Babuna, 2001, p. 72). Furthermore, according to the authors Kosovo Serbs were completely isolated and continuously mistreated by Albanians: “it is not that the last of the remnants of the Serbian nation are leaving their homes at an unabated rate, but according to all evidence, faced with a physical, moral and psychological reign of terror, they seem to be preparing for their final exodus” (“Memorandum” in Judah 1997, p. 38). Nevertheless the memorandum called for action: “the Serbian people cannot stand idly by and wait for the future in such a state of uncertainty. . . . Naturally, Serbia must not be passive and wait and see what others will say, as it has done so often in the past” (“Memorandum” in Judah 1997, p. 39).

This national climate facilitated the rise of a man like Slobodan Milošević. Because of its political sensitiveness the Kosovo question became critical (Vladislavjević, 2004) and Milošević used it as a basis for his populist political programme and for the consolidation of his power (Babuna, 2001, p. 72; Sell, 2002, p. 65-6). In 1989 the autonomy of Kosovo was abolished and followed by protests of K-Albanians (Judah, 1999, p. 10). The same year, the celebration of Kosovo Polje was celebrated for the first time in centuries in its original location, where the battle between the ancestral Serbian medieval state and the Ottoman Empire took place in 1389. This was not just a commemoration, but an official revival of the myth of the Serbian nation, which had an impressive impact on the Serbian public opinion (Kaser & Halpern, 1998).

The main concern of Serbs regarding Kosovo was that the changing demographic picture was part of an organized campaign that was causing a ‘cultural genocide’ affecting Serbian people living there (Hazrl, 2010, p. 43). The populist anti-Albanian rhetoric often included accounts of rapes of Serbian women and men, which unsurprisingly outraged the Serbian public (Sell, 2002, p. 65-6; Oberschall, 2000, p. 990). What cannot be denied is that between 1961 and 1981 the proportion of Albanians in Kosovo rose from 67% to 78% (Independent International Commission on Kosovo in Hazrl, 2010, p. 43) as a consequence of the high birth rate among Albanians and the emigration of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo. According to surveys conducted in this period the main causes for emigration were not economic reasons but verbal pressure, damage to property, attacks on children and so on (Vladislavjević in Hazrl, 2010, p. 43). International human rights monitors even found proofs of a pattern of intimidating assaults on property and persons. However, the proportion of this kind of attacks was not out of control. According to the official evidence on ethnically motivated crime, from 1981 to 1987 there were just five reported interethnic murders. In addition, Kosovo had the second-lowest rate of rape in Yugoslavia (Sell, 2002, p. 79-80). Therefore, even though it seems plausible that K-Serbs were to a certain extent abused because of their minority status, Serbian ethno-political agitators blew this out of proportion (Hazrl, 2010, p. 43). In doing so, they increased the fear in the Serbian society that later justified repression and aggression on Kosovo Albanians (Sell, 2002, p. 65-6).

In the 1990s special legal authorizations permitted the regime to massively lay off K-Albanian employees from their jobs (the majority of which were in state-owned institutions, enterprises and public administration). In addition, according to the Ministry's plans for the 1991/1992 school year, less than 30% of Albanian students finishing primary school had the opportunity to enrol in secondary schools, while 700 more slots were available for Serb students who were primary school graduates. This and similar policies created a growing frustration among the K-Albanian population, while strengthening its solidarity and commitment to collectively resist Serbia's takeover (Pula, 2004, p. 806-13). The main reaction to this discriminatory campaign was the development of parallel political arrangements, which were powered by social networks (Corrin, 2002, p. 99; Judah, 2008, p. 96) and created an unofficial state-like organization (with its own tax system, schools, legal and political organs and so forth) (Hagen, 1999, p. 58). In this context the peaceful revolution led by Ibrahim Rugova the leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo used non-violence as strategy due to the lack of access to arms, but also to the belief that such tactics would favourably dispose the international community to consider the secessionist demand *vis-à-vis* the overall disintegration of Yugoslavia (Koinova, 2006, p. 11). The most important source of revenue for the 'parallel state' were funds provided by the large Kosovar diaspora (Lani, 1999, p. 29; Judah, 2008, p. 73).

From 1990 onwards human rights reports collected evidence on cases of police violence, brutal treatment of Albanians while in custody, and other cases of ethnically driven maltreatment and violence perpetrated by the authorities. Many of such cases happened when the Serbian police started a campaign of random house raids throughout villages in Kosovo to search for hidden weapons. The raids were usually conducted at night, intended to humiliate as much as to actually confiscate weapons, and were accompanied by arrests, beatings, and even the death of family members (Pula, 2004, p. 808-9). These and similar human rights abuses, the campaign of 'ethnic cleansing' (Gray, 1999, p. 133) and the cold war between the two communities laid the foundations for a violent escalation of the conflict (Ogden, 2000, p. 118). In these circumstances the non-violent revolt of Rugova was not seen anymore as a solution to the problems of K-Albanians and the radical Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) gained more support and became central in the fight against the oppressive regime (and also against pro-Rugova Albanians who were seen as internal enemies) (Lani, 1999, p. 31; Papasotiriou, 2002, p. 43-5).

Summarizing, with the end of the World War II and the establishment of Yugoslavia, K-Albanians and Serbs became part of the same country and were forced to suppress their antagonisms. However, with the death of Tito in 1980 there was a revival of nationalistic tendencies, leading to mass protests in Kosovo and later in Serbia, paving the way for the rise of populist nationalists. Milošević used the Kosovo question to revive the myth of the Serbian nation and began a campaign of oppression on K-Albanians with the aim to reverse the demographic trends in the region. K-Albanians organized themselves and under the lead of Rugova and its idea of non-violent revolt established a parallel state.

However, after some time peaceful resistance lost its appeal and the KLA started using violence in the fight against Serbian oppression.

2.2.3 The 1998/99 Kosovo War

The KLA, the main Albanian rebel group, had just one goal: “liberate Kosovo from the Serbian yoke and make it independent” (Koktsidis & Ten Dam, 2008, p. 165). The long divisions between Albanians and Serbs at local and regional level were deeply rooted in society and the ethnic tensions of the 1990s made KLA’s simple and clear demand very appealing to the bulk of the population, especially after Rugova’s unsuccessful non-violent revolt (Pula 2004, 808–9). There were many factors that contributed to the rise of power of the KLA. First of all, after the collapse of Albania, weapons became suddenly available and the KLA got the means to lead a campaign of violence against the ‘Serbian oppressors’ (Özerdem, 2003, p. 79; Judah, 2008, p. 80). Furthermore, the KLA was successful in creating and using images of national heroes (such is the KLA leader Adem Jashari who was killed along with his extended family) to raise public support (Judah, 2008, p. 81). Third, the sudden upsurge in strength of the KLA during the summer of 1998 may have been at least partially due to the fundraising efforts by the Albanian diaspora in the West, which did not see any prospective in Rugova’s peaceful resistance (Demmers, 2002, p. 86; Ballentine and Nitzschke, 2003, p. 9). The KLA guerrilla operations against Serbs provoked a massive Serbian counter-offensive and a campaign of ethnic cleansing (including the displacement of several hundred thousand K-Albanians and the murder of many others), which finally convinced the international community (especially NATO countries) to react. This gave additional legitimacy to the KLA as the only real protector of Albanians in Kosovo (Koktsidis & Ten Dam, 2008, p. 169; Hagen, 1999, p. 59; Judah, 2008, p. 82; Papatiririou, 2002, p. 45).

As the KLA’s violent revolt was gaining more and more influence, several unsuccessful attempts of different countries and international organizations (such as the Rambouillet talks) aimed to persuade the warring parties to stop violence. After all diplomatic means had been exhausted without success, NATO—with the decisive support of the US—started bombing Serbian strategic targets in Kosovo and Serbia. It has been suggested that the international community acted relatively quickly because of the pressure from the public opinion for not having acted on time during the massacre of Srebrenica (in Bosnia) (Judah, 2008, p. 87-89).

Without going into detail on single battles, as a consequence of the war and the Serbian ethnic cleansing ‘tools’ (such as looting, torture, killings, massacres, rape, torching homes, etc.), which took place particularly during the NATO bombing campaign, almost one million and a half K-Albanians fled to neighbouring countries or were internally displaced. Moreover, it is estimated that from the 24th of March to the 19th of June around 10.000 persons (mostly K-Albanians) died because of the conflict (Özerdem, 2003, p. 81; Judah,

2008, p. 90). Although before and during the war the main targets of violence were K-Albanians, after the war this pattern reversed as Albanians returned and Serbs became victims of widespread violence. The average number of ethnically motivated killings of non-Albanian residents of Kosovo remained on a very high level for several weeks after the war ended (The International Crisis Group [ICG] in Hazrl, 2010, p. 52). Because of post-war violence and the KLA approximately 164.000⁵ non-Albanians were forced to leave (Hazrl, 2010, p. 52; Judah, 2008, p. 101-2) or became internally displaced. Serbs from almost all of Kosovo's towns retreated into enclaves and their freedom of movement was very limited for several years. Furthermore, many Orthodox churches and houses of non-Albanians (especially Serbs) were attacked and burned in order to prevent them from returning. All this happened because of the security vacuum created when Serbian security forces left Kosovo and as a consequence of the rather disorganized deployment of NATO troops (Judah, 2008, 91-2).

In conclusion, with the rise of power of the KLA the revolt against Serbs became much more violent. This provoked a Serbian counteroffensive, which intensified during the NATO bombing campaign. During the war, Serbian security forces became notorious for the high amount of atrocities they committed, which forced almost one million and a half of Albanians to flee from their homes. However, after the war the cycle of violence continued and both Serbs and other non-Albanians became targets of killings and indiscriminate violence. In this period many left Kosovo and went to Serbia or were internally displaced into enclaves or mono-ethnic areas.

2.3 Post-War Kosovo

In this section I present how Kosovo has changed after the war, with the deployment of international missions and later on with the declaration of independence. Thereafter, I describe two problems that make everyday life difficult for Kosovars: the legal status of their country (and its relationship with Serbia) and unemployment. I have focused on these two dimensions because they are connected to my case study. In the final part I concentrate on the structure of Kosovo's multiethnic society and on how ethnic groups cooperate (or not) in this newborn state. Special attention is given to the growing segregation between K-Serbs and K-Albanians.

⁵ The number of displaced non-Albanians was according to the UNHCR and Serbian official figures around 230.000 (Judah, 2008, p. 101; Bernabéu, 2007, p. 74).



Figure 2: Map of Kosovo (Source: Kenny in Judah, 2008, p. XIII).

2.3.1 Kosovo’s Legal Status and International Presence

In June 1999, the United Nations Security Council issued Resolution 1244, which authorised the deployment of two international missions: the ‘United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo’ (UNMIK) as a civil mission and the ‘Kosovo Force’ (KFOR) as a military peace support operation. UNMIK, at the time of its deployment, had several pillars allocated to the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union (EU). On its part, KFOR’s military mission has been led exclusively by NATO but has included troops from non-NATO member states (Bernabéu, 2007, p. 73).

The challenges faced in the years following the war were overwhelming. There were no working institutions left from the previous regime. In addition, there was a security

vacuum that was created after Serbian security forces withdrew from Kosovo. However, the international community, through civil and military missions, has been successful in establishing relatively functioning institutions and a legitimate government. Moreover, it managed to implement the crucial security sector reform aiming at setting up a local police force and at creating the conditions for the future establishment of an army (Bernabéu, 2007, p. 88-90; Judah, 2008, p. 94-107). Although there were still many problems to be solved, such as the general state of corruption, widespread smuggling and limited freedom of movement of the Serbian population, Kosovo became moderately stable (Judah, 2008, p. 94-107).

A crucial step that would determine the future of Kosovo was taken on the 17th of February, 2008, with the declaration of its independence. The main problem of this (unilateral act) was related to the general question on whether priority should be given to state sovereignty and territorial integrity or to self-determination of peoples and independence (Muharremi, 2008, p. 403). The concerns were that the separation of Kosovo from Serbia would set a precedent for the redrawing of borders among ethnic lines, which could have a destabilizing impact on multiethnic Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro (Kupchan, 2005, p. 14; Bardos, 2008, p. 57-8). Though, the reality was that Kosovo was in a state of limbo, since its general population and elites did not want anything to do with Serbia. Demography did not play in Serbia's favour: after the war the number of K-Serbs decreased and they became a small minority concentrated in the north with no much say (Kupchan, 2005, p. 14). Nevertheless, on the international level the main dilemma regarding the legal status of Kosovo was whether Resolution 1244 provided a legal basis for its independence (Muharremi, 2008, p. 403).

Following Kosovo's controversial secession from Serbia, two EU-led missions were deployed to Kosovo: the 'International Civilian Office' (ICO) and the 'European Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo' (EULEX) (Tansey & Zaum, 2009, p. 15). The latter has the objective of assisting the development of security and judicial institutions in Kosovo and with an annual budget of over 200 million euros it is the biggest EU mission of this kind (European Stability Initiative [ESI], 2009, p. 1). With this step the EU has become even more involved in the Kosovo question (De Wet, 2009). However, on the ground it was not clear which mission was responsible for what because there was an overlapping of responsibilities and roles. The major consequence of insufficient coordination was the *de facto* division between the territories inhabited by Serbs and the rest of the country. In Serbian areas (particularly in the north) Serbs set up new municipal administrations that were financed by Belgrade and were recognized neither by the Kosovar government nor by missions of international organizations (Tansey, 2009, p. 15-7). This has become a big obstacle for the integration of Serbian areas into the Kosovar state.

To conclude, after the war Kosovo had no functioning institutions and an uncertain security situation. In this regard the international presence has been crucial in filling the gap and creating the conditions for the establishment of the needed institutions, but it has

failed to curb corruption, smuggling, etc. Following Kosovo's controversial declaration of independence in 2008 the EU became the central actor in the peacebuilding process and two more missions were deployed. However, because of bad coordination and overlapping authorities, Serbian areas with the assistance of Belgrade (especially in the north) have organized themselves and created parallel institutions. These structures pose a serious danger to the integration of Serbs in the Kosovar state and provoke further instability.

2.3.2 Two Real Problems: Legal Status and Unemployment

From the end of the war it has been the population of Kosovo who has most felt the consequences of Kosovo's unclear legal status, the shrinking relationship between the Kosovo government and Serbia and the overlapping of responsibilities and roles of various international missions. People living in Kosovo had problems carrying out simple everyday activities, such as making a phone call, visiting a relative in another country or travelling to Serbia. For example, since its break-up from Yugoslavia Kosovo did not have its own international dialling code and instead it 'borrowed' numbers belonging to other countries. This made communication between ethnic groups difficult, since Serbs living in Kosovo were still using the Serbian number for cell phones and if an Albanian wanted to call a Serbian friend, he had to make an international call (Judah, 2008, p. 99).

Also regarding travelling Kosovars have had many difficulties. Immediately after the war, travellers needed a Yugoslavian Passport. Later on, the passports issued by UNMIK were not recognized by many countries including Serbia, which constrained the mobility of Kosovo citizens (Judah, 2008, p. 100). Furthermore, after the declaration of independence, even though the largest EU civilian mission was deployed in Kosovo and it generally enjoyed the support of many EU countries, Kosovo has been the only country in the region to be excluded from the 'visa dialogues'; these aim to liberalize visas in order to allow visa-free travel to the Schengen area (ESI, 2010). Therefore, the mobility of people (especially Albanians who do not have Serbian passport) has been in the last decade very limited. However, in the last months (during my stay in Kosovo) as a consequence of EU-led negotiations there has been a breakthrough regarding the acceptance of Kosovo IDs in Serbia (Marzouk, 2011; Ristic, 2011). Moreover in 2012 Kosovo will start the visa dialogues with the EU, which are seen as a meaningful step in the build-up towards Kosovar statehood (Aliu, 2012).

Another problem was until recently the use of vehicle licence plates issued in Kosovo that were not recognized by Serbia. People who wanted to travel to Serbia had to pay for temporary plates or get both of them (Judah, 2008, p. 100). I could experience 'the plates problem' by myself, since when I was travelling from Belgrade to Pristina, the bus stopped as we approached the border and the driver stepped out to change the plates. In some cases we (the passengers) had to take another bus. People I interviewed told me that it is dangerous to have a Serbian registration plate in Kosovo or a Kosovo registration plate in

Serbia (or in Serbian inhabited areas of Kosovo north of the Ibar river). This has been a major concern especially for Serbs living in enclaves in Kosovo, since they are often travelling between Kosovo and Serbia. Yet, the deal establishing freedom of movement that was agreed between Kosovo and Serbia during the summer of 2011 plates seems to have at least formally solved this problem (Marzouk, 2011; Ristic, 2011).

Apart from the legal status issues and the unclear relationship with Serbia, another major challenge for Kosovo, whose population is among the youngest in Europe (Judah, 2008, p. 16), is the difficult economic situation. During the war essential infrastructure services were severely damaged or neglected and are now in very poor conditions. Kosovo was for decades the least developed part of Yugoslavia and after the violent conflict and the declaration of independence, the per capita income has remained among the lowest in the region (Sen & Kirkpatrick, 2011, p. 133). Furthermore, the level of unemployment is very high in comparison to other neighbouring countries, and it affects almost 50% (the majority under the age of 30) of the economically active population (CRIP, 2009, p. 34-5; Bardos, 2008, p. 63). A total of 334,595 persons (compared to 327,262 persons in 2006) were registered unemployed by the end of 2007 of whom 93% were jobless for more than 12 months (CRIP, 2009, p. 34-5). Even though informal and seasonal employment makes the unemployment rate lower than the official figures suggest (World Bank in Sen & Kirkpatrick, 2011, p. 147) it still remains a visible threat to stability and a possible trigger for further violence.

Especially the K-Albanian population relies on remittances from its large diaspora to maintain a standard of living it could otherwise not afford (Sen & Kirkpatrick, 2011, p. 133). However, according to research done by the European Stability Initiative there is a trend showing that less money is coming from abroad, which means that many people will not be able to count on a fixed monthly income anymore (ESI, 2006). On the other side many K-Serbs receive double salaries because they are employed by the Serbian government but work at the same time for Kosovar institutions (Judah, 2008, p. 103). However, should Belgrade give up its parallel institutions in Kosovo and stop its financial support to K-Serbs, this would create a serious economic problem for the Serbian minority. Therefore, the difficult economic situation Kosovo is facing could precipitate quickly due to several threats and destabilize a country that is already under enormous pressure.

To sum up, in this sub-chapter I wanted to present the main challenges the Kosovo population is facing on a daily basis. Kosovo's unclear relationship with Serbia and its legal status have very concrete consequences on people's lives, particularly by limiting their freedom of movement. Moreover, the high level of unemployment in a state with a very young population is certainly a major concern for further instability. It seems undeniable that Kosovars, its government and the international missions still have many challenges ahead.

2.3.3 Kosovo's Post-Conflict Interethnic Relations

In Kosovo there is still a lot of tension between the K-Serbian and K-Albanian part of the population (Judah, 2008). What exists is negative rather than positive peace, especially because of the lack of contact, relationships and trust between the two sides. It is therefore more an absence of personal violence (direct violence) than an absence of structural violence (indirect violence mostly rooted in the structures of society) and as it is, it cannot lead to a positively defined condition and a durable peace (Galtung, 1969). These deep systemic divisions between the two parties make a renewal of physical violence more likely and any prospect for a common future under the same flag very difficult to achieve.

Demographically Kosovo could be still regarded as a multiethnic society. According to primary school attendance data, about two-thirds of K-Serbs live in small, rural settlements spread in over 20 southern municipalities. The other third of Serbs are highly concentrated in the municipalities of Leposavić, Zubin Potok, Zvečan, and the mainly urban northern part of the Mitrovica municipality where they represent the majority (ESI, 2004, p. 6-7). However, the multiethnic nature of Kosovar society is changing and there is a growing segregation between the two communities, which certainly has a negative effect on conflict resolution. An episode which further accelerated the process of segregation is the 'March 2004' ethnic violence that especially targeted the K-Serbian community and increased displacement inside the country, forcing people to move to mono-ethnic areas where they could feel safer (IDMC, 2010).

This trend becomes clearly visible when analyzing the patterns of return of IDPs (Internally Displaced People). Many minority returnees (to areas where the majority of the population is not of the same ethnicity) face problems with reintegration and consequently the level of return is relatively low; until 2009 there were in total just 19,525 minority returns to Kosovo (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] Pristine, 2009). This number is meaningful if it is compared to the number of K-Serbian IDPs still living in Serbia, which is, according to UNHCR data, 205,211 (UNHCR, 2009). Minority returnees face difficulties with security, finding employment and having services in a language they know. Therefore, very often they are not willing to return to their previous homes but prefer (especially if they have young children) to move to areas inhabited with people from their same ethnicity (in enclaves or in the north of Kosovo) (Smit, 2004, p. 194-6; Englbrecht, 2004, p. 142-3). However, also in enclaves life is difficult, since often people have a limited freedom of movement, no jobs, and no real prospects to be integrated in the new state (Bardos, 2008, p. 62). This growing separation and lack of contact between the two communities living in the same country is certainly not a positive sign and negatively effects the achievement of a durable peace in Kosovo.



Figure 3: Ethnic Populations in 2008 (Source: Kenny in Judah, 2008, p. 112)

The level of tensions between K-Serbs and K-Albanians has varied considerably in the last decade. A study conducted by Gjoni, Wetterberg, & Dunbar (2010, p. 295-6) shows that the willingness to work with the other ethnic group has generally increased since 2002, although relations are not normalized to the point that working together is widely accepted. Compared to December 2002, K-Albanians' willingness to work with K-Serbs had increased by about 20% by early 2010, but has mostly remained below 50%. On the other side, K-Serbs' interest in co-operating with K-Albanians has been much more variable, but has declined significantly since its highpoint of almost 80% in March 2007. Moreover, according to the authors the two ethnic groups remain unwilling to recognize their own community's contribution to tensions. K-Albanians mostly blame Serbian forces (K-Serb leaders, community and increasingly Belgrade) with fuelling tensions; though, in

2009, for the first time more than 10% of K-Albanians reported their own community's and leaders' responsibility for continuing the conflict. In contrast, K-Serbs consistently blame the K-Albanian community and leaders for ethnic tensions.

Since the Serbian inhabited north is *de facto* not yet integrated into the Kosovar state I will shortly describe the situation in this part of the country. In this area (particularly in the west) K-Serbs represent the great majority of the population and many are IDPs from elsewhere in Kosovo. On the other side, many K-Albanians who once lived north of the Ibar have been displaced to Mitrovica and often move to the South. In the north the ties with Serbia are still very strong and Belgrade has a lot of influence through politics and by financing K-Serbian parallel institutions and services. The tension between the two communities is clearly visible and K-Serbs resist every attempt to be integrated into the new state, which could possibly provoke further violence and instability in the region. However, despite the substantial amount of money funnelled into the region, unemployment represents a big problem—as in other parts of the country—and many emigrate in the hope of finding better job opportunities. Open violence is rare, but both communities use the reconstruction of IDPs housing as a 'weapon' to maintain the ethnic balance. Above all, organized crime is very much present and there is a high level of corruption (ICG, 2011).

Concluding, although Kosovo is regarded as a multiethnic state, there is a growing segregation between K-Albanians and K-Serbs. K-Serbs are concentrated in enclaves with a limited freedom of movement or on the north of the Ibar River where the influence of Belgrade is still very visible. There is not much contact between the two ethnicities and there is a serious risk K-Serbs will very difficultly integrate into the new Kosovo state.

3 Theoretical Framework

In the theoretical framework I present, compare and analyse the theories and themes that are important for understanding my case study. Since my research project is part of a multidisciplinary field of study, the simultaneous use of a wide range of theories is required in order to analyse the totality of its dimensions. In the first part I examine the role of emotions in intractable conflicts or more exactly why people dehumanize the opposing side and what are the consequences of such alienation. Thereafter, I focus on how cooperation, trust and relationships can influence the peace process. I analyse these elements in definitions of 'reconciliation' (Lederach, 1997, p. 26-7; Bar-Tal, 2000, p. 355), 'conflict resolution' (Fisher, 1994, p. 14; Kelman, 2008, p. 23) and 'instrumental reconciliation' (Nadler & Shnabal, 2008, p. 41). In this section I first describe the differences between these definitions and subsequently I examine the theories that are particularly useful for comprehending my case study. These highlight the role of cooperation between two parties trying to achieve a common instrumental goal, which has a positive influence on intergroup trust.

In the next sub-chapter I concentrate on the 'Contact Hypothesis' (Allport in Krochick & Jost, 2011, p. 158; Allport in Pettigrew, 1998, p. 66), which explains how contact between two opposing sides (if certain conditions are met) can reduce intergroup prejudice and ameliorate relationships. In the context of this theory certain authors propose the 'use' of a common goal to promote cooperation and they present two possible approaches, which can be utilized to decrease biases: decategorization and recategorization (Gaertner, Dovidio, Phyllis & Bachman, 1993; Dovidio et al., 2008; Gaertner, Dovidio & Bachman, 1996, p. 273). Particular attention is also given to the majority and minority status of the groups taking part in the interaction (Shelton, 2003, p. 183; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005, p. 951). Last but not least, (in the following sub-chapter) I focus again but in more detail on the theory of reconciliation of Nadler and Shnabel (2008), who differentiate between instrumental reconciliation and socio-emotional reconciliation. I analyse the divergences between the two and I present an example of instrumental reconciliation.

Subsequently, in order to better understand another perspective of my case, I explain the role of development in post-conflict settings and the importance of economic sides of peacebuilding (in my case the KCRDP promotes the use of development as a 'tool' for increasing intergroup cooperation). I also focus on why it is necessary to guarantee employment opportunities to people who are living in post-conflict societies. Moreover, I argue that the structure of aid (as a supply driven support, which does not involve the local community) is one of the reasons why post-conflict development can be relatively unsuccessful. Nevertheless, I present a possible (more demand-oriented) solution to this problem: the use of so-called 'Community approaches to development', which aim at involving the local community and using local resources and knowledge to promote development in post-conflict societies. Because of the similarities with the studied project

(the KCRDP), which is being implemented in Kosovo, analyzing the positive and negative sides of these approaches is crucial for understanding my case.

In the final sub-chapter I analyse the role of NGOs in post-conflict societies. I concentrate on the proliferation of NGOs, which are oriented primarily towards the outside world, the problems with coordination and the dependence of these NGOs on donors with their own agendas. Afterwards, I propose the use of local knowledge, resources and human capital in order to achieve better results and rationalize foreign assistance. I have decided to include this section because the KCRDP is planned and implemented by two NGOs, who are as well receiving funds from foreign donors, but which still manage to include the local community in their projects.

3.1 Emotions and Dehumanization in Intractable Conflicts

“Post-war reconstruction begins in the hearts and minds of those who suffer the horrors of war and want to change societies so that there is no return to mass violence.” (Barakat, 2005a, p. 1)

Irrespective of whether conflicts are driven by greed (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Billon, 2001), grievances (Gurr, 1970), or cultural and religious differences (Huntington, 1993) etc., intractable conflicts have often something in common: emotions. The presented theories and studies are important to understand the role of emotions for people involved in the Kosovar (intractable) conflict. Emotions are part of the problem because they keep people apart, but they can become part of the solution when taken enough in consideration during the peace process (also on the local level in very specific programmes, such is the KCRDP).

Emotions in a conflict can become so important to overtake over rationality and as a consequence people begin to see the out-world the way they feel. Their perception of reality totally changes and they feel no empathy for the needs and suffering of the other side (Maiese, 2007, p. 188). It is much easier to fight against a dehumanized, faceless enemy (Jeong, 2008, p. 78) and emotions play a major role in creating this distorted image. Therefore, according to several authors (Retzinger & Scheff, 2007, p. 71; Fisher & Kelman, 2011, p. 76) conflicts cannot be properly understood, without giving enough attention to emotions and other consequent socio-psychological process.

Emotions play a particularly important role in ‘intractable conflicts’, which are conflicts defined as “recalcitrant, intense, deadlocked, and extremely difficult to resolve” (Coleman, 2003, p. 6). According to Kriesberg (in Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998, p. 761-2; Bar-Tal, 2007, p. 1432-3) intractable conflicts share different characteristics. They are protracted, which means that they persist for at least one generation, but often with a fluctuation in the frequency and intensity of physical violence. As a consequence there is a lot of animosity

and hostility between the two sides. Moreover, such conflicts are perceived as total, since the parties believe that a defeat can have catastrophic consequences for the existence and survival of their society. They are zero-sum games where there can be just one winner and one loser and possibilities for win-win outcomes are ruled out. Intractable conflicts are also seen as irresolvable and they occupy a central place in the lives of individuals and whole societies.

Intractable conflicts are fuelled by visible material but also immaterial concerns (Retzinger & Scheff, 2007, p. 75). Many characteristics of intractable conflicts—as some of the ones mentioned above—are psychological (Bar-Tal, 2007, p. 1433) and involve intense emotions (Coleman, 2003, p. 25). Individuals can experience emotions that are not a consequence of events involving their personal lives, but are connected to collective or societal experiences. As a result, if part of the group has directly experienced something all members can feel it because they are part of the same organism. Collective emotions are the consequence of many group-based emotional responses to a societal event (Bar-Tal, Halperin & de Rivera, 2007, p. 442-8; Halperin, Sharvit & Gross, 2011, p. 85). Furthermore, emotions in violent conflicts are particularly strong because they are connected to negative experiences. Negative information and events cause negative emotions that are easily remembered and override positive emotions (Jarymowicz & Bar-Tal, 2006).

There are many different emotions that are present in conflicts and contribute to intractability. Retzinger & Scheff (2007) claim that “hidden shame and alienation are the emotional and relational sides of the same dynamic system, a cycle of violence” (p. 77). Bar-Tal (2001, p. 603-4) emphasizes the role of fear as the emotion that maximizes the probability of surviving in adverse environments and dangerous situations. According to him, fear is not necessarily connected to a real danger, but it can be triggered by a stimulus or emotional memory, which quickly overcomes rationality and logic. In addition, by being exposed to fear over a longer period, individuals are more prone to see possible threats and react according to their previous experiences. In these circumstances in order to protect themselves they generally become more aggressive.

People involved in conflicts use frames to understand and simplify complex situations and to give them a meaning that is coherent with their worldviews. Therefore, parties differ not only in their interests, values and beliefs, but also in the way they perceive a situation as a consequence of framing. Frame differences provoke communication difficulties, the polarization of parties and can contribute to the escalation of conflicts (Shmueli, Elliot & Kaufman, 2007, p. 209). Similarly Bar-Tal (1998) sees the formation of specific societal beliefs, as “the psychological infrastructure that enables society to cope with the intractable conflict” (p. 23). These include the justness of one’s own goals, security, the delegitimization of the adversary, own victimization, patriotism, etc. (Bar-Tal, 1998, p. 26). The role of societal beliefs is comparable to the role of frames, since they can be helpful for ‘surviving’ a conflict, but they also perpetuate its continuation and make its resolution much more difficult. Conflicts thus create different realities for people that are in some

way connected to them and as a consequence parties construct different narratives, discourses, myths, collective memories and in the long-run parallel histories (Coleman, 2004; Tint, 2010; Paez & Hou-Fu Liu, 2011; Hadjipavlou, 2006). All this not just contributes on keeping the disputants apart from each other but it creates an even bigger split between the two sides.

Finally, identities of 'Us' and 'Other' are formed by boundaries which can be real or virtual points of separation (or contact) (Newman & Paasi, 1998, p. 191). Physical proximity is not necessarily connected to social proximity (Simmel in Houtum & Strüver, 2002, p. 143). During conflicts psychological and emotional barriers or boundaries can be particularly hard to remove and are often underestimated. The opposing sides do not see each other anymore on a human level but they see just a faceless, dehumanized 'Other', an enemy who has to be 'destroyed before it is too late'. In these circumstances parties avoid any contact with each other (Pettigrew, 1998, p. 69), which makes the road to peace even harder. Therefore, all in all according to the presented literature, particularly in intractable conflicts emotions have a key role, since they can have a significant influence on the behaviour of the involved groups and the possible resolution of the conflict.

3.2 Towards Peace with Cooperation, Trust and Relationships

After having summarized some of the conflict resolution literature, which describes the theorized role of emotions in intractable conflicts, in this sub-chapter I present a set of definitions that highlight the importance of cooperation, trust and relationships in different phases of the peace process. Particular attention is given to explanations, which are useful for understanding my case study in more detail. These emphasize the role of cooperation in the achievement of common instrumental goals, which has a positive influence on intergroup trust and relationships.

3.2.1 Reconciliation, Conflict Resolution and Instrumental Reconciliation

The importance of cooperation, trust and relationships is widely recognized in the different phases of the peace process and it is mentioned in definitions and explanations of 'reconciliation' (Lederach 1997, p. 26-7; Bar-Tal 2000, p. 355), 'conflict resolution' (Fisher 1994, p. 14; Kelman 2008, p. 23) and 'instrumental reconciliation' (Nadler & Shnabal 2008, p. 41). Clearly there is some conceptual vagueness regarding the usage of these terms and there is a constant evolution of these definitions (Nadler & Shnabal 2008, p. 41). Therefore, in this sub-chapter I firstly review some explanations of reconciliation and conflict resolution and their emphasis on cooperation, trust and relationships. Afterwards, because of the clear connection with my case study, I concentrate on theories of conflict resolution and instrumental reconciliation, which argue that cooperation between two parties trying

to achieve a common instrumental goal has a positive influence on intergroup trust and relationships.

In recent years the term reconciliation has, according to Rouhana (2011, p. 295), acquired a different dimension. Reconciliation has come to represent a step further in the peace process and therefore a more enduring transformation of the conflict and the nature of the relationship between societies (it is has become more than just peaceful coexistence). The evolution of theory in this field of studies is related to the growing understanding of the importance of emotions in conflicts. This is the consequence of the change from the realist approach to conflict and its resolution, which dominated the past half-century and emphasized material interest, as the only key to the resolution of disputes, to an alternative psychological needs approach (Shnabel, Nadler, Canetti-Nisim & Ullrich, 2008, p. 160-1).

Several authors emphasize the importance of cooperation, trust and relationships in reconciliation. Lederach (1997) argues that there should be a “shift from the concern about the resolution of issues toward a frame of reference that focuses on the restoration and rebuilding of relationships” (p. 24). From his point of view, personal experiences, emotions and prejudices, which have been created in conflict situations and violent environments, make any pragmatic attempt at conflict resolution ineffective and in certain situations even offensive. Therefore, peacebuilding must be shaped in a way that addresses subjective realities shaping people’s perspectives and needs. Similarly Bar-Tal (2000, p. 355-6) says that the solution to conflicts taking place within a country as a consequence of interethnic, interracial, or inter-religious divisions, is the creation of peaceful, collaborative, and trustful relations in a society. In other words, the process of reconciliation “is the process by which the parties in conflict form new relations of peaceful coexistence based on mutual trust and acceptance, cooperation, and consideration of each other’s needs” (Bar-Tal 2000, p. 355).

In contrast to Lederach (1997, p. 24) and Bar-Tal (2000, p. 355-6) who use the term reconciliation, Fisher (1994, p. 60) identifies two very similar phenomena, which are the building of sustainable relationships between groups and the meeting of basic human needs, as being two of the main goals of conflict resolution. In a similar way Reykowski & Cyslak (2011, p. 241) see conflict resolution as an ongoing task that includes the prevention of conflict escalation, elimination of its violent and destructive sides, and the facilitation of constructive adaptation in people and in their relations in society. Clearly the distinction between reconciliation and conflict resolution is in some cases blurred and not all authors make a clear differentiation between the two.

However, much more central to my research project because of the case study I analyse, is conflict resolution as defined by Kelman (2008), which “is a strategic change in the relationship between the parties, expressed in the terms of a pragmatic partnership and the development of a degree of working trust” (p. 23). At this point each side is persuaded

that stable peace and cooperation are both in its own interest and the interest of the other. This definition is important for my case, because it is much more detailed in defining the specific phase in the peace process, when a relationship based on mutual interest is established. It emphasizes the role of a ‘pragmatic partnership’, which can be formed while trying to achieve common (in my case development) goals. Though, conflict resolution in these terms is just one of the steps towards the final objective, which is reconciliation and sustainable peace.

Consistent with Kelman’s (2008, p. 23) explanation of conflict resolution—and for the same reasons also important and useful for my study—is Nadler & Shnabel (2008, p. 41-3) definition of instrumental reconciliation. As I will explain in more detail in the sub-chapter *Cooperation Through Instrumental Reconciliation*, they differentiate between socio-emotional reconciliation and instrumental reconciliation. The latter consists of “repeated acts of cooperation to achieve common instrumental goals . . . in the route to ending intergroup conflict” (Nadler & Shnabel 2008, p. 41). Even though the outcome of this process is not yet reconciliation as defined by Rouhanna (2011, p. 295; 2004, p. 175) or Kelman (2008, p. 24), it still represents an important step towards peace.

To summarize, taking emotions into consideration is fundamental for solving a conflict. Cooperation, trust and relationships are extremely important in all the phases of the peace process no matter how authors deconstruct or define it. They are essential in the final stage (reconciliation), but they are crucial also when the first contact between the opposing groups is established and while parties cooperate to achieve a common instrumental goal (this is also what the KCRDP tries to achieve).

3.2.2 Contact as a Precondition for Decategorization or Recategorization

According to Amir (1969) and Pettigrew (2008) intergroup contact plays an important role in shaping positive or negative relationships between groups. But the mere fact that two parties in a conflict are interacting with each other is not enough to guarantee positive results. In some cases contact can reduce conflicts and weaken animosities between the two sides, but in others it may intensify prejudices and push the parties even more apart. Therefore, in order to make sure that intergroup contact leads to positive results, such as the amelioration of intergroup relations (and not further polarization), it is necessary to consider whether the conditions of interaction are suitable for a constructive change.

Allport (in Krochick & Jost, 2011, p. 158; in Pettigrew, 1998, p. 66)—the father of the ‘Contact Hypothesis’—was among the first to point at four key conditions that need to be present for intergroup contact to guarantee positive results. The first is equal status within the situation, which means that the parties involved in the interaction need to perceive themselves as equal. According to Pettigrew (1998, p. 66) “most research supports this contention” (p. 66), but he also argues that some authors (Brewer & Kramer in Pettigrew,

p. 66) emphasize the importance of 'equal group status coming into the situation'. Therefore, in the thesis (particularly in the *Debate* chapter) I focus on both 'equal status within the situation' and 'equal group status coming into the situation'. Secondly, society and institutions have to support the contact between disputants in order to make it socially acceptable. Furthermore, the two sides have to strive for a common goal, which can be achieved just by cooperating (and not competing) with each other (Pettigrew, 1998, p. 66-67); in these circumstances the success or failure of cooperation is very important, since it determines whether the interaction will decrease or increase prejudice (Tajfel, 1982, p. 28). Nevertheless, Pettigrew (1998, p. 76) adds another condition, which is the possibility for the members from the two groups to become friends.

When analyzing the impact of intergroup contact on prejudice it is important to give enough attention to the majority or minority status of groups taking part in the interaction. Research has shown that they have a different response to contact because of their experiences in society. Members of majority status groups are usually more concerned of being perceived as prejudiced, while the main concern of members of minority status groups is being the target of prejudices from people who are higher in status (Shelton, 2003, p. 183; Tropp and Pettigrew, 2005, p. 951). According to Tropp and Pettigrew (2005, p. 956) intergroup contact has a major impact on the reduction of prejudice on majority status groups, while the contact-prejudice relationship is generally weaker for minority status groups.

As members of opposing sides establish intergroup contact and start cooperating in order to achieve a common goal, two approaches can be used to decrease biases: decategorization and recategorization. Both strategies try to change people's identities in a conflict in order to bring them closer, but in two different ways. Decategorization is used to promote interaction between persons by highlighting individual characteristics of people. In other terms they try to 'strip' group members of their social or group identity and as a consequence 'the Other' is deconstructed and seen as a person (Gaertner et al., 1993; Dovidio et al., 2008). According to Dovidio et al. (2008) "this occurs because the forces of in-group favouritism are not invoked for those who would otherwise be considered as members of one's own group . . ." (p. 234) and as a result stereotypes and prejudices are not applied anymore on out-group members.

However, with decategorization individuals can lose part of their identity by not being part of a group anymore, which can have an impact on their psychological well-being (self-esteem, feeling of belonging, etc.) and also on some practical aspects of their everyday lives (loss of social support, intragroup cooperation, etc.) (Dovidio et al., 2008, p. 234). In contrast, recategorization does not leave the individual just with his personal identity (as decategorization does), but aims at changing previous categories or identities and creating more inclusive new ones (Krochik & Jost, 2011, p. 159; Dovidio et al., 2008). Recategorization is also the main idea behind the 'Common Ingroup Identity Model', which proposes that the ". . . causal relation between the conditions of contact and

reduced intergroup bias is mediated by changes in member's perceptions of the aggregate from two groups to one more inclusive group" (Gaertner, Dovidio & Bachman, 1996, p. 273). In these circumstances the individual does not need to lose his group identity (ethnic, religious, etc.), but he gets a new parallel identity, which does not represent an obstacle for having contact with people that were before perceived as 'enemies'. The benefits of this interaction can be generalized also to out-group members who are not directly involved in this process, since people that are cooperating are still connected to their primary groups (Gaertner et al., 1996, p. 274-5).

To conclude, intergroup contact is necessary to resolve conflicts and reduce prejudices. However, a great deal of attention has to be placed on the conditions in which the contact occurs, since the interaction between opposing groups is a very delicate process which may (if not properly managed) lead to further alienation. A good method is to promote cooperation by choosing a common goal, which can be achieved only by working together (in my case study the common goal is the successful implementation of the joint development project by K-Albanians and K-Serbs). In this process it is important to change the identity of the participants so they do not perceive each other anymore as dehumanized enemies. This can be accomplished with decategorization, by emphasizing personal characteristics of people or with recategorization, by creating new groups and as a consequence parallel identities.

3.2.3 Cooperation Through Instrumental Reconciliation

Nadler and Shnabel (2008) define reconciliation as the process of removing conflict-related emotional barriers that are an obstacle for the healing of conflictive relationships. Their theory on reconciliation is based on the psychological needs approach to conflict, which suggests that peace can be achieved only if the psychological needs of disputants have been addressed (Burton in Shnabel et al., 2008, p. 161). However, they differentiate between socio-emotional reconciliation and instrumental reconciliation.

Socio-emotional reconciliation focuses on the apology-forgiveness cycle and the emotional needs of both victims and perpetrators. These are, broadly speaking, the need for empowerment and the need for acceptance (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008, p. 42). Empowerment is crucial for victims because they want to regain the feeling of control and autonomy on their lives and want to be treated equally and justly. This can be achieved by recognizing their suffering and the guilt of the perpetrator. On the other side, the needs of perpetrators are to be accepted as moral social actors who are understood and deserve sympathy. By addressing these psychological needs it is possible to achieve socio-emotional reconciliation (Shnabel et al., 2008, p. 163-66).

The way to instrumental reconciliation is not concerned with the past and is different from the apology-forgiveness cycle of socio-emotional reconciliation. It focuses on the gradual

learning that happens when former enemies cooperate to achieve instrumental goals that are important for both sides. During such repetitive cooperative projects the parties learn step by step to trust and accept each other and coexist in a peaceful environment (Nadler and Shnabel, 2008, p. 41-2). In this process parties “replace enmity with trust and negative with relatively positive perceptions of the other” (Nadler et al., 2008, p. 6). As stated by Nadler et al. (2008, p. 6-7), instrumental reconciliation is strictly related and overlapping with the Contact Hypothesis (presented in the previous sub-chapter), which according to Pettigrew (1998, p. 66-67) also emphasizes cooperation for the achievement of common goals as a way for reducing biases.

Aiken (2010, p. 171) argues that although until now studies of transitional justice have focused almost exclusively on socio-emotional reconciliation, peace cannot be achieved without long-term interventions promoting instrumental and distributive reconciliation (aimed at reducing material inequalities). Moreover, instrumental reconciliation can be a very valuable method to overcome the psychological boundaries between people, especially in societies where it is not self-evident who is the victim and who the perpetrator. Experiences have shown that strategies that seek to bring about accountability too soon are in some cases counterproductive and risk derailing the reconciliation efforts (Aiken, 2010, p. 187).

Gaining trust is the ultimate goal of instrumental reconciliation and, as Kelman (2005, p. 640-1) and Borris & Diehl (in Hewstone et al. 2008, p. 216) also claim, trust is essential in efforts to resolve conflict and transform the relationship between enemies into a relationship characterized by stable peace and cooperation. In deep-rooted, protracted conflicts between different identity groups, reciprocal distrust is omnipresent and very difficult to overcome. The parties live in close geographical proximity and they have direct experiences of violent traumas that they associate with their perceived enemies. This is, as argued by Lederach (1997, p. 23), sometimes tied to a history of grievances and hostility persisting over many generations when the two sides are locked in established patterns of adverse interaction. Furthermore, Kelman (2005, p. 640-1) asserts that in these circumstances the parties are afraid to extend trust to the other because they think that they will be betrayed at great expense to their own side. They are reluctant to be open, truthful, and generous in their interactions, because they assume that the other side will take advantage of them. Therefore, if the parties learn to cooperate and trust each other, even if it is just for achieving common instrumental goals, it is a big improvement and a prerequisite for durable peace.

In order to better portrait instrumental reconciliation I will present a good example, which inspired my study in this area of studies and is described in the Revised Manual for Sustainable Return in Kosovo (UNMIK, 2006, p. 29). In this case the authors propose to make the reconstruction of returnee houses a multi-ethnic endeavour, by for example employing K-Albanian villagers to work on non K-Albanian community returnee houses and involve returnees to work on community integration projects. The positive effects of

such projects can be according to the authors, improved inter-ethnic cooperation and trust, and a lower unemployment rate in the area. Therefore, with such creative approaches, it should be possible to reach multiple goals at the same time, with relatively little effort.

To conclude, instrumental reconciliation is a very valuable method that contributes to the achievement of intergroup trust and durable peace. The main difference with socio-emotional reconciliation is that it does not focus on the past and the apology-forgiveness cycle, but it concentrates on the step-by-step learning that happens when two opposing groups cooperate to achieve common instrumental goals (which is also one of the ideas of the Contact Hypothesis). Nevertheless, in order not to create confusion, in the continuation of the thesis, I will use the term and meaning of instrumental reconciliation⁶ as it was defined by Nadler and Shnabel (2008, p. 41-3). Even though the meaning is similar to Rouhanna's (2011, p. 295; 2004, p. 175) and coherent to Kelman's (2008, p. 23) conflict resolution, this term is much more unique and therefore easier to apply without creating misunderstandings.

3.3 Development in Post-Conflict Situations

As stated by Junne and Verkoren (2005b, p. 322), the fields of conflict and development studies should be more connected. According to Collier and Hoeffler (2004, p. 567-8) because of the correlation between the lack of development and outbreaks of violence, conflict transformation and peacebuilding must pay more attention to the development needs of societies. Woodward (2002, p. 184) asserts that countries that experienced a civil war never fully recover to the economic level they had before the war began and economic growth remains lower. Moreover, economic inequalities and hardship may persist and cause increased crime, instability, and even new outbreaks of violence. Therefore as Junne & Verkoren (2005a, p. 2) claim, even though economic development itself is no guarantee against violent conflict, there is a clear connection between the two. If many young males remain without employment, if resources are scarce, if there is no perspective for some way out of poverty and a normal life, then the chances are high that a conflict will escalate into violence.

Among the under-researched areas in the fields of conflict and development studies are the economic sides of reconciliation process and the importance and right sequencing of development in post-conflict situations (Arbour, 2007, p. 4-10; Junne & Verkoren, 2005a, p. 4; Nagy, 2008, p. 278-9). As described by Millar (2011, p. 15), "as the outbreak of war is related to impoverishment, unemployment, and de-development, so post-war justice must

⁶ "Repeated acts of cooperation to achieve common instrumental goals where the parties gradually learn to trust and accept each other and coexist in a conflict-free environment" (Nadler and Shnabel, 2008, p. 41).

account for those violations”. For this reason, future development planning has to take the realities of a conflict-torn society into account and create development strategies that help overcome existing divisions rather than prolong or deepen them (Junne & Verkoren, 2005a, p. 6-7). Furthermore, more emphasis should be given to the integration of the “economic dimension of conflict and conflict transformation in the design and mediation of peace processes, in addition to the traditional political and military issues” (Nitzsche & Studdard, 2006, p. 233).

In the next sub-chapter I focus on the role of employment in the aftermath of conflicts. I argue that particularly in post-conflict societies providing job opportunities should be a priority in order to avoid the re-escalation of violence. This topic is strictly related to my case study, since there is a high unemployment rate in Kosovo as a consequence of the conflict⁷. Afterwards I concentrate on how aid is structured, why it is supply driven and relatively unsuccessful and what a possible alternative would be (more focus on sustainability, long-term results, bottom-up approaches, etc.). Finally, because of the similarities with the KCRDP, I describe the positive and negative aspects of approaches that promote development and peacebuilding through local communities.

3.3.1 No Peace Without Employment

Conflicts drastically reduce the ability of economies to absorb labour, which has an impact on the increase of unemployment (Dunne, 2003, p. 36) as it happened in Kosovo, where unemployment ails almost 50% of the economically active population (CRIP, 2009, p. 34-5; Bardos, 2008, p. 63). Warfare destroys factories and farms; infrastructure is damaged (Cramer, 2006, p. 395); and those people with economic activities dependent on access to markets and credit become severely disadvantaged. As a consequence the labour situation during violent conflicts worsens and poverty spreads very quickly. Paradoxically, part of the population also becomes economically dependent on conflict-related activities, such as combatants or providers of goods and services, and their economic well-being becomes entangled in the violent conflict (Krishnamurty, 2003, p. 56). As Collier (2000) suggests, the economic motivation to keep the conflict alive cannot be overlooked and this should be taken into consideration when trying to solve conflicts.

In post-conflict societies, the most important but most neglected fact is that a large majority of people has no employment (Woodward, 2002, p. 201). Demobilized soldiers, refugees, IDPs, etc. who returned home are usually all without jobs. Especially, for those who were directly or indirectly dependent on conflict related activities not finding an adequate employment alternative can represent a significant obstacle in the peace process (Krishnamurty, 2003, p. 56; Specht, 2003, p. 74-75). In other words, as stated by Turner & Pugh (2006, p. 475) the integration of conflict-affected people (particularly former

⁷ Analysed in more detail in the sub-chapter: *Two Real Problems: Legal Status and Unemployment*.

combatants) into society cannot succeed if there are no jobs available for them. Moreover, Krishnamurty (2003, p. 53) points out that it is important to guarantee equal access to employment to different groups that were involved in a conflict in order to avoid a revival of violence on the basis of new economic differences.

Because of the already mentioned reasons, after the cessation of hostilities there is a need for immediate assistance to create new job opportunities. Though, economic actors are in these circumstances very cautious, international donors do not want to take any risks until peace is secure, private investments are slow to return and markets are generally depressed (Krishnamurty, 2003, p. 58). This negative effect can be, as Dunne asserts (2003, p. 36), partially minimized by creating jobs in the reconstruction of infrastructure (roads, bridges, etc.) that was damaged during the war. However, it takes more time to boost the local economy and provide large-scale employment opportunities. Therefore as Krishnamurty (2003, p. 61) argues, since employment is one of the most urgent needs in a post-conflict society, which cannot be addressed just by rebuilding the infrastructure, providing job opportunities must be a priority also in the large-scale humanitarian response and must come immediately after relief needs have been met.

Another problem is that in post-conflict environments, because of the stagnant and seriously neglected labour market (Turner, 2006, p. 475; Krishnamurty, 2003, p. 57) the labour force lacks skills, education and there are no functioning mechanisms that would guarantee the provision of basic knowledge. Many young people enter the labour market for the first time and they have often poor qualifications because of interrupted education. In addition, well-trained or educated workers, who could help the local economy to start functioning, are usually abroad and not willing to return until it is completely safe. For all these reasons Krishnamurty (2003, p. 57) asserts that it is very important to prioritize the establishment of employment services even if there is little to begin with.

Despite a limitation of opportunities for starting new business due to lack of infrastructure, difficult access to foreign markets and complications with the banking system (safety, credits, etc.) (Krishnamurty, 2003, p. 58; Lazarte-Hoyle, 2003, p. 194), the end of war can also be an opportunity. New entrepreneurs may find themselves in a market with relatively little competition and growing demand. As a consequence it is — according to Krishnamurty (2003, p. 58)—essential to promote micro-credit schemes as part of quick impact projects, since they provide employment for large numbers of people.

Concluding, in the reviewed literature it is argued that violent conflicts destroy the labour market, provoke a drastic increase of unemployment and as a consequence part of the population becomes dependent on conflict-related activities in order to survive. Post-conflict societies are therefore faced with a very high number of people who were already unemployed or lost their jobs due to the termination of the conflict and are waiting to be integrated into the job market. However, in these circumstances there are very little quickly available job positions, which can seriously threaten the road to peace. Providing

jobs is a priority that should be met by any available means and by using different parallel strategies (micro credits, renovation of the infrastructure, etc.). Therefore, the KCRDP can theoretically contribute to stability and minimize the risks of an escalation of violence by tackling unemployment and promoting economic development on the local level.

3.3.2 Aid as a Supply-Driven Support

In order to understand why actors in post-conflict situations do not address priorities—as tackling unemployment and promoting long-term development—from the very beginning, it is necessary to explain how assistance to war-torn countries (such as Kosovo) functions. A fact that can help us comprehend why the amount of resources does not influence the success and effectiveness of aid in a greater extent is that assistance is supply rather than demand driven. According to Chesterman (2004, p. 184) donors rather than recipients have a greater influence on the kind of assistance that will be provided. Frequently, donors insist on the use of their nationals in humanitarian programmes or aid being delivered through specific NGOs in the form of nationally-produced goods (Chesterman, 2004, p. 192). Moreover as argued by Woodward (2002, p. 205-207), donors decide the sequence of how aid is provided, but very often the situation is not well evaluated and this has bad consequences for the conflict-affected societies.

Organizations active in post-conflict zones are in some way like other businesses; they are concerned about their own survival, growth and meeting the needs of their employees (Shearer, 2000, p. 200). Performance is often evaluated according to success in transferring funds, which is of course misleading (Woodward, 2002, p. 200). As Barakat and Zyck (2009, p. 1070-1) point out, it is not high levels of assistance but instead the way in which such assistance is provided which is important for effective post-conflict recovery.

Woodward (2002) asserts that “the very presence of an international peace mission, military forces, and aid agencies has economic consequences that are directly contrary to the political goals of self-governance and economic and political sustainability” (p. 208). In other words, aid is too often antithetically ‘self-oriented’, for priority is not given to the quality of the final result but to the conditions of donors and aid organizations. These reasons can also explain why the crisis in the Balkans received far more per capita assistance than comparable or worse crises in other parts of the world (Chesterman, 2004, p. 187). According to Woodward (2002, p. 205-207), donors’ political agendas determine whom to assist and whom not to, and by doing so they create differences that may further destabilize an already fragile peace. If inequalities persist because of the distribution of economic aid, this can revive divisions, which can be easily exploited by populist leaders who are not satisfied with the terms of the peace (Woodward, 2002, p. 186).

All in all, as stated by Paris & Sisk (2009, p. 313-4) much more attention should be given to ‘sustainability’ and the development of strategies focusing on long-term results. However,

according to the presented literature this cannot happen with a top-down approach, where the major focus is given to short-term imperatives of foreign actors involved in a crisis. Priorities should be given to real needs of the local population such is the creation of new job opportunities and development, which minimize the chances for violence to erupt again.

3.3.3 Involving the Local Community

The role of the local community in peacebuilding and post-conflict development is often overlooked. Pouligny (2005, p. 498-502) argues that peacebuilding operations do not take into consideration local knowledge and traditional forms of social arrangements seriously enough. After years of violence, repression and negative impacts of international interventions on society and mechanisms of regulation, local communities are the structures that help people survive and deal with security threats. Though, not sufficient attention is given to the involvement of communities and the reinforcement of local process and their coordination with outside interventions. Turner & Pugh (2006, p. 472-3) similarly point out that peacebuilding should be a bottom-up process and that in post-conflict societies people at the local level are being largely excluded from decisions taken particularly on economic issues.

However, there are several programmes that are planned and implemented by international organizations—such as the International Labour Organization or the World Bank—that promote communal approaches to development (see Boekel & Logtestijn, 2004; Lazarte-Hoyle, 2003; Haider, 2009). These programmes aim at transforming the local economy and broader society in order to overcome difficulties left in a country by years of war (Lazarte-Hoyle, 2003, p. 196-7). They focus on development but also on the transformation of relationships by encouraging people from antagonistic groups to work together on the same development projects; and by cooperating with actors beyond the development community (Haider, 2009, p. 4). As Lederach (in Haider, 2009, p. 4) claims, with the promotion of interaction, communication and joint decision-making it is easier to overcome mistrust present in divided societies. According to Lazarte-Hoyle (2003, p. 196-7) this kind of communal approaches to development that push for common action among estranged social and economic local players by drawing on local resources seek to improve the living conditions of the population.

The main characteristics of these approaches are, as also stated by O'Brien (2007, p. 119), the promotion of 'people-centred' and 'people-driven' processes, which do not rely just on knowledge and expertise from outside. Instead as Lazarte-Hoyle (2003, p. 196-7) and Haider (2009, p. 9) argue, community approaches to development try to use the extensive knowledge of local communities about the actors (local firms, financial bodies, etc.) who represent a potential for development. In addition, they try to improve the quality of human resources (by providing education, promoting entrepreneurship, with motivation

trainings, etc.) and develop the infrastructure in order to increase efficiency. By defining common interests and priorities and enabling communication between actors it is claimed, they offer great economic opportunities, which have benefits for the whole society. In other words great emphasis is given to the empowerment of people and communities in order to promote a better life quality.

O'Brien (2007, p. 119) states that communal approaches to development facilitate local leadership and encourage the participation of people from different social, cultural and political backgrounds. Supporters of these approaches argue that they can be much more inclusive and can also reach groups usually excluded from development process (such as members of minorities, women, disabled people, etc.) (Dongier et al., 2003, p. 7). However, one of the main criticisms is that they have difficulties targeting the poor (Mansuri & Rao, 2004, p. 30). As Strand et al. (2003, p. 16-7) assert, especially in post-conflict societies there are a lot of imbalances and it is difficult to ensure that funds percolate through the whole community (especially to its most unprivileged members). Particular segments of the community may take advantage of projects financed by external actors since, as explained by Mansuri & Rao (2004), "community involvement in choosing, constructing, and managing a public good will almost always be dominated by elites, who tend to be better educated, have few opportunity costs on their time, and therefore have the greatest net benefit from participation" (p. 30). In this case it is important to find the best method of checks and balances and ensure that the less advantaged are also represented.

Several authors (Dongier et al., 2003, p. 4-5; Lazarte-Hoyle, 2003, p. 197) point out that in an increasingly globalized world a grass-root approach to development can give hope to local agents, which are 'left behind' also because of centralization and weak institutions. Centralized governments do not have enough knowledge of the local situation and experience has shown that policies and programmes on a national level are often too slow to address the needs of communities. Moreover—as Lazarte-Hoyle (2003, p. 197) says—, in post-conflicts environments, institutions are frequently very weak and according to Lederach (in Haider, 2009, p. 4) community approaches to development can be in this context particularly useful to re-connect states with their citizens. Though, as emphasized by Strand et al. (2003, p. 4-6) it is very important to include and not bypass the government. In this context Burde (2004) claims that trying to promote community approaches to development without involving the state is problematic in the long run; if NGOs or international organizations become service providers the state is not held accountable anymore for the well-being of the citizens and when these organizations decide to retrieve this can create a lot of instability. In addition, sceptics argue that even though community development projects improve the infrastructure, their positive effects are comparable to other centralized programmes and it is therefore difficult to establish what is the added value of these projects (Mansuri & Rao, 2004, p. 30)

Community approaches to development are, as argued by Mansuri & Rao (2004, p. 31), sustainable if they cooperate with institutions, which are responsive to the needs of

communities and if community leaders are accountable for their decisions. Furthermore, projects have to be planned and implemented case-by-case because every culture is different and needs to be properly analysed. As mentioned by Haider (2009, p. 4) they can be applied to individual projects level or on a larger scale. Strand, Toje, Jerve & Samset (2003, p. 4-6) state that experiences from community driven development projects promoted by the World Bank and implemented in various post-conflict countries, show that with this projects it is not always possible to reconcile previous enemies. What is particularly interesting for my case study is that cooperation and trust on the local level need to be linked to similar processes on the national level in order to make a change. Moreover, the same authors also argue that for a successful implementation it is important to take the necessary time and carefully define the goals and priorities of the projects.

To summarize, it is argued that by including the local community and using local knowledge it is possible to contribute to peacebuilding and post-conflict development. Community approaches to development aim at uniting and empowering people and building the necessary infrastructure in order to increase efficiency and ameliorate life conditions. However, particularly in post-conflict societies it is difficult to ensure that funds of these projects reach all the segments of the society. As stated by several authors in this sub-chapter, even though community approaches can promote grass-root development in isolated areas and therefore contribute to a more balanced growth it is very important to include the government in this process, in order to enhance sustainability. Nevertheless, it is essential to emphasize that according to the literature it is not always possible to reconcile enemies and that processes on the local level need to be connected with process on the national level so that there can be a change towards peace.

3.4 NGOs in post-conflict environments

As Doyle (2002, p. 74-5) argues, what is needed to end a civil war is a holistic approach tailored to fit the case. Therefore, successful exercises of authority require a coordinated approach that can unite different elements (peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and humanitarian action) to create a coherent strategy. In the 90s there was a drastic increase in the development of a great variety of NGOs, which had the advantage of being much more flexible and faster in the implementation of projects in comparison to international organizations (Barakat, 2005b, p. 26). However, the proliferation of 'humanitarian' organizations (especially NGOs) has produced a great variety of institutions with very different ethical maturity, principles, political complexity and priorities, working in the same emergency (Slim, 2001, p. 128-9). Many NGOs have moved beyond the traditional 'aid objectives' of providing basic needs (food, water, shelter, etc.) and are more and more involved in all the phases of emergency relief and reconstruction (Jones, 2002, p. 104; Franke, 2006, p. 9). Some function as service providers for donor agencies without having their own programmes, while other deploy to crisis situations with little or no founding, waiting to raise funds from local donor missions and UN agencies (Chesterman,

2004, p. 186). Moreover, organizations often argue on sequencing, priorities and approaches to peacebuilding, which further complicates their cooperation (Martin & Miller, 2003, p. 153) and coordination on the field (Woodward, 2002, p. 194).

Pugh (2004, p. 50) states that NGOs are under the control of states and donors, which leads them to act as their subcontractors in areas where an indirect strategy of intervention is preferred. Moreover, the fact that there is much more proximity between 'northern' NGOs and IOs than with 'northern' NGOs and 'southern' NGOs helps us understand why the collaboration between 'North' and 'South' (locally grown) NGOs is very limited. While pretending to work with the local civil society, outsiders in fact collaborate with other outsiders, or establish local NGOs oriented primarily towards the outside world, with which is much easier to cooperate. As a result, as Pouligny (2005, p. 499-501) asserts, these 'local' NGOs, which primary goal is the competition for foreign funds are far from being true representatives of the civil society. Usually they remain dependent on the international community for financial assistance, with little prospects for becoming self-sufficient (Kumar, 1998, p. 221).

Even though in the latest phase of the evolution of post-conflict recovery (post September 11th 2001), there have been some efforts of key actors to centralise external assistance, there is still a long way to go (Barakat & Zyck, 2009, p. 1076). During the transition from war to peace the need for a coordinated action is crucial and enormous skills are required to unite the needs of short-term security and long-term effective governance (Rothchild, 2002, p. 135). Therefore, in order to overcome the problems with coordination (especially among NGOs) and guarantee a successful transition, some additional measures should be taken. First of all, as Paris (1997, p. 87) suggests, executive committees with very clear rules should be established for each peacebuilding operation. This would rationalize the use of resources and create clear strategies for long-term development.

Furthermore, as it has been argued also in the previous sub-chapters, much more attention should be given to local resources. As Migdal & Rothstein (in Roberts, 2009, p. 172) emphasize: "it would be folly to imagine that centuries or millennia of different trajectories of political evolution can be intellectually ignored and technically papered over with little more than the elections and the expectation that people simply change their values and overwrite their experiences when something new comes along". Drawing inspiration from these reflections, exotic localism proposes the use of local expertise, knowledge, information and already existing social structures (not necessarily in the form of NGOs) (Pouligny, 2005, p. 502-3). Such approach would—according to Chesterman (2004)—prevent the duplication of resources and it would certainly be more sustainable in the long run (especially when a crisis is no more in the spotlight of the international community and when financial resources are not any longer available). A less invasive method would also require less international personnel, which would diminish the negative effects of the bubble economy (of providing services to expatriates) and the distortion it causes in the labour market. As stated by Barakat & Zyck (2009, p. 1076) a

more “locally owned process” would bring many advantages and it could be more acceptable for the local population.

To sum up, in the context of NGOs much more attention should be given to coordination, regulation and the establishment of relevant bodies, which would control and regulate the performance of these organizations. As a consequence, donors would have less influence on NGOs and this would certainly enhance the effectiveness of these organizations; in addition the real needs on the field would be more easily addressed. Nevertheless, local resources should be taken more seriously into consideration. This would prevent the duplication of resources and it would certainly be more sustainable in the long run, especially when the financial support in a crisis decreases and the attention (and funds) of the international community shifts to some other conflict.

4 Kosovo Community Reconciliation and Development Programme

The KCRDP is a programme consisting of several phases, which is being implemented since 2009. I conducted field-research during the most crucial phase when the groups started with the realization of the community small grants projects in the selected locations. In the next sections I present the programme in more detail, since it has a relatively complicated structure.

4.1 Programme Goals

The KCRDP is planned and implemented by two NGOs (Partners Kosova from Pristina with the assistance of Fractal from Belgrade), and financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its main goal is to promote economic development and reconciliation activities in the geographic north of Kosovo. Great attention is given to the improvement of interethnic cooperation, the education of the local community in terms of project planning and implementation, and to the realization of strictly community-oriented projects. Below, there is a more detailed categorization of the objectives of the programme (PK & Fractal, 2009a; KCRDP, 2011a):

- Identification of obstacles to effective Albanian and Serbian community cooperation through economic development strategies.
- Development of models, which aim at overcoming these obstacles, by promoting interethnic cooperation and economic development.
- Increase of local capacities (knowledge, transparent communication, social cohesion, civic participation) for the implementation of KCRDP.
- Involvement of the community in setting priorities for Albanian and Serbian cooperation in respective project locations.
- Implementation of at least one community (economic development) project in each location.
- Strengthened cooperation between NGOs dealing with interethnic programs and the private sector.

4.2 Programme Structure

In the first phase of the programme, Partners Kosova and Fractal have recruited key representatives of K-Albanian and K-Serb communities and have established six working groups (WG) (each with five to seven members). Every WG is based in a different location in the geographic north of Kosovo. Among these six working groups, three are composed of K-Albanians and located in Albanian majority areas, and three consist of K-Serbs and

are situated in Serbian majority areas. The KCRDP locations have been selected according to certain criteria. They had to be situated in multiethnic environments, where there used to be interethnic tensions, with no interethnic cooperation and no clear economic development strategy. Another criterion was the presence of formal structures, which deal with community, social and economic issues. In addition, people living in these areas had to explicitly express their willingness and motivation to participate in interethnic programmes (PK & Fractal, 2009a; PK & Fractal, 2009b).

Since the KCRDP is managed by PK, a K-Albanian NGO from Kosovo, with the assistance of Fractal from Serbia, beneficiaries of both ethnic groups are represented in the programme. While Partners Kosova assists the three K-Albanians locations, Fractal assists the three remaining K-Serbs locations. As a consequence, during the WG meetings (which are held every two weeks), participants talk in their mother tongue and share their opinions and concerns with NGO representatives of the same ethnicity. Moreover, the programme is an opportunity for contact and cooperation between the two ethnic groups; every K-Albanian WG meets with the neighbouring K-Serb WG and together they form a multiethnic team, which is called ‘focus group’. Their meetings are held on a monthly basis and their purpose is to create communication between the two sides in order to solve common problems and explore possible areas of cooperation (KCRDP, 2011b; PK & Fractal, 2009b). As it is visible from the mind map below, every Albanian WG (coloured in green) cooperates with a Serbian WG (coloured in blue) on a focus group level. Working groups are named after towns/villages where they are located.

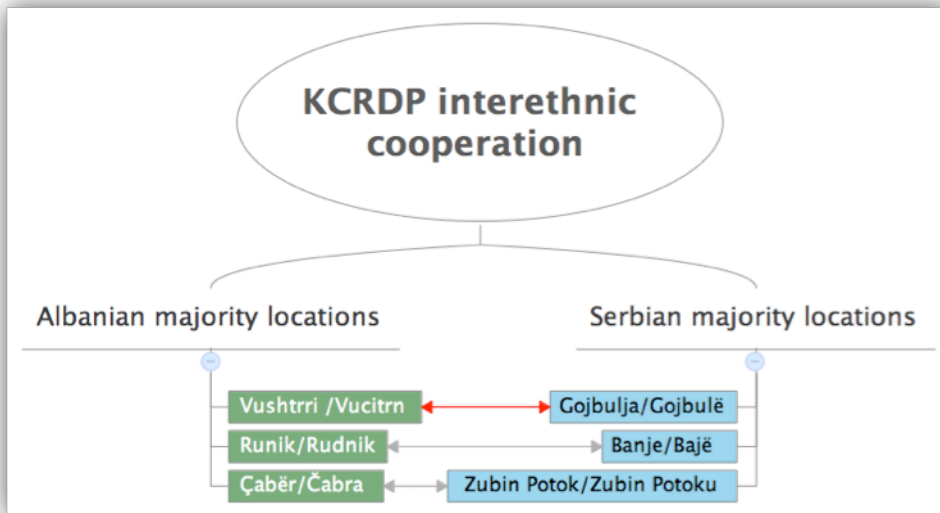


Figure 4: Cooperation between Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb working groups.⁸

⁸ As it is explained in more detail in the *Difficulties and Limitations* sub-chapter I could not conduct the interviews in the two locations of Çabër/Cabra and Zubin Potok/Zubin Potoku.

In the context of the KCRDP, before the implementation of the projects funded with the community small grants (as it is visible in the timeline below), Partners Kosova organized trainings on capacity building for all the members of the WGs. In this occasion K-Serbs and K-Albanians spent few days in Pristina (in focus groups), which was a good opportunity for interaction. After the training, in the next phase of the programme, every WG had a period of time available to develop an idea for a project of an amount of 45.000 euros. The proposed project had to support economic development, interethnic cooperation, freedom of movement, and women interethnic activities. In addition, the project had to be co-financed by a third party (public institution, private person or company) and it had to be economically sustainable (PK & Fractal, 2009a; PK & Fractal, 2009b).

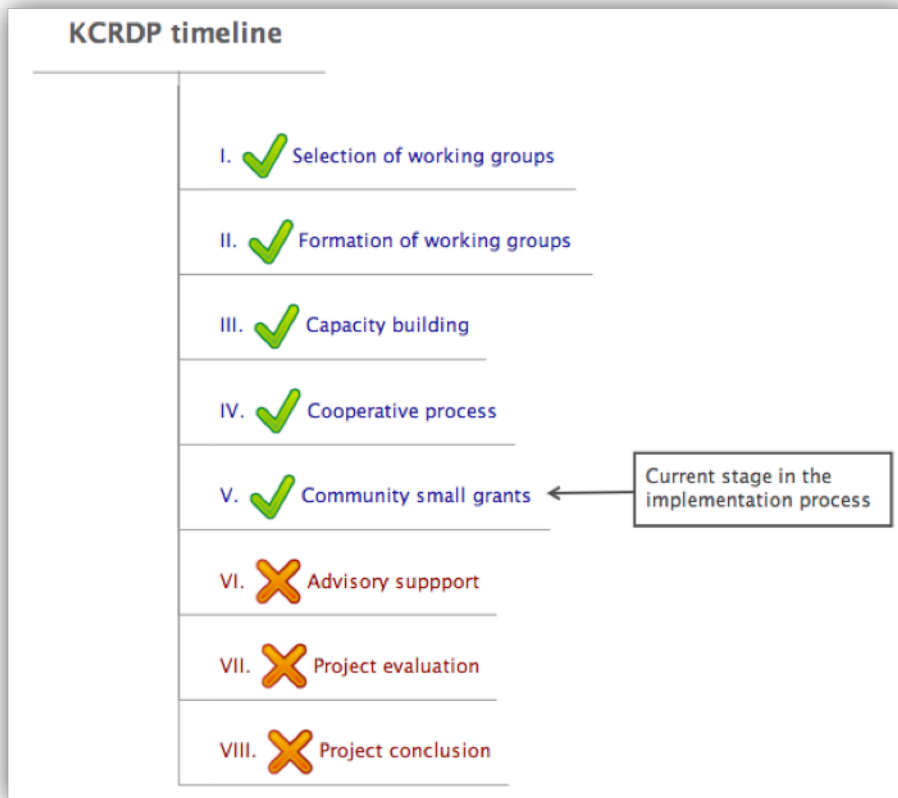


Figure 5: KCRDP timeline.

Every working group had the possibility to plan and implement its own individual project or invest into an interethnic joint project on the focus group level. However, just the K-Albanian Vushtrri/Vucitrn and K-Serbian Gojbulja/Gojbulë WGs decided, for the reasons that I will mention in the following chapters, to realize a joint project and thus embark on a closer interethnic working relationship (in the Figure 4 this relationship is labelled with a red arrow) (Hajrizi, 2010). As it is possible to gather from the following figures, the main

difference between individual and joint projects is that in the latter there is more direct interethnic cooperation (between K-Albanian and K-Serb WGs)⁹.

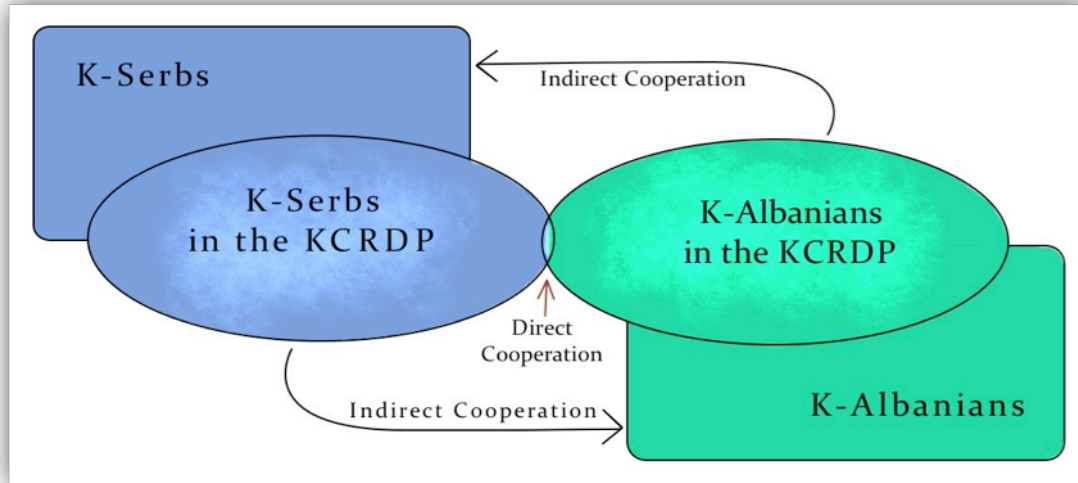


Figure 6: Individual development project.

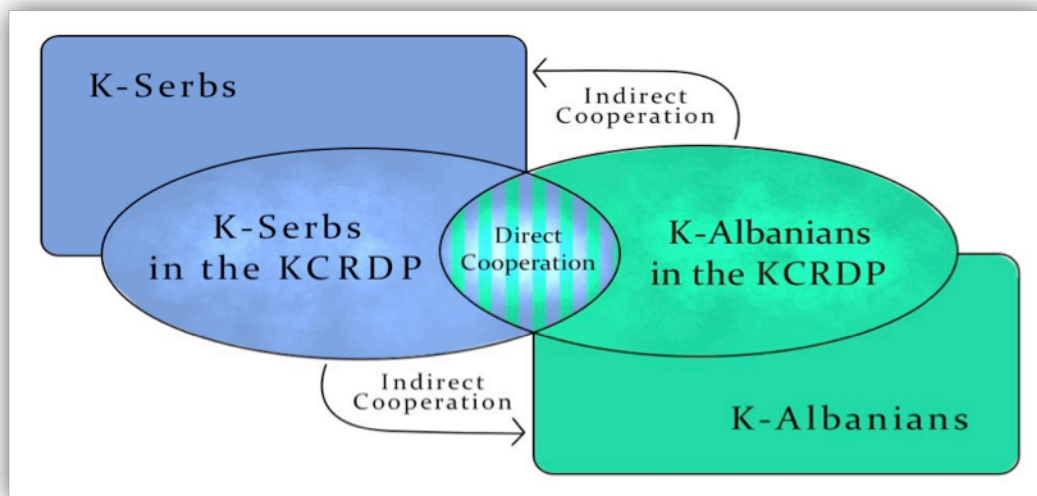


Figure 7: Joint development project.

In order to evaluate the sustainability of every single project an external economic advisor was hired who selected the projects that had the best chances to succeed. The ones that were chosen could proceed with the implementation phase (KCRDP, 2010a). In addition, to guarantee a consistent and skilful implementation of the programme, constant communication and regular meetings have been held between the two NGOs (KCRDP, 2010a). Moreover, PK and Fractal have also collaborated with local municipalities and

⁹ Presented in more detail in the sub-chapter: *Individual and Joint Projects*.

other (national and international) institutions and organizations (KCRDP, 2010a). The next phases of the KCRDP include the mainstreaming of all five projects under a common umbrella and thereafter the extension of the programme on the interregional level (PK & Fractal, 2009a).

4.2.1 Partners Kosova

Partners Kosova - Centre for Conflict Management has been the leading organization in the KCRDP and the internship at this organization gave me deep insight into the programme and enabled me to pursue this research project. PK is a locally managed NGO (with a staff of seven members) founded in 2001, which is one of the twenty centres of Partners for Democratic Change (PDC), an international NGO founded in 1989 (PK, 2011). PK has been working within local communities to foster a culture of peaceful conflict resolution and build consensus on neighbourhood, business, majority-minority, and citizen-government issues. The main activities of the organization include a mediation service, trainings of local government officials and elected municipal representatives in leadership skills and citizen participation processes, and several other mentoring and reconciliation activities. In cooperation with PDC, PK has received funding support from the Royal Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Open Society Institute, Council of Europe, Westminster Foundation for Democracy in London, etc. (PK, 2011).

4.3 Individual and Joint Projects

In this sub-chapter I analyse the four project locations¹⁰ included in this study, their interethnic history, and other specifications, which made them suitable for the implementation of the KCRDP. Subsequently, after the presentation of each location, I continue with the description of the projects that are being implemented.

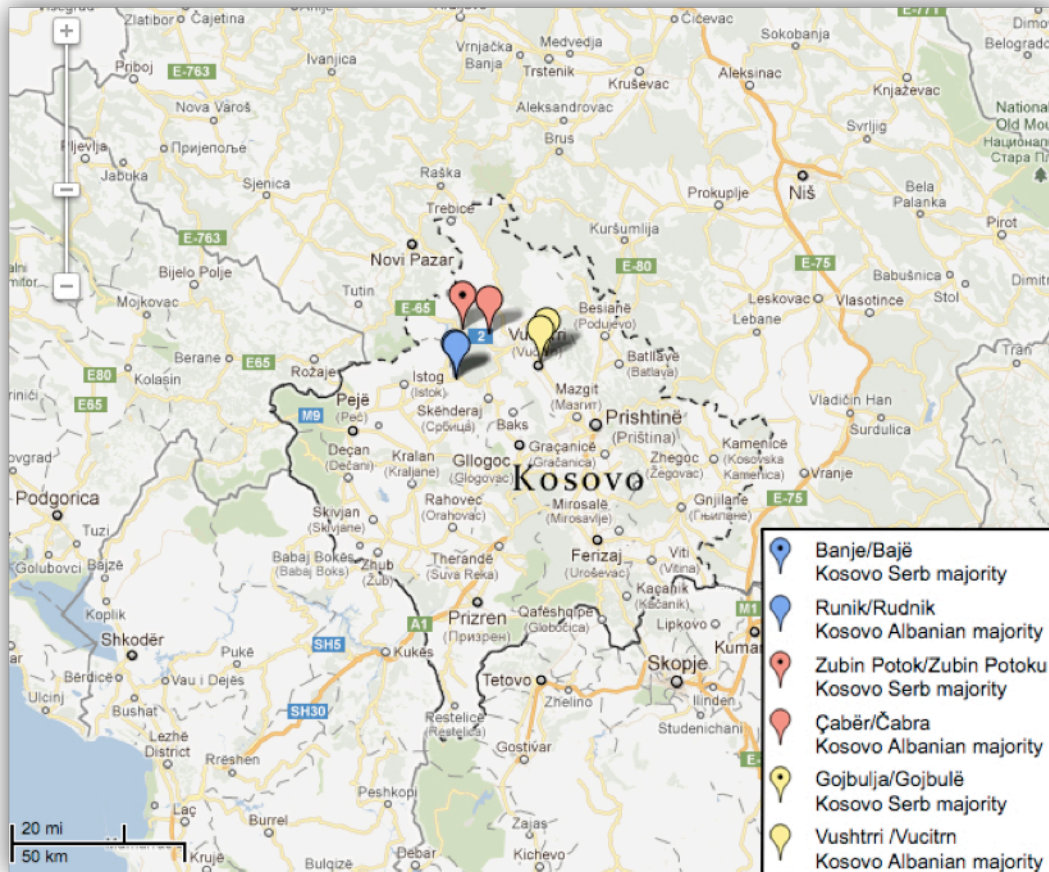


Figure 8: Map of Kosovo with KCRDP project locations.

¹⁰ Because of the reasons mentioned in the *Difficulties and Limitations* sub-chapter I could not conduct the interviews in the two locations of Çabër/Cabra and Zubin Potok/Zubin Potoku. However, I have included their profiles in the Appendix section in order to provide a complete picture of the programme.

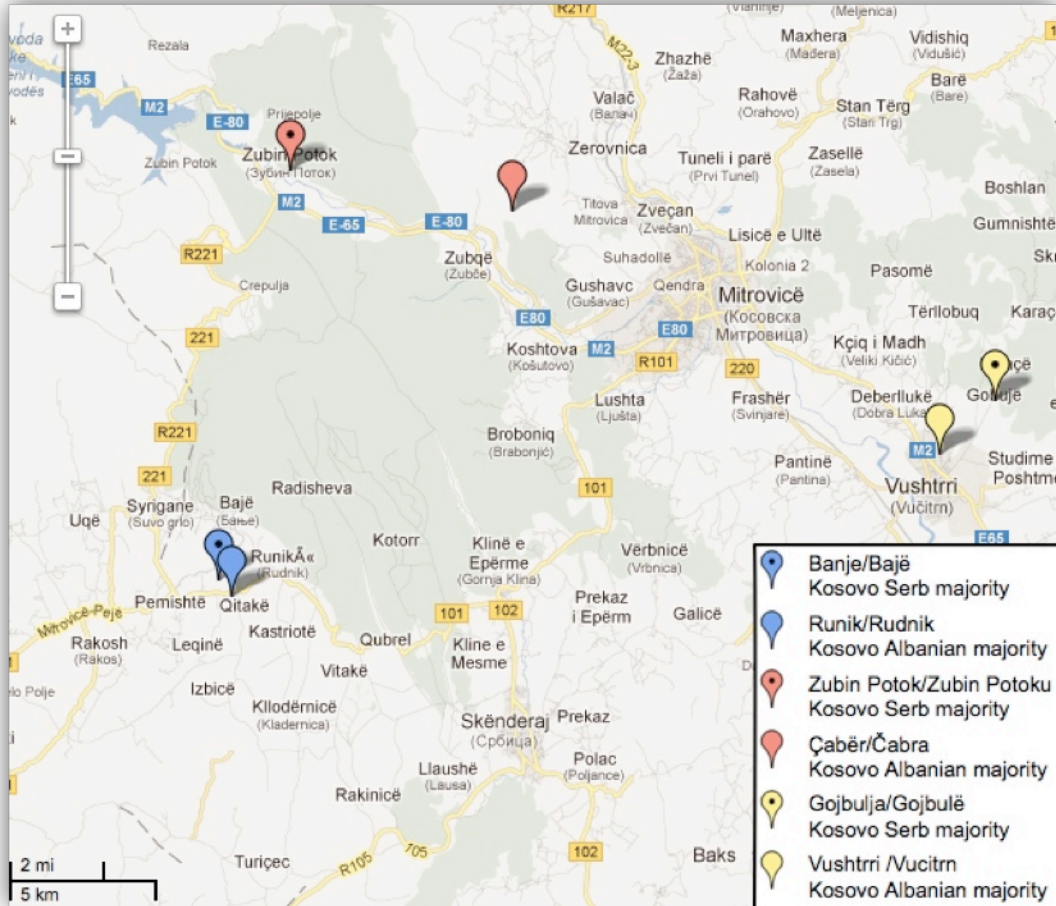


Figure 9: Map of the northern part of Kosovo with KCRDP project locations.

4.3.1 Banje/Bajë Project

Banje/Bajë is a rural, relatively isolated village with a strong K-Serbian majority, surrounded by Albanian communities (one of them in the village of Runik/Rudnik). The 1999 war did not change the ethnic composition of the village, but the number of inhabitants decreased – up until now - to slightly above 200 (of which three families are K-Albanian). The main problems the village is facing are limited freedom of movement (for the K-Serbs), high unemployment rate (around 61%) and limited access to services. However, from 2004 to 2008 there has been an increased inter-ethnic cooperation as a consequence of various income generating and community development projects (PK & Fractal, 2010a).

The WG of Banje/Bajë chose to establish a ‘home-made Rakia (a local brandy) factory’, because of the experiences gained through a similar project, realized few years before, but which ended due to some technical reasons. The level of trust and consensus between members of this WG has been, according to the programme manager, on a very high level (Krtinić & Milovanović, 2010a) and the decision to open a distillery was taken after all

other possibilities had been analysed, including the potential interethnic cooperation with the Runik/Rudnik WG. (Krtinič & Milovanović, 2010a; Krtinič & Milovanović, 2010b; Krtinič & Milovanović, 2010c). Moreover, the economic expert who was hired by the two NGOs, as already explained in the *Programme Structure*, examined the economic sustainability of the project and gave the green light to the implementation phase because it suited the demanded economic criteria (Krtinič & Milovanović, 2010d).

The factory in Banje/Bajë will have direct impact not only on the employment rate and economic development, but also on cooperation between ethnic groups. The group representatives have established contacts with different farmers from all surrounding (mainly K-Albanian) villages that produce the pear used for this type of brandy. The production will be linked to interethnic trade, which will increase contact and interaction between the two ethnicities. This project will directly employ up to five people (KCRDP, 2010b; Hajrizi, 2010). During my visits to this project location I could witness the construction process of the distillery (it is worth mentioning that a K-Albanian construction company has been hired) and various other preparations for the production.

4.3.2 Runik/Rudnik Project

Runik/Rudnik is an easily accessible K-Albanian village (with about 2800 inhabitants), situated in a rural area in the Skenderaj/Srbica municipality, which was one of the places where the conflict in the 90s escalated. Before the intensification of the conflict, two other minorities (K-Serb and K-Ashkaelia) had been part of the community in Runik/Rudnik, but until now only K-Ashkaelia have returned. The major problems facing the inhabitants of the village are low employment rate and limited access to services (PK & Fractal, 2010b).

The Runik/Rudnik WG has had regular working group and focus group meetings. Although, its members considered investing with the Banje/Bajë WG in an interethnic project, at the end – particularly because of the lack of good ideas - the WG in Runik/Rudnik opted out of this idea and instead decided to use the available funds for the implementation of an individual project (KCRDP, 2010a).

After examining all the possibilities, the members of the WG (with the counsel of the economic advisor) took the decision to invest the funds into the realization of a plant for the production of Inox chairs¹¹. The factory will be co-founded by a local investor and will employ from five up to ten people (KCRDP, 2011c; KCRDP, 2011d). During my stay in Kosovo I had the opportunity to visit the construction site where the factory is being built and observe one of the WG meetings.

¹¹ Chairs made of stainless steel.

4.3.3 Vushtrri/Vucitrn & Gojbulja/Gojbulë Project

Gojbulja/Gojbulë is a mono-ethnic K-Serb village with about 280 inhabitants, situated in a K-Albanian area. The ethnic composition of the community did not change as a consequence of the war, but the number of residents has decreased. Due to security reasons and the lack of contact with neighbouring K-Albanian villages, the access to arable land and forest is limited, which has a negative impact on the economy of the village. Last but not least, poor employment opportunities and limited availability of services strongly affect the living conditions of villagers (PK & Fractal, 2010c).

The Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG had different ideas for the project, ranging from apiculture, production of food for cattle, establishment of a transportation company, etc. (Krtinič & Milovanović, 2010b, Krtinič & Milovanović, 2010c). However, these ideas were rejected by the economic advisor for being economically unsustainable, because similar projects of other NGOs had been unsuccessfully implemented in the same area (Krtinič & Milovanović, 2010a). The WG also expressed its interest for the implementation of a joint project with the Vushtrri/Vucitrn WG (a factory for the production of plastic mesh and plastering facade elements, which are products needed in construction) if the chances of success would be higher. However, in this case the main concern was the eventual location of the factory because of the limited freedom of movement of K-Serbs in the area (Krtinič & Milovanović, 2010b). Furthermore, there were some doubts regarding the share of the company, the profits, and decision-making power, since the Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG investment would amount just to one-third of the total investment (one third would be invested by the Vushtrri/Vucitrn WG and the last third by the future K-Albanian owner). As a consequence, one of the members of the WG was expelled because he countered the decision to collaborate with the K-Albanian Vushtrri/Vucitrn WG and in various occasions threatened the members of the WG. Though, the apparent lack of trust of some members in the WG did not stop the project from being implemented (Krtinič & Milovanović, 2011).

Vushtrri/Vucitrn is based in a municipality where K-Albanians represent 95% of the population. It is predominantly agriculture-oriented, but the economic situation is stagnant and the unemployment rate is very high. Apart from some small enterprises and shops, the municipality is the main employer (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe [OSCE], 2010a).

The Vushtrri/Vucitrn WG had few different proposals for the realization of the project, but the plan for the establishment of a factory for the production of plastic mesh and plastering facade elements received the biggest support. One of the options, which was immediately and seriously considered and finally also adopted, was to include the K-Serbian Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG in the project. Since all project proposals of the Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG were evaluated as economically unsustainable, the WG agreed on joining the funds for an interethnic project (KCRDP, 2010a). The owner of the newly established company would be a K-Albanian, member of the Vushtrri/Vucitrn WG.

Joint Project: As already mentioned, the representatives of Vushtrri/Vucitrn and Gojbulja/Gojbulë working groups have agreed on joining their funds and opening a plant for the production of plastic mesh and plastering facade elements. The factory based in Vushtrri/Vucitrn will employ up to twelve persons (K-Albanians and K-Serbs) and will bring together members from K-Albanian and K-Serb communities from both locations (KCRDP, 2010b; Hajrizi, 2010). The agreement was reached after few months of bargaining, many meetings and phone calls, which were necessary to gain the needed trust to embark in this kind of cooperation. I also had the opportunity to assist in the last phases of this process and take part in two crucial meetings when they finally arrived at the agreement.

5 Methodology

5.1 The KCRDP as a Case Study

“Case studies are likely to continue to be popular because of their style and to be useful for exploration for those who search for explanatory laws. And, moreover, because of the universality and importance of experiential understanding, and because of their compatibility with such understanding, case studies can be expected to continue to have an epistemological advantage over other inquiry methods as a basis for naturalistic generalization /.../ this method has been tried and found to be a direct and satisfying way of adding to experience and improving understanding” (Stake, 1978, p. 7).

The case study in my research project is the Kosovo Community Reconciliation and Development Programme (with particular focus on the programme participants), which tries to promote interethnic cooperation in a post-conflict environment with the implementation of economic development projects on the local level. By exploring in detail how the KCRDP is being implemented I want to understand if and how this programme can contribute to the peace process and what motivates people to cooperate. I decided to choose this case study because of my interest for the Balkan region and the creative way the KCRDP simultaneously tackles the bad interethnic relations and the high level of unemployment. However, the most pragmatic reason for my choice is that PK (the leading organization in the KCRDP) gave me the necessary support to carry out the research project by allowing me a detailed insight in the programme (with the possibility to conduct interviews, participant observation and analyse the KCRDP documentation). The KCRDP is a good (and manageable) case study because of its relatively small size in terms of programme participants and the number of villages/towns, which are being targeted. This allows me (as a single researcher) to get a good insight from different perspective of the programme and get information from a relevant number of people who are involved in it (as explained in the *Sample* section). Therefore, conducting research with a focus on the KCRDP represents the best compromise between my personal academic interests and the feasibility to conduct the research project.

I included in the research¹² only four (out of six) villages/towns¹³, which are involved in the programme because at the time of my field research I could not visit the Çabër/Cabra and Zubin Potok/Zubin Potoku working groups¹⁴ for security reasons. As explained in more detail in the previous chapter, in two locations the majority of the population is K-Serbian and in the other two the majority is K-Albanian and every K-Serbian village is close to a K-

¹² All the used research methods are described in more detail in the *Research Methods* sub-chapter.

¹³ As visible from the map of the northern part of Kosovo with KCRDP project locations (in the *Kosovo Community Reconciliation and Development Programme* chapter).

¹⁴ For more details check the *Difficulties and Limitations* sub-chapter.

Albanian town. As a consequence, every K-Serbian WG is cooperating interethnically with the adjacent K-Albanian WG. On a number of four locations two (Albanian Vushtrri/Vucitrn and Serbian Gojbulja/Gojbulë) decided to invest their funds in a joint interethnic economic development project and therefore deepen their interethnic cooperation, while the remaining two (Albanian Runik/Rudnik and Serbian Banje/Bajë) opted for the implementation of individual projects¹⁵ with just limited intergroup contact. In my case study on the KCRDP I analyse in detail (with the research methods presented in the following sub-chapters, namely interviews, participant observation and content analysis) the planning and implementation of joint (interethnic) and individual (mono-ethnic) economic development projects and the interethnic cooperation between groups in the specific settings.

I used the case study research strategy because it is suitable for understanding the dynamics existing in specific situations and environments delimited by time and space (Elsenhardt, 1989; Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010) such is the phenomena under study. Furthermore, the case study research strategy emphasizes the participant perspective in research (Zucker, 2009), which is in my specific case very important, since my personal observation from the field (the KCRDP) and the interpretation of interviews of programme participants are of great importance for the study. According to Elsenhardt (1989, p. 535), the researcher can use this research strategy to accomplish various aims ranging from description of observable facts to testing and the generation of theories; these are all aims that I am trying to achieve to a certain extent in the thesis. I do that by first presenting relevant theories on conflict resolution, reconciliation, post-conflict development, etc. and then compare my results with them.

The main characteristics of the case study strategy are: small number of research units, intensive data generation, in-depth study of a subject as a whole, and use of strategic sample (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010, p. 178). The advantages are: the possibility to explore one case in depth, the relative dynamism in designing the case, the possible use of multiple methods, the comparability of the researched case with other cases, (Burnett, 2009, p. 117) and the fact that the results will be more easily accepted by people from a certain field than the results of a quantitative survey or complex experiment. On the other side, the main disadvantages of this research strategy are the external validity of the results, especially if there are not many case studies on a certain topic (as I explain in the next paragraph) (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010, p. 184-5) and the possible subjectivity of the researcher, which can affect the results (Swanborn, 2010, p. 137). As suggested by Wisker (2008), in order to minimize the disadvantages of using the case study research strategy, I insisted on rigour in the methods of data collection and analysis, and on a detailed contextualization and careful description of the case in various chapters in the thesis.

¹⁵ More details about the project in the Kosovo *Community Reconciliation and Development Programme* chapter.

In this paragraph I present some of the most common misunderstandings regarding the case study research strategy, in order to argue and justify my choice. According to conventional wisdom, a case study cannot be of value just by itself, but it represents the first phase of a study (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner in Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 220). Although it is generally thought that theoretical knowledge is more valuable than concrete or practical knowledge and that it is impossible to generalize from one single case, according to Flyvbjerg (2006, p. 222) case studies can certainly contribute to scientific development. Context-dependent knowledge is the core of expert activity, because it gives a context to mere facts; it is only from experience with cases that one beginner becomes an expert. Furthermore, as asserted by Jensen & Rodgers (2001, p. 235-6), narrative case studies are very valuable and irreplaceable for the amount and richness of data they can produce in a historical context. As argued by Campbell, (1975, p. 179) even though case studies as common sense naturalistic observation cannot be totally objective or unbiased (and we have to be aware of their weakness), they are very valuable for the creation of knowledge. In other terms, the analysis of a small-scale case (as mine is) is also a modest but still significant scientifically relevant contribution.

To conclude, I decided to choose the KCRDP (with its two K-Albanian and two K-Serbian working groups) as my case study because of my research interests and the interethnic nature and accessibility of the programme. In addition, the case study research strategy best fits my specific research conditions and it gives me the necessary flexibility to properly conduct my field-research. This research strategy has enabled me to test the already existing theories¹⁶ on a concrete local case and therefore produce evidence about the validity or invalidity of these theories in a real environment. The accurate use of multiple research methods, the detailed description of the context of my case and the constant awareness about the possible effects of researcher's subjectivity have increased the validity and importance of my findings in the fields of post-conflict development and reconciliation.

5.2 Sampling

In qualitative research the selection of the sample is of great significance and contributes to the quality of the study. For the interviews in my research project I used the judgement sampling strategy (also known as purposeful sampling). This is the most common sampling technique in which the researcher actively selects the most productive sample in order to answer the research questions and to be more time and content effective (Marshall, 1996, p. 523; Coyne, 1997, p. 624). Moreover, as Marshall argues (1996, p. 523), it involves the developing of a framework of variables that might influence an individual's contribution and it is based on the researcher's practical knowledge of the research area

¹⁶ Mentioned in the *Theoretical Framework* chapter.

and the available literature. During the interpretation of the data it is important to consider subjects who support emerging explanations, as well as subjects who disagree.

In this particular case the sample of the research project are the participants to the KCRDP; community representatives of K-Albanian and K-Serb ethnicity and persons responsible for the planning and implementation of the programme. My intention was to interview two people for each project location/working group (on a total of six project locations). However, as it has been mentioned in the previous section, because of the ‘border crisis’ (as I further explain in the *Difficulties and Limitations* sub-chapter) I could not conduct the interviews in the Çabër/Cabra (K-Albanian) and Zubin Potok/Zubin Potoku (K-Serbian) project locations but I had to limit my research to the remaining four villages/towns (K-Albanian Runik/Rudnik and Vushtrri/Vucitrn, and K-Serbian Banje/Bajë and Gojbulja/Gojbulë) and increase the number of respondents per WG to three. In total I carried out twelve formal interviews with KCRDP participants and several informal interviews with programme managers. According to Kvale (2008) and Verschuren and Doorewaard (2010), this is a regular number for interview studies.

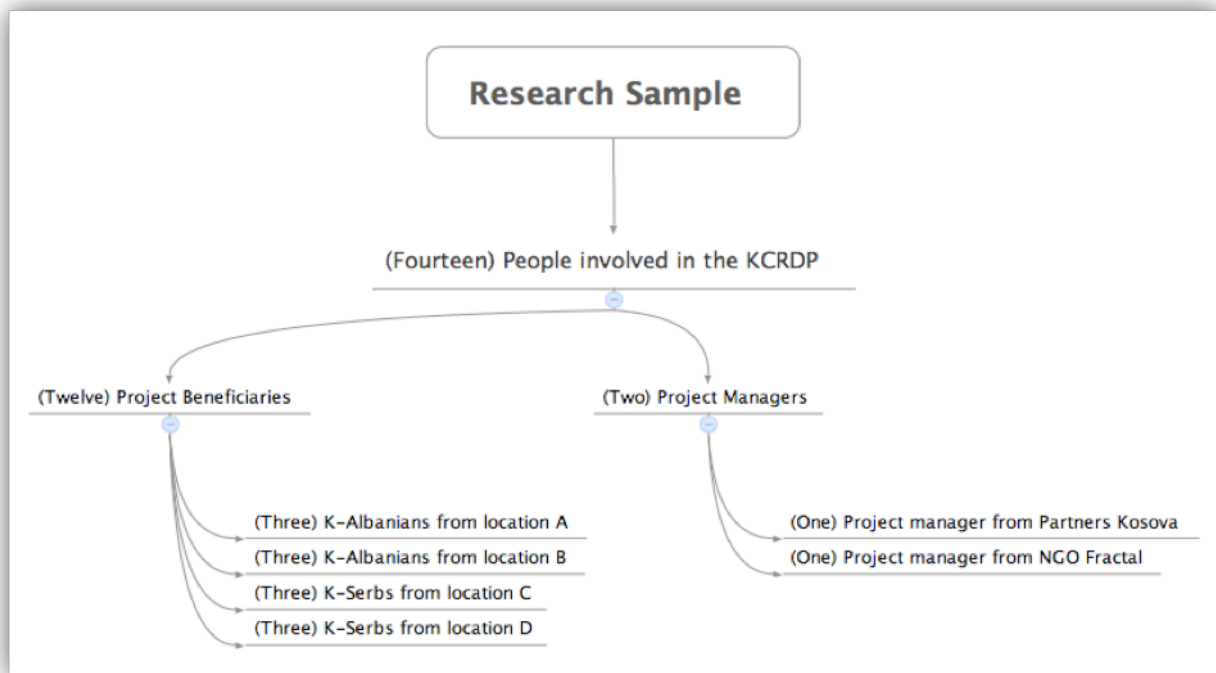


Figure 10: Research Sample

I used the judgment sampling strategy (a non-probability sample), because it is not my purpose to generalize the study to a population living on a certain territory. In other words, it is not the aim of my research project, as similarly stated by Raymond (1996, p. 114), to make accurate statements about the distribution of certain variables on a larger basis. Instead my intention is to analyse and understand how an already existing programme functions. Therefore, my sample is not representative of a population but the

conclusions of my study could be useful for reconciliation and development programmes/projects/strategies, which are comparable to the KCRDP.

This sampling strategy turned out to be a good choice for my research project, also because of the limited access to the KCRDP project locations (in north Kosovo). I was introduced to the WGs by my internship organization (PK), but due to several reasons, I was not able to visit these towns/villages on so many occasions. The main concern was security, but also the fact that my freedom of movement was limited as I was dependent on public transportation. In addition, my interpreter was available just on a limited number of days. In these circumstances and in order to get enough information, I had to focus on the most 'productive' individuals that were able to give me a thorough insight on the topic of my research project and who were available on the days when all conditions for conducting interviews were met. I contacted the respondents through PK and Fractal, but I tried to distance myself from the NGOs in order to be perceived as impartial as possible. Before every interview I explained the aim of my study and my position towards the KCRDP as a neutral researcher as well as I emphasized their anonymity in the research project. I took these steps to guarantee – as much as possible – the sincerity of the respondents and realistic results.

I chose the key respondents from K-Albanian and K-Serbian locations on advice of programme managers from PK and Fractal. Because of the time limitation I had to consider their judgement on who were the most cooperative individuals that could give me a thorough insight into the researched topic. Their estimation turned out to be very useful, since I soon realized that the respondents I had chosen were playing a very important role in the single project locations. As a result of their experience and leading role in the WGs, they were able to provide meaningful and profound answers to my questions. In every project location I also had the opportunity to interview members of the working groups who had not been pointed out to me by the two NGOs. This has enabled me to get a holistic picture on the project and less biased opinions of participants without risking that the NGOs would have had an excessive influence on the composition of my sample.¹⁷

5.3 Research Methods

In my research project I made use of qualitative research methods (interviews, participant observation and content analysis), which enabled me to analyse, understand and interpret this particular case in-depth. According to Shank (in Parker, 2004), qualitative research is defined as “the study of process and behaviours in their natural settings, through which the researcher tries to make sense of phenomena and the meanings that people attribute to them” (p. 159). With the use of qualitative research methods the researcher assumes

¹⁷ For further details see *Difficulties and Limitations* and *Characteristics of Respondents* sub-chapters.

that there is no single reality; the reality is represented by the interaction of the researcher with the phenomenon under study (Raymond, 1996, p. 61-2). Moreover, this research methodology implies recognition of process, which cannot be measured in terms of quantity, amount, or frequency (Carney et al. in Wagner & Okeke, 2009, p. 63), and are as a consequence less suitable for quantitative research methods. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2000, p. 3), qualitative research consists of a set of interpretative, material practices, which turn the world visible with interviews, field notes, recordings, etc. Therefore, only through the use of qualitative research, which is relatively more flexible, I could really immerge myself in the specific post-conflict environment and understand the phenomena and society under study.

5.3.1 Interviews

As I have already mentioned above, I conducted semi-structured, face-to-face interviews, which were scheduled in advance and carried out in determined locations. The interviews lasted from thirty minutes to one hour. I started every interview with an introduction about my background, the purpose of my study and with some opening questions. Afterwards, in order to get as much information as possible about all the subjects of my research, I made use of some guidelines and open-ended questions as suggested by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009, p. 345). While interviewing, I tried to create a positive and informal atmosphere by carrying out the interview in the form of a discussion without any sudden change of subject or interruption. As Gillham (2000, p. 52) and Reinharz & Chase (2001, p. 227) claim, people are very often more open to certain subjects when involved in a debate, while they are less talkative when they are 'forced' to answer to a specific question. As a consequence, the order of questions was changing according to the direction of the discussion but at the end I made sure that all the key topics of my research had been covered. As recommended by Diccico-Bloom & Crabtree (2006, p. 316) the location of the interviews was chosen in advance regarding the preferences of the interviewed persons, in order to make him/her feel more comfortable and to gain some trust; the interview were in my case held in offices, cafés, restaurants or in respondents' homes.

With prior consent of the person interviewed, all the interviews were recorded. This allowed me to better focus on the discussion, give all my attention to the interviewee and properly react with relevant sub-questions. The interviews were anonymous and even though the gathered data were not of a very sensitive nature, I took all the necessary measures to keep the recordings in a safe place (by encrypting them) and hence safeguard the privacy of interviewees. As argued by Diccico-Bloom & Crabtree (2006, p. 319), I reduced the risk of 'unanticipated harm' by formulating questions in a way that if desired, respondents could avoid talking about painful personal memories on the conflict. By asking more general questions about the current and past relationship with K-Serbs/K-Albanians, I could still get enough information relevant for my research. All in all, while

interviewing I did my best to follow the principles of ethical research, among which are the principle of doing no harm, informed consent, honesty, privacy and conflict of interest (Steane, 2004, p. 63).

The interviews were held in Serbian, since it can be understood by both ethnic groups; it is the language of K-Serbs and it is still widely spoken by the majority of K-Albanians. All interviews were conducted with the assistance of an interpreter, who was working as an intern at PK. She was given instruction on how to translate the interviews, since the translation had to be as detailed as possible and had to reflect the exact meaning of my questions and interviewee's answers and thus not fear the violation of validity (Ryen, 2001, p. 344). The interpreter was from the Romanian minority in Vojvodina (Serbia), so especially when we were interviewing K-Albanians she stressed the fact she was Romanian by nationality and not Serb. This allowed me to get sincere answers, especially by K-Albanian interviewees, who might otherwise feel pressured to answer in a different way if they would think that the interpreter is Serb.

Even though all the interviews have contributed to my research project, some were less successful and useful for my study than others. This depended especially on the personal characteristics of respondents, since some of them were not very talkative and open, and avoided going into details when answering to my questions and sub-questions. In addition, sometimes I was not able to get the answers to some question even when I tried to explain or/and rephrase the question. On the whole, every interview was relevant and meaningful for understanding the researched phenomena and for answering my research questions.

5.3.2 Participant Observation

Participant observation consists of intensively participating in activities in a specific location or environment, by observing and interpreting certain phenomena and/or dynamics (Becker & Geer in Seligman 2005, p. 235). I used this method by taking part at the WG meetings that had to be held on regular basis (few times per month) in the four project locations. However, because of the summer break I managed to participate just to one meeting in every location (in total four meetings). Moreover, I had the opportunity to take part in two meetings between the leaders of the Banje/Bajë and Gojbulja/Gojbulë working groups, which were crucial for merging their funds into a joint interethnic project. During all the meetings I observed intergroup dynamics and took notes on my observations regarding interethnic relations. When the language of the meetings was Albanian, I received short briefings from the programme managers, in order to get the relevant information for my research project. However, my passive knowledge of Serbian has been sufficient to follow the meetings that were held in Serbian.

Since I spent three months working in PK, I also had an insight into the project from an organizational point of view. I was able to obtain a lot of information on the project directly from the programme managers. In addition, I took part at the regular bi-weekly meetings between the representative of the Serbian Fractal and the K-Albanian PK. Throughout the internship at Partners Kosova I took research notes with all the observations on the KCRDP; I subsequently analysed and used all the relevant collected data in my thesis.

For ethical reasons and for my safety, I tried to keep my activities as transparent as possible and as emphasized by Marshall & Rossman (2011, p. 142), I informed all the participants in the KCRDP about my research project. In this way people with whom I was cooperating on everyday basis could trust me more. Furthermore, I avoided expressing my opinion on sensitive matters such as the independence of Kosovo, K-Serb/K-Albanian issues during the war, and the Kosovo relationship with Serbia. As suggested by Sluka (1990, p. 122) and Glaser (1996, p. 536), by keeping a more neutral profile (and by revealing my purpose and not sharing my opinion) it has been easier to work with both ethnic groups, without being perceived as partial. While conducting participant observation I was also aware of the fact that Kosovo is a post-conflict area and as such certain topics or behaviours could be perceived as provocative and could endanger my safety (Dowler, 2001).

In order to understand the local culture, I tried to talk with as many people as possible on everyday basis as also recommended by Sluka (1990). I joined a local martial arts club where I was able to interact with locals and where I had the chance to observe them in everyday activities. Although this was not directly connected with this study, it helped me to comprehend the Albanian culture (which is quite different from my own) and better understand the perception that K-Albanians have about Serbia and K-Serbs.

5.3.3 Content Analysis

The content analysis research method is very flexible and there is no 'exact way of doing it' that could be applied to every case (Satu & Kyngas, 2007, p. 113). The qualitative content analysis generally requires an analytical process of seven steps: the formulation of the research questions, selection of the sample, definition of categories, demarcation and implementation of the coding process, determination of reliability of sources, and analysis of the results (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1285). Since I have already dealt with the research questions and the selection of the research sample in the previous chapters of the thesis, I will concentrate in this section exclusively on the sampling of relevant textual material, the categorization and reliability of sources, and the analyzing process.

As part of the study, I analysed all the textual material of PK on the evolvement of KCRDP, which included: the working plan, the programme application, the reports of

working/focus group meetings, the monthly newsletters and the community profiles. I examined the transcripts of interviews of key beneficiaries of the programme, which were conducted in four project locations. All the data in textual format were coded in categories that better represent hypothetical answers to my research questions. First I set the main categories and sub-categories, but during the process of coding I still considered adding new categories (developing new codes) in case some new elements did not fit in the established framework, as suggested by Gillham (2000) and Hsieh & Shannon (2005). The units for coding were sentences or paragraphs with certain ideas, which were crucial for answering my research questions. Additionally, in order to understand the main patterns I evaluated all the respondents' answers on the basis of different scales. The purpose of the scales was to simplify every answer to its very core and thus see 'the whole picture' and not get lost in the amount of transcribed material. Coding was not an end in itself but a way for achieving categorization and interpretation (Morse & Richards, 2002), since the main objective was to screen all the gathered textual material in order to find out which are the obstacles to cooperation and the incentives for instrumental reconciliation.

While analyzing the gathered data, I assessed their reliability by using the already mentioned and presented 'methods triangulation', and by conducting parallel research. I examined academic and non-academic literature on the topic and informally questioned people, who were not directly connected to the programme, on the veracity of certain facts and phenomena. By using this approach I have increased the chances of getting realistic and more reliable data for my study (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). I have also included direct quotations from the interviews in the empirical chapter, which enable the reader to interpret certain information by himself/herself (Baxter and Eyles, 1997).

5.3.4 Achieving Credibility

Credibility is the most important criterion, which has to be met in qualitative research. This means that an experience described by the researcher should be easily recognized, understood and, as a consequence, more authentic (Lincoln & Guba in Baxter & Eyles, 1997, p. 512). According to Cutcliffe & McKenna (1999, p. 375), qualitative studies should not be tested by positivist criteria, because they differ very much from quantitative studies. Their credibility and accuracy should be established only by using standards that have been developed for this particular approach. In order to enhance credibility while doing research I took into consideration the following guidelines. Namely, as emphasized by several authors (Elliot, Fisher & Rennie, 1999; Glaser & Strauss, 1966), great attention was given to the specification of the context in which research was conducted and to the sharing of all relevant information that contributed to my opinion on the studied phenomenon (including the theoretical framework on which the study is based). Thereafter, I also used examples and quotations, because it is argued that they help the reader to better understand and imagine certain situations. I put a lot of effort in presenting the data and findings in a coherent and clear way, in order to make research

more comprehensible as also claimed by Elliot et al. (1999). Last but not least, I tried to make the sample¹⁸ fit the specific research goal and I avoided generalizing on the basis of my own research.

As Baxter & Eyles (1997) argue, to meet a sufficient degree of credibility, the research project has to be the result of premeditated and well-substantiated choices, also regarding the use of specific research methods and sampling strategy. The researcher should make clear what methods he has used to establish the credibility of his/her data interpretations (Cutcliffe & McKenna, 1999). I have used the case study research strategy¹⁹ because I wanted to get a substantive and holistic insight on the chosen topic and I utilized qualitative research methods (semi-structured face-to-face interviews, participant observation and content analysis), which were presented in more detail in the previous sub-chapters. The combined use of multiple methods, or 'triangulation', provided an in-depth understanding of the topic and increased the validity of the findings. According to Campbell (1975), "The achievement of 'realistic' constructs in a science requires multiple methods focused on the diagnosis of the same construct from independent points of observation..." (p. 189). To strengthen research credibility as much as possible, I used triangulation, suggested by number of authors (Baxter & Eyles, 1997; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010; Yin, 1994). Through the 'method triangulation' I added richness, complexity and depth to my study and to obtain more credible information and better understand the obstacles and incentives that make people engage in processes of instrumental reconciliation.

To sum up, to maximise research credibility I provided clear and extensive descriptions and analysis of the used methodology and theoretical framework. I described the context of my research project and included many examples and quotations from the conducted interviews, particularly in the *Analysis of the Results* chapter, in order to give the reader the possibility to interpret certain information by him/her-self.

5.4 Difficulties and Limitations

In this sub-chapter I explain the main difficulties and limitations of my sample and why I could not conduct the interviews in all six project locations. The reason why I had to change the structure of the sample (by bypassing two project locations and focusing on the remaining four) was the escalation of the conflict in the north of Kosovo, which limited my freedom of movement. In the period when I started conducting interviews, the relations between Kosovo and Serbia (including the Serbian minority living in the north of Kosovo) suddenly worsened. The main issue was represented by the fact that the Kosovo

¹⁸ More about the sample used in the research project in the *Sampling and Characteristics of Respondents* sub-chapters.

¹⁹ Described in more detail in the sub-chapter: *The KCRDP as a Case Study*.

government decided to break the fragile status quo and take direct control on some of the border crossings in the north of the country (Prelec, 2011).

Because of security reasons I was advised by the Albanian and Serbian programme managers not to visit the Zubin Potok/Zubin Potoku and Çabër/Cabra project locations. In the time range of two weeks, a member of the Kosovo police special forces was killed and a border crossing (in the proximity of Zubin Potok/Zubin Potoku) was set on fire (Barlovac & Kosanovic, 2011; Collaku, 2011). Moreover, in Zubin Potok/Zubin Potoku the situation was very tense and there was a high risk of further escalation of violence; the local K-Serbian population countered the decision of the Kosovo government and blocked the roads with barricades, in order to pressure the government and the international forces in Kosovo. Even after several months, there was no improvement in the situation, and all the parties were still in a stalemate (Aliu, 2011). Regarding Çabër/Cabra, apart from security, the problem was also that (as it has been told to me by the programme managers) the implementation of the project was temporarily stopped because of some internal disagreements. In these circumstances it was clearly too dangerous and senseless for me to conduct the interviews in all the six project locations, so I decided to focus only on four WGs but increase the number of respondents. Nonetheless, I still managed to get a very representative sample, which helped me understand the value of the KCRDP and how development can be used for reconciliation.

As it has been already mentioned, the language used in the interviews was Serbian, since both groups could satisfactorily speak it. From one point of view the use of this language represented an advantage because I could understand great part of the answers, which made communication between the respondents and myself much more direct and I needed the assistance of the interpreter only for the simultaneous translation of the questions. However, this choice was also an obstacle that prevented me from having a more gender-balanced sample. Among twelve interviewees nine were male and just three female. The problem lies in the fact that the women in the K-Albanian WGs did not speak Serbian or English, so I could not include any K-Albanian female in my sample.

Last but not least, since I needed the assistance of the NGOs for conducting the interviews, I could not get in contact with people who disagreed with the KCRDP, and as Collier & Mahoney (1996) argue, to get a complete picture on the studied phenomena. My sample is therefore composed only of people who had a relatively positive attitude towards the programme. However, despite all the limitations of my sample, which I have already described, I believe I have managed to provide enough details and enhance the credibility of the research project, by collecting meaningful data to answer the research question.

5.5 Biases in the Research Project

In this sub-chapter I will identify and analyse the biases, which could have influenced – in one way or another – my research findings and could have had an impact on the credibility of my research project. When I was conducting interviews and participant observation in Kosovo, I was certainly being perceived partially as an insider and partially as an outsider, and my experience was “multiple and layered, rather than singular and one-dimensional” (Smyth, 2005, p. 12). I was seen as an insider because I am Slovenian by ethnicity and Slovenia was part of the same political system (Yugoslavia) as Kosovo. Moreover, I could understand Serbian, which is to a certain extent still a *lingua franca* especially for older generations. Though, by being an insider my impartiality was endangered by the fact that Slovenia, as an EU member, had an influence on Kosovo’s declaration of independence and on the deployment of EULEX (European Rule of Law Mission) (Slovenian Presidency of the EU, 2008), which could have generated positive/negative associations in the interviewees.

However, at the same time I was also an outsider, since I was not personally connected to the conflict because of my ethnicity and my age. For the respondents I was ‘just’ a student, willing to listen and understand both parties, who have been involved in the conflict. Therefore, as similarly argued by Smyth (2005) during the fieldwork I was perceived being both: an insider who knows the circumstances, historical context and cultural background of the conflict, but also as an outsider who is objective and not emotionally attached to the case. As a consequence I was able to conduct my research project and closely enough approach both ethnic groups involved in the conflict. Additionally, I believe that my background most probably did not have a major influence on the veracity of collected data.

According to Williams (1964), “interview bias is likely to occur as a result of some motivation on the part of the respondent or interviewer (or both) to falsify a response” (p. 339). In my case, even though I did my best to be seen as an independent researcher, who is not linked to any specific organization (by explaining the aim of my study and that I am a student and not an NGO employee), I had the impression during at least three interviews that I had been explicitly perceived as part of the NGOs, which are implementing the programme. In these occasions the interviewees either thanked me for the KCRDP, or tried to promote their own villages for future projects. This was most probably the consequence of the fact that Partners Kosova and Fractal assisted me to get in contact with the respondents. But apart from the mentioned occasions I did not have the impression that the interviewees had any specific interest in falsifying their responses.

As an intern at PK I could have been biased in favour of this organization. By researching their project and being at the same time their intern, I could have been under pressure to have a more positive view on the KCRDP. However, there was no conflict of interests, since I was not financed by PK and this has certainly contributed to my impartiality in the

research project. Moreover, my internship did not last long and the staff at the organization never tried to influence my research project, which has additionally minimized the risk of being biased.

During the interviews I have also noticed that many respondents were answering to the questions not by saying how things are, but how things should be. Since I was interested to understand certain phenomena the way they are in reality, I had to pose additional questions in order to arrive to the actual answer relevant for the study. For example, when I asked how the relations between K-Albanians and K-Serbs in a certain area are, the respondents answered in this way: “here between us there are no problems at all, we are all the same and there should be no differences between us”. However, after insisting with additional sub-questions, I realized that the area where the respondent was living was mono-ethnic, which actually made his previous statement almost useless. Therefore, in certain cases I am not completely convinced of the sincerity of certain answers and I wonder whether the interviewees only tried to ‘impress’ me with their ‘political correctness’. Also the escalation of the conflict with the ‘border crisis’ has influenced the answers of the respondents, because they were visibly under pressure in the period when I was conducting the interviews.

To conclude, by describing my observations regarding possible biases my aim was to enhance the credibility and reliability of my research project. As I have already mentioned, in qualitative research it is very important to provide all the details that could have an impact on the results and their interpretation (Mays & Pope, 2000). By taking into considering the fact that the researcher can also be biased in certain contexts and by describing the possible biases, which could have been present in my case, I tried to minimize the possibility of misinterpretation of the data (Patton, 1999).

6 Analysis of the Results

6.1 Characteristics of Respondents

During my research project in Kosovo, I conducted twelve formal and recorded interviews in four different locations (two K-Albanian towns and two K-Serbian villages). The age of respondents varied from 30 to 69, with an average age of 46,8. Among twelve interviewees nine were male and three female. The majority was employed in public institutions: five were teachers, five were employees of the municipality, one was working in a hospital, and another one had its own business in construction. All the respondents were engaged in the KCRDP and were members of the WGs. As it has been already mentioned in the previous sections, among the four working groups, which I interviewed, the K-Serbian Banje/Bajë and K-Albanian Runik/Rudnik WG were implementing individual projects, while the K-Serbian Gojbulja/Gojbulë and K-Albanian Vushtrri/Vucitrn WG were realizing a joint project.

Pseudonym	Location	Ethnicity	Age	Gender	Occupation	Type of project
<i>Nenad</i>	Banje/Bajë	K-Serb	42	Male	Municipality sub-office in Banje/Bajë	Individual project
<i>Senka</i>	Banje/Bajë	K-Serb	30	Female	Municipality sub-office in Banje/Bajë	Individual project
<i>Milica</i>	Banje/Bajë	K-Serb	39	Female	Municipality sub-office in Banje/Bajë	Individual project
<i>Behar</i>	Runik/Rudnik	K-Albanian	69	Male	Retired teacher - Primary school	Individual project
<i>Dardan</i>	Runik/Rudnik	K-Albanian	54	Male	Teacher - High School	Individual project
<i>Korab</i>	Runik/Rudnik	K-Albanian	47	Male	Municipality office Skenderaj/Srbica	Individual project
<i>Radmilo</i>	Gojbulja/Gojbulë	K-Serb	51	Male	Teacher - Primary school	Joint project
<i>Pavle</i>	Gojbulja/Gojbulë	K-Serb	46	Male	Teacher - Primary school	Joint project
<i>Nada</i>	Gojbulja/Gojbulë	K-Serb	39	Female	Teacher - Primary school	Joint project
<i>Gezim</i>	Vushtrri/Vucitrn	K-Albanian	39	Male	Municipality office Vushtrri/Vucitrn	Joint project
<i>Enver</i>	Vushtrri/Vucitrn	K-Albanian	48	Male	Manager of construction company	Joint project
<i>Valon</i>	Vushtrri/Vucitrn	K-Albanian	58	Male	Hospital finance manager	Joint project
			46,8			

Table 1: Characteristics of respondents.

6.2 Pre-War, War and Current Interethnic Relationships

At the beginning of each interview, in order to better understand the nature of the relationship between K-Serbs and K-Albanians in the period of my research project, I asked the interviewees to describe their pre-war and war experiences with people from the opposing ethnic group. The vast majority of interviewed K-Serbs and K-Albanians answered that before the rule of Milošević and the war, their interethnic relations were very good and that they were living in harmony with each other; they had good neighbourly relations, they were going to the same schools and doing the same jobs. Thus, for socializing and mutual understanding, ethnicity did not represent an obstacle.

Almost all the accounts of persons from both ethnic groups include very positive descriptions of the pre-war period. Two K-Albanians described their relationship with K-Serbs with these words:

I was eating bread with Serbs in their houses (Gezim, 39, K-Albanian from Vushtrri/Vucitrn WG).

Before the 1998 conflict there were no problems with Serbs . . . we did not notice so much the nationality of people. We could have not lived better, until the explosion of Milošević nationalism (Behar, 69, K-Albanian from Runik/Rudnik WG).

Similar memories and feelings were also shared by K-Serbs:

When I was going to school we were learning Albanian, we were going to the same schools and we were travelling with the same buses . . . We had Albanian friends with whom we were interacting. My brothers were working in a shop with Albanians, because at that time it was normal to work together and have friendly relations with them. During Bairam²⁰, they brought us baklava²¹ and we visited them when we had our holidays. We socialized a lot and there were much more cases of friendships than disagreements (Nada, 39, K-Serb from Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG).

I didn't have bad experiences with Albanians, I grew up and mingled with them, we were going together to school . . . (Nenad, 42, K-Serb from Banje/Bajë WG).

Even though some K-Serb respondents said that there were sporadic interethnic tensions also in the pre-war period, all interviewees agreed on the fact that these frictions exponentially increased no earlier than under the ruling of Milošević and later on with the war. According to the accounts, K-Albanians suffered more during the war, especially by being massively displaced, while K-Serbs had major problems in the post-war period particularly because of the limited freedom of movement. Both experienced similar direct

²⁰ Celebration at the end of Ramadan.

²¹ A dessert originating from the Middle East.

or/and indirect degrees of violence ranging from killings, loose of property, acts of vandalism, etc. While some of the interviewees collaborated interethnically also during the war, the majority among them interrupted all contacts and relationships. In order to understand what was happening during the war and after from the perspective of my respondents, I provide four concise descriptions of the circumstances:

During the 1998 all Albanians left the village, just Serbs remained . . . and my house was burned. I escaped with my family first to Mitrovica, then to Pristina and after to Skopje . . . we had nobody there. They put us on a train for cattle. This was a big tragedy for the Albanian nation. . . . After the war, when we came back, Serbs went away (Behar, 69, K-Albanian from Runik/Rudnik WG).

During the war, when they emptied Mitrovica, we left for Albania. I walked on foot to Albania for five days with my kids. If you saw the queue, you could see that only in the holocaust. Old men and sick people were walking with children. Few had cars, tractors or motor vehicles but the rest were all by foot. I am glad that my kids survived this scenario . . . (Valon, 58, K-Albanian from Vushtrri/Vucitrn WG).

After the 1999, I was here in Banje but my wife and children left the village. For the Serbs that stayed in Kosovo, the war started and it was terrible. . . . There were no conditions for life here, we were completely isolated, the KFOR army guarded us and we could leave the village (to Mitrovica or somewhere else) just with armoured vehicles. People around villages were being killed, a bus exploded and everything took place in front of the eyes of the international community and the peacekeepers . . . nobody was then held responsible for anything (Nenad, 42, K-Serb from Banje/Bajë WG).

With the war everything changed and the relationship we had with them terminated (Nada, 39, K-Serb from Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG).

Most K-Albanians I interviewed made a clear distinction between K-Serbs that were committing wrongdoings during the war and were connected to the regime, and all others. They agreed that displaced K-Serbs, who did not have 'dirty hands', should return to their villages. In general they were more positive about the current relationship with K-Serbs. They looked at the war as part of the past and they had very optimistic thoughts about the future, such as:

I cannot say that we will like each other but it is important that we don't hate each other and that we believe in Kosovo. I talked with a Serb and I said that it could be true that I love Albania and he loves Serbia, but we have to live here together and build our own country. Also in Europe Germans hate/hated Frenchmen and the other way around, but now they live together, even though they know their history it doesn't mean that history has to be repeated. It is important to forget (Behar, 69, K-Albanian from Runik/Rudnik WG).

On the other hand, K-Serbs were generally much more sceptic and insecure about the present situation and about the future. Despite noticing a big progress in the last three/four years in security, freedom of movement and in the general situation, they felt Belgrade betrayed them and was using Serbs in Kosovo just for political games. In other words, they felt that they had been left in a country where there is not much room left for them and where the security situation is very volatile. With the following words an inhabitant of Banje/Bajë expressed her opinion about the circumstances in Kosovo:

The passions calmed down and there is much less hatred. We are going to their shops, and they are coming here, but there is still distrust and the situation can still be tense.

. . . Everyone leads it's own life, and in this moment there are no problems, but you never know when there will be some (Senka, 30, K-Serb from Banje/Bajë WG).

The feeling of uncertainty was particularly noticeable in the interviews that were conducted in the Serbian village Gojbulja/Gojbulë, during the peak of the 'border crisis'. The series of events in the north of Kosovo had a big psychological impact on people in the village and this has been a good example of how quickly relations and opinions can change and be adapted to the situation. In this occasion all the respondents from the village mentioned the crisis and the potential impact this could have on their lives.

To summarize, in the last thirty years the relationships between the two major ethnic groups living in Kosovo have drastically changed. According to the interviewees, war and politics have divided them and even though the interethnic relations have improved in the last years, they are not as good as they were in the period before Milošević. K-Albanians share the feeling of winning the war and consequently a new state, being as a result much more optimistic about the future and less afraid about having a relationship with K-Serbs. On the contrary, K-Serbs feel as they lost the war (some are not sure even if the war has finished yet) and they are much more cautious, because they do not know if they should accommodate in the newborn state or resist it. For Serbs in enclaves life is more difficult, and the performing of everyday tasks can be very complicated because of isolation, lack of infrastructure and the constant feeling of uncertainty.

6.3 Present and Future Interethnic Cooperation

In this sub-chapter I first present the different types of cooperation (based on economic interest) between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo, and thereafter examine the potential for future interethnic collaboration between the two groups. My aim is to understand if, with the right economic incentives, the representatives of WGs would be willing to embark on a more demanding relationship with the 'opposing' side. The collected data are important for evaluating whether projects, such as the KCRDP, could be successful in post-conflict environments and could have a positive effect on the reconciliation process and the normalization of interethnic relations.

According to the respondents, trade is the most common way of cooperation between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo and in the last four years it has represented an opportunity for contact and interaction. K-Serbs that live in enclaves can now choose between shopping in the Serbian part of Mitrovica, as they were used to in the last ten years, or just going to the neighbouring Albanian village where they feel (according to their own accounts) 'well accepted'. This relationship, which has become relatively widespread, is in the interest of both groups and can be seen as an indicator of the gradual normalization of relationships.

A different type of cooperation is going on through Kosovar institutions, since there is a quota of K-Serbs that has to be employed at the municipality offices or at the Kosovo Police; however, this affects a very small number of persons. The same is with interethnic businesses, which are extremely rare or well hidden, because open cooperation with people from the other ethnicity (apart from trade) is, as a consequence of political pressures, still largely undesired. As stated by the individuals that I interviewed, there are virtually no examples of 'spontaneous' Serbian-Albanian business connections. Although some NGO projects promoted cooperation (as in the case of the KCRDP), these were not genuine grass-root initiatives. Obviously this is a kind of relationship that requires a lot of trust, but which is not yet present in this case under study. In the quotation below, a K-Albanian respondent explains how he sees cooperation between the two ethnicities:

We don't 'cooperate', but we 'work' together when we have to do something. 'Cooperation' is a politically sensitive term . . . we work on a 'people's' level, we don't know what the other think about politics but we still cooperate as individuals. . . . During the war I worked with Serbs, and everybody was gossiping about me, but even the people that were gossiping were as well cooperating with them. When there is interest nothing stops us from collaborating with each other and we don't look at nationality. In our mentality is like this: if one cooperates with Serbs, he also talks against Serbs, it is like a defence mechanism (Behar, 69, K-Albanian from Runik/Rudnik WG).

Particularly for K-Serbs who are living in villages (such are Gojbulja/Gojbulë and Banje/Bajë), which are surrounded by K-Albanians communities, collaboration is almost unavoidable and is a meter of survival because of the lack of infrastructure and relative isolation. Therefore, arrangements for the cultivation of land, building of houses, etc. are quite common and represent another way by which contact between the two ethnicities is being created. But also in this case, spontaneous, needs-driven collaboration is better not to be public, even though this is according to the interviewees becoming more and more tolerated:

By agreement Albanians can cultivate Serbian land, because Serbs don't have an adequate equipment (tractors, etc). But Serbs can buy fertilizers in Serbia, and in this way together we can cultivate the land. This has become quite a common phenomenon in the last two years. But at the beginning this was held in secret, in order for nobody to say to an Albanian

that he is socializing with a Serb and the other way around (Radmilo, 51, K-Serb from Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG).

Yes, we cooperate. We live in this area (in Gojbulja) where there are also Albanians. As a consequence we see each other, we cooperate, but everything up to a certain point. All depends on the political situation (Pavle, 46, K-Serb from Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG).

In continuation, in order to understand to what extent the interviewees are prepared to cooperate interethnically, I asked them if they would be willing to open and run a multi-ethnic business. Most K-Albanians answered that with the right guarantees and incentives they would be eager to do so and that ethnicity would not be a major problem in this regard. On the other side K-Serbs were more reluctant about opening a business with K-Albanians, although they would still consider this option if the offer was appealing enough (particularly from the financial point of view). However, on both sides there were some respondents who said – without mentioning any specific conditions – that they would open and run a business together.

In conclusion, K-Serbs and K-Albanians are clearly embarked in a very pragmatic and practically oriented relationship because of the nature of cooperation, which has been described by the respondents. Trade between the two ethnicities has become more and more widespread and represents the first step towards the normalization of contacts. Cooperation is guaranteed also at the ‘institutional’ level in the municipality and in other bodies. Moreover, in some other cases, K-Serbs living in enclaves are ‘forced’ into a collaborative relationship with K-Albanians (which at the end brings benefits to both groups), because of the lack of infrastructure for the cultivation of land and the relative isolation. Nonetheless, even though there are currently no examples of business where both ethnic groups would work side by side, there are some chances for prospective interethnic cooperation according to the respondents.

6.4 Interethnic Development Projects and their Influence on Reconciliation

Arriving at the core of my study, in this sub-chapter I analyse the opinions of interviewees on whether and how interethnic development projects contribute to peace. However, I want to point out that since the KCRDP is running for just about two years it is very difficult to assess the real long-term effects of the programme on reconciliation. Thus, in these circumstances it is only possible to examine peoples’ estimations of the effects of the KCRDP or similar projects on reconciliation.

When I asked the respondents about their opinion on interethnic development projects in general, their answers were relatively coherent and similar to each other, irrespective of who is taking part in an individual or joint project – be it Albanian or Serb. From their

point of view these projects are a good method for creating contacts between the two sides. They have a positive impact on relationships, and they promote communication and generate opportunities for interaction. At the same time, by promoting economic development and by fighting unemployment, they contribute to stability and indirectly help the peace process. As I explain in more detail in the *Incentives and Conditions for Interethnic Collaboration* sub-chapter, all the interviewees agreed that a common (mainly economic) interest is the best way for bringing people together; this can have a positive effect on the alleviation of tensions between the two parties involved in the conflict and it can help to understand how people of different ethnicity live. Moreover, as also presented in the next sections, interethnic development projects can have an impact on the freedom of movement and they can have a positive effect on the population not directly related to the project, because they help breaking 'taboos' about the 'Other' in the society. However, their success depends on whether both parties stick to the agreement and if the experience with the opposing ethnic group is positive until the end. According to some interviewees there should be more everyday collaboration, since only a few meetings with the counterpart cannot really maximise the positive effects and bring a change.

As part of the interviews I also asked the respondents if they thought that interethnic cooperation in the concrete case of the KCRDP could bring some kind of reconciliation. Clearly I did not expect their interpretation of the term reconciliation, but I was especially interested to see if they believe that the KCRDP could have an effect on the amelioration of interethnic relationships in the long run. All interviewees (from both ethnicities) thought that the KCRDP could contribute to peace. While some said that it is 'possible' some others claimed that is 'very probable', but no one expressed a negative opinion on this matter. The only difference between K-Albanian and K-Serb respondents was that the latter included more 'ifs' in their explanations. Serbs were in comparison to Albanians more uncertain of their everyday situation and more afraid that the other side could not stick to the agreement. Below I present the most representative explanations in order to better understand respondents' points of view and the differences,; the first two are from K-Albanians and the next two from K-Serbs:

I think that at the end there will be more 'bringing together' and reconciliation than economic gain. . . . The process could take from two to three years, not just for people from this village but also for people from other villages. When they will see us working, cooperating and seating together drinking coffee, they will start changing in their mentality (Enver, 48, K-Albanian from Vushtrri/Vucitrn WG).

Every cooperation has the chance to push us forward in terms of further cooperation and a better life. However, it has to be a collaboration that promotes 'healthy' relationships and that it is not just for a short-term goal or profit (Korab, 47, K-Albanian from Runik/Rudnik WG).

Yes, such project could help for reconciliation. It promotes cooperation, it spreads common human relationships and there is more interaction and socializing. . . . I think that if everything goes according to the plan, it will evolve to something, which is more than just simple cooperation. But I am not sure exactly how, because the general situation here is changing everyday. I don't know what will be tomorrow (Senka, 30, K-Serb from Banje/Bajë WG).

Maybe it will be good if there are more projects like this. For example we would never meet people from the project if we wouldn't be part of it. . . . A common interest takes us closer. . . . If they will stick to the agreement and if they fulfil the promise that in one or two years we can get a bigger project, than this project could lead to some kind of reconciliation. . . . However, everything depends on how things will develop with the current crisis (Nada, 39, K-Serb from Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG).

In addition, I could witness by myself – as an observer of the meetings held between the two opposing groups cooperating in a joint project (K-Serbian WG from Gojbulja/Gojbulë and K-Albanian WG from Vushtrri/Vucitrn) – that certain people (of different ethnicity) became friends as a consequence of the interaction. Before and after the meetings there was always a very informal positive atmosphere and the participants were talking and making jokes. Therefore, during the time I spent in Kosovo I had the opportunity to see some of the positive results of the KCRDP, as well as experience how despite of the efforts, such projects are only a 'drop in the sea'. A crisis on a higher level (as the one during my stay) can have drastic repercussions on interethnic relations and can spoil the process of reconciliation by increasing distrust towards the opposing side.

Thereafter, I wanted to find out how the respondents would change the KCRDP in order to make it more successful in terms of interethnic cooperation. According to the members of the K-Albanian working group from Runik/Rudnik, which have been involved in an individual project, the project would have had a bigger impact on interethnic relations if directly implemented with K-Serbs; an example includes the two ethnic groups working alongside each other in a factory. It is worth mentioning that the members of the K-Serbian Banje/Bajë WG (the K-Serbian WG implementing an individual project) did not mention this option, which could explain their relatively major restraint from interethnic cooperation. Another comment was made by the leader of the K-Serbian working group in Gojbulja/Gojbulë (the WG involved in a joint project) who claimed that K-Serbs were in a disadvantaged position; according to this interviewee the project could provide an employment for three K-Serbs and could help solving a social problem for some families, but the owner who is K-Albanian would receive a much bigger profit. In his opinion a better option would be to create a multiethnic company that would employ 12-14 people from both ethnic groups, and in which the profit would be equally shared (from his point of view this was apparently not the case in the KCRDP).

In sum, interethnic development projects are according to the respondents a good way for creating contact and rebuilding relationships that were destroyed during the conflict. All of them also agreed on the fact that such projects can have a positive impact on reconciliation and long-term peace. However, K-Serbs were comparatively more insecure about the effects of these projects, because of the unstable socio-political situation and relative distrust towards the other side; as it was evident from the quotes, they were afraid that K-Albanians would not stick to the agreement. During the crisis they were also visibly upset and they saw everything in a more pessimistic way.

6.5 Obstacles to Interethnic Cooperation

In order to learn and understand the main problems that obstruct interethnic cooperation I asked the interviewees to describe the obstacles that have prevented them from having a normal relationship with the opposing side (on everyday basis and specifically in the KCRDP). In most of the cases I did not get a direct answer, so I had to formulate different sub-questions to specify what exactly I was interested to know. The majority of the respondents identified the obstacles for cooperation in general (in everyday life), but very few could find any direct obstacle for collaboration in the programme.

The main obstacle to interethnic cooperation in general, which was named directly and indirectly by at least half of the representatives of both ethnic groups, has been political pressure in people's everyday life, in the way I will further explain. K-Serbs as well as K-Albanians stated that the other side (correspondingly K-Albanians and K-Serbs) is very unpredictable and easily persuaded against collaborating with them, particularly when the political situation is tense. Similar observations were made by representatives of both groups and were particularly visible during the days when the interethnic situation in the north of Kosovo escalated. In this period I could notice an increased polarization and renewed fear about the opposing group through the interviews, on the streets, and also at my internship organization.

K-Serbs especially lamented that collaboration with K-Albanians always depends of the political situation in a certain time and that this has bad consequences also for the reconciliation process. Below two K-Serbs from Gojbulja/Gojbulë, whom I interviewed during the peak of the crisis, expressed their opinion on the matter:

I don't have many Albanian friends and their friendship depends on the general situation, because this is how it is their attitude towards Serbs. When the (interethnic) tension is high, if I am calling, they are not allowed to answer to their phones. They will not contact us for some time, but later when the 'climate' is less tense, they try to get in contact with us again (Pavle, 46, K-Serb from Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG).

With this project the image of Albanians maybe ameliorated, but it does not mean anything if then, because of this certain situation, it gets worse again. We went to Pristina and we had a good impression of Albanians, but now if we go to Mitrovica it is bad for us and we get scared again (Nada, 39, K-Serb from Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG).

On the other side, K-Albanians thought that Serbs are being pressured not to accept Kosovo as a new country and that they avoid cooperation with Albanians. This is how an inhabitant of Vushtrri/Vucitrn and one from Runik/Rudnik described the problems they have noticed:

Their own people, especially Serbs that don't live here, are pressuring them not to cooperate with us. Security is certainly not a concern but they often don't have the will to work, because they get enough money from Serbia (Enver, 48, K-Albanian from Vushtrri/Vucitrn WG).

Serbs are still under the influence of Belgrade politics. Belgrade still thinks that the situation can go back to the pre 1999 and that Serbs can still decide without the consent of the majority (Korab, 47, K-Albanian from Runik/Rudnik WG).

Furthermore, particularly K-Serbs pointed at language as being another problem, which makes cooperation between ethnicities in Kosovo more difficult. Not many interviewees (of both ethnicities) perceive language as being a problem in the present relationship with the opposing side, but the majority is afraid that language will soon become a big obstacle. Although older generations of K-Albanians can speak a good level of Serbian, there are very few K-Serb respondents who can speak a satisfactory level of Albanian. The new generations of K-Serbs and K-Albanians, who grew up during or after the conflict, speak only their mother tongue and in schools they do not learn the language that is spoken by the other side. This makes and will make communication between the two major ethnic groups in Kosovo very difficult. Therefore, apart from the difficulties in communication caused by the conflict, the two ethnicities living in this area will soon have no common language, which will as a consequence make interethnic communication even more difficult. A K-Serb from Gojbulja/Gojbulë and one from Banje/Bajë expressed their concerns with these words:

I do not know how would communication look like between my son and the son of other Albanians who are involved in the project; my son doesn't speak Albanian and their sons do not speak Serbian. The communities in Kosovo will soon start to communicate in English. In our country we will start to speak a third language . . . (Radmilo, 51, K-Serb from Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG).

A common problem for both groups is that languages are very different. Before the war we were learning Albanian and Serbian, because there were many opportunities to learn it, but now it is different. Especially younger generations do not speak the language of the other side . . . also because our children are not going to the same schools. In the future not

having a common language for communication will create a difficult situation (Nenad, 42, K-Serb from Banje/Bajë WG).

In connection to the abovementioned problem, the education system in Kosovo is divided by ethnicity, which keeps younger generations separated and prevents interaction. Even though having multiethnic schools is according to an interviewee from Banje/Bajë not yet realistic, the lack of 'institutionalized' opportunities for contact and for learning the language of the other ethnic group will result in further alienation. Particularly Serbs living in enclaves see this as a growing difficulty and an obstacle for future cooperation.

Another difficulty is represented by the limited freedom of movement of K-Serbs, who claimed that even though the situation has improved in the last years, they sometimes still feel fear when travelling to Albanian areas. Especially during the periods when the tension is high (as during the 'border crisis') their freedom of movement is very limited and they feel in danger. I had the opportunity to witness this fear when I went to the village of Gojbulja/Gojbulë, which is close to Vushtrri/Vucitrn (a K-Albanian town). K-Serbs from the village picked me up and later dropped me at the outskirts of the town, since they were very afraid of entering Vushtrri/Vucitrn with Serbian car plates. However, apart from this, they did not mention other problems with security as presenting obstacle for collaboration.

An issue that has not been explicitly mentioned in respondent's answers to this question, but is in my opinion another obstacle to reconciliation, is the common use of historical 'evidences' to justify the right of being entitled to a territory. I noticed this tendency while I was interviewing representatives of both ethnicities. Respondents used historical 'facts' such as archaeological findings or names of towns to explain and convince me that the 'ancestors of their ancestors' have always lived in Kosovo. In this context, radical and exclusive interpretations of history of people inhabiting the same territory certainly represent an obstacle to future cooperation.

Afterwards, as part of the interview I asked the respondents, which were the obstacles for cooperation not in general as asked before, but specifically in the KCRDP. All of them (representatives of groups implementing individual projects as well as joint multiethnic projects) said that there were no obstacles and that cooperation under KCRDP was very successful due to projects' openness and transparency:

There are not just good or bad sides. If you try to forget about the bad sides, in order to have better interethnic relations, then it is positive. However, this project is good, so there are less negative aspects. . . . There are no obstacles, we did not have any obstacle for cooperation, since both of us managed to find a 'common language' during the project and work together for our common goals (Behar, 69, K-Albanian from Runik/Rudnik WG).

There are no obstacles and if we and they stay 'human' than this will not be a problem . . . Until now we managed to use a 'common language' and to reach an agreement. We were going to the same meetings and it was good for us and for them (Radmilo, 51, K-Serb from Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG).

However, some of them mentioned having only few contacts with the other side; for example, for them going to Pristina for training was not enough for really noticing the obstacles, which could undermine cooperation in the KCRDP:

In the project we did not have so much contact with Albanians. We have focus group meetings and during one occasion we went to Pristina and there were no problems, but it is far from having a relationship or really cooperating with them. It is much better in comparison to how it was before, but it still has to improve, there has to be more freedom, more contacts, communication, etc. (Milica, 39, K-Serb from Banje/Bajë WG).

Furthermore, during my personal observations of the meetings that were held to decide whether Gojbulja/Gojbulë and Vushtrri/Vucitrn would join their funds into an interethnic project, I could notice a lack of trust particularly on the Serbian side. At these occasions it was evident that K-Serbs were much more afraid of being cheated and betrayed. Moreover, they felt that they were not in a position to control the development of events, so they had to double-check every single step and make sure that they were appropriately protected in case anything would have gone wrong. Nonetheless, at the end they managed to come to a suitable agreement for collaboration, even though all respondents from Gojbulja/Gojbulë expressed their fears during the interviews on the compliance of the reached agreement.

As a way for additional understanding of the level of trust among K-Albanians and K-Serbs in the KCRDP, I asked the interviewees if they thought that trust in the project is reciprocal or one-sided. Although not every respondent answered to these question and the answers did not differ too much among ethnicities, it was also in this case possible to recognize an established pattern. Most of the interviewees felt that trust was mutual and that they trusted the same as the other party did. However, in the K-Serb group there were two persons who stated that they trusted more, and one that said that distrust (not trust) was reciprocal. Even if the answers were not so coherent as in some previous cases, it was still possible to establish that Serbs were again relatively more distrustful towards Albanians, because they thought that Albanians trusted them less.

In addition, I was interested to know if there is enough trust between the two ethnic groups to join all the projects under a common project umbrella. I formulated this specific question because as already stated, uniting all the small projects into a big project could be the next step (project stage) of the KCRDP; for this reason I had to detect what representatives of WGs think about this option. The great majority of the respondents said that from their point of view the projects are too different to be joined in a meaningful

way. Their opinion was not based on a potential lack of trust but it was the result of a very practically oriented reasoning. The answers in this case did not differ among ethnicities.

The main obstacle to cooperation is evidently the lack of trust, which has not been explicitly mentioned but it was clearly visible when both parties portrayed the other side as changeable and unreliable. K-Albanians as well as K-Serbs saw each other in a similar distrustful way and tried to find a reason why they should/could not trust each other too much. This made particularly K-Serbs cautious when taking decisions, as in the case when the Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG was considering the option of joining the Vushtrri/Vucitrn WG in an interethnic project. Another obstacle was represented by language differences especially among younger generations. This is a problem, which has been created by the division of schools on the basis of ethnicity and the failure to include the two principal Kosovo languages in the educational curriculum. In addition, the limited freedom of movement of K-Serbs and the constant emphasizing of one-sided history by both sides are as well problems that make cooperation difficult. Thus, despite the fact that the respondents said that there were no obstacles for cooperation in the KCRDP, it seems as all other mentioned problems have had an indirect influence on the implementation of the project and on the lack of trust in certain situations.

6.6 Incentives and Conditions for Interethnic Collaboration

In the following sub-chapter I firstly examine the incentives, which induced the two ethnic groups to cooperate, and then continue with the analysis of the conditions, which according to the respondents need to be present for the two groups to engage in a closer relationship. Knowing what motivates K-Albanians and K-Serbs to interact and collaborate in interethnic projects and which are the necessary conditions for cooperation is crucial for successful planning and implementation of similar programmes in the future.

All respondents agreed on the fact that economic incentives were crucial in motivating them to take part in this programme. Even though some mentioned the 'need for jobs' and others more generally 'economic development', all agreed that economic gain (individual and/or collective) is what unites them and makes them cooperate in projects such as the KCRDP. As a result of the stagnant economic situation and the high unemployment rate in Kosovo, the economic incentives provided by such projects have become good motivations for cooperation. With these words three K-Albanian interviewees explained what personally motivated them to become involved in the project:

The thing that motivated me most was to get a job, because nowadays it is very difficult to get an employment. Even though it is a small project, because it is just for six people, it is still something; it is a contribution for six families (Behar, 69, K-Albanian from Runik/Rudnik WG).

The main reason for cooperation is the growth of my business. They have Serbian friends, they will give my telephone number to other people and so on and we will have more business and more work. This has just positive sides (Enver, 48, K-Albanian from Vushtrri/Vucitrn WG).

The best way to encourage cooperation is to invest, promote development and create new working places (Korab, 47, K-Albanian from Runik/Rudnik WG).

In a similar way K-Serbs from Banje/Bajë expressed their reasons for cooperation:

Cooperation should be based on some interest, nowadays everything is based on interest. . . . You saw our village, we have a lot of fruit and it would be a pity that the community couldn't gain something from it (Milica, 39, K-Serb from Banje/Bajë WG).

We live in this place and we think that a business, which is in the common interest of the community is needed (Nenad, 42, K-Serb from Banje/Bajë WG).

On the other hand, particularly the interviewees from Gojbulja/Gojbulë emphasized the fact that they had no choice but to cooperate, since not cooperating would mean not getting any benefit from the project:

Without Albanians we could not do anything with this project, we are a small community. We have to cooperate with them, otherwise the project cannot be successful (Neda, 39, K-Serb from Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG).

The biggest motivation for cooperation is fighting for the survival of our families. So we are collaborating because of economic reasons (Pavle, 46, K-Serb from Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG).

I will tell you sincerely: the community that I want it survives, is how you saw it. There are few of us, we are not technically equipped and we don't have our own services (mail, telephone, etc.). We understood that regardless of which project we start, we couldn't make it on our own. We cannot sell things that we produce, we cannot get the raw materials, etc. It wouldn't make a difference if we got one million or 45.000 Euros. Therefore, we came to the conclusion that we have to start with a multiethnic project if we want to get somewhere. We can sell the products to Serbia and they can sell them to Macedonia, Albania, etc. . . . These are the reasons why we want to cooperate (Radmilo, 51, K-Serb from Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG).

Apart from the economic incentives, the respondents who were involved in the KCRDP also mentioned some other reasons for cooperation. The members of the two WG (K-Albanian and K-Serb from Vushtrri/Vucitrn and Gojbulja/Gojbulë) that agreed on cooperating in a joint project for the production of construction materials for instance said that they have also been motivated by the wish to create better relations between the two ethnicities. They wanted to be a good example for other people living in the area, so that

there would be less fear of having interethnic relations. Or in other words, they wanted to extend the positive contact experience beyond the contact group to the conflict groups in general.

I would like them to feel secure. If they start working with us, other Serbs will see them and there will be more cooperation and more trust (Enver, 48, K-Albanian from Vushtrri/Vucitrn WG).

The representative of the Albanian group often comes to Gojbulja, and people ask him what he is doing here, and he says that he is my friend. Certainly this has some consequences. . . . We would like to see Serbs and Albanians working together in the same factory and during the same shifts (Radmilo, 51, K-Serb from Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG).

Thereafter, both groups also mentioned some conditions, under which interethnic cooperation would be facilitated. K-Albanians emphasized that K-Serbs should start respecting and accepting Kosovo institutions and the fact that Kosovo is an independent state.

Now my experiences with them are good, but they do not want to recognize our Republic of Kosovo. They have to accept it as a country and respect our laws, so that we can be equal (Dardan, 54, K-Albanian from Runik/Rudnik WG).

On the other side K-Serbs said that they would like to have more equal relationship in with K-Albanians²², and the guarantee that they can invest without fears. Once again they pointed at the freedom of movement, which should be present in order for them to engage in a more demanding relationship with the opposing side.

We need to have the freedom of movement guaranteed so that we can move and work freely and our capital has to be safe. All these are conditions that need to be present in order to have a business and life in general (Nenad, 42, K-Serb from Banje/Bajë WG).

By analyzing the answers I came to the conclusion that economic gain (individual or/and collective) represents the biggest incentive, which motivates both ethnicities to cooperate. Unemployment and economic instability create a state, where people (especially minorities) are 'forced' to work together in order to survive. This was made clear particularly by the members of the Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG, who did not have the conditions to implement their own project, and at the end decided to invest with the K-Albanian group. The reason for this decision was the village's underdeveloped infrastructure, which would make any attempt to implement an individual project unsuccessful. Bad economic situations in delimited areas can therefore present, if properly channelled through interethnic development projects, an opportunity for cooperation.

²² This concern was expressed also by the leader of the Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG in the sub-chapter *Interethnic Development Projects and their Influence on Reconciliation*.

6.6.1 Possible Changes and Collaboration with the NGOs

I also asked the respondents if they would change anything in the KCRDP; the majority said that they were satisfied with the project the way it was planned and implemented. However, there were also some critiques. The first critique was based on the amount of money allocated to the project; according to three respondents, the grants should have been higher in order to have a bigger impact. Some other claimed that the duration of the project should have been shorter; five years was apparently a too long period and the motivation of people who were involved in the project could drastically decrease in this time. The last comment was about the selection process of the members of the working groups. Some respondents claimed that the WG could have been composed of people who had better ideas and more motivation (this would be possible especially in towns with more human capital). With a public tender everything would have been more transparent, the best ideas would have been chosen and the project could have possibly been even more successful.

K-Serb and K-Albanian respondents were in general satisfied with the planning and implementation abilities of PK and Fractal. The cooperation between the NGOs and the beneficiaries was on a very high level, the relationships were fair, and everything went according to the plans. The people involved in the projects felt free of taking their own decisions, expressing their opinions, and were not influenced in any way by the two NGOs (there were no external pressures, blackmails, etc.).

7 Discussion

In this chapter I link the main findings from the *Analysis of the Results* section with the theories presented in the *Theoretical Framework*. This allows me to answer to the main research question; if and how the KCRDP can contribute to the peace process and what motivates K-Albanians and K-Serbs to cooperate. Additionally, in this section my aim is to establish if the theories I reviewed are appropriate and useful for explaining and understanding my particular case.

7.1 Cooperating for Peace

7.1.1 Understanding What Keeps People Divided

In the last two years the Kosovo Community and Development Programme has been an opportunity for contact and interaction between representatives of adjacent K-Serbian and K-Albanian communities²³. In order to understand the real impact of the programme I first had to establish how interethnic relations (of people in the concerned villages/towns) had been before the implementation of the KCRDP and what have been keeping the two ethnic groups divided in this territory. As it has been presented in the *Analysis of the Results*²⁴ chapter, there is still not much interaction between the two groups and emotions and prejudices play a major role in preventing the two sides to cooperate. Even though the situation has ameliorated in the last few years, since for example K-Serbs started shopping in Albanian shops and they collaborate to a certain extent in the cultivation of land, the relationship between the two parties could be regarded, in Galtung's (1969) terms, as a degree of negative peace²⁵. Understanding how the relationships have been changing and how each side perceives the 'Other' is very important, since in this way it is possible to formulate adequate responses that can lead to reconciliation.

As argued by Heraclides (1997, p. 318-22) and Burg (2005, p. 201), the Kosovo conflict could be defined as an intractable conflict²⁶, which means that it is protracted, total (Kriesberg in Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998, p. 761-2; Bar-Tal, 2007, p. 1432-3), and it involves intense emotions (Coleman, 2003, p. 25). However, from the conducted interviews it is possible to assume that before the 1980s and the rise of Milošević to power, the relationships between the two ethnic groups were relatively good; respondents were going to multiethnic

²³ Described in more detail in the *Kosovo Community Reconciliation and Development Programme* chapter.

²⁴ In the sub-chapters: *Pre-War, War and Current Interethnic Relationships* and *Present and Future Interethnic Cooperation*.

²⁵ More on negative peace in the *Kosovo's Post-Conflict Interethnic Relations* sub-chapter.

²⁶ The characteristics of intractable conflicts are described in the *Emotions and Dehumanization in Intractable Conflicts* sub-chapter.

schools, they had friends of different ethnicity, and in general they had good memories from this period. Although the conflict could certainly be regarded as intractable because of the abovementioned reasons, there were apparently certain periods when at least people on the local level partially forgot about past intergroup hatreds. This suggests that in intractable conflicts people's emotions towards the opposing group can temporarily change. But when violence or discrimination along ethnic lines reappears, as I explain in the next paragraphs, several centuries old enmities are immediately remembered and crowds can be more easily manipulated. In such circumstances narratives²⁷, mixing history, and myths become the only reality and people's prejudices exponentially increase.

The last massive escalation of violence between the two groups before, during and after the 1998/9 war, recreated the divisions between the two sides and in Newman's and Paasi's (1998, p. 191) terms, reinforced the identities of 'Us' and 'Other'. From the emotional descriptions²⁸ of violence and abuses that both Serbian and Albanian interviewees directly or indirectly experienced, it is clear that all of them have been to a certain extent traumatized because of the conflict. Yet, in general, K-Albanian respondents were much more positive about the current relationship with K-Serbs, as I will further explain. During the interviews and the informal conversations I had the impression that even K-Albanians who lost a relative by hand of the opposing group, who were for several years imprisoned, forcefully displaced or their houses were burned, made a clear line with the past and were more optimistic about the interethnic relations and the future in general.

However, the K-Serbian participants in the programme were way more insecure and negative about the general situation, and it seemed as their memories, emotions, etc. on the violent conflict were still alive. For this reason, even though both groups used 'frames', as described by Shmueli, Elliot & Kaufman (2007, p. 209), or 'societal beliefs' in Bar-Tal's terms (1998, p. 23), to subjectively simplify the conflict and were in a way prejudiced, K-Serbs were visibly more worried and upset about their life conditions. Their fear and dissatisfaction were caused particularly by the after-war events, since Serbs became the targets of intimidations and post-war violence (Hazrl, 2010, p. 52; Judah, 2008, p. 101-2). Thus, it could be said that while the post 1998/9 lives of K-Albanians ameliorated, – especially in terms of security – the problems for K-Serbs have just started.

I could witness the fear of K-Serbs particularly when I interviewed the Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG during the peak of the 'border crisis'. As it is pointed out by Bar-Tal (2001, p. 603-4), fear is not necessarily connected to a real danger, but instead provoked by emotional memory, which can quickly overcome rationality and logic. Therefore, in my case fear could have been provoked by the fact that small enclaves such as Gojbulja/Gojbulë were in the past easy targets for K-Albanian revenge (Judah, 2008, p. 143). In such circumstances, in order to protect themselves, as stated by Bar-Tal (2001, p. 603-4), people generally

²⁷ Presented in more detail in the *History and Myths on the Conflict* sub-chapter.

²⁸ For a detailed review check the *Pre-War, War and Current Interethnic Relationships* sub-chapter.

become more aggressive, or as I noticed from the interviews and informal debates (with K-Serbs), they can also become upset, apathetic and dissatisfied.

The negative emotions of K-Serbs could have also been provoked by their doubts regarding the status of Kosovo and the unclear relationship with Serbia²⁹. In general, when talking with K-Serbian respondents, I could notice that they were kept in a state of limbo (and constant uncertainty) between accepting and resisting the integration in the new Kosovo state³⁰. Moreover, the high level of unemployment that was also mentioned in the literature (Bardos, 2008, p. 62) additionally contributed to the difficult life conditions of this ethnic minority. Even though K-Albanians had very serious problems with unemployment (Country of Return Information Project, 2009, p. 34-5; Bardos, 2008, p. 63), K-Serbs were clearly in a quite different position because of their isolation and all the previously mentioned problems (post-war retributive harassment, limited freedom of movement, unclear position towards the Kosovo state, difficult economic situation, etc.).

In order to achieve positive results in the peace process, great attention should be given to the proper understanding of emotions and consequent prejudices, which have been dividing people. It is important to take into account the fact that not both groups necessarily share the same emotions, because their experiences might greatly differ. For this reason reconciliation programmes should be 'tailored' in a way that can fit both sides. Especially emotions of K-Serbs should be respected and taken much more seriously into consideration, because they represent the weak, unsatisfied and distrustful part, which is more afraid of intergroup contact.

7.1.2 Contact as an Opportunity

As part of the KCRDP, K-Albanians and K-Serbs have had the possibility to meet at least on a monthly basis for a period of almost two years and had a common training in Pristina³¹. However, at this point the question arises on whether such intergroup contact, as argued by Amir (1969) and Pettigrew (2008), has had an influence on the shaping of more positive or more negative relationships between ethnic groups. Allport (in Krochick & Jost, 2011, p. 158; in Pettigrew, 1998, p. 66) asserts that four conditions³² have to be met for intergroup contact to guarantee positive results, as I will further explain.

First, parties should have equal status 'within the situation' and 'coming into the situation': in the case of the KCRDP this is guaranteed by the fact that the programme is

²⁹ In more detail in the *Two Real Problems: Legal Status and Unemployment* sub-chapter.

³⁰ More about the uncertainty of K-Serbs in the KCRDP in the *Pre-War, War and Current Interethnic Relationships* sub-chapter.

³¹ Presented in more detail in the *Kosovo Community Reconciliation and Development Programme* chapter.

³² The conditions are explained in greater detail in the sub-chapter *Contact as a Precondition for Decategorization and Recategorization*.

implemented by two different NGOs (one from Kosovo and one from Serbia), which represent each ethnic group (KCRDP, 2011b) and make sure that both sides have equal rights. Moreover, during the focus groups meetings both languages were equally used and great attention was given to the respect of each other's points of views. A good example of this was visible also during an interethnic meeting, which was held in the Vushtrri/Vucitrn municipality when I was asked to take pictures of the event for the webpage. In this occasion both (K-Serbian and K-Albanian) programme managers stressed that I had to be careful not to include in the photo the portrait of a K-Albanian hero, since for Serbs he was a terrorist. This was just a detail, but clearly a very important one to guarantee equality and respect between the two sides within the situation. In addition, the parties also had equal status 'coming into the situation' since they had very similar occupations (most of them in the public sector)³³. Secondly, society and institutions should support the contact between disputants in order to make it socially acceptable. The interethnic cooperation in the KCRDP has been accepted by K-Albanian and K-Serbian communities particularly because it has been part of a programme of two relatively well-known NGOs (and not spontaneous cooperation, which is still quite undesired³⁴) and because of the opportunity for economic development. Moreover, since the meetings I could take part in were all held in public places (municipality, pubs, etc. in the project locations) and they certainly did not go unnoticed by people living in the area, I assume that nobody was afraid or ashamed of working on the project. Another condition mentioned by Pettigrew (1998, p. 76) is the possibility of the members from the two groups to become friends. This condition was also met, since some of the programme participants (of different ethnicity) developed friendly relationships, as I could observe by myself and which was explicitly mentioned in the interviews. Though, the programme participants from the WGs implementing individual (mono-ethnic) projects had fewer possibilities to become friends than the WGs implementing the joint (interethnic) project, because they were meeting less frequently. Last but not least, the parties have to strive for a common goal as it happened in the case of the joint development project implemented by Vushtrri/Vucitrn and Gojbulja/Gojbulë WGs. However, the WGs who decided to realize individual mono-ethnic projects did not entirely met this condition, since apart from the interethnic meetings they decided to implement their own development projects. All in all, almost all conditions have been met (apart from the last one, which has been just partially met) in the KCRDP, to guarantee a decrease of intergroup prejudice.

³³ Visible from the table in the *Characteristics of Respondents* sub-chapter.

³⁴ More in the *Present and Future Interethnic Cooperation* sub-chapter.

	Joint (Interethnic) Project		Individual (Mono-ethnic) Project	
	Vushtrri/Vucitrn	Gojbulja/Gojbulë	Runik/Rudnik	Banje/Bajë
Equal Status (within and coming into the situation)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Societal Acceptability	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Possibility of developing friendly relationships	Yes	Yes	Yes (limited)	Yes (limited)
Common Goal	Yes	Yes	No	No

Table 2: Contact theory conditions in the KCRDP.

If intergroup contact leads to an opportunity for cooperation based on a mutual interest, it can according to several authors (Kelman, 2008, p. 23; Nadler & Shnabel, 2008, p. 41-3; Nadler, Malloy & Fisher, 2008, p. 6) increase intergroup trust, which is according to Kelman (2005, p. 640-1) and Borris & Diehl (in Hewstone et al. 2008, p. 216) necessary for long-term peace. In my study, after having analysed the data collected with the interviews and participant observation, I came to the conclusion that interethnic cooperation in the KCRDP has (at least in the short-term) apparently increased trust between programme participants. By spending time together and having regular meetings the two sides got the chance to get to know each other and as a result some even developed friendly relations. Thus, the interaction between the two ethnic groups certainly had a positive influence on the peace process.

Though, by joining their funds and establishing an interethnic factory for the production of construction materials, the Vushtrri/Vucitrn and Gojbulja/Gojbulë WGs have the chance to maximise the possible positive effects of interaction, as well as to spoil the process of reconciliation. As stated by K-Serbian interviewees, their biggest fear is that K-Albanians would not stick to the agreement. Therefore, as similarly argued by Tajfel (1982, p. 28), the success of the programme depends on the cooperation experience at the very end, since there still exists the potential risk of one party 'ruining' the interaction. For this reason it is better that the NGOs planning and implementing the KCRDP have not pressured the two other working groups to invest their funds together. This is a very delicate and precarious step, which can in some cases (if one of the parties does not stick to the agreement) bring more negative than positive results to the peace process. However, on the other side, by avoiding a more intense cooperation the two WGs miss the chance to experience the possible positive effects of the contact. With a figure below I present the relation between the level of cooperation and the possible extreme outcomes of the interaction. The higher is the level of cooperation the higher are the chances that the contact experience brings very positive or very negative results for the peace process and *vice versa* (less cooperation means also less risk).

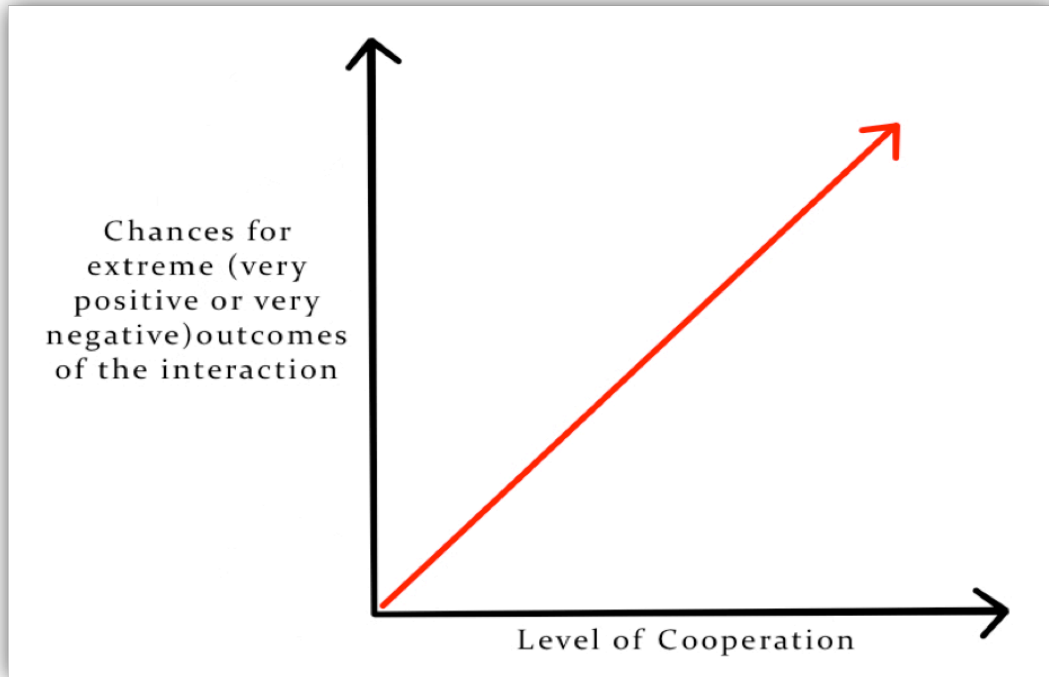


Figure 11: Relation between the level of cooperation and the possible extreme outcomes of the interaction.

Pettigrew (1998, p. 66-67) states that intergroup cooperation for the achievement of common goals is also a way for reducing biases between parties involved in the conflict. In the KCRDP prejudices such as the belief that the other side (correspondingly K-Albanians and K-Serbs) is very changeable and influenced and pushed not to collaborate (particularly when the political situation is tenser), represents a real obstacle in the peace process³⁵. According to the results of my field research interethnic cooperation may have reduced prejudices and increased trust between people directly involved in the interaction, because they had no problems collaborating with each other. However, it certainly did not reduce biases and increase trust towards the opposing group in general (people who were not involved in the interaction). This was particularly evident from the participant observation and interviews with K-Serbs during the 'border crisis'. Moreover, I would like to point out the possibility of K-Serbs and K-Albanians involved in the KCRDP, of being relatively more unprejudiced than the general population because of previous contact experiences with the other side (with other projects, or because they have been working in Kosovo institutions, or in any other way). Nevertheless, the respondents claimed³⁶ that the contact experience in the context of the KCRDP has been helpful for reconciliation and has also indirectly influenced other people who have been observing this interaction or who will be later on involved in the development projects.

³⁵ More in the sub-chapter *Obstacles to Interethnic Cooperation*.

³⁶ For more details see the *Interethnic Development Projects and their Influence on Reconciliation* sub-chapter.

When members of opposing groups establish intergroup contact and start cooperating in order to achieve common (instrumental) goals, two approaches³⁷ can be used to decrease biases: decategorization and recategorization. In the KCRDP neither approach has been explicitly used, since it was not the aim of the project to strip individuals of their own identity with decategorization (Gaertner et al., 1993; Dovidio et al., 2008) or to create a new identity not based on ethnicity with recategorization (Krochik & Jost, 2011, p. 159; Dovidio et al., 2008). However, in the programme the participants still worked divided in ethnic groups, but a common material interest motivated them to cooperate. So, their new identity could have changed from non-cooperative K-Albanians/K-Serbs to partially (just for business) cooperative K-Albanians/K-Serbs.

In conclusion, the interaction and cooperation between K-Albanians and K-Serbs promoted by the KCRDP has certainly contributed to the peace process. Especially the two WGs, which decided to invest their funds together and directly cooperate in order to achieve a common instrumental goal, met all Allport's (in Krochick & Jost, 2011, p. 158; in Pettigrew, 1998, p. 66) basic conditions necessary for intergroup contact to guarantee positive results. This means that if all parties respect the agreement the interaction in the programme will most probably lead to positive results in the long run (though, additional research is necessary to study the long-term effects of the KCRDP). The interaction in the joint project can bring more positive results but it is also more risky, since if a group does not stick to the agreement this reinforces prejudices and distrust. Furthermore, the interaction between the two opposing sides has increased intergroup trust and reduced prejudices, and according to the interviewees, the programme has been helpful for reconciliation (but as already mentioned, a lot depends on how the contact experience will be at the end of the programme). Therefore, in light of my field research and collected data I claim that the theories presented above have been useful in understanding and clarifying my case study, and that this case study can validate the employed theories.

7.2 Interest Uniting People

In the theoretical chapter I have reviewed many theories (Kelman's, 2008, p. 23; Nadler and Shnabel, 2008, p. 41-3; Pettigrew, 1998, p. 66-67; Nadler, Malloy & Fisher, 2008, p. 6), which argue that cooperation aimed at achieving common instrumental goals has a positive influence on the peace process. Thereafter, in order to prove their validity and better understand my case I have analysed (in the previous section) how the interaction in the KCRDP has increased interethnic trust and reduced prejudices between K-Albanian and K-Serbian programme participants. I also came to the conclusion that at this stage of the programme implementation it is not yet possible to establish whether interethnic cooperation will have a long-term effect on reconciliation. However, it is possible to

³⁷ More on decategorization and recategorization in the *Contact as a Precondition for Decategorization or Recategorization* sub-chapter.

determine which were the incentives that motivated K-Serbs and K-Albanians to take part in the interaction. In this sub-chapter I focus on the 'instrumental goals', which stimulated the two sides to collaborate, since it is important to establish which is the best way to promote contact and cooperation, especially if we assume that the results of the interaction will be positive also in the long-term.

Already during the time of Yugoslavia Kosovo was the least economically developed part of the confederation (Pula 2004, p. 801) and the situation also did not ameliorate in the post-war period. This is because conflicts drastically reduce the ability of economies to absorb labour, which has an impact on the general increase of unemployment in society (Dunne, 2003, p. 36). Thus, as a consequence of the already neglected economy and the conflict, modern day Kosovo has a very high level of unemployment (Country of Return Information Project, 2009, p. 34-5; Bardos, 2008, p. 63), which constrains people's lives and represents a threat to peace³⁸. According to Krishnamurty (2003, p. 56) and Specht (2003, p. 74-75) not finding an adequate source of income, especially for those who were directly or indirectly dependent on conflict related activities, can provoke new outbreaks of violence. In addition, as stated by Junne & Verkoren (2005a p. 2), although economic development itself is no guarantee against violent conflict, there is an apparent correlation between the two. Therefore, the high level of unemployment and the stagnant economy in Kosovo represent a real risk, which could seriously endanger the peace process.

However, from a different viewpoint, the bad economic situation and the high unemployment rate in Kosovo can – with the right approach – also become an opportunity for peace. Namely, in these circumstances economic benefits can motivate people to cooperate with the opposing ethnic group. The answers of the K-Albanians and K-Serbs interviewees are a proof of that, since nowadays they only interact because of some mutual economic interest³⁹ (trade, agreements for the cultivation of land, etc.). Moreover, in the KCRDP the main incentive for cooperation, which was convincingly pointed to me by all respondents, was also (individual or collective) economic gain⁴⁰. Even though some mentioned the 'need for jobs' and some others 'economic development' in general, they all agreed that economic incentives motivated them to take part in the programme.

³⁸ More about the correlation between unemployment and violent conflict in the *No Peace Without Employment* sub-chapter.

³⁹ In more detail in the sub-chapter: *Present and Future Interethnic Cooperation*.

⁴⁰ Details in the *Incentives and Conditions for Interethnic Collaboration* sub-chapter.

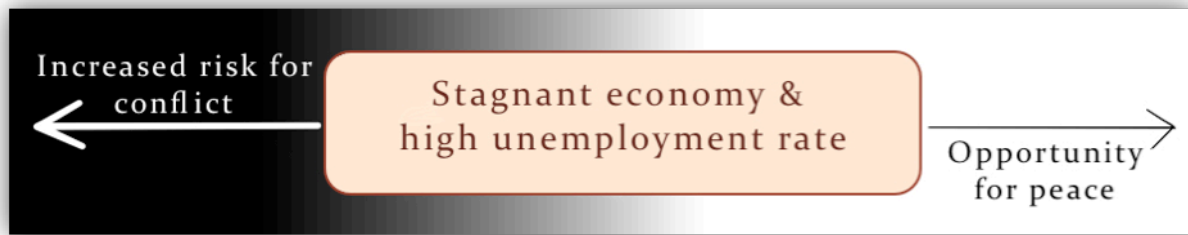


Figure 12: Possible effects of the stagnant economy and high unemployment rate.

Especially for the Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG, which at the end decided to invest with the K-Albanian working group, the main reason for collaboration has been the economic ‘isolation’ and underdeveloped infrastructure of the village⁴¹. The K-Serbs living in this village did not reach the basic conditions, which would allow them to implement their own project, and for this reason they had no other choice but to collaborate with the opposing side. On the basis of the interviews and the participant observation I claim that they would prefer to implement their own project and not share their funds with other working groups if there was an appropriate alternative. The other K-Serbian WG (Banje/Bajë) had the opportunity to invest with the Albanian Runik/Rudnik WG, but they opted for the implementation of a mono-ethnic development project (the Rakia distillery), which just partially allows the two parties to get in contact (by buying fruits from neighbouring Albanian farmers). Although I cannot speculate on whether the lack of trust was the reason why the Banje/Bajë WG decided to invest their funds in this way, I state that the bad economic conditions were the cause for the K-Serbian Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG to cooperate with the K-Albanian Vushtrri/Vucitrn WG. Therefore, weak economic situation make economic incentives for cooperation even more appealing, since in some cases people will have no other choice than to work with the opposing group. This would probably not happen if the economic situation in general was better, since especially the K-Serbian (more distrustful) side would most likely opt for the implementation of an individual mono-ethnic development project. In this case the interaction between the two sides and possible positive effects on the peace process would be much more limited.

In post-conflict environments with a stagnant economy (such as Kosovo) it is thus relatively simple to find an instrumental goal, which can be according to several authors (Kelman’s, 2008, p. 23; Nadler and Shnabel, 2008, p. 41-3; Pettigrew, 1998, p. 66-67; Nadler, Malloy & Fisher, 2008, p. 6) used to bring the two parties closer and promote interaction with positive effects on the peace process. Therefore, programmes such as the KCRDP offer to the two sides the right ‘levers’ to come closer, or with Kelman’s (2008) words, allow “a strategic change in the relationship between the parties, expressed in the terms of a pragmatic partnership and the development of a degree of working trust” (p. 23). Even though the outcome of this process is not yet reconciliation as defined by Rouhanna (2011, p. 295; 2004, p. 175) or Kelman (2008, p. 24), and is different from the apology-forgiveness

⁴¹ Presented in more detail in the sub-chapter *Incentives and Conditions for Interethnic Collaboration*.

cycle of socio-emotional reconciliation, it can still represent (if the interaction is successful until the end) a small but important step towards peace.

However, projects (such as the KCRDP), which try to motivate the two opposing sides to cooperate with economic incentives, should be implemented on a mass scale in order to outweigh the risks that high unemployment creates in a post-conflict society. In other words, although in Kosovo's circumstances economic benefits can become the reason why people decide to cooperate with the opposing ethnic group, it is extremely important to guarantee the 'channels' (with KCRDP like projects), which actually give people the possibility to earn the minimum income needed for subsistence. Otherwise, as already mentioned, the stagnant economy and high level of unemployment can have very negative effects on the peace process. Though, since nowadays aid is more supply than demand driven, as argued by Chesterman (2004) and Woodward (2002), it is debateable whether donors who usually set priorities on investments in post-conflict societies would ever massively promote programmes such as the KCRDP. Literally 'paying' people to cooperate and involve the local community to such an extent is not a realistic option as long as aid is structured as it currently is.

In conclusion, in this sub-chapter I presented the main incentive, which has motivated people from different ethnic groups involved in the KCRDP to cooperate. I have argued that since Kosovo is in a very weak economic situation and the unemployment rate is generally very high, economic incentives for cooperation have been a very good way to motivate K-Serbs and K-Albanians to participate in the programme. Particularly the (K-Serbian) Gojbulja/Gojbulë WG, which decided to invest with the (K-Albanian) Vushtrri/Vucitrn WG, had according to the data collected with my field research no other choice than cooperating, since an individual mono-ethnic project would not be economically sustainable. Therefore, in this case bad economic conditions can motivate people to cooperate, but it is important to guarantee the right channels for collaboration (projects such is the KCRDP). Otherwise the stagnant economy and high unemployment rate can cause further instability and new outbreaks of violence. However, since aid to post-conflict zones is more supply than demand driven this kind of projects will very difficulty become a 'main stream' solution, because they have to involve the local community and be very locally owned processes.

7.3 Helping the Local Community?

7.3.1 The KCRDP: A Locally Owned Process?

Various authors (Turner, 2006, p. 472-3; Pouligny, 2005, p. 498-502) argue that the local community should be more included in peacebuilding processes⁴². Even though this is not of central importance in my study, comprehending to what extent the local community is part of the process is crucial to see how sustainable the programme actually is. By analyzing the KCRDP I had the opportunity to understand to what degree the programme really involves the local population in its mechanisms, how it manages to reach the most marginalized members of the society and how it cooperates with the government.

As stated by O'Brien (2007, p. 119), community approaches to development facilitate local leadership by encouraging the participation of people from different social, cultural and political backgrounds; the KCRDP also emphasizes a balanced representation of women and minorities (K-Serbs). However, these kinds of projects which try to include the local community have difficulties targeting the poor, because in post-conflict environments it is hard to ensure that funds reach the most unprivileged members (especially as elites dominate this process) (Mansuri & Rao, 2004, p. 30; Strand et al. 2003, p. 16-7). In the KCRDP the WGs were composed of the representatives of local communities (and certainly part of the elite) and at the time of my field research (since the projects were at the beginning of the implementation phase), it was still unclear to what extent the programme would include the most marginalized people. This could be an interesting starting point for further research.

Moreover, in the KCRDP a lot of emphasis has been given to the inclusion of Kosovo institutions in the programme, since as argued by Strand et al. (2003, p. 4-6) it is very important to involve and not bypass the government. As some of the members of the WG were employees in the municipality there was a constant flow of information between the civil society and state institutions. Therefore, the NGOs implementing the programme did not become service providers instead of the government, but with the government. As a result, I agree with Lederach (in Haider, 2009, p. 4) who stated that community approaches to development in post-conflict environments can be particularly useful to re-connect states with their citizens.

Another fact, which can also help us evaluate to what extent the KCRDP is a locally owned process, is that the two implementing NGOs are locally based organizations with native employees. Although PK and Fractal are still very much outside-oriented NGOs, since they compete almost exclusively for foreign funds (PK, 2012; Fractal, 2012), their projects are clearly community oriented. Therefore, even though the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

⁴² More in the *Involving the Local Community* sub-chapter.

is financing the programme, the KCRDP is planned and implemented with local knowledge and human resources, and in strict contact with the local community.

Finally, despite the fact that the KCRDP has been planned and implemented by locals, as mentioned above, it is still unclear at this stage to what extent the programme will manage to target the most marginalized members of the society. However, the programme seems useful to re-connect the state with their citizens, because it includes local institutions in the implementation. All in all, although no major research was done on this matter, the KCRDP is according to the reviewed theories a relatively sustainable locally owned programme. Nonetheless, as I explain in the next sub-chapter, peacebuilding efforts targeting exclusively the local population are according to this case study only of limited importance in the peace process.

7.3.2 Grass-Root Cooperation is Not Enough

Although it was not my primary intention to include this section in the thesis, my stay in Kosovo and the events that shook the country (with the 'border crisis') reminded me of how fragile peace is and enabled me to observe my case study from a different perspective. The persons that I interviewed during the peak of interethnic tension were visibly upset and more hostile towards the other ethnic group than usual. In these circumstances all the efforts of the KCRDP to unite the conflicting parties were temporarily 'erased' and people started seeing the opposing side in a much more emotional way. In those days especially K-Serbs were under pressure as their security could have been under threat because of the escalation of violence. As a result I realized that years of efforts to promote cooperation are a 'risky investment', since any (unpredictable) outbreak of violence between the two ethnic groups can easily spoil the peace process.

As stated by Strand et al. (2003, p. 4-6), experiences from community driven development projects promoted by the World Bank and implemented in various post-conflict countries show, that cooperation and trust on the local level needs to be linked to a similar process on the national level in order to make a change. This was very evident also in my case, since even if people of opposing groups had the opportunity to interact with each other, the crisis negatively influenced the progress. Therefore, in order to bring the desired results, grass-root cooperation and peacebuilding must be linked to similar processes on other (not only local) levels.

8 Conclusion

The Kosovo conflict has endured for many generations and the repetitive cycles of revenge have become almost a routine with dramatic consequences for the society. This is because Kosovo had and still has an enormous symbolic value for both parties involved in the conflict. Myths and narratives have justified the use of violence towards the 'Other', the dehumanized and faceless enemy. The conflict has become part of the reality in people's everyday lives and as such it provokes intense emotions, which keep K-Albanians and K-Serbs divided. Consequently, the lack of contact between ethnic groups has drastically reduced the chances for the two sides to start a relationship necessary for reconciliation. Therefore, despite the relatively low level of violence, the society is extremely polarized and there are little or no signs of any soon amelioration of the situation.

As part of my study I conducted field research in Kosovo in order to explore the Kosovo Community Reconciliation and Development Programme (a project implemented by a Serbian and a K-Albanian NGO), which tries to promote interethnic cooperation and economic development on the local level. The central research question of this study was: if and how the KCRDP can contribute to the peace process and what motivates K-Albanians and K-Serbs to cooperate. Special attention was given to the instrumental use of development as a unifying factor, which theoretically promotes interaction between the two sides involved in the conflict.

I came to the conclusion that at least at the time of my fieldwork the interethnic cooperation based on a mutual interest promoted by the KCRDP has, as several theories argue (Kelman, 2008, p. 23; Nadler & Shnabel, 2008, p. 41-3; Nadler, Malloy & Fisher, 2008, p. 6), increased intergroup trust, which is as stated by Kelman (2005, p. 640-1) and Borris & Diehl (in Hewstone et al. 2008, p. 216) necessary for long-term peace. Moreover, this interaction has, as suggested by Pettigrew (1998, p. 66-67), reduced prejudices towards the opposing ethnic group. This is certainly a major success, since according to the data I collected the main obstacle which prevents the two sides to reconcile are prejudices. However, the first key observation is that although interethnic cooperation may have increased trust and reduced prejudices between people directly involved in the interaction, I cannot claim that the same change also happened towards the opposing group in general (towards people of different ethnicity who are not involved in the KCRDP). This was particularly evident from the participant observation and interviews with K-Serbs during the 'border crisis'. In those circumstances they were still very much afraid of having contact with K-Albanians. The second and the last observation is that the two working groups, which decided to invest their funds together and directly cooperate in order to achieve a common instrumental goal, have apparently much more at stake. If the contact experience is positive until the very end of the cooperation, this will contribute to the amelioration of interethnic relationships. But if one group does not stick to the agreement, it will reinforce intergroup prejudices and distrust. This will further have very negative

consequences for the peace process, especially if K-Serbs are the 'victims' since apparently they are already more distrustful and more afraid of interethnic contact.

Another finding of this research project is that economic incentives were the main motivation for people from the two sides to collaborate in the KCRDP. As I argued in the previous sections, Kosovo has a stagnant economy with a very high unemployment rate, thus, it might come as no surprise that material benefits provided by the programme persuaded the two ethnicities to start with the interaction. This was also noticeable from the statements of K-Serbian programme participants who decided to invest with the K-Albanian WG because they 'had no other choice', or in other words, they were aware of the fact that an individual mono-ethnic project would not be economically sustainable in a relatively isolated village (enclave) with no infrastructure. Therefore, even though the bad economic situation in Kosovo represents a real risk for further instability and new outbreaks of violence, the appropriate channels (such as the KCRDP) can motivate people from opposing sides to cooperate.

Moreover, local knowledge, know-how and human resources can be very effective and successful in bridging divided communities. However, to bring the desired results, these grass-root initiatives have to be integrated into a larger strategy, which also includes processes on other (not exclusively local) levels. This was especially visible with the escalation of violence during the 'border crisis' at the time of my fieldwork in Kosovo, since in this period people involved in the programme (particularly K-Serbs) tried to avoid any contact with the opposing ethnic group and became much more distrustful than usual. Therefore, the impact of this kind of local-level cooperation promoted by the KCRDP is visibly diminished if interethnic incidents are still occurring or if there are no political efforts for reconciliation.

Finally, I believe that this research project contributes to the creation of knowledge in this multidisciplinary field of study, with the exploration and analysis of a specific case study and several related theories. Understanding if and how projects such as the KCRDP influence the peace process on the local level and what motivates the two opposing sides to cooperate, is crucial for future research in this area. Even though every conflict is a *sui generis* phenomenon, which means that solutions that are successful in the case of Kosovo conflict may be more difficult to apply on other conflicts, every new idea can be useful. Especially very simple but at the same time creative and innovative 'formulas', which can be relatively easy to apply on the grass-root level in order to simultaneously promote reconciliation between communities and economic development, are an achievement that can benefit post-conflict societies.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Zubin Potok/Zubin Potoku Project

Zubin Potok/Zubin Potoku is located in a predominantly K-Serb municipality with a total population of approximately 14,900. In the municipality there are 800 K-Albanians who are concentrated in the village of Çabër/Cabra. Moreover, in the area there are about 3,000 K-Serb IDPs and 220 refugees from Croatia. The main difficulties are represented by the lack of investment, relative isolation and irregular job opportunities (OSCE, 2010b). Zubin Potok/Zubin Potoku is also, because of its ethnic composition and the general opposition towards Kosovo's secession from Serbia, one the hotspots in the region (KCRDP, 2010a). The situation in this area has been very tense in the last crisis (the 'border crisis') and there were some clashes between the representatives of the international forces and the local population who built barricades on the main roads; this was a measure, which was taken by local K-Serbs to counter the decision by the Kosovo government to retake control of two border crossings with Serbia (Barlovac, Kosanovic & Osmani, 2011). Because of the volatile security situation in this area I could not visit the WG and conduct all the interviews as it has been first planned.

In the beginning there was some distrust in the WG towards Fractal and PK, since there have previously been some attempts of NGO trying to implement their projects, but with no success. Moreover, some NGOs have in the past pressured the K-Serbian local population to accept Kosovo as an independent country. Therefore, the first step of the KCRDP was to reassure and convince the members of the WG that this project would be implemented successfully and with no external pressures (Krtinič & Milovanović, 2010b)

The main idea of the Zubin Potok/Zubin Potoku working group was to develop a 'carp fish farm', since in the area there are many pits on the banks of the Ibar River, which would be suitable for this activity with some investment. Among others, also the option of merging the funds with the Çabër/Cabra WG (if the benefits would be mutual) was seriously considered (KCRDP, 2010b; Hajrizi, 2010; Krtinič & Milovanović, 2010b). However, at the end the Zubin Potok/Zubin Potok WG, with the assistance of the economic advisor, decided to invest in carp fish farming. The main benefit of this project is that in eight years there will be eight people employed (Hajrizi, 2010) and according to the programme managers some of the employees will be K-Albanians.

Appendix 2: Çabër/Cabra Project

Çabër/Cabra is a predominantly K-Albanian village with around 800 inhabitants within the Zubin Potok/Zubin Potoku municipality. The vast majority of the municipality population is K-Serb. The main economic activity is agriculture (OSCE, 2010b).

During the first months of the project the cooperation between the Çabër/Cabra working group and the two NGOs was on a very good level and comparable to other locations. The Çabër/Cabra WG expressed its willingness to join the funds and co-invest with the (K-Serbian) Zubin Potok/Zubin Potoku WG. However, in November 2010 the programme manager observed that the motivation drastically decreased and the relationships in the WG were very tense because of some internal disputes. According to the report, the WG members were passive in generating ideas for the project and a tendency for nepotism and a possible misuse of funds was noticed (KCRDP, 2010a). In comparison with other WGs, the Çabër/Cabra WG had a lot of difficulties in finding an idea, which would be economically sustainable and would bring benefits to the whole community (not just to few individuals) (Gashi, 2011). For this reasons the external economic expert proposed an alternative project, which would involve the production and packing of a typical pudding. This project could employ between six and nine individuals (mostly from the village) (KCRDP, 2010b; Hajrizi, 2010), but due some internal disagreements it was stopped in the period when I was doing my research project in Kosovo.

However, in October 2011 after bypassing some of the most critical members of the WG, it was possible to continue with the project. The previous idea (about the production and packing of pudding) was abandoned and a different plan was drafted. The programme managers found two persons from the village that were willing to invest some of their funds in order to open a cattle farm. The establishment will most likely employ four people and the families on social assistance will get meat and milk produced in the farm at no cost (KCRDP, 2011c).