*Serb perspectives on Decentralization and Local Governance in Kosovo: towards integration or exclusion of the Serb community in the Republic of Kosovo?*

**Tessa Bakx**

**3245128**

**Utrecht University**

**30 July 2012**

**A Thesis submitted to**

**the Board of Examiners**

**in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of**

**Master of Arts in Conflict Studies & Human Rights**

Supervisor:                           Prof. Dr. Ir. Georg Frerks
Date of submission:                   30th of July 2012
Programme trajectory followed:        Internship of 10-12 weeks (15 ECTS)
                                      and Research & Thesis Writing (15 ECTS)
Word Count:                           15.752

**TABLE OF CONTENS**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank:

Norbert, for making me part of the LOGOS team in the first place

And my LOGOS colleagues, for making me feel part of that team

Without you all I would have never gained and learned so much out of my Kosovo experience

Pascal, for guiding me through my internship

And for always making the time to give me advice on both the thesis and LOGOS work

Alexsandra, Alexsandar, Danica, Nikola and Zoran, for guiding me around in the world of the Serbs

Without you I would have never have been able to collect such valuable data

Georg, for guiding me in the process of thesis writing

Because what would a student be without a supervisor

Mam, for supporting me in the somewhat rough times

For always answering my calls, giving me advice and reading through my writings

My classmates, for making all those hours in the library much more pleasant

Without your company I think I would have gone mad

My family and friends, both here and in Kosovo, for the never-ending support

And because life is not all about thesis writing

Thijs, for not being there and still always being here with me

**AUTHORS NOTE**

There is much confusion about the use of the words ''Serb'' and ''Serbian''. The former is used to describe the people from the Serb ethnic group, and the latter is used to describe either a native or inhabitant of the current Republic of Serbia, or inhabitant of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. ''Serbian'' is also used to refer to the Serbo-Croatian language spoken by Serbs. Within this thesis the words ''Serb'' and ''Serbian'' will be used accordingly.

Another note I want to make is on the use of Kosovar place names. Both Albanian and Serbian are recognized as official languages in the Republic of Kosovo, and therefore will always use both the Albanian and Serbian name when I refer to a place in Kosovo. The first out of the two forms is always in the language of the majority group in that area. The second time I refer to a same city or municipality, I will only use the most commonly used form, thus the place name in the majority language.

**SUMMARY**

The newborn Republic of Kosovo has yet to find her sustainable peace. While the year 2009 showed a growing willingness of Serb community below the river Ibar to participate within the institutions of the republic, something they strongly refused to do before. It is questioned what this means for the future of Kosovo. This research aims to gain a better insight into the perspectives of the Serbs in South-Eastern Kosovo on the creation of Serb majority municipalities, and the functionality and legitimacy of these newly established units of local self-governance. I have tried to answer the question *if the current decentralization measures can entrench Serb integration, and can foster sustainable peace within the Republic of Kosovo.*

This research demonstrates that the current decentralization measures have had positive effects on Kosovo's state- and peace-building process. We have heard the voices of the Serb community and determine groups of people with negativist, pragmatic and positivist attitudes towards the Kosovo state, and different perspectives towards their future within the Republic of Kosovo. Overall we can conclude that the newly established Serb majority municipalities are received as positive by the Serb population in Kosovo. When it comes to the functionality of the new municipalities, we see that the municipalities are able to provide to their citizens a share of the services that are needed. Serb citizens have currently accepted the authority of the Kosovo municipalities, which has contributed to an increase in the legitimacy of the state on the local level. It is recognized that the new municipalities have more abilities to help the Serb community, but unfortunately not in all municipalities are these capabilities used to their full potential. The effect of decentralization on the challenge of Serb integration is more difficult to assess. We conclude that it has worked in two directions: it has been successful in inclusion of the Serb community into the local governance structures of the republic, but we have not observed Serb integration into the bigger Kosovar society. What I can conclude is that sustainable peace has not been reached in Kosovo at the moment. In order to reach such a situation of positive  peace, a shift in Serb attitudes towards the Kosovo state and their own future within this state must be acquired. With the eyes on the future, we must work to create more functionality and thereby legitimacy of the Serb majority municipalities. The topics of unemployment, the creation of economic opportunities, education, corruption, and inclusion of the Serb parallel structures into the state structures of Kosovo need to be addressed as well. Then we can only wait until the time will do its work.

**ABBREVIATIONS**

| | |
|---|---|
| CSP | Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement |
| EU | European Union |
| EULEX | European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo |
| FRY | Federal Republic of Yugoslavia |
| ICO | International Civilian Office |
| ICR | International Civilian Representative |
| ISG | International Steering Group |
| KIPRED | Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development |
| LOGOS | Swiss - Kosovo Local Governance and Decentralization Support project |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe |
| RKS | Republic of Kosovo |
| RS | Republic of Serbia |
| SDC | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation |
| SFRY | Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia |
| SRSG | Special Representative of the Secretary General |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNMIK | United Nations Mission in Kosovo |
| UNSC | United Nations Security Council |

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. The ''country'' Kosovo

Located in the heart of the Balkans, we find the political entity called the Republic of Kosovo (RKS). A much disputed area, which has experienced her share of unrest and violent conflict.  However, when the majority Albanian population officially declared independence in the beginning of 2008, the long contested territory finally seemed to have found the path towards enduring peace.

As with any territory, the history of Kosovo is strongly connected to the current status of the ''country.'' After years of reasonably carefree autonomy under the rule of Joseph Tito[1] within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), it underwent years of crisis under the rule of Serbian president Slobodan Milošević. As a result of the conflict in the late nineties, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), Kosovo came to be under international transitional administration by the United Nations (UNMIK) (LOGOS 2012: 6). Since that time, 1999, many international players have walked the streets of Kosovo: the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union (EU) through their Rule of Law Mission (EULEX), and the International Civilian Office (ICO). When the Kosovo Assembly unanimously adopted the declaration of independence on the 17th of February 2008 the road towards complete self-rule of a territory of which the status remains disputed to date,  had only just began. Although the country declared its independence, Kosovo is still monitored by the same international community. It is exactly as Danilo Mandic puts it (2012: 93, emphasis added): *''Kosovo's unilateral independence was not the end but the beginning of some of the society's central problems''.*

At the core of the 1999 conflict lies the dispute between two ethnic groups residing in the territory: the Kosovo Serbs and the Kosovo Albanians. The Kosovo Albanians make up 92 per cent of the inhabitants of Kosovo, while the Serbs only count for about 4 per cent of the population.[2] The Albanians have always fought for autonomy and eventually an independent Kosovo, and the Serbs on the other hand see Kosovo as a province of the Republic of Serbia (RS). Serbs and Albanians have contrasting ideas of the history of the area, and therefore aspire a different future. It is a fact that

---

[1] Tito has been president of the SFRY from 1953 until his death in 1980
[2] Nowadays Kosovo has  approximately 2 million inhabitants. Since 1981 no accurate census has been conducted in Kosovo, so exact population statistics are not available. According to an estimation of the Kosovo government the current population is comprised of about 92% ethnic Albanians, 4% ethnic Serbs, and the remaining 2% are other minority groups such as Roma, Gorani, Bosniaks, Ashkali, Egyptians and Turks.
At the moment of writing the preliminary results of the 2011 population census  are available, but no conclusions are presented about the ethnic composition of the country.

both ethnicities share a long history with the territory, but the overall number of Serbs residing in Kosovo diminished over the past decades. The amount of Albanians within the boundaries of Kosovo has only increased. While the majority of Albanians seemed to have gained what they wanted, independence, the Serbs who have long ruled the territory have lost the battle.

Kosovo's status officially remains unclear, but the situation on the ground tells us that the Kosovo acts as an independent country and never again will be ruled by Belgrade. Currently, 91 United Nations (UN) member states, including twenty-two out of the twenty-seven EU members have formally recognized the independence of Kosovo, whereas former parent-state Serbia and other major players Russia and China have not[3]. In the eyes of the Kosovar Albanians and their international supporters independence is the one and only solution for the Kosovo problem, but without the support of all minorities living in the territory, and without the approval and cooperation of Serbia and its protector Russia, it proves to be difficult to reach effective statehood.

Whether the Serbs like it or not, the time of supervised independence will soon come to an end. Over the course of 2012 there were many indicators that the end of supervision was not far off, but this was finally confirmed by the International Civilian Representative (ICR) Pieter Feith[4] on the 2nd of July. Kosovar Albanians could take a breathe again: independence would be granted to Kosovo in the fall of that same year. The International Steering Group (ISG), the group of twenty-five states who has been overseeing the country since its independence in 2008, concluded that Kosovo had successfully implemented the preconditions for full independence. At the same time the main supervising body, the ICO, will close down (Balkan Insight 2012, B92 2012). Also other international players such as UNMIK, EULEX as well as the OSCE are currently reducing the size of their missions on the ground. This means newborn Kosovo has to stand on its own feet for the first time.

The question which needs to be asked is, is the country ready for self-rule? Can the government of Kosovo assure the creation of a stable country, not only for the majority of Albanians, but for all minorities residing in the territory? One specifically looks towards the Kosovo Serbs, who have been opposed against the independent status of the country since the beginning. I ask myself, can the country work towards successful integration of the Serb community in Kosovo? And equally important, can Kosovo find her sustainable peace when they follow the direction they are currently following? That is what I aim to answer in this thesis.

---

[3] Website Kosovo Thanks You

[4] The International Civilian Representative is the head of the International Civilians Office, which is meant to supervise the implementation of Kosovo's status settlement. Feith is also the main contact person from the International Steering Group, who is meant to guide Kosovo's democratic development and good governance. Both organization were formed pursuant to the Ahtisaari plan, which will be discussed below.

**1.2. The challenge of Serb integration in Kosovo**

Kosovo's road towards creating effective statehood and finding a peaceful future is eminently led by the Comprehensive proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement (CSP). Most of the CSP has been included in the constitution and laws of the Republic. The core message of this plan, as designed by UN's Special Envoy Marti Ahtisaari, was that independence in combination with a period of international supervision was the only viable option for Kosovo. After what had happened under the rule of Milošević, the Albanian population would never accept to be placed under Serbian rule once more. Autonomy under the FRY was not a sufficient solution, independence is what they wanted and they were actively supported by the UN and a variety of important international players[5] to reach this goal. The Serb community in Kosovo desired the opposite: to remain under the rule of Belgrade. Serbs did not want to become a minority in an area where their people had been a majority for decades. Independence was and is still strongly rejected, and therefore the CSP document and the provisions herein have a negative connotation for Serbs in Kosovo (Dahlman and Williams 2010: 406-407, Lehne 2012).

The basic question of post-independence is not international recognition – because I dare to say that conflicting opinions about the status of Kosovo will remain in existence forever – much more important is to ask ourselves how to deal with the minority communities on the ground (2010: 407). In order to become a state seen as such by all its citizens, the Republic of Kosovo must prove itself capable of equal inclusion of minority populations. The government needs to show all its citizens and the international audience that they are able to protect their citizens, independent from ethnicity, something which the FRY in its time failed to do. Especially Serb integration within the framework of the Republic of Kosovo remains a major challenge. Kosovo Serbs still strongly hold on to Serb-run governance structures, who operate parallel to the institutions of the Republic. The Kosovo government needs to offer an alternative to these ''illegal'' structures. Only when the Kosovo authorities succeed in this task, their declared independence will be deemed legitimate. At that moment, Kosovo's status will be questioned no more.

Surprisingly, 2009 showed a shift in Serb attitudes towards cooperation with the Kosovo state, something which they had strongly refused since independence. This counts especially for Serbs living in scattered enclaves in the South of Kosovo. According to leading international and local research institutes, the high amount of Serb votes for the municipal elections of 2009[6], sealed the

---

[5] Amongst other the United States, and EU countries such as Germany and France.
[6] And for some municipalities in 2010.

success of Ahtisaari's decentralization plans and the creation of new Serb majority municipalities. The local KIPRED[7] institute (2010: 6-7) observes ''a major turn in political and social sentiment of the Serb population in Kosovo''. Also the International Crisis Group (2009: i) observes that where Kosovo Serbs first firmly rejected any interactions with the Kosovar state, now it seems that Kosovo Serbs South of the river Ibar/Ibër, who are living surrounded by Albanians, have come to the conclusion that ''there is no choice but to deal with the society around them''. This is exactly the point where my research starts.

**1.3. Aims and significance of research**

As we have seen, there seems to be growing willingness amongst the Serb community to participate within the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo. Both the KIPRED institute and the ICG, as well as other (inter)-national observers not cited here report these recent positive shifts in Serb perspectives, but I think that we must be wary when arriving at conclusions too soon. It is a fact that many Serbs voted in the municipal elections in 2009, and that some of them are cooperating with the Kosovo authorities in Serb majority municipalities, but this does not entail that Serbs are willing to integrate in the Republic of Kosovo. Whether this marks a growing acceptance of their incorporation within Kosovo as an state independent from Serbia, we cannot say based on this data. And whether this means a growing opposition against Serb-run parallel structures (KIPRED 2010: 7), is a statement we certainly cannot underpin based on our current knowledge. All in all, the positive developments need further research before we can generate conclusions about the future of Serb integration into the Republic of Kosovo.

One of the aims of this research is to gain a better insight into Kosovo Serb perspectives on local governance and decentralization measures in Kosovo. I want to map out the attitudes and behavior of the inhabitants of the newly established Serb majority municipalities. The municipal elections in the end of 2009[8] will be used as demarcation point in time from which we start the research. The facts say that many people voted in these elections, but I want to know what the underlying motivations of these votes were. The municipalities have been operative since the beginning of 2010, and some, for example in the municipality of Parteš/Partesh, the Municipal Assembly has only been inaugurated in August 2010. Now we have reached the point where municipalities have been in power for over two years – a good time to evaluate the functioning and the effectiveness of these local governance bodies. We have to explore if the ideas as written down in the CSP and the

---

[7] Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development
[8] In some municipalities these elections took place over the course of 2010.

constitution of Kosovo, live up to their expectations in practice.  Now it can be assessed if these municipalities can fulfill the promise of Serb integration in Kosovo.

This thesis is of significant additional value to the current body of knowledge. There is a lack of evaluation of the current decentralization process by the government of Kosovo as well as by their international supervisors . I noticed that all reports derived their conclusions from interviews with municipal officials, MLGA[9] employees, other government officials, and employees of international organizations in Kosovo. No one has ever talked to normal citizens – the Serbs residing in these municipalities – to ask what they think of the decentralization process.  I felt supported in drawing this conclusion when I read the ICO report from April 2012. It is stated in their introduction that it is the first time that ''anyone – local or international – had asked the Serb community in Kosovo directly what they thought about the CSP'' (ICO 2012: 7).  To me it was striking to find proof that no one actually had made the effort to talk to local Serbs about these subjects. Where ICO did its research in the North of Kosovo, this was exactly what I had been working on in South-Eastern Kosovo. The voices of the Serb community about the functioning of Serb majority municipalities, one of the provisions which can be found in the CSP, need to be heard.

To summarize, the goal of this research is threefold: [1] to gain a better insight into Kosovo Serb perspectives on decentralization reforms, and in specific the establishment of the new Serb majority municipalities, [2] to give voice to the Serb community in Kosovo about their concerns of a life in Kosovo,  [3] and to generate conclusions about the future of Serb integration in Kosovo. I want to emphasize that because we have determined that these three aims constitute the core of this research, academic theory is of less importance. You will see that several theories are used to underpin the findings we have gained in the field, but I have not been trying to prove an existing theory, or to generate new theories. This would be incompatible with the aims of giving voice and testing the decentralization policy in practice. It is important to keep that in mind when reading the research.

With these aims in mind we try to find an answer to the following question:
''*Can the current decentralization measures entrench Serb integration and foster sustainable peace within the Republic of Kosovo?''*

---

[9] Ministry of Local Government Administration

**1.4. Research design and methodology**

This research is based on a combination of three methods: [1] literature research, [2] a series of qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews, [3] and Q methodology. By the use of these three methods we have ensured the reliability of the evidence.

Literature research has been used to provide a better understanding of the history of the conflict and the decentralization process in Kosovo. Various sources have been consulted to gain a better understanding of the use and practices of Q methodology, used later on as a research method. Besides that, literature has been used as a basis for the theoretical framework of the thesis.

The research period consisted of about three months of field research, which took place from the middle of March until the beginning of June 2012. Interviews have been carried out in five selected Serb majority municipalities in South-Eastern Kosovo: Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Klokot-Vrbovac/Kllokot-Vërbovc, Parteš/Partesh, Ranilug/Ranillug and Štrpce/Shtërpcë (see figure 1. below). I have chosen to work in this specific area because most research into the Serb community has been done in the Northern part of Kosovo, or in the biggest Serb enclave near Pristina[10], Gračanice/Gracanica. Since two thirds of the Serb population lives in the South, below the river Ibar, now it is time to give this large share of the Serb community their chance to speak. A secondary factor in this decision was that the organization where I did an internship for at that moment, Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation[11], could provide me with contacts and access to these specific municipalities. In this way my research does not only serve this thesis, but will hopefully also add a meaningful contribution to the work they do in the field. With the exception of the municipality of Štrpce, all municipalities have been newly established over the course of 2010. Novo Brdo/Novobërdë municipality was already in existence, but was assigned new borders in 2010. The somewhat older municipality of Štrpce is included in my research with the motivation to compare between newer and already existing Serb municipalities. Besides that, this municipality is also included for the sake of Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, to research all Serb majority municipalities in which they work.

---

[10] The commonly used English name for Kosovo's capital Pristinë (Albanian) or Priština (Serbian).
[11] Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation is a Swiss development organization who works amongst others on a Local Governance and Decentralization Support (LOGOS) project in Kosovo. The LOGOS project contributes to strengthen local governance and decentralization reforms in nine municipalities in the South-Eastern part of Kosovo. This phase of the project has been running since 2010, and aims specifically to make its partner municipalities in Kosovo more accountable, transparent, equitable and effective in local governance and able to deliver key services to satisfy all citizen groups.

*Figure 1. Serb majority areas in Kosovo*[12] (Dahlman and Williams 2010: 409)

A total of thirty respondents have been selected for the in-depth interviews, whereof fourteen respondents have been selected for the purpose of Q method. For those unfamiliar with this method, Q methodology ''provides as a foundation for the systematic study of subjectivity, a person's viewpoint, opinion, beliefs, attitude, and the like'' (Exel and de Graaff 2005: 1). Since it is one of my research goals is to grasp Serb perspectives on institutions of local governance, the application of this

[12] Out of the municipalities in our research, only the municipalities of Štrpce and Novo Brdo are visible on this map. Other municipalities included in the research, are the Serb majority areas located below Kamenicë/Kamenica (Ranilug), below the city of Gjilan/Gnjilane (Parteš), or around Viti/Vitina (Klokot-Vrbovac).

method fits perfectly. Q method is also commonly used as policy analysis tool. In this research it is used to analyze the idea of decentralization  and the installment of local government units in practice.  It works as follows; the participants in a Q research are asked to rank order a set of statements – the Q set – according to their point of view. The order in which they arrange the statements will provide the researcher information about the subjective meaning respondents ascribe to these statements, and thus about their viewpoint towards the topic of research. The rankings that people give to a Q set are subject to factor analysis, where after we can indicate which different social perspectives exist among Kosovo Serbs (2005: 1-3). This is exactly the additional value of Q methodology on in-depth interviews. By the use of this method we cannot determine how many people share a perspective, but we are able to map out the variety of Serb perspectives in the Kosovo society in a more organized manner. After the organizing of each Q set, an additional interview was conducted with the respondent in order to generate more ''story'' around their perspectives on local governance.

All interviews were conducted with the help of a contact person, an inhabitant of the municipality under research.  Finding the right contact person for each municipality was a difficult and time consuming task, but was worthwhile in the end. This contact person arranged my respondents, and functioned as translator during the interviews at the same time. Only in the municipality of Klokot, the interviews were conducted in English. One of the limitations of the research is therefore the control over the selection process of the participants. It is possible that the contact person selected a specific group of people, or people with a specific opinion. The fact that I worked with five different contact person reduces this risk. I instructed the contact person that I wanted to talk to a variety of people; both men and women, people from different ages, people with different backgrounds in terms of education and employment, and with people from different villages in the municipality. As can be seen in the list of respondents (see Appendix I), this instruction was not always followed. In have spoken to more men, and for example in the municipality of Klokot I have spoken to a lot of people from the same age category. So working with a translator has had its negative aspects, but it allowed me to gain access to people who would could not speak English,  and people who would have otherwise never wanted to talk to me, or would not have trusted me with their stories.  In the end I feel I have spoken to a high amount and variety of people, and that would never have been possible without the help of my translators.

In addition to the three methods of research I mentioned before, due to my work for the LOGOS[13] project of the development organization Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, I also had the opportunity to gain professional insight and practical information about the functioning of the Serb majority municipalities. By triangulation of methodology, and additional advice from professionals on the topic through my internship, I am convinced that I have collected reliable evidence.

Assessing the reliability of the procedures of research, I can only come to the conclusion that I have done everything in my power to secure a fair and correct process. As described above, working with contact persons could have possibly endangered the selection of participants, but it was the best option for me. With a well-prepared topic list in my hands (see Appendix II), and my previous interview experiences, I believe I have been able to do a good job. The use of Q methodology was much more of a challenge for me, since I was not familiar was the method before I started. I would like to mention two critical phases within Q methodology. At first, designing of Q set (see Appendix III). Designing the Q statements requires profound insight into the discourse of the respondents, which I did not possess at the start of the research. Through extensive literature research, and good guidance and advice from experts[14] in the field I have designed a reliable and complete set of statements. In order to check the reliability of my Q set I asked respondents if they felt the statements expressed sufficiently what they felt about local governance in Kosovo. Most of them stated that the statements covered all they wanted to say about the topic. One respondent even said: *''Everything that hurts us is here. I can find myself in every statement, some to a lesser extent of course... All is at the table''* [15] A second important phase in Q method is the factor analysis and thereafter designing the social perspectives. I faced quite some difficulties with the statistical analysis, but luckily Gjalt de Graaf, professor in Q methodology at the VU in Amsterdam, could help me out. Through his comments and advice I know my analysis has been reliable. Designing the social perspectives is known to be an art, which each researcher will design in his or her own way. This provides the researcher a lot of freedom, but also made it difficult for me as someone who was totally unfamiliar with Q method. It took me some efforts, but in the end I am convinced the procedure has been correct, since the results of my interviews and the Q method showed similar perspectives.

---

[13] The Kosovo Local Governance and Decentralization support
[14] My colleagues at Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation
[15] Author's interview, municipality of Parteš, 29 May 2012

**1.5. Chapter outline**

This first chapter has presented a short history of the ''country'' Kosovo, has provided for an introduction into our research topic, and has explained through which methodologies we have collected the data which we will build on in next chapters. The following chapters are dedicated to the research into Serb perspectives on local governance. We will discover what these perspectives tell us about the future of Serb integration and sustainable peace in the Republic of Kosovo.

In the next chapter we will explore the decentralization process in Kosovo. We will obviously dive into the phenomenon of decentralization. I will discuss the theory and debate about the effects of decentralization on post-conflict societies, and the more technical and legal aspects of the decentralization process in Kosovo. With this theory in mind, we will elaborate of the functionality and legitimacy of the newly created municipalities in practice.

The focus in the third chapter lies on the future of Serb integration in Kosovo. I question if the creation of the new municipalities shall lead to sustainable peace or renewed conflict, and what its effect will be on the integration of the Serb community into the local level structures of the Republic, and into the bigger society. Thereafter the various perspectives and insights of the Serb community in Kosovo on a future in the Republic of Kosovo are discussed.

In the last chapter all of my findings will be put together and summarized in order to generate conclusions and to give recommendations to those working on decentralization in Kosovo.

**CHAPTER 2. THE DECENTRALIZATION PROCESS IN KOSOVO**

Local governance has a great potential in peacebuilding. Installing local government units could play a stabilizing role in the transformation and reconstruction of post-conflict societies, but it is dependent on many issues if it is to realize its potential in practice (Musch et al. 2008: 16-19). A similar question must be asked when considering the role of local governments in Kosovo. In this chapter we will see if the current decentralization measures have lived up to their potential. Is it the practice that we had envisaged in the plans, or is much left to be desired?

This chapter is meant to give the reader insight into the theory and practice of local governance in Kosovo. I will first describe the concept of decentralization, the argumentation of its protagonist and antagonists, and thereafter a short history of the decentralization process in Kosovo. Since the CSP voiced the idea of Serb majority municipalities in the first place – the basic units of self-governance in Kosovo – I will elaborate on what is stated within this plan. Thereafter I will discuss the 2009 municipal elections, who are seen by the international community as indicators of the success of decentralization. We find that both the legal provisions as described in the Ahtisaari plan and in the Kosovo constitution, as well as the municipal election outcomes cannot tell us the full story of decentralization. Therefore we will dive into the perspectives of the Serb local population on the legitimacy and functionality of the municipalities, to see what has become of Ahtisaari's ideas in practice.

**2.1. The decentralization process in Kosovo**

''Decentralization is defined as a process by which central state power is devolved to sub-national units to broaden access to political decisions making and localize provision of public goods and services.'' (Monteux 2006: 164). Decentralization thus entails a transfer of political, administrative and/or fiscal powers to lower level units of the state. But in Kosovo, and in other post-conflict situations, decentralization is also used as a means to promote good governance, to effectively and efficiently provide public services, to make the political process more inclusive and accommodate the interests of all communities, to strengthen local power and to make the state as a whole less prone to conflict (DLGN 2012). Keeping in mind the Ahtisaari plan – the document on which the current decentralization measures are based – the international community indeed considered decentralization as the tool for ethnic conflict regulation, and an instrument through which to facilitate a sustainable solution for the Serb population within the multi-ethnic state of Kosovo (Brinkerhoff 2005, Gjoni et al. 2010, Monteux 2006).

Brinkerhoff (2005: 12) presents four reasons why decentralization mitigates conflict. He argues that the idea of local governance allows minorities to settle for peace because they receive some degree of autonomy, thereby fulfilling a meaningful part of their reasons to oppose a settlement. Second, gaining the control over a local level of government limits the power of the central government. A third reason is that the creation of multiple levels of governance prevents a 'winner-takes-it-all' dynamic that can have the potential to lead to renewed conflict. When minorities gain a share in power, they will be less likely to risk their own achievements through conflict. And fourth, effective functioning of local governance units gives way to the understanding of conflicting parties that their differences can be managed. Although Brinkerhoff does not mention this himself, this is the point where protagonists of the decentralization approach would argue that decentralization fosters cooperation between different groups, and therefore has the chance to bring national unity.

Where protagonists of the decentralization approach claim that installing local units of self-governance is a way to end (ethnic)-conflict, skeptics are not convinced of this outcome. Monteux (2006: 171-179) states that although decentralization may able to provide short-term conflict mitigation, it will eventually lead to renewed conflict. The argument is that decentralization does not enhance national cohesion between opposing groups, on the contrary, it offers an ethnic basis for self-government through which the roots of the conflict are sustained. Unlike what is said before, opponents would say that ethnic groups are not united but become more divided through decentralization measures. In order to reach a long-term solution for territories where groups are divided along ethnic lines there is a need for a type of institutions which force cooperation and cohabitation.

The history of decentralization in Kosovo dates back to the early 2000's, when municipalities were appointed by law as the basic units of self-government . The idea to actively start decentralization reforms was first mentioned in 2002, by the then Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Michael Steiner, but only when violence against the Serb population erupted again in 2004 the international community felt the pressure to take serious steps forward in the process. The implementation of five pilot municipalities, including two with a Serb majority[16], was firmly rejected by the Serb community. As a result of the Serb unwillingness to accept the municipalities, and the growing frustration of Kosovo Albanians in relation to the absence of any progress, the UN decided the time had come to address the roots of the conflict: the final status of the territory. At this point, decentralization became irreversibly interlinked to Kosovo's status question. And still in my experience, the word decentralization is often received very negatively by

---

[16] Gracanica and Parteš

the Serb population in Kosovo, while the evolution of Serb autonomy through the establishment of majority municipalities is perceived as highly positive. Discourse plays an important role here. Decentralization has a totally different meaning for Albanians. It was and is seen as a concession which needed to be made to Serbs as the price for statehood. A price they were willing to pay in order to get their state (Gjoni et al. 2010: 297 – 306).

During the process of status negotiations a variety of conflicting opinions had to be dealt with. Belgrade through the Serb delegation emphasized the importance of autonomy for Kosovo Serbs, and actually proposed the creation of Serb majority municipalities. Also the Kosovo Serbs on the ground called for local autonomy in the field of healthcare, education, police, justice and safety affairs (KIPRED 2007: 11). The Kosovar Albanians and their leadership initially strongly opposed decentralization. They feared that Serb majority municipalities would endanger the territorial integrity of Kosovo, and that it would strengthen their fight against Kosovar Albanian rule. The international community was convinced of the opposite, and saw it as a means to remain control over Serb inhabited areas and prevent Serbs from pursuing self-government (Dahlman and Williams 2010: 415-420, 2007: 8, 11-14). The establishment of Serb majority municipalities was meant to offer a better alternative for the Serb parallel governance structures operating outside of the scope of the international community and out of the sovereignty of Kosovo. Whether it was a good idea to work towards elimination of parallel governance structures I will discuss in the next chapter.

It is interesting to note that the Serb community in Kosovo was ''united in its opposition to decentralization'' in the first few years after the war (2010: 301).  In 2005, both Serbs in the majority areas in the North, and Serbs in Southern enclaves boycotted Kosovo municipalities, but these attitudes have grown apart over the years. The fact that the first unwilling Serbs living below the river Ibar have started to cooperate with Kosovo municipalities from the municipal elections onwards, gives us hope for a possibility that the currently still radically opposed Serbs in the North will shift their behavior and attitudes at some point in the future. Maybe the time to start accepting decentralization reforms will come now the implementation of the sixth planned Serb majority municipality Mitrovicë /Mitrovica North has started. Time will tell.

The process of decentralization, and especially the acceptance of the decentralization process by minority communities is still a work in progress today. We know that the status negotiations did not result in a final solution for Kosovo, but we what we gained is the Ahtisaari plan, and – some say – successful implementation of decentralization measures.

**2.2. From Ahtisaari plan to practice**

The CSP has been the most important document on state-building , and guideline on how to deal with inclusion of minorities into the Republic of Kosovo. While the plan never made it through the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) because it was blocked by Russia and China, it gained broad international support.[17] From the parties who the proposal actually concerns, Belgrade and Pristina, the former did not accept the proposal, but Pristina eventually committed to implementing all the provisions in the plan (Lehne 2012: 4). As mentioned before, it was believed by the Serb community in Kosovo that implementation of the CSP would have negative consequences for them. This had everything to do with the fact that the plan intended to lead Kosovo to independence.

The plan contains mechanisms that ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of minority communities in Kosovo, with an special emphasis on the rights of the Serbs.  Based on the European Charter for Local Self-Government, one of the most important provisions in the Ahtisaari plan is focused on self-government of the Serb community. In practice this entails that a number[18] of Serb majority municipalities are to be established in which the Serb population has the full and exclusive powers to manage their own affairs.  This provision comes forth out of the ''legitimate concerns of the Kosovo Serb and other Communities that are not in the majority in Kosovo'' (CSP 2007: 22).  Other rights granted within the CSP are for example that minorities have a guaranteed seat in the Kosovo Assembly, and Serb representatives have special voting rights when it comes to laws detrimental for the Serb community; they have the right to maintain and express their own language, culture and religion in Kosovo; the protection of religious and cultural heritage, and special protection of the Serb Orthodox Church; the right to education in the Serbian language; and the right to maintain links and receive contributions from Serbia , both in the ability to receive funding and to form associations with Serbian institutions (CSP 2007).

The Ahtisaari plan prepared the establishment of six new Serb majority municipalities. The provisions as set forth in the CSP are currently adopted in the constitution of the Republic of Kosovo and the Law of Local Self-Government. Ahtisaari's plan has thus become part of the legal framework of the Republic. Besides an exhaustive list of delegated competences applicable to all municipalities in Kosovo, the Serb majority municipalities are granted additional competences in the field of healthcare, education, cultural affairs, including cultural and religious heritage, and social protection.

---

[17] Amongst others the United States and influential EU countries such as Germany and France.
[18] The Serb municipalities which are currently established are: Gračanice/Gracanica, Novobërdë/Novo Brdo, Ranillug/Ranilug, Parteš/Partesh, Kllokot-Vërbovc/Klokot-Vrbovac. The establishment of the municipality Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North will take place over the course of 2012.

The rationale behind this was the fact that Serbs still heavily rely on education and health care services which operate parallel to the Kosovo government, and which are funded by Belgrade. In this way, Serb parallel structures were actually legalized within the state of Kosovo. Serb majority municipalities are entitled to cooperate and form partnerships with Kosovar municipalities, and as already mentioned above, with institutions from the Republic of Serbia. The government in Belgrade is also allowed to make financial contributions to these municipalities, of course under certain conditions.

| Municipality | Description | Population size | Ethnic composition |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Klokot-Vrbovac/ Kllokot-Vërbovc | An area of 24km2 that includes Klokot town and 4 villages | 5.050 | 5.350 Kosovo Serbs 1.690 Albanians 10 Roma |
| 2. Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë | An area of 31km2 that includes Novo Brdo town and 31 villages | 9.670 | 5.802 Kosovo Serbs 3.771 Albanians 97 Roma |
| 3. Parteš/Partesh | An area of 18km2 that includes Parteš town and 2 villages | 5.217 | 5.217 Kosovo Serbs |
| 4. Ranilug/Ranillug | An area of 100km2 that includes Ranilug town and 12 villages | 5.800 | 5.718 Kosovo Serbs 82 Albanians |
| 5. Štrpce/Shtërpcë | An area of 217 km2 that includes Štrpce town and 16 villages | 13.630 | 9.100 Kosovo Serbs 4.500 Albanian 30 Roma |

*Table 1. Description of ''our'' Serb majority municipalities[19]*

The extensive legal framework for Serb local self-governance may sound quite perfect on paper, but what we have to ask ourselves how the written provisions are functioning in practice. Actually this is one of the things which is voiced very often by the Serb community: the ideas within the Ahtisaari plan are very well constructed, but in practice much remains to be done before the institutions are functioning according to the ideal described on paper . Just because the laws are written, does not mean the government of Kosovo can or will fully implement them. And even if the government fulfills her promises, we need the cooperation of all citizens to make it happen. Also and especially from the Albanian majority.. Where the municipal elections in 2009 launched the implementation of the decentralization process, it is the practice that has to prove the success.

---

[19] OSCE municipal profiles, November 2011

**2.3. Municipal election time**

The 2009 municipal elections marked the beginning phase of the execution of the CSP. An array of international players[20] appointed these Kosovar local elections as turning point in Serb attitudes towards the decentralization process.  Not only was the high turnout of Serb voters in municipalities in Southern Kosovo a positive surprise, no one could have ever imagined that the number of ballots casted by Serbs in the municipal elections under the Kosovo authorities, would be significantly higher than the voter turnout in the elections for the Serb parallel structures organized by Belgrade in that same year[21] (KIPRED 2010: 4). The positive outcomes of the first local elections after the declaration of independence were therefore seen as an first indicator of the success of decentralization.

| *Municipality* | *Number of registered voters[22]* | *Voter turnout* | *Voter turnout as % of registered voters* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Klokot-Vrbovac/ Kllokot-Vërbovc | 2.706 | 1.106 | 39,71 % |
| 2. Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë | 7.936 | 3.617 | 50.03 % |
| 3. Parteš/Partesh | 3.426 | 1.918 | 56 % |
| 4. Ranilug/Ranillug | 4.822 | 895 | 17.92 % |
| 5. Štrpce/Shtërpcë | 12.604 | 5.839 | 48.87 % |

*Table 2. Voter turnout municipal elections 2009[23]*

An overview of the voter turnout in the five municipalities of our concern are portrayed above in table 2. In none of the municipalities the percentage of casted ballots exceeds 60 per cent.  In Albanian majority municipalities in Kosovo we see the same picture. In Pristina for example the voter turnout was 45.30 per cent, and most other municipalities showed a turnout of between 40 and 50 per cent (OSCE 2011).  Compared to the municipality of Zvečan/Zveçan, a municipality in the North of Kosovo, only 0,5 per cent of the registered voters showed up. This demonstrated that the election results in Serb municipalities South of the river Ibar have indeed been quite impressive. In the case of

---

[20] As we have seen before the KIPRED institute and International Crisis Group share this opinion, but also the OSCE and ICO emphasize these positive results in their reports.

[21] Serb parallel elections were held on 16 August 2009 in the Serb enclaves in the Pristina region and Peja/Pec region. While a turnout of 80 per cent was expected, the voter turnout was 60 and 35 per cent respectively. Local elections also took place in May 2008 in the four Serb municipalities in the North of Kosovo.

[22] Including out of Kosovo voters

[23] OSCE municipal profiles, November 2011

the municipality of Ranilug, where only 17.92 per cent of the total registered voters casted their ballots, we cannot confirm the conclusion that the elections were a big success.[24]

While international observers and research institutes draw the conclusion that decentralization has been a success on the basis of election results, I believe they miss out on something. The fact that a high percentage of Kosovo Serbs voted does not automatically mean they support the decentralization process. Motivations for voting also have a role to play here, and therefore they need to be incorporated in this discussion.

Several motivations for voting can be distinguished amongst Serbs in South-Eastern Kosovo. Because this was the first time elections for municipalities under the Kosovo authorities were conducted, some voted because they felt they should give the new municipalities a chance to prove themselves: *´´that is the only way to find out if they can or cannot help you.´´* Due to the novelty of the Kosovo municipalities many people voted to see if they could gain something from it, but I dare to say that many people have already been disappointed in what the new structures can do for them, and therefore will not vote again for the municipal elections in 2013. Luckily there are people who say: *´´I voted because I knew it was good for us, we would get more rights´´*[25] or *´´I live in Kosovo and I hope to work for democracy here… for a better tomorrow. Through voting we express our human rights.´´* Two of my respondents actually presented themselves as eligible for elections, which indicates their willingness to be part of the Kosovo society. Thus a relationship between voting and positive attitudes towards decentralization exists, but not on such as large scale as is described by international observers. Out of the almost thirty persons interviewed, the majority of people voted for other reasons. At least one third of the people voted for personal interests; either because of the obligations of their job, or because there was possibility to get a job in the future. In the municipality of Parteš, citizens were even being paid to bring out their votes on the mayor currently in power.[26] Voting for personal gain, in my eyes, has nothing to do with sealing the success of decentralization.

---

[24] Although I haven't found a direct explanation for this, possible reasons could be that the Serb parallel municipality is a still much respected authority in this area. Further on, the municipal building lies quite far away from the actual village Ranilug, in which most of the Serb community live. I have not observed that people in this municipality offer more resistance against the new municipality then others.
[25] Author's interview, municipality of Klokot, 6 June 2012
[26] Author's interviews in Parteš municipality

Interesting to note is that that almost every Serb voted for the Serbian presidential and parliamentary elections in May 2012. According to UNSC resolution 1244[27] Serbia is allowed to organize these type of elections, but of course these were not welcomed by the Kosovo authorities. Therefore they were organized and overseen by the OSCE. Within my interviews I have seen that out of the thirty respondents, only a handful of people abstained from voting, and most of the time due to other reasons than unwillingness to vote. Where many Serbs abstained from voting for the Serb local elections in 2008 and 2009, they re-affirmed their connection towards the Serbian state when they voted in 2012. The affirmative answer that people voted for the Serbian elections was often followed by the statement that Serbia is their country, that they are a citizen of Serbia and therefore should vote: ''*My state, my people.*'' This indicates a strong emotional connection to the Serbian state, which is not present towards the Kosovo municipalities. From my experience, the Serbian state remains deeply embedded in the hearts of the people. They will be certainly not willing to vote for the Kosovo state, because this connection to the Serbian state stands in the way.

According to David Lake (2007: 14-19), we have to question if the democratic process of elections as such can produce legitimate governments. Where a constitution is prepared, and democratic elections are held, the newly created institutions are expected to exert authority, and would be almost spontaneously accepted by the people as legitimate. This is the so-called ''formal-legal approach'' of state building. The fault with the focus on the legitimate process of institution building, is that there is little evidence that the democratic process per se can produce legitimate governance in post-conflict states. A formal-legal approach does not necessary result in the desired authority of institutions, which we have already seen in the previous paragraph. While well-formulated on paper, we do not know if the CSP has resulted in a good practice. An established constitution, and positive election outcomes have nothing to do with the policies and practice of the institutions that follow. In order to determine the success of the decentralization process, we have to go one step further and evaluate the legitimacy and the functionality of the institutions that have emerged out of the election process.

---

[27] UNSC resolution 1244 was adopted on the 10th of June 1999 and recognized the sovereignty of the FRY over Kosovo, but at the same called for meaningful autonomy and self-administration for Kosovo. Officially this resolution is still in force, and the international organizations on the ground such as UNMIK, EULEX and OSCE are guided on basis of this resolution.

**2.4. Legitimacy of Serb majority municipalities**

''Rebuilding a legitimate political system is a crucial step in peacebuilding and the structural transformation from conflict to peace'' (Klem and Frerks, in Musch et al. 2008: 50). Legitimacy refers to the popular and collective acceptance of the ruler´s right to rule (Lake 2007: 11).  It is preferred for a state who claims authority over a territory, that as many citizens as possible accept its governing regime as correct. It results in citizens who accept its laws and comply to its command on a voluntary basis. Without a certain degree of legitimacy, the state apparatus will experience difficulties in functioning due to the forces undermining its authority, or it has to resort to the use of force to get this authority. Building a political system in which all groups perceive the government as somehow legitimate, is a necessary condition for effective statehood, and for the creation of a peaceful society. The presence or absence of legitimacy in relationship to the newly established Serb majority municipalities is therefore worthwhile to discuss.

The grant of legitimacy of the Serb community is closely connected to the sovereignty of the Kosovo state. The sovereignty of the Kosovo state is a much-discussed topic, because both the RKS and Serbia claim authority over the territory of Kosovo. While this dispute goes beyond the scope of what we want to discuss here, it is important to mention in relation to our discussion of legitimacy. Sovereignty is independent state authority. When a state actor exerts sovereignty, it is expected that its commands are complied by those over who she claims authority. But not every claimed authority operates effectively within its territory. What matters here is not the territory over which a government claims authority, but the de facto territory over which that government can exercise its power. Agnew (2005: 438-441) would call this effective sovereignty. Unfortunately for the Kosovo government, it is not accepted as the sole and sovereign authority in the territory at the moment.

The idea of the Serb majority municipalities has been the main instrument of the Albanian leadership and the international community to increase the sovereignty and legitimacy of the Kosovo state. Both actors have been working to create effective legitimacy from independence onwards. While creating legitimacy amongst the Albanian part of the population was relatively easy, it was clear beforehand that the process towards popular acceptance of Kosovar institutions amongst Serb citizens would require a greater investment, both in time and in effort. Is it widely known that (re)gaining confidence in a new authority requires a considerable amount of time, which is even more difficult when trust has to be won amongst parties emerging out of violent conflict. The one that aspires effective sovereignty, will have to do hard work to get it. Granting Serbs authority on the local level has been the major tool of the Kosovo government to win this hard-to-get confidence and

loyalty amongst the Serb population, and pave a way towards the popular acceptance of the Kosovo state as a whole.

> *''The best example is marriage, if there doesn't exist confidence between partners, then (the marriage) is broke. It is the same for the system, if confidence is lacking… how can we work, how can we can live with them''[28]*

The majority of Kosovo Serb citizens have accepted the existence of Kosovo municipalities as an authority, but this does not mean they consider this authority as legitimate. One of my respondents clearly tells us in one sentence what the majority of the Serb population in Kosovo is thinking: *''Pristina has more authority, but Belgrade should be the legitimate authority.''[29]* In the eyes of the Serb community *''Kosovo is Serbia, and Serbia deserves to have the legitimate authority here.''[30]* So while most Serbs have come to accept that they live under the rule of the Kosovar authorities, which have more power on the ground, they would still rather see the Serbian government in power. Voluntary compliance of the command of the Kosovo government is not present. Order is only followed when it suits the Serb population, or when enough pressure is used. For example, it has been illegal to drive a car with a Serbian license plate in Kosovo for years, but only when the Kosovo government declared that sanctions would follow, Serbs massively applied for Kosovo license plates. As said before, building trust and gaining de facto authority could be a long-lasting process, and I am quite certain that the Serb loyalty towards the Serbian state will not be erased soon. This means that creating loyalty towards the Kosovo state is going to take a while.

> *''I consider the Serb structures in Kosovo as legal authorities. For me Serb structures were legitimate before 1999 and now, and that will be forever.''[31]*

> *''It is hard to separate people from their country, it has a founded place in us.''[32]*

Another side of the story tells us that the creation of the new municipalities is received as predominantly positive. In practice, all Serbs cooperate with the Kosovo municipalities in some kind of way, may be it only to apply for civil registrations. Many Serbs also benefit from the other services municipalities have to offer. This corresponds to basic assumption of Anders Hanberger (2003: 257), who states that legitimacy should be seen as the ''product of satisfying felt needs and solving perceived problems.'' In the words of Frerks and Klem (2008: 54): ''output legitimacy.'' If we pass by

---

[28] Author's interview, former Serb mayor municipality of Novo Brdo, 4 May 2012
[29] Author's interview, municipality of Parteš, 24 May 2012
[30] Author's interview, municipality of Ranilug, 26 April 2012
[31] Author's interview, municipality of Ranilug, 20 May 2012
[32] Author's interview, municipality of Novo Brdo, 20 April 2012

the Serb conviction of the sole legitimacy of the Serbian state, we see that the Kosovo municipalities are gradually taking a place in Serb lives. In some ways, Serbs have started to accept the authority of the municipalities. So as according to Hanberger, if the municipalities can deliver effective services, and succeed in solving the problems of Kosovo Serbs, they can win trust and full cooperation of a large share of the Serb community. I would like to add that if Kosovo municipalities will be accepted as a legitimate in the future, this will only happen under the condition that Serbian structures are accepted as sovereign as well.

> *''Honestly I don't have anything against the Kosovo governance, but I would like for the parallel to continue existing as well.''[33]*

Lake (2007: 2, 23-28) offers us two guidelines on how to reach a compliance with the (new) state. He states that: ''providing security, protecting property rights, and adjudicating disputes within society should be the first step in any state building process.´´ Once an effective social order is established, legitimacy will follow. A second step needs to be undertaken to secure the newly granted legitimacy. People must be convinced that this order, and no other order, will remain the best and only viable option in the future. Once people become ''vested'' in the state, meaning when they come to perceive their inclusion in the social order as in their personal interest, then the legitimacy of the state is built and a sustainable future is ensured.

This means that we have come to reviewing the practice of Kosovo municipalities. The importance of assessing the functionality of municipalities in practice was stressed by David Lake's and Anders Hanberger's conclusions directed us towards an investigation into the achievements of the new municipalities. Can they satisfy the needs of the Serb community, can they solve problems and ensure their security? That is what we will assess in the next paragraph.

## 2.5. Functionality of Serb majority municipalities

In this section we will answer the question how effective the new Serb majority municipalities are functioning in practice. I will judge the functionality of the new municipalities on basis of three functions: [1] Is the municipality able to deliver services and satisfy the needs of the Serb community, [2] Is the municipality able to solve the problems of the Serb community, [3] And is the municipality able to protect the (human) rights and safety of the Serb community.

---

[33] Author's interview, municipality of Štrpce, 8 May 2012

Every Serb in South-Eastern Kosovo has to agree that the establishment of the new municipality has led to gradual improvements of infrastructures, and has provided employment to a significant amount of people. *''Progress is visible that cannot be denied.''*[34] Both infrastructure and unemployment are major problems in Kosovo. You can see with your own eyes that the landscape of ''our municipalities'' shows roads with holes and cracks in the asphalt, that is if the streets are asphalted at all. Public and municipal buildings are neglected, the water supplies are weak, and things like parking lots, street lighting and public parks barely exist.[35] Unemployment is one of the biggest problems over the whole of Kosovo, at around forty-five  per cent (Fitzgerald 2012). The fact that municipalities have provided a share of the service delivery, and have created job opportunities is very-well received by the Serb community, but it is not enough to satisfy needs of the community as a whole. Unfortunately the quality of service delivery on its current level, is not effective enough to create the full legitimacy of the institutions. I must remark that these problems are Kosovo-wide, it is simply a country in development. Albanian majority municipalities face the same difficulties in satisfying the full range of needs of the people.

> *''The establishment of the new Serb municipality here was the possibility to get a job, and the possibility of the Serb community to solve the infrastructures.''*[36]

> *''Now people are eager to cooperate with the Kosovo municipalities, they offer them jobs. It is not about an emotional connection, it is just about who pays the most.''*[37]

The new municipality has more abilities to solve the problems of the people than the Serb structures. It is simple, Kosovo municipalities have more abilities because they have more power in the state of Kosovo. Many respondents express that the municipality has power, but this does not mean this power is always used in the right way: *''they have to understand the possibilities they have to help people.''*[38] A great deal of the municipal officials are simply not interested to solve the problems of the community, and only work for their own benefits. Corruption rules in Kosovo. Although new municipalities have addressed some of the problems, many problems remain; insecurity, various forms of discrimination, the problem of returnees is barely touched, and high unemployment remains.  According to many of my respondents, good things have been done, but it is just not good enough.  Again I want to remark that Kosovo is developing gradually. I think that the new municipalities can make a meaningful contribution to the lives of the Serb people, but the

---

[34] Author's interview, municipality of Štrpce, 9 May 2012
[35] Observation made during my work for the LOGOS project
[36] Author's interview, municipality of Parteš, 22 May 2012
[37] Author's interview, woman working for ministry of justice in the municipality of Klokot, 7 June 2012
[38] Author's interview, municipality of Parteš, 29 May 2012

existing problems cannot possibly be addressed all at once. It is not in the competences of the municipality to fix such complicated problems as security and discrimination. This brings us to the third aspect, the ability of the municipality to protect the human rights and safety of their Serb inhabitants. Put simply, no they cannot.

Moving back to Hanberger's connection between legitimacy and effective functioning of institutions, we can conclude that the new municipalities have contributed to an increase of the legitimacy of Kosovar institutions. A feeling of distrust towards Kosovo's central government authorities is deeply embedded, but local governance branches can win the confidence of the Serb population more easily. This is also due to the fact that in most municipalities, members of the Serb community are employed as municipal officials. This makes communication and cooperation with Kosovo institutions much easier. The municipal assembly in Ranilug and Parteš for example is fully comprised of Serb representatives, and thus it is easy for the people to feel a connection to their municipality. In the municipalities where assemblies are comprised of different ethnicities, citizens have the positive experience of cooperation with Albanians. This contributes to better inter-ethnic relations, and to more openness towards the Kosovo state as a whole.

I would like to shed a little more light on the municipality of Parteš, because in terms of functionality this municipality fails completely. Corruption and involvement of municipal officials in criminal affairs are the main problems in this municipality. According to residents of the municipality, the mayor and the ruling parties have bought themselves into power, and the municipal officials are only working for their own benefits: *''The question is simple, did you vote for me? No, then I will not help you.''*[39] Another problem which is addressed by the inhabitants of Parteš is that the municipality was too small to established in the first place.  While Parteš has 5000 registered residents, the minimum required by the CSP, only 3000 people reside permanently in villages within the municipality. The small territory of the municipality makes it even more difficult to provide the necessary services to citizens. *''Parteš doesn't have incomes, or they are very low. They cannot fund (much) from the budget, and are dependent from the government of Pristina... and the international community.''*[40] So where municipalities were built to bring the Serb community more autonomy, this has not been the outcome in the case of Parteš. According to its citizens they were better off when they were still part of the bigger municipality of Gjilan.

---

[39] Author's interview, municipality of Parteš,  22 May 2012
[40] Author's interview, municipality of Parteš, 22 May 2012

On the other hand, the municipalities of Štrpce and Klokot can be seen as success stories of decentralization. We are aware of the fact that creating effectiveness and legitimacy takes time, and in Štrpce time has done its work. Overall citizens are satisfied about how the municipality operates. They are able to provide Serb people what they need.[41] I have to mention that several respondents expressed that Štrpce is a special case, which cannot be compared to other Serb enclaves. In the case of the new municipality of Klokot, we also see that people embrace the decentralization process. The municipality is functioning well, stands closer to the people, and resulted in the improvements in the lives of the Serb people. So where the municipality of Parteš shows a clear failure of decentralization, luckily we also see cases where the Ahtisaari plan has been quite effective in practice.

In the end we can conclude that the new municipalities are functioning to a satisfying degree in practice. We have seen that the institutions are able to provide an important share of the required services to the Serb community, but they cannot fulfill the full range of needs. This is not different from Albanian majority municipalities or Serb parallel structures, although Kosovar municipalities have more abilities to help. Unfortunately they are not always fully using their possibilities to help the Serb community. They have clearly done a good job in creating employment opportunities and in construction of new infrastructures, but new municipalities are not capable to solve the full array of problems of Kosovo Serbs. We know that *''a lot of time has to pass for them to do the job right.''*[42] It is important that the Serb inhabitants of the municipalities becomes aware what can and what cannot be expected from them, otherwise they will be unfairly disappointed. We have seen the example of Parteš, and examples of Štrpce and Klokot, but overall we can say that the new municipalities are fulfilling a part of the job they are supposed to do. Some people perceive the new municipalities as legitimate, while others do not, but this corresponds to what can be expected of municipalities which have been in place for less than three years. Now all that is needed is time to work towards full grown legitimacy and effectiveness of these actually still brand new institutions.

---

[41] Author's interviews, municipality of Štrpce, 8 May 2012 and 9 May 2012
[42] Author's interview, municipality of Štrpce, 9 May 2012

**CHAPTER 3: THE FUTURE OF SERB INTEGRATION IN KOSOVO**

In the previous chapter we have seen that the decentralization process had successes, but has not lived up to its full potential – yet. Although the effectiveness of the municipalities leaves some things to be desired, they have clearly contributed to the creation of trust in local level institutions of Kosovo governance, and in some cases even established legitimacy of the Republic as a whole. Now we have arrived at the point where we explore if these institutions also constitute a good option for peacebuilding, and fulfill the promise of Serb integration.

In this chapter I will first discuss the theory of one of the founding fathers of conflict studies, Johan Galtung, to answer the question if decentralization is leading us to sustainable peace or to renewed conflict. We discover that while large scale hostilities between the conflicting parties have come to an end, the Kosovar society is still characterized by conflictuous tendencies. We cannot speak about overt conflict, but building peace has not come to an end. Thereafter we will move deeper into the Serb perspectives on the new majority municipalities, their attitudes towards the Kosovo state, and ideas about a future in Kosovo. I will discuss the limitations of the current decentralization process, and address an array of problems and difficulties which remain in the lives of Kosovo Serbs. A separate paragraph is dedicated to the role of Serb parallel structures, because their future existence is strongly connected to the future of the Serb community. I will argue why I think that these Serb run structures should be incorporated in Kosovo's state- and peacebuilding process. Lastly a judgment will be made about the future of Serb integration into the Republic of Kosovo, by means of acculturation studies.

**3.1. A road to sustainable peace, or renewed conflict?**

Johan Galtung provides us with an interesting account on sustainable peace. He states that peace is more than the absence of overt violent conflict. The assumption is that ''silencing the guns without addressing the underlying causes of conflict is often insufficient to permanently end violence'' (Galtung 1996, in Musch et al. 2008: 52). The state of ''negative peace'' which arises shortly after hostilities have come to an end must be transformed into a situation of ''positive peace'' in which constructive relationships between former enemies are built, and where a type of structures is created which fosters peace and cooperation (Galtung 1996: 71-72).

Galtung architecture of conflict is a triadic construct in which attitudes (A), behavior (B) and a contradiction (C) constantly influence each other (see figure 2. below). At first, attitudes are the parties perceptions of the self, and of the opposing group(s), which in conflict situations most of the time contain negative feelings and beliefs about the other party. Attitudes could also be seen as

emotions and cognitions. Behavior refers to the range of actions – violent and non-violent – that individuals within a situation of conflict perform. And last but not least the contradiction, which refers to the incompatibility of goals between the conflicting parties. The behavior-aspect can be easily observed, while attitudes and the contradiction are much more less visible to the naked eye. A conflict becomes overtly violent when all three components of the conflict triangle are present in a society. On the other hand, when out of the three necessary aspects for conflict, only one or two are present, we cannot perceive a fully articulated conflict. That does not mean the conflict as such has disappeared completely. In that case we speak of a situation of negative peace (Galtung 1996, Galtung 2009).
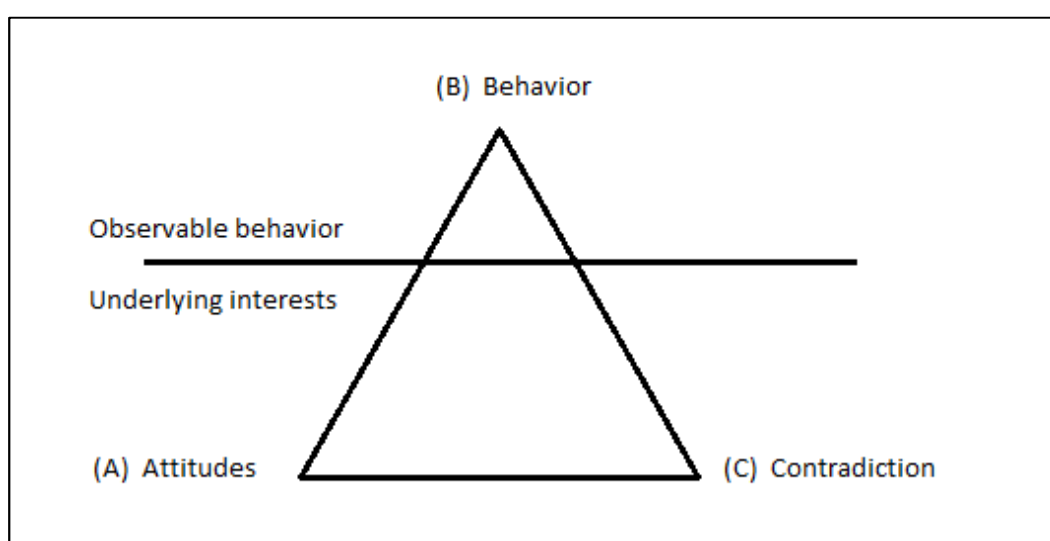


*Figure 2. The conflict triangle*

It is the contradiction aspect of the triangle which receives the most attention of Galtung. The contradiction is the base of a conflict between two parties, because the aspirations of one could be standing in the way of the other, or be perceived as standing in the way. While a contradiction could lead to conflict, I must emphasize that goals are not necessarily incompatible (Galtung 1996: 70, 79). Sometimes parties find a way in which both of their aspirations can be achieved, and a conflict can be avoided. The incompatibility of goals is the reason which led to the possibility of a conflict in the first place, but also often transforms into the structural part of the conflict. It is this structure of violence embedded in a society, either latent or manifest, which makes the transition from negative peace to positive peace such a complex and lengthy project.

The dichotomy between negative and positive peace sheds light on the situation in Kosovo. While large-scale violence between ethnic groups has been avoided, and ''the first tentative measures to protect effective statehood are taken.. the calm surface is deceptive'' (ICG 2008: i). At

first, the relationship between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians is far from optimal. Incidents of violence between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovar Albanians still happen on a daily basis. On many occasions I heard Serbs talking about their Albanian fellow-citizens, and these words did not reflect an attitude of trust and cooperation between the two groups. Similarly, the Albanians attitude towards the Serbian population as a whole reflects distrust and prejudices. Second, the institutions which have been built do not foster peace, but are a source of contention between the Albanian and Serbian ideas of statehood. Thus we have observed recurring incidents of violence, negative perspective of ''the other'', and structures which reflect the original source of the conflict. This means the underlying patterns of conflict have not been erased, and that we must assess the seemingly peaceful situation in Kosovo as a smoldering conflict.

We must conclude that no positive peace has been reached in Kosovo. The conflict triangle shows us that while most of the observable behavior – the manifest side of the conflict – has left the stage, the original contradiction between Kosovo Serbs and Albanians and cognitions of conflict between the parties still dance around in the spotlight. We need to search for a social order in which Serbian and Albanian goals become compatible, and a change of heart can take place.

Within this research I have focused on the attitudes, perspectives, emotions, cognitions, feelings of members of the Serb community in Kosovo. We are already quite aware of the contradiction between Serbs and Albanians, the contradiction between the Kosovo state and the Serbian state, and the behavior of the conflicting parties, but their attitudes have been less exposed. As described by Galtung, I have seen for myself how important attitudes are in the continuation of a latent conflict. A historical feeling of distrust in the Albanian population, and the Albanian leadership specifically means that confidence building remains difficult. Although the security situation has improved over the past couple of years, perceptions of un-safety and discrimination are still present in the heads of many Kosovo Serbs. A lot of people question if their future will lie within the boundaries of Kosovo, or somewhere else. No matter if these perceptions of the Kosovo Serb community reflect the reality in which they live, they need to be heard.  In the end it is all about perceptions, because depending on the interpretation of the situation, Kosovo will experience either a violent, or a peaceful future.

*''It is about perception, that is all that matters.''*[43]

*''People have problems in their heads you know.''*[44]

---

[43] Author's interview, municipality of Štrpce, 8 May 2012
[44] Author's interview, municipality of Klokot, 7 June 2012

**3.2. Serb perspectives on a future in Kosovo**

I have distinguished three different perspectives which exist amongst the Serb population in Kosovo.[45] It is a package of attitudes towards the Republic of Kosovo as a whole, attitudes of the functioning and role of the newly established Serb majority municipalities, and ideas about their own future in between all of this.

First, we have a group of *''negativists.''* These are the people with the attitude that is most feared by the international community and the Kosovo government, because they withdraw themselves from the state of Kosovo as much as possible. The negativists, or retainers as I also like to call them, have a strong emotional connection to the Serbian state and to Serb-run structures on the ground in Kosovo. For them there is no point of discussion:  Kosovo is an integral part of Serbia, and therefore the Republic of Serbia and local branches of the state apparatus in Kosovo are the legitimate authority. The government of Kosovo on the other hand is described with  words like distrust, corruption, bandits, and war criminals. Negativists strongly oppose the decentralization process, and avoid cooperation with the Serb majority municipalities as much as possible. They feel forced to cooperate.  Most of them have no good words left for the Kosovo municipality; the municipality has no abilities to help the Serb people, and cannot contribute to service delivery and to improve the protection of Serb rights. People in this category are very pessimistic about their future in Kosovo, and a lot of them voice that they are considering the possibility to leave, also due to the discrimination they face on a daily basis. The situation is only getting worse. Clearly these people are unsatisfied citizens of Kosovo.

> *''First of all, Serbians were fighting against these people who are ruling Kosovo, they were our enemies, they are still our enemies.''[46]*

> *''You have the Kosovo institutions who are led by Hashim Thaçi, and you have internationals asking the Serbs, why don't you trust the Kosovo institutions? For me it would be the same if you would ask a Jew during the Second World War, you can promote and you can protect your rights within the Nazi regime institutions. Can you work within these institutions to protect yourself?''[47]*

---

[45] By the use of Q methodology. While the outcome of three perspectives is the result of the Q methodology, when you compare the results to respondents from the interview-group, we find the exact same perspectives.
[46] Author's interview, teacher in the Serb school, municipality of Ranilug, 20 May 2012
[47] Author's interview, employee international organization, municipality of Štrpce, 8 May 2012

When you look at the statements above you see the attitude of the real negativists. These people are very radical in their opinions about the Kosovo government and municipalities. There are also people who have grown to become negativist because of bad experiences with the Kosovo state or life in Kosovo in general. For example, all the people I interviewed who are unemployed fall into the negativist category. These are the people who are *''fighting to survive and to get a normal life for (their) family''*[48], but have given up the hope that it will result in a better future. A great deal of the people from the municipality of Parteš showed this negative attitude. I am convinced that the proven ineffectiveness of the municipality, and the corrupt municipal officials lie at the basis of this attitude. I observe that a lot of young people who have never experienced that a positive cohabitation of Albanians and Serbs is possible, have difficulties picturing their future in Kosovo. Amongst these youngsters are also people who study in Mitrovica. It could be the case that their perspectives on the Kosovo state have become more radical as a result of being surrounded by the more radical segments of the Serb population, or they moved to Mitrovica because they wanted to be surrounded by Serbs in the first place. If people have the opportunity to live in areas where Serb authority is still very strong, they also have all reasons not to accept the state of Kosovo.

For the future of negativist people in the Republic of Kosovo I see two possibilities. A first group will stay in Kosovo, but they will hold on to the idea of the Serbian state and Serb parallel structures as long as possible. I believe that it is going to take a long time before negativists accept the government institutions of Kosovo as legitimate authority, and therefore will remain a danger for sustainable peace. A second group of negatives will leave Kosovo if they have the chance. Especially the younger generation that does not see a future in Kosovo. They rather go to Serbia, where it might also be difficult to find a job, but at least they will not be discriminated against.

A second segment of the Serb community are the predominantly pragmatic people, who I therefore call *''the pragmatics.''* These people have a much more open and practical point of view towards cooperation with the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo. Like the negativist, these people feel strongly connected to the Serb structures in Kosovo, but also admit that these structures cannot provide them with all they need.  Because Serb structures lack the ability to protect the rights and needs of Serbs, Kosovo municipalities are given a chance to prove their function for the Serb community. They would say: *"I do not mind cooperating with both the Kosovo municipality and Serb structures as long as they both work for the benefit of the local Serb population.''*[49]  The pragmatic attitude corresponds to the theory of Hanberger (2003) wherein institutions are seen as legitimate if

---

[48] Author's interview, unemployed father municipality of Ranilug, 20 May 2012
[49] Q methodology statement

they do their work correctly. Thus it is not that these people are so eager to cooperate with institutions of the state of Kosovo, but they see it in their own interest to cooperate. These are the type of people who also cooperate with the Kosovo institutions for the benefits of employment and other goods. Although these people are open to take what the municipality can offer them, they conclude that the establishment of the municipality has not brought major improvement to their daily lives. Compared to the negativists the pragmatics have a more positive perceptions of safety, they do not feel openly discriminated and they are generally quite satisfied with their lives in Kosovo. When it comes to the topic of Serbs and Albanians relationships, almost none of the pragmatists have regular interactions with Albanians, and certainly no one has Albanian friends. Compared to negativist, this perspective is not shared by a specific group of people. The only thing that struck me is that a lot of people from Klokot municipality have the pragmatic perspective.

> *''She is open to cooperate when it comes to the material aspects of their help.''*[50]

> *''The Serbian people do not accept the state of Kosovo but the facts say something different. You must because you live here. You need the money, you need everything from them.''*[51]

A third group of Kosovo Serbs can be described as *''the positivists, or protagonists of decentralization.''* These are the people who stress the possibilities of decentralization for the Serb community. The establishment of the Kosovo municipality is assessed as highly positive, and they say it has had a positive impact on their daily lives. The municipality is definitely seen as an legitimate authority. The new municipality is able to meet the basic needs of the Serb people and can offer services and fulfill needs which the Serb municipality fails to do. At the same time, respondents with a positivist attitude emphasize that Serb hospitals and schools play an important role in their lives. No matter how highly Serbs value the (local) Kosovo institutions, a life without Serb structures is unimaginable to them. Compared to the negativists and pragmatics, they do have less of an emotional connection to the Republic of Serbia and remnants of the Serbian state in Kosovo. Most positivists express their disappointment in Serb parallel structures to protect the human rights of the Serb people, which the Kosovo municipalities at this point are better able to do. The positivist attitude either found amongst very young people, some engaged in civil society organizations or NGOs, or amongst the older generation. While the positivist youngsters fight for a better future, the forty-plus generation positivists speak about the glory times of Tito and have a hope that there is some day in the future that they can live again ''as brothers'' with their Albanian neighbors.

---

[50] Author's interview, municipality of Štrpce, 08 May 2012
[51] Author's interview, Serb employee municipality of Novo Brdo, 04 May 2012

*''The most positive thing about decentralization that it helps us, it gives us an independent way to make decisions… You have more power to influence your life and what will be done to benefit the society and the community.''[52]*

*''It has potential, it is effective, I know it from experience out of this municipality… I support the Ahtisaari plan for that matter, it gave us rights, before that we had no rights at all.''[53]*

The positivist view towards local governance institutions does not ensure a stable future for Kosovo. While positivists express that they have trust in the municipal officials in the Kosovo municipality, they do not share the same feelings towards the central government. No matter how positive someone may be about the decentralization process and the functioning of the Serb majority municipalities, no one seems to have positive feelings towards the state of Kosovo. Since the central government of Kosovo is not functioning very well –and that is an understatement – Serbs have no reason to start building trust in an institution that does not seem to provide anything for them. So also works remains to be done to ensure inclusion of positivist Serbs within the Republic.  As it is expressed by one of my respondents: *''In the past ten years they got their state, but they didn't do anything to solve the social problems of the people… In the ten years of their authority, they didn't solve any problems, they just (created) more.''[54]* The reader must be informed that no matter what ethnicity, the government of Kosovo is widely criticized. There is general dissatisfaction amongst all inhabitants of Kosovo. It is stated that a lot of *''Albanians don't even trust the Kosovo government.''[55]* While it was not within the scope of this research to interview the Albanian part of the population, I have spoken to a lot of my Albanian friends and acquaintances informally about governance in Kosovo, and most of them told me about the dysfunction, corruption and their disappointment in the Kosovo government.

Going back to the question of the future of the Serb community in Kosovo, we expect that people will act different depending on their perspective. As stated before, negativists will either leave, or they will stay and deliver the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo much trouble. There is always a group of radicals who remain, but this is no problem if a large share of the population takes another point of view. Luckily for the Kosovo government, the pragmatics can be won when the Serb majority municipalities become more effective in the future. When we take a look at the municipality of Štrpce, who has had its time to become effective, we see that a lot of people accept the

---

[52] Author's interview, NGO worker in the municipality of Štrpce, 9 May 2012
[53] Author's interview, teacher Serb elementary school, municipality of Klokot, 6 June 2012
[54] Author's interview, teacher Serb elementary school, municipality of Ranilug, 20 May 2012.
[55] Author's interview, municipality of Ranilug, 20 May 2012.

municipality as a legitimate authority. This is the first step towards the sovereignty that the government of Kosovo wants to achieve. With the help of the protagonists, we might find a way in which the Serb community and municipalities in South-Eastern Kosovo are fully included in the Republic of Kosovo. One thing is clear, it will take more time before we have reached have such state of positive peace.

> *''You need a long time to do something here.. to give them some kind of trust and believe to live together, that they hate… First we should talk and do much work, we need so much more work, too much communication.''*[56]

Although negativists, pragmatics and positivists think very differently, there are also several topics on which their opinions match. I want to go very briefly into their shared perspectives on discrimination, un-safety, corruption and the economic situation, because these were topics which were stressed as important in most of my interviews. At first, a lot of Serb people express that they feel discriminated in the Kosovo society, and that the situation has not improved since the establishment of the new municipalities. Amongst others, discrimination is detected in the field of language, protection of properties, return of refugees, and employment. Second, perceptions of un-safety are highly present amongst the Serb population. Some people feel uncomfortable or even fear to go to Albanian dominated areas. They *''feel marked when they speak Serbian''*[57] and say they must act differently and be careful when they go to Albanian areas. What is interesting is that not many people have ever experienced and actual incident themselves, so according to me the feelings of un-safety are quite high in comparison with the actual incidents taking place. However, if people themselves perceive this negative feelings, it hurts them no matter how realistic the fear is. Third, the topic of corruption is something we already touched upon several times. If I may believe my respondents: *''Corruption in ruling this country.''*[58] It is an unanimous voice of the Serb community: you cannot have people who have committed war crimes in a government. This corresponds to the earlier discussed general dissatisfaction about the functioning of the government by all populations in Kosovo. And last, there is a need to create economic opportunities for all people in Kosovo. When asked about the biggest problems of the Serb community, and what any government should addressed first the answer always was: unemployment. All of these four problems should be dealt with order to reach sustainable peace in Kosovo.

---

[56] Author's interview, municipality of Parteš, 24 May 2012
[57] Author's interview, municipality of Ranilug, 20 May 2012
[58] Author's interview, municipality of Štrpce, 9 May 2012

**3.3. Serb parallel structures and the Kosovo state building process**

Kosovo's road towards effective statehood is faced with many problems. At first, because of conflicting ideas about statehood amongst the populations in Kosovo and uncertainty about the status of Kosovo itself, the government of Kosovo experiences difficulties in expressing its authority over Serb majority areas within its territory. Especially in by Serb inhabited areas in the North of Kosovo, Kosovar authorities are not at all accepted as legitimate authority, but also in Southern enclaves there is a group of people who refuse to accept the state of Kosovo (Dahlman and Williams 2010). This makes that inclusion of the Serb community in the Republic remains difficult. Secondly, even in areas where Kosovar government institutions are recognized as legitimate authority by all groups, they cannot always provide for the services citizens need. Serb citizens experience discrimination and insecurity, besides the general problems of ineffective service delivery, corruption and unemployment. Where the Kosovo government cannot (or will not) provide these services, Serb-led parallel structures try to provide Kosovo Serb citizens with municipal services, healthcare and education.

These Serb parallel governance structures are necessary for the survival of the Serb community in Kosovo. This is the most stressed and unanimous opinion I have heard within my research. Without the existence of Serb structures, the Serb community will not see a future in Kosovo. We have to make a distinction between Serb municipalities, and other types of institutions in the healthcare and education sector. A large share, although not all, of the Serb municipalities seem to be functioning inefficiently and have therefore lost part of their legitimacy and support, while the work of the Serb hospitals, ambulances, schools and university is still highly valued. Serb citizens rarely use Albanian healthcare and education services, because the parallel structures provide them with the services they need in this field. Although the CSP allows the existence of Serb schools and hospitals, this does not mean the Kosovo government is working to incorporate these structures into the state system. This explains the fear of the Serb community that these structures will disappear. I totally agree with my respondents that these parallel structures should remain within the state of Kosovo, and preferably should even be incorporated in the official state building process.

> *''The condition for us to accept a possible solution is that we don't have to disown our identity as Serbs, and that we are connected to our headquarters in Belgrade… to have that authority.''[59]*

---

[59] Author's interview, municipality of Štrpce, 9 May 2012

*''We need that structures, they are not making the damage. They are helping us. Belgrade's funds are spend on schools, and everybody benefits, also the Kosovo economy. They are not interfering with anything, they don't do anything bad.''[60]*

The theory on hybrid political orders as designed by Victor Boege et al. provides support for the existence of Serb parallel structures. The advice is to utilize rather than to neglect the more traditional or non-state networks of governance in order to make a post-conflict state apparatus work more effectively. Some governments ''deliberately incorporate traditional authorities, in order to strengthen state capacities and legitimacy'' (2009: 21-22). Serb parallel structures adopt an ambiguous position towards the Kosovo state. While they provide an important share of the services to Serb citizens in Kosovo, they also contribute to a Serbian presence in the territory of Kosovo. Incorporating Serb structures into the framework of the Kosovo state may entail a risk of losing authority, but it can also reinforce this authority. As many of my respondents state, Serb structures do not harm the Kosovo state, so it would be a shame if they are forced to leave. Not only will the Serb population in Kosovo suffer immensely if they have to live without these structures, it will also have negative effect on Serb relations with the government of Kosovo. Distrust and suspicion towards the Republic will only increase, and Serb will feel even more unwelcome than they already feel. I think it is very important the Kosovo state recognizes that a large share of their citizens benefit from the existence of these structures. If they let the Serb structures be part of the Republic of Kosovo, they truly show that they are willing to protect the rights and needs of the Serb community. Not to forget, they can benefit from the relatively well-functioning structures themselves.

At the end of the day all that counts for a peaceful Kosovo is that stable, effective and legitimate institutions are built (2009:30). Whether these institutions are funded by the Kosovo government or by Belgrade, or whether they are called Serbian or Kosovar institutions, should not make a difference. If the Kosovo government accepts Serb parallel structures into the framework of the Kosovo state, and when the Serb community recognizes that they can gain from interaction with Kosovo institutions it will become clear that these institutions are not necessarily in contradiction with each other. Where both fail to provide their citizens the full range of services that they need, they could complement each other (van der Borgh 2012: 34).

---

[60] Author's interview, municipality of Parteš, 29 May 2012

**3.4. Serb integration or separation from the Republic of Kosovo?**

In this paragraph, we question if the current decentralization measures have led to more integration or separation of the Serb community into the Kosovo society. If we must believe the protagonists of the decentralization approach, decentralization can have a positive effect on national cohesion and inter-ethnic cooperation. Skeptics on the other hand claim that decentralization has an opposite effect, it drives groups further apart. In the case of Kosovo it proves to be difficult to assess its influence.

For the past couple of years, the Serb population in Kosovo has lived their lives in ethnic enclaves separated from the Albanian part of the population in Kosovo. Since the end of the war and again after massive violence against the Serb community broke out in 2004, the overall number of Serbs in Kosovo has declined, which has contributed to the sharpening of ethnic segregation in Kosovo over the past ten years (Dahlman and Williams 2010: 415). The Serb community locates itself in areas where Serb structures are functioning properly: ''*You already see it in areas of Kosovo where Serbian institutions are dysfunctional…there are two cases: you either have no Serbs, or you have only the elderly left who live of their pensions and they don't need anything else. They are just there to die.*''[61] Not many Serbs live outside of these enclaves, or dare to move to Albanian dominated areas. I am convinced that no matter how successful decentralization will be, it will have a very marginal, if any, effect on ethnic enclavisation. The Serb community will not move away from their safe havens. Thus we see Kosovo Serbs living in these enclaves, and merely cooperating with Kosovo municipalities who are in fact also somewhat separated from the Kosovo state, can we actually speak of Serb integration in Kosovo?

In the field of acculturation studies the way in which the Serb community has separated itself from the larger Kosovar society would be called separatism. In the light of our discussion about Serb integration in Kosovo it is interesting to discuss this theory. In essence, acculturation covers all the psychological and cultural changes that arise following continuing contact between people of different cultural backgrounds. When two different groups share a social and political framework, it is sometimes assumed that a culturally uniform society should be forged. However, in today's world where cultural groups have moved around and settled in multi-ethnic societies, uniformity can rarely be found, and it is questioned if we should even try to achieve this.

---

[61] Author's interview, municipality of Štrpce, 8 April 2012

Figure 3. below shows us two possible ways how minority groups in cultural diverse societies can organize themselves in relation to the bigger society. The melting-pot model on the left side clearly resembles the situation of the Serb community in the Republic of Kosovo. The minority groups in this model are not incorporated in the dominant or so-called mainstream society, and therefore risk to become marginalized (Sam and Berry 2006: 27-28).
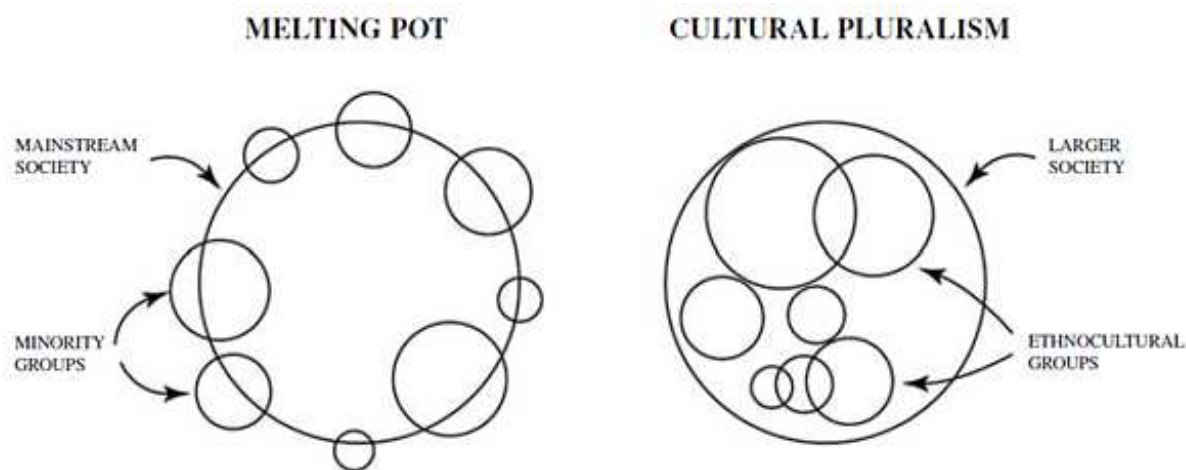


*Figure 3. Two models of culturally diverse societies* (Berry 2006: 28)

The structure of the political and social framework in which two culturally diverse groups reside depends inter alia on the type of acculturation strategy that the non-dominant group pursues. These acculturation strategies are composed of two components: attitudes and behavior. You can almost hear Johan Galtung speaking. Berry describes attitudes as individual preferences, and behaviors as the actual practices which an individual is able to carry out (2006: 33). We have already seen before there is rarely a perfect match between attitudes and the behavior of individuals. In the case of the Serb community in Kosovo we see that it is their emotional preference to avoid any contact with the mainstream society, a separation strategy, while their behavior towards the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo sometimes reflects a strategy of integration.

However, acculturation outcome is also dependent on the attitudes and behaviors of the Albanian share of the population. To assume that non-dominant groups can always decide freely how and if they engage in contact with the greater society is not correct. The majority group can enforce certain kinds of relations, or put constraints on the possibilities of integration of minority communities. Integration thus requires ''a *mutual accommodation*…involving the acceptance by both dominant and non-dominant groups of the right of all groups to live as culturally different peoples within the same society'' (2006: 35-37, emphasis added).  We have already seen in our discussion of the positive peace theory of Johan Galtung that integration requires a shift in the

behavior and mainly attitudes of the Serb community, but now we see that also the attitudes and the behavior of the Kosovo government and the Albanian majority play a major role. In order to attain Serb integration in Kosovo, the Albanian part of the population needs to show in both their attitudes and acts that Serbs as culturally distinct group are accepted as equal citizens, and will be given the special place they deserve within the society (2006: 39).

To go back to our discussion of the effect of decentralization on Serb acculturation in Kosovo, we see that the creation of Serb majority municipalities has worked in two directions. It works both towards integration of the Serb community into the structures of the Republic of Kosovo, and it supports and strengthens the separation of Serb citizens into their already existing enclaves. It depends on the individual attitude if the creation of the new municipalities has led to more integration into the Kosovo society. If a person is willing to integrate, he or she will act accordingly. It is also dependent on the ethnic composition of the new municipality. For example integration can be achieved much more easily in a multi-ethnic environment such as in the municipality of Novo Brdo, than in the municipality of Ranilug where almost all inhabitants are Serbs. If we must believe Berry (2006: 36) integration can only be pursued in societies where certain psychological preconditions are present. He mentions the widespread acceptance of cultural diversity, relatively low levels of prejudice, positive attitudes amongst the various ethnic groups, and a sense of attachment to the larger society by all individuals. It may be clear that these conditions are not all present in the Kosovo society, but there is no reason to be pessimistic about the future. We are at a point where the culturally diverse character of the society is accepted by both Albanians and Serbs, and both have a feeling of attachment to the territory. If the now high levels of prejudices and the quite negative attitudes of the other groups become better, maybe integration will be given another chance. I do not exclude that this will happen in the future, but for the moment we must conclude that  most Serbs remain safely in their enclaves on the edge of the Kosovo society.

**CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**4.1. Outcome of decentralization: Serb integration and sustainable peace?**

Throughout this thesis I have tried to provide an answer to the question *if the current decentralization measures can entrench Serb integration and foster sustainable peace within the newborn Republic of Kosovo.* As could be expected when uncovering the complex state building process in post-conflict Kosovo, the answers to this single question are multiple. First we have seen what is understood under the ''current decentralization measures''. It mainly entails the creation and implementation of new Serb majority municipalities as the basic units of local self-governance. We have also detected that there is a major difference between the decentralization measures as have been written on paper, and her practices. To further dissect the main question, the process of Serb integration and the desired situation of sustainable peace have both been treated as possible outcomes of decentralization in this research. Other possible effects of decentralization have passed by, but in my perception these are the two most important concepts to understand how the future of the Serb community and other citizens of the Republic of Kosovo will look like.

I conclude that the establishment of new Serb majority municipalities has had a positive effect on the Kosovo state- and peace-building practice. Overall, these municipalities are functioning to a satisfying degree, and they are able to fulfill an important share of the needs of their citizens. I believe that they have not lived up to their full potential yet, but time will tell if they will become more effective. Most Serbs have come to accept the existence and authority of the Kosovo municipalities, which in turn has contributed to an increase in the legitimacy of the state on the local level. An image of the state of Kosovo as legitimate authority as a whole has not been established as a result of the current decentralization measures, but who knows what the future might bring.

We have observed that the effect of decentralization on Serb integration has been twofold. At first, it has been successful in the inclusion of the Serb community into the local governance structures of the Republic of Kosovo, but on the other hand it has not resulted in integration of the Serb community into the bigger Kosovar society. We do see the phenomenon that cooperation between Serbs and Albanians is taking place in the more multi-ethnic municipalities. New relationships between Serbs and Albanians on the local level may be a precursor for increased Serb integration into the Kosovo state and society.

In relation to the effect of decentralization on the creation of sustainable peace for Kosovo we must conclude that sustainable peace has not been reached in Kosovo at the moment. In order to reach such a situation of positive peace, a shift in Serb attitudes towards the Kosovo state and their own future within this state must be acquired. We have established that negativistic, positivist and a more pragmatic attitudes exist amongst the Serb population in Kosovo. We need to make sure to take into account all of these perspectives, and their different ideas about a future in Kosovo. Where positivists will contribute to the creation of positive peace, negativists are less likely to participate within the Kosovo state soon.

## 4.2. Voices of the Serb community on a future in Kosovo

We have concluded that the current decentralization process has not come to her end. Sustainable peace has not yet been realized, and Serb integration could possibly be lifted to a higher level. Within my research I have asked my respondents whether they wanted to give me suggestions or recommendations for the creation of a peaceful and stable Kosovo. Since we have placed so much importance to the voices of the Serb community in this thesis, that is also how I would like to end. My points of recommendation for the road towards a peaceful Kosovo will therefore be guided by these voices. Who could tell it better than the people who deal with the conflictuous structures of the Kosovo society every day.

Out of my interviews I have derived five focus points for a peaceful Kosovo:
[1] A focus on creating effective municipalities, [2] A focus on creating employment and economic opportunities, [3] A focus on the role of Serb parallel structures in Kosovo, [4] A focus on the elimination of corruption, and [5] A focus on educating towards a common future.


**[1] A focus on creating effective municipalities**

We have seen that legitimacy of the state will follow when an effective order is established (Lake 2007). Therefore it is very important that the local level units of the Kosovo government are functioning effectively. Once this is the case, the Serb community will deem the state as legitimate, and integration in the state as a whole will be considered.

*''Overall they are doing a good job, but they should learn to work more effectively''*[62]

---

[62] Author's interview, municipality of Štrpce, 9 May 2012

**[2] A focus on creating employment and economic opportunities**

It is simple, unemployment is perceived as the biggest problem by Serbs but by other citizens in Kosovo as well, and therefore requires extra attention. It is widely known that once economic problems are solved, ethnic divisions will become less salient.

*''The biggest problem is unemployment, especially for the Serb people.''[63]*

*''It is nice to invest in pavements and sidewalks, to invest 30.000 euro, but for that money you could have also invested in for example a small factory that could hire a small number of people. But it would make a big difference, because you cannot live of lights and pavements.''[64]*

*''We have to create economic opportunities.''[65]*

**[3] A focus on the role of Serb parallel structures in Kosovo**

I have stressed the importance of the Serb parallel structures for the Serb community in Kosovo. The Kosovo government needs to consider integration of Serb parallel hospital and education systems into the framework of the Republic of Kosovo. We have seen that this will also benefit the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Kosovo state.

*''Maybe they will not disappear, they shouldn't, they are important for the people. Serb institutions contribute to bringing opportunities for Serb people''[66]*

*''I accept these municipalities, as long as the Albanians don't forbid our schools, hospitals and post office… it should be connected of course we should cooperate.''[67]*

---

[63] Author's interview, municipality of Novo Brdo, 20 April 2012
[64] Author's interview, municipality of Štrpce, 9 May 2012
[65] Author's interview, municipality of Parteš, 22 May 2012
[66] Author's interview, municipality of Ranilug, 26 April 2012
[67] Author's interview, municipality of Klokot, 6 June 2012

**[4] A focus on the elimination of corruption**

In order to create an legitimate state system, we should be focused on working on the elimination of corruption. Since corruption is a widespread phenomenon on both the local and the central level in Kosovo, this will be a difficult task.

*''You cannot have people with a reportedly dirty background, promoting a system with values that they themselves have destroyed. It simply doesn't work that way.''[68]*

*''I hope that people leading the institutions simply take more brain and chose to work in the interest of the community.''[69]*

**[5] A focus on educating towards a common future**

Everything starts with education, also positive peacebuilding in Kosovo. Children in Kosovo are educated in two totally different environments: they are taught different versions of history, in a different language, through a different curriculum. If children are meant to be the future of a peaceful and multi-ethnic Kosovo, they also need to be educated in institutions which breed inter-ethnic understanding and cooperation. It would already be a first good step if all children in Kosovo would both learn the Albanian and Serbian language.

*"Education, education, and education, citizen's education you know… we must learn one each other's language as it was in communism. Communism wasn't good but it was better than now, everyone would know the language from another. We need Albanian they need Serbian so… Everything must start with education.''[70]*

*''The solution of most problems is through education. You educate the little children to learn how to find a solution for the problem. How to live exactly… You teach the young people. If you fix the problem in the beginning it is okay, (but) if you tell them it is okay, it will pass, that makes the problem even bigger.''[71]*

---

[68] Author's interview, municipality of Štrpce, 8 May 2012
[69] Author's interview, municipality of Parteš, 29 May 2012
[70] Author's interview, municipality of Klokot, 7 June 2012
[71] Author's interview, municipality Novo Brdo, 4 May 2012

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Agnew, J. (2005) Sovereignty Regimes: Territoriality and State Authority in Contemporary World Politics, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 95 (2): 437-458.

B92 (2012) *Kosovo supervision ends, sovereignty in fall*, 02 July 2012. Available from: http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2012&mm=07&dd=02&nav_id=81064 Assessed on 02 July 2012.

Balkan Insight (2012) *Kosovo given green light for full independence*, 02 July 2012. Available from: http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-given-green-light-for-full-independence. Assessed on 03 July 2012.

Bird, R., Vaillancourt, F., and Roy-César, E. (2010) *Is Decentralization ''Glue'' or ''Solvent'' for National Unity?* Georgia state university, Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, International Studies Program, Working Paper 10-03. Available from: http://aysps.gsu.edu/isp/files/ispwp1003.pdf. Assessed on 01 March 2012.

Boege, V.Brown, A. Clements, K. and Nolan, A. (2009) *On Hybrid Political Orders and Emerging States: What is Failing – States in the Global South or Research and Politics in the West?* Berlin: Berghof Research Center, pp. 15-35.

Borgh, C. van der. (2012) Resisting International State Building in Kosovo, *Problems of Post-Communism*, 59 (2): 31-42.

Brinkerhoff, D.W. (2005), Rebuilding Governance in Failed States and Post-Conflict Societies: Core Concepts and Cross-Cutting Themes, *Public Administration and Development*, 25: 3-14.

Brown, S.R. (1993) A Primer on Q methodology, *Operant Subjectivity*, 16 (3/4): 91-138.

Bush, K. (2010) 'The Peacebuilding role of Local Governments', in Musch et al. (2006) *City Diplomacy. The Role of Local Governments in Conflict Prevention, Peace-building, Post-Conflict Reconstruction.* The Hague: VNG International, pp. 105-122.

Chesterman, S. (2004) *You, the people: the United Nations, transitional administration, and state-building.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dahlman, C.T., and Williams, T. (2010) Ethnic Enclavisation and State Formation in Kosovo, *Geopolitics*, 15: 406-430.

Devas, N., and Delay, S. (2006) Local Democracy and the Challenges of Decentralising the State: An International Perspective, *Local Government Studies*, 32 (5): 677-695.

Durning, D.W., and Brown, S. (2006) *Q methodology and Decision Making*, Taylor & Francis Group, LCC, 537-563. Available from: http://www.fairnessdiscourse.com/pdf/Durning%20-%20Q%20Methodology%20and%20Decision%20Making.pdf. Assessed on 24 June 2012.

Democratisation, Decentralisation and Local Governance Network website (DLGN) (2012). Available from: http://www.sdc-decentralization.net/. Assessed on 02 July 2012.

Eckhard, S. (2011) Political engineering in Kosovo. Lessons from confronting institutional theory and practice, *Amsterdam Social Science,* 3 (1): 21-45.

Exel, N.J.A. and G. de Graaf. (2005) *Q-methodology: A sneak preview.* Available from: http://www.qmethodology.net/PDF/Q-methodology%20-%20A%20sneak%20preview.pdf. Assessed on 25 February 2012.

Fearon, Kate. (2012). *Guests in Our Own House: The Comprehensive Settlement Proposal and the Serb Community in northern Kosovo.* Mitrovica/ë: International Civilian Office.

Fisher, M. and Schmelze, B. (2009) *Building Peace in the Absence of States: Challenges the Discourse on state failure.* Bergdorf handbook dialogue series. Berlin: Berghof Research Center, pp. 1-98.

Fitzgerald, Mary (2012) *Europe's youngest state: no work, no way out, no country for young people*, 07 April 2012, The Irish Times. Available from: http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/weekend/2012/0407/1224314481863.html. Assessed on 12 April 2012.

Galtung, J. (1996) *Conflict Theory: Conflict Formation*, in Peace by Peaceful Means: peace and conflict, development and civilization. London: Sage, pp. 70-80.

Galtung, J. (2009) *Theories of Conflict. Definitions, Dimensions, Negations, Formations.* Available from: http://www.transcend.org/files/Galtung_Book_Theories_Of_Conflict_single.pdf. Assessed on 18 July 2012.

Gjoni, R., Wetterberg, A. and Dunbar, D. (2010) Decentralization as a conflict transformation tool: the challenge in Kosovo, *Public Administration and Development*, 30 (5): 291-312.

Hanberger, A. (2003) Public Policy and Legitimacy: A historical policy analysis of the interplay of public policy and legitimacy, *Policy Sciences*, 36: 257-278.

International Crisis Group (ICG) (2008) *Kosovo's Fragile Transition*, Europe Report N° 196, Pristina/Brussels.

International Crisis Group (ICG) (2009) *Serb integration in Kosovo: Taking the Plunge*, Europe Report N° 200, Pristina/Brussels.

International Crisis Group (ICG) (2011) *North Kosovo: Dual Sovereignty in Practice*, Europe Report N° 211, Pristina/Mitrovica/Brussels.

Judah, T. (2008) Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

KIPRED (2007) *Ethnic Centralization and the Perils of Confusing Solutions*, Discussion Paper, Prishtina. Available from: http://www.kipred.org/advCms/documents/5801_Ethnic_Centralization_and_the_Perils_of_Confusing_Solutions.pdf. Assed on 20 June 2012.

KIPRED (2008) *Kosovo Serbs after the Declaration of Independence: the right momentum for Confidence Building Measures*, Policy Brief Series, Policy Brief 8, Prishtina. Available from: http://www.kipred.net/web/eng.php?cid=2,3. Assessed on 14 February 2012.

KIPRED (2009) *Decentralization in Kosovo II: Challenges of Serb Majority Municipalities*, Policy Brief Series, Policy Brief 16, Prishtina. Available from: http://www.kipred.net/web/eng.php?cid=2,3. Assessed on 16 February 2012.

KIPRED (2010) *Review of Decentralization – Functioning of Serb Majority Municipalities*, Policy Brief Series, Policy Brief 2010/5, Prishtina. Available from: http://www.kipred.net/web/eng.php?cid=2,3. Assessed on 16 February 2012.

Klem, M. and Frerks, G. (2008) 'How Local Government Contribute to Peace-Building', in Musch et al. (2006) City Diplomacy. *The Role of Local Governments in Conflict Prevention, Peace-building, Post-Conflict Reconstruction.* The Hague: VNG International, pp. 47-74.

Kosovo Local Governance and Decentralization Support (LOGOS) (2012) Project document for bridging phase, January 2013- December 2013. Internal document.

Kosovo Thanks You (2012), website. Available at: www.kosovothanksyou.com. Assessed on 04 July 2012.

Lake, D.A. (2007) Building Legitimate States After Civil Wars: Order, Authority, and International Trusteeship, San Diego: University of California.

Lehne, S. (2012) *Kosovo and Serbia: Towards a Normal Relationship,* Carnegie Europe. Endowment for International Peace, Policy Outlook. Available from: http://carnegieeurope.eu/2012/03/13/kosovo-and-serbia-toward-normal-relationship. Assessed on 22 July 2012.

Lijphart A. (1977) *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*. Yale University Press: New Haven.

Mandic, D. (2012) The importance of informality. A few thoughts on Eckhard´s ´´Political Engineering in Kosovo´´, *Amsterdam Social Science*, 4 (1): 93-99.

Manning, T. (2010) Lost between parallel worlds: finding equality in Kosovo with decentralization, *Journal of Politics & International Affairs*, pp. 106-116.

Monteux, A. (2006) Decentralisation: The New Delusion of Ethnic Conflict Regulation?, *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 8 (2): 162-182.

Musch, A., van der Valk, C., Sizoo, A., and Tajbakhsh, K. (2008) City Diplomacy. *The Role of Local Governments in Conflict Prevention, Peace-building, Post-Conflict Reconstruction.* The Hague: VNG International.

OSCE (2003) *Parallel structures in Kosovo 2003*, Department of Human Rights and the Rule of Law. Pristina: OSCE mission in Kosovo.

OSCE (2007) *Parallel structures in Kosovo 2006 – 2007*, Department of Human Rights, Decentralization and Committees. Pristina: OSCE mission in Kosovo.

OSCE (2011) *Municipal profiles.* Available from: http://www.osce.org/kosovo/43753. Assessed on 23 April 2012.

Paris, R. (2004) *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sam, D.L., and Berry, J.W. (2006) *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Swiss - Kosovo Local Governance and Decentralization Support Project (LOGOS) website. Available from: http://helvetas-ks.org/wp/. Assessed on 23 July 2012.

Tansey, O. (2007) Democratization without a state: Democratic regime-building in Kosovo, *Democratization*, 14 (1): 129-150.

Thomas, D.M., and Watson, R.T. (2002) Q-sorting and MIS Research: A Primer, *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 8 (9): 141-156.

UNOSEK (2007) *Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement*, United Nations Office of the Special Envoy for Kosovo. Available from: http://www.unosek.org/docref/Comprehensive_proposal-english.pdf. Assessed on 02 February 2012.

UNOSEK (2007) *Report of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Kosovo's Future Status,* United Nations Office of the Special Envoy For Kosovo. Available from: http://www.unosek.org/docref/report-english.pdf. Assessed on 09 March 2012.

United Nations Security Council (UN SC) Resolution 1244 (1999). Available from: http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/172/89/PDF/N9917289.pdf?OpenElement. Assessed on 09 March 2012.

Webler, T., Danielson, S., & Tuler, S. (2009). Using Q method to reveal social perspectives in environmental research. Greenfield MA: Social and Environmental Research Institute. Available from: www.serius.org/pubs/Qprimer.pdf. Assessed on 28 February 2012.

**APPENDICES**

**Appendix I: Overview of respondents**

|  | Municipality | Date | Sex | Age | Q respondent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Respondent #1 | Ranilug | 12/04/12 | M | 20 |  |
| Respondent #2 | Novo Brdo/Novobërdë | 19/04/12 | M | 39 |  |
| Respondent #3 | Novo Brdo/Novobërdë | 19/04/12 | M | 50 |  |
| Respondent #4 | Novo Brdo/Novobërdë | 20/04/12 | M | 38 |  |
| Respondent #5 | Novo Brdo/Novobërdë | 20/04/12 | F | 33 |  |
| Respondent #6 | Ranilug/Ranillug | 26/04/12 | M | 27 |  |
| Respondent #7 | Ranilug/Ranillug | 26/04/12 | F | 26 |  |
| Respondent #8 | Novo Brdo/Novobërdë | 04/05/12 | F | 40ish |  |
| Respondent #9 | Novo Brdo/Novobërdë | 04/05/12 | M | 65 |  |
| Respondent #10 | Štrpce/Shtërpcë | 08/05/12 | F | 23 |  |
| Respondent #11 | Štrpce/Shtërpcë | 08/05/12 | M | 34 | X |
| Respondent #12 | Štrpce/Shtërpcë | 09/05/12 | F | 47 |  |
| Respondent #13 | Štrpce/Shtërpcë | 09/05/12 | M | 37 | X |
| Respondent #14 | Štrpce/Shtërpcë | 09/05/12 | M | 51 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

| Respondent #15 | Štrpce/Shtërpcë | 09/05/12 | F | 21 | X |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Respondent #16 | Ranilug/Ranillug | 20/05/12 | F | 22 | X |
| Respondent #17 | Ranilug/Ranillug | 20/05/12 | M | 34 | X |
| Respondent #18 | Ranilug/Ranillug | 20/05 /12 | M | 33 | X |
| Respondent #19 | Parteš/Partesh | 22/05/12 | M | 24 | X |
| Respondent #20 | Parteš/Partesh | 22/05/12 | F | 22 | |
| Respondent #21 | Parteš/Partesh | 24/05/12 | M | 47 | |
| Respondent #22 | Parteš/Partesh | 24/05/12 | F | 40ish | X |
| Respondent #23 | Parteš/Partesh | 29/05/12 | M | 53 | |
| Respondent #24 | Parteš/Partesh | 29/05/12 | F | 38 | X |
| Respondent #25 | Klokot/Kllokot | 06/06/12 | M | 24 | X |
| Respondent #26 | Klokot/Kllokot | 06/06/12 | M | 29 | X |
| Respondent #27 | Klokot/Kllokot | 07/06/12 | F | 30 | |
| Respondent #28 | Klokot/Kllokot | 07/06/12 | F | 30ish | X |
| Respondent #29* | Ranilug/Ranillug | 04/06/12 | M | 25 | X |
| Respondent #30* | Štrpce/Shtërpcë | 07/06/12 | F | 24 | X |

* Pure Q methodology respondents

**Appendix II: Topic list interviews**

1.  **Interactions with governance structures**

- Vote municipal elections 2009?

    o   Voting message

    o   Pressure to vote

- With which municipalities (Belgrade or Pristina) do you have **interactions**?

    o   Is this different than before?

- **In what way** do you interact with this municipality?

    o   Civil registrations; certificates?

    o   License plate(s) on your car?

    o   Payment of taxes, to who?

- Will you vote for Kosovo elections in 2013?

- Will you vote for Serb elections in May?

- Opinion towards the fact that Serb municipal election are not held in Kosovo ?

2.  **Functionality of governance structures**

    - How do you perceive the **functioning** of your municipality?

    - Are you satisfied with the **service delivery** of your municipality?

        o   Water and electricity supplies

        o   Where do you go to for healthcare?

        o   What kind of post office do you go to?

        o   Which network do you have for your telephone?

        o   Education of children

        o   Where does the rest of your family live?

    - Do you feel your municipality has the ability to solve the problems of the people?

    - How do you assess your municipal officials?

    - Is your opinion of the work of your municipality negative or positive?

    - Do you see progress / positive change in the work that the municipality does for you?

    - Which are the most important problems that remain present?

- What do you see as the **legitimate authority**;

  o What type of governance should be in power according to you?

- Do you think other Serbs in Kosovo accept a similar authority as you?

3. **Safety and inter-ethnic tensions**

- Do you feel safe to go to Albanian dominated cities/areas?

- How do you assess the occurrence of incidents of violence?

  o Stable, increased or decreased over the last couple of years

- Has the establishment of Serb majority municipalities contributed to a peaceful existence between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo?

  o Do you feel people from different groups have come together?

  o Do you recognize improvement in your daily live (since 2009)?

- Has your position as Serb in the society of Kosovo changed over the last couple of years?

  o Do you have trust in the Republic of Kosovo?

  o Are you a satisfied citizen within Kosovo?

4. **The future**

- Perception of the institutions in Pristina?

- Can Serb structures remain within the Republic of Kosovo?

- Can both municipalities and parallel structures live side by side within Kosovo?

- What do you see as **solution for Kosovo**'s problems in the future?

  o Ideal solution?

  o Most acceptable and realistic solution?

- If municipalities funded by Belgrade cease to exist, will you stay in Kosovo?

- If the state of Kosovo becomes a long term reality, how will you react?

- How would you react to fully recognized and formal independence?

  Comparison North and South:

- What is your opinion about the current events in the North of Kosovo?

- Do you think South Eastern Kosovo has made better arrangements?

**Appendix III: Q cards**

| | |
|---|---|
| **1**<br><br>I am optimistic about my future in Kosovo | **2**<br><br>I believe that within 10 years not much will change about the situation in Kosovo |
| **3**<br><br>It is really difficult to solve the problems of the people in Kosovo | **4**<br><br>I would not stay in Kosovo if I had the opportunity to raise my family in Serbia |
| **5**<br><br>The Kosovo municipality are unable to meet the basic needs (such as water, infrastructure, employment etc.) of the Serb community | **6**<br><br>The Kosovo municipality has the ability to solve the problems of the Serb people |
| **7**<br><br>The Kosovo government and municipalities are not able to protect the human rights of the Serb people | **8**<br><br>The establishment of the new Serb majority municipality has improved my daily life |
| **9**<br><br>The new Kosovo municipality invests in my village, and I saw gradual improvement of infrastructures | **10**<br><br>The Kosovo municipality has more abilities to help the Serb people than the Serb municipality |
| **11**<br><br>I am informed about the work of the Kosovo municipality | **12**<br><br>I feel pressure of the people around me not to cooperate with the Kosovo municipality |
| **13**<br><br>I cooperate with the Kosovo municipality because they can offer me things the Serb municipality cannot provide for me | **14**<br><br>I do not mind cooperating with both the new Kosovo municipality and the Serb municipality as long as both work for the benefit for the local Serb population |

| 15<br><br>I only cooperate with the Kosovo municipality, because I have to | 16<br><br>I trust the municipal officials in the Kosovo municipality |
|---|---|
| 17<br><br>I trust the municipal officials in the Serb municipality | 18<br><br>I have trust within the government of Kosovo |
| 19<br><br>I have trust within the government of Serbia | 20<br><br>The Serb municipality is unable to meet the needs (such as water, infrastructure, unemployment etc.) of the Serb people |
| 21<br><br>The Serb municipality has the ability to solve the problems of the people | 22<br><br>The Serb governance structures (municipality, hospitals and schools) are not able to protect the human rights of the Serb people |
| 23<br><br>I am informed about the work of the Serb municipality | 24<br><br>It is more socially accepted to cooperate with the Serb municipality |
| 25<br><br>The Serb municipality is an effective structures of governance for Serbs people in my village | 26<br><br>If Serb structures were to leave or disappear in Kosovo, I will leave as well |
| 27<br><br>I need the Serb municipality to live a good life in Kosovo | 28<br><br>I feel more emotionally connected to Serb structures then to the Kosovo municipality |

| | |
|---|---|
| **29**<br><br>I feel left out of Kosovo society | **30**<br><br>I do not feel safe in Albanian dominated areas |
| **31**<br><br>I feel discriminated as Serb within the Kosovo society | **32**<br><br>I am a satisfied citizen within Kosovo |
| **33**<br><br>I have Kosovo Albanian friends and meet them regularly | **34**<br><br>It is a good things that Serbs and Albanians mostly live separately |
| **35**<br><br>I accept the municipalities of Kosovo as legitimate authority | **36**<br><br>I accept the Serb structures as legitimate authority |
| **37**<br><br>I  accept the government in Pristina as legitimate authority | **38**<br><br>I accept the government in Belgrade as legitimate authority |
| **39**<br><br>The creation of new Kosovo municipalities with a Serb majority, such as Klokot, Partes, Ranilug, have changed my life | **40**<br><br>The creation of Kosovo municipalities with a Serb majority, such as Klokot, Partes, Ranilug, was a good thing for me |
| **41**<br><br>I do not support the decentralization process in Kosovo | |