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Injustice, inequality, and the environment: An analysis of sustainable development
and the environment in EU peacebuilding in Kosovo

by

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Abstract

This thesis contributes to the conceptual and theoretical development of the field of environmental peacebuilding by engaging critically with the core concepts that are often taken for granted, such as ‘the environment’ and ‘sustainability’. Against this background, my thesis examines how understandings of the environment in sustainable development affect the European Union’s (EU) peacebuilding process in Kosovo. It follows three overarching objectives, namely (a) to identify the understanding of the environment that the EU promotes through its peacebuilding policies; (b) to trace how this understanding of the environment has been transposed into Kosovar policy-making processes; and (c) to pinpoint the implications of such an understanding of the environment on the peacebuilding process itself. By synthesising insights from green political economy and political ecology with original qualitative data gathered through interviews and policy analyses, I argue that the EU’s peacebuilding policies promote an anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment that emphasises its commodification in the process of boosting post-conflict sustainable development and human wellbeing. However, this gives rise to two clashing notions of sustainability: a development-based notion of sustainability as sustained economic growth and a security-based notion of sustainability as (regional) stability. My analysis illustrates that different interests and agendas are collapsed into the conceptual umbrella of ‘sustainability’, which gives the impression of policy coherence but creates frictions in the peacebuilding process itself. Thereby, EU policies and the broader peacebuilding process contribute to the institutionalisation of patterns of unsustainability - in the form of socio-economic, political and environmental inequalities and injustices - into the post-conflict context. I argue that research in environmental peacebuilding can become more attuned to whose version of peace and sustainability the peacebuilding policies in question aim to promote by unpacking the underlying interests and power dynamics that are collapsed into its core concepts of sustainability and ‘the environment’.

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Declaration

I confirm that the dissertation is my own work. I am aware of University Guidance on the use of [Unfair Means](#). This work has not been previously presented for an award at this, or any other, University.

Teresa Lappe-Osthege

Sheffield, 20th November 2019

List of Acronyms

CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECRAN	Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network
EEAS	European External Action Service
ERA	Economic Reform Agenda
ERP	Economic Reform Programme
ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
EULEX	EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
EUPT	EU Planning Team
HR/VP	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
IcSP	Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace
IEEFA	Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis
IfS	Instrument for Stability
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
KAF	Kosovo Armed Forces
KEPA	Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency
KFOR	Kosovo Force
KIPRED	Kosovo Institute for Policy Research and Development
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
KOSID	Kosovo Civil Society Consortium for Sustainable Development
KSF	Kosovo Security Force
MESP	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDS	National Development Strategy
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPISAA	National Programme for Implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPIC	Overseas Private Investment Corporation
RPF	Resettlement Project Framework

SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SAC	Stabilisation and Association Council
SAP	Stabilisation and Association Process
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SPO	Strategic Planning Office
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange
TEU	Treaty on European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UEFA	Union of European Football Associations
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WB6	Western Balkans 6

Author's Note

In this dissertation, I use anglicised names for places and locations where possible. I chose to do so for two reasons. First, in the Albanian language definite and indefinite grammatical forms are frequently used, meaning that the same place can be written in two different ways (e.g. Prishtina or Prishtinë). Second, the use of either the Albanian or the Serbian name of a place or location (e.g. Peja or Peć) is often perceived as pro-Albanian or pro-Serbian bias.

In addition, events that influence the peacebuilding process between Kosovo and Serbia are ongoing. Since conducting my fieldwork, analysing the findings and writing the dissertation, events have occurred that certainly fall within this category. For practical reasons, I do not include events that took place after the time of writing, i.e. after June 2019. However, I acknowledge that deep political changes are underway that will impact on the relationship between Kosovo and Serbia, and on the course of Kosovo's European integration process. The fact that (now ex-)Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj was called to The Hague in July 2019 to be questioned over war crimes during the conflict in 1998 and 1999, triggered his resignation and a general election, which was held on 6 October 2019 (see e.g. Zivanovic & Isufi, 2019). This election resulted in the first change of government in almost twelve years, with the left nationalist Vetevendosje Party (roughly translated as self-determination) winning the majority of votes and its candidate Albin Kurti set on becoming Kosovo's next Prime Minister.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines how understandings of the environment in sustainable development affect peacebuilding processes, drawing on insights from green political economy, political ecology and environmental peacebuilding. Exploring the illustrative case of the European Union's (EU) peacebuilding policies in Kosovo, I argue that peacebuilding processes, which build on anthropocentric understandings of the environment as instrumental to the neoliberal economy and human wellbeing, produce new or deepen existing socio-economic and ecological inequalities and injustices. Thereby, rather than supporting the long-term peacebuilding objectives, they undermine them. These findings bear significance for research in the field of environmental peacebuilding as they highlight and address its conceptual shortcomings, while simultaneously broadening its analytical applicability. I argue that environmental peacebuilding in its current form is theoretically ill-equipped to help us understand how these conceptualisations of the environment can influence peacebuilding processes themselves. My findings demonstrate that this is because scholarship in environmental peacebuilding has not yet engaged critically and reflexively with the core conceptualisations that it takes for granted. These relate specifically to the notions of the 'environment' and 'sustainability' which function as carriers of different (and at times clashing) interests, agendas and power dynamics, but which are collapsed into these overarching conceptual umbrella terms. By omitting to unpack these underlying interests and power dynamics, environmental peacebuilding runs the danger of brushing over nuanced but crucial differences of whose agenda, and ultimately whose version of peace and sustainability, the peacebuilding policies in question aim to promote.

However, it is crucial to understand underlying agendas and power dynamics as they influence transitions between periods of conflict and peace. The challenge for peacebuilding is to effectively manage this constant struggle between the different stages of conflict and peace and to prevent the reignition of open confrontation (Galtung, 1996). The conflict in the Western Balkans that erupted in the 1990s, but which has been stirring for centuries, is certainly only one case in point (Malcolm, 1998). However, it illustrates the persistence of tensions between conflicting parties after (in)formal peace arrangements have been reached and the ease with which resentments and ideas of territoriality can be exploited for political aims. In situations where tensions continue to simmer below the surface, external factors such as increasing environmental changes or degradation can reinforce the likelihood of relapse into conflict (see e.g. Blaikie & Brookfield, 1987; Conca, 2015; Schilling et al., 2017). Global policy-makers have

integrated these environmental considerations with the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, which frame socio-economic and environmentally sustainable development as a key component in global peacebuilding efforts (European Commission, 2015a; United Nations, 2015).

While the conflict dimension of the environment has been researched widely, particularly against the background of rising climatic pressures (see e.g. Barnett & Adger, 2007; Gemenne, Barnett, Adger, & Dabelko, 2014; Keucheyan, 2016), a growing body of research has begun to specifically explore the role of the environment in bridging and stabilising this constant struggle between peace and conflict. Taking the impact of environmental changes and shared environmental problems seriously, researchers in the field of environmental peacebuilding examine the manner in which environmental factors can contribute to cooperation and sustainable peace (e.g. Bruch, Muffett, & Nichols, 2016; Conca, 2015; Conca & Dabelko, 2002; Grech-Madin, Döring, Kim, & Swain, 2018; Ide, 2018; Weinthal, Troell, & Nakayama, 2014). However, as environmental peacebuilding has its origins in policy-oriented research, it has not yet developed the conceptual and theoretical depth to help us fully understand how ecological factors interact with socio-economic and political processes in contexts of peace and conflict (Dresse, Fischhendler, Nielsen, & Zikos, 2019; Krampe, 2017a).

In this chapter, firstly, I introduce my research question and discuss the three objectives and main arguments that emerge from my analysis. Secondly, I outline my research strategy, introducing my theoretical and methodological framework and choice of methods. Thirdly, I discuss the significance of my research and highlight the specific areas where it contributes to the advancement of knowledge with a particular emphasis on the development of environmental peacebuilding. Last, I provide an overview of the structure of the thesis.

Research question and objectives

Environmental peacebuilding research has recognised that we need to pay greater attention to how post-conflict countries are affected by the interaction of ecological, socio-economic and political processes. This also involves greater critical engagement with underlying conceptual assumptions that are normally taken for granted. Against this background, I explore the following overarching research question: how do understandings of the environment in sustainable development affect the EU peacebuilding process in Kosovo? My dissertation has three overall objectives:

- 1) First, combining insights from green political economy, political ecology and environmental peacebuilding, my dissertation aims to identify the kinds of understanding of the environment that the EU promotes by means of its peacebuilding policies. In the case of Kosovo, this involves a review of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) as well as its enlargement agenda in the Western Balkans. Here, I argue that the EU promotes an inherently anthropocentric understanding of the environment, which is unsurprising given that the EU peacebuilding process is designed to integrate post-conflict countries into the European market economy, in which environmental policies often function as market correcting measures. However, such an understanding of the environment aids in reinforcing the short-term logic of the neoliberal market economy, thereby reinforcing negative peace by creating and exacerbating structural inequalities in Kosovo. This approach to the environment disregards the messy social embeddedness of environmental factors in the global neoliberal economy on the one hand, and in the contexts of peace and conflict on the other hand. More specifically, it negates the environment's agency against the background of increasing neoliberalisation in the Western Balkans, thereby degrading it to a passive ingredient in the competition over human wellbeing and geopolitical influence. Based on such an understanding of the environment, two clashing notions of sustainability emerge, which guide the EU's peacebuilding policies, namely sustainability as sustained economic growth on the one hand, and sustainability as the socio-economic, political and institutional stability of the status quo on the other hand. The first is a development-based conceptualisation of sustainability, while the second is a security-based conceptualisation.
- 2) Second, my dissertation aims to trace how this anthropocentric understanding of the environment has permeated Kosovar domestic policy-making processes. Combining theoretical insights with findings from an extensive document analysis of more than 200 EU and governmental policy documents and 46 semi-structured interviews in Kosovo and in Brussels, I argue that Kosovar policy-makers have integrated the anthropocentric understanding of the environment, and with it the development-based conceptualisation of sustainability. At the same time, my analysis establishes that Kosovar policy-makers break with the EU's emphasis on the status quo and instead prioritise the universal recognition of its territorial independence from Serbia. They therefore reject the security-based notion of sustainability that is advocated by the EU's peacebuilding policies.
- 3) Third, my research aims to identify the implications of such an anthropocentric understanding of the environment on the peacebuilding process itself. In this regard, I

trace its effects on the processes as well as outcomes of EU peacebuilding in Kosovo. I examine where tensions and frictions emerge from the peacebuilding process itself and assess their impact in the context of Kosovo's domestic policy-making. I argue that peacebuilding processes, which build on anthropocentric understandings of the environment as instrumental to economic growth and geostrategic stability, institutionalise conceptual contradictions into fragile post-conflict settings (e.g. development-based sustainability versus security-based sustainability). These have the potential to create frictions between peacebuilding actors and to produce socio-economic and ecological injustices and inequalities, which undermine overall peacebuilding objectives. They do so by creating the illusion of progress towards a durable solution of the Kosovar conflict, i.e. towards positive peace, under the vague and conflicting notion of 'sustainability' while in fact concealing and locking in the inequities created and reinforced through the continuous state of negative peace.

As I elaborate in more detail in the next sub-section on the contribution of my research to knowledge, the findings of my analysis illustrate the hidden power dynamics, socio-economic structures and ideologies that are collapsed into the overarching notions of 'the environment' and 'sustainability'. I argue that we need to engage more critically with these underlying dynamics in order to understand *whose* idea of sustainable peace these peacebuilding policies seek to promote.

Rationale and original contribution to knowledge

My research speaks directly to current debates in environmental peacebuilding. It contributes to the advancement of the field by a) illuminating the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding and suggesting ways to address these, and by b) using environmental peacebuilding as an analytical lens rather than object of study, and thereby broadening its applicability beyond the more empirical (and more prominent) cases of community-based conservation or natural resource management.

Environmental peacebuilding as a field of policy-oriented research emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s against the background of the inability of the then prominent approaches to understanding the links between the environment and conflict to support effective peacebuilding efforts. Ken Conca and Geoffrey Dabelko first explored the cooperative mechanisms that shared environmental problems could provide and argued that in certain contexts cooperation on environmental issues could improve the relations and interactions

between conflict parties and positively influence post-conflict peacebuilding efforts (Conca, 2002, pp. 3, 5; Conca & Dabelko, 2002b, p. 222). Although the body of empirical research in environmental peacebuilding has grown significantly since Conca and Dabelko's foundational work (see e.g. Barnett, 2018; Bruch, 2017; Bruch et al., 2016; Carius, 2006; Dresse et al., 2019; Ide & Detges, 2018; Krampe, 2017b; Schilling et al., 2017; Swain, 2016), environmental peacebuilding remains theoretically and conceptually under-researched (Dresse et al., 2019; Krampe, 2017a). As scholars like Barquet and Dresse et al. argue, this leaves environmental peacebuilding susceptible to becoming a greenwashing 'buzzword' for deeply unsustainable practices that reinforce socio-environmental inequalities and injustices (Barquet, 2015; Dresse et al., 2019, p. 103).

Against this background, my research advances environmental peacebuilding research in two distinct ways. First, my dissertation illuminates the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding and suggests that green political economy and political ecology provide insights with which we can begin to address these limitations. In this regard, I critically interrogate some of the conceptual assumptions that the empirically focused research on environmental peacebuilding to date has taken for granted. Existing studies have not engaged critically with the conceptual foundations of environmental peacebuilding and their effects on peacebuilding processes, although scholars like Anaïs Dresse et al. and Florian Krampe have identified these shortcomings (Dresse et al., 2019; Krampe, 2017a) and researchers like Tobias Ide have borrowed from other theories to fill the theoretical void (Ide, 2016b, 2017). I demonstrate that environmental peacebuilding scholars run the danger of brushing over seemingly small but very nuanced differences of *whose* peacebuilding agenda they promote by advocating a type of peacebuilding that takes the 'environment' seriously but promotes 'sustainable development' without engaging more critically with the ideologies and power dynamics that these concepts promote.

More specifically, by making the environment part of the competition over power and resources in the pursuit of individual human wellbeing, post-conflict development based on the exploitation of the environment and human labour is justified under the vague banner of future 'sustainability'. My research illustrates the negative implications that such understandings of the environment, which prioritise its instrumental use-value for perpetual growth in the neoliberal economy and human wellbeing, can have on peacebuilding processes. I illustrate that peacebuilding policies which are anchored in anthropocentric conceptualisations of the environment, produce inequalities and injustices, thereby feeding into existing conflict dynamics, and creating new ones. They do so by institutionalising conceptual tensions and advocating

contentious and unsustainable short-term policies, which they justify, paradoxically, under the rhetorical umbrella of ‘future sustainability’. In other words, they use the sustainability rhetoric to create a false sense of progress towards positive peace, although they obscure and lock in the structural inequalities that characterise negative peace. Thereby, such policies support neither the peacebuilding process nor sustainability in the short- or long-term. I argue that if environmental peacebuilding is to avoid being degraded to a buzzword for greenwashing practices, it needs to engage more critically with the conceptual paradoxes surrounding ‘the environment’ and ‘sustainability’ in the context of the socio-economic structures prescribed by global neoliberalisation processes.

Secondly, my research broadens the applicability of environmental peacebuilding beyond the often-cited cases of community-based conservation or transboundary resource management (see e.g. Ali, 2007; Barquet, 2015; Ide & Tubi, 2019; van Amerom & Büscher, 2005; Zahler, Wilkie, Painter, & Ingram, 2016). Although studies exist that have examined environmental peacebuilding on the national, regional and international levels (e.g. Grech-Madin et al., 2018; Ide, 2018; Swain, 2002; VanDeveer, 2002; Weinthal, 2002; Zeitoun et al., 2014), they tend to focus on the management of shared natural resources or the mitigation of environmental degradation as a tool for diplomacy, particularly following military activity. I demonstrate that we can use environmental peacebuilding not only as an object of study, but also as an analytical lens to understand the interplay of the environment and peacebuilding on different scales in post-conflict situations where the environment itself was not an immediate cause or contributor to conflict. In fact, environmental peacebuilding allows us to interrogate the processes of high politics, the power asymmetries and the different agendas that underlie post-conflict peacebuilding and that emerge around specific conceptualisations of the relationship between humans and the environment. By this I mean that environmental peacebuilding, through its emphasis on environmental dynamics, directs our attention towards the neoliberalising structures of the global economy that forcefully unravel the links between humans and the environment. I argue that by separating humans from the environment, patterns of socio-ecological and economic inequalities and injustices and exploitation can emerge which undermine peacebuilding processes in the long-term. Environmental peacebuilding has the analytical focus necessary for us to explore these dynamics in more depth.

Therefore, my research critically engages with the concepts that environmental peacebuilding takes for granted and draws on green political economy and political ecology to understand and address these limitations. In this context, my dissertation underlines the merits of broadening the applicability of environmental peacebuilding as an analytical lens to cases

where the environmental dimension of the conflict is not immediately evident. In the following sub-section, I introduce my research strategy in more detail.

Research strategy

In order to explore how understandings of the environment in sustainable development affect the EU's peacebuilding process in Kosovo, I draw on insights from green political economy, political ecology and environmental peacebuilding. I anchor these theoretical insights in a retroductive research strategy, which builds on ontological realism, epistemological relativism and judgmental rationalism (Bhaskar, 1978, 1979; Harré & Secord, 1972). In the following, I briefly discuss my rationale for committing to these methodological approaches. I first explain why the theoretical fields of green political economy, political ecology and environmental peacebuilding are particularly well-suited to guide my analysis for two reasons.

Firstly, green political economy, political ecology and environmental peacebuilding advocate conceptual and methodological pluralism, complexity and hybridity. This theoretically flexible approach is necessary. The logic that we can find a permanent solution within the current parameters of the global economy to what is essentially a dynamic problem, namely ecological deterioration and social conflict stemming from uneven and environmentally unsustainable development, is flawed itself (Barry, 2012, p. 64). Such an idea of a permanent equilibrium has not only been questioned in the context of sustainable development, but also in the field of peace and conflict. As I indicated above, peace and conflict follow a cyclical logic without ever reaching a final endpoint (Galtung, 1996, pp. 89-90; Richmond, 2006, p. 368). Green political economy, political ecology and environmental peacebuilding therefore reflect the dynamic nature of the problem at hand, by recognising and emphasising pluralism, complexity and hybridity.

Secondly, green political economy, which focuses on the interaction between humans and the environment in the context of the global economy, political ecology, which emphasises the role of power and knowledge in human-environment relations, and environmental peacebuilding, which examines the connection between the environment, peace and conflict, point towards four core theoretical assumptions that guide my analysis. These assumptions promote the view that a) the human and the environmental spheres are closely interlinked; b) power and patterns of knowledge-production matter in the politicised environment; c) the environment has both material and produced dimensions, our understandings of which are influenced by the dominant socio-economic and institutional structures; and that d) we need to

focus on present injustices and inequalities instead of future sustainability to address persisting conflict dynamics. I argue that these assumptions can reveal different angles of how the EU's policies, based on a specific understanding of the environment, institutionalise inequalities and injustices into Kosovo's fragile post-conflict peacebuilding process.

Against this background, my methodological framework reflects the underlying commitment to pluralism and complexity. It combines ontological realism, epistemological relativism and judgmental rationalism (Bhaskar, 1978, 1979; Harré & Secord, 1972). I briefly introduce the core assumptions of each of these here. Ontological realism promotes a view in which a reality exists independently of human knowledge of it and human action towards it. This implies that there can be no guaranteed fit between theory and reality. We therefore need to consider science as producing different perceptions of the same reality (Bhaskar, 1978, pp. 19, 31). Epistemological relativism acknowledges that no objective, 'true' knowledge exists. Instead, knowledge is socially produced, transformed and contested through scientific progress in a specific context (Bhaskar, 1978, p. 190, 1979, p. 7; Sayer, 1992, p. 5). Judgmental rationalism places these assumptions into a wider perspective, recognising that the world is not entirely relative as it is socially constructed in relation to an independent material reality against which we can make judgments about our perceptions of it (Patomäki & Wight, 2000, p. 224). Given that humans are self-aware and possess the ability to be critical of their own actions, we are able to judge which perceptions and understandings of reality might be more accurate than others (Harré & Secord, 1972, pp. 6-7).

On the basis of these ontological and epistemological assumptions, my analysis is rooted in a retroductive research strategy. This means that it follows a cyclical logic of (re-)production of scientific knowledge through constant realignment of the research question and the empirical material, identifying and interpreting common themes and prominent perceptions (Bertilsson, 2004; Blaikie, 2007, p. 83; Sayer, 1992, p. 113). I combine retroduction with induction, to answer the more descriptive question of how the EU conceptualises the environment in its peacebuilding policies, and abduction, to explain how and why this conceptualisation institutionalises inequalities and injustices into the fragile post-conflict peacebuilding process (Blaikie, 2007, p. 88). Through a combination of these approaches, my research strategy is flexible and reflects the complexity of the socio-economic and environmental phenomena in post-conflict countries that it seeks to analyse (Mason, 2002, p. 7).

Methods

My choice of qualitative methods mirrors the above commitment to flexibility, pluralism, and complexity. Although I recognise the potential value of quantitative methods, such as statistical enquiry, I argue that while they are useful in establishing the existence of regularities between social and environmental phenomena, they are too empirically flat to explain the existence of such regularities in the first place. Their linear conception of causality and commitment to objectivity would be inadequate to explain the dynamic and complex processes of the relations between the environmental and the human spheres in contexts of peace and conflict (Bhaskar, 1978, pp. 13-14; Sayer, 1992, p. 177).

First, I use an illustrative case study to provide a specific context in which I can explore how understandings of the environment affect peacebuilding processes. The EU's peacebuilding process in Kosovo provides an interesting example of a complex post-conflict situation on the EU's doorstep. For instance, although the EU's rule of law mission in Kosovo (EULEX) is the largest EU civilian peacebuilding mission ever to be deployed - not even to speak of the additional investments that have been made under the enlargement umbrella - the political, socio-economic and environmental situation in Kosovo continues to be tense (Capussela, 2015, p. xiii). Almost twenty years after the end of open conflict and ten years after Kosovo's declaration of independence from Serbia, Kosovo's population is still among the poorest in Europe, the society is divided, corruption is widespread, and environmental pollution is a key feature of everyday life (European Commission, 2019). Relations between Belgrade and Pristina are at an all-time low, and the EU's performance in mitigating tensions and resolving the conflict has been widely criticised (Capussela, 2015; Russell, 2019). The disputes over Kosovo's territory and its deep entanglements with history and identities make Kosovo a valuable case to explore the analytical merits of environmental peacebuilding beyond shared environmental problems or the management of natural resources. Against this background, the EU's peacebuilding policies provide an interesting study as they combine a variety of policy areas (e.g. Common Foreign and Security Policy, enlargement policies, conflict prevention and development). By analysing the EU's peacebuilding process in Kosovo, my dissertation produces a valuable form of context-dependent knowledge about the implications of anthropocentric conceptualisations of the environment in post-conflict peacebuilding, while possessing a degree of transferability to other post-conflict cases where the EU is not necessarily the (only) main peacebuilding actor.

Second, I use the methods of document analysis and semi-structured interviews to generate original empirical material. My analysis focuses particularly on the content and function

of key official EU and Kosovar documents, such as laws, regulations, directives, policy reports, or press releases.¹ I identify discursive patterns, such as (historical) narratives and (normative) assumptions to determine how the environment is conceptualised under the umbrella of sustainable development, and what underlying power dynamics and potential inequalities these documents prescribe for the peacebuilding process (Prior, 2004, p. 388). Due to the legacy of the conflict, I acknowledge that many key documents and reliable data, especially on Kosovar society and environment, are unavailable. Where appropriate, I therefore also consider other documents, such as reports or analyses, that have been published on behalf of national authorities.

In addition to document analysis, I conducted 46 semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in Brussels and in Kosovo in order to identify underlying dynamics in the peacebuilding process, such as perceptions of frictions and power asymmetries among national and international peacebuilding actors (Millar, van der Lijn, & Verkoren, 2013). In line with the above retroductive research strategy, the interviews provide the setting in which empirical data can be produced in a meaningful way through social interaction (Mason, 2002, pp. 52, 62). However, I do not consider the interviews to function as objective representations of reality; rather, they are interpreted accounts of situated knowledge, which can reveal meaningful insights into wider conflict dynamics (Mansvelt & Berg, 2016, pp. 400-401). Against this background, using NVivo, I coded and analysed the interview transcripts in several coding cycles in line with the cyclical logic of retroduction² (Dunn, 2016, p. 175). While I identified prominent patterns, themes and collective meanings (for instance relating to different conceptualisations of the environment), I focused on observable frictions and tensions between stakeholders to identify contested patterns of power which can have unexpected effects on the peacebuilding process (Millar et al., 2013, p. 139; Soldaña, 2016, p. 137). Such a combination of document analysis and interviews is most appropriate to establish how understandings of the environment affect peacebuilding processes, as stakeholders' perceptions of their actions reveal valuable insights into underlying power dynamics, which can sustain existing or create new socio-environmental inequalities in the post-conflict context.

A note on anonymity is necessary here. As my interviews touched upon sensitive issues, I gave my interviewees the choice of full anonymity, which some gladly accepted. Where they agreed to identification and where their context adds to my analysis and argument, I refer to their names and/or organisational affiliation. However, where they wished to remain anonymous, I do not reveal identifiable characteristics, but instead assign anonymised codes to the interviews. In

¹ For an overview of the documents that I included in my document analysis, please see Tables 1-3 in Annex 1.

² Please see Annex 2 for an overview of the codes that emerged from my analysis in NVivo.

this context, I acknowledge that some of my interviews were held in German and that it would be customary to include the original text as well as an English translation of it in my dissertation. However, for the sake of anonymity, I am unable to reveal which individual interviews were held in German and therefore cannot always provide an excerpt of the interview in the original language.

Therefore, my choice of qualitative methods, focusing on document analysis and semi-structured interviews, reflects the core assumptions of my retroductive research strategy and my methodological and theoretical framework. In addition, my methods enabled the meaningful creation of additional qualitative data, which provided particularly useful insights for the study of Kosovo, where the legacy of conflict means that quality public data has often either been outright destroyed or left unattainable. Having provided the rationale for my choice of theory, methodology and methods, I now turn to introduce the structure of my dissertation.

Structure of the dissertation

In order to explore how understandings of the environment in sustainable development affect the EU's peacebuilding process in Kosovo, I structured my dissertation around seven chapters, with an additional introduction and conclusion. The first three chapters (Chapters 1-3) provide the rationale and review of existing research, the theoretical and methodological framework and the background on the conflict in Kosovo. The next two chapters (Chapters 4-5) trace and identify the EU's understanding of the environment in sustainable development throughout its foreign policies more broadly and in its approach to peacebuilding in Kosovo more specifically. The last two chapters (Chapters 6-7) examine how the EU's understanding of the environment has been integrated into domestic Kosovar policy-making and discuss its implications for the wider peacebuilding process. The conclusions draw the findings of the chapters together and place them in the context of the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding. In this sub-section, I briefly summarise the main aspects and findings of the analyses in each of the chapters.

In Chapter 1, I explore how sustainable development and environmental peacebuilding have become increasingly intertwined by tracing the emergence of the concepts of security, conflict and cooperation in global policy-making. I demonstrate that environmental peacebuilding emerged in response to advances in the policy world, which focused predominantly on resource scarcity and abundance, population growth and violence in the framing of the political economy of conflicts. Against this background, I analyse the conceptual

representation of environmental cooperation in key policies and discuss its practical application in the context of global cooperative environmental policies. My analysis shows that although a strong positive link between environmental cooperation and peace is created conceptually, research in environmental peacebuilding points towards a more ambiguous relationship. Yet, scholars in environmental peacebuilding have not yet developed the sound theoretical and conceptual framework necessary to understand these dynamics. Based on these findings, I discuss the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding, which I argue gravitate around issues of the conceptual definitions of both environmental peacebuilding and sustainable development. Here, I promote the view that due to a lack of engagement with paradoxes surrounding the concepts that it takes for granted (such as ‘the environment’ or ‘sustainability’), environmental peacebuilding currently lacks the theoretical depth to explore how understandings of the environment affect the EU’s peacebuilding process in Kosovo.

In the second chapter, I introduce and discuss my theoretical and methodological framework. As I explained above, I draw on insights from green political economy and political ecology to address the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding. I combine this theoretical approach with a methodological research strategy that is based on epistemological relativism, ontological realism and judgmental rationalism (Bhaskar, 1978, 1979; Harré & Secord, 1972).

Based on these assumptions, I argue that EU peacebuilding functions as a neoliberalising process, which is inherently environmental due to the manner in which it prescribes socio-ecological structures and adapts to forms of environmental resistance, creating new forms of ‘green’ neoliberal policies (Castree, 2008, p. 140; McCarthy & Prudham, 2004; Polanyi, 1944). Here, I define neoliberalism as a situational assemblage of theory, practices, ideological beliefs, discourses, policies, power relations and other social constructs, which determines our socio-economic structures and our interpretations of the world (Peck, 2010, p. 15). However, I recognise that there is not one abstract form of neoliberalism, but that hybrids, or “variegation[s]” of neoliberalism exist in different spatial-temporal contexts (Bakker, 2010, p. 716). It is therefore more appropriate to speak of different processes of neoliberalisation rather than one homogenous neoliberalism (Castree, 2008, p. 137; Peck, 2010, pp. 6-7). For instance, in the international political economy conception, neoliberalisation can refer to the advancement of specific socio-economic belief systems and institutional arrangements (see e.g. McCarthy & Prudham, 2004; Peck, 2010), while in its Foucauldian understanding neoliberalisation involves a form of governmentality, or governance at a distance (see e.g. Fletcher, 2017; Foucault, 1991; Joseph, 2012). While I draw predominantly on these two understandings of neoliberalisation, I

recognise that it does not always mean the same thing with reference to post-conflict peacebuilding, development or security.

I place these findings in the context of hybridity and frictions in peacebuilding (Mac Ginty, 2010; Millar et al., 2013; Richmond, 2015). The concept of hybridity specifically points towards the interactions of international and national peacebuilding actors and the outcomes of the peacebuilding process as a contributing factor to sustaining conflict in certain contexts (Mac Ginty, 2010, p. 397). However, rather than simply focusing on the outcome of peacebuilding efforts, the notion of frictions draws our attention to the *processes* of peacebuilding. This means we examine how tensions and frictions emerge from asymmetric power dynamics or clashing interests among peacebuilding actors, which create situations that either support or undermine peacebuilding efforts. Thereby, we can make sense of how the peacebuilding processes themselves can lead to unexpected outcomes. I argue that these insights are particularly helpful to understand the underlying power dynamics and unanticipated consequences of EU peacebuilding policies in Kosovo.

Against this background, I explore the deep entanglements between neoliberalisation, governance and accountability. Here, I understand neoliberalisation as an assemblage of economic and political ideologies, which prescribe specific social structures and power dynamics. Based on the recognition that neoliberalisation functions as a form of governance, I examine the unsustainable effects of subordinating democratic principles to the sphere of neoliberal economic strategies on the EU's peacebuilding process in Kosovo. I argue that the neoliberalising socio-economic structures that the EU's peacebuilding policies promote, distort domestic and international structures of accountability. Democratic principles are traded for a heavy emphasis on efficient policy implementation, legitimising obscure decision-making processes at the state level and undermining the EU's long-term peacebuilding objectives.

In Chapter 3, I explore the origins of the conflict in Kosovo by examining the dichotomous interpretations of history, myths and the social constructions of Kosovo's territory. I assess how (Kosovar-)Albanian and (Kosovar-)Serb perceptions of the causes and dynamics of the conflict differ, and how they contribute to the construction of Kosovo's territory as a contested space. More specifically, I trace arguments of autochthonic rights, settlement continuity and influential myths through the lens of ethnicity, nationalism and religion. I argue that these perceptions of the historic origins of the conflict in Kosovo contribute to the persistence of contemporary conflict dynamics. In addition, they feed into constructions of the Kosovar territory as a contested space, which plays a key role in both Albanian and Serb identity-

building processes. This chapter therefore provides the overarching context for my analysis in the remaining chapters. We can make sense of the complex socio-political context in which EU peacebuilding takes place, on the one hand, by understanding the underlying conflict dynamics and their entanglements with Kosovo's territory. On the other hand, we can better comprehend the role of Kosovo's territory and its unresolved status question in sustaining the conflict and feeding into frictions and tensions in the peacebuilding process. These insights illuminate the difficulties of understanding the environment merely in terms of its material dimension (e.g. as natural resources contributing to economic development) and hence reveal a crucial aspect of the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding. I argue that it is crucial to understand these underlying conflict dynamics, and the different meanings and functions of Kosovo's territory as a contested space, as they shape the versions of sustainability and peace that the conflict parties aim to promote.

The fourth chapter explores the EU's understanding of the environment, and the relationship between the environment, conflict and peace that emerges out of its external policies to provide the necessary background and context to grasp the complexities of the Kosovar peacebuilding process. In this regard, I examine how sustainable development emerged as a guiding principle of the EU in order to determine what kind of understanding of the environment the EU promotes in its external action. I then trace the EU's conceptualisation of the link between environment, conflict and peace by examining the convergence of the security and development agendas. I argue that such a convergence has influenced the manner in which the EU understands the environment in post-conflict peacebuilding. The chapter continues to assess how EU peacebuilding and enlargement have become increasingly entangled. Thereby, my analysis provides an insight into the kind of underlying socio-economic structures and power dynamics that the EU exports through its peacebuilding policies.

My analysis in this chapter demonstrates that the EU's policies promote an inherently anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment that emphasises the commodification of the environment as an integral part of socio-economic neoliberalisation. Moreover, it shows that the EU has institutionalised the link between conflict, peace and the environment by interweaving the security and development agendas. However, I illustrate that a significant degree of conceptual ambiguity was necessary to do so, since conceptual tensions exist between short-term security and long-term development objectives. I argue that such ambiguity in core policies provides the foundation for institutionalising injustices and inequalities into fragile post-conflict peacebuilding processes. Such institutionalisation of injustices and inequalities is arguably

accepted as an unintended outcome of the creation of socio-economic structures that are favourable to the perpetual expansion of the European market economy.

In the fifth chapter, my analysis zooms in on the EU's regional strategy in the Western Balkans and its peacebuilding policies in Kosovo, including the enlargement process and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). I explore how the EU's anthropocentric understanding of the environment as instrumental to growth is reflected in its peacebuilding policies in Kosovo. In this context, I pay particular attention to how the EU's regional strategy and peacebuilding policies in Kosovo institutionalise the link between conflict, peace and the environment. In addition, I assess what effects the conceptual ambiguity that was necessary to interweave the at times contradictory security and development agendas in its external policies had on the design of context-specific policy responses.

My analysis demonstrates that in order to simultaneously work towards the short-term security and long-term development agendas in the Western Balkans and in Kosovo (or at least to give the illusion of complementarity of the two), country-specific post-conflict peacebuilding policies require a significant degree of conceptual ambiguity. I argue that by brushing over the differences of what specifically peace, conflict or the environment mean for either post-conflict development or security, EU peacebuilding policies in Kosovo revolve around two vague notions of sustainability: a development-based notion and a security-based notion.

The first presents sustainability as sustained economic growth and the second presents sustainability as stability of the status quo. I illustrate that the anthropocentric understanding of the environment plays a crucial role in reinforcing the sustainability (development) conception as it aids in the interlinking of economic prosperity and stability. Thereby, the EU creates a rhetorical linear path from the short-term socio-economic neoliberalisation of post-conflict Kosovo to long-term stability (and hence security). However, as I illustrate through my analysis in later chapters of specific policies intended to boost economic development, this linear logic of prioritising short-term economic prosperity is flawed as it produces inequalities and injustices in the present (such as displacement or socio-economic marginalisation) that undermine long-term stability. The EU's CFSP policies in turn promote the second conception of sustainability (security), yet disregard the role of Kosovo's territory (and with it the status question) in feeding into contemporary conflict dynamics. My analysis in this chapter illustrates the implications of the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding. I argue that by being unable to see that allegedly complementary peacebuilding policies can in fact promote two different and at times conflicting notions of sustainability, environmental peacebuilding is conceptually ill-

equipped to understand the negative implications of institutionalising conceptual tensions in peacebuilding policies. This relates to the power asymmetries and inequalities that arise surrounding different understandings of ‘the environment’ and ‘sustainability’ in the context of security and development.

In Chapter 6, I first analyse to what extent the EU’s anthropocentric understanding of the environment, and with it the dual conceptualisation of sustainability (development) and sustainability (security), are integrated into domestic Kosovar policy-making processes. I then establish what implications these conceptualisations of the environment and sustainability have on the wider peacebuilding process. I argue that the anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment and the development-based notion of sustainability have indeed been integrated into Kosovar policy-making. They serve the purpose of interweaving security and development objectives in domestic Kosovar policies, aligning Kosovo’s interests with the regional agenda of the EU. However, thereby, Kosovo’s policy-making processes have become neoliberalised. This allows policy-makers to promote policies that promise ‘future sustainability’, but in fact produce immediate socio-economic and ecological injustices and inequalities (such as increased exposure to pollution, rising living costs, etc.). Against this background, my analysis reveals that the government of Kosovo attempts to break with the EU’s security-based notion of sustainability and emphasis on the status quo. Instead, it frames the recognition of Kosovo’s independence as a key prerequisite for stability in the Western Balkans. Therefore, the Government of Kosovo promotes a different understanding of sustainability (security). I illustrate the (conceptual) tensions and frictions that arise among the peacebuilding stakeholders over Kosovo’s disputed territory and independence and I argue that the injustices and inequalities that have been institutionalised into the peacebuilding process undermine its long-term objectives.

Chapter 7 explores the tensions and frictions that emerge from the neoliberalising peacebuilding process itself in more detail and examines the experiences of the Kosovar policy-making process. This serves to interrogate critically how the peacebuilding process itself creates a setting in which unsustainabilities in the form of socio-ecological injustices and inequalities are institutionalised into the post-conflict context. The specific understandings of the environment and approaches to sustainability, which I discussed in previous chapters, function as analytical lenses here through which these unsustainabilities become visible. I draw on insights from my interviews to examine what the tensions between the peacebuilding actors in Kosovo’s sustainable development sector reveal about underlying power dynamics. My analysis establishes that in many cases the EU’s peacebuilding policies themselves are blamed for distorting structures of democratic accountability in Kosovo. I then proceed to examine the Kosova e Re

power project and I demonstrate that it institutionalises three different kinds of injustices and inequalities (financial, socio-economic, and environmental), thereby subordinating Kosovo's democratic principles to the logic of neoliberalisation. I argue that through the institutionalisation of these injustices and inequalities, the project undermines the prospects for long-term peace. The example of Kosova e Re illustrates the practical implications of the conceptual tensions between sustainability (development) and sustainability (security). Based on the analysis in this chapter, I argue that environmental peacebuilding scholars can begin to engage more critically with its conceptual paradoxes by focusing on socio-ecological injustices (or unsustainabilities) in the present rather than on an ambiguous ideal of future 'sustainable development'.

In the conclusion, I distil the findings of my analysis to establish what they reveal about how understandings of the environment in sustainable development affect the EU's peacebuilding process in Kosovo.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I introduced the rationale and main objectives of my dissertation, which explores how understandings of the environment in sustainable development can affect the EU's peacebuilding in Kosovo. I illustrated how the findings in each chapter contribute to the refinement of my main argument, namely that peacebuilding processes, which build on anthropocentric understandings of the environment as instrumental to the neoliberal economy and human wellbeing, produce socio-economic and ecological inequalities and injustices in the present, which undermine long-term peacebuilding objectives, rather than supporting them. Thereby, they lock in structural inequalities and hamper the transition from negative to positive peace in Kosovo. I demonstrated that my dissertation advances the field of environmental peacebuilding by examining and addressing its conceptual shortcomings and broadening its applicability as an analytical lens. I argued that environmental peacebuilding research needs to unpack the underlying interests and power dynamics that are collapsed into the broad notions of 'the environment' and 'sustainability', as in its current form it runs the danger of brushing over nuanced but crucial differences of whose agenda, and ultimately whose version of peace and sustainability, the peacebuilding policies in question aim to promote. Against this background, I introduced my retroductive research strategy, which builds on insights from green political economy, political ecology and environmental peacebuilding. I justified my choice methodological framework and methods, which reflect the pluralism, complexity and hybridity

necessary to understand dynamic and complex post-conflict contexts. Having summarised and identified the core building blocks of my analysis, I turn to discuss the rationale and existing research in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 1

Sustainable development and the environment in the context of peace and conflict: Tracing emerging concepts of security, conflict and cooperation

“[The] environment can be easily used to ... overcome the division that exists as the result of war and conflict.”

– Kosovar civil society (Interview M16Pr12³)

“I think at the bigger level, ... the environment brings more friction than it brings peace.”

- Kosovar civil society (Interview M16Pr20⁴)

Introduction

Before I began my field research in Kosovo, the advantages of mainstreaming environmental considerations into EU peacebuilding seemed obvious to me. Not least because the works I had read on environmental peacebuilding provided practical examples of cases where an emphasis on environmental cooperation had supported conflict resolution and post-conflict development (e.g. Bruch, Muffett, & Nichols, 2016). Keen to apply these insights to my own research, I wondered how understandings of the environment in sustainable development affect the EU peacebuilding process in Kosovo. Conforming with the first of the above two statements, my initial assumptions could crudely be summarised as something like this: the environment can be used to break conflict cycles, to initiate cooperation and to bring long-term peace. Research in the field of environmental peacebuilding has explored this for two decades. For this to work, existing peacebuilding policies must prioritise the environmental dimension of the sustainable development agenda. In the case of Kosovo, acknowledging that Kosovo’s territory plays an important role for both Kosovar and Serb nation- and identity-building, the EU’s peacebuilding policies can gain from an increased focus on environmental cooperation projects that bring Kosovars and Serbs together. I assumed that once the EU recognised this missed opportunity, Kosovo could be one step closer to lasting peace, enabling it to move further along its path to becoming a member of the EU. After all, contrary to the emphasis in the environmental peacebuilding literature, the environment does not only matter in environmentally induced

³ Interview conducted by author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 16th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁴ Interview conducted by author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 20th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

conflicts. It could help resolve protracted conflicts even where the environment did not contribute to the outbreak of violent conflict.

Admittedly, although I was aware of the underlying complexities of the above assumptions, my expectations were naïve, and I realised their limitations as soon as I was confronted with the realities of fieldwork. When I started interviewing relevant stakeholders to gain a more comprehensive insight into how the understandings of the environment in sustainable development affect the EU's peacebuilding process in Kosovo, I soon found that they could indeed influence the peacebuilding process – but not in the way I had suspected. In fact, speaking about the links between sustainable development, the environment and peace during my interviews, many responses were as conflicting as the above two exemplary statements by Kosovar civil society actors. Usually, as soon as I directed the focus of these discussions to the EU's peacebuilding policies, people began to talk about the tensions *within* Kosovo, *among* Kosovars, rather than between the states of Kosovo and Serbia or specific ethnic groups. I found this surprising in so far as the conflict has predominantly been framed as an ethnically motivated conflict of an autonomous region seceding from the former patron state, with both ethnic groups remaining in the new state now having to learn how to live together (Lindstedt, 2012; Schmitt, 2008, p. 27; Todorova, 2015). However, ethnicity was rarely mentioned in the contexts of my interviews, unless I specifically asked about it or it came up with regards to internationally sponsored negotiations or policies. Instead, when asked about sustainable development, the environment, and peace, my interviewees would start talking about the hopeless economic situation and the hazardous industrial pollution, about corruption having infested the new democracy, about the poor becoming poorer while the rich become richer. They spoke about inequalities and injustices that they believed were partially to blame on the EU's peacebuilding policies themselves. Was it possible that the EU's peacebuilding policies were built on a specific understanding of the environment under the heading of sustainable development that gave rise to these inequalities and injustices in the first place? So, rather than leading to the sustainable development of Kosovo, do the EU's peacebuilding policies in fact institutionalise *unsustainability*?

My research demonstrates that this is indeed the case. But in order to understand how and why this is possible, and what this means for wider environmental peacebuilding research, we need to comprehend how the link between sustainable development, the environment and peace and conflict has emerged on the global stage. After all, the EU's peacebuilding policies are designed to integrate post-conflict countries into the global political economy. We therefore have to consider the wider context and the process that has influenced the design of these policies. In

this chapter, I set out to illustrate this wider context and trace how sustainable development, the environment and peace and conflict have become interlinked. I interweave these insights with advances in the academic debates on environmental peacebuilding on the one hand, to illustrate how this body of literature speaks to processes in the policy world. And on the other hand, to outline how and why in its current form it does not provide the necessary theoretical depth to help us conceptualise how understandings of the environment in sustainable development affect the EU's peacebuilding processes in Kosovo.

My analysis in this chapter contributes to wider debates in environmental peacebuilding in a distinct way: it demonstrates that the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding revolve around difficulties of conceptual definitions that are similar to those which scholars have already observed in the context of sustainable development. More specifically, research in environmental peacebuilding has thus far failed to engage critically with the paradoxes surrounding the key concepts that it takes for granted, such as 'sustainability' and 'the environment'. Given that environmental peacebuilding and sustainable development have become closely interwoven, I argue that we can understand the implications of such omission by paying more attention to the debates that emerged surrounding the shortcomings of sustainable development.

In order to grasp these conceptual entanglements, in this chapter I aim to identify a set of key issues that have emerged out of the wider debates on sustainable development in the contexts of peace and conflict, and that have given significant impetus to the creation of environmental peacebuilding. Having said that, I do not set out to revisit in detail the emergence of sustainable development as a guiding principle of international politics as such. Neither do I seek to provide an overview of its achievements and limitations. These issues have been discussed at length elsewhere (e.g. Conca & Dabelko, 2015; Death, 2010; Elliott, 1998; Sachs, 2015). Rather, I argue that the issues that have contributed to the emergence of environmental peacebuilding centre on the notions of environmental conflict and security, and environmental cooperation. Therefore, in the sections below, first, I provide a brief conceptual background on the emergence of sustainable development and environmental peacebuilding, its main assumptions and criticisms. Second, I explore how environmental conflict and security have been framed under the heading of sustainable development. I argue that resource scarcity and abundance, population growth and violence played a crucial role in framing the political economy of conflicts, and significantly contributed to the securitisation of the environment. Third, I examine the notion of environmental cooperation by analysing its conceptual representation in key policies and its practical implications in the context of cooperative

environmental policies. My analysis reveals that while a strong positive link between environmental cooperation and peace is created conceptually, research in environmental peacebuilding points towards a more ambiguous relationship in practice. Last, I discuss the conceptual limitations of environmental peacebuilding that emerge out of the debates in the previous sections. I argue that key criticisms revolve around issues of the conceptual definitions of both environmental peacebuilding and sustainable development, pointing towards a lack of engagement with its inherent conceptual paradoxes.

Before moving on to the first sub-section, and although a more in-depth discussion and definition of key concepts follows in Chapter 2, a brief clarification of the terminology I use in this chapter is necessary here. In this regard, I understand the environment as an entity with both a material and produced dimension. This means that I recognise the material reality of the environment as biophysical processes, while also recognising the way in which the environment, through the ideas, rules and beliefs we associate with it, is socially constructed or produced (Escobar, 1999, pp. 1–2; Peet, Robbins, & Watts, 2011, pp. 29, 34; Soper, 1995, pp. 8–9; Watts & Peet, 2007, p. 20). In turn, I draw on key literature in peace and conflict studies to define unsustainability. Here, I understand unsustainability in terms of structural violence, i.e. as inequalities and injustices that derive directly from the wider socio-economic structures in which they are embedded. This conceptualisation draws our attention to both the environmental and the human spheres, emphasising the underlying dynamics of marginalisation, social and environmental exploitation, and socio-political oppression (Galtung, 1996, pp. 2, 31). Against this background, I argue these underlying unsustainabilities can form part of the conflict cycle and are hence closely intertwined with the notions of peace and conflict (Galtung, 1996, pp. 89–89; Keen, 2012). Here, I define peace in positive terms, recognising that it is more than the absence of conflict or violence (Conca, 2002, p. 9; Conca & Wallace, 2012, p. 64). Instead, positive peace promotes cooperation and the reduction of indirect forms of violence (Galtung, 1996, pp. 31–32). I define sustainable development and environmental peacebuilding in the next section.

1.1 The emergence of sustainable development and environmental peacebuilding

Sustainable development and environmental peacebuilding have become closely intertwined in both academic debates and in post-conflict policies focusing on, among other things, natural resource management (Dabelko, 2008). Against this background, environmental peacebuilding has often been framed as contributing to sustainable development (Dresse et al., 2019, p. 109;

Ide & Detges, 2018, p. 64). It is therefore crucial that we examine how both sustainable development and environmental peacebuilding have emerged on the global policy stage. In this section, I provide a brief background on key summits that have led to the institutionalisation of sustainable development as a guiding principle of global politics. In view of this, I discuss the simultaneous emergence of environmental peacebuilding.

The 1987 Report by the World Commission on Environment and Development (also called the Brundtland Commission or the Brundtland Report) provides the first comprehensive definition of sustainable development. It argues that “[s]ustainable development seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 51). This needs-focused definition, emphasising the notions of intergenerational justice, people and planet, still provides the basis for today’s distinction of the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely economic, social and environmental, which are to be achieved in synergy (United Nations, 2015, p. 3). However, the processes leading to a first comprehensive definition of sustainable development was set in motion before 1987. The Brundtland Commission was arguably influenced by measures that began with the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, which provided the initial impetus for the exploration of the interaction of the environment and development and paved the way for the creation of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) (Elliott, 1998; United Nations, 1972). Several key conferences and summits took on the Brundtland Commission’s approach to sustainable development; a process which eventually led to the proclamation of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. These summits include the 1992 UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, which entailed the publication of the UN’s *Agenda 21*, setting out specific priorities and actions, the 2002 UN World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, the 2012 UN Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, and the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York (United Nations, 2002, 2015; United Nations General Assembly, 1992, 2012). It is crucial to note that “[e]ach of the global summits was stamped with the imprint of its context” (Conca & Dabelko, 2018, p. 4). In this regard, we need to be aware that the Cold War, the optimism that followed in the early 1990s, increased globalisation throughout the late 1990s and 2000s, 9/11 and the global financial crisis all had a significant impact on the agenda and implications of the summits (ibid).

Over the last decades, these global summits laid the groundwork for sustainable development as a guiding principle of global policy-making, and resulted in the creation of an international system of cooperative environmental governance that focused on interlinking

environmental factors with the global economy (Clapp & Helleiner, 2012, p. 488). However, the summits were not only an indication for a re-focusing of policy priorities, but also provided the momentum for the environment to be more closely integrated into academic fields, such as International Political Economy (IPE) (Clapp & Helleiner, 2012, p. 485). As I discuss in Chapter 2, this somewhat newfound emphasis on environmental research in IPE eventually gave rise to the field of green political economy, which explores the links between capitalism and neoliberalism on the one hand and socio-economic and environmental inequality on the other hand.

Here, I place specific emphasis on the field of environmental peacebuilding, which emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s against the background of advances in sustainable development with the influential work of Ken Conca and Geoffrey Dabelko on ‘environmental peacemaking’ (Conca & Dabelko, 2002a).⁵ Noting the inability of the then predominant environmental conflict and security narrative to resolve conflicts and establish peace, they aimed to “pinpoint the cooperative triggers of peace that shared environmental problems might make available” (Conca, 2002, pp. 3, 5). They argued that the peace potential of the environment had been under-researched and they suggested two significant ways, in which environmental cooperation could indeed support peacemaking. On the one hand, increased environmental cooperation could positively influence the relations between conflict parties by emphasising the cooperative dimensions that rebuild trust and confidence and by highlighting the potential for shared interests and gains. It could therefore facilitate a move along the conflict cycle from open confrontation towards a state of negative peace, i.e. a situation characterised by the absence of violence. This could function as first step towards positive peace in which violence is inconceivable (c.f. Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of negative and positive peace). On the other hand, environmental cooperation could divert the attention of state-centric peacemaking towards non-state governance. Such an emphasis on what Conca refers to as “post-Westphalian governance” would increase the likelihood of collective identities (and with it, societal peace) to arise out of these cooperative processes through spillovers into other areas (Conca, 2002, p. 10). This type of governance also lends itself to post-conflict contexts where state functions have not yet been rebuilt. Cooperation on shared environmental issues is therefore a “low-politics framework that can offer additional channels for dialogue” (Dabelko & Rogers, 2016, p. 283). However, as Conca and Dabelko cautioned, cooperation itself is not a

⁵ The terminology later changed from environmental peacemaking to environmental peacebuilding to emphasise the merits of environmental cooperation not only in resolving ongoing conflicts, but in addressing conflict dynamics at all stages of the conflict cycle (including pre- and post-conflict) (Dresse et al., 2019, pp. 101–102).

guarantee for peace and its success depends on its underlying nature, scope and aims (Conca & Dabelko, 2002b, p. 222).

A growing number of scholars have further developed Conca and Dabelko's ideas. Dresse et al. provide the most recent definition of environmental peacebuilding. They define it as "the process through which environmental challenges shared by the (former) parties to a violent conflict are turned into opportunities to build lasting cooperation and peace" (2019, p. 104). I argue that this definition provides an interesting starting point for us to explore environmental peacebuilding more critically. Their definition emerged out of a comprehensive review of the existing literature on environmental peacebuilding, which has grown considerably both in scope and quantity over recent years. Contemporary research on environmental peacebuilding explores, for example, the management of land or specific natural resources, such as water (Bencala & Dabelko, 2008; Grech-Madin et al., 2018; Krampe, 2017b; Swain, 2016; Unruh & Williams, 2013a); the role of education in understanding the environment-conflict-peace nexus (Ide, 2016a; Wenden, 2014); the peace potential of conservation (Ali, 2007; Barquet, 2015; Walters, 2015; Zahler et al., 2016); the legal dimensions of the environment in peacebuilding (Bruch, 2017; Bruch, Boulicault, Talati, & Jensen, 2012; Stahn, Iverson, & Easterday, 2017); the links between geography and peace (Björkdahl & Buckley-Zistel, 2016; Courtheyn, 2017; Ide, 2017; Vogel, 2018); and the impact of climate change on peacebuilding (Barnett, 2018; Gemenne et al., 2014; Krampe & Möbjörk, 2018; Tänzler, Carius & Mass, 2013). This list is by no means exhaustive. In addition, a number of edited volumes have been published that bring together and explore specific angles of the connection between natural resource management, livelihoods, governance, and post-conflict peacebuilding (Bruch et al., 2016; Jensen & Lonergan, 2012; Lujala & Rustad, 2012; Unruh & Williams, 2013; Weinthal et al., 2014; Young & Goldman, 2015). Given the recent spike in interest that surrounds issues of environment and peace, it appears safe to say that Conca and Wallace's assessment of empirical research in environmental peacebuilding still being in its infancy no longer holds true (Conca & Wallace, 2012, p. 68).

However, critics have highlighted the lack of theoretical research underpinning the empirical insights that environmental peacebuilding provides. For instance, Krampe notes that "this research has not led to a cohesive theoretical understanding of the pathways by which environmental cooperation facilitates peace" (Krampe, 2017a, p. 1). He argues that two distinct camps have emerged in environmental peacebuilding, focusing on cooperation on the one hand, and resource-induced risk and instability on the other. However, neither camp has paid sufficient attention to exploring the theoretical implications of their empirical findings (2017a, p. 2). As a result, we still do not fully understand how socio-economic, political and ecological processes

interact in post-conflict countries (*ibid*). Along very similar lines, Dresse et al. point towards the fact that lack of theoretical debates in environmental peacebuilding is indicative of a lack of theorisation of the environment-peace nexus more broadly (Dresse et al., 2019). In their view, this lack of theorisation has made environmental peacebuilding susceptible to one of the main criticisms of sustainable development, namely that it becomes “a buzzword used to attract international funds” (Dresse et al., 2019, p. 101). Functioning as a ‘buzzword’, environmental peacebuilding could then easily be transformed to a greenwashing rhetoric that legitimises socially, politically, economically, and environmentally harmful practices (Barquet, 2015; Dresse et al., 2019, p. 103; Lightfoot & Burchell, 2005; Redclift, 2005, p. 218).

Nonetheless, I argue here that Dresse et al.’s criticism merely scratches the surface. They demonstrate that environmental peacebuilding is built on “terms such as ‘environment’ and ‘peace’ [which] have multifaceted meanings grounded within a wide array of disciplines” (Dresse et al., 2019, p. 100). In this regard, they remark that when it comes to the conception of the environment, the environmental peacebuilding literature treats the environment as a pre-given and unalterable variable; an understanding which is informed by “neoliberal conceptions” (2019, pp. 102–103). However, we require a more “comprehensive approach to the biophysical and socio-political environment of conflict transformation” to conceptualise understandings of conflict and peace against the background of a (potentially uneven) distribution of power (2019, p. 107). Particularly in the process of complex peacebuilding arrangements, failure to recognise the need for more differentiated engagement with the key concepts of environmental peacebuilding can result in negative unintended consequences (2019, p. 111). Although Dresse et al.’s arguments add a welcome critical dimension to the debates in environmental peacebuilding, I argue that they merely scratch the surface. We still understand too little about how a lack of a more comprehensive approach to the environment (and other key concepts like sustainability) affects peacebuilding processes themselves.

However, in order to explore the conceptual paradoxes and their implications on peacebuilding processes, we need to develop a clearer understanding of how the environment, conflict, security, and peace have become interlinked in both policy and research. As Dabelko observed, “[t]wenty years after the release of the Brundtland Report, our common future still depends on the health of our environment. It is increasingly clear that our common peace may rely on it as well” (Dabelko, 2008, p. 44). I explore the linkages between sustainable development, environmental conflict and security, and environmental cooperation in the next sections.

1.2 Sustainable development, environmental conflict and security

The narratives surrounding environmental conflict and security have shifted notably from a focus on resource scarcity and the impact of environmental degradation on economic growth to the reverse, namely an emphasis on the pressures exerted onto societies and the environment by economic development. While the 1970s, 1980s and, for the most part, the 1990s were concerned with natural resource management for economic development and poverty eradication, climate change and the impact of economic activity on the Earth's ecosystems have dominated discussions since the 2000s. The increase in quantity and intensity of natural disasters in recent years has brought issues of resilience and mitigation, adaptation and recovery to the forefront. However, many aspects of today's conception of environmental security have their roots in the early debates on sustainable development (Dabelko, 2008). It is crucial that we are aware of these processes, as they have significantly influenced the manner in which sustainable development, and with it a particular understanding of the environment, has informed the design of peacebuilding policies in the EU. In addition, they have also provided the foundations upon which notions of environmental cooperation (and environmental peacebuilding) have emerged. Therefore, if we want to grasp how understandings of the environment affect peacebuilding processes, we need to comprehend how the notions of environmental conflict and security have been mainstreamed into global policy-making. In the section below, I explore these issues in the context of the political economy of environmental conflicts, emphasising the role of resource scarcity and violence, before briefly discussing the increasing securitisation of environmental factors as a result of these debates.

1.2.1 The political economy of environmental conflict: resources, scarcity and violence

Notions of the environment, conflict and security first became closely intertwined on the back of questions related to economic development. The 1972 *Limits to Growth* was key in triggering wider debates on the connection between economic development, the state of the environment and broader security issues.⁶ Its emphasis on intergenerational justice still rings true today. The authors noted that managing the interaction between economic growth and environmental

⁶ It is noteworthy that the *Limits to Growth* report sparked fierce controversy. Particularly its assumption that humanity would soon have to face exponential prices for the increasingly scarce non-renewable resources that fuel its economy has been a cause of disagreement, among other aspects because it dared to question the feasibility of perpetual economic growth (Lomborg, 2001; Simon, 1981). The report's emphasis on resource scarcity was challenged most famously by economist Julian Simon who won a bet of \$10,000, claiming that contrary to the report's conclusions, scarce resources would in fact not increase in price (Lomborg, 2012, pp. 31–32). In turn, this bet has sparked ongoing debates on the inadequacy of resource prices as indicators of scarcity and sustainability (see for example Kiel, Matheson, & Golembiewski, 2010; Lawn, 2010)

degradation required difficult trade-offs “because they involve choosing between present benefits and future benefits” (Meadows, Meadows, Randers, & Behrens III, 1972, p. 68). Blaikie and Brookfield added the notion of scale to this emphasis on intergenerational justice. Observing how the benefits of economic development and the costs of environmental degradation are distributed, they argued that it was often the locals who carried most of the costs. To put it in their own words, “one person’s degradation is another’s accumulation” (Blaikie & Brookfield, 1987, p. 14). These assumptions inform much of today’s research in political ecology (c.f. Chapter 2).

Against this background, notions of environmental security began to emerge in the late 1980s (Conca, 2015, p. 153). For instance, the 1987 Report of the Brundtland Commission made two crucial observations in in this regard. First, it argued that the conception of security in pure military terms was too narrow to reflect the complexities of reality. Particularly, the focus on the military in responding to threats arguably did not reflect the emerging pressures of environmental insecurity (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 34). Second, and more specifically, the Commission concluded from this observation that greater attention had to be paid to environmental stresses as potential causes of conflict. The Commission argued that “the distribution of power and influence within society lies at the heart of most environment and development challenges” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 49). This statement not only reflects the political nature of environmental factors, but also paves the way for a conceptualisation of the environment as a contributing factor to social conflict (see e.g. Blaikie & Brookfield, 1987, p. 21). Consideration for the distribution of costs and benefits at the environment-development nexus had entered both the sphere of policy and academia.

On the basis of this close interplay of environment-development dynamics and social tensions, the link between the environment and conflict was framed particularly in terms of natural resources (Baechler, 1999, p. 76). For instance, with its 1992 *Agenda 21*, the UN acknowledged that conflicts could arise around the management and use of natural resources (United Nations, 1992b). However, these assumptions emerged out of a reorientation of human security more broadly. The United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) 1994 Human Development Report identified environmental factors as a key threat to guaranteeing human security, focusing particularly on the links between scarcity, poverty and environmental degradation (United Nations Development Programme, 1994, pp. 28–30). Here, UNDP framed population growth as the underlying dynamic intensifying the negative outcomes of this process and undermining human security (United Nations Development Programme, 1994, p. 34). Such

a framing of environmental issues is indicative of the predominant conflict-environment narratives of its time.

For instance, journalists like Robert Kaplan and scholars like Thomas Homer-Dixon examined the connections between population growth, resource scarcity and conflict (Homer-Dixon, 1999; Kaplan, 1994). They argued that on the basis of increased human activity and population pressure, environmental scarcity would create diffused forms of violence (Homer-Dixon, 1999, p. 13; Kaplan, 1994). While such a focus on scarcity has been challenged by those that argue it is in fact resource abundance that causes conflict (e.g. Collier & Hoeffler, 2004, 2005; Di John, 2007; Fearon & Laitin, 2003), it placed the competition surrounding natural resources in greater structural context. This assumption has given rise to a conceptualisation of the development-environment-conflict nexus around the notions of greed versus grievance as the main causes of conflict, which arguably still influences debates today.⁷ It is closely intertwined with a continuing interest in issues of resource abundance and scarcity, especially in policy circles because their oversimplification of conflict dynamics lends itself to policy-making processes (Conca, 2015, p. 154; Keen, 2012, p. 758). For instance, the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) conceptualisation of natural resources and conflict emphasises the causal links of scarcity and conflict in the context of population growth (United Nations Environment Programme, 2009, p. 8). However, recent research suggests that the link between resource scarcity, abundance and conflict is much less straightforward (Koubi, Spilker, Böhmelt, & Bernauer, 2014, p. 294).

Therefore, as the above analysis illustrates, environmental issues were integrated into the global policy-making machinery on the back of security considerations, which played a crucial role in understanding issues of greed and grievance in the political economy of conflict. But how do these aspects relate to advances in the field of environmental peacebuilding? And what can they tell us about how conceptualisations of the environment can affect peacebuilding processes? I argue that these insights into the deep entanglements of the environment and conflict have significantly shaped the manner in which the environment is conceptualised in post-conflict peacebuilding. The notion of securitisation can help us shed further light on this process.

⁷ Key research in this area explores the political economy of conflicts, focusing on the interaction of material gains and perceived inequalities and injustices as causes of conflict. For core works examining these issues, please see Ballentine and Sherman (2003), Berdal and Malone (2000), Cederman, Gleditsch and Buhaug (2013), Collier and Hoeffler (2004), Cramer (2002), Ross, Lujala and Rustad (2012), Stewart (2008), Stewart, Brown and Langer (2008), Stewart and Fitzgerald (2000).

1.2.2 Securitising the environment – and greening peace

Securitisation here refers to discursive acts of framing an issue as an existential threat, used by specific actors in positions of power relative to a respective audience, thereby depoliticising the referent object and legitimising the use of extraordinary measures (i.e. those not bound by usual political scrutiny in situations of emergency) (Buzan & Hansen, 2009, p. 214; Buzan, Waever, & de Wilde, 1998, pp. 23–25). The advantages and disadvantages of securitisation in international (environmental) politics have widely been explored and debated, particularly in the fields of, for example, critical security studies (e.g. Buzan & Hansen, 2009; Deudney, 1990; Fagan, 2017; Stritzel, 2007), political ecology (e.g. Büscher & Fletcher, 2018; Duffy, 2014; Duffy et al., 2019; Marijnen, 2017), and in the context of climate change (e.g. Gemenne et al., 2014; Keucheyan, 2016; Scheffran, Brzoska, Brauch, Link, & Schilling, 2012; Trombetta, 2008). A review of these debates lies beyond the scope of my thesis. However, it is worth noting that securitisation provides the background against which researchers have begun to explore the “greening of peace efforts” (Conca, 2015, p. 183).

For example, while there is a variety of works examining the greening of peacebuilding processes (e.g. Ravier, Vialle, Doran, & Stokes, 2016; United Nations Environment Programme, 2012; Waleij, 2016; Waleij, Bosetti, Doran, & Liljedahl, 2016), Lucile Maertens provides one of the most theoretically comprehensive analyses in this regard. She analyses the ‘environmentalization’ of UN peacekeeping missions following the cholera outbreak in Haiti in 2010, which was caused by the incorrect disposal of wastewater in a UN camp. Maertens examines the manner in which the UN showed increasing awareness of its environmental footprint and ‘greened’ its actions on the ground as a consequence of the epidemic. However, along with the environmentalization of its practices, Maertens argues, the UN also further contributed to the securitization of the environment (Maertens, 2019, pp. 20–21). While she makes a valid contribution to the overall debate on environmental security, arguing that practices in the everyday can shape overall policies, she fails to discuss two crucial aspects of the wider debate. In this regard, she does not provide (a) a critical assessment of the problems of securitizing the environment more broadly, such as reinforcing conflict dynamics and impeding cooperation (Conca, 2015, p. 212); and (b) a comprehensive conceptualisation of ‘the environment’ in the context of sustainable development after conflict. For example, Maertens argues that “[b]etter environmental management practices could undeniably improve missions’ outcomes, especially in a sustainable peace and a ‘do no harm’ perspective” (Maertens, 2019, p. 21). However, in this context, she engages neither with the inherent paradoxes of the notion of a ‘sustainable’ peace, nor the limitations of the ‘do no harm’ principle in international aid (see e.g.

Anderson, 1999; Barnett & Weiss, 2008; Zanotti, 2010). Thereby, she fails to examine her findings more critically against questions of asymmetric power dynamics. As I discuss in the last section of this chapter, such an omission is indicative of a wider lack of engagement with the inherent paradoxes of environmental peacebuilding.

In this section I illustrated the emerging entanglements of the environment with notions of conflict and security. I argued that these interlinkages were first framed in the context of economic development, but then took centre stage in the process of broadening the concept of human security. Here, environmental degradation, resource scarcity and abundance, and population growth played a crucial role in defining the notion of environmental security. Against this background, natural resources became a core component in conceptualising the political economy of conflict, giving rise to longstanding debates on greed versus grievance as the causes of conflict. Such close intertwining of environmental factors with conflict and security arguably culminated in the securitisation of the environment. These arguments significantly inform contemporary research in environmental peacebuilding, such as explorations of greening peacebuilding efforts. However, these works often overlook their inherent paradoxes and the broader questions of power in the global economy. Having reviewed the heavy emphasis on the conflict dimension of the environment in both policy and academia, we can now turn to examine how these arguments provided the foundations for an emphasis on environmental cooperation in sustainable development.

1.3 Sustainable development and environmental cooperation: from conflict to peace

As the above discussion illustrates, the emergence of environmental security and conflict as part of the sustainable development debates has led to a mainstreaming of environmental considerations into the areas of peace and conflict. However, the increasing securitisation of the environment, particularly in the context of climate change⁸, also gave rise to the exploration and manifestation of environmental cooperation in the global policy-making arena. There are two dimensions to the conceptualisation of environmental cooperation under the umbrella of sustainable development that we need to discuss in greater detail here. First, the conceptual

⁸ While a discussion of the securitisation of climate change lies beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is worthwhile noting that the UN Security Council has begun to pay more attention to the influence of climate change on the international security structure. For example, in January 2019, having taken over temporary presidency over the Security Council, the Dominican Republic launched an open debate to discuss the impact of climate change on security and peace (United Nations Security Council, 2019).

dimension emphasises the enabling relationship between the overarching notions of peace, the environment and development in guiding policies more broadly. Second, the practical dimension focuses on the cooperative policies that facilitate joint management of natural resources or responses to natural degradation. However, we need to acknowledge one crucial limitation here. Due to the heavy emphasis on environmental conflict and security, and because of a newfound focus on the security implications of climate change in global policy-making, explorations of sustainable development and environmental cooperation in the context of peace and conflict are rather scarce. As I indicated in the first section of the chapter, research on environmental peacebuilding has seen a spike in scope and quantity in the last five years, with little research examining the actual mechanisms and conditions of environmental cooperation (Krampe, 2017a, p. 5). Therefore, in the section below, I aim to synthesise the main themes and arguments that emerge in policy-making and in academic debates by discussing both the conceptual and practical dimensions of environmental cooperation.

1.3.1 The conceptual dimension of environmental cooperation in sustainable development

Analysing the core documents setting out the global approach to sustainable development, it appears that the notions of the environmental cooperation and peace initially became intertwined on the back of newfound concern for intergenerational justice issues. For example, the 1972 *Limits to Growth* first drew attention to the need for environmental protection in the process of expanding global development. Against the background of the Cold War, it emphasised that:

“[t]o defend and improve the human environment for present and future generations has become an imperative goal for mankind – a goal to be pursued together with, and in harmony with, the established and fundamental goals of peace and of world-wide economic and social development.” (Meadows et al., 1972, p. 3)

At the heart of this statement lies the assumption that under-development and industrialisation are to blame for widespread environmental degradation. Economic development is framed as the main path to ensuring that the environment is ‘defended and improved’ now and in the future. While this assumption poses its own problems, which I explore in Chapter 2, it indicates that the pursuit of peace and environmental protection are complementary goals that can be achieved through joint action by the international community.

However, it took 20 years for the connection to be fully recognised. It was with the 1992 Rio Declaration that the UN formally acknowledged that “[p]eace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible” (United Nations General

Assembly, 1992, para. 25). International cooperation on achieving all three aspects in unison, rather than tackling them individually, therefore became an essential part of the UN machinery. In the reverse, this also meant that the UN recognised that “[w]arfare is inherently destructive of sustainable development” (United Nations General Assembly, 1992, para. 26). This not only referred to the severe socio-economic consequences of war, but also recognised the grave negative impact of the conduct of warfare itself on the environment. In fact, as UNEP’s 1999 assessment of the environmental impact of the Kosovo war illustrates, these assumptions were quickly translated into post-conflict policies (United Nations Environment Programme, 1999). Against this background, the UN Agenda for Peace highlighted the cooperative potential of peacebuilding. It argued that

“post-conflict peacebuilding may take the form of concrete cooperative projects which link two or more countries in a mutually beneficial undertaking that can not only contribute to economic and social development but also enhance the confidence that is so fundamental to peace” (United Nations, 1992a, para. 56).

By drawing attention to the positive effects of cooperative peacebuilding in key sectors of the economy (e.g. resources and energy), the UN fundamentally linked peacebuilding, neoliberal development and democracy. As Millar et al. argue, the emerging image of post-conflict states was one that framed them as “almost clean slate[s] into which could be injected the institutions of democracy and liberal economics” (Millar et al., 2013, p. 137). Neoliberal conceptions of the environment as a key ingredient in kick-starting and fuelling the post-conflict economy for the improvement of human living conditions, and the integration of the state in question into the global market economy therefore became a crucial component of the development angle of the UN’s peacebuilding operations (de Soysa, 2012).

With the introduction of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, environmental protection had become a fundamental value of the UN (United Nations General Assembly, 2000, p. 2). Here, the notions of solidarity, and shared and collective responsibility provided the basis for creating a global partnership for development that would – at least in theory - protect the environment from the negative externalities of economic growth. It is therefore not surprising that at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development the UN announced that “[p]eace, security, stability ... are essential for achieving sustainable development and ensuring that sustainable development benefits all” (United Nations, 2002, p. 3). The notions of peace, the environment and development had therefore become deeply intertwined.

The most explicit recognition of the interconnected nature of the environment and peace in the context of sustainable development came with the introduction of the Sustainable

Development Goals in 2015. Not only did the UN introduce 17 closely interwoven areas of priority that would guide global action in support of the three dimensions of sustainable development (i.e. social, economic, and environmental). It also made peace explicit as a fundamental requirement of achieving sustainable development, stating that “[t]here can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development” (United Nations, 2015, p. 2). However, it is striking here that although economic development, environmental protection and peaceful societies are to be achieved in synergy, the explicit emphasis on environmental factors as such that was first shown in 1992 has indeed disappeared. For example, Goal 16 on peaceful societies makes no reference to environmental factors at all, focusing instead on issues of justice, rule of law and good governance (United Nations, 2015, pp. 25–26). While these are indeed absolutely essential to peacebuilding efforts, the lack of recognition that was shown in the earlier documents for environmental factors in the context of peace is still striking.

Nonetheless, the above discussion illustrates that the conceptual emphasis on environmental cooperation, through a recognition of the close relationship between the environment and peace, arguably passed through two stages. It was first enabled by an interlinking of concerns for environmental protection with the overall development agenda under the heading of intergenerational justice and solidarity. With the introduction of the Millennium Development Goals, the interdependence of development and peace then became the foundation of global action. Peaceful cooperation on shared challenges had therefore emerged as a fundamental requirement of sustainable development. However, research in the area of environmental peacebuilding comes to mixed conclusions when the link between environmental cooperation and peace is concerned. I discuss this in the next sub-section.

1.3.2 The practical dimension of environmental cooperation in sustainable development

Recalling that each of the key summits or reports were held or written in a specific historical context, we need to consider the events against which the Brundtland Commission published its report in August 1987. In April 1987, the Chernobyl disaster made the severe effects of a nuclear accident visible, which could not be contained by national action alone. The Commission therefore noted at the time that “[a]lready, environmental stresses are encouraging cooperation among nations, giving some indication of ways to proceed” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 296). The interesting aspect here is not that it took

note of the cooperation that emerged in the face of the disaster. Rather, I argue that we can observe an early indication of what the international community thought was a potential solution to the unstable climate of the Cold War specifically, and conflicts more broadly.

Coordinated disaster response provided a first step in this regard. The UN resolved in its 2000 Millennium Declaration to “intensify cooperation to reduce the number and effects of natural and man-made disasters” (United Nations General Assembly, 2000, p. 6). This ties in with my observation in the first sub-section on environmental stresses increasingly being framed as threats to human security (c.f. pp. 33-35). However, another narrative emerged in the Millennium Declaration, namely a focus on joint resource management, particularly in the water sector. In this regard, the UN underlined the link between development and equity, vowing to “stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources by developing water management strategies at the regional, national and local levels, which promote both equitable access and adequate supplies” (United Nations General Assembly, 2000, p. 6). Such an emphasis on transboundary cooperation in the water sector is reflected in today’s Sustainable Development Goal 6, which identifies integrated water management enabled by cooperation as a priority area (United Nations, 2015, p. 18). The UN has further explored the possibility of institutionalising the link between water and peace, with, for example, the recommendation to establish a Global Observatory for Water and Peace, providing a framework for diplomacy “to leverage water for comprehensive peace” (Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace, 2017, p. 78).

Against the background of such heavy emphasis on the water sector in global policy-making, it is unsurprising that research in environmental peacebuilding has focused on examples of water resources in conceptualising environmental cooperation. In the context of early explorations of environmental peacebuilding, Stacy VanDeveer examines institutionalised environmental cooperation around the Baltic Sea following the Cold War, such as the Baltic Marine Environmental Protection Commission. While he acknowledges the merits of cooperative measures in marine environmental protection, he cautions that different assumptions of the extent and inclusiveness of cooperation can create significant obstacles to environmental cooperation supporting peacemaking processes (VanDeveer, 2002). In turn, Swain, for example, conceptualises cooperation on water management as “an interactive process, which turns a situation from a potentially destructive conflict into a productive one”, based on the underlying readiness of conflict parties to find mutual solutions to shared (environmental) problems (Swain, 2016, p. 1314). In this context, by providing “an excellent exit strategy for conflicting parties”, environmental cooperation can break conflict cycles, thereby creating a setting, in which economic development can support peacebuilding processes (Swain & Krampe,

2011, p. 207). However, researchers have come to mixed conclusions concerning its ability to contribute to peace. For instance, based on Conca and Dabelko's initial elaboration of environmental cooperation (as outlined in sub-section 1 above), Tobias Ide examines the potential of bilateral environmental agreements to contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Focusing on transboundary freshwater treaties and transboundary protected areas, he finds that high-level environmental cooperation can in fact support reconciliation after conflict. However, much like Conca and Dabelko, he cautions that cooperation itself is not guarantor for conflict resolution, but that it can support existing reconciliation efforts (Ide, 2018, p. 361). In another article examining cooperation on water-related issues, Ide and Detges argue that environmental cooperation below the level of formal interstate agreements can also facilitate post-conflict peacebuilding by creating an institutional and societal memory of positive interaction (Ide & Detges, 2018, p. 67). One of the most prominent examples of successful environmental cooperation and diplomacy in the water sector is arguably the Good Water Neighbors Program between Israel, Palestine and Jordan run by EcoPeace Middle East, formerly known as Friends of the Earth Middle East. The project promotes a community-led approach to cross-border water management and environmental education in support of regional peacebuilding. It has widely been discussed as a success in the environmental peacebuilding literature due to its ability to break the conflict cycle among riparian communities (see e.g. Carius, 2006; Djernaes et al., 2015; Ide, 2017).

However, cases such as the Good Water Neighbors Program often disregard that conflict and cooperation can exist simultaneously. Mark Zeitoun refers to this situation as the 'conflict vs. cooperation paradox', in which "very negative consequences ... may be hidden under an apparent air of cooperation" (Zeitoun, 2007, p. 106). He argues that environmental cooperation contains conflict dynamics on one level (e.g. between states), while often leaving them unresolved on another (e.g. within states). Drawing attention to the processes as well as the outcomes of cooperation, Zeitoun cautions that "inequitable outcomes can be entrenched by apparently fair processes" due to persisting power asymmetries between different actors (Zeitoun, 2013, p. 141). In the case of the Good Water Neighbors Program, cooperation exists but takes place within an uneven power arrangement, allowing the powerful actor to shape cooperative processes in a manner that create outcomes, which further the actor's own interests. Zeitoun therefore argues that any analysis of environmental cooperation needs to place greater emphasis on power distribution and injustices that can affect both processes and outcomes (Zeitoun et al., 2014, p. 186). As I discuss in Chapter 2 (c.f. section 2.3), such a focus on processes is key for understanding the unintended consequences of peacebuilding more broadly.

Other scholars exploring the negative implications of environmental cooperation argue that such examples can be highly context-specific or theoretically under-researched (Büscher & Schoon, 2009, pp. 36–37; Dabelko, 2013; Krampe, 2017b; Selby, 2013). For instance, remaining with the example of transboundary protected areas, environmental cooperation can function as a form of exerting control over a territory and population, and can legitimise the use of violence under the veil of environmental policies (Barquet, 2015, p. 22).⁹ Another key narrative in the more critical approaches to sustainable development and environmental cooperation emerges around the argument that its very roots in the capitalist system and neoliberal economy are to blame for existing tensions within and beyond the socio-ecological dimensions (Brockington, Duffy, & Igoe, 2011, e.g. Chapter 9; van Amerom & Büscher, 2005, p. 168). These issues do not only apply to the practical implications of policies, but also to the preceding processes of environmental policy-making. For example, when discussing the outcome and impacts of the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, Dauvergne criticises the highly growth-focused agenda. He argues that “industry captured the agenda at Rio ..., and the outcomes were little more than an incompetent doctor (the state system) slapping a Band-Aid on to a cancerous tumour (capitalism)” (Dauvergne, 2017, p. 395). It is therefore crucial that we see the above-mentioned advances in policies, which create the practical links between sustainable development, environmental cooperation and peace, against the background of these arguments.

In this sub-section, I reviewed the emergence of environmental cooperation in both conceptual and practical terms. While conceptually, there appears to be a clear positive link between environmental cooperation and peace, the practical implications of environmental cooperation are not necessarily always positive. In fact, the success of environmental cooperation appears highly context-specific and, under certain circumstances, can lock in power asymmetries and contribute to violence. If we are to understand its (unintended) negative consequences, it is crucial that we examine issues of environmental cooperation against the background of power dynamics that are prescribed by the wider socio-economic structures of the global economy in which environmental cooperation takes place.

Having examined the debates that have significantly informed research in environmental peacebuilding (i.e. those surrounding the notions of environmental conflict and security, and

⁹ Political ecology scholars explore the exertion of control over a territory or population by borrowing from Foucault’s governmentality approach. They consider environmental policies as carriers of power, which shape actions, rules and behaviour, and eventually lead to a form of self-governance (Foucault, 1978/1991., p. 87). Political ecologists refer to these processes as ‘environmentality’ (Agrawal, 2005; Fletcher, 2017), ‘greenmentality’ (Cavanagh, 2018; Cavanagh & Benjaminsen, 2018), or ‘eco-governmentality’ (Goldman, 2004).

environmental cooperation), we can now turn to a more in-depth discussion of what they reveal about the shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding. As I indicated in the first section, crucial conceptual and theoretical questions arise around the argument that sustainable development and environmental peacebuilding are simply ‘umbrella terms’ (Dresse et al., 2019, p. 101). Therefore, engaging with these arguments in the next section, I argue that the limitations of environmental peacebuilding can best be understood when we consider the debate surrounding the definition of sustainable development.

1.4 Illuminating the limitations of environmental peacebuilding: A question of definition?

Given the close conceptual connection between sustainable development and environmental peacebuilding, I argue in this section that the inherent conceptual paradoxes of sustainable development project onto environmental peacebuilding. Crucially, this does not mean that I advocate for a reinvention of the wheel in environmental peacebuilding in the form of further debates on its conceptual definitions. To the contrary, I believe that the definition by Dresse et al. (c.f. section 1) provides a helpful starting point that leaves sufficient room for critical engagement. However, scholars in environmental peacebuilding do need to engage with the implications of its conceptual paradoxes for the processes that they seek to analyse. As I show throughout my dissertation, their emphasis on sustainability and the environment without engaging with broader conceptual debates results in environmental peacebuilding turning a blind eye to deeply unsustainable practices that are enshrined in the peacebuilding policies themselves. Thereby, they fail to recognise that peacebuilding processes can create – to paraphrase Zeitoun – an illusion of progress towards positive peace while in fact locking in the structural inequities of negative peace (Zeitoun, 2013, p. 142).

Some scholars have touched upon this subject, but merely scratched the surface. For example, they framed environmental peacebuilding as a solution to the conceptual shortcomings of sustainable development, without recognising its own limitation (Swain, 2016, p. 1316). In this regard, Swain and Krampe deeply interweave the notions of sustainable development, stability and peacebuilding. They argue that

“peacebuilding systems should pursue a sustainable economic policy for growth and development, which will not only be sensitive to the local needs and the environment, but will also take the support of the local resource base to promote cooperation and peace in the long run” (Swain & Krampe, 2011, p. 205).

Although Swain and Krampe are critical of the neoliberal normative systems that peacebuilding policies tend to prescribe, they do not further question the conceptual focus that comes with an emphasis on growth-focused sustainability in the post-conflict context (Swain & Krampe, 2011, p. 201). While they highlight the need for economic development in post-conflict contexts to “be based upon sustainable values”, they do not discuss *whose* values these are, how they come about or upon which potentially competing assumptions of sustainability these values are based on (2011, p. 203).

In contrast, Conca and Dabelko recognise that questions of sustainability are interlinked with questions of power. They clearly outline the need for more critical engagement with the concept of sustainability in environmental politics, arguing that

“we must clarify and reconcile the goals that characterize radically different visions of a sustainable society; and we must broaden our vision to engage the contested issues of power, wealth, and authority that underlie current environmental problems.” (Conca & Dabelko, 2015, p. 182)

Other scholars, like Ide, have begun to explore the negative consequences of environmental peacebuilding by drawing attention to how costs and benefits of environmental cooperation are distributed. He argues that we need to understand what he calls “the dark side of environmental peacebuilding ... to identify potential risk factors for sustainability and peace” (Ide, 2020, p. 7). According to Ide, we can gain such insight into the role of power in environmental peacebuilding by drawing on political ecology which examines patterns of marginalisation and exclusion. While Ide’s suggestion of turning to political ecology is certainly beneficial for understanding human-environment interactions in environmental peacebuilding, he does not critically engage with the questions of power that are tied to the notion of ‘sustainability’ or ‘peace’ itself. This lack of critical engagement with the power dynamics prescribed by certain approaches to sustainability or peace is indicative of a broader omission in environmental peacebuilding research to integrate these debates. This is particularly surprising in so far as an assessment of potentially asymmetric power dynamics has been framed as a prerequisite for understanding why conflicts and violence arise, and how they are sustained and legitimised (Galtung, 1996, pp. 2–7). I further explore the role of power in Chapter 2. Nonetheless, given that environmental peacebuilding is closely interwoven with sustainable development, particularly when it comes to issues of power and equity (Dresse et al., 2019, p. 109), it appears to be a grave omission that environmental peacebuilding research has not sufficiently explored the implications of these conceptual debates in the context of post-conflict peacebuilding. We

can gain an understanding for the importance of these conceptual debates, if we consider what discussions emerged surrounding the shortcomings of sustainable development.

For example, scholars like Lélé have cautioned that “SD [sustainable development] is in real danger of becoming a cliché like appropriate technology – a fashionable phrase that everyone pays homage to but nobody cares to define” (Lélé, 1991, p. 607). Along similar lines, Redclift argues that “the term is usually attached uncritically to existing practices and policies that might benefit from ‘re-branding’” (Redclift, 2005, p. 218). In contrast, Carter identifies this as one of the key strengths of sustainable development. He observes that “[s]ustainable development, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder; it therefore promises something for everyone” (Carter, 2001, p. 199). For instance, it promises a compromise between economic growth and environmental protection; a compromise which allows to acknowledge issues of intergenerational justice while simultaneously maintaining the status quo (Galtung, 1996, p. 79). It thereby lends itself to different contexts and policy areas, especially in complex post-conflict settings that require simultaneous action across multiple sectors.

As I further elaborate in Chapter 2, accepting the trade-off between the ability to bring together opposing camps and brushing over deep-seated paradoxes brings about severe problems.¹⁰ For instance, the promise of an improvement of future conditions (be they socio-economic or environmental) can be (mis)used to justify unsustainable practices in the present, and in fact worsen the situation that sustainable development policies seek to improve. While, as I indicated above, the emphasis on intergenerational justice is certainly a key achievement of sustainable development, this does not rectify the fact that its focus on the future can conceal injustices in the present (Barry, 2012, p. 6). Therefore, as I explain in Chapter 2, rather than getting caught up in discussions of narrower/broader definitions of sustainable development, we should focus on the actually existing implications of the unsustainability that it enables in the present. After all, as Redclift cautioned more than almost 15 years ago, the negative implications of the sustainability discourse in the context of intra- and inter-generational justice “come[...] to light when examining *actual* cases, existing places and communities”¹¹ (Redclift, 2005, p. 223).

Therefore, although research on environmental peacebuilding now covers a vast variety of policy sectors and geographic regions, its theoretical developments do not yet match the scope and quantity of its empirical contributions. Such theoretical shortcomings have made environmental peacebuilding susceptible to criticism similar to that voiced in the context of

¹⁰ For an analysis of the debate on the definition and discourses of sustainable development, see, for example, Carter (2001), Redclift (2005), and Death (2010).

¹¹ Emphasis in original.

sustainable development, focusing on it being little more than an umbrella term that can legitimise socially and environmentally harmful practices. Arguably, rather than increasing efforts to find a more adequate universal definition, we can begin to address these criticisms by engaging critically with the conceptual paradoxes, and their actual implications, upon which both sustainable development and environmental peacebuilding are built. As I show in the following chapters, the paradoxes revolve predominantly around the concepts of ‘the environment’ and sustainability.

Conclusion

My analysis in this chapter contributed to an exploration of the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding through a discussion of the emergence of the concepts of the environment, security, conflict and cooperation in global policy-making. It demonstrated that as environmental peacebuilding has become increasingly entangled with the notions and practices of sustainable development, it has taken on some of its conceptual paradoxes. As I illustrate in more detail in the following chapters, these conceptual paradoxes revolve around the key concepts which research in the field of environmental peacebuilding tends to take for granted, namely ‘the environment’ and ‘sustainability’. I argue that such an omission to engage with these paradoxes makes environmental peacebuilding susceptible to criticisms of functioning as an ‘umbrella term’ or ‘buzzword’ that can legitimise unsustainable and harmful practices in contexts of peace and conflict.

Against this background, it appears that the two contrary statements by my interviewees on the environment leading to either cooperation or conflict reflect the wider uncertainties that I identified in this chapter. In this regard, I argued that in order to understand how the EU’s peacebuilding policies in Kosovo reinforce inequalities and injustices, and what this means for wider environmental peacebuilding research, we need to be aware of how the link between sustainable development, the environment and peace and conflict was institutionalised in global policy-making. My analysis demonstrated that the environment - under the heading of resource scarcity and abundance, population growth and violence - played a crucial role in understanding the political economy of conflicts. This approach to environment-security nexus significantly contributed to the securitisation of the environment. Against this background, my examination of environmental cooperation in both policy and practice indicated that while there appears to be a strong positive link between environmental cooperation and peace on the conceptual level, environmental peacebuilding scholars caution that this is not always the case when it comes to

the implications of cooperative policies. Placing these findings in wider context, they point towards the theoretical and conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding revolving around a lack of engagement with its inherent conceptual paradoxes. I argue that such an omission makes environmental peacebuilding susceptible to criticisms of functioning as an ‘umbrella term’ or ‘buzzword’ that can legitimise unsustainable and harmful practices in contexts of peace and conflict. As I illustrate throughout the following chapters, these conceptual and theoretical shortcomings emerge predominantly in the context of its approach to ‘the environment’ and sustainability. We can begin to address these shortcomings by taking a step back and establishing how socio-economic, political and ecological processes interact in post-conflict countries.

However, I argue that we cannot understand these dynamics without paying attention to the (neoliberal) socio-economic structural arrangements that are prescribed by both sustainable development and post-conflict peacebuilding themselves. Therefore, if we want to examine how conceptualisations of the environment affect peacebuilding processes, we need to be aware that, as Barry argues, “[o]rthodox, undifferentiated economic growth under capitalism is the dominant cause of actually existing unsustainability” (Barry, 2012, p. 140). Having discussed the rationale for my research and reviewed the key debates that it speaks to, I explore this connection between the economic system and unsustainability from a green political economy and political ecology angle in the following chapter. These frameworks provide the necessary input to define and examine unsustainability in the context of post-conflict peacebuilding, enabling us to move in on the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding.

CHAPTER 2

Theoretical and methodological framework

Introduction

In this chapter, I outline the theoretical and methodological framework to explore the overarching research question, namely how do understandings of the environment in sustainable development affect the EU's peacebuilding process in Kosovo? I argue that the EU has incorporated the concept of sustainable development into its peacebuilding initiatives. But this is based on an anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment in its peacebuilding policies, which commodifies both the environmental and human spheres in the processes of socio-economic and political neoliberalisation. Thereby, the EU obscures the structural inequities of a constant state of negative peace and institutionalises deeply flawed unsustainabilities into peacebuilding processes. These unsustainabilities, which I understand as socio-economic and environmental injustices and inequalities (such as the diversion of democratic accountability, socio-ecological exploitation, marginalisation or oppression), feed into conflict dynamics and hamper the success of the peacebuilding process in the long-term. Bringing different strands of literature together (i.e. green political economy, political ecology, and environmental peacebuilding) I define unsustainabilities as socio-ecological forms of structural violence, i.e. inequalities and injustices, that emerge from the wider socio-economic context in which they are embedded. Such an understanding of unsustainabilities allows us to emphasise the reinforcement of existing tensions and the emergence of new conflict dynamics under the heading of 'post-conflict sustainable development' in the context of the global economy (Galtung, 1996, p. 2, 31).

I draw on insights from the fields of (i) green political economy, (ii) political ecology and (iii) environmental peacebuilding to conceptualise the EU's understanding of the environment and to determine where and why patterns of unsustainability emerge. These three frameworks advocate conceptual and methodological pluralism, complexity and hybridity. By combining key arguments from debates within each of these fields, I identify four core theoretical assumptions, namely that a) the human and the environmental spheres are closely interlinked; b) power and patterns of knowledge-production matter in the politicised environment; c) the environment has both material and socially produced dimensions, our interpretation of which is influenced by the dominant socio-economic and institutional structures; and that d) we need to focus on present unsustainabilities instead of future sustainability. Against this background, I argue that peacebuilding often functions as a neoliberalising process which is inherently environmental due

to the manner in which it determines socio-ecological structures and adapts to forms of environmental resistance.

My analysis is informed by a methodology that is rooted in the assumptions of ontological realism, epistemological relativism and judgmental rationalism (Bhaskar, 1978, p. 18, 31; Harré & Secord, 1972, pp. 6-7; Patomäki & Wight, 2000, p. 224; Sayer, 1992, p. 5). My analysis demonstrates that by combining insights from document analysis and semi-structured interviews, we can explore underlying neoliberalising processes and frictions between different actors in the peacebuilding process. Thereby, we are able to identify how and why anthropocentric conceptualisations of the environment (i.e. those that emphasise the increasing commodification of the environment as an integral part of socio-economic neoliberalisation) in EU peacebuilding policies institutionalise injustices and inequalities into the post-conflict context in Kosovo, hampering progress towards positive peace. I argue that we can use these specific insights to address the theoretical shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding more broadly.

As I showed in Chapter 1, the field of environmental peacebuilding has explored the role of the environment in peace and conflict from a predominantly policy-oriented angle. It therefore lacks the theoretical depth to understand the underlying dynamics of institutionalised injustices and inequalities and their implications for the peacebuilding process. I argue that we can draw meaningful theoretical insights from the fields of green political economy and political ecology to address these theoretical shortcomings. Therefore, in the below sections, I first identify four core theoretical assumptions that emerge from green political economy and political ecology, which make valuable contributions to the case of Kosovo specifically, and environmental peacebuilding more broadly. Here, I define my own understanding of key concepts like the environment, power, and (un)sustainability. Second, I argue that neoliberalism is 'the elephant in the room' that drives key arguments in the fields of green political economy and political ecology. I outline my understanding of neoliberalism as both theory and practice and argue that it is better understood as a process of socio-economic neoliberalisation and a form of governance. I therefore demonstrate that peacebuilding functions as a combination of different neoliberalising processes, which can feed into a protracted conflict by creating tensions and frictions between peacebuilding actors. Against this background, I outline the essentially environmental nature of such neoliberalising processes, as it aids in the conceptualisation of how specific human/environmental relations and power asymmetries become institutionalised. Understanding neoliberalising processes in such a manner provides the theoretical foundations to grasp what greater concern for environmental factors can reveal about broader conflict dynamics. Third, I place these findings in the context of hybridity and frictions in peacebuilding.

I show that these concepts specifically point towards the interactions of international and national peacebuilding actors as a contributing factor to sustaining conflict in certain contexts. I argue that these insights are particularly helpful to understand the unexpected consequences of EU peacebuilding policies in Kosovo, as they draw attention to the outcomes as well as the processes of peacebuilding. Fourth, I examine the relationship between neoliberalisation, governance and accountability in order to understand the negative effects of subordinating democratic principles to sphere of neoliberal economic policy strategies. Here, I argue that by overemphasising efficiency in policy implementation, the EU's peacebuilding process contributes to obscure decision-making and distorts domestic and international structures of accountability, thereby undermining the long-term peacebuilding objectives. Fifth, I outline my methodological assumptions, introduce my choice of methods accordingly, and briefly discuss the limitations of alternative approaches, before drawing conclusions.

2.1 International political economy and the 'green' turn: green political economy and political ecology

The existing research on green political economy is scattered across different disciplines, with many scholars in the fields ranging from politics, geography, and economics to sociology and history, conducting research relevant to green political economy without necessarily labelling it as such. It is therefore not surprising that green political economy covers a wide variety of theories, methodologies and objects of study. For instance, consider the works by scholars such as Bruch et al. (2016), Krampe (2017a), and Le Billon and Duffy (2018) on the environment in peace and conflict; by Jenkins et al. (2016), and Sovacool and Dworkin (2014) on energy and natural resources; by Dryzek (2013) and Stevenson (2015) on discourses of green politics and democracy; by Eckersley (2004) and Death (2016) on the evolution of the green state; by Joseph (2016), and McGregor and Pouw (2017) on resilience and well-being or by Schilling et al. (2017) on resilience and environmental security; or by Fletcher and Rammelt (2017), and Sullivan (2017) on decoupling and de-growth. There have also been first attempts to synthesise these approaches into coherent discussion pieces and volumes (Dauvergne, 2017; Goldthau, Keating, & Kuzemko, 2018) and to lay out directions for further research, particularly in the context of the global capitalist economy and ecological changes (Newell, 2012) and in the area of energy and natural resources (Kuzemko, Lawrence, & Watson, 2019). Although these works employ different methods to study a great variety of issues, they appear to share an underlying recognition of the value-laden nature of research and the subsequent necessity for pluralist epistemology and ontology. In addition, they examine the mutually constitutive relationship between the political

and the economic dimensions of sustainability. Therefore, although the terminology differs and despite the fact that the term itself is still nascent¹², I refer to this body of research as green political economy.

Crucially, green political economy has taken what James Brassett and Richard Higgott advocated as a turn to pragmatic ethics, moving away from abstract theoretical aims to real objectives that recognise that “human suffering is an ever-changing facet of reality, which requires innovative agendas for articulating and effecting responses” (Brassett & Higgott, 2003, p. 50). While their aim is to integrate normative concerns into a debate otherwise dominated by (neo)realist versus (neo)liberalist or state versus market dualisms, their call for more pragmatism resonates with scholars such as John Barry. Barry emphasises the interdisciplinary and applied nature of research in green political thought (Barry, 2012, p. 3). Setting out to reframe green political theory from an emphasis on future sustainability to a focus on present *unsustainability*, Barry outlines the assumptions he makes about the relation between the human and non-human spheres, which inform my own theoretical approach. According to Barry,

“a green politics of actually existing unsustainability suggests we need to begin our search by developing a view of the human person as someone who is both socially and ecologically embedded, biologically embodied and dependent biographically at different points in his or her life. And in the ‘circumstances of unsustainability’ that currently prevail we need a conception of human flourishing, what it means to be a healthy human viewed holistically, that is cognizant of the finite planet and its resources.” (Barry, 2012, p. 11)

A number of theoretical assumptions are implicit in the above quote, which guide my theoretical framework and therefore deserve more detailed elaboration here.

2.1.1 Core theoretical and analytical assumptions

a) Human and environmental spheres are interlinked.

First, I argue that the human and the environmental spheres are inherently connected, but that this connection is being forcefully unravelled by contemporary (neoliberal) socio-economic structures, which conceptualise the environment anthropocentrically, i.e. as a key ingredient in the pursuit of individual human wellbeing and the expansion of the global market economy. This argument, which builds on the above insights by Barry, reflects the main assumption of political ecology that humans cannot be separated from the environment which they inhabit, as they *are*

¹² A large part of the research, which touches upon issues of political economy and the environment, is categorised under the heading of global environmental politics, green political thought or, as Gale has recently argued, under “sustainable political economy” (Gale, 2018, p. xiv). The list is by no means exhaustive. When I refer to the term green political economy, I aim to encompass these various strands of research.

indeed part of nature and vice versa (Moore, 2017, pp. 597–598). This assumption allows for a more nuanced and contextual view of the production and constitution of the human and the environmental spheres (Castree, 2008, p. 133; Robbins, 2012, pp. 12–13). I elaborate further on this point in the below section on my definition of ‘the environment’. Therefore, unlike what mainstream economists would argue, it is not simply the economy or the market that provides the link between the human and the environmental sphere (e.g. Lomborg, 2001; Sachs, 2015). Rather, both spheres are intrinsically interlinked, meaning that events in one sphere will have an impact on the other. However, in this context, the socio-economic structures of the market economy prescribe certain relations of power (Barry, 2012, p. 121). According Bryant and Bailey, the implications of this understanding are that certain environmental processes “become meaningful only in the context of an integrated understanding of human-environmental interaction in which political and economic inequalities influence the social distribution of ... costs and benefits” (Bryant & Bailey, 1997, p. 33). We can begin to grasp the merits of this approach, which recognises the inherent political ecology of the environment, if we consider the main assumptions and implications of the contrasting view: the anthropocentric understanding of the instrumental environment.

Conceptualising the environment anthropocentrically entails the underlying conviction that humans and their well-being are ultimately superior to other forms of existence (Srinivasan & Kasturirangan, 2016, pp. 126–127; Yang, 2006, p. 28). In this context of moral superiority, the human and the environmental spheres are fundamentally separate from one another. The environment is of instrumental use to human wellbeing and progress and acquires value only by means of human production of it (ten Have, 2006, p. 19). To understand what implications such an anthropocentric understanding of the instrumental environment can have on the manner in which we organise our societies, economies and politics, or on how we interact with one another and our environment, we need to be aware of the roots from which this understanding emerges.

At its core, such a conceptualisation of the environment is closely linked to the liberal emphasis on the welfare of the rational individual (Eckersley, 2004, pp. 99–100; Yang, 2006, p. 31). In fact, as Hayley Stevenson observes, the anthropocentric understanding of the environment is a core component of contemporary liberal democracies which have institutionalised it into their socio-economic structures (Stevenson, 2012, p. 37). However, the longevity of these systems depends fundamentally on the reproduction of their structures and values; the economy plays a crucial role in this regard (Eckersley, 2004, p. 106). In this context, in a system where individuals compete over power and resources for their welfare, compromise and negotiation are key. Unlike certain individual rights and freedoms, which are non-negotiable,

“environmental freedoms are ranked differently. That is, they are considered matters of the ‘good life’ and therefore a matter of competing individual preferences” (Eckersley, 2004, p. 100). We can understand the problems that arise surrounding these assumptions if we place them in the context of the neoliberal economy. Reinforcing a system in which the environment plays an instrumental role in the acquisition of individual human wellbeing results in the rise of socio-ecological exploitative practices. As Robyn Eckersley puts it, in such systems “[t]he needs and requirements of others are cast as external to those of the lone, self-contained, rational maximizer who, by virtue of what is seen his/her autonomy at the expense of others and the environment” (Eckersley, 2004, p. 104). Therefore, conceptualising the environment in anthropocentric terms ignores underlying issues of power, inclusion and exclusion that are inherent to the global economy, which is characterised by variants of neoliberalism (Bakker, 2010, p. 721; Crouch, 2011, p. vii). In contexts of peace and conflict, these power asymmetries can manifest as structural violence and undermine progress towards positive peace. While an anthropocentric approach to the environment is not exclusive to neoliberalism (for example, it also provides the foundation for other approaches to economic development, such as Keynesian growth-focused strategies), it underlines the lack of morality as a key characteristic of the neoliberal market economy (Crouch, 2011, p. 25).

The deep interweaving of (neo)liberalism with the anthropocentric environment also has implications for our understanding of human nature. Forcefully separating humans from the environment supports a worldview in which humans “are truly exceptional” and exert control over the biophysical environment, mastering environmental challenges and detaching their wellbeing from environmental constraints (Smith, 1996, pp. 47, 49; Srinivasan & Kasturirangan, 2016, p. 127). The commodification of the environment thereby becomes a prerequisite for (neoliberal) human progress (Polanyi, 1944, pp. 71, 187; Smith, 1996, p. 41). Creating an image of humans as detached from the chaos and constraints of the biophysical environment reinforces the assumptions of humans as morally superior to other forms of life (Attfield, 2006, p. 71; Stevenson, 2012, p. 67). While some scholars have begun to acknowledge and explore the influence of the chaotic environment¹³, especially in contexts of post-conflict peacebuilding (see

¹³ For example, David Chandler and Julian Reid critically examine the nature of human subjectivity in global neoliberalism (both as theory and as socio-economic practice or mode of governance). In particular, they question the extent of (rational and autonomous) human agency in light of rising insecurity and uncertainty. They explore the implications of reconceptualising human subjectivity in the contexts of resilience, adaptation and vulnerability, which increasingly require and reinforce resourceful behaviour (Chandler & Reid, 2016). However, since parallels can be drawn between their arguments and discussions in the field of political ecology on the interaction and interconnectedness of the environmental and human spheres (see for example Chapter 10 in Robbins, 2012), which I explore in more detail in the next sub-section, an in-depth discussion of their theoretical explorations lies beyond the scope of this dissertation.

e.g. Chandler & Richmond, 2015), alternative development approaches¹⁴ are only just entering scholarly discussions (see e.g. Caradonna et al., 2015; Jackson, 2017; Jones & O'Donnell, 2017; Kothari, Demaria, & Acosta, 2014). Ultimately, underlining the existential threat to human survival at the hands of environmental changes, while simultaneously emphasising human mastery (through their morality and ingenuity) over the biophysical environment, is what makes the anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment so appealing in contemporary policy-making (Hattingh, 2006, p. 209). In this line of reasoning, the (short-term) exploitation of the environment and of human labour is morally justified as it contributes to perpetual economic growth and thereby ensures human wellbeing in the long-term. I explore this issue in more detail in the below section on (un)sustainability. As matters of asymmetric power dynamics and exclusion are conveniently silenced, the uneven distribution of costs and benefits bears no significance here. However, I argue that in the case of the EU's peacebuilding in Kosovo, the anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment, which presupposes the neoliberalisation of socio-economic structures and belief systems, leads to the institutionalisation of deep socio-ecological injustices and inequalities into the peacebuilding process, ultimately undermining the EU's peacebuilding objectives in Kosovo. This becomes possible as the increased use of the sustainability rhetoric by the different peacebuilding actors obscures the structural inequities of negative peace and creates the illusion of the EU-driven peacebuilding process contributing to positive peace. Being aware of this conceptualisation of the connection between humans and the environment in political ecology, which draws attention to (institutionalised) inequalities, we see that power matters.

b) Power matters in the politicised environment.

As indicated above, this recognition of the close interrelationship between the human and the environmental spheres leads us to a second crucial assumption, namely that the environment is inherently political. Advocates of mainstream economics often provide a very anthropocentric view of the environment, which they frame predominantly in terms of natural resources with

¹⁴ Alternative development approaches not only question the universality of neoliberalism in both economics and politics, they also build on and explore more radical approaches to the environment, which shift attention away from its instrumental use in the global economy and instead place greater emphasis on its intrinsic value. Such critiques of the dominant understandings of development and the anthropocentric approach to the environment, reconceptualise the relationship between humans and the environment by, for instance, turning towards indigenous knowledge to identify pathways for radical socio-economic and political change that recognise the deep entanglement of the environment with its socio-cultural context. Key approaches that break with the anthropocentric logic of global development explore notions such as *buen vivir*, degrowth, planetary boundaries and ecological Swaraj. Since a comprehensive review of these alternatives lies beyond the scope of this dissertation, please see Kothari et al. (2015), Raworth (2017) and Stevenson (2015) for a discussion of more radical development approaches and alternative conceptualisations of the environment.

value to human development and capital accumulation (Gale, 2018, p. x). As Dryzek observes, such a view can involve denying the environment's very existence outside of human activity. For instance, in this line of reasoning, 'natural' resources "are [only] created by humans transforming matter" (Dryzek, 2013, p. 59). In addition to raising serious philosophical questions about the 'natural' in the environment, such an apolitical conceptualisation of resources as a neutral component of economic growth disregards the power dynamics that are tied to them. For example, issues of ownership, access and control, and the distribution of costs and benefits and their contribution to conflict have widely been discussed (Duffy, 2016; Homer-Dixon, 1999; Humphreys & Smith, 2014; Koubi et al., 2014; Le Billon & Duffy, 2018; Martinez-Alier, Kallis, Veuthey, Walter, & Temper, 2010, pp. 153–154). Particularly in the context of the capitalist system, the utilisation of privately owned resources, often by exploiting the environment (and labour), forms a crucial part of the means to make profits (O'Connor, 1998, p. 160). In contrast, more recently, researchers in the field of environmental peacebuilding have also begun to explore the cooperative mechanisms of these issues in more depth (Bruch et al., 2016). Whether the focus lies on cooperation or conflict, these issues play out in what Bryant and Bailey call the "politicised environment" (Bryant & Bailey, 1997, pp. 5–6). If we are to understand the socio-economic impacts of environmental policies, we need to be attuned to underlying power dynamics and asymmetries. Questions as to who wins and who loses need to be asked.

However, we need to be clear on what we understand as 'power'. Here, I align my approach with that of political ecologists, and I argue that we need to see power not just in material but also in socially produced terms.¹⁵ This relates to matters of direct control, including for example the access and control of natural resources, and, simultaneously, to indirect control, bearing upon different perceptions and categorisations of nature, particularly in the context of policy-making (Bryant & Bailey, 1997, pp. 41–46). Peet et al. make this point explicit when arguing that "environmental problems (and their possible solutions) are inevitably entangled with questions of power and governance" (Peet et al., 2011, p. 31). Issues of power and governance are also crucial components in peace and conflict studies, which I explore in more detail in a below sub-section. Arguably, to understand the complexities of power relations playing out in the environmental spheres and to avoid falling into the 'local trap', a multi-scalar approach is necessary (Brown & Purcell, 2005; Bryant & Bailey, 1997, p. 4; Peet et al., 2011, p. 30). In

¹⁵ While I only draw on a small number of political ecologists and green political economists here, I acknowledge that power has long been a widely debated subject, particularly in the field of International Relations and IPE. A few crucial works in this regard include (but are not limited to): Keohane (1984), Cox (1987), Gilpin (1987), Guzzini (1993), Nye (1990), Strange (1996), and Waltz (1993). For a review of the conceptualisation of power in political ecology specifically, please refer to Svarstad, Benjaminsen and Overå (2018).

addition to our increased awareness to scale, we also need to be clear on the role of knowledge and the process of knowledge production, which, depending on its context, can influence the manner in which the environment is represented or silenced (Demeritt, 1994, p. 33). Expertise and scientific knowledge can determine what claims about the environment are legitimised and accepted to be true, thereby empowering some ideas (and hence actors) and disempowering others. Peet et al. refer to these processes in which science can serve specific purposes, as the "political economies of knowledge" (Peet et al., 2011, p. 39). If we are to determine how understandings of the environment in sustainable development affect peacebuilding processes, we need be aware that the policy-making process itself is a process of power-laden knowledge production serving particular political functions.

c) The environment is both material and socially produced. Global institutional and economic structures influence how we interpret 'the environment'.

Third, I understand the environment as a 'produced environment' in the sense that human activity has become such an integral part of ecosystemic processes that it would be misleading to speak of a 'natural' environment devoid of human activity (Peet et al., 2011, p. 29). While I acknowledge the broader philosophical debates surrounding this assumption, which are too vast to engage with here due to space constraints, there is a material level to the environment, which for example relates to biophysical changes in landscapes, and an produced level, which encompasses the different ideas and meanings assigned to the environment (Escobar, 1999, pp. 1–2; Soper, 1995, pp. 8–9). Against this background, understanding humans as “sociologically and ecologically embedded” and “biologically embodied” not only hints at the interconnectedness of the human and the environmental spheres (Barry, 2012, p. 11). It also recognises the material reality of the environment (e.g. woodlands existing as a biophysical mass of trees, animals, and other organisms regardless of human interpretation) as well as the role of social norms, rules and beliefs in making sense of this material reality (e.g. woodlands existing as spaces of enclosure and exclusion, or spirituality and identity, depending on respective systems of beliefs) (Conca, 2018, p. 53; Green, 2015, p. 25). The phenomenology of the environment, i.e. the fact that the same environmental issues can be perceived in different ways, is of critical importance here (Watts & Peet, 2007, p. 20). However, this does not mean that all is relative. As Peet et al. highlight on the epistemology and ontology of the environment,

"[t]his concern with the so-called 'construction' of nature does not come at the expense of an understanding of the environment as real, concrete and material; rather it accepts the inevitability of our partial knowledge of the environment and the way human

knowledge of the environment can be interpreted, controlled, and indeed manipulated." (Peet et al., 2011, p. 34)

The recognition that the environment exists outside of human agency but that our ideas and interests surrounding it influence our understanding of it, are crucial components of the relativist epistemology and realist ontology. I illuminate these aspects further in the below section outlining my methodology.

Against this background, like Conca and Dabelko, I argue that our different perceptions of the environment, which can be influenced by the “structures that govern world politics” (such as the economic system), reveal something about the potentially competing interests of conflict parties (Conca & Dabelko, 2015, p. 2; Green, 2015). Greater awareness of how the environment is conceptualised can thus not only point towards environmental unsustainabilities. It also reveals how certain peacebuilding policies, aimed at rebuilding state and society structures, institutionalise socio-economic inequalities and injustices into post-conflict contexts, thereby locking in the structural inequities of negative peace and hampering progress towards positive peace.

d) Focus on present unsustainability instead of future sustainability.

Fourth, I argue that the current focus of global policy-making on sustainability is misleading. Scholars and practitioners have debated the precise meaning of sustainability itself for years; a process which I argue has principally contributed to stripping it of meaning instead (Lélé, 2018, p. 202). The EU’s approach to sustainability is deeply anchored in its definition of sustainable development, i.e. “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (European Commission, 2016d, p. 2). I discussed the conceptual problems that arise around this definition in Chapter 1. Although I recognise the positive aspects that have emerged from greater engagement with sustainability (e.g. concerns for intergenerational justice), I believe that little is gained from reviewing these debates here.¹⁶

Instead, rather than striving towards a potentially utopian future ideal, I argue that we need to shift our attention to the “circumstances of unsustainability” (Barry, 2012, p. 11). I draw

¹⁶ Forming a core concept of sustainable development, ‘sustainability’ has been on scholars’ and practitioners’ agendas since the 1972 *Limits to Growth* (Meadows et al., 1972). The tripartite conceptualisation of sustainability as social, economic and environmental sustainability first emerged with the 1987 Brundtland Commission (1987). Since then, its meaning and use have been further developed and widely debated (United Nations General Assembly, 1992, 2012). For different approaches to sustainability, please see: Conca and Dabelko, particularly Part IV (2015), Gale (2018), Jackson (2017), Sachs (2015), and Stiglitz et al. (2009).

on peace and conflict studies here to define unsustainability along the lines of structural violence, namely as socio-economic and environmental structural injustices and inequalities (Galtung, 1996). Crucially, I do not limit unsustainabilities to the environmental sphere (e.g. in the form of environmental degradation). I also understand unsustainabilities to extend to the human sphere through, for example, exploitation of labour, asymmetric power dynamics or marginalisation. Paying attention to the circumstances of unsustainability means that rather than placing our focus on intergenerational justice – as the guiding principle of sustainable development prescribes (see above) – we instead redirect our emphasis on issues of intragenerational justice. As UNDP's 1994 Human Development Report cautioned in the context of the compatibility of sustainable development with sustainability, “[t]here would, however, be something distinctly odd if we were deeply concerned for the well-being of future – as yet unborn – generations while ignoring the plight of the poor today” (United Nations Development Programme, 1994, p. 13). Therefore, these circumstances of unsustainability relate to our socio-economic structures and political arrangements as well as to the processes of socialisation, identities and normative beliefs that have had an influence on how our understanding of sustainability has emerged.

This assumption is rooted in the constructivist argument that humans, as ‘biographically dependent’ beings, do not have static identities and normative beliefs; they can be shaped, transformed and reinforced by socialisation (Adler, 1997; Katzenstein, 1996; Wendt, 1992). The structures in which we interact (e.g. institutional or economic) have an influence on this process. Therefore, global institutions and agreements on sustainable development, emphasising sustainability and conceptualising the environment anthropocentrically, have arguably extended our time horizon for action towards a vague future ideal of a ‘sustainable’ world (Dauvergne, 2017, pp. 404–405). The result is that under the “short-term contractual logic” of the global economy, present inequalities and injustices have become acceptable - if they contribute to the establishment of environmental, social, and economic sustainability in the future (Harvey, 2005, p. 172).

I argue that such an emphasis on an ideal future end-state is problematic for two reasons. First, it directly limits our range of action to tackle inequalities and injustices in the present. It does so by giving the impression that unless we have a defined goal in the form of a clear vision of sustainability, we cannot begin to address existing inequalities (Barry, 2012, p. 13). Stevenson strikingly demonstrates the negative implications of this paradoxical approach to sustainability in the context of global climate change governance. She finds that deeply flawed anthropocentric understandings of the environment have been institutionalised into the systems of global climate change governance, which respond more directly to the requirements of liberal democratic

election cycles rather than ecosystemic timeframes (Stevenson, 2012, p. 204). The very system that the international community has created to tackle climate change is, therefore, to blame for worsening it. The result, she argues, is that “the action that has been taken by the international community in response to the threat of climate change is so problematic as to be not necessarily preferable to no action at all” (Stevenson, 2012, p. 2). As I show in the present analysis, we can transfer Stevenson’s findings to post-conflict peacebuilding processes that are built on such anthropocentric conceptions of the environment in sustainable development.

However, we need to acknowledge another crucial shortcoming of the mainstream approach to sustainability here. Second, Barry argues that the idea of “permanent sustainability” is flawed in itself. It is worth quoting his argument at length:

“[G]iven the ineliminable contingency, complexity, and uncertainty in our dealings with the natural world, the search for such a ‘permanent solution’ is not only impossible and in many respects utopian and self-indulgent, but also dangerous in being based on a erroneous perspective about human-nonhuman relations” (Barry, 2012, p. 64).

This argument relates to my above criticism of an anthropocentric understanding of the human and environmental spheres under which present socio-ecological exploitation is justified for the prospects of future human wellbeing (Eckersley, 2004, p. 104; Jackson, 2017). The logic that we can find a permanent solution within the current parameters of the global economy to what is essentially a dynamic problem, namely ecological deterioration and social conflict stemming from uneven and environmentally unsustainable development, is flawed itself. Such an idea of a permanent equilibrium has not only been questioned in the context of sustainable development, but also in the field of peace and conflict. Galtung, for instance, argues that peace and conflict follow a cyclical logic without ever reaching a final endpoint (Galtung, 1996, pp. 89–90). If we conceptualise unsustainability similarly to how Galtung understands conflicts, namely as structural violence, the inherent paradox of permanent sustainability becomes evident. Galtung holds that “the struggle against structural violence and the propensity to use direct violence never ends, it is part of our human condition” (Galtung, 1996, p. 122). A focus on present unsustainabilities, which I understand as socio-economic and environmental structural injustices (or, to use Galtung’s terms, as forms of structural violence), allows us to tackle existing problems much more pragmatically.

Therefore, as scholars like Barry and Stevenson have shown, shifting our attention towards existing unsustainabilities can help break the ‘sustainability trap’ that has paralyzed global action against rising injustices and environmental degradation. If we apply these conceptualisations to the context of post-conflict peacebuilding, we can assess how and why

peacebuilding processes built on such flawed notions of sustainability can have the opposite effects and institutionalise injustices and inequalities, thereby undermining peacebuilding in the long-term.

In this sub-section I outlined my core theoretical assumptions, namely that a) the human and the environmental spheres are closely interlinked; b) power and patterns of knowledge-production matter in the politicised environment; c) the environment features both material and socially produced dimensions, our understanding of which is influenced by the dominant socio-economic and institutional structures; and that d) we need to focus on present unsustainabilities in the form of injustices and inequalities instead of future sustainability. I argue that these assumptions can reveal different angles of how the EU's policies institutionalise inequalities and injustices into Kosovo's fragile post-conflict peacebuilding process. However, in order to understand not only how, but also *why* they do so, we need to understand the manner in which peacebuilding policies themselves reinforce dominant socio-economic hierarchies and power asymmetries. We can therefore not avoid addressing the figurative 'elephant in the room', namely the global neoliberal economy, in which post-conflict states are to be integrated. It is crucial that we have a clear understanding of how variants of neoliberal policy approaches inform, guide and structure policy-making more generally, how this conveys certain forms of power and how, in turn, this relates to our conceptualisations of the environment. I explore these issues in the next sub-section.

2.2. Addressing 'the elephant in the room'

2.2.1 Neoliberalism as processes of neoliberalisation

The structures and systems of neoliberalism form a significant part of the debates in green political economy, political ecology and peace studies. For instance, political ecologists have long been critical of the social relations and power dynamics that neoliberal environmental policies impose (Arsel & Büscher, 2012; Brockington et al., 2011; Fletcher, Dressler, Anderson, & Büscher, 2018). In turn, peace scholars have questioned the legitimacy and adequacy of peacebuilding missions informed by the idea of neoliberal development (Mac Ginty, 2010; Pugh, Cooper, & Turner, 2011; Pugh, 2004). However, to understand the relevance of such arguments for the EU's peacebuilding policies in Kosovo more specifically, and for the theoretical development of environmental peacebuilding more broadly, we need to have a clearer idea of what neoliberalism is and why its structures can have negative effects on a post-conflict context.

In essence, neoliberalism is a complex, situational assemblage of theory, practices, ideological beliefs, discourses, policies, power relations and many other (often socially constructed) components which structures our socio-economic interactions and through which we interpret and make sense of the world we inhabit (Peck, 2010, p. 15). This means that it is inherently complex, escaping any attempts of clearly defining its meaning, often leaving researchers with theoretical descriptions that do not necessarily reflect the dynamics of reality. While David Harvey recognises neoliberalism's roots in the principles of liberalism, namely individual freedoms, private property and the free market, he distinguishes between neoliberalism as a theory of political economy and neoliberalism as a "hegemonic ... mode of discourse" (Harvey, 2005, pp. 2–3). He argues that although it is indeed a theory that helps us make sense of economic practices, it has become so influential that we have internalised the rules of neoliberalism, which now guide our behaviour and determine our understanding of the world (Harvey, 2005, p. 3). The neoliberal logic has, to put it in Philip Mirowski's words, "sunk its roots deep into everyday life" (Mirowski, 2014, p. 28). It has essentially become common sense. However, this does not mean that the theory of neoliberalism is the same as the practice of neoliberalisation. In fact, Noel Castree illustrates the nuances of this differentiation and demonstrates the inconceivability of one overarching form of neoliberalism. In his view, it would be more accurate to speak of the existence of many different "spatiotemporally variable *process[es]* ('neoliberalisations')" (Castree, 2008, p. 137). Other scholars, such as Jamie Peck, have also pointed to the existence of "messy hybrids" of neoliberalism and argued that "there is no neoliberal replicating machine" which ensures neoliberalisation takes the same form in every context (Peck, 2010, pp. 6–7). Such contextually-dependent complexity makes it a notoriously arduous task to define neoliberalism (not just for the present analysis).

However, Peck's conceptualisation of neoliberalism in terms of what he calls "the very *unattainability* of its fundamental goal"¹⁷, namely the free market system, can provide an entryway for us (Peck, 2010, pp. 15–16). He argues that neoliberalism keeps evolving, in spite of - or precisely *because of* - its failures. This process of "fail[ing] forward" continuously incentivises the restructuring and replacement of existing neoliberal structures with new, improved neoliberal practices (2010, p. 6). This relates to the arguments on increased economic development as the solution to the world's ills which I outlined in Chapter 1. The fact that unconstrained market rule is a utopian ideal is offset by its inherent ability to adapt to different contexts, even in the face of crisis (2010, p. 4; Polanyi, 1944, p. 3). Arguably, the same logic applies to the dominant approach to future 'sustainability'. Peck therefore argues that any definition of neoliberalism that does not

¹⁷ Emphasis in original.

recognise these dynamic processes sets itself out to failure. Instead, like Castree (and to a certain extent Barry), he emphasises the necessity to pay attention to the real processes of neoliberalisation (Peck, 2010, p. 16).

Such an emphasis on the realities of the neoliberalising processes, rather than one coherent – and abstract – neoliberalism, is a helpful distinction for my analysis of EU peacebuilding policies in Kosovo. After all, Jessica Dempsey’s work on enterprising nature illustrates that while simplifications built on “layer upon layer of abstraction” to make complexities amenable to (neoliberal) policy-making, they result in the construction of models that in fact no longer represent the complexities of reality (Dempsey, 2016, p. 21). In this sense, as the post-conflict context is made up of a highly complex web of political and socio-economic interactions, with domestic and international stakeholders advancing different (neoliberalising) interests, my analysis shows that the relationship between the economy, society and the natural environment is equally as complex. I therefore argue that by recognising the contextual specificity and geographic characteristics of neoliberalisations of nature, my analysis can move beyond the abstract and rhetorical realms, and make visible the ‘actually existing’ processes of unsustainability (in the form of injustices and inequalities) that are institutionalised in the EU’s peacebuilding policies in Kosovo (Barry, 2012). This means that by analysing neoliberalising processes prescribed by the EU’s peacebuilding policies under the heading of sustainable development, we can shed light on how and why asymmetric power dynamics become institutionalised through specific practices and thereby promote unsustainabilities in the long-term. In other words, paying attention to how the environment is conceptualised can help us understand where new inequalities and conflict dynamics arise. After all, neoliberalisation may just as well be used as a “political project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites” (Harvey, 2005, p. 19).

Against this background, it is crucial to acknowledge the nuances of neoliberalisation.¹⁸ In my analysis of EU peacebuilding policies in Kosovo, I understand neoliberalisation to refer to an economic approach as well as a mode of governance. The example of EU enlargement can illustrate both angles here. The fact that neoliberalisation is a situational assemblage of theories, practices, ideologies, and structures means that it conveys different meanings in different contexts, depending on who or what it is viewed in relation to. In terms of neoliberalisation as an economic approach, the EU and its continual enlargement can be seen as both the greatest

¹⁸ Due to space constraints, I merely touch upon two variants of neoliberalisation here. For a more comprehensive review of the nuances of neoliberalisation, please see Bakker (2010), Crouch (2011), Mirowski (2014) and Slobodian (2018).

opportunity as well as the most serious challenge to the global neoliberal economy: on the one hand, it creates a safe haven for free trade and cross-national competition, while on the other hand, it creates barriers for market expansion beyond its immediate borders (Slobodian, 2018, p. 182, 215). However, neoliberalisation, especially in the context of the EU enlargement, does not simply refer to an economic doctrine that prescribes the self-regulating market as the end-goal. Reality is more nuanced than that, as the different social democratic variations of European market economies underline (Crouch, 2011, pp. 9-18).

Drawing on Foucault's notion of governmentality, which theorises the 'conduct of conduct' or governance at a distance, neoliberalisation also depicts a specific form of socio-economic and political governance in which political responsibility and human wellbeing is individualised and subordinated to the forces of the self-regulating market (Crouch, 2011, p. vii; Foucault, 1978/1991). Especially (but of course not exclusively) in the context of EU enlargement, rather than simply depicting an economic strategy, neoliberalisation refers to the process of shaping state structures and institutions in a manner that integrates them into a framework of supranational governance, which in turn create and reinforce structural arrangements favourable to the European market economy. As Quinn Slobodian argues, these arrangements depend on a strong legal framework; in this case the EU *acquis communautaire*. Or, to use Slobodian's words, "[t]he normative neoliberal world is not a borderless market without states but a doubled world kept safe from mass demands for social justice and redistributive equality by the guardians of the economic constitution" (Slobodian, 2018, p. 16). I explore the implications of understanding neoliberalisation as a mode of governance in more detail in section 2.4 on neoliberalisation and democratic accountability.

Having outlined my approach to neoliberalism (or, more accurately, neoliberalisation as an economic approach and a mode of governance), I now turn to explain why exploring the neoliberalising processes of EU peacebuilding in Kosovo from an environmental angle is particularly useful for understanding its long-term impact.

2.2.2 Neoliberalising processes are inherently environmental

At the core of my above argument lies the assumption that, as Castree, among others like Polanyi, McCarthy and Prudham, has argued, neoliberalism is "intrinsically environmental" (Castree, 2008, p. 140; McCarthy & Prudham, 2004; Polanyi, 1944). I argue that while the environmental peacebuilding literature recognises the wider role of the material environment in building peace after conflict, it takes this connection between neoliberalism and the environment

for granted, and therefore does not engage with the inherent contradictions of peacebuilding rooted in anthropocentric notions of the environment and sustainability. To contextualise the implications of such an omission, in the below, I take a step back and illustrate why neoliberalism is inherently environmental.

First, as indicated above, Castree is not the only scholar advocating for neoliberalism to be understood as an environmental project. Karl Polanyi demonstrated in 1944 that the free market system relies on the ‘fictitious’ commodification of nature through the detachment of people (and labour) from land. This is highly problematic, since, in his view, “to include them [labour and land] in the market mechanism means to subordinate the substance of society itself to the laws of the market” (Polanyi, 1944, p. 71,187). Polanyi further argued that the market economy was unnatural as it did not recognise the deep links between the human and the environmental spheres; production itself, he explained, needed to be understood as the “interaction of man and nature” (Polanyi, 1944, p. 130). By forcefully unravelling this link to promote a self-regulating market, the market economy would thereby undermine social structures and have a catastrophic impact on the environment.

Although Polanyi’s work is crucial in that it identifies the inherent paradoxes of the free market system by analysing the historic emergence of the market economy, we need to consider his arguments in the context of the modern forms of globalised neoliberalism influenced by the pressures of climate change. Some scholars have drawn on Polanyi’s work and advanced our understanding of the environmental nature of contemporary neoliberalisations. For example, James McCarthy and Scott Prudham argue that neoliberalism itself is “necessarily” an environmental project as it is rooted in the laissez-faire environmental liberalism promoted by John Locke (McCarthy & Prudham, 2004, p. 278). The historic designation of nature as private property, like Locke advocated, developed a system of exclusive ownership, which (a) presupposed that nature did not have value unless it was added by human labour, and that (b) was secured by state regulations. Such a fencing off of the commons with the help of the state distorted the relations between the human and the non-human spheres, and paved the way for the capitalist class system to emerge (2004, p. 277). These historical dynamics matter, as they illustrate the origins of the material environment forming a central part of the capitalist mode of production under contemporary neoliberalisations, which are also reinforced in many post-conflict state-building projects.

Contemporary neoliberalisations have adapted to the fact that the environment enables, sustains and delimits production in equal measure. Against environmental resistance to

expanding neoliberalisation¹⁹, we witness the merger of what McCarthy and Prudham argue are ‘free-market environmentalism’ and ‘green’ capitalism. The emergence of the dominant approach to sustainable development is one of the symptoms of this process (McCarthy & Prudham, 2004, p. 279). Examples are numerous: capitalist production requires the use of natural resources to fuel its factories, eco-tourism presupposes the marketisation of conservation areas, and carbon trading commodifies the negative externalities of preceding capitalist accumulation (Castree, 2008, p. 140). Such a constant struggle of enabling and constraining biophysical forces at the heart of capitalist mode of production lead Harvey to argue that processes of neoliberalisation always entail a degree of what he calls “creative destruction” (Harvey, 2005, p. 3). James O’Connor in turn describes this cycle as the “ecological contradiction” of capitalism. Recognising the central role of the environment in capital accumulation, he argues that it is an inherent “self-destructive” paradox of capitalism to externalise ecological costs to society or the natural environment, although it is so severely dependent on its resources, thereby increasing social resistance to its very system (O’Connor, 1998, pp. 171, 177). The focus on these inherent contradictions has inspired a body of literature exploring the synthesis of ecological economics with political ecology, focusing on issues of burden-sharing and systemic inequality (c.f. Martinez-Alier, Kallis, Veuthey, Walter, & Temper, 2010).

These debates are rooted in Polanyi’s key thesis of the ‘double movement’ of the self-regulating market. He argued that the above-mentioned fictitious commodification of nature and labour in an attempt to expand market reign would undermine social structures and severely degrade the environment, thereby paradoxically limiting the expansion of the market by means of rising (social) resistance to its measures (Polanyi, 1944, p. 76). There is therefore a continuous tension between the clashing principles of economic liberalism and social protection, revolving around the question of how society should be organised (1944, p. 132). These discussions illustrate the contradictions that are inherent to the manner in which nature is neoliberalised and in which neoliberalisations adapt to (environmental) resistance, resulting in social injustices and the human appropriation of nature to satisfy their needs.²⁰ At their very extreme, these contradictions give rise to, as Dryzek elaborates, a discourse of neoliberal Prometheanism, which

¹⁹ Resistance to neoliberalisations rallies predominantly around its severe environmental impact, explaining the ability of some social environmental movements to contain the expansion of neoliberalism (McCarthy & Prudham, 2004, p. 278; Polanyi, 1944, p. 76).

²⁰ These arguments also relate to the persistence of neoliberalisation in the face of perceived risk. The term ‘risk’ in this case refers to both opportunity and challenge at the same time, encouraging the individual not simply to accept risk as an integral part of life, but to capitalise on it. To use Mirowski’s words, “[e]mbracing risk and taking chances is putative mark of the entrepreneur, the only solid evidence that the agent has been actively engaged in pursuit of self-advantage, as opposed to passively accepting the lot that has been bequeathed him by others” (Mirowski, 2014, p. 119). For further insights into discussions on neoliberalisation and risk, and other associated concepts like resilience, please see Beck (1992), Crouch (2011), Joseph (2013) and Payne (2012).

denies the very existence of nature outside of human production (Dryzek, 2013, p. 59). As I illustrated in section 2.1 above, such an anthropocentric understanding of the environment neglects its political dimensions and fails to see its broader role in the context of peace and conflict.

In summary, I have argued in this sub-section that we need to understand neoliberalisations as environmental processes. After all, the environment is a decisive factor in (i) structuring social relations under neoliberalism, (ii) enabling and delimiting capitalist accumulation simultaneously, and (iii) forcing neoliberalisations to adapt to environmental resistance, creating new forms of 'green' capitalist policies. It is for this close link between neoliberalism and the environment, as well as the fact that peacebuilding policies function as neoliberalising processes, that greater attention to how the environment is conceptualised can reveal something about those dynamics that support or hamper peacebuilding projects. However, while in the previous sections I have outlined my main theoretical assumptions and traced the links between the environment and neoliberalism, what is still lacking here is a more comprehensive conception of why these assumptions matter particularly for our analysis of post-conflict peacebuilding processes in the context of the global market economy. I explore this issue in the following section.

2.3 On hybridity and frictions in peacebuilding

As in the fields of green political economy and political ecology, the recognition of complexities and dynamism in global politics has led to a move towards theoretical and analytical flexibility in the field of peace studies (Galtung, 1996; Keen, 2000). This theoretical shift is normally associated with the ideas of hybridity and what Millar et al. refer to as frictions of the peacebuilding process (Millar et al., 2013). In this section, I briefly outline my conceptualisation of 'peace', before engaging with some of the key arguments on hybridity and frictions.

First, as I indicated in the above, the idea of policies leading towards a permanent solution of a dynamic problem is flawed. This assumption is also reflected in my approach to peace. Galtung argues that because peace and conflict cannot exist without the other, there is no absolute peace and no fixed endpoint to a peace process. What we can witness is the "betterment of the human condition", a move towards a somewhat more stable balance of peace and violence (Galtung, 1996, p. 17). As Richmond argues, separating peace from conflict leads to the creation of a sense of "utopian harmony", which, in fact, is unattainable (Richmond, 2006, p. 368). This understanding is built on the distinction between negative and positive peace, where negative

peace means "the absence of war or direct collective violence, but the presence of structural inequalities and indirect violence", and positive peace emphasises "the presence of harmonious non-violent, cooperative relationships; the minimalization of direct and structural violence and its replacement by nonviolence" (Young, 2010, p. 594). A further distinction between direct, structural and cultural positive peace needs to be made here to grasp the different components influencing the peace process on different levels. Direct positive peace involves compassion towards everything physical, mental and spiritual. Structural positive peace relates to social structure, which, ideally, is characterised by freedom, equality, participation, integration and dialogue. Cultural peace is arguably the most difficult to achieve, aiming to establish a "positive peace culture" and legitimising peace rather than violence and conflict (Galtung, 1996, p. 32).

For instance, environmental conflict usually feeds upon structural issues of access and control to resources and the distribution of costs and benefits, but can also feature a combination of different forms of violence (Guha & Martinez-Alier, 1997, p. 31). However, conflict should not be equated with the breakdown of social life and development. Rather, it gives rise to alternative systems of order, highlighting that at its core is always a struggle for power (Stewart & Fitzgerald, 2000, p. 41). Assuming then that these different forms of violence and conflict are dynamic formations, the solution to a conflict cannot be permanent. It can merely provide a sustainable framework for peacefully dealing with such changes by engaging with the underlying dynamics feeding into conflict, may they be actor-oriented, structural or cultural (Galtung, 1996, p. 90).

Second, the EU defines peacebuilding by drawing on the UN's 1992 Agenda for Peace, arguing that it concerns "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" (European Economic and Social Committee, 2012, p. 23; United Nations, 1992a). However, hybrid peace has emerged as a critique of such a liberal peacebuilding paradigm. Richmond argues that hybridity "represents the contingent and complex nature of the politics of peacemaking and the dynamics of power, agency and identity it involves" (Richmond, 2015, p. 52). It recognises that in addition to the above-mentioned fluctuating dynamic between states of peace and conflict, there is also a crucial interaction between international and local actors and their perceptions of peace that can have a direct influence on the peacebuilding outcome (Mac Ginty, 2010). Hybrid peace aims to make sense of these complex interactions and cautions us not to oversimplify complicated post-conflict situations. As Mac Ginty puts it, "[n]otions of hybridity move us away from the binary combinations that can seem attractive in helping to explain the social and political world" (Mac Ginty, 2010, p. 397). By drawing attention to the asymmetric power relations of the

peacebuilding process, it further acknowledges that actions to promote development or statebuilding might not always have the desired effects (Richmond, 2015, p. 51). It takes into consideration local perceptions of the peacebuilding process, which might be characterised by a need to mitigate the unintended consequences of actions decided elsewhere (Richmond, 2015, p. 52).

However, Millar et al. argue that hybridity emphasises the specific (unintended and unexpected) outcomes of peacebuilding processes, but disregards how the processes themselves contribute to these outcomes (Millar et al., 2013, p. 139). Against this background, they hold that “the interaction between international and local actors, structures, and concepts generate emergent realities on the ground”, which sometimes “contribute to peace and stability, and sometimes they do not” (Millar et al., 2013, p. 142). They refer to these interactions as ‘frictions’ and argue that if we pay more analytical attention to such interactions, we can make sense of how the peacebuilding processes themselves can lead to unexpected outcomes and consequences. This relates to Zeitoun’s argument that power asymmetries within apparently cooperative processes can obscure and lock in deep structural inequities that allow conflict dynamics to simmer beneath the surface (c.f. Chapter 1).

Recalling my above argument that peacebuilding policies need to be seen as neoliberalising processes, the notion of frictions can help us understand the underlying power dynamics. In the present case, they can point towards inequalities and injustices that emerge on the back of anthropocentric conceptualisations of sustainable development and the environment. In other words, by paying attention to frictions between the different actors involved in the peacebuilding process in Kosovo, we gain a valuable analytical insight into how and why the EU’s peacebuilding policies have led to the institutionalisation of unsustainabilities. Crucially, this is not only limited to the Kosovar cases, but paying attention to the power dynamics within peacebuilding processes can indeed provide useful insights into other post-conflict contexts. However, to understand the tensions that emerge from the peacebuilding process and the frictions that arise between the different actors, we need to be aware of the underlying structures of governance and accountability that the peacebuilding policies establish and how they are embedded in wider neoliberalisation processes. I explore the effects of neoliberalisation on democratic accountability in post-conflict peacebuilding in the next section.

2.4 Neoliberalisation and its effects on democratic accountability in post-conflict peacebuilding

To grasp how understandings of the environment in sustainable development can affect the EU's peacebuilding process in Kosovo, we need to be aware of the deep entanglements between neoliberalisation, governance and accountability. I discuss in this section that increased commodification of the environment and human labour also undermines democratic structures of governance and distorts accountability, which are vital components of post-conflict peacebuilding (Brown, 2015). To recall, as I demonstrated in section 2.2, at the heart of neoliberalisation lies the commodification of the environment and human labour (Polanyi, 1944). This results in the unravelling of the link between humans and the environment, enabling socio-ecological exploitative practices and increasing inequalities and injustices by promoting a worldview in which value is derived exclusively from an entity's use-value in the processes of capital accumulation.

Against this background, how then is neoliberalisation intertwined with democracy and accountability? Firstly, we need to recall that neoliberalisation does not only refer to the dominant economic system, but it also prescribes social beliefs and ideologies, structures and hierarchies. As I argued in section 2.2, neoliberalisation, supported by buzzwords such as sustainability, hence functions as a form of governance²¹ (Peck, 2010, p. 15). Secondly, this results in the subordination of every aspect of socio-political life to the sphere of economic growth. Wendy Brown provides a helpful insight for us to understand the influence of this subordination onto our political systems. She argues that neoliberalisation conceptualises humans as a form of *homo oeconomicus* whose aim it is “to self-invest in ways that enhance its value or attract investors ... across every sphere of its existence” (Brown, 2015, p. 33). Thereby, human value is reduced to human capital, i.e. its instrumental function in the neoliberal economy, much like the anthropocentric environment derives its value merely from its use to the competitive practices of human wellbeing and progress (Brown, 2015, p. 37; ten Have, 2006, p. 19). Note also how Brown's depiction of the *homo oeconomicus* is equally applicable to entities other than the human being, such as post-conflict states on the path to ‘sustainable development’. Thirdly, this has direct implications for the conceptualisation of humans as political beings. As Brown argues:

“neoliberalisation transposes democratic political principles of justice into an economic idiom, transforms the state itself into a manager of the nation on the model of a firm ... and hollows out much of the substance of democratic citizenship and even popular sovereignty” (2015, p. 35).

²¹ This understanding is rooted in Foucault's governmentality approach, which sees policies as carriers of power that influence behaviours and instil forms of self-governance from a distance (Foucault, 1978/1991).

Neoliberalisation thereby challenges democratic structures of governance and accountability and replaces them with a system that is more in tune with the competitive nature of the market economy. We can draw a parallel here with Eckersley's argument on the anthropocentric environment, where the environment itself, in contrast to human rights and freedoms, becomes part of the negotiable aspects in the competition over human welfare (Eckersley, 2004, p. 100). Arguably, by subordinating democratic principles to the logic of the neoliberal market economy, they too become negotiable in the pursuit of economic growth. These assumptions play a crucial role for my analysis of the EU's peacebuilding process in Kosovo. As I argue throughout my dissertation, EU peacebuilding functions as a neoliberalising process that exports an anthropocentric understanding of the environment and leads to the institutionalisation of unsustainabilities into the post-conflict context. I argue that one form of unsustainability is the distortion of democratic governance and accountability in Kosovo, undermining peacebuilding in the long-term (c.f. Chapter 7). But what do I mean by accountability?

I understand accountability as the process by which one group of actors can determine whether those in a position of power have lawfully carried out their obligations according to a universally (i.e. society-wide) recognised standard. This process involves the potential imposition of penalties in cases where the standards are disregarded (Grant & Keohane, 2005, p. 29; Olsen, 2014, p. 107). Accountability is closely interlinked with the notion of legitimacy. Particularly in the context of supranational bodies such as the EU, there is a close relationship between the perceived degree of accountability and the perceived level of legitimacy of its actions (Goodhart, 2014, p. 293). However, as Grant and Keohane established, there are seven different mechanisms of accountability (namely hierarchical, supervisory, fiscal, legal, market, and public reputational) that apply particularly to supranational bodies (Grant & Keohane, 2005, p. 36). Although supranational bodies are therefore indeed held accountable through different channels, their perceived illegitimacy stems from their lack of democratic accountability (Harvey, 2005, p. 205). This means that those people who are subject to their policies and/or those that have entrusted them with certain duties cannot hold them responsible for their actions (Goodhart, 2014, p. 293; Grant & Keohane, 2005, p. 37). I argue that sound structures of democratic accountability are of particular importance in post-conflict settings, where functioning institutions are to be rebuilt and alternative channels like the legal or the fiscal mechanisms of accountability might not be functioning properly.

Lise Philipsen's work on peacebuilding in Sierra Leone provides a useful example of the challenges and unintended consequences of (re-)establishing forms of governance after conflict. Philipsen argues that peacebuilding aims to establish two types of liberal democratic contracts: a

domestic contract between state and civil society, and an international contract between the overarching peacebuilding body (such as the UN or the EU) and its donors (i.e. its Member States) (Philipsen, 2014, p. 47). In this context, the values of national ownership and mutual accountability between state and society and between international donors and host country are key. National ownership and mutual accountability are to be achieved through the integration and coordination of both the national and international peacebuilding strategies (Philipsen, 2014, pp. 48-49). However, although integration and coordination seem crucial for efficient implementation of peacebuilding efforts, they also run the danger of collapsing the different sides of the democratic contracts into one. Thereby, prioritising efficiency under the banner of integration and coordination can shift accountability from the domestic towards the international sphere and distort structures of democratic accountability in post-conflict contexts (Philipsen, 2014, p. 54).

Here, I argue that the neoliberalising socio-economic structures that the EU's peacebuilding policies promote intensify this distortion of accountability. In the case of Kosovo, as I discuss particularly in Chapters 6 and 7, the prospects of (coal-powered) economic growth, incentivised by EU peacebuilding policies and built on anthropocentric understandings of the environment, subordinate democratic principles to the logic of neoliberalisation. They legitimise non-transparent decision-making processes at state level and shift accountability from the domestic to the international sphere. Therefore, although, theoretically, greater ownership is given to domestic actors, it is the international stakeholders that decide on the framework that locals are meant to be working within. Crucially, there is a mismatch between language (the rhetorical support of the internationally prescribed framework) and practice (the actual rejection of it), resulting in mimicry behaviour or isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). The circumvention of democratic structures for the sake of efficiency, and the breach of the democratic contracts by all parties involved in Kosovo's peacebuilding process (i.e. the government of Kosovo, Kosovar civil society, and EU peacebuilding actors), intensifies the distortion of accountability and undermines the peacebuilding objectives in the long-term. Having introduced my core theoretical assumptions and justified the rationale behind them, I now turn to outline my methodological approach and choice of methods that guide my analysis.

2.5 Methodological Framework

Given the complexity of determining what greater concern for the conceptualisation of the environment in peacebuilding policies can reveal about the underlying dynamics driving or

hampering peacebuilding processes, the methodological assumptions reflect this with a degree of flexibility. As indicated above, my research strategy combines epistemological relativism, ontological realism and judgmental rationalism (Bhaskar, 1978, 1979; Harré & Secord, 1972). Below, I outline the methodology before introducing the methods that I use for my analysis of EU peacebuilding policies in Kosovo.

2.5.1 Methodology

First, I briefly revisit the meaning of epistemology, ontology and methodology to place my assumptions in a wider context. *Epistemology* depicts a theory of knowledge, establishing "the conditions of knowledge, or the social and philosophical requirements necessary to possess, need and use knowledge" (Forsyth, 2003, p. 15). Based on the epistemological assumptions, the researcher is able to make analytical claims about what is 'good' knowledge and who is in a position to decide what such good knowledge actually is (Mason, 2002, p. 16). In environmental politics, these assumptions can change the way in which allegedly neutral scientific evidence of the environment is viewed. Being clear about one's own epistemological suppositions helps assess, for instance, the degree to which research findings can be generalised. *Ontology* is a theory of being, making claims about what constitutes the world's structure and what exists in relation to it (Blaikie, 2010, p. 92; Forsyth, 2003, p. 15). This relates to issues of agency and structure, and perceptions and (intersubjective) reality (ibid). *Methodology*, which is not to be equated with methods as such, involves the choice of appropriate methods to gain knowledge (epistemology) about what exists (ontology).

Second, my research strategy is built on three components. On the one hand, in line with the above assumptions in green political economy and political ecology, I argue that there is a reality that exists independently of human knowledge of it (*ontological realism*). This implies that there can be no guaranteed fit between theory and reality, leading to the epistemological assumptions outlined below. We hence need to consider science as producing different perceptions of the same reality (Bhaskar, 1978, pp. 19, 31). For instance, while environmental activists can perceive deforestation as a form of environmental degradation, local communities might interpret lumbering as essential to their traditional livelihoods. The concept of power is influential here, since facts are value-laden and thus possess the potential to create certain versions of environmental knowledge and narratives (Waterton & Wynne, 2004, pp. 3–6). The 'tragedy of the commons' narrative serves as an example, depicting that collective resource

management results in environmental degradation and conflict (Robbins, 2012, p. 51). This narrative can directly influence the regulation of access and control and serve a specific purpose.

On the other hand, there is no objective, 'true' knowledge (*epistemological relativism*), since science and knowledge are informed by culture and politics (Sayer, 1992, p. 5). For instance, Waterton and Wynne's analysis of the construction of environmental knowledge within the EU found that there are competing claims to objective environmental knowledge by the European Environmental Agency (EEA) and the European Commission, used for different purposes (Waterton & Wynne, 2004). Thus, there is no single environment with which society interacts (Forsyth, 2003, p. 273). Moreover, knowledge neither develops in a vacuum nor accumulates. Rather, knowledge is socially produced and transformed through scientific progress in a specific context (Bhaskar, 1978, p. 190, 1979, p. 7).

Our knowledge of the world is not entirely relative since it is produced in relation to an independent reality against which we can make judgments about our perceptions of it (*judgmental rationalism*) (Patomäki & Wight, 2000, p. 224). Drawing on Harré, since humans are considered to be self-aware and critical of their own actions, it is possible to judge which claim about reality might be more accurate than another (Harré & Secord, 1972, pp. 6–7).

Considering these ontological and epistemological assumptions, my approach is rooted in a retroductive research strategy. *Retroduction* follows a cyclical logic, involving a gradual (re-) production and of scientific knowledge through constant realignment of the research question and the data (Bertilsson, 2004; Blaikie, 2007, p. 83). Here, I combine retroduction with induction, to answer the more descriptive question of how the EU conceptualises the environment in its peacebuilding policies, and abduction, to explain how and why this conceptualisation institutionalises unsustainabilities into the fragile post-conflict peacebuilding process (Blaikie, 2007, p. 88). Therefore, my analysis moves in a cyclical manner between research question and empirical material through which I accumulate and interpret common themes and prominent perceptions (Sayer, 1992, p. 113). My choice of methods reflects these methodological assumptions.

Third, I acknowledge possible limitations and criticisms here. The above assumptions can be criticised on the grounds of providing only a vague explanation and lacking reliable verification of hypotheses. However, as Harré argues, this problem is not exclusive to retroduction in the social sciences, but can in fact be encountered in the natural sciences where established theories might have to be revised (Harré & Secord, 1972, p. 17). Rather, following Mason, this openendedness provides the necessary room for qualitative research to be flexible,

mirroring the complex social phenomena that it seeks to analyse (Mason, 2002, p. 7). I have already illustrated above why a degree of flexibility is necessary for analysing the complex human-environment interactions in contexts of post-conflict peacebuilding from the angle of green political economy and political ecology (Forsyth, 2008, pp. 760–761; Walker, 2006, p. 383).

Moreover, positivists might denounce the above distinction between natural and social sciences (and hence between the methods applied to understand either one), and the consequential rejection of objectivity (Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson, & Norrie, 1998, p. xiv; Forsyth, 2003, p. 2, 2008, p. 757; Jones, 2002, p. 247; Patomäki & Wight, 2000, p. 213). This argument, however, fails to see the importance of underlying normative factors, both in the way in which research is conducted and in which the subject of such research is understood.

In contrast, rational choice approaches would argue that human action is intentional and that social phenomena are explained as "the aggregate result of the rational actions by large numbers of participants" (Little, 1991, p. 39). However, these approaches tend to overemphasise utility-maximization and neglect the cultural aspects of human behaviour. This is not to say that regularities within social behaviour do not exist, but rather that these cannot always be due to the same cause (Little, 1991, p. 229).

Having introduced my methodological assumptions based on ontological realism, epistemological relativism, and judgmental rationalism, as well as having discussed potential limitations to this approach, we can now turn to discuss the methods I used for my analysis of EU peacebuilding policies in Kosovo.

2.5.2 Methods

The context in which social phenomena take place matters. Given that actors' statements and their behaviour can reveal something about their perceptions of underlying power dynamics, and that knowledge is produced by constant reproduction, I chose the methods for my analysis accordingly.

Firstly, I use an illustrative case study to provide a specific context in which I can explore and demonstrate the implications of an anthropocentric understanding of the environment in post-conflict peacebuilding. The peacebuilding process in Kosovo provides an interesting example of a highly complex post-conflict situation on the EU's doorstep. Past actions by the EU and its continuous difficulties in the peace process between Belgrade and Pristina can shed light on how inequalities and injustices have been institutionalised into the peacebuilding policies

themselves. In this regard, the case of Kosovo produces a valuable form of specific context-dependent knowledge about the implications of anthropocentric conceptualisations of the environment and possesses a degree of transferability (Flyvberg, 2007, p. 426). For example, the use of a flexible theoretical and methodological framework, as well as my findings on the implications of taking the connection between the environment and neoliberalisation for granted, can prove useful in understanding other post-conflict cases, in which peacebuilding has become protracted. Crucially, I do not claim that exclusively interrogating the underlying understanding of the environment in peacebuilding paints a comprehensive picture of the wider dynamics obstructing post-conflict progress. However, critically engaging with conceptualisations of the environment is an often overlooked yet insightful part of understanding peacebuilding processes.

Secondly, I generate original data from document analysis and semi-structured interviews. My analysis includes more than 200 official EU and governmental documents, such as core laws, regulations, directives, policy reports, press releases and scientific studies in the broader field of EU peacebuilding. I analyse them with regards to their content on the one hand, and their function on the other hand. In addition, I consider other relevant institutional documents that are specific for the Kosovar case, such as the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, annual country progress reports or country enlargement strategies.²² I identify coherent discursive patterns, such as (historical) narratives and (normative) assumptions, to determine how the environment is conceptualised under the umbrella of sustainable development, and what potential injustices and inequalities these documents prescribe for the peacebuilding process (Prior, 2004, p. 388). Where appropriate, I also take other documents, such as reports, analyses and releases published on behalf of or by relevant national authorities or (regional) think tanks into consideration.

Here, I acknowledge an underlying intellectual paradox of my research: I criticise the anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment as instrumental to economic growth yet restrict my analysis to the confines of the neoliberal economy. I focus predominantly on policies that are intended to support sustainable development in Kosovo without exploring potential alternative understandings of the environment in other policy areas (such as cultural and natural heritage). However, I argue that this focus is prescribed by my subject of study, namely the EU's peacebuilding policies in Kosovo. My analysis has shown that the EU prioritises economic development and regional stability under its enlargement and Common Foreign and Security

²² Please see Annex 1 for an overview of the documents analysed in Chapter 4-6.

Policies. Due to space constraints, I was unable to extend my study beyond these immediate priority areas that emerge from the EU's own policy documents.

In addition to document analysis, I conducted 46 semi-structured interviews to account for participants' own critical perceptions of (underlying) dynamics in the peacebuilding process. Given that, as Harré stresses, actors' actions and statements about their actions can be used to identify normative patterns, semi-structured interviews provide the setting in which data can be produced in a meaningful way through social interaction (Mason, 2002, pp. 52, 62). Moreover, such first-hand accounts of the peacebuilding process give a valuable insight into the frictions that emerge between national and international (see Millar et al., 2013). For instance, having interviewed representatives from most major peacebuilding actors in Kosovo, it was eye-opening to hear how cynical most of them were with regards to the actions (or lack thereof) of their partner organisations or of the framework that they were forced to work within. A brief word on positionality seems necessary here. I do not approach interviews as objective representations of reality, but as interpreted accounts of situated knowledge, which is a core methodological assumption of the retroductive research strategy (Mansvelt & Berg, 2016, pp. 400–401). Such meaningful constructions of knowledge and additional qualitative data make a particularly significant contribution in the context of Kosovo, where the legacy of conflict means that quality governmental data have often either been outright destroyed or left unattainable.

The fact that my interviews provided insights into interpreted, situated knowledge became particularly evident to me at the beginning of my fieldwork. For example, I decided to ask fairly general and seemingly obvious questions to get a feel for the underlying discrepancies and tensions between different actors and their approach to Kosovo's peacebuilding process. The question 'in your opinion, is there peace in Kosovo?' yielded opposing answers in almost every interview, ranging from enthusiastic affirmation to cynical negation. At the same time, the broad question of how my interviewees defined sustainable development was often met with initial confusion as to why I would ask such an obvious question, yet most interviewees struggled to give a definitive response and answers generally varied greatly. These accounts pointed towards the fact that peacebuilding policies often work towards one version of peace and sustainable development, while disregarding others.

In addition, the conversations during my interviews often had a direct influence on the policies I would be analysing in more detail. For instance, as my initial analytical focus was on the exploration of the socially produced dimensions of the environment, I tried to steer clear of lengthy discussions on natural resource management or energy transitions. Yet, the controversy

over the planned coal power plant that was to be built with international support featured in almost every interview. I soon realised that it hinted at crucial conflict dynamics (e.g. socio-environmental exploitation and marginalisation) that my analysis had to take into consideration. Simply being in the country and observing specific events also influenced my understanding of wider political dynamics. For instance, seeing the decorations that had been put up all along the main boulevard in celebration of Kosovo's accession to UEFA illustrated how politically important and emotionally charged issues of international recognition were. Yet, seeing the decorated boulevard lead up to an art installation in front of the main government building that depicted a single giant Lego piece in reference to Kosovo's visa liberalisation for EU travel being the missing piece in building an integrated region and united Europe exposed the simultaneous forces of hope and resignation characterising Kosovo's society.

Against this background, I chose potential interviewees based on several criteria. They were either (a) EU policy-makers involved in the design of peacebuilding and/or environmental policies in Kosovo; and/or (b) putting these policies into practice in Brussels and/or Kosovo; and/or (c) civil society actors working on peacebuilding and/or issues related to sustainable development in Kosovo; and/or (d) have a personal or professional affiliation with the region towards which such policies are directed; and (e) speak English and/or German. I used the snowballing technique during the selection process to identify the most important and influential actors on the ground. Among the interviewees were Kosovar government officials, such as former Minister of Environment and Spatial Planning Ferid Agani, and Director of the Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency Ilir Morina; civil society representatives, such as the Kosovo Civil Society Consortium for Sustainable Development; and senior officials of institutions, such as the European Commission, and main donor countries. However, due to the fact that the fragile post-conflict political environment can pose severe challenges to the personal and professional life of my research participants, the protection of their anonymity is paramount; therefore, their names, organisational affiliation or position cannot universally be disclosed. More specifically, as my interviews touched upon sensitive issues, I gave my interviewees the choice of full anonymity, which some gladly accepted. Where they agreed to identification and where their context adds to my analysis and argument, I refer to their names and/or organisational affiliation. However, where they wished to remain anonymous, I do not reveal identifiable characteristics and instead assign anonymised codes. In this context, I acknowledge that some of my interviews were held in German and that it would be customary to include the original text as well as an English translation of it in my dissertation. For the sake of anonymity, I am unable to

reveal which individual interviews were held in German and therefore cannot always provide an excerpt of the interview in the original language.

However, I also need to acknowledge a practical limitation of my research here, which relates to positionality and reflexivity. I recognise that I conducted research in a setting that is characterised by conflict, but where traditions of hospitality towards outsiders are still strong and widespread. On the one hand, this means that I had to work with the evidence that was available to me, both in terms of my document analysis as well as with reference to my fieldwork. For example, because of travel restrictions in certain areas, I was unable to do research in those areas of Kosovo where tensions are highest and the conflict might be experienced differently, such as in the northern (and partly Serb dominated) city of Mitrovica. On the other hand, I acknowledge that because I conducted interviews exclusively in English or German, I mostly spoke with people from higher education backgrounds, which excluded a significant part of the population. Here, I specifically recognise that, as Temple and Young argue, “language is power”, allowing certain groups to be heard while silencing others (Temple & Young, 2004, p. 164). However, at the time, I decided against the use of translators for financial and methodological reasons, as adding a mediating level to the interaction of the interview process could have distorted the nuances of the research that emerge from the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. In addition, I recognise that my perceived social standing as a foreign, Western woman in a male-dominated, traditional society will inevitably have had an impact on the dynamics of the research process. While at times customs of hospitality might have opened doors for me and enabled frank discussions, at other times, I acknowledge that interviewees might either have tried to give me favourable answers to my questions or, at the other end of the extreme, might not have taken me seriously (which is something, however, I experienced particularly during my research in Brussels, not in Kosovo). Nonetheless, my research strategy pays attention to the social dynamics that underlie the interview *process* and to the relationship between researchers and participants, not simply to the outcomes. In this regard, I argue that these interactions are a significant part of my research and that by contextualising the insights that my interviews provided, I was able to make an informed judgment about the motivations behind certain statements and findings.

To aid in sorting and interpreting data gained from my interviews, I used the NVivo software to code and analyse the interview transcripts in several coding cycles in line with the cyclical logic of retroduction (Dunn, 2016, p. 175). During the first coding cycle, I applied versus codes (references to clashing actor groups, interests, processes or beliefs) to identify the

conflicting perceptions and power dynamics that characterise EU policy-making in Kosovo²³ (Soldaña, 2016, p. 137). Encoding²⁴ observable frictions and tensions between the stakeholders indicates that contested patterns of power exist which can have unexpected effects on the peacebuilding process (Millar et al., 2013, p. 139; Soldaña, 2016, p. 137). Having identified the main stakeholders and distribution of power between them, during the second coding cycle, I grouped initial codes into broader categories that naturally evolved out of the first coding cycle. This helped me identify prominent patterns, themes and collective meanings (for instance relating to different conceptualisations of the environment), which was crucial to synthesise the empirical data with findings of the document analysis. Such a combination of versus and thematic coding is most appropriate to understand how and why inequalities and injustices become institutionalised into peacebuilding processes. More specifically, drawing directly on stakeholders' perceptions of their actions reveals valuable insights into underlying power dynamics, which sustain existing or create new inequalities in the post-conflict context.

Thirdly, a brief word on the exclusion of other research methods seems necessary here. Quantitative methods, particularly statistical enquiry, indeed prove helpful in establishing the existence of regularities between social and environmental phenomena. However, the success of that kind of enquiry depends, as Sayer stresses, on the object that is to be studied and is arguably inadequate to analyse context-dependent phenomena (Sayer, 1992, p. 177). Thus, given the above epistemological and ontological assumptions, I consider quantitative methods to be too empirically flat to explain the existence of such regularities and relations in the first place. Hence, I argue that their linear conception of causality, their focus on closed systems and pursuit of objectivity are inadequate in the present case and would lead to rather superficial conclusions (Bhaskar, 1978, pp. 13–14).

Conclusion

In this chapter I outlined my theoretical and methodological framework to explore how understandings of the environment in sustainable development affect the EU's peacebuilding process in Kosovo. This framework provides the analytical, theoretical and methodological tools with which I explore and address the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding throughout my dissertation. It illustrates the underlying power dynamics, meanings and socio-

²³ Please see Annex 2 for an overview of the codes that emerged from my analysis in NVivo.

²⁴ Here, I draw on Soldaña's distinction between decoding and encoding. According to Soldaña, decoding refers to identifying the main message of a body of text, while encoding concerns the application of appropriate codes and labels (2016, p. 5).

economic structures that are collapsed into core concepts that environmental peacebuilding research tends to take for granted and allows us to explore the implications of omitting to unpack these in the context of post-conflict peacebuilding.

Here, I introduced my research strategy, which is based on a tripartite approach, drawing on (i) green political economy, (ii) political ecology and (iii) environmental peacebuilding. These three frameworks are unified by their inherent commitment to conceptual and methodological pluralism, complexity and hybridity. By combining key arguments from debates within each of these fields, I arrive at four core theoretical assumptions that guide my present analysis, namely that a) the human and the non-human spheres are closely interlinked; b) power and patterns of knowledge-production matter in the politicised environment; c) the environment has both material and socially produced dimensions, our understanding of which is influenced by the dominant socio-economic and institutional structures; and that d) we need to focus on present unsustainability instead of future sustainability.

Against this background, I define neoliberalism as a situational assemblage of theory, practice and ideological beliefs which determines our socio-economic structures and the manner in which we make sense of the world (Peck, 2010, p. 15). However, I recognise that there is not one form of the theory or practice of neoliberalism; hence, it is more appropriate to speak of different processes of neoliberalisation, which can have different meanings (e.g. as theory, practice or form of governance) depending on their context (Castree, 2008, p. 137; Fletcher, 2017; Joseph, 2012). Based on these theoretical insights, I argue that we need to understand peacebuilding as inherently environmental neoliberalising processes. This means that peacebuilding which works towards future sustainable development prescribes certain socio-ecological structures, which unravel the link between humans and the environment and adapt to forms of environmental resistance by creating 'green' policy alternatives. This is problematic, as it promotes the short-term logic of the neoliberal market and enables the institutionalisation of inequalities and injustices (e.g. forms of socio-ecological exploitation) into the peacebuilding process, locking it in to a constant state of negative peace and hampering progress towards positive peace.

My methodology is anchored in the assumptions of ontological realism, epistemological relativism and judgmental rationalism. I argue that by combining insights from document analysis and semi-structured interviews, I can explore underlying tensions and frictions between different actors in the peacebuilding process. By placing these frictions in the context of the neoliberalisation of the post-conflict economy and society, my analysis draws attention not

simply to the outcomes, but also to the processes of peacebuilding and their implications for (domestic) democratic governance and accountability. Thereby, we are able to identify how and why anthropocentric conceptualisations of sustainable development and the environment in EU peacebuilding policies institutionalise injustices and inequalities, such as the distortion of accountability, into the post-conflict context in Kosovo. I argue that environmental peacebuilding research often takes the connection between neoliberalisation and the environment for granted, meaning that it does not question the commodification of the environment in post-conflict development. The theoretical insights I discussed in this chapter can help address such conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding.

In the next chapter, I turn to explore the historical dynamics that have sustained the conflict in Kosovo for centuries. I show that a crucial dimension of the underlying processes that feed into the conflict is missed if peacebuilding actors disregard the socially produced elements of the environment and instead conceptualise it entirely in material and anthropocentric terms.

CHAPTER 3

Perceptions of the Kosovo conflict: exploring dichotomous histories, myths and constructions of territory

“There were times when the [Balkan] peninsula seemed truly large, with enough space for everyone: for different languages and faiths, for a dozen peoples, states, kingdoms and principalities. ... But times changed, and with them the ideas of the local people changed, and the peninsula began to seem quite constricting. This feeling of constriction was spawned more from the ancient memories of the people than by their lands and languages rubbing against each other. In their solitude the people hatched nightmares until one day they felt they could no longer bear it.”

– Ismail Kadare (2000, pp. 3-4)

Introduction

On 28th June, the Serbian Orthodox Church celebrates Serbia’s national holiday Vidovdan, or St Vitus Day. Perhaps coincidentally, but in all likelihood intentionally, many key historical events happened on 28th June, such as the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914, which started the First World War, or the signing of the Treaty of Versailles ending the First World War (and laying the foundations for the second) only five years later, or the extradition of former Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia to be convicted of war crimes in 2001 (Bieber, 2002, p. 95). Arguably the most determining event for the Kosovo conflict, however, happened on 28th June more than 600 years ago, namely the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, during which an alliance of Balkan forces fought the Ottoman army on the plains of Kosovo Polje, just outside of today’s Pristina. Much time has passed since. To put it in the words of Tim Judah, “[s]o what? So everything...” (1997, p. 23).

In his book *Three Elegies for Kosovo*, Albanian literary writer Ismail Kadare traces the origins of the conflict in Kosovo back to the ancient myths and historical interpretations surrounding the Battle of Kosovo that have sustained the conflict for centuries. As he notes, people’s interpretations and memories of the event have contributed much more to driving tensions than what actually happened during the event itself (Kadare, 2000, p. 4). This is not necessarily unique to Kosovo, as Judah highlights, “in the end, in the Balkans or elsewhere, what matters is not historical truth but what people believe it to be” (Judah, 2008, p. 25). But in Kosovo, these interpretations and memories are deeply interwoven with its territory, with the

plains in its centre and the meanings they hold. To comprehensively explore how understandings of the environment in sustainable development can affect the EU's peacebuilding process in Kosovo, it is important that we are aware of these underlying historical complexities that are entangled with Kosovo's territory and that have sustained and transformed the conflict over centuries.

In this chapter, I ask, a) how do (Kosovar-)Albanian and (Kosovar-)Serb perceptions of the causes and dynamics of the conflict differ, and b) how do they contribute to the construction of Kosovo's territory as a contested space? I take a more holistic view of the conflict, including not only the open warfare between Serbia and Kosovar insurgents in late 1990s, but also the socio-political tensions and eruptions of violence that characterised the pre- and post-war periods. Becoming more attuned to the underlying dynamics of the conflict that are intertwined with Kosovo's territory enables us to make sense of the complex socio-political context in which the EU's peacebuilding policies take place. I demonstrate that both the material and socially constructed dimensions of Kosovo's territory as a contested space play a crucial role sustaining existing conflict dynamics on the basis of the use of its natural resources, particularly coal, and the meaning it holds in reinforcing identities and belief systems.

The legacy of the conflict still influences processes of policy-making in Kosovo today. For example, in its 2019 Government Working Plan, the government of Kosovo identifies the "cultivat[ion of] the values of war" by spreading information about the "Liberation War" (objective 18.1) and by awarding decorations like "Martyr of the Nation" to former soldiers (objective 18.2) as key priorities for the Office of the Prime Minister (Republic of Kosovo, 2019). Such narratives reflect a view of history that clearly distinguishes between right and wrong. They appeal to arguments of autochthonic rights, settlement continuity and cultural supremacy, as much as they are built on ethnically and religiously informed readings of history (Lindstedt, 2012; Schmitt, 2008, p. 27; Todorova, 2015). By illuminating the underlying clashing interpretations of the conflict, we gain a better understanding of the role that Kosovo's territory, and the unresolved status question, plays in sustaining the conflict and feeding into frictions and tensions in the peacebuilding process.

Here, I engage with existing debates on the contentious nature of the Kosovo conflict, without reiterating simplifications of primordial enmity between two different ethnicities or religions (as for example advocated by Kaplan, 1996). In the first section, I briefly discuss the conceptual distinctions between ethnicity, nationalism and religion, as well as the understanding of myths upon which my analysis is built. In the second section, I analyse the different

perceptions of the historical conflict. First, I examine Kosovar-Albanian interpretations of the conflict. I place special emphasis on tracing arguments of autochthonic rights and settlement continuity, as well as influential mythologies through the lens of ethnicity, nationalism and religion. Second, I explore the Kosovar-Serb perceptions of the conflict in a similar manner. I argue that in both cases the perceptions of the conflict are rooted in specific readings of historical events and myths that legitimise social structures and naturalise history. In the last section, I discuss how these perceptions and interpretations contribute to the construction of Kosovo's territory as a contested space, which is closely entangled with Albanian and Serb identity- and nation-building processes, and thereby underline the significance of Kosovo's unresolved status question in sustaining current conflict dynamics.

The insights from the analysis in this chapter help us understand the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding, as they draw attention to the need for a clearer approach to what research in environmental peacebuilding means when it refers to 'the environment'. My analysis illuminates the difficulties of understanding the environment merely in terms of its material dimension (e.g. as natural resources contributing to economic development) and instead illustrates the way the socially produced dimension of the environment (i.e. the meanings it holds for different groups) can contribute to sustaining the conflict. I argue that it is crucial to understand these underlying conflict dynamics, and the different meanings and functions of Kosovo's territory as a contested space, as they shape the versions of sustainability and peace that the conflict parties aim to promote.

3.1 Conceptual distinctions

As Kadare captures in his literary exploration of the Battle of Kosovo, the Kosovo conflict is fuelled by nightmares of the past and uncertainties of the present. I do not intend for my analysis of the conflict to provide a comprehensive historical overview of past events, nor a discussion of all factors that sustain present conflict dynamics. These issues have been discussed at length elsewhere (see e.g. Malcolm, 1998; Schmitt, 2008) and lie beyond the scope of my research. Rather, acknowledging the highly contentious nature of the topic at hand, I have made selective omissions of historical events in order to construct a coherent and valid argument without falling into the trap of trying to identify 'the true' answer where it cannot be found. After all, history is subjective and does not always clearly distinguish between winners and losers. Therefore, before engaging with the history of the conflict in more depth, I briefly discuss my underlying analytical assumptions and limitations in this section.

First, we cannot simply impose today's borders of the Republic of Kosovo on its past to determine the relevance of historical processes on the present state. According to Oliver Schmitt, Kosovo is no typical conflict area, but rather a central Balkan landscape that has developed over centuries to form the Republic of Kosovo in its current territorial borders and with its contemporary contentious social contours (Schmitt, 2008, p. 90). Therefore, I take a more regional approach to understanding the conflict in Kosovo, acknowledging that the frame of enquiry is essentially an artificial space that did not exist until 1945 (2008, p. 25). Here, I draw on Birte Vogel to argue that the territory of Kosovo is a contested space that is “no longer necessarily understood as describing physical locations but rather as [a] lived social construct... and bearer... of political identities and ideologies” (Vogel, 2018, p. 3). This also has an influence on the terminology I use to refer to the different social groups. I refer to Kosovar-Albanians and Kosovar-Serbs when my analysis alludes to the dominant ethnic groups in today’s Republic of Kosovo. In contrast, I refer to Albanians and Serbs to depict the social groups that resided in the historical central Balkan landscape upon which the Republic of Kosovo sits today.

Second, given that it is not just the clashing interpretations of a shared history that make this a difficult analytical terrain to navigate, ethnicity, nationalism and religion are also ambiguous concepts in their own right, especially in a context of violent conflict. There are many different arguments on the degree and nature of the link between violent conflict and ethnicity, nationalism and religion. For instance, Frances Stewart explores ethnic and religious violence in the context of (perceived) structural inequalities (Stewart, 2008). In turn, Ted Gurr examines “ethnopolitical conflicts” as political disputes between different identity groups (Gurr, 2017). Different yet again, Matthew Isaacs illustrates the role of religion in spurring ethnic conflicts through competition over religious followers (Isaacs, 2017). Although this brief snapshot of research indicates fundamentally different approaches to the study of ethnicity, nationalism and religion in conflict settings, they all point towards the multi-layered nature of conflict and the close interconnection between the three concepts.

Against this background, due to the prevalence of ethnic nationalism in the Kosovar case and the conceptual similarity of ethnicity and nationalism in the context of conflict, I examine them as one analytical category here (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, p. 428; Duijzings, 2000, p. 32). Moreover, neither ethnicity, nationalism nor religion alone are conclusive when it comes to understanding conflicts between groups (Duijzings, 2000, p. 20). As I discuss below, the multi-layered and more flexible concept of identity is better suited to discern underlying conflict dynamics as it accounts for the various possible factors influencing feelings of belonging and since it impacts on the role of the environment in situations of conflict (Aspinall, 2007;

Duijzings, 2000, pp. 19-22; Green, 2015). Against this background, as Rogers Brubaker and David Laitin have pointed out, we need to distinguish between ethnic violence and conflict (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998). I understand (ethnic) violence not as a degree but as a form of conflict which allows for a more critical engagement with the ethnic labelling of political violence and the ethnicization of conflict (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, p. 425, 427).

Third, this distinction helps in understanding how ethnicity and nationalism can be used to provoke and sustain conflicts. In the case of Kosovo, as I demonstrate in more detail below, ethnicity functions as a vehicle to give meaning to acts of violence by “meaningfully orient[ing it] in some way to the different ethnicity of the target” (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, p. 428). Framing violence under the heading of ethnic conflict serves the purpose of supporting specific political interests, most notably through the repeated spread of fear and hatred in mass media and state propaganda, appealing to people's emotions (Malcolm, 1998, p. xxvii; Oberschall, 2000, pp. 998-999). As, among others, David Lake and Donald Rothchild have pointed out, this social construction of fear gives rise to the sense of a security dilemma, feeding on the lack of trust in state institutions and hence lack of protection, asymmetric information about the 'other side', and intra-ethnic group dynamics (e.g. policing, provocation of tensions with outsiders, etc.) (Lake & Rothchild, 1996, p. 44). This perceived security dilemma arguably lowers the threshold for the use of violence.

Taking a step back and examining the social construction of fear through ethnicity itself, Anthony Oberschall's argument on the distinction between peacetime and crisis frames through which ethnicity can be experienced, sheds light on how ethnicity can be manipulated. He argues that while ethnic co-existence and cooperation are prevalent in the peacetime frame, feelings of mistrust, fear and even hate can easily take hold and grow out of proportion once the crisis frame is triggered (Oberschall, 2000, p. 989). The intentional spread of misinformation through media, politics, education and other channels is one of the most influential tools in the process of reactivating the crisis frame (2000, p. 996). Most importantly for my analysis of the conflict in Kosovo, historical myths and the construction of memory play crucial roles in this context, as they shape what Oberschall calls the cognitive frame, namely “a mental structure which situates and connects events, people and groups into a meaningful narrative in which the social world that one inhabits makes sense and can be communicated with others” (2000, p. 986). Therefore, the spread of misinformation that appeals to people's sense of (ethnic and national) identity through allusions to historical myths and certain constructions of memory can make the flip of the switch from peacetime to crisis frame much more likely. Here, I draw on Maja Essebo to define myth as “an analytically rich and highly useful concept which holds values and powers

that instil place with taken-for-granted meaning” (Essebo, 2018, p. 20). Through its metaphorical power, a myth can legitimise social structures and naturalise history (2018, p. 9).

These underlying analytical assumptions, namely (a) the understanding of Kosovo’s territory as a contested space, (b) the significant role of ethnicity, nationalism and religion in identity-building processes, and (c) the ethnicization of conflict through crisis frames, are crucial for the contextualisation of the different interpretations of the conflict. I explore (Kosovar-) Albanian and (Kosovar-)Serb perceptions in the next sections.

3.2 Perceived roots of the Kosovo conflict: on readings of history and popular mythologies

While in the below analysis I distinguish between (Kosovar-)Albanian perceptions on the one hand and (Kosovar-)Serb perceptions on the other, implying clear ethnic divides, this is in fact an analytical distinction in order to trace the main arguments and claims of legitimacy advocated by both sides. Although both conflict parties emphasise ‘natural’ ethnic differences, as Duijzings points out, Kosovar society is in fact not clearly divided into Albanian and Serbian ethnic groups. Rather, Kosovar society is a “frontier society” in which “periods of confrontation alternate with periods of contact and co-operation across ethnic and religious boundaries” (Duijzings, 2000, p. 1). Moreover, (ethnic) national identities only really developed in Kosovo in the past 130 years, previously to which people belonged to a language group with distinct traditions and cultures (Schmitt, 2008, p. 89). As I show below, while it holds true that Orthodoxy was the main driver in Serb identity-building processes until approximately the 1880s, there were differences even within that identity group and social boundaries were in fact porous (Duijzings, 2000, p. 1; Schmitt, 2008, p. 159, 170). The same line of reasoning applies to Albanian (ethnic) national identity. Rather than, as often argued, Albanian identity having its origin in Illyrian ancestry, the identity of Albanian speaking Muslims acquired ethnic-nationalist characteristics through Serb policies in Kosovo in the late nineteenth century (Lindstedt, 2012, pp. 114-115). However, given that in the following sections I examine Albanian and Serb perceptions of conflict dynamics through the lenses of ethnicity, nationalism and religion, I take a broader historical view to reflect the main arguments, centring around (a) claims to autochthonic rights and settlement continuity, and (b) dominant mythologies.

3.2.1 Albanian perceptions of the Kosovo conflict

(a) Claims to autochthonic rights and settlement continuity

The narrative of a distinct, historical Albanian ethnic nation that has resided in Kosovar territory for centuries but that has been denied its own nation-state, plays a crucial role in sustaining the contemporary conflict between (Kosovar-)Serbs and (Kosovar-)Albanians.

Albanians have their ancestral roots in ancient Illyria, so the argument goes. Illyria occupied the vast area between what is today southern Austria and western Bulgaria, and what would be succeeded by the Roman province of Dardania in the territory of today's Kosovo (Dahlman & Williams, 2010, p. 417; Di Lellio, 2009, p. 17; Ker-Lindsay, 2009, p. 8; Schmitt, 2008, p. 136). Because of the long tradition of Albanian settlement in the region, Albanians hold historical ownership over Kosovo. In this line of reasoning, Slavs, the ancestors of the Serbs, were merely invaders (Judah, 2008, p. 18). The symbolic power of this argument resonates to the present day: Ibrahim Rugova, President of Kosovo in the 1990s and early 2000s, considered changing Kosovo's name into 'Dardania' to underline the continuity of Albanian historic settlements and Kosovar-Albanian roots in Roman Christianity (Judah, 2008, p. 31).

While there are historic periods and events of varying degrees of significance in sustaining arguments of autochthonic claims and settlement continuity to the territory, a comprehensive discussion of all lies beyond the scope of my dissertation. However, a few deserve highlighting here. First, as appears to be a key feature in the making of modern statehood, rule over Kosovo changed hands several times over the course of its history, changing the political arrangements and social characteristics of its population. But in the context of Albanian (ethnic) identity-building, these periods are viewed as times of oppression and imposed foreign rule over the (Kosovar-)Albanian nation.

After having been part of the Byzantine Empire until 1204, Kosovo was integrated into the Serbian Kingdom and was eventually absorbed by the Ottoman Empire in 1455 (Malcolm, 1998, p. 62 ; Schmitt, 2008, p. 32). The Ottomans divided the population into Muslims and non-Muslims, with social privileges being given depending on religious affiliation. This led to a process of (nominal) Islamisation for political purposes, homogenising society in the public spheres (Schmitt, 2008, p. 79). However, syncretism was common, and significant parts of the population continued to practise Christianity in private. Duijzings refers to “the outward adoption of an identity for the sake of survival” as “mimicry” behaviour (Duijzings, 2000, p. 15). More Albanians are said to have converted to Islam than Serbs, mainly due to the fact that Christianity was not as deeply rooted in Albanian identity as Orthodoxy was in the Serb (Judah,

2000, p. 8). Religious affiliation therefore did not have a significant impact on the historical development of Albanian national identity (Duijzings, 2000, p. 8). However, the implications of these processes of forced religious conversion appear to resonate with Kosovar society today. For instance, scholars noted that at the time of the Ottoman accession to power, the rural population did not convert to Islam as quickly as people in urban areas did. This rural - urban divide can arguably still be seen today, with most Christians living in rural areas (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2011, pp. 37-38; Malcolm, 1998, p. 133). But most importantly, although Kosovo's society is predominantly Muslim today, providing the foundations for framings of Kosovo as the non-European 'Other', the state is arguably more secular than some of the EU Member States (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2011, p. 36).

When in 1912 Kosovo was integrated into the Kingdom of Serbia, the Ottoman practices of "ethnic engineering" were mirrored in order to alter the population's identity and change the social composition through forced conversion to Orthodoxy (Duijzings, 2000, p. 17). In the face of the Serb 'colonisers' who aimed to civilise the 'barbaric' Albanians, the call for a Kosovar-Albanian state grew louder and fuelled ethnic sentiments from the early twentieth century onwards (Malcolm, 1998, p. xxx). This process of gradual ethnic polarisation was deepened from 1918 onwards when land reforms dispossessed a large part of the Albanian population while Serb settlements were established at strategic points across the Kosovar territory (Judah, 2008, p. 12; Schmitt, 2008, p. 199, 205).

In the Albanian framing of the conflict, another period of oppression began with the integration of Kosovo as the Serb province of Kosovo i Metohija (Kosmet) into Yugoslavia in 1945 under the rule of Minister of Interior Aleksandar Ranković, feeding into Albanian nationalist sentiments (Schmitt, 2008, p. 19, 250-254). Although repressive policies ended with Ranković being overthrown in 1966, Albanian protests grew, and a number of concessions were eventually made. While the granting of autonomy in 1974 is the most drastic concession politically, the establishment of the University of Prishtina in 1969 was most noteworthy socially, providing significant intellectual impetus to the rise of Albanian nationalism. It allowed a class of educated Albanians to emerge, who began to rewrite dominant narratives of Albanian history (Malcolm, 1998, pp. 326-327). This period is crucial for the reinterpretation of history in light of particular political motivations, developing the more scientific foundation for claims to autochthony and settlement continuity. The change in the education system hence played a significant role in the nationalisation process (Obućina, 2011, p. 40; Schmitt, 2008, p. 241). The Albanian uprising against the government developed out of a student protest at the University of

Pristina in 1981, feeding into demands for full republic status for Kosovo (Schmitt, 2008, pp. 297-305).

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, ethnicity became a crucial factor in polarising Albanians and Serbs against each other. With Slobodan Milošević slowly assuming power from 1987 onwards, eventually revoking Kosovo's autonomy in 1989 and threatening the Albanian political leadership while suppressing the Albanian population, a parallel society emerged (Judah, 2008, p. 61; O'Neill, 2002, p. 22; Schmitt, 2008, pp. 306-308, 316, 218). Initially, Albanian resistance was peaceful and passive under the leadership of Ibrahim Rugova's Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), but when the 1995 Dayton Agreement failed to address the issue of Kosovo, an armed insurgency emerged that would eventually internationalise the conflict and lead NATO to engage in aerial bombardments against Serbia in 1999 (Capussela, 2015, p. 4; Ker-Lindsay, 2009, p. 11). While these periods of changing regimes are not only often used to remind of times of oppression in order to re-activate feelings of resentment against 'the Other', i.e. Serbs, they also provide the foundation for the narrative of Albanian victimhood. This narrative is a crucial unifying factor in the process of ethnic identity-building.

Second, in addition to autochthonic arguments appealing to a sense of historical continuity despite different ruling regimes, large migratory movements against the backdrop of historical events fuelled the disputes over 'who was there first'. In this regard, the legacy of the Great Migration of 1690 is contested. Following the Ottoman-Habsburg wars of the late seventeenth century, many Serbs left Kosovo once the Habsburg army retreated, changing the demographic composition of the territory. While it is widely accepted today that settlement movements went both ways, constantly changing the numbers of Albanians and Serbs residing in Kosovo, it continues to fuel the debate on rightful historic ownership on the basis of the question whether the Great Migration righted a historical wrong (Malcolm, 1998, p. 140, 179). The period from World War I to World War II saw similar fluctuations of in- and out-migration. During this period, Kosovo first briefly came under Austrian-Hungarian rule (1915-1918), who promoted the Albanian population, then became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918-1941), before it was placed under Italian and German administration (1941) that furthered Albanian nationalism in the hope of establishing a Greater Albania in the region (Judah, 2008, p. 12). The re-integration of Kosovo into Yugoslavia in 1945 put an end to these aspirations and, in turn, the Yugoslav leadership heavily promoted the Serbian population (Schmitt, 2008, pp. 221-226). This trend was again reversed when Kosovo became an autonomous province in 1974 and the press and general public discourse became more polemic and polarising (Malcolm, 1998, p. 329, 337-338). When Milošević came into power in the late

1980s, migration patterns drastically changed yet again. Many Albanians fled from Kosovo as the Albanian population was increasingly discriminated against; for example, Serbs were put into positions of power in the judiciary and police force, and it became almost impossible for Albanians to buy property (O'Neill, 2002, p. 21). The outbreak of open conflict from 1995 onwards saw increased numbers of atrocities and war crimes being committed, mainly by Serb paramilitaries following attacks by the insurgent Kosovo Liberation Army²⁵ (KLA) (Capussela, 2015, p. 4). Once the Serbs withdrew from Kosovo in 1999, international peacekeeping forces failed to prevent numerous acts of revenge killings against the Serb population, not only in the immediate aftermath of the war but up until 2004 when large anti-Serb (and anti-UN) riots surprised NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) (Capussela, 2015, pp. 5-7). As I discuss further below, to a certain extent, these periods of (forced) migration homogenised Kosovar society ethnically and provide the necessary fuel to sustain arguments of first settlements and hence rightful ownership of Kosovo.

Third, there have been structures of organised resistance to ruling powers throughout Kosovo's history that justify their cause by drawing on the above arguments of autochthony and settlement continuity. Against the background of the establishment of a Serbian state and the introduction of centralising reforms by the Ottoman rulers that were intended to strengthen state structures, Albanian resistance culminated in the foundation of the League of Prizren in 1878. It is often seen as the birth of Albanian nationalism, as clan leaders joined forces to rebel against the decision that had been taken at the Congress of Berlin (1878) to give Albanian populated (and previously Kosovar) Gusinje to Slav Montenegro (Malcolm, 1998, p. 180, 201; Schmitt, 2008, p. 90). The Ottomans violently suppressed the League in 1881 (Schmitt, 2008, p. 171). When Kosovo became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918, the *kaçaks*, an anti-Serb political movement, formed an armed rebellion. They did not achieve any concrete successes, but they managed to interfere with the colonising plans and function as a symbol against Serb oppression (Malcolm, 1998, p. 273; Obućina, 2011, p. 37).

Throughout Yugoslav times, there were periods of Albanian resistance against the regime, from the protests starting in the mid-1960s to the student revolts of the early 1980s. The most significant - because most influential in terms of affecting contemporary politics - was the period of the KLA. It was founded in 1993 and trained in secret camps in the remote mountain region across the Albanian border to the West of Kosovo. Albania, which plunged into political upheaval itself in 1997, provided the necessary space for the KLA to organise its insurgency and

²⁵ Albanian: Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës (UÇK).

to acquire the necessary weaponry (O'Neill, 2002, p. 22; Pettifer & Vickers, 2009, p. 146; Schmitt, 2008, p. 323). Although KLA attacks led to a violent intensification of the conflict, its symbolism of resistance against the 'cruel oppressor' functioned as a uniting factor in Kosovar-Albanian identity-building.

In fact, the KLA, both in terms of the power it holds and its symbolism, continues to be influential today. Not only did the old KLA elite, backed by international support, assume power in parliament in 2007 and now continues to fill important political positions (e.g. Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj and President Hashim Thaçi were key KLA commanders during the war in the 1990s) (Schmitt, 2008, p. 341). But also the symbols of the KLA form part of the public sphere in Kosovo today. For example, passengers arriving at Kosovo's international airport 'Adem Jashari' are instantly reminded of the national hero who founded the KLA and was killed by Serb forces at Prekaz in 1998 (Di Lellio & Schwandner-Sievers, 2006, pp. 516-517; Obućina, 2011, p. 36). Or at times when tensions between Serbia and Kosovo flare up, men wearing uniforms decorated with the KLA emblem often walk through the streets of Pristina to remind of past resistance and victories, as I observed during a visit in May 2019 (right after Serbia announced that it would deploy security forces to the northern Kosovar border region). Although some of its branches are accused of having committed war crimes in the 1990s (including Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj), the KLA is still at the heart of the political system of today's Kosovo (Hopkins, 2018).

Therefore, as the above cross section of key historical events demonstrates, Kosovar-Albanian perceptions of the conflict are informed by historical claims to autochthonic rights and settlement continuity. These claims build on specific readings of history, drawing clear parallels between past and present, to construct justifications for contemporary politics and political agendas. As this process appeals directly to people's emotions and individual interpretations, national myths provide the necessary tool to support and sustain the nationalist "invention of tradition" (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). The following sub-section explores some of the mythologies that are used to further the Albanian reading of Kosovo's history.

b) Dominant mythologies

The above arguments of autochthony and settlement continuity draw their persuasive power from myths that have been reinforced in folklore for centuries and, to put it in Essebo's terms, have naturalised an Albanian reading of history (Essebo, 2018). As a discussion of all relevant myths lies beyond the scope of my dissertation, I focus on four specific ones here, namely the

myths of the *Antemurales Christianitatis*, the 1389 Battle of Kosovo, the myths surrounding national heroes and resistance unto death, and Albanian victimhood.

First, the myth of the *Antemurales Christianitatis*, the Bulwark of Christianity, is closely interlinked with arguments of Kosovo's inherent Europeanness. It frames Kosovo as the protector of Europe against the oriental 'Other', the Turks. In this line of reasoning, it appeals to Kosovo's Roman Christian roots as Dardanians and serves the purpose of providing a counter-narrative to the Serb labelling of Kosovars as 'barbaric' in contrast to civilised Europeans (Petrović, 2015, p. 113). As I demonstrate in Chapter 6, the framing of Kosovo as inherently European plays a crucial role in its pursuit of European integration and universally recognised independence.

Second, the myth of the Battle of Kosovo at Kosovo Polje (or the 'Field of Blackbirds') in 1389 is by far the most determining historical event, the memory of which is still very much alive today. In 1389, Ottoman Sultan Murat I. fought an alliance of Balkan forces led by Serbian Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović at a plain outside of today's Pristina. There are many different myths surrounding the battle, even though there was no decisive outcome as both the Sultan and the Prince died and both armies were severely weakened (Di Lellio, 2009, pp. 3-4; Judah, 2000, p. 7). Nonetheless, the legacy of the battle lives on in Albanian oral tradition and folk culture, or in what Judah describes as "post-battle propaganda" (Judah, 2000, p. 7). Although the Ottoman conquest meant the end of Serbian rule, the Kosovar-Albanian historical reading of the event underlines that Albanians fought among the ranks of Serbian Prince Lazar's army in order to sustain arguments of Kosovo's rightful place in the European community. Moreover, while the battle did not have the same defeatist connotations for Albanians as it did for the Serbs, it was still perceived as an imposition of foreign rule, suppressing the development of Albanian national unity.

Third, myths surrounding national heroes Gjergj Skanderbeg and Adem Jashari highlight the notion of resistance unto death, greatly feeding into Kosovar-Albanian nationalism. For example, Skanderbeg, born under the name of Gjergj Katriot into Albanian nobility in the early fifteenth century, was taken to Istanbul once the Ottomans assumed power over the region. He converted to Islam and fought among the Ottoman army. But when he returned to Albania, having been assigned to administrative duties in Kruja in central Albania, he converted to Christianity and took up arms against the Ottomans, liberating parts of Albania from Ottoman rule (Judah, 2008, p. 25; Malcolm, 1998, p. 88). His actions did not bear any notable material consequences for Kosovo, but their ideational implications are of great significance. While the

narrative of resistance and Albanian heroism surrounding Skanderbeg promotes a sense of Albanian unity in the face of an oppressor, it also highlights that religion as such does not play a significant role for the development of an Albanian identity. However, the extent to which these discourses correspond to historical fact are somewhat unclear, underlining Essebo's understanding of myths in which historical accuracy is of no significance. For example, there are indications that Skanderbeg frequently shifted alliances and also fought alongside Serbian armies (Judah, 2008, p. 26). It seems that these aspects are (intentionally) forgotten today; an imposing statue of Skanderbeg decorates the square outside of Kosovo's main government building in Pristina to celebrate the legacy of the Albanian national hero.

A powerful national "master-narrative" also developed following the killing of KLA founder Adem Jashari in 1998 at Prekaz (Di Lellio & Schwandner-Sievers, 2006, p. 527). Jashari, who had been under attack by Serb forces several times throughout the 1990s but managed to escape every time, was eventually killed by the Serb police, along with forty members of his family, civilians, and KLA fighters (Di Lellio & Schwandner-Sievers, 2006, pp. 516-517; Obućina, 2011, p. 36). These events at Prekaz radicalised the Kosovar-Albanian opposition against the Serbs and the resulting master-narrative of Jashari being a "martyr ... of the nation" strongly appealed to Albanian nationalist sentiments and identity-building by turning a traumatic experience into an a cause for pride and solidarity (Di Lellio & Schwandner-Sievers, 2006, p. 527). The memory of Jashari was soon engulfed in a strong sense of heroism and mysticism, unifying Kosovar-Albanian society and binding Kosovo's past to the present (Di Lellio & Schwandner-Sievers, 2006, p. 514). As my illustration of war rhetoric in the Government Annual Work Plan illustrates (c.f. introduction), the narratives of martyrdom are actively promoted today.

Last, the myth of victimhood functions as a discursive umbrella under which almost every political intention can be nourished and promoted. It is often used to view certain historical events in a particular light and prescribes specific readings of history. As my above discussion indicates, references to victimhood underlie most of these historical myths.

Therefore, as I demonstrated in this sub-section, historical myths, no matter how ancient or how historically (in)accurate, play a crucial role in reinforcing sentiments of Kosovar-Albanian nationalism. They are often linked to specific geographic locations, emphasising that the Kosovar territory itself provides significant impetus to processes of Kosovar-Albanian identity-building. Having explored a cross section of the underlying dynamics that drive the Kosovar-Albanian perceptions of the ongoing conflict in Kosovo, I now turn to examine the (Kosovar-)

Serb interpretations of the conflict to help us understand the contested context in which EU peacebuilding takes place and to grasp the origins of the different versions of peace that the conflicting parties advocate today.

3.2.2 Serb perceptions of the Kosovo conflict

(a) Claims to autochthonic rights and settlement continuity

There is a certain degree of commonality between the Kosovar-Albanian and Kosovar-Serb perceptions of the conflict in Kosovo: both build on a specific reading of history to support arguments of autochthonic rights and settlement continuity. Although they might refer to the same events, I demonstrate in this section that the interpretations of these events differ significantly.

For example, the Serb counternarrative to the Albanian arguments on autochthony and settlement continuity centres mainly on the legacy of the medieval Serb kingdom founded by Stefan Nemanja. This period is crucial as Nemanja built a strong autonomous church and his son Rastko (or also called St. Sava) deeply rooted the Serbian state in Orthodoxy (Judah, 2008, p. 19). In this line of reasoning, Albanians did indeed live in the region of today's Kosovo in the Middle Ages, but they were outnumbered by Slavs, the ancestors of the Serbs. Most importantly, Kosovo is and always has been "heart of the Serbian nation" (Blumi, 2006, p. 2). This is not least because the centre of power of the Serbian state – and hence church – was moved to Peja in Western Kosovo in 1253 following the fall of the Byzantine Empire when Kosovo came under Serbian rule. Two crucial Orthodox monasteries and UNESCO World Heritage sites can today be found in Peja, namely the Patriarchate of Peć and the Visoki Dečani Monastery. These monasteries are of great importance for the Serbian nation as they provide evidence for its historic autochthony and underline its roots in the Orthodox church. As I elaborate in more detail in Chapter 5, these monasteries are also targets of anti-Serb protests and riots and continue to require NATO's protection (Schmitt, 2008, p. 53). Religion therefore plays a crucial role in supporting claims of autochthonic rights; being Orthodox is seen as irrevocably linked to being Serb, proving the long history of Orthodoxy in Kosovo (Judah, 2000, p. 3). Against the background of Kosovo's significance for both the Serbian state and the Serbian Orthodox church, the Ottoman conquest of Kosovo with the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 is hence perceived as a traumatising event for the Serbian nation. However, it also provides the basis for the construction of a powerful narrative of resistance that would allow Slobodan Milošević to

reiterate Serbian claims to Kosovo in the 1990s (Capussela, 2015, p. 2). I explore the myths linked to the Battle of Kosovo in more detail in the next sub-section.

The reclamation of Kosovo in the aftermath of the First Balkan War of 1912 was a moment of liberation from the Ottoman oppressors, so the argument goes (Malcolm, 1998, p. 356). It is within this context that the argument of cultural supremacy grew stronger, according to which the Serbs civilised the 'barbaric' Albanians in Kosovo. The resulting practices of dispossession and resettlement underlined by 'scientific', historical proof that supported Serb political claims to Kosovo, affected the demographic composition of the region (Schmitt, 2008, p. 199). As indicated above, this process of imposed social transformation was continued in 1918 when Kosovo became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (called Yugoslavia from 1929 onwards) (2008, p. 205). Strategic land reforms and settlements, and the Serbianization of the education system slowly marginalised the Albanian population despite existing legal provisions securing minority rights (Malcolm, 1998, p. 267). The superior status of the Serb population was formalised in 1945 when Kosovo became Kosmet, a province in the Yugoslav Serbian republic (Schmitt, 2008, pp. 221-226). Despite Kosovo being granted autonomy in 1974, it was officially still part of the Serbian Republic. Nonetheless, it was effectively put on par with other Yugoslav republics but without being named as such. This underlines Serb claims to the Kosovar territory and their strong reluctance to taking steps that could result in the breaking away of the 'heart of the Serbian nation' (Ker-Lindsay, 2009, pp. 9-10; Malcolm, 1998, p. 327).

With polarising and polemic, half-true nationalist discourses on the rise in the 1980s and 1990s, Serbia slowly strengthened its position in Kosovo by appealing to (radical) ethnic sentiments. It defended its political influence against outside interference, mostly with support from Russia. For example, at the Rambouillet peace talks in 1999, the Great Powers (i.e. the United States, the United Kingdom, France as well as Russia, Germany and Italy) tried to negotiate a deal between Serbia and Kosovo but failed to achieve a successful outcome (Capussela, 2015, p. 4; Ker-Lindsay, 2009, p. 14; Schmitt, 2008, p. 329). Serbia's defeat to NATO and loss of Kosovo - effectively to the international community - did not end Serbian claims to Kosovar territory on the basis of autochthonic arguments. Rather, it simply transformed the (discursive) struggle and gave it new persuasive power (Dahlman & Williams, 2010, p. 408).

Second, in addition to arguments on autochthony that are based on 'heart of the Serbian nation' lying in Kosovo, arguments on settlement continuity also underline Serbia's claims to Kosovo's territory. In this regard, historic migratory movements are interpreted in a specific

light. For instance, the Great Migration of 1690 following the Habsburg-Ottoman war plays into the narrative of Serb victimhood, framing Serbs as having been expelled from a region that was rightfully theirs (Judah, 2008, p. 14). The integration of Kosovo into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918 allowed Serbia to advance its vast colonisation programme by targeting the demographic composition of Kosovo. However, this was not only obstructed by Albanian resistance, as highlighted above, but also by the general turmoil of both World Wars, during which migration flows in and out of Kosovo fluctuated (Malcolm, 1998, p. 273; Schmitt, 2008, pp. 164-167). Even though these migration movements were not unidirectional, both conflict parties frame them as if they entailed either an extreme out- or inflow of their respective ethnic group in order to further their political agendas. This holds true for most of the Yugoslav era, especially during the late 1970s, most of 1980s and 1990s. In this regard, the granting of autonomy in 1974, for instance, is perceived as the beginning of a genocide against the Serbian people by means of displacement (Schmitt, 2008, p. 31).

The issue of settlement continuity can be traced to the present day. For example, a Brussels-brokered deal between Kosovo and Serbia causes severe political unrest in Pristina. The agreement, drafted in 2013 and signed in 2015, sets out to grant more autonomy to the remaining Serb municipalities on Kosovar territory, effectively allowing them to establish their own systems of governance and administration (Republic of Kosovo, 2013). I discuss this agreement in much greater length in Chapters 5 and 6. However, it is noteworthy here that the deal has been widely criticised as it sustains the Serb argument that those Serbs living in Kosovo today have the right to remain part of the greater Serbian nation, offsetting the right of the Kosovar-Albanian majority to sovereignty (Dahlman & Williams, 2010, p. 419; KIPRED, 2013). In addition, Kosovar President Hashim Thaçi and his Serbian counterpart Aleksandar Vučić briefly explored the option of a land swap, in which the Serb majority North of Kosovo would be traded for the Albanian majority South-East of Serbia (Capussela, 2018). However, these plans were abandoned after international backlash and a significant worsening of the relations between Kosovo and Serbia (Gray, 2018).

As I illustrated in this section, Serbian perceptions of the conflict are built on similar arguments surrounding autochthony and settlement continuity yet interpret associated events differently from their (Kosovar-)Albanian counterparts. In this context, religion plays a much more significant role, emphasising that the origins of the Serbian nation indeed lie in today's Kosovo. I explore the myths that surround and underline these arguments in the next section.

b) Dominant mythologies

The Serbian interpretations of the conflict in Kosovo, which rely on a particular framing of autochthonic rights and settlement continuity, are deeply rooted in historical myths. They serve a key function similar to the myths supporting Kosovar-Albanian perceptions of the conflict: they naturalise a Serbian reading of history and prescribe specific social structures and political arrangements. Four core myths emerge in this context, which I examine in more depth in this section, namely the myth of Kosovo as the 'Jerusalem of the Serbian nation', the myths surrounding Serb national heroes, the myth of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo, and the myth of Serb victimhood.

First, as I indicated above, the myth of Kosovo as the heart or the 'Jerusalem of the Serbian nation' emerged with the consolidation of the Orthodox Serbian state in the Middle Ages. The interest of the Serb Orthodox Church in keeping this myth alive should not be underestimated. For instance, in light of secularizing and modernising pressures that advanced at the end of the nineteenth century, the Orthodox Church played a crucial role in glorifying Kosovo as the heart of the Serbian nation to resist such pressures. They drew direct connections between the Serbian medieval kingdom of Stefan Nemanja (and the defeat endured by the Serbian people in 1389) and the present, constructing an image of collective, historical suffering that would soon be rewarded as the Serbian nation had chosen the path of the everlasting heavenly kingdom (Judah, 2008, pp. 24-25). This narrative is closely interlinked with the myths surrounding Serbia's national heroes.

Second, the myths of national heroes Stefan Nemanja, the founder of the Nemanjić dynasty, and Prince Lazar, the leader of a Balkan alliance in the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, underline the crucial role of the Orthodox church in Serb identity-building processes and the relevance of Kosovo's territory in this context. For example, as I discussed in the previous subsection, Stefan Nemanja united Serbian clans and feudal lords to advance Serbian power throughout much of today's Kosovo. His son Rastko, or St. Sava, is thought to be the founder of the Serb Orthodox Church as it was due to his efforts that it became autonomous in 1219 (Judah, 2008, p. 19). Both the Patriarchate of Peć and the Visoki Dečani Monastery around Peja in Western Kosovo stem from the times of the Nemanjić dynasty. It therefore plays a crucial role for Serb identity- and nation-building (Schmitt, 2008, pp. 53-54). The myth that is constructed around Prince Lazar further underlines the importance of Orthodoxy. Epics, poems and other literature and folklore have created a glorified memory of Prince Lazar who chose the "empire of heaven" over suppression by the Ottomans at the 1389 Battle of Kosovo (Judah, 2000, p. 5).

The canonization of Prince Lazar by the Orthodox Church emphasises the underlying power of this narrative (2000, p. 8).

Third, the myth of the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 surrounding the defeat by the Ottomans and the loss of Kosovo is turned into a narrative of resistance unto death in the Serbian reading of history (Di Lellio, 2009, p. 3). The narrative of national hero Prince Lazar choosing death over Ottoman suppression forms a crucial building block of Serb nationalism (Schmitt, 2008, p. 60). Slobodan Milošević would later use his speech at Kosovo Polje, marking the 600th anniversary of the battle, to underline Serbia's 'rightful' claims to Kosovo (Capussela, 2015, p. 2). The Battle of 1389 hence functions as a perfect example of constructing memory in a specific manner for a specific purpose. As Saunders argues, “some conflicts are reconfigured as national myths, linking past and present wars” (Saunders, 2002, p. 106). In the case of Kosovo, the myth of the battle in 1389 is closely interwoven with the Kosovar territory.

Fourth, the myth of Serb victimhood provides the discursive umbrella under which historical events are interpreted and specific forms of historic legacies are constructed. By rallying national sentiments, the narrative of victimhood becomes a crucial tool in advancing political interests and agendas. For example, many Serbs fled from Kosovo following the 1981 student revolts in Pristina. The Orthodox Church and nationalist Serbian elite constructed a narrative of Serbs as the victims of this episode in history, spreading propagandist and polarising messages that would find resonance against the background of heightened tensions in the late 1980s (Schmitt, 2008, pp. 297-305). The fact that the Orthodox Church actively promoted the discourse of Serb victimhood following the unrest in Pristina in 1981 highlights how closely the Serbian state is linked with the Orthodox Church. Even today the church's influence affects community relations in Kosovo. For example, in the context of distinct Serb enclaves emerging across Kosovo, Orthodox clergymen have promoted and supported Serb boycotts of Kosovar (state)institutions with a view towards ensuring Kosovo remains part of the Serbian state (Dahlman & Williams, 2010, p. 410).

Therefore, the above myths provide a very specific reading of history, in which the territory of Kosovo is inherently linked to the making of the Serbian nation and the Serb Orthodox Church. These myths appeal to ethnic sentiments and serve specific political agendas by creating a constant between the past and the present, thereby lending additional persuasive power to the arguments of autochthony and settlement continuity. Such arguments reinforce today's claims to Kosovo's territory. They point towards tensions which continue to simmer below the surface and explain the difficulties of solving Kosovo's status question, for example,

within the framework of the EU-mediated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. In addition, these contentious entanglements of myths and historical events with the territory of Kosovo can explain why peacebuilding actors often steer clear of further engaging with these debates, even if it means that the issue of Kosovo's independence remains unresolved. Most importantly, these readings of history illustrate the different social constructions that are linked to Kosovo's territory and that feed into contemporary conflict dynamics. As I show throughout my dissertation, the EU's peacebuilding policies understand the environment predominantly in anthropocentric terms (i.e. as a key ingredient for post-conflict development and human wellbeing) and thereby neither consider nor address those conflict dynamics that stem from and feed on the socially constructed dimension of the environment, such as the ones I have discussed here.

Having explored some of the key arguments that inform (Kosovar-)Albanian and (Kosovar-)Serb understandings of the conflict and hence sustain socio-politically charged claims to Kosovo's territory, we can draw a number of preliminary conclusions while simultaneously highlighting significant limitations here. For example, drawing parallels between antiquity and the present for political purposes is a highly problematic undertaking. The argument that Albanians are Illyrians and hence have the right to claim historical ownership of Kosovo spans over more than 2000 years, yet aims to give the impression that history is a linear process (Ducellier, 2006, p. 28; Judah, 2000, p. 2; Schmitt, 2008, p. 136). If we take the example of the Great Migration of 1690, which aims to frame one ethnic group under the banner of continuity (and hence autochthony) and the other group under the umbrella of movement (and hence immigrants), we find that Kosovo's history is in fact far from linear (Schmitt, 2008, p. 136). As indicated above, migration indeed constantly altered the composition of the population in Kosovo. However, the population at the time was not clearly divided between Albanians and Serbs. Rather, as Duijzings argues, it was an "ethnic shatter zone" with many different identity groups that were characterised along religious, political and demographic lines (Duijzings, 2000, p. 10). This is simply an example of how demography was - and still is - used to further a specific political argument. Even today, demographic data are often very contentious and the national census does not always assess the question of the ethnic composition of a certain area in Kosovo, as for example in the disputed North (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2011). It is not without reason that Dahlmann and Williams have compared this practice of emphasising ethnic composition in specific territories to "demographic warfare" (Dahlman & Williams, 2010, p. 417).

In addition to distorting the role of ethnicity, such a highly polarised reading of history conveniently erases darker moments in Kosovo's past. For instance, the heroic narratives that are constructed around Adem Jashari indeed unify Kosovar-Albanian parts of society. However, this master-narrative simultaneously prevents the development of civic nationalism and pluralism by giving in to "the politics of oblivion, with total annihilation of earlier history, and their [Albanians'] role, positive and negative, in historical events" (Obućina, 2011, p. 41). The fact that KLA members also committed war crimes loses importance in the face of Jashari's martyrdom. These arguments of autochthony and settlement continuity therefore silence certain parts of Kosovo's history while placing others in the spotlight. Therefore, we need to be aware that contemporary ideas of 'sustainable peace' in Kosovo are built on such polarising readings of history, which empower certain groups while silencing others.

Against this background, myths are used to naturalise these distorted readings of history. Historic events, such as the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, become meaningful events in both Kosovar-Albanian and Serb identity-building process, tying identities to a specific geographic space (Larsen, 2004, p. 470). Recalling Oberschall's argument on the activation of a crisis frame in the process of manipulating ethnic sentiments, Milošević used the myth of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo, combined with polemic discourses on high Albanian birth rates and Serb emigration, to re-activate the crisis frame. Thereby, he managed to spread feelings of fear and hatred through intentional misinformation in mass media, education, and politics (Oberschall, 2000, p. 986, 996).

Therefore, whether the above arguments and myths are historically accurate bears no significance in the framing of the ongoing conflict in Kosovo. They serve specific political purposes and as Judah summarises the years in the run-up to the outbreak of war in the 1990s,

"Serbian and Albanian propagandists ... went to war armed with statistics, lies and half-truths, which far from helping either side in the long-run, were to embitter communal relations, pave the way for rise of Milošević, the destruction of Yugoslavia and the deaths of tens of thousands" (Judah, 2000, pp. 43-44).

These Serbian and Albanian propagandists projected their lies and half-truths upon the contested space that is Kosovo's territory, which, as I outlined above, functions as a carrier of identities and political ideologies (Vogel, 2018, p. 3). I argue that we cannot understand the problems that arise surrounding specific understandings of the environment in EU peacebuilding policies, if we are not aware of these underlying socially constructed functions of Kosovo's territory. Peacebuilding policies which conceptualise the environment merely in terms of its material dimension run the danger of turning a blind eye to those conflict dynamics which run much deeper and are not immediately evident when seen through the lens of the efficiency-oriented

peacebuilding approach of the EU. However, as I discussed above, the meanings, ideas and functions of Kosovo's territory form a key part in sustaining the conflict today. I explore these social constructions and their implications in more detail in the next section.

3.3 Kosovo's territory as a contested space: underlining the importance of the unresolved status question

My analysis in this chapter has so far established that feelings of resentment and perceived tensions can easily be exploited by specific interest groups if they appeal to historical events and ethnic, nationalist and/or religious narratives. However, my analysis also demonstrated that these narratives are fraught with historical inaccuracies, creating artificial socio-political and cultural divides and simplifying highly complex conflict dynamics. Nonetheless, what all the above-mentioned conflict narratives have in common is that they assign a central role to the territory of Kosovo. I argue that if we pay more attention to the manner in which Kosovo's territory is constructed as a contested space, we can move beyond such oversimplifying dichotomies and understand the relevance of contemporary struggles over Kosovo's independence. Ultimately, these constructions of the territory as a contested space can help us grasp how understandings of the environment can affect the EU's peacebuilding process in Kosovo. For example, as I discuss in Chapters 5 and 6, the EU's policies disregard the role of the territory itself, which, combined with the EU's ambiguity on Kosovo's status, creates significant tensions in the peacebuilding process. These insights also bear significance for understanding and addressing the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding. They illustrate that both the material and the socially constructed dimension of the environment can play a crucial role in sustaining a conflict; however, research in environmental peacebuilding tends to overemphasise the former (e.g. by understanding the environment predominantly as natural resources and highlighting the cooperative potential of joint resource management) while disregarding the latter (i.e. the ideas, meanings and beliefs that can be associated with the environment) (see e.g. Green, 2015). I illustrate this point by examining both dimensions in this sub-section.

Against this background, there are two different dimensions to the constructions of Kosovo's territory as a contested space: the first relates to the role of natural resources and the second refers to the meaning it holds in reinforcing identities and belief systems. First, Kosovo's territory features large amounts of metals and minerals that have helped develop and consolidate the power of different regimes of governance throughout the centuries. For instance, the medieval Serb kingdom of the Nemanjić dynasty that ruled over Kosovo after the fall of the

Byzantine Empire drew large proportions of its wealth from silver mines in the region (Judah, 2000, p. 5; Schmitt, 2008). Craftsmanship using fine silver threads (called filigree) is deeply woven into Kosovo's cultural heritage (see e.g. Gowing, 2017). Under the brief period of German-Italian rule during the Second World War, Kosovo's resources were crucial in powering Germany's war economy (Schmitt, 2008, p. 212). During Yugoslav times, Kosovo held approximately 65 percent of Yugoslav lead and zinc resources. Industrialisation and modernization relied heavily on the Trepça mine in northern Kosovo, but it mainly supported economic growth in the north of Yugoslavia, fuelling Albanian resentment against the regime (Malcolm, 1998, p. 320; Schmitt, 2008, pp. 250-254). Today, the use of Kosovo's resources does not only create tensions between states and governments. Kosovo's vast amounts of exploitable mineral and coal resources (approximately 10.9 billion tons) form the core of a struggle between those who want to use them to boost economic growth, regardless of the socio-ecological costs, and those who want to keep them in the ground and instead increase investments in renewables (World Bank, 2015, p. 10). Kosovo's energy industry, relying heavily on coal rather than renewable resources, is assumed to be the main cause of environmental degradation, especially air pollution, in Kosovo today (European Environment Agency, 2015). Given that Kosovo is still in the early stages of implementing and enforcing European environmental standards and protection mechanisms, the environmental implications of resource exploitation can be difficult to mitigate. I explore these tensions and their impact on the peacebuilding process in more detail in Chapter 7.

Second, as I indicated in the previous section, constructions of Kosovo's territory also reinforce and strengthen (clashing) identities and belief systems. For example, some scholars have argued that the deeply rooted distrust in the state that still characterises contemporary society-state relations has its origins in the fact that ruling powers never had full authority over remote mountain regions in Kosovo. The protests by the League of Prizren rebelling against centralising reforms of the Ottoman rulers underline this point. They highlight that the Ottoman state had almost no control over the mountain areas and only secured people's compliance by granting them a large degree of autonomy and self-governance. This is the context in which the *kanun*, could develop, the historic code of honour that still shapes community relations in the remote mountain terrain today (Malcolm, 1998, p. 120; Schmitt, 2008, p. 82, 106).

Another argument emerges surrounding the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 illuminating the relationship between war, landscapes and narratives. As Larsen argues, "if there is a landscape, it is never there in the first place as a given place, even less as a natural phenomenon. It has to be defined - its identity or identities, its locality or localities, its function or functions" (Larsen, 2004,

p. 470). In this line of reasoning, different social groups project varying meanings onto a landscape, especially if it was the site of a conflict that has left an imprint on the group's collective memory (Saunders, 2002, p. 106). Narratives, through literature and folklore, provide a specific viewpoint of this relationship between locality, identity and function while simultaneously constituting it. Arguably, this is what happened with the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. Through its reconstruction in both Albanian and Serb oral and written culture, the battle shaped the meanings of the landscape of Kosovo Polje as a site of contested localities with different meanings for Albanian and Serb identity-building processes.

Arguably, these constructions, by building on beliefs in the “natural cultural or historical unity to any territory”, result in the creation of what Murphy calls territorial ideologies (Murphy, 2002, p. 194, 200). At the heart of such territorial ideologies lies the manipulation of both humans and the environment to legitimise nationalist agendas. Based on the above discussion of Kosovar-Albanian and Serb interpretations of underlying conflict dynamics, this process of constructing territorial ideologies has not come to a halt with the declaration of independence in 2008. Indeed, Dahlmann and Williams have observed that independence has only transformed the conflict, not ended it (Dahlman & Williams, 2010, p. 408). The continuous outbreak of ethnically motivated or framed violence and the recent protests over the Brussels-brokered deal between Kosovo and Serbia that has deadlocked Kosovar parliament and led to violent protests in Pristina, highlight that the issue of territorial integrity is still high up on the agenda (Cani, 2016; e.g. EURACTIV, 2019; Popova & Morina, 2018).

The rise of Serb enclaves throughout Kosovo, as “localised majority territories”, in fact underlines the continuous construction of territorial ideologies (Dahlman & Williams, 2010, p. 408). These enclaves are not formally integrated into Kosovar society, have built their own institutions (supported by the Serbian government) and societal structures (2010, p. 410). In this light, they often function as a proxy for Belgrade-steered Serbian influence in Kosovo and underline the geopolitical importance of the territory. Moreover, with the enclaves playing an even more prominent role in the 2015 Agreement on Normalisation of Relations, they also display the existence of clashing governmentalities within Kosovo and tensions within the EU's approach to the peacebuilding process (see Chapters 5 and 6). A closer look at Dahlmann and Williams' theorisations on Serb enclavisation proves helpful here. They define it as “a set of practices by which ethnicity and territory are mobilised to constitute de facto sovereign territorialities that respond to ethnopolitical movements” (Dahlman & Williams, 2010, p. 414). Enclavisation can prolong conflict by making group boundaries more explicit and undermining state sovereignty (2010, pp. 424-424). We need to view the implications of the EU's

peacebuilding policies against this background, as for example, it allows to critically interrogate the EU's stance on Kosovo's status and the effectiveness of Brussels-brokered agreements within the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue (see Chapters 5 and 6).

Therefore, Kosovo's territory plays both a vital role in sustaining existing conflict dynamics in Kosovo on the basis of the use of its natural resources and the meaning it holds in reinforcing identities and belief systems. It is crucial to be aware of the constructions of Kosovo's territory as a contested space as it helps move beyond oversimplifying dichotomies that often characterise conceptualisations of the Kosovo conflict. The contemporary struggles over Kosovo's independence provide the necessary critical context to explore how specific conceptualisations of the environment can affect the EU's peacebuilding process in Kosovo and what kinds of peace the different stakeholders ultimately promote.

Conclusion

Ismail Kadare's literary depiction of tensions emerging from people's perceptions and interpretations rather than from actual differences or the consequences of historical events is an accurate description of the contemporary reality of the Kosovo conflict. In this chapter, I illustrated that these perceptions and interpretations are closely intertwined with both the material and socially constructed dimension of the environment, which can have different meanings for different groups. I explored the (Kosovar-)Albanian and (Kosovar-)Serb interpretations of the causes and dynamics of the ongoing conflict and demonstrated that they are deeply rooted in specific readings of history, sustained by myths that draw parallels between the past and the present. I demonstrated that both sides use arguments of autochthonic rights and settlement continuity to underline their claims to the territory, and in the process interpret, reinforce and rewrite historical events, such as the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 or the Great Migration in 1690, to suit their political agenda. They use mythical narratives to legitimise social structures and naturalise their dichotomous readings of history. These myths are deeply entangled with the territory of Kosovo, constructing specific images of localities that play a vital role in identity- and nation-building processes and in the creation of territorial ideologies. By appealing to such territorially embedded ideologies and identities, interest groups can easily exploit feelings of (ethnic) resentment and distrust for political purposes. As Judah framed it, "[i]n Kosovo, history is war by other means" (Judah, 2000, p. 1). It is crucial that we are aware of these underlying dynamics as they influence the manner in which the environment is understood

in the context of peace and conflict, and, consequently, what role Kosovo's territory itself plays in promoting or obstructing the wider peacebuilding process.

Therefore, these deep entanglements of dichotomous readings of history, mythology and the construction of Kosovo's territory as a contested space provide the critical context in which the EU's peacebuilding process in Kosovo takes place. One of my interviewees, the director of the aid agency of an EU Member State, alluded to the charged setting in which they attempted to operationalise European peacebuilding policies, and explained to me, "look, if you say one thing here, you're anti-Albanian or anti-Kosovar, and if you say another thing, you're anti-Serb. I realised it's best if you're both. At least then nobody can shift the blame" (Interview M16Pr2).²⁶ The dichotomous readings of history and constructions of Kosovo's territory as a contested space that I reviewed in this chapter help us understand where and why these tensions and frictions between the different peacebuilding stakeholders may arise.

These findings help us respond to the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding, as they draw attention to the necessity to develop a more nuanced approach to what research in environmental peacebuilding means by 'the environment' because it influences whose version of peace environmental peacebuilding promotes. In this context, my analysis emphasised that it is crucial to consider both the material and the socially produced dimensions of the environment. After all, understanding the environment merely in terms of its material qualities (e.g. as natural resources contributing to economic development) turns a blind eye to the way in which the socially produced dimension of the environment (i.e. the meanings it holds for different groups) can contribute to sustaining the conflict in question. Here, I argue that it is crucial to understand these underlying conflict dynamics, and the different meanings and functions of Kosovo's territory as a contested space, as they shape the versions of sustainability and peace that the conflict parties aim to promote.

Having introduced and discussed the context in which EU peacebuilding takes place, and how constructions of history and Kosovo's territory feed into conflict dynamics, I now turn to explore the EU's understanding of the environment in contexts of peace and conflict in the next chapter.

²⁶ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 4th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

CHAPTER 4

Tracing the environment in EU external policies: on sustainable development, security, and peacebuilding

Introduction

In the sphere of global policy-making, sustainable development often provides the headline under which issues of environment, conflict and security, and cooperation are considered (cf. Chapter 1). The EU itself states in the (frequently cited) Article 3(5) of the Treaty on European Union, also referred to as the Lisbon Treaty, “[i]t [the Union] shall contribute to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth...” (European Union, 2009a). As I have indicated in the previous chapter, the environment in both its material (i.e. biophysical nature) and its socially produced (i.e. our interpretation of the biophysical nature) dimensions is deeply interwoven in all of these aspects (Le Billon & Duffy, 2018; Peet et al., 2011, pp. 29, 34). But if we want to comprehend how conceptualisations of the environment can affect EU peacebuilding processes in Kosovo, we need to take a step back and establish what the EU’s understanding of the environment actually is. In this chapter, I aim to do just that; I explore the EU’s conceptualisation of the environment, and the relationship between the environment, conflict and peace that emerges out of its external policies. This provides the necessary background and context for us to grasp the complexities of the Kosovar peacebuilding process, and to establish what they reveal about the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding.

My analysis is divided into three sections. First, I examine how sustainable development emerged as a guiding principle of the EU (through treaties, strategies and action plans from the late 1990s until today) to establish what kind of conceptualisation of the environment has been institutionalised into EU external action. Second, I trace the EU’s understanding of the link between the environment, conflict and peace by examining the convergence of the security and development agendas in EU external policy. This is crucial in so far as these insights into the deep entanglements of environment and conflict have shaped the way the environment is conceptualised in post-conflict peacebuilding. Third, I analyse the EU’s approach to peacebuilding and enlargement, paying particular attention to how the two have become increasingly intertwined over the years and what kind of conceptualisation of the environment emerges from these policies. I then draw conclusions from the analysis and provide the broader context for my analysis in the following chapters.

As set out in Table 1 (see Annex 1), in this chapter I analyse the most influential²⁷ policy documents defining the EU's strategy in the areas of sustainable development, external security and development, peacebuilding and enlargement. In this regard, I conducted a narrative analysis of the main documents, exploring (a) the contexts in which a conceptualisation of the environment takes place, and (b) the discursive manner in which conflict, peace and the environment are interlinked. While I acknowledge that the analysis incorporates an extensive policy area - running the danger of over-extending its analytic focus - such a comprehensive consideration of sustainable development, security and development, and peacebuilding is justified for two reasons. On the one hand, the EU's policies deeply intertwine issues of peace and conflict with development. For example, as I show below, poverty eradication plays a crucial role in reinforcing the link between the environment, peace and conflict. At the same time, poverty eradication is set out in Article 208 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) as the main objective of EU development policy (European Union, 2009b). Therefore, examining issues of peace and conflict without consideration for development would only paint half a picture. Conversely, analysing exclusively the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the supporting Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions, for example, would not suffice. On the other hand, the interconnection of security and development policies extends into the sphere of EU enlargement, which provides a key policy framework for EU action in Kosovo. I therefore consider those angles in synergy to create the most comprehensive picture of the underlying drivers of EU involvement in Kosovo (c.f. Chapter 5). Further, as I examine in more detail below, investigating the interplay of CFSP, post-conflict development and peacebuilding, and enlargement policies is reflective of the EU's Comprehensive Approach to external crises and conflict, which is intended to align policies in CFSP/CSDP with other relevant instruments of external action (European Commission, 2016b; European Commission & High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2013).

This chapter contributes to answering the overall research question in one distinct way: it provides crucial insights into the kind of underlying socio-economic structures and power dynamics that the EU exports through its peacebuilding policies by tracing the conceptualisation of the environment that emerges out of the EU's commitment to sustainable development in its external policies, and by paying attention to the underpinning link between the environment, peace and conflict. Thereby, it builds the framework upon which I explore how understandings of the environment can influence peacebuilding, assessing where potential injustices and

²⁷ In this context, I understand 'most influential' to mean the most path-defining documents that are termed as such by the EU itself and frequently cross-referenced in the process of policy-making.

inequalities may arise. As these insights allow me to identify the implications of understanding core concepts like ‘the environment’ or ‘sustainability’ in a certain way and to zoom in on the actual *processes* of peacebuilding in later chapters, they provide a first step towards engaging critically with the conceptual limitations of environmental peacebuilding more broadly.

In this regard, I argue that the EU’s policies promote an inherently anthropocentric and growth-focused conceptualisation of the environment that is rooted in the commodification of the environment. Thereby, they separate the human and the environmental spheres from one another, giving rise to patterns of unsustainabilities in the form of socio-ecological inequalities and injustices. More specifically, rather than seeing both as intrinsically interconnected, the EU highlights the environment’s use-value as instrumental to economic growth and human progress. In this context, the EU emphasises its enabling (through the use of natural resources) and constraining (through environmental degradation) impact on the neoliberal market economy, which is indicative of Polanyi’s double movement of neoliberalisations that I discussed in Chapter 2. Moreover, my findings reveal that the link between conflict, peace and the environment has been institutionalised by interweaving the security and development agendas. However, I argue that a significant degree of conceptual ambiguity was required to bridge the gap between short-term security and long-term development objectives. Nonetheless, such ambiguity provides the foundation for further institutionalising inequalities and injustices into fragile post-conflict peacebuilding processes, arguably with the overarching aim of creating socio-economic structures that are favourable to the perpetual expansion of the neoliberal market economy.

4.1 Green growth, sustainability, and poverty eradication: exploring the environment in EU sustainable development

In this section, I examine how the EU conceptualises the environment against the background of mainstreaming sustainable development across its external policy areas. This provides the context against which I explore the institutionalisation of the link between the environment, peace and conflict in more depth later in this chapter. In this regard, the EU’s Strategy for Sustainable Development (SDS) and its Europe 2020 strategy in conjunction with the global Agenda 2030 provide the overarching sustainable development policy framework (European Commission, 2013a, p. 6). A review of these key documents reveals that an inherently anthropocentric and growth-focused conceptualisation of the environment emerges alongside the EU’s increasingly comprehensive institutionalisation of sustainable development across a

wide range of policy areas. As I demonstrate below, the advancement of present prosperity and future sustainability are key narratives in this process.

I begin by examining the EU's definition of sustainable development to identify the starting point for the analysis. In line with the Brundtland Commission's approach (c.f. Chapter 1), the Council introduced the Union's Strategy for Sustainable Development in 2001, defining it as a process "to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising those of future generations" by "dealing with economic, social and environmental policies in a mutually reinforcing way" (European Council, 2001, p. 4). Over the next fifteen years, the European Commission further developed this definition:

"The EU is committed to development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. A life of dignity for all within the planet's limits that reconciles economic prosperity and efficiency, peaceful societies, social inclusion and environmental responsibility is at the essence of sustainable development." (European Commission, 2016d, p. 2)

The EU's approach to sustainable development is therefore rooted in a concern for inter-generational justice, in which the environment is conceptualised in a manner that underlines its simultaneously enabling and constraining impact on economic development. However, in order to paint a more detailed picture of how the EU conceptualises the environment here, we need to analyse the period in between these two definitions. Doing so reveals that an anthropocentric understanding of the environment emerged over time, which presupposes the commodification of the environment for human wellbeing and progress, particularly in the areas of (a) economic growth, (b) natural resources, and (c) poverty eradication.²⁸

First, economic growth is framed as a key policy priority, focusing particularly on green or sustainable growth, trade, and patterns of consumption and production. With the 2001 Sustainable Development Strategy, the Council added an environmental dimension to the Lisbon Process, which was intended to drive forward socio-economic progress within the Union and was later superseded by the Europe 2020 strategy (European Commission, 2010b; European Council, 2000b). The Sustainable Development Strategy was aimed at mainstreaming the environment into all EU policy areas but framed it as a means to improving the sustainability of existing policies. In this context, the European Council stressed "the importance of decoupling economic growth from resource use" (European Council, 2001, p. 4). The notion of

²⁸ While there are other areas in which we can trace the EU's conceptualisation of the environment, such as climate change or public health, reviewing all these here lies beyond the scope of my research. I selected the above-mentioned three focal areas, as they emerged as the most relevant in Kosovo's peacebuilding process (c.f. Chapters 5, 6 and 7).

sustainability that emerges here, therefore, is one that aims to free the EU's economic development from the limits of the biophysical environment.

The review of the Sustainable Development Strategy in 2006 gravitates around similar issues. It sets out to increase the level of Green Public Procurement, and targets the promotion of sustainable production and consumption to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation (Council of the European Union, 2006c, pp. 4, 12). For instance, it argues that by adjusting product prices to realistically reflect their socio-environmental production costs, the economy could “reconcile environmental protection and smart economic growth and exploit win-win opportunities” (Council of the European Union, 2006c, p. 24). Thereby, it aims to adapt its neoliberal market economy to the constraints imposed by resource depletion and environmental degradation in order to ensure continuous growth.

These interlinkages between the environment and economic growth have become more nuanced and pronounced over the years. When the Europe 2020 strategy was introduced against the background of the financial and economic crises in 2010, the focus on boosting economic growth intensified. The Europe 2020 strategy outlines three main priorities for Member States as well as (potential) candidate countries: smart growth, sustainable growth, and inclusive growth (European Commission, 2010b, p. 3). To achieve these objectives, emphasis is placed on green technology, decoupling growth from environmental degradation, and creating sustainable patterns of consumption and production (European Commission, 2010b, pp. 3–4). The theme of creating a green economy which “tap[s] the ecological and social innovation” (Council of the European Union, 2006c, p. 3) of the EU’s “natural capital” (European Commission, 2011e, p. 2) and is dependent on the “services provided by nature” (European Commission, 2013a, p. 2) recurs throughout the years. The value of the environment is thereby fundamentally measured in terms of human production. Such a deep interlinking of the environment and growth is indicative of the EU’s approach to sustainable development being fundamentally built on the – as Polanyi put it – fictitious commodification of the environment, which, as I argued in Chapter 2, falsely separates the human and the environmental spheres (Polanyi, 1944). Thereby, the EU creates structures of unsustainability (i.e. inequalities and injustices) that are built on ecological and socio-economic exploitation (c.f. Chapters 6 and 7).

Second, we can trace the EU’s conceptualisation of the environment in more detail within the framework of natural resource management and valuation, biodiversity loss and protection. In this context, the EU again emphasised the constraints on human progress and development imposed by environmental degradation. For example, in its review of the

Sustainable Development Strategy, the Commission argued that more attention needed to be paid to biodiversity protection as the “[d]egradation of ecosystems ... reduces the quality of our lives and the lives of future generations” (European Commission, 2009c, p. 15). Within this framework, the Commission highlighted the success of existing policies in counteracting this process, such as the EU Water Framework Directive, or the reform of the Common Fisheries Policies (European Commission, 2009c, pp. 8–9). Nonetheless, greater emphasis was placed on unsustainable resource demand and use beyond natural carrying capacity. In 2013, the Commission referred to it as “one of the greatest long-term threats to humankind” (European Commission, 2013a, p. 3). It thereby underlined the growth-constraining dimension of the environment and emphasised the pressing need for solutions, but in this context did not question the role of growth itself.

In fact, a closer read of key EU policies reveals that the EU not only aims to mitigate the constraining impact of environmental factors on growth, but also views the environment as instrumental to human benefit. In 2005, the Commission stated that “the European Union can turn the need for environmental protection and social cohesion into opportunities” (European Commission, 2005b, p. 2). This implies that the EU had recognised the need for adapting its economy to the realities of environmental degradation, but, in neoliberal fashion, aimed to capitalise on the necessary changes. The 2009 review of the Sustainable Development Strategy further built on such an instrumental anthropocentric approach to the environment. For example, when assessing the damage to biodiversity, the Council referred to “the loss of nature’s capital” and the “intrinsic and economic value of ecosystem services”, framing biodiversity protection and environmental conservation predominantly in monetary terms (Council of the European Union, 2009, p. 14). While the EU’s attempt at valuing the environment simultaneously in intrinsic and economic terms forms part of a wider debate which I cannot review here²⁹, it highlights that the comprehensive neoliberalisation of the environment lies at the heart of the EU’s policies.

Third, poverty eradication provides the framework within which the growth-focused conceptualisation of the environment becomes interlinked with matters of conflict and peace. In this regard, the 2006 Sustainable Development Strategy Review directly linked the environment to poverty by categorising the promotion of improved environmental governance as one strategy in the fight against global poverty (Council of the European Union, 2006c, p. 20). In 2007, the

²⁹ For some of the key arguments in this debate, please see works by Castree (2014), Escobar (1999) and Soper (1995).

Commission then created the institutional link between the environment, poverty, and conflict. It stated that:

“pressures on environmental sustainability remain high, notably access to key resources such as water, wood or arable land which potentially dramatic impacts for the livelihood of the poorest and could be a cause of conflicts [sic.]” (European Commission, 2007e, pp. 10–11).

It is noteworthy here that through the emphasis on livelihoods and poverty, sustainability appears to vaguely refer to an ideal state of equilibrium between environmental protection and economic development; an issue which I discuss in more detail in the next chapter.

We can observe another significant discursive step towards recognising the link between peace, conflict and the environment when analysing the 2013 Communication ‘A decent life for all’. First, unlike other official documents before it, it incorporated the issues of peace and security as an integral part of the post-2015 global policy framework. It recognised that conflict was a serious obstacle to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. While it failed to elaborate upon this issue to a point that could facilitate the creation of targeted policies, it nonetheless stressed the need for increasing conflict prevention and peacebuilding in order to enable sustainable development in fragile contexts (European Commission, 2013a, p. 3). The ideal of sustainable development as an end-state of peacebuilding had therefore become formally accepted. Second, the Communication argued for the incorporation of environmental sustainability in the post-2015 agenda to aid social and economic empowerment in line with the three principles of sustainable development:

“It will not be possible to eliminate poverty and ensure a decent life for all without, at the same time, addressing global environmental sustainability, and the other way around. Climate change, natural disasters, biodiversity loss and the degradation of oceans, freshwater sources, land and soil have a particularly negative impact on the world’s poorest populations.” (European Commission, 2013a, p. 8)

It is important to note here that the European Commission underlined the need to mainstream considerations for sustainability yet remained sufficiently vague in its statements; arguably to facilitate the convergence of various policy objectives under one conceptual umbrella in the post-2015 agenda.

Nonetheless, the EU converted some of its vague political statements of global commitment to sustainability into actual policy priorities for external action. The Commission’s 2014 Communication translated the ideas of its 2013 predecessor³⁰ and 2013 Council

³⁰ European Commission (2013). A DECENT LIFE FOR ALL: Ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future. COM(2013) 92 final.

conclusions³¹ into specific priorities and targets. These priorities and targets - seventeen in number – shared significant similarity with the final SDGs. Most notably, they reaffirmed the EU’s understanding of peace in the context of sustainable development, stating that, “peace is a prerequisite for sustainable development and lasting poverty eradication” (European Commission, 2014a, p. 11). It recognised the need to tackle violent conflicts, wildlife and other illegal trafficking, and corruption, and to strengthen institutions of justice and security. Moreover, it placed repeated emphasis on the correlation between poverty and the environment, highlighting that biodiversity, natural resources and ecosystem services were a vital component of sustainable and inclusive growth (European Commission, 2014a, p. 11).

The theme of conflict as an obstacle to sustainable development became more prominent over the next two years, arguably against the background of pressing environmental changes. In its 2014 conclusions, the Council stated that “[b]usiness as usual is no longer possible” (Council of the European Union, 2014, p. 3). More action was needed to support conflict-affected countries in fighting the root causes of conflict on the one hand, and the structural causes of other obstacles such as inequalities and environmental degradation on the other hand (Council of the European Union, 2014). In early 2015, the Commission aligned the EU’s approach to sustainable development even more with the SDGs which would be introduced later that year. The Commission highlighted the need for peace and human rights alongside poverty eradication and sustainable development as a precondition for intergenerational prosperity (European Commission, 2015a, p. 2). A few months later, the EU recognised that more attention had to be paid to state- and peacebuilding objectives, stating that

“[f]ragile and conflict-affected states require special attention and sustained international engagement in order to achieve sustainable development. State- and peacebuilding goals are essential for developing domestic capacity for economic, social and environmental concerns to be fully integrated with security and development concerns.” (Council of the European Union, 2015a, p. 5)

Promoting peaceful societies was henceforth considered a precondition to the full integration of social and environmental concerns into the development and security agendas (Council of the European Union, 2015a, pp. 5–6).

The above analysis provides significant insights into how the EU conceptualises the environment under the heading of sustainable development in contexts of peace and conflict. To recall,

³¹ Council of the European Union (2013). The Overarching Post 2015 Agenda – Council conclusions. Luxembourg, 25 June 2013.

understanding the EU's approach to the environment is a crucial first step to determine how this in turn influences the peacebuilding process in Kosovo and what this reveals about the wider conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding. While intergenerational justice, and with it an (elusive) ideal of future sustainability, functions as a central theme across all areas of the EU's sustainable development policies, the EU's conceptualisation of the environment emerges most prominently in the areas of economic growth, natural resources, and poverty eradication. Here, the EU's understanding of the environment is anthropocentric in nature, framing the environment as instrumental to continuous economic development and human progress and as having value only through the process of human production. Such an understanding of the environment lends itself to the evidence-based, quantified processes of policy-making. However, we also need to note that the simultaneously constraining and enabling influence of the environment on the neoliberal market economy is key to the design of the EU's policies. As I observed above, as the pressures of environmental change and degradation increase, the EU aims to decouple growth from its negative environmental externalities to ensure the continuous expansion of the European economy.

In addition, my analysis reveals that the EU interlinks this development-focused conceptualisation of the environment with matters of conflict and peace particularly in the external policies that focus on poverty eradication. Although it initially places emphasis on the (unsustainable) use of natural resources in this context, as the SDGs emerge as the new framework of global action, it identifies conflict as an obstacle to sustainable development, the success of which in turn depends on peaceful societies. In this regard, the link between the environment and conflict is strengthened particularly as the EU begins to recognise that state-building and peacebuilding efforts can function as a vehicle to integrate environmental dimensions into post-conflict security and development. Therefore, over the course of the last few years, the conflict dimension of the environment has been recognised in EU external sustainable development.

The following section explores to what extent these conceptualisations are reflected in the EU's external security and development policies.

4.2 The environment, conflict and peace: converging security and development agendas in EU external action

As I discussed above, the EU interlinked its growth-focused conceptualisation of the environment with matters of conflict and peace most prominently under the heading of poverty

eradication. Such an emphasis on development issues in making sense of conflict dynamics hints at the convergence of the security and development agendas. In this section, I demonstrate that the convergence of security and development agendas provides the framework within which the EU's understanding of the relationship between the environment, conflict and peace is institutionalised into EU external action. This is crucial since such convergence has influenced the manner in which the EU understands the environment in post-conflict peacebuilding in Kosovo.

However, the external action of the EU is highly complex, featuring a web of interlinkages across policy areas and stakeholders: from security and defence to enlargement and development, from the European External Action Service (EEAS) and Common Security and Defence (CSDP) missions to in-country EU delegations. But a consideration for all actors across all external policy areas would expand the scope of my research beyond analytic focus. Therefore, here, I focus on the interaction of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and (post-conflict) development policies, with a geographic focus on the Western Balkans.

As many of the relevant policies which I analyse here fall within or are influenced by CFSP, it is crucial to briefly review the institutional framework in the area of CFSP first. Most importantly, CFSP is an area of EU policy-making with shared competences between the EU institutions and Member States. These entities have different interests and agendas, particularly, as I demonstrate in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, concerning Kosovo's unresolved status question. We need to be aware of these dynamics as this is where tensions and frictions can arise in the peacebuilding process. Having said that, CFSP was initially established as one of the three pillars of the EU through the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 (Lindstrom, 2017, p. 16). With the increasing instability in the Balkans in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the need for a more integrated security policy became more pressing (2017, p. 17). Against the security concerns at the EU's borders, the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, consisting of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), provided for the addition of a joint political and military angle to CFSP. Subsequently, CFSP/CSDP became an integral area of external security policy, conducted by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP³²) and supported by the European External Action Service (EEAS) (European Union, 2009a, Arts. 18(2), 27). The HR/VP is to perform a double-hatted function, chairing the Foreign Affairs Council in the Council of Ministers (Art. 18(3) TEU) and acting as the Vice President of the European Commission (Art. 18(4) TEU). This is to ensure coherence

³² Now more often referred to as High Representative and Vice-President of the Commission.

and complementarity across policy areas and actors. As highlighted in Art. 21 TEU, the overall objectives of the CFSP are to: protect EU values, interests and security; promote the rule of law, democracy and human rights; prevent conflict and establish peace on an international level; enhance the socio-economic and environmental development of partner countries; assist in disaster response and foster multilateralism (European Union, 2009a). It is based on the principle of political solidarity, implemented by the HR/VP and, as set out in Art. 28 TEU, monitored by the Political and Security Committee. While the civilian dimensions of the CFSP are funded by the EU budget, its military operations are the direct financial liability of EU Member States (Art. 41(2) TEU). The CFSP is complemented by a number of thematic and geographical instruments which fall under the general umbrella of EU external action, such as the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) and the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA). I examine these in more detail below. Therefore, CFSP is an area of EU policy-making where the struggle for influence between EU institutions and Member States can come to the foreground.

The institutional framework of the CFSP provides the background against which the EU conceptualises and institutionalises the link between conflict, security and the environment through the convergence of the security and development agendas, which I focus my analysis on here. At the heart of EU external action lies a common security strategy. The first of its kind – the European Security Strategy (ESS) - was introduced in 2003 and needs to be analysed against its specific historical background to grasp the motivations driving its main narratives. It highlighted that the “outbreak of conflict in the Balkans was a reminder that war has not disappeared from our continent” (European Union, 2003, p. 1). The strategy sought to reinvent the EU’s place in the post-Cold War world order and, in the process, to make sense of the changing nature of conflict from inter- to intra-state conflicts (European Union, 2003, p. 7). It acknowledged that EU policies needed to address a multitude of highly complex, multi-faceted conflict dynamics simultaneously. This bears significance here for several reasons. On the one hand, recognising that socio-economic concerns can lie at the root of conflicts, the EU held that “poverty ... give[s] rise to pressing security concerns” (European Union, 2003, p. 2). While this initial statement vaguely recognised the role of poverty in conflict, the EU was much clearer about the interaction of security and development. It argued that “security is a precondition of development” (European Union, 2003, p. 2). The concepts of policy coherence and EU-internal capacity-building are offered here as possible solutions to integrate this interaction into policy-making processes (European Union, 2003, pp. 12–13). It thereby began to align its security policies with its external development policies, as highlighted in the 2001 Sustainable Development Strategy (European Council, 2001, pp. 4–8).

This more nuanced understanding of the underlying causes of conflict allowed for the consideration of environmental factors in conflict assessments. The EU recognised that access to – and eventually competition over – natural resources could “create further turbulence ... in various regions” (European Union, 2003, p. 3). Although this did not yet recognise the natural environment as a ‘threat multiplier’, it alluded to the conflict dimension of the environment. Moreover, as I highlighted above, by emphasising that the distribution of natural resources could lead to conflict, the EU created a narrative of the environment and conflict that is deeply interwoven with issues of economic prosperity and development. It is notable here that contrary to the instrumental environmental discourse, the tone of the strategy was idealistic, stressing for example that the EU has a “responsibility for global security and for building a better world” (European Union, 2003, p. 1). As I discuss below, this stands in stark contrast to the overall tone of the new 2016 Global Strategy for EU Foreign and Security Policy.

Nevertheless, in 2007, the Council outlined a more pragmatic approach to fostering the security-development nexus across EU external policies. It highlighted that “there cannot be sustainable development without peace and security, and ... without development and poverty eradication there will be no sustainable peace” (Council of the European Union, 2007, p. 2). The Council conclusions stressed the need to create greater coherence and complementarity between development and security policies by realising several pragmatic actions. For example, under the heading of strategic planning, the Council emphasised that policies in CFSP needed to show greater awareness of development concerns, and vice versa (Council of the European Union, 2007, p. 4). Moreover, it drew attention to the role of international partnerships and the overlap with further policy areas, such as regional integration. By introducing such priorities based on actionable pragmatism, the EU aimed to further institutionalise the security-development nexus. However, the link between the environment, conflict and peace still appeared to be a weak one. The Council merely stated that the “security and development implications of climate change, [and] environmental and natural resource management issues” would require further consideration in the future (Council of the European Union, 2007, p. 8). Although this conceptualisation is rather vague in nature, it does indicate a broader integration of environmental considerations in security and development policies.

The EU made an additional attempt at institutionalising the security-development nexus in 2008. In its report on the implementation of the European Security Strategy, the EU again created a discursive link between security, peace, development and poverty eradication (European Union, 2008). Drawing on past experiences, it reaffirmed its commitment to human security, concentrating on tackling issues of poverty and socio-economic inequalities to prevent

the outbreak of conflicts (p. 2). Such development-focused conflict prevention was to be combined with Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) measures, particularly through Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) civilian missions facilitating peacebuilding (European Union, 2008, p. 8). Arguably, these policies were aimed at operationalising the security-development nexus, reflecting the increased level of underlying pragmatism.

While EU (external) security policies were developed on the basis of the European Security Strategy, the Commission's 2011 'Agenda for Change' was introduced as the cornerstone of EU development policies. It streamlined and transformed EU development policies, not simply in terms of its institutional framework by setting out specific sectorial focal points, but also with regard to its long-term, comprehensive outlook. It therefore gives us a useful indication of the conceptualisation of the environment, as well as the link between the environment, conflict and peace in overarching EU development policies. For example, it identified climate change and environmental protection as global challenges that can best be addressed by recognising that "objectives of development, democracy, human rights, good governance and security are intertwined" (European Commission, 2011c, p. 3). Thereby, it reinforced the emerging link between security and development. The concept of resilience also featured prominently as an overarching aim of the new development strategy, combining concerns for good governance with sustainable growth (European Commission, 2011c, pp. 7, 10). Moreover, under the headline of good governance, the strategy provided for the EU to focus its action *inter alia* on the sustainable and inclusive management of natural resources (European Commission, 2011c, p. 6). On the one hand, this categorisation of resource management as a pillar of good governance implies a recognition of the conflict dimension of the environment. On the other hand, it reinforces the inherently anthropocentric and development-focused understanding of the environment, which almost exclusively focuses on its material dimension. For example, the document outlined the need to focus on sustainable agriculture and energy to promote a green economy that fostered poverty reduction "by valuing and investing in natural capital" (European Commission, 2011c, p. 7). Such a focus on the instrumental value of the environment fits with the overall narrative in the sustainable development policy area that I discussed in section 4.1. However, the commodification of the environment in the context of the neoliberal market economy, for instance through the framing of the environment as 'natural capital', is problematic. It provides the foundation for the separation of humans from the environment, allowing for a continuous exploitation of the environment and human labour for the sake of capital accumulation. I discuss the implications

of this anthropocentric understanding of the environment, and the specific inequalities and injustices that it creates, in later chapters on post-conflict Kosovo.

Here, I argue that such a neoliberalisation of the environment is integrated into the EU's wider peacebuilding approach through the increased interconnection of the development and security agendas. In this process of policy convergence that was initiated with the 2011 'Agenda for Change', first steps of institutionalised coordination were introduced with the EU's Comprehensive Approach (from 2016 onwards called Integrated Approach) to external crises and conflicts. The 2013 Joint Communication developing the EU's Comprehensive Approach to external crises elaborated upon the need to implement the development-security nexus and introduced the consistency principle in the area of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). It reiterated the link between sustainable development, poverty eradication, peace and security and emphasised that "the connection between security and development is ... a key underlying principle in the application of an EU comprehensive approach" (European Commission & High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2013, p. 4). Existing approaches to conflict needed to be streamlined throughout several policy-supporting areas, such as conflict analysis and operational strategy (European Commission & High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2013, p. 9). Here, the Communication highlighted the need to foster its long-term engagement in countries affected by conflict or crises. More specifically, it stressed the need to reconcile and align the short-term focus of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions with the long-term objectives of development policies. This stemmed from the understanding that "long term engagement in peace and state building and long-term sustainable development are essential to address the underlying causes of conflict" (European Commission & High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2013, p. 8). Policy coherence between the security and development agendas had therefore become a high priority.

In addition to reinforcing the institutional connection between sustainable development, peace and conflict, the communication reflected the growth-focused conceptualisation of the environment under the banners of climate change, energy security and natural resources. It framed the environment within the framework of global challenges, highlighting the notions of degradation and depletion (European Commission & High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2013). Thereby, it reflects the inherently neoliberalising assumption of the environment functioning as a constraint to economic growth and human progress. We can observe how this assumption translates into practice if we consider

the 2014 Regulation on ‘common rules for the implementation of the Union’s instruments for financing external action’. It identified the environment as an area of concern for external action, prescribing the conduct of environmental impact assessments, considering actions related to climate change and biodiversity, and tracking of environmental expenditure within external action financing (European Union, 2014, pp. 99, 105). The underlying instrumental understanding of the environment is omnipresent. The EU thereby institutionalises a conceptualisation of the environment into its external policies that leads itself to the mitigation of environmental constraints on growth.

Alongside the above focus on policy coherence between the areas of security and development, capacity-building emerged as a key narrative. In 2015, the Commission and HR/VP put forward a Joint Communication on capacity-building, identifying clearer possibilities to institutionalise the security-development nexus and arguing that “[t]he need for mutually reinforcing interventions in the areas of security and development is clear” (European Commission & High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2015, p. 3). In this regard, much in line with the overall policy discourse, it reiterated the urgency to strengthen the EU’s Comprehensive Approach to external conflicts and reaffirmed its commitment to eradicate poverty in support of stability in fragile contexts. Thereby, it reinforced the link between conflict, security and development.

One issue that lies at the heart of this link is the relationship between the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and development policies. Closer cooperation and coherence between CSDP missions and development objectives should be ensured through, for instance, increased information-sharing and joint reporting to align the short- and long-term objectives. In order to achieve this alignment on a practical level, the Joint Communication pushed for Security Sector Reform that would be applicable to both CSDP and development actors (European Commission & High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2015, p. 10). Here, SSR provided the framework within which civilian and military capacities could be synthesised (European Commission & High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2015, p. 5). Most significantly, an image emerged of SSR being the main vehicle of institutionalising and implementing the security-development nexus. This has a much broader significance since, as was argued in the Joint Communication, “[t]he security-development nexus is central to maximising the effectiveness of the EU’s external action” (European Commission & High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2015, p. 3). In fact, already in 2007, the Council highlighted the beneficial role of SSR in bridging the gap

between short-term action and long-term stability, which was considered a main obstacle to EU post-conflict engagement (Council of the European Union, 2007). Being aware of the institutional importance of SSR helps us to contextualise the EU's peacebuilding policies focusing on the rule of law, such as the rule of law mission EULEX in Kosovo, which I discuss further in the next chapters.

In order to widen and deepen the EU's approach to capacity-building in security and development, an EU-wide strategic framework on SSR was introduced in 2016. The Joint Communication highlighted that “[h]elping partner countries to reform their security systems supports the EU's objectives of peace and stability, inclusive and sustainable development, state-building and democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law” (European Commission & High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2016, p. 2). Crucially, this does not only apply to the post-conflict context, but also to (potential) candidate countries (European Commission & High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2016). By stressing its role in balancing short-term needs with long-term stability, SSR is framed as the ‘be all and end all’ of implementing the security-development nexus.

However, there has been significant progress in further developing other relevant sectors and, particularly relevant here, in conceptualising the environment between the years 2015 and 2017. The EU's 2016 Global Strategy, which replaces the 2003 European Security Strategy, aims to navigate the EU through the challenges posed by new global dynamics. It significantly mirrors the simultaneous progress in EU sustainable development policy-making, indicating a deep convergence of both agendas. The Global Security Strategy reflects the above-mentioned conceptualisation of the environment predominantly under the heading of climate change or natural resources (or “the global commons”) (European External Action Service, 2016, p. 8). Along these lines, it understands climate change as a threat multiplier and places it in a threat category with energy (in)security, terrorism, and hybrid threats (European External Action Service, 2016, p. 9). Highlighting that “[c]limate change and environmental degradation exacerbate potential conflict”, it recognises the conflict dimension of the environment (European External Action Service, 2016, p. 27). Unlike its 2003 predecessor, but in line with its underlying commitment to “principled pragmatism”, the strategy promotes a very pragmatic understanding of peace, stressing the importance of acquiring a level of “strategic autonomy” through the build-up of European defence capacities (European External Action Service, 2016, p. 19). In this regard, it promotes an approach to peacebuilding that is rooted in the concept of human security, comprehensively addresses multiple threats at various stages of the conflict

cycles, and is closely integrated into international partnerships (European External Action Service, 2016, pp. 9–10, 28–29). It places great emphasis on fighting shadow war economies and on bridging the gap between security and development to reconcile short-term objectives and long-term goals (European External Action Service, 2016, p. 30).

The concepts of policy coherence and capacity-building are framed again as the path towards implementation of the Global Strategy. The 2016 Action Plan on the EU's Comprehensive Approach stated that “the Comprehensive Approach is an important means to implement the Global Strategy ... and will help to ensure a holistic and integrated approach necessary for the achievement of the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals” (European Commission, 2016b, p. 3). In addition to policy coherence and capacity-building, the SDGs themselves are a crucial tool of implementing the Global Strategy. The Communication ‘Next steps for a sustainable European future’ argued, for example, that “the SDGs will be a cross-cutting dimension of all the work to take forward the Global Strategy” (European Commission, 2016d, p. 12). However, the implementation of the Global Strategy through policy coherence between security and (sustainable) development cannot be understood without consideration for the simultaneous progress on EU development policies more generally.

In 2017, European development cooperation was re-invented and aligned with the Agenda 2030 by means of the new European Consensus on Development. It confirmed the EU's overall understanding of sustainable development based on intergenerational justice and aimed to reconcile “economic prosperity and efficiency, peaceful societies, social inclusion and environmental responsibility” (European Union, 2017, pp. 4, 52). The Agenda placed the new approach to development within the overall objectives of EU external action (European Union, 2017). In this regard, by drawing on the Integrated Approach, it placed special emphasis on two aspects: the importance of peacebuilding and statebuilding in addressing root causes of conflict (which include environmental degradation and climate change), and the role of capacity-building in the security sector, fostering a broad conception of human security (European Union, 2017, pp. 34–35). Thereby, it identified conflict-sensitivity as an integral part of successful development and reinforced the link between security and development.

In addition, the new Consensus on Development strongly reflects the anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment that we have observed in the overall sustainable development policies (c.f. section 4.1). The environment is mainly conceptualised under the banners of natural resources, energy and climate change, highlighting its instrumental use-value for economic development in the context of peace and conflict. For instance, the EU argued that

it aimed to support the conservation and management of resources and biodiversity “for the provision of ecosystem services”, and highlighted the importance of promoting natural capital accounting to boost future sustainability (European Union, 2017, p. 21). Thereby, it reinforced the commodification of nature as a core component of the EU’s (external) development policy. Although it prioritised, for instance, access to energy, climate change adaptation, and sustainable agriculture, it did recognise the broader conflict dimension of the environment. It vaguely noted that “increase in water demand and water shortages over the coming decades will lead to major challenges” (European Union, 2017, p. 10), but argued more specifically that environmental degradation “can increase vulnerabilities and needs, jeopardise peace and stability” (European Union, 2017, p. 20). Therefore, as the EU’s recent policy reforms closely integrate the security and development agendas, they reinforce the mainly instrumental conceptualisation of the environment and its ability to constrain both the promotion of development and peace.

The above analysis on the manner in which the EU’s external policies conceptualise the link between the environment, conflict and peace provides key insights into the institutionalisation of the gradually converging security and development agendas. These processes directly influence how the EU understands the environment in post-conflict peacebuilding. First, the institutionalisation of the security-development nexus takes place simultaneously to sustainable development emerging as a guiding principle of overall EU policy-making. As security and development policies become more closely aligned, the EU emphasises the pragmatic need for policy coherence and capacity-building to operationalise the convergence of agendas. From the 2003 European Security Strategy to the 2016 Global Strategy and beyond, policy coherence and capacity-building are increasingly framed as potential solutions to the challenges of practically institutionalising the security-development nexus, both within the EU and within partner countries (for example, through comprehensive SSR). For instance, in an attempt to promote policy coherence and capacity-building, the EU introduced the EU-wide SSR framework that bears significance for development and security actors (such as in-country EU delegations and CSDP missions) alike. Second, the anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment which presupposes its commodification in the global market economy gains more prominence in the security-development nexus over the years. The EU recognises the conflict dimension of the environment, particularly under the heading of natural resource governance, and its importance in the context of (post-conflict) economic development. This framing reinforces the emphasis on the material dimension of the environment in EU policies, particularly in terms of its ability to simultaneously promote and undermine peace and economic development (which is reflective

of Polanyi's argument of the 'double movement'³³). However, this is problematic in so far as it promotes the separation of humans from the environment, meaning that the environment is turned into a pre-given entity that acquires value only through its contribution to human progress and wellbeing. However, such a framing enables the exploitation of labour and the environment for the sake of continuous capital accumulation. I examine the implications of this process, and the specific injustices and inequalities that it creates, in Chapters 6 and 7.

Here, I have analysed the EU's conceptualisation of the environment, as well as its understanding of the link between the environment, conflict and peace that emerges from its overarching (sustainable) development and security policies. In the next sub-section, I zoom in on the last missing piece in the policy puzzle: the EU's peacebuilding policies.

4.3 From conflict prevention to enlargement: exploring the environment in EU peacebuilding

In 2001, the European Commission highlighted that the "list of EU instruments directly or indirectly relevant to the prevention of conflict is long" (European Commission, 2001, p. 6). The EU's response to conflicts is hence built on a multitude of policies, ranging from sustainable development to Security Sector Reform, from climate change adaptation to resilience, from inclusive green growth to social protection. It is therefore not surprising that there is not one coherent peacebuilding strategy, but a response that emerges out of the area of conflict prevention and that is informed by advances in different policy fields. Taken together, this myriad of policies creates a (in theory) comprehensive peacebuilding approach (European Economic and Social Committee, 2012, p. 21; Natorski, 2011). My analysis of EU peacebuilding reveals that the policies centre around two main narratives: on the one hand, the environment as a potential threat to security and stability; on the other hand, enlargement policies as a tool for peace promotion by enhancing both EU internal and external security and stability. In the below sub-sections, I first explore how the EU's peacebuilding approach emerged from an initial focus on conflict prevention, before examining the intersection of peacebuilding and EU enlargement. Both of these strands of analysis are key for understanding the Kosovar case, as they influence the design of EU peacebuilding in Kosovo (c.f. Chapter 5). As in the above sections, I pay particular attention to the conceptualisation of the environment and its reflection in the environment-conflict-peace nexus in the below examination of central policies.

³³ Please refer to Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of Polanyi's double movement.

4.3.1 From conflict prevention to peacebuilding

An examination of the EU's key documents defining its conflict prevention strategy reveals that it mirrors the processes that I observed in the institutionalisation of the security-development nexus. The EU argues that conflict prevention (and peacebuilding) must speak directly to the short-term needs of stability and the long-term development aspirations alike.

One of the key documents setting out the path for the EU strategy is the 2001 Communication on conflict prevention. Its main aim was to identify policies that aided the creation of what is called "structural stability", both at home and abroad (European Commission, 2001, p. 10). Such a focus on stability significantly guided its identification of long-term policies. By attempting to streamline conflict prevention measures into EU external assistance more generally, the EU interlinked concerns for development, security and peace. Therefore, it is not surprising that ten years later, in its 2011 Council conclusions on conflict prevention, the Council reaffirmed that the above approach to conflict prevention still provides the foundation for EU conflict prevention measures. In fact, rather than revising any sections in light of the contemporary complexity of conflicts, it merely highlighted the need for further policy coordination and the development of early warning systems (Council of the European Union, 2011, p. 3).

However, this also means that the EU's approach to conflict prevention is still based on the 2001 understanding of development and conflict. In this regard, growth-focused development policies are conceptualised as "the most powerful instruments at the Community's disposal for treating the root causes of conflict" (European Commission, 2001, p. 4). Natural resource governance and climate change-induced environmental degradation are grouped here under an exploration of potential causes of conflict (European Commission, 2001, pp. 4–5). In fact, the Commission examined environmental degradation predominantly in terms of security risks (European Commission, 2001, p. 19). It held that environmental degradation was "often closely linked to resource problems [and] may be both a contributing factor to insecurity and conflict and the result of it" (European Commission, 2001, p. 18). By placing an emphasis on the conflict dimension of resources and environmental degradation, the Commission reflects an instrumental conceptualisation of the environment that is deeply intertwined with the political economy of conflicts.

Peacebuilding policies have taken on such an approach to the environment and its impact on conflicts. For instance, the 2012 Joint Commission and HR/VP Communication stated that "the (re)allocation of resources can trigger outbreaks of violence and/or armed

conflict, and trigger setbacks in often fragile transition processes” (European Commission, 2012b, p. 10). Along the same lines, the Council conclusions on an EU-wide Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts following the 2001 Communication on Conflict Prevention maintained the categorisation of (competition for) natural resources as a possible root cause of conflict (Council of the European Union, 2001, p. 5). Given the historical context of the civil war in Sierra Leone and Liberia at the time, this focus is hardly surprising. Moreover, the Council conclusions reaffirmed that conflict prevention needed to be streamlined as an integral part of EU external action across all policy areas. In this regard, it stated that the “process of enlargement will extend this community of peace and progress to a wider circle of European states” (Council of the European Union, 2001, p. 2). Enlargement is hence framed as an integral part of the EU’s peacebuilding agenda in its immediate neighbourhood, a point that I further illuminate in the next sub-section.

The 2007 Communication ‘Towards an EU response to situations of fragility’ remained within a conceptualisation of the environment that sees it as instrumental to the political economy of conflicts. It examined environmental factors, such as environmental degradation, natural disasters and climate change from a human security perspective, highlighting that they bore the potential “to exacerbate fragile situations by introducing new and multiple impacts in low capacity contexts” (European Commission, 2007f, p. 5). In line with the narratives in policies at the broader security-development nexus, it placed the focus on socio-economic conflicts revolving around resource scarcity and abundance (European Commission, 2007f, p. 9). The EU thereby reflects the progress of integrating environmental security into wider global security concerns (cf. Chapter 1).

The focus on environmental concerns in terms of natural resources and climate change remains a prominent narrative in EU peacebuilding over the years. For example, in its 2008 resolution on development perspectives for peace- and nation-building in post-conflict situations, the European Parliament “urges the Commission to take climate change considerations into account in its peace-building efforts” (European Parliament, 2010, p. E/83). How that was best to be achieved, remained unspecified. Aside from such a focus on climate change implications and consideration for the role of inequitable distribution of natural resources in re-starting the conflict cycle, the resolution also emphasised the issue of land ownership and land grabbing. It argued that failure to consider instances of illegal appropriation could result in new inequalities and grievances (European Parliament, 2010, p. E/82). By emphasising the economic role of natural resources in creating new structural inequalities that could feed into conflict dynamics, the European Parliament reinforced a conceptualisation of the environment in

contexts of peace and conflict that strongly emphasised its material dimension, while disregarding the social constructions that surround it.

This understanding of the environment is also mirrored on the implementation level, as an analysis of one of the key instruments of implementation at the intersection of security and development, and conflict prevention and peacebuilding reveals. The Instrument for Stability (IfS), initially established in 2006 and renamed to Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) in 2014, supports (civilian) CSDP missions and complements external action in the field of development assistance. Guiding policies for the duration of the IcSP cycle (2007-2013 and 2014-2020), the IcSP is implemented by means of Multi-annual Indicative Programmes or Multi-country/-thematic Strategy Papers that are supported by more specific Annual Action Programmes (European Parliament & Council of the European Union, 2014a, p. 7; European Union, 2006, pp. 5-6). The instrument allows for flexible yet targeted actions in settings of crisis and (in)stability, and promotes threat prevention, focusing on institution- and capacity-building, reconciliation, democracy promotion and enhancement of a favourable economic environment (European Parliament & Council of the European Union, 2014a, p. 6; European Union, 2006, pp. 3-4). It is embedded in the EU's CFSP policies and interlinked with the Consensus on Development and the Security Strategy. Therefore, it allows the EU to proactively implement policies that lie at the nexus of security and development and support the promotion of sustainable development in partner countries.

In line with the increasing attention paid to environmental factors in security-development policies, although not yet made as explicit in the 2006 regulation, its 2014 amendment stated that “security and development should include the security and development implications of climate change, environmental and natural resource management issues and migration”(Council of the European Union, 2007; European Parliament & Council of the European Union, 2014a, p. 1). It thereby created a link between the security-development nexus and environmental concerns. Overall, the narrative between the two regulations shifted, with much more focus being placed on the environmental dimension of conflict in 2014 than in 2006. The environment, even climate change, was largely absent from the 2006 regulation. In 2006, the single time reference was made to the environment was in the context of framing the need for IfS to support “measures to promote equitable access to and transparent management of natural resources” (European Union, 2006, p. 3). While the need to ensure fair access to and control over resources was reiterated in the 2014 amendment (European Parliament & Council of the European Union, 2014a, p. 5), it emphasised the role of resources, such as diamonds, in contributing to war economies by financing and sustaining conflicts (2014a, p. 6). Thereby, the

amendment reinforced a conception of the environment in terms of its use-value as a key component of both peace and war economies.

The above analysis demonstrates that the EU has created an approach to peacebuilding that synthesises strategies and actions from a wide variety of policy areas, such as conflict prevention, security responses and development assistance. What emerges from the above analysis is the image of an environment that is closely interwoven with the political economy of conflicts and bears particular significance for EU peacebuilding under the heading of climate change and natural resources. It is an image that predominantly highlights that environmental degradation can feed into conflicts by exacerbating tensions over the uneven distribution of resources or by disrupting existing socio-economic structures. It is an environment that is treated in terms of security risks which, if left unattended, can undermine the ‘structural stability’ of the EU and its neighbourhood. Therefore, at the heart of the security-development nexus in EU policies lies an environment that is inherently anthropocentric, meaning that it is understood predominantly in terms of its contribution to human progress (or regress) within the frame of the global market economy, and that plays a key geostrategic role in determining the EU’s approach to situations of peace and conflict. I examine the framing of EU enlargement policies against this background in the next sub-section.

4.3.2 Enlargement as a peacebuilding tool

The EU’s enlargement process is often framed as the prime example of EU peacebuilding and the success of the EU project as such. For instance, the European Economic and Social Committee emphasised in 2012 that “[p]eace-building is in the European Union’s DNA. Its very creation, enlargement and survival in times of crisis are testament to its peace-building prowess” (European Economic and Social Committee, 2012, p. 21). Even the European Security Strategy framed enlargement policies as a tool for stability and peace, aiding to achieve the EU’s objective of guaranteeing security in the immediate neighbourhood of the Union (European Union, 2003). Here, it specifically highlights its involvement in the Balkans as the flagship of EU crisis management and statebuilding (European Union, 2003, pp. 12-13, 26).

Such an emphasis on the link between enlargement and peace has manifested in EU policy-making over the years. The 2006 European Council conclusions reiterated the peace dimension of EU enlargement, arguing that it has helped spread European values and prosperity across the continent. On this basis, the European Council set out a renewed consensus on enlargement that anchored it in a commitment to consolidation, conditionality and

communication (European Council, 2007, p. 2). Specifically, with regard to the Western Balkans, the European Council affirmed that “the future of the Western Balkans lies in the European Union” (European Council, 2007, p. 3). Within this framework, the Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAA)³⁴ that are negotiated with every applicant function as a vehicle to implement the conditionality branch of the enlargement strategy. Therefore, these conclusions reinforced an enlargement strategy that institutionalises conditionality and emphasises the value of enlargement as a tool of peace promotion. In 2010, the Council reaffirmed the peace potential of the enlargement strategy and stressed that it contributed to “a climate conducive to addressing ... the legacy of the past” (Council of the European Union, 2010b, p. 12). Thereby, it emphasised that the enlargement process itself can support post-conflict peacebuilding efforts by institutionalising reconciliation. This approach, assigning special significance to reconciliation, is again reiterated in the 2015 EU Enlargement Strategy. It framed enlargement policies as a “key stabilising factor”, while recognising that – with a specific view towards the Western Balkans – “the wounds of the recent conflicts still need time to fully heal” (European Commission, 2015b, p. 4). Accession processes to the EU are here considered as the framework within which reconciliation can take place.

While the peace dimension of enlargement is reinforced, the conceptualisations of the environment become more technical in nature, focusing on harmonisation of legislation and preparation for accession to the EU market economy. In this context, the EU’s enlargement strategy conceptualised the environment predominantly in the spheres of climate change and energy under the Connectivity Agenda, which aims to interlink infrastructure networks within the EU and beyond its borders. Here, the enlargement strategy recognised that regional cooperation on environmental issues was necessary. In this regard, it highlighted the issue of transboundary rivers and protected areas (European Commission, 2015b, p. 11). However, given the technical nature of the enlargement process, cooperation on these environmental issues was arguably intended to secure a reliable resource base for the consolidation and expansion of the European market economy into the neighbourhood countries. In essence, it was intended to prepare accession countries for the gradual neoliberalisation of their economic and political structures.

An examination of the practical implementation of the accession process reveals a similar picture. For example, in 2006, the EU established the 2007-2013 Instrument for Pre-Accession

³⁴ The Stabilisation and Association process for South-Eastern Europe was established in 1999 (c.f. ‘Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the Stabilisation and Association process for countries of South-Eastern Europe’, COM(1999) 235 final).

Assistance (IPA), which was amended in 2014 and renamed IPA II, to support the preparation of candidate countries for EU accession (Council of the European Union, 2006b; European Commission, 2007b; European Parliament & Council of the European Union, 2014b). In 2006, neither the peace dimension of enlargement nor the understanding of the environment was specifically outlined yet. Rather, the regulation stipulated that financing through IPA should contribute to “reconciliation and reconstruction, and ... to sustainable development and poverty reduction” in (potential) candidate countries (Council of the European Union, 2006b, p. 82).

However, placing the 2006 regulation in direct comparison to the 2014 regulation, a notable shift in discourse appears. Under IPA II, the peace potential of enlargement is used as a prominent theme to underline its policy relevance, stating that “the enlargement process reinforces peace, democracy and stability and Europe” and that “IPA II shall contribute to stability, security and prosperity” (European Parliament & Council of the European Union, 2014b, pp. 11, 14). Moreover, such an increased recognition of enlargement as peace promotion goes hand in hand with greater attention being paid to environmental issues. Here, environmental protection is considered a thematic priority for territorial cooperation, with an emphasis on its ability to simultaneously undermine and enable economic growth. For instance, the regulation highlights the role of the environment in shifting towards a “safe and sustainable low-carbon economy” and underlines the need for resources efficiency and renewable energy production (European Parliament & Council of the European Union, 2014b, pp. 22–23).

Enlargement policies serve a strategic function in terms of bridging the gap between internal and external security. However, this narrative does not emerge in specific enlargement policies, but in policy areas that touch upon issues of enlargement, most notably at the security-development nexus. For example, the EU conceded in its 2003 Security Strategy that EU internal and external security are increasingly interlinked (European Union, 2003). Such an understanding of interdependence between EU internal and external security has been reinforced over the years. The 2016 Communication ‘Next steps for a sustainable European future’ provides an insight into the underlying understanding of security that today guides the EU’s external action in light of the SDGs. It considered EU enlargement as a link between internal and external security by highlighting the role of human rights and rule of law in (potential) candidate countries (European Commission, 2016b, p. 12). Further, it held that the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was advocating a broader concept of security by focusing on conflict prevention and crisis management (European Commission, 2016d). This broader conception of

security is reflected in the Commission's focus on resilience³⁵ in EU humanitarian assistance policy, which stipulates a clear link between poverty, state fragility, natural disasters and conflict.

The concept of resilience re-emerges in the discourse on EU enlargement over the years. For instance, the Global Strategy conceptualises enlargement policies as an instrument of peace promotion based on enhancing state resilience (European External Action Service, 2016). In this regard, it pays special attention to sustainable development, arguing that "sustainable development lies at the heart of a resilient state" (European External Action Service, 2016, p. 23). In line with the EU's overarching understanding of the environmental dimensions of conflicts, and with a view to improving climate policies, it speaks of fostering environmental resilience, particularly in the energy sector, to prevent the rise of "social tension" and the exacerbation of conflict (European External Action Service, 2016, p. 27).

However, the EU does not explore the meaning and nature of resilience in more depth, neither within nor beyond the context of enlargement.³⁶ For instance, the Council conclusions which adopted the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence focused on the role of resilience, stating that "the aim is to strengthen CSDP's ability to contribute more systematically to the resilience and stabilisation of partner countries recovering from or threatened by conflict or instability" (Council of the European Union, 2016, p. 4). However, the conclusions do not outline a specific understanding of resilience (environmental or other). Instead, they give the impression that 'resilience' in fact means stability. The 2015 Resolution of the European Parliament on 'the EU in a changing global environment' is also reflective of these dominant trends. In this regard, it recognised the link between the internal and external security dimensions (paragraph A), highlighted the role of enlargement policies in stabilising the EU's neighbourhood (paragraph 21) and reaffirmed the commitment to the promotion of (economic) resilience in the EU neighbourhood (paragraph 43) (European Parliament, 2016). However, although the enlargement policies provide the umbrella under which the EU links its internal and external security dimensions and even though resilience is often mentioned in the same context, this is merely done on a very superficial level. In fact, just as the notions of 'peace', 'reconciliation' or 'sustainable development' can function as buzzwords to combine a variety of agendas, so too does resilience seem to encompass everything and nothing at the same time. Here, I argue that

³⁵ Please see the Commission Staff Working Document 'Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis-Prone Countries 2013-2020' (SWD(2013) 227 final) and the Commission Communication 'A strategic approach to resilience in the EU's external action' (JOIN(2017) 21 final) for the EU's approach to resilience in this context.

³⁶ There is a growing body of research exploring the role of resilience in EU external action, highlighting particularly its use as a buzzword across different policy areas (much like sustainable development or sustainability) and examining its role in creating hegemonic forms of (self-)governance (or neoliberal governmentality). See for example Joseph (2014), Joseph and Juncos (2019), Juncos (2017), and Wagner and Anholt (2016).

its inherent ambiguity is used to merge different policy agendas (e.g. internal and external security, economic development, etc.) for socio-economic stability within and beyond the EU's borders.

My analysis of the EU's approach to peacebuilding through an initial focus on conflict prevention and enlargement reveals a number of preliminary findings that help us understand how conceptualisations of the environment can affect peacebuilding processes. First, in the initial stages of developing an approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, the EU created a link between development, security and peace that was founded on the notions of morality and responsibility. This ideational tone is also reflected in the early Security Strategy. Within this framework, development policies, including enlargement, were framed as a tool for peacebuilding. While the narratives turn from idealism to pragmatism over time (much in line with the Global Strategy), the focus on 'development for peace' remains, providing the framework for contemporary peacebuilding policies. Second, the environment plays a crucial role in reinforcing the link between development, conflict and peace. The EU recognises that environmental factors, such as degradation or the mismanagement of resources, can at the very least create obstacles to development, and at the very worst cause and sustain conflicts. This reflects the instrumental conception of the environment and its ability to simultaneously constrain and enable economic development that I have already observed earlier in the chapter, particularly in contexts of climate change, natural resources or energy. Third, the analysis reveals that enlargement is often framed as bridging the gap between internal and external security. It is within this framework of the internal-external security dimension that the environment appears to be conceptualised under the banner of promoting resilience. However, there are two limitations here. On the one hand, this narrative does not emerge from enlargement policies themselves, but from policies that are seated at the security-development nexus, giving the impression that security objectives in fact overshadow development concerns. On the other hand, resilience is used as a buzzword that provides the necessary conceptual ambiguity to combine a variety of objectives for the overarching purpose of socio-economic stability. Therefore, at the heart of this approach to peacebuilding lies an inherently anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment that emphasises its geostrategic importance and its role in rebuilding and preparing post-conflict states and EU candidate countries for the gradual neoliberalisation of their economic and political structures.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I took a step back to explore what the EU's understanding of the environment actually is in order to build an analytical framework against which I can examine the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding in more detail, focusing on its omission to develop a more critical approach to some of its key concepts, such as 'the environment'. I did so by focusing my above policy analysis on (a) the EU's understanding of the environment under the heading of sustainable development in its external action, and (b) the underlying conceptualisation of the link between conflict, peace and the environment in EU external policies. Both of these components are crucial determinants for the EU's peacebuilding approach in Kosovo.

First, within the broad frame of the policy areas that I analysed above, the EU conceptualises the environment in anthropocentric terms, particularly in the fields of economic growth, natural resources, and poverty eradication. This conception is predominantly development-focused and instrumental, framing the value of the biophysical environment in terms of its ability to enable and sustain, while simultaneously undermining neoliberal socio-economic structures. This matches Karl Polanyi's argument of the double movement of neoliberalisation that I discussed in Chapter 2, emphasising its abilities to adapt to environmental challenges. For instance, in the design of the EU's overall sustainable development policies, the EU conceptualises environmental changes as an economic opportunity that can be capitalized on (e.g. a shift away from fossil powered energy to renewables creating new opportunities for capital accumulation). However, when framed in the context of security-development and peacebuilding policies, the EU emphasises the negative effects of the biophysical environment on society and the economy. It is framed as a negative 'add-on' to policies, as something that requires additional mitigation efforts, underlining the inherently anthropocentric conception in which human ingenuity can master the chaos of the biophysical environment (cf. Chapter 2). EU peacebuilding policies place a particular focus here on the conflict dimension of the environment, framing it in terms of 'security risks' and threats to regional stability.

Second, my analysis demonstrated that the link between conflict, peace and the environment that emerges from the EU's external policies is one that is mutually reinforcing, enabling and challenging. However, we need to note that this link is conceptualised under different banners across sustainable development, security-development, and peacebuilding policies. For example, in EU sustainable development policies, the environment-conflict-peace dimension is framed mainly under the heading of poverty eradication. This is particularly where

its neoliberalising tendencies come to the fore. In turn, the EU institutionalises the link between the environment, conflict and peace through the convergence of security and development agendas and operationalises it through actions on policy coherence and capacity-building. Different yet again, enlargement policies frame it under the umbrella of resilience, which is used to emphasise the need for socio-economic stability. What all these approaches have in common is a striking degree of ambiguity. I argue that this conceptual ambiguity is necessary to reconcile different actors, agendas, interests and policy priorities in the EU's comprehensive peacebuilding approach. However, as I demonstrate in the next chapters, such ambiguity creates the room that allows for deep socio-ecological inequalities and injustices to be institutionalised into the EU's peacebuilding process in Kosovo, as it disregards underlying questions of power.

The theoretical assumptions that I outlined in Chapter 2 provide the necessary input to determine where those inequalities and injustices may arise. For example, I argued that we need to understand the policy-making process, along with the resulting policy as its outcome, as processes of power-laden knowledge production that can serve particular political functions. In this case, the EU's emphasis on anthropocentric understandings of the environment, which overemphasise the role of the material dimension of the environment for human wellbeing and progress, are deeply influenced by the socio-economic structures of the global market economy. By interweaving the security and development nexus in its external policies, which it builds on such an anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment, the EU strategically exports its socio-economic structures to third countries, particularly those states emerging from (violent) conflict and/or working towards EU accession. Therefore, I argue that the EU's external policies in the area of peace and conflict are neoliberalising processes that advance the EU's political and economic interests abroad. To determine the nature of these strategic interests in the Western Balkans specifically, I examine the EU's peacebuilding policies in Kosovo in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Sustainable development and the environment in contemporary EU peacebuilding policies in Kosovo

Introduction

When moderate Kosovo-Serb politician Oliver Ivanović was shot outside his office in North Mitrovica on 16 January 2018, the world was reminded of the tensions simmering underneath the surface of the fragile peace in the Western Balkans (BIRN, 2018). An EU-mediated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina that was due to resume in Brussels that day was cancelled with fingers quickly pointed at different interest groups: while the opposition in Pristina accused Belgrade-instructed Serbs of the assassination of Ivanović, who had grown increasingly critical of Belgrade, Russian officials suggested that the government of Kosovo and its Western sponsors were attempting to conceal their involvement in the murder, who in turn quickly condemned Russian interference in domestic affairs (Morina, 2018a, 2018b). Others suggested that the trail of evidence was indeed leading towards Belgrade, although the death of Ivanović was to be seen as a symptom of wider failed peace- and state-building in Kosovo (Gashi, 2018a). Even though the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina had briefly resumed, ethnic tensions and political power struggles continue to form the difficult context in which EU peacebuilding processes in Kosovo operate. The recent breakdown of talks over Kosovo's failed bid to join Interpol, for which it blames Serbia, demonstrates the fragility of diplomatic relations between the conflict parties.

Against this background, claims to national territory and disputes over border demarcation persist as obstacles to domestic and regional advancement. For instance, the government of Kosovo had been in frequent - and at times violent - deadlock over disagreements on a border deal with Montenegro, which the EU identified as the last remaining condition for Kosovo to receive visa-free travel within the Schengen area (European Commission, 2016c; Morina, 2018d). Kosovo agreed to a settlement of the border issue in February 2018, but the visa liberalisation process has since ground to a halt in the EU institutions (Osmani, 2018). Although uncertainties in and around the northern territory of Kosovo and the re-drawing of borders clearly have the potential to derail any political progress towards a normalisation of the situation, Kosovo's Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj seems uneasy about officially acknowledging as much. Asked in a recent interview with the BBC whether he would consider conceding parts of the ethnically Serb majority territory in the North

of Kosovo to settle the dispute with Serbia once and for all, he diplomatically stated, after several attempts to dodge the question, that “conflicts happen because of people, not territory or land” (Haradinaj, 2018). While the context in which this statement was made certainly matters and although its underlying political motivations leave much room for interpretation, it highlights the fact that Kosovo’s territory continues to fuel tensions between Serbia and Kosovo. In fact, so much so that both governments have recently begun to explore potential land swaps of their respective ethnic majority territories to settle the dispute (Capussela, 2018).

As I demonstrate in this chapter, the EU’s peacebuilding approach does not recognise the deeper dynamics that surround Kosovo’s territory as a contested space. Instead, the EU’s concerns for regional security and post-conflict development under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the enlargement agenda are closely interwoven with its own interests, which in itself is not necessarily surprising. However, I argue that in order to reconcile the short-term security and long-term development objectives in the Western Balkans and in Kosovo, the EU’s country-specific peacebuilding policies require a significant degree of conceptual ambiguity. This means that as the EU’s policies become more technical in nature, the discourses and narratives surrounding sustainable development and the environment, as well as the link between conflict, peace and the environment become more ambiguous. However, by overlooking what specifically peace, conflict or the environment mean for either post-conflict development or security, EU peacebuilding policies in Kosovo revolve around two vague notions of sustainability: a development-based notion and a security-based notion.

Against the background of these persistent (conceptual) tensions in Kosovo’s peacebuilding process, in this chapter I zoom in on the EU’s regional strategy in the Western Balkans and its specific peacebuilding policies in Kosovo, consisting of the enlargement process and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). I explore how the EU’s overall understanding of the anthropocentric environment as a crucial component of human wellbeing and economic development is reflected in its peacebuilding policies in Kosovo. In this context, I focus particularly on how the EU’s regional strategy and peacebuilding policies in Kosovo institutionalise the link between conflict, peace and the environment that I observed in the previous chapter. Moreover, I assess the implications of the conceptual ambiguity that was necessary to interweave the security and development objectives. My analysis is divided in three sections. First, I examine the manner in which economic development and security have become intertwined in the EU’s approach to regional stability. Here, I focus on the EU’s Western Balkans strategy to help us understand the context in which its Kosovo-specific policies are embedded. Second, I examine the EU’s emphasis on linking economic development with

stabilisation by analysing the enlargement process in Kosovo. Third, I interrogate the CFSP angle of EU action in Kosovo, comprised of the rule of law mission EULEX in Kosovo and the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, to identify the relationship between security, sustainability and the environment. I synthesise the findings of a policy analysis³⁷ with insights from my interviews with stakeholders in Pristina and Brussels.

My analysis demonstrates that the development-based notion of sustainability emphasises sustainability as sustained economic growth, while the security-based notion promotes sustainability as stability of the status quo. Which notion of sustainability dominates in what policy context, depends on the setting in which they operate (e.g. enlargement or CFSP). Against this background, I illustrate that the EU's understanding of the environment in anthropocentric terms (i.e. as a commodity in the pursuit of economic growth and human welfare) aids in the interlinking of economic prosperity and stability. This serves the function of creating the impression of a linear path leading from the short-term neoliberalisation of Kosovo's post-conflict socio-economic and institutional structures in line with enlargement criteria to long-term (regional) stability - and hence security. However, such a linear logic of short-term economic development leading to stability is flawed. It disregards the complexity of the context and produces inequalities and injustices in the form of socio-ecological exploitation, displacement or marginalisation. Thereby, it can feed into conflict dynamics rather than support long-term peace. In contrast, the EU's CFSP promote the security-based conception of sustainability. However, as I briefly hinted at above, they fail to recognise the role of Kosovo's territory, including the dispute over Kosovo's status, in feeding into contemporary conflict dynamics.

These findings have direct implications on the understandings of the conceptual paradoxes in environmental peacebuilding. I argue that environmental peacebuilding is theoretically ill-equipped to understand the repercussions of institutionalising such conceptual tensions and ambiguities in peacebuilding policies. This is because it has not yet developed the conceptual nuance to recognise that allegedly complementary peacebuilding policies can in fact promote two different and at times clashing notions of sustainability, which functions as a conceptual heading under which varying interests and agendas can be promoted, yet still give the impression of complementarity. Therefore, I argue that environmental peacebuilding research needs to recognise the power asymmetries, inequalities and injustices emerging from different understandings of 'the environment' and 'sustainability' in the context of security and development.

³⁷ Please see Table 2 in Annex for an overview of the documents that I included in my analysis in this chapter.

However, before moving on to the analysis, I provide a brief overview of the origins and overarching structure of EU peacebuilding policies in Kosovo here to provide the necessary context for my analysis. In 2003, the EU highlighted that “the credibility of our foreign policy depends on the consolidation of our achievement there [in the Western Balkans]” (European Union, 2003). It is therefore not surprising that the EU has made a considerable amount of financial and human resources available to its engagement with the Western Balkans. In fact, first referred to as Potential Candidate countries at the European Council summit in Santa Maria da Feira in 2000, the Western Balkans have remained high on the EU’s agenda ever since (European Council, 2000a). In the context of Kosovo, EU peacebuilding policies have changed significantly following the war in 1998/99. Today, the EU’s peacebuilding approach in Kosovo is twofold, falling under the umbrella of (1) CFSP, and (2) (regional) enlargement, supported by the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) and the Infrastructure Projects Facility in close collaboration with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) (Barnes & Barnes, 2010, p. 425). Although there is indeed an overlap between these two policy areas and a variety of EU instruments, or ‘soft tools’, are applicable to both, enlargement policies tend to promote socio-economic and institutional development, while CFSP policies focus on the security dimensions of EU peacebuilding policies in Kosovo. The enlargement process hence functions as a long-term political strategy, in which the security dimensions of EU external action are embedded. Thereby, the EU attempts to ensure coherency and effectiveness of its large-scale involvement in Kosovo (European Union, 2010, p. 42).

Different stakeholders contribute to the EU’s peacebuilding in Kosovo. The Member States significantly influence the decision-making process and complement actions on the ground. For instance, while competences for the enlargement process span across all EU institutions, the decision-making process is heavily dependent on the governments of the Member States (Barnes & Barnes, 2010, p. 427; European Union, 2009, Art. 49). The same applies to decision-making in the area of CFSP (ibid). The CFSP component in Kosovo is embedded in the wider international response to the Balkan conflict, i.e. developed in close alignment with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) and coordinated with NATO’s Kosovo Force (KFOR). In terms of donor assistance, Germany, Kosovo’s second largest donor, as well as the United Kingdom and Sweden, alongside the United States and Switzerland, amount for almost half of the financial assistance to Kosovo (Ministry of European Integration, 2016, p. 8). However, the EU remains the largest contributing donor to Kosovo (ibid). Nonetheless, it is crucial to recognise the underlying dynamics in decision-making and financial allocation of aid, as they can influence EU policy priorities.

Having provided a brief overview of the structure of EU peacebuilding policies and donor assistance in Kosovo, I now turn to the analysis of the EU's regional strategy towards the Western Balkans, as it provides the wider framework for EU peacebuilding in Kosovo.

5.1 Interlinking economic development and security for regional stability: exploring the foundations of the EU's regional strategy in the Western Balkans

A conglomeration of security, (sustainable) development, and enlargement policies provides the foundations of EU peacebuilding strategies. Thus, rather than a clearly defined policy area with rigid boundaries, EU peacebuilding draws on interdisciplinary tools and instruments to realise policy interventions into different institutional and socio-economic components of the state in question. These interventions rarely happen in isolation but are usually designed and implemented in coherence with wider EU objectives. Therefore, to understand EU peacebuilding policies in Kosovo, we need to be aware of how they are embedded into the wider EU regional strategy for the Western Balkans. In the following, I analyse key policies guiding EU action in the Western Balkans more broadly (e.g. the Thessaloniki Agenda, the Stabilisation and Association Process and the Berlin Process), and their relevance for EU peacebuilding in Kosovo more specifically, to establish how the EU conceptualises the environment and the link between conflict, peace and the environment in the regional policy approaches. I demonstrate that in line with my findings in Chapter 4, the EU interlinks economic development and security for the purpose of guaranteeing regional long-term stability, but in fact prioritises short-term stability over the resolution of the conflicts in the Western Balkans. I argue that in combination with an inherently anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment, which emphasises the instrumental use-value of the environment in the process of Kosovo's socio-economic neoliberalisation, the EU's short-termism provides the platform for unsustainabilities to emerge in the peacebuilding process. To recall my theoretical assumptions outlined in Chapter 2, I understand unsustainabilities by building on the approach to structural violence in peace and conflict studies, arguing that they are socio-ecological inequalities and injustices that are embedded in the neoliberalising structures of the global economy.

First, following the end of the conflict in former Yugoslavia in 2001, the outlook of EU policies gradually shifted from post-conflict stabilisation and reconstruction to European integration and enlargement of the Western Balkans. Most notable in this regard was the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003, which determined the course of the post-conflict relationship between the EU and the Western Balkans for years to come. It reiterated the importance of

extending EU enlargement to the Western Balkans, emphasising it as a “catalyst for addressing [post-conflict] problems in the region” (European Council, 2003, p. 2). In this regard, the summit declaration endorsed the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) as the “framework for the European course of the Western Balkan countries” that would tackle issues of economic development, stability, rule of law, reconciliation, democracy building, and organised crime and corruption (European Council, 2003, p. 2). Recalling that sustainable development began to emerge as a guiding principle of EU foreign policy at that time (c.f. Chapter 4), there are traces of it in the Thessaloniki summit declaration. Although still rather tangentially, the European Council linked the notion of stability with prosperity by highlighting that “[e]conomic prosperity is essential to long term stability and democracy” in the Western Balkans (European Council, 2003, p. 3). Within this context, the EU identified the management of natural resources as an area of regional cooperation, alongside issues such as free regional trade and regional energy markets (European Council, 2003, p. 3).

The so-called Thessaloniki Agenda developed these areas of action in much more detail. It identified Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), justice and home affairs, economic development, and reconciliation as the main areas of increased cooperation between the EU and the Western Balkans. At the heart of any action in support of these policy objectives lay an understanding of post-conflict state- and peacebuilding that highlighted the significance of stability as the immediate and sustainable development as the long-term objective. For example, the EU emphasised that the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) had already contributed greatly to immediate regional stability and that “it now needs to be ... enriched with elements from the enlargement process, so that it can better meet the new challenges, as the countries move from stabilisation and reconstruction to sustainable development” (Council of the European Union, 2003, p. 12). This focus on sustainable development as the ideal end state of the peacebuilding and enlargement process reflects the EU’s overall framing of enlargement as a crucial part of its peacebuilding toolbox, as I demonstrated in my analysis in Chapter 4. At the same time, it also hints at the pursuit of future sustainability as the main motivation and justification of the EU’s policy interventions in post-conflict countries in the Western Balkans. This is crucial in so far as it allows for injustices and inequalities to emerge based on the argument that they are necessarily justified because they ensure short-term stability and long-term sustainability (cf. Chapters 6 and 7).

The EU further formalised this emphasis on enlargement as a peacebuilding tool for regional stability with the introduction of the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP). It provides the overall framework for enlargement policies in the Western Balkans and continues to

interlink economic development and security for regional stability. First initiated at the Zagreb Summit in 2000 and consolidated at the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003, it was created to (a) stabilise the region by enabling the establishment of market economies, (b) promote regional cooperation, and (c) prepare the political, economic and legislative systems of Western Balkan countries for accession to the EU (Council of the European Union, 2003; European Commission, n.d.; European Council, 2003). Through a cycle of dialogues within the Stabilisation and Association Council (SAC), comprised of EU representatives, national governments and civil societies, priorities are identified, monitored and implemented on an individual country basis. In the case of Kosovo, the formal Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) entered into force in April 2016 and is supported by the European Reform Agenda (ERA), which I examine in more detail in the following chapter (European Union, 2016).

While the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) promotes a peacebuilding process with the aim of building a neoliberal market economy, relying on economic cooperation and sustainable development (notably without further defining the notion), it places the main emphasis on stability as the underlying, immediate priority. Against this background, Kosovo's status question is essentially circumvented. This is surprising in so far as the recent events that I discussed above show that tensions can re-ignite over Kosovo's contested territory, thereby significantly undermining said stability. One way of circumventing this issue is by reaffirming that the SAA is an EU-only agreement, which has no *direct* bearing on Member States' policies and merely includes EU-only competences (Interview S16Br29³⁸). It is stated that

“[n]one of the terms, wording or definitions used in this Agreement ... constitute recognition of Kosovo by the EU as an independent State nor does it constitute recognition by individual Member States of Kosovo in that capacity where they have not taken such a step” (European Union, 2016, p. 5).

One of my interviewees, a senior official at the European Commission, referred to Kosovo's SAA as “a Stabilisation and Association Agreement ‘light’, not a real one” (Interview S16Br29³⁹). While I examine the bone of contention that is Kosovo's independence and territory in more detail below, suffice it to say here that the above statement indicates that the immediate need for stability outweighs the necessity of settling the dispute to sustain the regional peace in the long-term. Therefore, as I demonstrate below, although the EU frames its actions in the Western Balkans as key contributors to long-term stability, concerns for short-term stability dominate,

³⁸ Interview conducted by the author in Brussels, Belgium, on 19th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

³⁹ Interview conducted by the author in Brussels, Belgium, on 19th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

emphasising that underlying EU self-interests promote a peacebuilding process in which immediate (EU internal) security considerations appear to outweigh concerns for long-term peace in the Western Balkans.

Second, stability, based on prosperity and (ethnic) reconciliation, is also a core objective of the Berlin Process, which forms another core pillar of EU action in Kosovo and underlines its rhetorical commitment to long-term stability. It was created in 2014 to provide a platform for leaders of the Western Balkans 6 (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia), a core group of Member States (Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, UK) as well as EU representatives to drive forward targeted regional action. The aim of this high-level political process is to foster local ownership, by means of complementing individual country strategies, on issues related to regional cooperation, focusing mainly on matters related to energy and transport connectivity, and youth exchanges (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation [Italy], 2017).

In this context, regional and wider European stability emerge as key themes throughout the Berlin Process. The EU created a strong link between the issues of stability, prosperity and reconciliation in the declarations of the Berlin Summit (2014), the Vienna Summit (2015), and to a certain extent the Poznań Summit (2019). For example, in the context of outstanding bilateral issues, the parties declared that “[r]econciliation is essential to promote stability”, while fostering economic performance alongside good governance and rule of law “increase[s] stability and prosperity in the region” (Federal Ministry for Europe Integration and Foreign Affairs, 2015). With the Poznań Summit’s emphasis on regional economic development, the EU pledged large sums of financial support to boost connectivity in the region⁴⁰, arguing that “it is not only vital for the citizens and economies, but it also enhances the political stability and socio-economic development” (The Chancellery of the Prime Minister, 2019, p. 5). Such linkages serve two functions. On the one hand, by interlinking the notion of prosperity with stability and reconciliation, the parties introduce a measurable standard of success of their actions. As I already touched upon in the previous chapter, this makes the peacebuilding process amenable to the quantified (neoliberalising) policy-making process of the EU institutions. On the other hand, by establishing reconciliation as a precondition for stability, the EU emphasises the role of the Berlin Process in regional peacebuilding. This became particularly evident at the London Summit

⁴⁰ The actions taken at the Poznań are a contribution to the EU’s Connectivity Agenda, which was created in 2016 to boost infrastructure investments in the Western Balkans. Under its umbrella, a combined sum of €1 billion of EU and national investments, and IFI loans were initially made available for large-scale energy and transport projects across the region (European Commission, 2016a), with an additional €700 million pledged at the Poznań Summit in 2019 (The Chancellery of the Prime Minister, 2019, p. 5).

(2018) which focused on war crimes and the issue of missing persons (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2018). In fact, on closer inspection, the EU strengthened these links between reconciliation and stability against the background of a reiteration of a shared past (parties coming together “a hundred years after the outbreak of the First World War”) and a common future (“the Western Balkans firmly believe that their future lies in the European Union”) (Press and Information Office of the Federal Government of Germany, 2014), thereby creating a sense of partnership and ownership of the process. Such an emphasis on a common past creates a sense of unity that directs the process of identify-formation in the Western Balkans towards an ‘EU-ideal’.⁴¹ This is crucial in so far as appeals to a shared identity create an environment conducive to the promotion of EU self-interests abroad, particularly at times when these are under threat at home.

The EU’s underlying self-interests arguably set the agenda at the summit meetings held in Paris (2016) and Trieste (2017), which were overshadowed by terror attacks in European capitals. At these summits, the attending parties paid greater attention to issues of security, alongside stability, and prosperity. In light of “unprecedented security challenges” (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs [France], 2016), regional cooperation and European integration of the Western Balkans was viewed as a “strategic investment in peace, democracy, prosperity, security and stability of Europe as a whole” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation [Italy], 2017). This emphasis on security also has direct bearing on the perception of the enlargement process. The parties stated that “[m]ore than ever, the rule of law lies at the heart of the enlargement process” (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs [France], 2016). Therefore, as I explore further in the next section of the chapter, as enlargement policies have gained significant regional geostrategic importance in recent years, so too have concerns for stability, security and economic prosperity become closely intertwined.

Third, analysing the EU’s overarching regional strategy in the Western Balkans does not only point towards a deep interlinking of stability with economic prosperity and security. It also reveals that the EU reinforces the anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment with an emphasis on the contribution of its material dimension to economic growth. In this regard, the SAA mirrors the EU’s general conceptualisation of the environment in instrumental terms, highlighting particularly its ability to undermine socio-economic development. For instance, cooperation on environmental issues is encouraged where it works to “halt[...] further degradation” and to improve “the environmental situation with the aim of sustainable

⁴¹ For further reading on processes of identity-formation that are based on values and norms instilling a sense of historical continuity, please see Anderson, 1983; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Todorova, 2009.

development in Kosovo” (European Union, 2016, p. 33). This includes policies tackling (hazardous) waste and industrial activity, environmental planning and renewable energy (Art. 115), and climate change mitigation and civil protection from natural disasters (Art. 116-117). By emphasising the negative effects of environmental degradation and change on human wellbeing, the SAA reinforces the anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment in the context of the EU’s model of a market economy. A similar picture emerges from an analysis of the European Partnership, a country-specific instrument under the umbrella of the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP). Established in 2004, the European Partnership acts as an annually reviewed and adjusted “checklist” of short-term and medium-term priorities against which country progress towards EU accession can be measured (Council of the European Union, 2004). It reflects the heavy emphasis on securing stability by means of a regionally integrated market economy, the performance of which is measured against quantifiable standards.

But it is the Thessaloniki Agenda which best illustrates the underlying (moral) assumptions upon which the EU’s approach to the environment is built. It recognised that “[e]nvironmental protection is an important element of sustainable development” (Council of the European Union, 2003, p. 17). Although this statement does not appear striking at first sight, we can make two significant observations about the choice of language here. Firstly, there is a clear change in tone when it comes to environmental issues. While the EU “urges” countries in the Western Balkans to foster the rule of law or to promote good governance in the public sectors, it merely “encourages” them to align their environmental policies to EU standards (Council of the European Union, 2003, pp. 12, 17). Such a change in tone is indicative of a subordination of environmental issues on the list of post-conflict priorities. Recalling the theoretical assumptions that I outlined in Chapter 2, subordinating the environment in such a manner reflects the anthropocentric distinction between human rights as non-negotiable entities and the environment as an area of compromise in the quest for human wellbeing (Eckersley, 2004, p. 100). I argue that it is in these contexts of making the environment part of the competitive practices over (individual) human welfare where unsustainabilities (i.e. socio-ecological injustices and inequalities) can arise. Secondly, the EU understands the environment in instrumental terms, with the EU encouraging cooperation predominantly on issues related to natural resources management. While this implies some understanding of the role of the environment in the peace process (e.g. the necessity of equitable access to resources), environmental considerations are entirely absent when it comes to reconciliation, education, religion, or cultural heritage, which are, however, of high significance in Kosovo’s post-conflict transition (Council of the European Union, 2003, p. 18). Given that Kosovo’s territory itself

continues to re-ignite tensions, particularly in the context of cultural heritage and land claims, and recalling that the Thessaloniki Agenda provided the grounds for EU action in the Western Balkans for years, the impact of such a disregard of the socially produced dimensions of the environment on Kosovo's institutions should not be underestimated. I explore this point in more detail in section 5.2.

Although only referred to tangentially in the EU's policies in the context of the return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) and property rights (European Commission, 2015c, pp. 4, 26), it is crucial that we recognise the continuous conflict potential of both the socially produced and material environment in Kosovo. Both the territory itself as well as the different meanings associated with it bear the potential to re-ignite tensions. For example, Serbia continues to claim ownership over land surrounding Serbian Orthodox monasteries and churches across Kosovo's territory (Russell, 2019, p. 5). The monasteries of Visoki Dečani and the Patriarchate of Peć in the predominantly Muslim West of Kosovo were attacked during outbreaks of violence in the 2000s and still require NATO protection (Çollaku, 2015; UN Secretary-General, 2004, pp. 1-2). When I visited Visoki Dečani, I had to hand over my passport to two armed Italian soldiers keeping guard in a camouflaged military hut just outside the monastery's main gate. Another example of tensions surrounding territory is the Monastery Gračanica close to the capital of Pristina. Although not guarded by armed NATO soldiers, it is situated in one of the Serb enclaves scattered around Kosovo. I appeared to have timed my visit to the monastery perfectly with a wedding party driving their cars through the little town in celebration. I was struck by the number of Serbian flags and colours that were decorating the cars as they drove past the Orthodox monastery sounding their horns. These brief snapshots illustrate that it is not simply Kosovo's territory as a whole, but small parts of land scattered across the country that are deeply embedded in the cultural belief systems of the population in the immediate vicinity and beyond.

Therefore, the above analysis of the EU's regional strategy in the Western Balkans demonstrates that a) the EU increasingly interlinks economic development and security objectives for the sake of (short-term) stability in the Western Balkans, catering in particular to its own interests and security priorities, and that b) these processes are embedded in fundamentally anthropocentric assumptions of the relations between humans and their environment. This reinforces the commodification of the environment in the process of post-conflict development with the proclaimed aim of future sustainability. But it disregards the role of Kosovo's territory as a contested space in sustaining the conflict. Two significant problems arise in this context. First, although the EU reaffirms its commitment to long-term stability in the Western Balkans, its actions are short-sighted, focusing particularly on immediate

stabilisation and security. The creation of a linear discursive path between short-term economic prosperity and long-term stability is misleading. I discuss this in more detail in the next two chapters. Second, combined with a conceptualisation of the environment that considers its material dimensions as part of the competitive practices over human wellbeing and progress, the EU's short-termism enables the institutionalisation of practices of socio-ecological exploitation, marginalisation and displacement (c.f. Chapter 7), arguing that they are justified because they work towards an ideal end-state of future sustainable development.

The findings of this analysis make a significant contribution to understanding the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding: while environmental peacebuilding research often refers to the environment as a more neutral platform upon which cooperation can be built, leading to a process of sustainable development, my analysis demonstrates that underlying concerns for short-term stability and security can hide behind the aim of future socio-ecological sustainability, thereby failing to address existing conflict dynamics or creating new ones which endanger the peacebuilding process in the long-term. I argue that this process builds upon predominantly anthropocentric understandings of the environment as a resource, which is to be used in order to boost human prosperity after conflict. Against this background, environmental peacebuilding research would benefit from engaging more critically with the interlinking of economic prosperity and stability, particularly in light of an increased prioritisation of security considerations, and the conceptual paradoxes and multiple agendas that arise surrounding 'the environment' and 'sustainability'.

Having analysed the EU's regional strategy in the Western Balkans, I now turn to examine the EU's policies in the Kosovo more specifically. In the following section, I review the EU's enlargement policies with a focus on the development angle, before I review its security policies in the last section.

5.2 From post-conflict stabilisation to European enlargement: the environment in the (re)building of Kosovo's post-conflict economy

The EU integration process requires deep institutional and structural reforms that align candidate countries with the *acquis* of the EU. As I demonstrated in my analysis of the EU's regional approach above, the deep interweaving of economic prosperity and stability plays a crucial role in enabling and justifying the overhaul (or neoliberalisation) of entire political, institutional and economic structures in the Western Balkans to meet the standards of the EU's economy. By framing these reforms as contributing significantly to long-term sustainability and

stability, comprehensive neoliberalising processes become essential parts of the EU's peacebuilding toolbox in the Western Balkans. Here, I examine to what extent the EU's Kosovo-specific peacebuilding policies build on an anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment, thereby creating a setting for socio-ecological exploitative systems to emerge in the peacebuilding process. In the below, I analyse the core policy documents (e.g. enlargement strategies, country-specific progress reports, and financial instruments) setting out the EU's enlargement strategy for Kosovo.⁴²

Examining the EU's Kosovo-specific Enlargement Strategies from 2005 to 2018 reveals that a) due to their much more technical nature, the sustainable development rhetoric that I identified in the previous chapter is largely absent, but that b) they operationalise the EU's commitment to sustainable development as the ideal end-state by emphasising the links between economic growth and long-term stability; a connection that is fundamentally built on an anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment that overemphasises its material dimension. For example, the European Commission frames the EU-internal Europe 2020 Agenda as a roadmap for the promotion of policies in the Western Balkans that foster inclusive growth, competitiveness and "macroeconomic stability" (European Commission, 2005a, 2010a). The introduction of the new framework for economic governance in the 2013 Enlargement Strategy underlined the prioritisation of economic growth for stability (European Commission, 2013b, p. 4). It combines macroeconomic and fiscal programmes with a targeted structural reform and competitiveness programme to boost economic development in Kosovo in the long-term (ibid). Simultaneous to this increasing focus on socio-economic programmes, judicial reforms and fundamental rights as well as transparency and accountability in public administration emerge as key areas for EU-induced reform packages (European Commission, 2012a, 2014b). Economic and political stability are therefore closely intertwined. As the European Commission highlighted in the 2018 enlargement strategy, by committing to the comprehensive reform progress "Western Balkan countries can already benefit from an increased stability and prosperity that will ... facilitate progress on their European paths" (European Commission, 2018a, p. 2).

These notions of economic development for long-term stability build on an approach to the environment, which guides policies to capitalise on both environmental challenges and opportunities and thereby - following the EU's logic - promotes long-term stability. Such an understanding of the environment reflects Polanyi's double movement of the self-regulating

⁴² For an overview of the documents I analysed in this chapter please see Annex 1, Table 2.

market (cf. Chapter 2), acknowledging both the environment's productive and destructive dimensions (Polanyi, 1944). For instance, the EU frames the environment here as something that requires mitigation for it possesses the ability to cause instability if left to unattended. While the 2005 and 2008 Enlargement Strategies briefly assessed the progress made on harmonizing environmental legislation with the EU *acquis*, particularly in the areas of water and air quality (European Commission, 2005a, p. 28), the 2007 Enlargement Strategy placed greater emphasis on water resource management, disaster risk reduction and civil protection from natural disasters (European Commission, 2007c, pp. 12, 54, 2008a, p. 59). Even by 2015, such a focus on the destructive dimension of the environment had not changed. Stressing the importance of regional cooperation on environmental issues, the European Commission confined cooperative actions to issues of flood prevention and environmental pollution (European Commission, 2015b, p. 11). At the same time, the Enlargement Strategies highlight the opportunities for capital accumulation that arise out of environmental changes. For instance, in 2010 the European Commission noted that enlargement policies “help[...] the EU to achieve its objectives in ... areas which are key to economic recovery and sustainable growth, including energy, transport, the protection of the environment and efforts to address climate change” (European Commission, 2010a, p. 3). However, although environmental protection is highlighted here, the European Commission does not elaborate upon specific measures, but rather sticks to generic statements, highlighting instead the potential of climate action to “bring benefits through low-carbon development” and the creation of employment opportunities (2011, p. 11; 2018, p. 12).

As I indicated in sub-section 5.1 above, such a consideration for the environment exclusively in terms of the opportunities and challenges it poses to the perpetual expansion of the (neoliberal) economy, but disregard in other sectors, such as cultural heritage or education, has had negative effects on Kosovo's environmental sector over time. While the European Commission noted in 2007 that the “population's awareness of environmental issues remains very poor” (European Commission, 2007c, p. 54), it acknowledged in 2011 that “due to insufficient budget allocations, limited progress has been made on strengthening the legislative and administrative framework in the area of the environment and climate change” (European Commission, 2011b, p. 70). By 2014, the Commission conceded that “[t]he lack of interest in the environment has become a serious issue for public health and the quality of life in Kosovo” (European Commission, 2014b, p. 44). While the underlying tone of such statements implies that the fault lies with the government of Kosovo itself, the EU has considerable influence over agenda-setting processes in Kosovo due to the very nature of the accession process, and its Member States as well as institutions being Kosovo's largest donors. Given that the EU's

Enlargement Strategies promote predominantly reactive policies that exclusively exploit the productive and destructive dimensions of the environment for the purpose of boosting economic growth, it is hardly surprising that they have failed to raise public environmental awareness and public spending on environmental issues to an adequate level. In addition, particularly in recent years, the environmental sector has attracted the most financial support by international donors, leaving little incentive to increase financing from Kosovo's fiscal budget (Ministry of European Integration, 2016, p. 8). As the Director of the Kosovo Environmental Protection told me during an interview when we spoke about Kosovo's small environmental budget, "the politicians think that we receive a lot of money for the environment from the EU, so they don't assign it much importance themselves".⁴³

A brief review of the Kosovo Progress Reports reveals a very similar picture. These reports were compiled by the European Commission between 2004 and 2018 to provide technical analyses in support of the country-specific conclusions drawn in the Enlargement Strategies. In the progress reports, the European Commission takes note of the negative implications of having severely underfunded the environmental sector in Kosovo. It repeatedly highlighted the lack of human and financial resources in the environmental sector as a fundamental challenge, stating for instance in 2008 that allocated resources "are still far from sufficient to address Kosovo's environmental challenges" (European Commission, 2008b, p. 44). The projects devised under the umbrella of the Environmental Action Plan function as another example outlining the negative effects of the budgetary neglect. Although it was launched in 2006, the Environmental Action Plan itself could not be immediately implemented due to lack of funding (European Commission, 2006b, p. 31). A year later, the Commission stated that although 52 projects of the Environmental Action Plan were to be implemented in the period of 2007 to 2010, merely one of those projects featured an approved budget (European Commission, 2007d, p. 37). It is therefore hardly surprising that actions in support of public awareness of environmental issues are described as "insufficient" (European Commission, 2007d, pp. 37–38).

The allocation of Kosovo's fiscal budget is of significant concern here. In 2009, the European Commission already emphasised that the budget for the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP) was the lowest of all ministries in Kosovo (European Commission, 2009b, p. 38). By 2010, MESP's budget was still the lowest and had in fact been decreased even further (European Commission, 2010c, p. 42). In 2011, the Commission cautioned that

⁴³ Interview with Ilir Morina conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 10th May 2016.

additional budget cuts would have “a major negative impact on the ability of various institutions to perform their functions effectively” (European Commission, 2011d, p. 45). Further, by 2014 it warned that “[e]nvironment and climate need to become government priorities” (European Commission, 2014c, p. 41). However, during our interview, Kosovo’s former Minister of Environment and Spatial Planning Ferid Agani illustrated the issue of lacking funds and the environment losing out in the race of being recognised as a development priority. He stated that because of the conflict, Kosovo now faced many figurative construction sites that needed to be dealt with at the same time, further explaining that

“Kosovo is kind of like a highway with ten to fifteen... lanes, you know, all of them have to go at the same time. We go in parallel and where we have a stop, immediately it's affecting other lanes. So, it is a very complex process, but it's important that we are not stopping, that it is moving.”⁴⁴

Lacking financial resources in support of environmental actions is therefore a persistent issue that is increasingly recognised over the years. It reflects the deeper-seated disregard for environmental issues in the post-conflict context as the government of Kosovo (and arguably the EU) prioritise ‘not stopping’ in the move towards growth. However, I argue that the EU, as Kosovo’s largest donor, played a significant part in institutionalising these patterns of fiscal unsustainability by funding and promoting the prioritisation of economic development sustained by ecological exploitation for a vague ideal of future sustainability.

In this regard, the EU itself prioritises areas that are often considered fundamental to boosting economic growth in the context of its EU’s enlargement investments through the IPA Programmes (Instrument for Pre-Accession). The IPA Programmes are designed on a country-specific basis and reviewed annually to reflect the priorities as outlined in the Multi-Annual Indicative Country Programmes. These, in turn, are normally amended biannually and follow the wider regional direction provided by the Stabilisation and Association Process (Council of the European Union, 2006b). In the case of Kosovo, there are two stages to the IPA Programme: during the first stage between 2007 and 2013, policies focused on “transition assistance and institution building” (IPA I), while the focus shifted to “cross-border cooperation programmes” between 2014-2020 (IPA II) (European Commission, 2007a; European Parliament & Council of the European Union, 2014b). Aside from supporting infrastructure projects that mitigate environmental degradation (such as improved drinking water quality and better management of dumping sites), the European Commission allocated almost €1 million to improving the management of resources in the mining sector (European Commission, 2011a, pp. 7-8). As I

⁴⁴ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 26th May 2016.

demonstrate in Chapters 6 and 7, such an emphasis on the mining sector brings about new problems that undermine Kosovo's peacebuilding process.

Such a framing of environmental considerations under the banner of economic development was reinforced in 2009, along with increased investments in the environmental sector following the recognition that it had been severely underfunded. Now categorised under the policy area of European Standards, the focus shifted towards institution- and capacity-building in the environmental sector, through instruments like the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) or the Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network (ECRAN)⁴⁵. By allocating €4.6 million, the EU attempted to increase the capacities of the Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency (KEPA) to assume responsibilities over the management of environmental issues (European Commission, 2009a, p. 7). This shift towards an increased focus on capacity-building in the environmental sector came at the time when the European Commission acknowledged that insufficient funds and administrative capacities had negatively affected public awareness and policy effectiveness in Kosovo's environmental sector (European Commission, 2008b, p. 44). We need to understand the increased investment in capacity-building as an investment in the neoliberalisation of the environment to boost growth and to mitigate negative effects of environmental degradation. However, recalling the statement of the Director of KEPA above, the EU's increased funding of capacity-building in the environmental sector has created a system of financial dependency, where the government of Kosovo scaled down environmental investments as the gap in the environmental budget was filled by the international community. Moreover, this focus on capacity-building mirrors the shift in overall EU external policies that I examined in Chapter 4, where my analysis revealed that the security-development nexus was institutionalised through a focus on policy coherence and capacity-building. Therefore, I argue here that the shift towards capacity-building across all enlargement policy areas, the environmental sector included, is indicative of wider practical attempts to reconcile security – and hence stability - with development.

The above analysis reveals that although the EU's enlargement policies do not reflect the rhetorical emphasis on sustainable development and sustainability that I observed in the previous

⁴⁵ The Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network (ECRAN), which terminated in 2016, was preceded by the Regional Environmental Network for Accession (RENA), which ran from 2010 to 2013. They emerged out of the regionally steered and EU-supported Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme (2000-2009), initially managed by the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and then transferred to the Regional Co-operation Council (RCC) to reflect the changes that came with the then most recent round of EU accession at the time (RENA, n.d., p. 2). Both RENA and ECRAN focused on assisting accession countries as well as the European Commission in monitoring and evaluating the progress made on approximation with the EU acquis in the areas of environment and climate. These evaluations provided the basis for the country-specific Progress Reports (ECRAN, 2016; RENA, n.d.).

chapter due to the fact that they are much more technical in nature, they operationalise the EU's commitment to sustainable development as the ideal outcome of its peacebuilding policies by emphasising the links between economic development and long-term stability. Such a focus on stability borrows from the rhetoric that I observed particularly in the security angle of the EU's peacebuilding policies (cf. Chapter 4), thereby discursively aligning the development and security agendas and giving the impression that both are in fact compatible. The conceptualisation of the environment as a key component of post-conflict sustainable development plays a crucial role in creating the impression of a linear path between economic growth and long-term stability. More specifically, the recognition of the environment's productive and destructive tendencies in line with Polanyi's double movement give rise to neoliberalising policies which capitalise on both environmental challenges and opportunities and aim to promote deep structural reforms to align Kosovo's institutions with those of the EU. However, giving the impression that economic prosperity leads directly to long-term stability, the EU's policies in fact have negative unintended consequences. For instance, such a focus on future prosperity and stability leads to the institutionalisation of present socio-economic and institutional inequalities and injustices, such as structures of dependency between the national government and international donors (e.g. funding of environmental sector almost entirely through external investments) and the avoidance of deep-seated conflict dynamics (e.g. disputes over Kosovo's territory and independence). I argue that environmental peacebuilding in its current form does not recognise these types of underlying conflict dynamics as it takes the link between the environment and neoliberalisation for granted. This means that it does not currently possess the conceptual nuance to enable a much deeper understanding of the problems that arise surrounding the interweaving of economic prosperity with stability under the umbrella of the EU's neoliberalising reforms. Thereby, it misses the socio-ecological inequalities and injustices that are institutionalised into the peacebuilding process by focusing on the use the environment in striving for an 'ideal' end-state of sustainable development. Nonetheless, as the EU's enlargement policies focus predominantly on the overhaul of socio-economic and institutional structures, we are yet to examine the security angle of the peacebuilding process in Kosovo. I explore this in more detail in the next section.

5.3 Sustainability, security and the failure to address territorial tensions: exploring the lack of the environmental conflict dimension in the EU's CFSP in Kosovo

To comprehend how understandings of the environment in sustainable development affect the EU's peacebuilding process, we need to consider the implications of the convergence of the

security and development agendas in EU external policies. Having analysed the components of EU peacebuilding in Kosovo which concentrate predominantly on the alignment of Kosovo's post-conflict institutions and economy with EU standards, I now turn to an analysis of the security angle of the EU's peacebuilding in Kosovo. In this regard, the civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX Kosovo) represents the foreign security angle of EU action in Kosovo, alongside the EU-brokered Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue (on the Normalisation of Relations). In the following, I trace the change in EULEX mandates between 2008 and 2016 to determine what, if any, conceptualisation of the environment in the context of peace and conflict emerges. My analysis demonstrates that considerations for the environment (and economic development) take a backseat in the face of short-term stability and the maintenance of the status quo. This emphasis on stability and the status quo is equated with the notion of sustainability, which I argue borrows from the rhetoric of the development angle of the EU's peacebuilding policies to give the impression that the development and security agendas are in fact compatible. The EU's approach to and ambiguity on Kosovo's status question, which fails to recognise the role of the territory in sustaining the conflict, emerges as a significant obstacle to the peacebuilding process, which I discuss towards the end of the section.

First, EULEX was established in 2008 and fully operational by April 2009 following a two-year preparatory period, during which the EU Planning Team (EUPIT) Kosovo initiated the transition of responsibilities from the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to EULEX in line with UNSC resolution 1244/99 (Council of the European Union, 2006a, 2008a). The post-conflict crisis management operation – the largest ever financed by the EU – was created in order to “monitor, mentor and advise” Kosovo institutions to “ensure maintenance and promotion of rule of law, public order and security” (Council of the European Union, 2008a; European Union, 2010). Under the strategic guidance of the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP), EULEX works closely with other international actors, such as NATO's peacekeeping force Kosovo Force (KFOR), to ensure coordination and coherence in the international approach on the ground (Council of the European Union, 2008a, p. 95).

Before proceeding with the analysis of EULEX mandates, a brief overview of the formal structure of the mission is necessary here to grasp how it interacts with and is integrated into Kosovo's institutional structures. Up until the latest amendment to its mandate in June 2018 (Council of the European Union, 2018b), EULEX was divided into two general divisions: the Executive Division and the Strengthening Division. The former assumed responsibilities over

the investigation and prosecution of sensitive and serious crimes (e.g. war crimes, corruption and organised crime, etc.), supported by special units, such as EULEX Judges, EULEX Prosecutors, EULEX Police and the EULEX-internal Department of Forensic Medicine (EULEX Kosovo, n.d.-a). The latter focused on local capacity-building by means of monitoring, mentoring and advising, including special units for police or border issues, and correctional services (EULEX Kosovo, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). Over the years, an increasing number of cases were transferred from EULEX Executive Division to Kosovar prosecutors and judges, who continued to receive assistance from EULEX Strengthening Division on some cases. The 2014 mandate provided for a substantial restructuring of the mission on a strategic level. It introduced a policy of “no new cases”, transferred responsibility over judicial institutions to local leadership, and integrated EULEX judges and prosecutors into Kosovo’s judicial system (Council of the European Union, 2015b, p. 74). Continuing this process of transferral of responsibilities, EULEX is set to be gradually phased out with the establishment of Kosovo’s Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor’s Office. This special court will continue investigations into highly sensitive cases (such as war crimes committed by former KLA members who now hold political positions) from abroad to guarantee witness safety and limit political interference (Republic of Kosovo, 2015c). Against this background, the most recent amendment to the mandate of EULEX in June 2018 axed the Executive and Strengthening Divisions, leaving only a section on monitoring and operations. Under the new mandate, EULEX transferred all cases to Kosovar courts and judges, and its competences were limited to capacity-building by means of monitoring and advising, with only little executive responsibilities remaining in forensic medicine and Witness Protection Programmes. This mandate will be reviewed in June 2020 (Council of the European Union, 2018b).

Although the Council amended the mandate of EULEX over the years to reflect legal changes in the overarching fabric of the EU (particularly post-Lisbon) and to adjust the mission’s budget, its overall objective, namely the support of rule of law to consolidate regional stability, remained the same. This is crucial as the initial 2008 mandate closely interlinked the notions of stability and sustainability. This is perhaps unsurprising, given that the EU identified the SDGs as a core component of its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in a recent report setting out its priorities (Council of the European Union, 2018a). In fact, in the original EULEX mandate there is a gradual transition from one notion to the other, being used in the same context with essentially the same meaning. For instance, the Council initially reiterated the EU’s increasing role in “strengthening stability in the region” (Council of the European Union, 2008a, p. 92), then proceeded to declare the EU’s support to Kosovo on its “path towards sustainable

stability” (2008a, p. 92), before it provided for EULEX to aid Kosovo’s institutions in their “progress towards sustainability and accountability” (2008a, p. 93). This rhetorical shift hints at an underlying equation of ‘stability’ with ‘sustainability’, which stands in contrast to the development-based notion of sustainability that is advocated in the context of the EU’s external policies, and operationalised through its technical regional strategy and enlargement policies in the Western Balkans (see sections above). Even in the most recent mandate, the Council set out that EULEX was to support Kosovo’s institutions “on their path towards increased ... sustainability” (Council of the European Union, 2018b, p. 6). In a recent report, the European Commission confirmed that EULEX played a vital role in “establishing sustainable ... rule of law institutions” (European Commission, 2019, p. 90). While at first sight this terminology appears unproblematic as it merely depicts a choice of words to indicate continuity in overlapping policy areas, I argue that against the background of the enlargement policies borrowing from the security and stability rhetoric, the focus on sustainability is intended to give an impression of continuity and compatibility of the enlargement and the CFSP agendas. Referring to similar concepts in different contexts and using them almost interchangeably points towards frictions and tensions within the EU’s peacebuilding strategy, as it creates the conceptually ambiguous atmosphere in which unjust and exploitative practices can be introduced, legitimised and institutionalised for the rhetorical sake of sustainability. I examine this issue in much more detail in the next chapter.

At the same time, EULEX mandates reveal that responsibilities for guaranteeing policy coherence have shifted after Lisbon. While the 2008 mandate provided for the Council and the Commission alike to ensure overall coherence and consistency in EU external action (Art. 17), this responsibility was transferred towards the HR/VP in 2010, who has since assumed a double-hatted role as Vice-President of the European Commission and Representative of the Union in matters of foreign affairs (Council of the European Union, 2010a, p. 14). Coordination of the civilian and military aspects of EU peacekeeping actions now falls within the responsibilities of the HR/VP.

However, as the 2010 Report by former HR/VP Catherine Ashton to the European Parliament on CFSP illustrates, the HR/VP identified stability as the key concern for EU action in Kosovo. In this regard, she reiterates that the prospect of European integration was “an anchor of stability” in the region (European Union, 2010), with the Western Balkans themselves being “intrinsic to the stability and prosperity of Europe” (European Union, 2010). By emphasising such geopolitical interdependence, she arguably reinforced the importance of stability in both CFSP as well as enlargement areas. EULEX is therefore not merely seen as a

provider of security in Kosovo, but also – and if not more importantly – within the EU itself. Against this background, she framed EULEX as “an agent of stability” (European Union, 2010).

There are significant commonalities between these findings and my analysis of enlargement policies in Kosovo in the previous sub-section. In fact, not only do EU self-interests in fostering stability abroad for security at home seem to have encroached from CFSP onto enlargement policies. But the dominance of the CFSP agenda in Kosovo seems to be due to the structural organisation of EU peacebuilding in Kosovo, the coordination of which depends on the success of the HR/VP to balance the interests of the European Commission on the one hand and of the Member States on the other. During one of my interviews in Pristina, a researcher at a local political institute explained the effects of the EU’s attempt at combining the enlargement and CFSP agendas to me. It is worth quoting their observation at length. They argued that

“the EU doesn’t have a clear stance on Kosovo. So, this is the most important thing. They have two competing strategies in Kosovo. One is enlargement strategy. ... which has conditionality and the rule of law above everything else. The other is the EU’s strategy for Kosovo that comes from the Common Foreign and Security Policy... which has to do with the stabilisation and harmonisation of relations with Serbia. These two strategies are at conflict with each other on many terms. Because you cannot install a rule of law culture in the main institutions, and at the same time work and do bargaining with this leadership. It’s not possible. So, CFSP wants to have this leadership here, to have them stable, because they use this leadership to make bad deals with Serbia.” (Interview M16Pr8⁴⁶)

Their account highlights the frictions and tensions that arise from the design of the peacebuilding policies themselves. Although considerations for short-term stability push to the foreground, this emphasis on *Realpolitik* in the CFSP branch of EU action in Kosovo is hardly surprising. As Wong has observed, “foreign and security policy is one of the last remaining bastions of national sovereignty” (Wong, 2011, p. 166). While such an influence of national interests on the sphere of EU foreign policy has the potential to shape and promote EU-wide interests and values, it can also lead to decisions that settle for the lowest common denominator; in this case, the lowest common denominator is short-term stability. Although not classifiable exclusively under the umbrella of CFSP, the outcomes of Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue on the Normalisation of Relations have the potential to undermine said stability and the status quo in which EULEX operates (Llaudes & Andrada, 2015). I examine the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue below.

⁴⁶ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 12th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

The Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue on the Normalisation of Relations was initiated following a UN General Assembly resolution (A/Res/64/298) tabled by Serbia and the EU27 in 2010 to commence an EU-brokered dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia (United Nations General Assembly, 2010). The Council of the European Union welcomed the possibility of commencing a dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia as “a factor for peace, security and stability in the region” (Council of the European Union, 2010b, p. 22). What began as a dialogue on technical issues was eventually upgraded to a high-level political process mediated by the HR/VP following the 2012 elections in Serbia (European Commission, 2013c, p. 5). In April 2013, both parties signed the so-called ‘First agreement in principles governing the normalization of relations’ (hereafter referred to as ‘the Brussels Agreement’). The European Commission hailed it as the foundation for the creation of “the conditions for building a common European future for both sides” (European Commission, 2013b). It is worth examining its provisions and implications on the status quo in more detail here.

Most importantly, the Brussels Agreement foresees the establishment of an Association/Community of Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo (Republic of Kosovo, 2013, paras. 1–4). While it essentially provides for the creation of institutional parallel structures, it integrates Serb police forces in the North of Kosovo into Kosovo Police (para. 7), embeds all judicial authorities into Kosovar legal structures (para. 10), and arranges for municipal elections in northern municipalities according to EU law (Republic of Kosovo, 2013, para. 11). However, Kosovo’s Constitutional Court ruled in 2015 that the establishment of an Association/Community of Serb majority municipalities was not in line with the constitution (Constitutional Court of the Republic of Kosovo, 2015, p. 39). In addition, while the agreement provided for a structured dialogue between the two conflicting parties, it has widely been criticised, even before the ruling of the Constitutional Court, as it entailed the reshuffling of the balance of power in the North of Kosovo. Even my interviewees working in high-level positions at the European institutions acknowledged that the dialogue “is a kindergarten really” (Interview S16Br34, Participant A⁴⁷) that “they [Kosovars] see this as being purely in Serbia’s interest” (Interview S16Br29⁴⁸). Local critics were vocal from the onset. For example, as the Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED) critiqued, the dialogue was initially met by the Kosovar population with hopeful expectations for a peace treaty in line with Kosovo’s independence and sovereignty. Instead, upon signing of the Brussels Agreement, these

⁴⁷ Interview conducted by the author in Brussels, Belgium, on 21st September 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁴⁸ Interview conducted by the author in Brussels, Belgium, on 19th September 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

expectations turned into frustration and disillusionment with the government, as it became clear that it had agreed to an internal restructuring process. KIPRED criticised that the government of Kosovo had thereby essentially “mislead [sic.] the public opinion” (KIPRED, 2013, p. 4). Today, it appears that public perception of the dialogue is overwhelmingly negative. In line with what I was told by the above-mentioned EU official, many of my local interviewees were sceptical. One of them argued that “it’s not going to benefit Kosovo because it is going to turn it into a dysfunctional state” (Interview M16Pr12⁴⁹). A key reason behind this criticism is the fact that the Brussels Agreement restructured Serb political representation in the Serbian enclaves of Kosovo, having substituted local Kosovar-Serb structures for the Belgrade-sponsored Lista Srpska (Interview M16Pr17⁵⁰). As the director of a Pristina-based research institute explained to me,

“because after Brussels Agreement, the government in Belgrade created Lista Srpska, so the entire political spectrum of Serbs which had been organised in the past, disappeared, genuine political parties of Kosovo. So, obviously Lista Srpska is under full control of Belgrade. They are part of the government. So, in one way or the other, Serbia is part of decision-making in Kosovo through this Lista Srpska.” (Interview M16Pr22⁵¹)

Given such disagreements over the merits of the agreement in the context of the peace process, it is hardly surprising that implementation has stalled (European Commission, 2016c, p. 5, 2018a, p. 7).

Moreover, it is worth stressing that by focusing initially on more technical targets, the underlying issues were not addressed in the Dialogue (Ejdus, 2014). Kosovo’s status question has been circumvented and remains unsettled. In fact, the agreement holds that “[i]t is agreed that neither side will block, or encourage others to block, the other side’s progress in their respective EU paths” (para. 14), but it does not specify requirements in favour (or against) formal recognition of Kosovo by Serbia (Republic of Kosovo, 2013). This is partially due to the EU’s own ambiguity on Kosovo’s status question (c.f. Chapter 6 on the implications of failing to address Kosovo’s calls for independence).

In fact, the unresolved problem of the contested space that is Kosovo’s territory and its independence was an issue in the initial stages of the enlargement process. In 2006, against the background of the dissolution of the state union between Serbia and Montenegro, the European Commission acknowledged that solving Kosovo’s status question “could open the way for rapid

⁴⁹ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 16th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁵⁰ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 19th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁵¹ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 24th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

progress”, but simultaneously conceded that “[f]ailure would have serious consequences for the countries concerned, for the region, and for European security” (European Commission, 2006a, p. 3). Arguably, the conflict over Kosovo’s status broke with the value-laden discourse of European integration and brought the EU’s regional self-interests to the forefront.

Given the EU’s internal divisions on Kosovo, the Council reacted with diplomatic hesitation to the declaration of independence in 2008. It stated that it “takes note” of the resolution that was adopted in the Kosovo Assembly on 17 February and that it was up to the Member States to determine, “in accordance with national practice and international law, [...] their relations with Kosovo” (Council of the European Union, 2008b). Avoiding to take a clear EU-wide stance, the Council reiterated its commitment to the UN charter and the principles of territorial integrity and state sovereignty, clarifying that “Kosovo constitutes a *sui generis* case which does not call into question these principles” (Council of the European Union, 2008b).

What follows in the immediate post-independence years is a striking silence on issues related to resolving the status question and settling the territorial dispute. While there seems to have been some determination to reach a durable solution pre-independence, this determination has since evaporated. In fact, Kosovo’s status question emerges as the political ‘elephant in the room’ during the Berlin Process, which merely reminds Western Balkan countries to “resolv[e] outstanding bilateral and internal issues, and ... achiev[e] reconciliation within and between the societies of the region” (Press and Information Office of the Federal Government of Germany, 2014) and to refrain from using nationalist rhetoric. Such vagueness runs like a thread through EU peacebuilding policies in Kosovo, including the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue.

But what implications does the EU’s ambiguity on Kosovo’s independence have in the context of EULEX and the normalisation of relations? As observed above, maintaining domestic stability and a ‘sustainable’ status quo is the main underlying objective of EULEX, which in fact encroaches upon other policies under the peacebuilding umbrella. In this context, the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue has the potential to undermine said stability and status quo. As the Council recently stressed in the context of stalled talks, “the current status quo is not sustainable” (Council of the European Union, 2019, p. 21). The fact that the EU itself contributed to such unsustainability by promoting two different, at times clashing agendas which do not address the deeper divisions is disregarded. As Gashi et al. stress, this “paradigmatic ambiguity on the very question of what the dialogue means for the EU, for Kosovo and Serbia, and altogether for the EU’s relations with both countries” applies to many other policy areas and paralyses any progress towards a long-term resolution of the conflict (Gashi, Musliu, & Orbic, 2017, p. 550).

What do these insights into the security angle of the EU's peacebuilding policies tell us about how conceptualisations of the environment affect the peacebuilding process in Kosovo? My analysis demonstrates that as the link between the (material and socially produced) environment, conflict and peace is disregarded, the tensions surrounding Kosovo's territory bubble away under the surface and emerge as a key obstacle to resolving the conflict between Kosovo and Serbia. The EU itself has played a significant role in fostering these tensions by remaining ambiguous in its approach and by introducing policies that have institutionalised unsustainability in the form of socio-economic and institutional structures that undermine Kosovo's democracy. However, as the EULEX mandate and associated documents reveal, the EU attempts to create the impression of a coordinated approach by discursively reconciling the security with the development agenda through increased use of the sustainability rhetoric. I argue that rather than focusing on progress, this approach to sustainability emphasises the stability of the status quo in the region. I illustrate the implications for environmental peacebuilding research in the conclusion.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the EU's regional strategy in the Western Balkans and its peacebuilding policies in Kosovo, consisting of the enlargement process and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). I explored how the EU's overall understanding of the environment as instrumental to economic growth and human wellbeing is reflected in its peacebuilding policies in Kosovo and to what extent the EU peacebuilding policies in Kosovo reflect the conceptual ambiguity in understanding the link between conflict, peace and the environment that I observed in the previous chapter. My analysis revealed that in order to promote both short-term security and long-term development objectives at the same time (or to give the impression that both are indeed compatible), the EU's peacebuilding approach in Kosovo is built on a certain degree of conceptual ambiguity. I demonstrated that enabled by such conceptual ambiguity, the EU's peacebuilding policies revolve around two different and at times clashing notions of sustainability, namely a development-based and a security-based notion. The first notion presents sustainability as sustained economic growth, while the second promotes sustainability as the stability of the status quo.

My analysis illustrated that the EU's regional strategy in the Western Balkans and its enlargement agenda frame and operationalise sustainable development as the ideal end state of peacebuilding by interlinking stability (and hence security) with economic prosperity. Thereby,

they promote the assumption that economic prosperity directly leads to stability. An inherently anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment, which emphasises the contribution of its material dimension (i.e. biophysical processes and resources) to the gradual neoliberalisation of Kosovo's socio-economic and institutional structures, aids in interlinking economic prosperity with stability here. While this makes the environment a negotiable part of the competition over power and resources in the pursuit of the neoliberal idea of human wellbeing and progress, it reflects Polanyi's idea of the double movement of the self-regulating market. In this context, EU candidate countries are restructured to be able to capitalise on both the opportunities and challenges that the environmental sphere poses (e.g. creating new employment opportunities from a climate-induced shift towards a low-carbon economy). The institutionalisation of socio-ecological injustices and inequalities is justified here under the rhetorical umbrella of necessary mitigating efforts. In the case of Kosovo, these inequalities arise, for example, around the patterns of fiscal dependency that resulted from the EU's conceptualisation of the environment and allocation of associated financial resources exclusively in the context of their contribution to economic growth. Thereby, EU peacebuilding policies have created a situation where they themselves sustain tensions in Kosovo, which I will discuss in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

Second, my analysis demonstrated the implications of disregarding the territory as a contributing factor to the Kosovo conflict in the security angle of the EU's peacebuilding policies. I illustrated that considerations for the environment are pushed aside by a prioritisation of short-term stability and the maintenance of the status quo. This emphasis on stability and the status quo is equated with the notion of sustainability in the EU's key CFSP instrument, namely the EULEX mission. I argue that in the area of CFSP, the EU borrows from the development-focused rhetoric on sustainability to give the impression that the development and security agendas are in fact compatible. However, as these policies do not resolve the tensions that surround the contested space that is Kosovo's territory and its statehood, tensions continue to simmer under the surface.

In light of these findings, I argue that environmental peacebuilding currently lacks the theoretical framework to understand the implications of institutionalising such conceptual tensions and ambiguities into peacebuilding policies. This is because it does not yet possess the conceptual nuance necessary for researchers to conceptualise the deeper problems that arise from allegedly complementary peacebuilding policies promoting two different and at times clashing notions of sustainability. Due to the lack of such conceptual nuance, environmental peacebuilding is yet to develop the tools that are required to unpack the varying interests and agendas that can be promoted under the conceptual heading of 'sustainability' with the aim of

conveying policy coherence. I argue that researchers can begin to address these shortcomings by paying more attention to the tensions, power asymmetries, inequalities and injustices emerging from different understandings of ‘the environment’ and ‘sustainability’ in the context of security and development. This is particularly important if environmental peacebuilding is intended to contribute to “peace that is socially and politically relevant and desirable as well ecologically sensitive and viable” (Krampe, 2017a, p. 2).

I explore to what extent these conceptual tensions, enabled and reinforced by the EU’s specific conceptualisation of the environment, have permeated Kosovar domestic policy-making processes in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

Sustainability, economic growth and the status quo: identifying unsustainability in Kosovar policies

“Kosovo’s people will have a brighter and better future as part of the bigger Euro-Atlantic family. For Kosovo, there is no alternative to EU and Nato [sic.] membership. We do not have a Plan B, nor are we seeking one.

...[But w]e will not accept interim deals or [the] continuation of the status quo.”

- Hashim Thaçi, President of the Republic of Kosovo (2018)

Introduction

When Hashim Thaçi, the President of the Republic of Kosovo, published an opinion piece in the *Financial Times* in September 2018, he reflected on the state of his country ten years after it proclaimed independence from Serbia. Noting the progress that had been made and the obstacles that still needed to be overcome, he reaffirmed that the resolution of the conflict with Serbia was the only way to ensure Kosovo’s integration into the European Union and NATO (Thaçi, 2018). However, his proclamation of commitment to the dialogue with Serbia came at a time when both countries were discussing contentious land swaps. Thaçi and his Serbian counterpart Aleksandar Vučić explored the possibility of exchanging the Serb majority communities in Northern Kosovo for the Albanian majority communities in Serbia’s South-Eastern Preševo Valley (Capussela, 2018). Although it appeared as a possible solution to Kosovo’s contentious status question, it soon came to a halt amidst international backlash. EU Member States, like Germany, categorically ruled out any support for a redrawing of borders in the Western Balkans (Gray, 2018). By November 2018, the struggle over Kosovo’s independence had come to the foreground again, when Serbia blocked Kosovo’s bid to join Interpol and the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade finally broke down (Russell, 2019). At the time of writing, Kosovo’s independence, and the preservation of the status quo, continue to pose obstacles to regional stability in the Western Balkans.

As I have explored in the previous chapters, the integration of Kosovo into the EU, as well as the preservation of the status quo for the sake of stability – leaving Kosovo in limbo – form crucial components of the EU’s peacebuilding process in Kosovo. The analysis revealed that an anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment, which sees it predominantly in

terms of its biophysical processes and resources and their contribution to economic development, has become institutionalised into EU peacebuilding policies under the heading of sustainable development. At the same time, two distinct notions of sustainability emerge. These refer to, on the one hand, sustainability (development) as sustained economic growth, and on the other hand, sustainability (security) as regional stability. While at first glance, this terminology is unproblematic as it merely depicts a choice of words to indicate continuity in two overlapping policy fields (i.e. EU enlargement and Common Foreign and Security Policy), the underlying issues begin to emerge if we view it through the lens of environmental peacebuilding, which understands socio-environmental sustainability as one of the key means and aims of peacebuilding (c.f. Chapter 1, section 4). Although both the EU's enlargement policies and the Common Foreign and Security Policies (CFSP) work towards future 'sustainability', they promote different interests under the conceptual umbrella of 'sustainability' in Kosovo. For instance, enlargement policies prescribe a specific process of gradual neoliberalisation of Kosovo's structures towards EU standards, requiring deep reforms to support progress. In contrast, the CFSP agenda focuses on reinforcing the status quo for regional stability, hampering comprehensive political reforms which could endanger current arrangements of relative stability. However, this has direct bearing on how the EU treats the controversy surrounding Kosovo's territory. While the enlargement policies presuppose eventual international recognition of Kosovo's sovereignty over its territory, the CFSP agenda attempts to avoid recognition and the uncertainties that might come with it for the sake of regional stability. As I illustrate in this chapter, it is through these different approaches to sustainability that we can observe the emergence of unsustainabilities in Kosovo's peacebuilding process in Kosovo. These unsustainabilities become visible in the form of socio-economic and environmental inequalities and injustices, as well as frictions and tensions between peacebuilding actors.

Drawing on the theoretical arguments that I outlined in Chapter 2, in this chapter I aim to trace the emergence of such inequalities and injustices by paying attention to the processes of neoliberalisation that are institutionalised into the peacebuilding process. I do so by exploring two overarching questions. First, to what extent is the anthropocentric understanding of the environment, and with it the dual conceptualisation of sustainability, integrated into the domestic Kosovar policy-making process? To recall, the commodification of the environment as a prerequisite for (neoliberal) human progress and the detachment of humans from the constraints of the biophysical environment are core assumptions of this anthropocentric understanding of the environment, as identified in previous chapters. And second, what implications do such conceptualisations of the environment and sustainability have in the context of the peacebuilding

process? By illuminating these questions, we can assess the degree to which the neoliberalising, socio-economic structures that are promoted by EU peacebuilding policies have permeated post-conflict Kosovo. Using green political economy and political ecology approaches as set out in Chapter 2, I analyse where the unsustainability (in the form of inequalities and injustices) have become institutionalised. This will help provide insight into the frictions and tensions that arise among peacebuilding actors and conflict parties. Crucially, I do not consider unsustainability to refer exclusively to the environmental sphere. Instead, building on peace and conflict studies and political ecology, I take the term to include patterns of human exploitation, power asymmetries and structural inequalities that can feed into underlying conflict dynamics. This conceptualisation of unsustainability is particularly relevant for the second part of this chapter.

In the first section of the chapter, I set the scene by discussing how the government of Kosovo interweaves its own objectives with EU interests in the region, and how Kosovo's advancement towards a European neoliberal market economy has been written into Kosovar policies. I argue that the anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment serves the purpose of interweaving security and development objectives with domestic Kosovar policies, aligning Kosovo's interests with the regional agenda of the EU. This is crucial as Kosovo sees European integration as the path to universal recognition of its independence. In the second section, I explore the two notions of sustainability in Kosovar policies. First, I examine the institutionalisation of the development-based notion of sustainability. I argue that this conceptualisation of sustainability has deeply permeated and neoliberalised domestic Kosovar policy-making processes, resulting in the institutionalisation of unsustainable practices in the present for the sake of alleged future 'sustainability'. Second, I analyse the integration of the security-based notion of sustainability, illuminating how Kosovo deals with the EU disregarding the tensions that emerge from contestations over its territory. I argue that the government of Kosovo attempts to break with the EU's emphasis on the status quo and instead frames the recognition of Kosovo's independence as a key prerequisite for stability in the Western Balkans. Here, I illustrate the tensions and frictions that arise among the peacebuilding stakeholders over Kosovo's disputed territory and independence.

My analysis draws on a review of key policy documents, such as Government Annual Work Plans and the National Development Strategy. I selected the documents for analysis based on their contribution to setting the government's overarching policy direction.⁵² I contextualise the findings of the document analysis with insights from my interviews with stakeholders in

⁵² Please see Table 3 in Annex 1 for an overview of the documents that informed my analysis in this chapter.

Pristina, paying particular attention to what they reveal about underlying inequalities, injustices and tensions.⁵³ I argue that by not sufficiently considering these actually existing unsustainabilities (i.e. inequalities and injustices), when environmental peacebuilding scholars examine peacebuilding that works towards the establishment of ‘sustainable’ peace, they run the danger of brushing over seemingly small but nuanced differences of *whose* version of sustainable peace these peacebuilding policies are set out to support.

6.1. Kosovo and the EU: a convergence of interests?

Before I examine the different conceptualisations of sustainability (and inherent unsustainabilities) that have been institutionalised in Kosovar policies through the EU’s peacebuilding approach, I briefly explore how the government of Kosovo aligns its objectives with EU interests, and how Kosovo’s advancement towards a European neoliberal market economy has been written into Kosovo’s domestic policy-making processes. This allows me to assess the degree to which patterns that can reinforce injustices and inequalities have permeated domestic Kosovar policies. Below I use the example of the Kosovar government’s multiannual programmes setting out the policy priorities during its mandates from 2008-2011, 2011-2014, and 2015-2018 in order to show how the Kosovar government itself conceptualises the impact of the EU on the domestic agenda-setting process. These documents are particularly relevant as they provide a useful account of the changes in the overall policy strategy following Kosovo’s declaration of independence. Here, I focus specifically on (a) how the Kosovar government reaffirms key EU interests, and (b) to what extent the themes and narratives emerging from its policies overlap with the EU’s, with a particular emphasis on the conceptualisation of the environment.

Kosovar policy-makers appeal to the EU’s interests in two distinct ways. On the one hand, they reinforce the image of the EU as a guarantor of regional security in the Western Balkans, thereby creating a platform for framing Kosovo’s essential role in the success of the EU’s regional security strategy. On the other hand, they identify EU integration as Kosovo’s political end-goal, repeatedly reaffirming Kosovo’s readiness for deep reforms within the framework of EU accession. Such reaffirmation of EU interests is deliberate. By appealing to both the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policies (CFSP) as well as enlargement objectives, Kosovo’s government arguably attempts to intertwine its own strategic interest in acceding to

⁵³ Please see Annex 2 for an overview of the codes that emerged out of my analysis of the interview material in NVivo.

the EU as an independent, sovereign state with the EU's wider strategic interests in the Western Balkans. Let us explore these issues in more detail.

Governmental programmes from 2008 to 2018 show that Kosovo's domestic policies have been designed to complement and discursively align with the EU's interest in the region. The tone and choice of words used in Kosovo's policies mirror the language prevalent in EU policies. For example, the EU's key interests for engagement in the Western Balkans, namely regional stability and security, are framed as core components of Kosovo's domestic policies themselves. Examples of this harmonisation are scattered throughout the governmental programmes. The 2008 government programme sets out to create policies that "enable Kosovo to ensure permanent peace, stability, security and cooperation with the states of the region" (Office of the Prime Minister, 2008, p. 4). In 2011, the Government of Kosovo proclaimed its aim to ensure that Kosovo would act as "a factor of stability in the region" (Office of the Prime Minister, 2011, p. 24). In 2015, the Government of Kosovo made this connection even clearer. In the context of reaffirming its commitment to becoming an EU member state, the government argued that EU accession "will enable the country [Kosovo] ... to contribute in [sic] security, stability and prosperity in this part of Europe, based on democratic principles and values" (Republic of Kosovo, 2015d, p. 43). Such alignment of Kosovar policies with the EU's emphasis on regional stability indicates that the EU's own interests in guaranteeing the post-war status quo have played a significant role in directing Kosovo's reforms when the EU took over leadership from the UN in 2008. However, as I show in sub-section 6.2.2 below, this emphasis on the status quo appears no longer compatible with Kosovo's claims for sovereignty.

While this broad emphasis on security and stability emerges from provisions in the EU's CFSP pillar, the government makes more specific references to the importance of the European enlargement process in devising governmental policy priorities over the years. For instance, in 2008, shortly after Kosovo's declaration of independence, the government proclaimed that "[t]he will, purpose and final destination of Kosovo is, undoubtedly, the European Union. The objective that Kosovo becomes part of EU ... requires a serious institutional engagement by the Government towards the formal pre-accession process" (Office of the Prime Minister, 2008, p. 4). On a technical level, EU standards provide the necessary guidelines for restructuring Kosovo's institutions and policy reforms post-independence. In the context of the environmental sector, these undertakings focus specifically on the mitigation of environmental degradation and pollution. For instance, the government states that Kosovo's energy system is to be overhauled with consideration to the "precise implementation of international norms on protection of environment [sic]" (2008, p. 10). There is a lack of detail about what such

international environmental norms entail, making it difficult to assess the very nature of the norms that are to be institutionalised. However, given that with its declaration of independence Kosovo moved from UN administration to EU trusteeship, I argue that this statement does not only signify institutional harmonisation, but also the readiness for a normative alignment of Kosovo with EU principles. This is particularly important in the context of framing Kosovo's natural place among European states, as I discussed in Chapter 3. The government's reflection of the EU's understanding of the linkages between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development supports this assumption. In this respect, the government acknowledged that "[e]nvironmental protection ... has a direct impact on the economic and social development" of the country (Office of the Prime Minister, 2008, p. 50).

In 2011, the government of Kosovo reaffirmed its commitment to EU enlargement objectives, highlighting that "[t]he future of Kosovo lies in the European Union and among the free, integrated and developed nations, where the principles of market economy, open society and democratic institutions are valued and respected" (Office of the Prime Minister, 2011, p. 3). The shift from a commitment to technical reforms and institutional alignment to normative convergence is noteworthy here. Arguably, the government's framing of Kosovo as inherently European – and therefore as a natural EU candidate country – has become even more pronounced in recent years. For example, in its 2015-2018 Governmental Programme, the government roots its motivations and actions in European norms and values. It specifies that,

“[i]n the foundation of the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo and in its operational philosophy are included European democratic values ... which represent the basement of modern European society in Kosovo [sic]” (Republic of Kosovo, 2015d, p. 5).

As I outlined in Chapter 3 on the perceptions of the Kosovo conflict, highlighting the European nature of Kosovar society is a crucial aspect of countering Serbia's framing of Kosovo as the Muslim, non-European 'Other'. In the context of the EU enlargement process, making the 'Europeanness' of Kosovo explicit serves a crucial function. It changes the narrative of Kosovo as a backward, post-conflict country held hostage by a corrupt ruling elite to a progressive society that shares the fundamental values of the EU. Thereby, it conceptualises Kosovo's natural place among equal states in Europe. However, this raises questions about the recognition of Kosovo's independence. There is an underlying tension between Kosovo's active proclamation of its 'Europeanness' and its pursuit of territorial sovereignty. Although Kosovo's government frames EU integration as the path towards independence (c.f. section 6.2.2 below),

my analysis in the previous chapters has shown that the tensions within the building blocks of the EU's peacebuilding policies themselves are holding Kosovo back.

Along with this reaffirmation of key EU principles, Kosovo's conceptualisation of the environment in sustainable development as conveyed in the governmental programmes has become more nuanced too. Here, the government highlights the commodification of the environment as a prerequisite for the neoliberalising development of Kosovo's socio-economic structures. For instance, while in 2011 the government simply disregarded the environment as one of the three dimensions of sustainable development and conceptualised it as a subcategory of social policies (Office of the Prime Minister, 2011, p. 13), it prominently features under the heading of natural resources for economic growth in the 2015 governmental programme. Adherence to European standards plays a crucial role here. The government vows to "be engaged for an optimal utilization of Kosovo energy resources, as a public good for future generations as well, by meeting European environmental criteria" (Republic of Kosovo, 2015d, p. 19). Therefore, while the governmental programmes reflect the EU's overall instrumental conception of the environment that emerges from its country-specific peacebuilding policies in Kosovo (c.f. Chapter 5), the government closely interweaves this conception of the environment with issues relating to intergenerational justice. It notes that the "protection of the environment is an obligation and commitment for the wellbeing of future generations" (Republic of Kosovo, 2015d, p. 20), clearly underlining the environment's value in terms of human welfare. While this emphasis on intergenerational justice is indeed a key feature of sustainable development, the interlinking of environmental protection with intergenerational justice is primarily a rhetorical formality. There are indications of this in the narrative that emerges in Kosovo's more technical and sector-specific policies. For example, in the 2017 Energy Strategy, environmental protection is no longer conceptualised as an international norm, but as a provision of the EU's Energy Community. Here, the government states that "as an Energy Community contracting party, Kosovo has an obligation to implement European Directives related to the environment" (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017b, p. 15). Against the background of such a focus on the enlargement agenda and the legislative harmonisation with the *acquis*, Kosovo's domestic policies are heavily influenced by the EU's regional strategy. They mirror the overall (discursive) direction and technical tone of EU policies in Kosovo.

While this comparison between the governmental programmes provides a mere snapshot of the EU's influence on domestic policy-making, it allows us to draw one crucial conclusion here: borrowing from the EU's terminology, domestic Kosovar policies closely intertwine security and development objectives, framing the advancement of Kosovo's market economy in

line with European standards as a core component of establishing stability in the Western Balkans. Thereby, the government of Kosovo ties the success of their own policies to EU strategic interests in the region. This process is characterised by the government discursively reproducing the EU's values and principles as being fundamentally anchored in Kosovo's society, while simultaneously committing to the technical details of EU peacebuilding policies. However, not only does this result in Kosovo institutionalising the neoliberalising normative and socio-economic structures of the EU, but it also provides the background against which the government of Kosovo attempts to break with the status quo. I illustrate this argument in more detail in sub-section 6.2.2.

Having determined the close discursive and technical alignment of Kosovo's policies with the strategic interests of the EU in the Western Balkans, I now explore the conceptualisations of sustainability in Kosovo's policy-making processes. In the next section, I examine to what extent the EU's emphasis on development-based and security-based sustainability has been institutionalised into Kosovo's domestic policies and what implications this has for the wider peacebuilding process.

6.2 The different conceptions of (un)sustainability and their implications for Kosovo's peacebuilding process

The narratives of sustainability play a prominent role in guiding and legitimising Kosovar domestic policies. As I have shown above, since Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence, the government of Kosovo has aligned its policies in both rhetoric and technical detail to the CFSP and enlargement agendas of the EU. It is therefore unsurprising that the EU's anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment in terms of its commodification in economic development and its instrumental use for human progress has been transposed into Kosovo's domestic policy-making processes. In this context, sustainability is often used interchangeably with the notions of economic sustainability, stability and security. However, collapsing different assumptions of sustainability into one creates significant challenges for 'sustainable' peacebuilding as it is uncertain whose idea of sustainable peace the policies in fact promote. I explore these narratives and their implications in the below sub-sections.

6.2.1 Sustainability = sustained economic growth: Building Kosovo's neoliberal market economy

The EU's focus on development-based sustainability has been transposed into domestic Kosovar policies in the context of boosting post-conflict economic growth. In this sub-section, I review selected key policy documents to illustrate how Kosovar policy-makers have institutionalised the development-based concept of sustainability for post-conflict peacebuilding. These documents include, among others, the National Development Strategy, the Economic Reform Programmes (2015-2018) and the National Programme for Implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement. I synthesise the findings from the policy documents with insights from my interviews with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in Pristina to assess the implications of this process for wider peacebuilding efforts in Kosovo.

The National Development Strategy (NDS) provides crucial examples of the conceptualisation of sustainability in terms of economic development. Created as a cross-sectorial policy strategy extending beyond legislative government cycles, the government introduced the strategy in January 2016 with the purpose of identifying and addressing some of the key factors hampering Kosovo's economic growth. Although the strategy engages with the rhetoric of sustainable development, it only appeals to two of the three pillars of sustainable development itself. In this regard, it focuses primarily on "ensur[ing] highest annual economic growth rates" and "social cohesion and inclusion parallel with economic growth" (Republic of Kosovo, 2016c, p. 5), while almost entirely disregarding the environmental dimensions. Against this background, the NDS makes frequent use of the EU's sustainable development jargon. It includes references to the "threat[s] from extreme weather cycles due to climate change" (2016c, p. 49), the need for a "balance between development needs and environmental protection" (2016c, p. 8), and the acknowledgement that "[i]ndustrial development and market research have begun exerting serious pressure on natural resources ... damaging the basic living infrastructure – the ecosystem" (*ibid*). While we can expect the trade-off between growth and environmental protection to feature as a valid concern in a country's development strategy, the precise provisions of the development strategy severely undermine any of these rhetorical concerns for sustainable development as environmentally friendly economic growth.

For instance, one of the key actions to boost development is the "utilization of Kosovo's mining potential at the service of economic development", entailing the revitalisation of the Trepça mine in the North of Kosovo (Republic of Kosovo, 2016c, p. 29). Crucially, the government of Kosovo envisages the exploitation of Kosovo's estimated 12 billion tons of lignite resources alongside the construction of a new lignite power plant to tackle uncertainties in

Kosovo's energy supply (Republic of Kosovo, 2016c, p. 41). Within this framework, the National Development Strategy states that “[r]eliable supply will improve people’s wellbeing. Increased investments will facilitate higher economic growth rates and sustainable development” (Republic of Kosovo, 2016c, p. 41). The underlying paradox of lignite-powered ‘sustainable’ development is not addressed, strengthening the assumption that ‘sustainability’ of development means sustained economic growth. Forms of socio-environmental sustainability take a backseat. As I explain in more detail in Chapter 7, lignite is the dirtiest and most polluting form of coal, which is thought to have severe impacts in terms of environmental pollution and human health.

A high-level representative of a Kosovar civil society network put this in perspective. They told me, “you know, everything is sort of linked with the lignite capacities that Kosovo has, but no one thinks about the side-effects, the external factors, the health factors. Like how are they harming the environment and the future generations... [sic]” (Interview M16Pr3, Participant B⁵⁴). One of their colleagues supported this argument, questioning the short-termism of the Kosovar government: “Well, you see ... the idea is to grow fast. And when you grow fast, in a way, maybe you cause more harm in the long-run” (Interview M16Pr3, Participant A⁵⁵). These insights indeed indicate that, as the government of Kosovo is preoccupied with boosting growth in the present, it does not consider its impact on socio-ecological equity in the future. As stated above, I explore the issue of Kosovo’s reliance on lignite in more detail in the following chapter. While such a prioritisation of economic development over issues of environmental protection or social equity is often typical for EU accession countries (see e.g. Burns, Carter, & Worsfold, 2012, p. 55), it is the persistence of conflict dynamics in Kosovo that raises additional problems here.

For example, the ownership and management of Trepça, which is located close to the northern city of Mitrovica, continues to be a cause of disagreement between Serbia and Kosovo. Although part of Kosovo’s territory, Serbia has repeatedly claimed ownership over the mining complex and the associated revenues (Pantovic, 2016). In 2016, Kosovo introduced a disputed law which set out the nationalisation of Trepça and placed 80 percent of its ownership into the hands of the government of Kosovo, highlighting that “[m]ineral resources shall be the property of the Republic of Kosovo” (Republic of Kosovo, 2016a, p. 6). However, by the time of writing, three years later, the law has not been implemented yet and the issue over ownership is still far from resolved (Office of the Prime Minister, 2018, p. 6). Recent suggestions by senior EU

⁵⁴ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 5th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁵⁵ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 5th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

officials to tackle the issue of Trepça in talks on the normalisation of relations with Serbia have bewildered Kosovar politicians (Prishtina Insight, 2019). This is unsurprising given that the revitalisation of Trepça forms the core aspect of the government's strategic priority of "exploiting the country's natural resources as a power generator of economic growth and job creation" (Republic of Kosovo, 2019, para. 3.6). It is important to see references to the use of mining for economic growth in Kosovo's domestic policy documents against the background of these ongoing tensions.

With the government of Kosovo clearly determined to revitalise its northern mining complex for economic growth, the references to sustainability made throughout the National Development Strategy seem like simple catchphrases. Without any provision of necessary background or detail, they give the impression that dominant principles of key donors, such as the EU's emphasis on environmental sustainability, are simply repeated to discursively underline issues of policy harmonisation and legitimacy. Such discursive alignment reflects processes of institutional isomorphism⁵⁶ that often emerge against the background of harmonisation of EU legislation (Radaelli, 2000, p. 27). For instance, in the context of improving energy efficiency, the strategy vaguely states that energy inefficiency "produces environmental effects, making the development unsustainable" (Republic of Kosovo, 2016c, p. 3). No further specification is given as to what these environmental effects or patterns of unsustainability are. Further to such ambiguity, some attempts of reflecting donors' concerns for (economic) sustainability are on the verge of being void of any meaning. For example, listing specific actions for the expansion of the Trepça mine, the strategy sets out the "[d]ecision to increase the ... business/ industrial production of Trepça by supporting onto a more reasonable economical, technological, social and environmental alternative [sic.]" (Republic of Kosovo, 2016c, p. 36). What this decision actually means remains unclear. As one interviewee put it when we spoke about the discursive tactics of the Kosovar government, "when [the] government talks about sustainable development, [it] is to give an easy, sexy framing [for] their political rhetoric" (Interview M16Pr12⁵⁷).

Such reiterations of the development-based notion of sustainability appear particularly relevant in the context of the National Development Strategy "serv[ing] as a vehicle to push forward the Kosovo's European integration agenda [sic.]" (Republic of Kosovo, 2016c, p. 53). Situating the strategy in the process of European enlargement in the Western Balkans, the

⁵⁶ For key insights into the emergence of institutional isomorphism, please see DiMaggio and Powell (1991). For further work on its relevance in the EU context, please refer to Bicchi (2006) and Aspinwall and Schneider (2000).

⁵⁷ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 16th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

document functions as a prominent scorecard for aligning domestic policies with EU enlargement provision. Therefore, by highlighting the instrumental conception of the environment for human and economic benefit, Kosovo mirrors EU peacebuilding and enlargement policies, establishing the foundations for Kosovo to become an active contributor to the EU's neoliberal market economy.

This is problematic as it leads to the institutionalisation of socio-ecological inequalities and injustices that are inherent to the neoliberal market economy promoted by the EU. It provides the institutional and structural framework within which Kosovo's reforms are to be realised. I illustrate this argument here by using a key finding of the 'First report on the implementation and results of the National Development Strategy', which was published by the Office of the Prime Minister in 2018. In this document, the government reviews the progress on the implementation of the National Development Strategy. Against the background of the above-mentioned discursive ambiguity on sustainability, the government's assessment of measure 25 to "build new and sustainable power generation capacities" focuses exclusively on the progress that has been made with regard to 'sustainable' (as in reliable) coal power (Office of the Prime Minister, 2018, pp. 29–30). The government notes that "indicator targets have been met and exceeded" (Office of the Prime Minister, 2018, p. 30). Renewables are excluded from this section on 'sustainable power generation'. Instead, the use of renewables is reviewed under measure 28 ("rational use of renewable energy sources"). However, the government strikingly notes that "implementation is in an advanced stage", yet "no data has been recorded for this indicator [energy produced from renewable resources]" (Office of the Prime Minister, 2018, p. 31). The government therefore aligns its policies discursively with the EU's (neoliberalising) enlargement policies under the heading of sustainable economic growth, yet practically promotes practices that are environmentally and socially unsustainable. I will provide a more detailed analysis of the implications of this process in Chapter 7.

A crucial factor here appears to be the perceived costs that are associated with finding a balance between environmental protection and economic growth. For instance, in its programme for 2015-2018, the government of Kosovo notes that identifying and implementing a "solution for environmental problems is very expensive" (Republic of Kosovo, 2015d, p. 21). It appears that the government often uses the argument of lacking funds to justify the prioritisation of economic growth over environmental considerations. A statement by former Minister of Environment and Spatial Planning Ferid Agani during an interview in Pristina reinforces this assumption. When I asked him why the environmental sector received so little attention from the government, he explained that

“we know that the best care for [the] environment is taken by countries who have large economic development. So, we need to develop infrastructure that will make possible stronger economic development and from that position, with more budget resources, address increasing environmental needs. [sic]” (Agani, 2016⁵⁸)

Therefore, although negative implications of coal-powered economic growth might be evident – at least to the Minister of Environment – the solution to mitigating the negative environmental externalities of economic development appears to be, perhaps unsurprisingly, more development. The concept of the Environmental Kuznets Curve captures this argument in the form of an inverted U-curve (Grossman & Krueger, 1996). It depicts the increased pollution levels caused by economic growth but argues that once income reaches a certain point, pollution decreases while environmental institutions improve, leading to greater levels of environmental protection than pre-growth. As I observed in Chapter 2, the argument of acceptable levels of environmental degradation and socio-ecological exploitation in the present for future improved environmental sustainability reflects the ability of the neoliberal economy to “fail forward” by creating the impression that the negative effects of its perpetual growth will eventually be outbalanced with the positive effects of continuous growth (Peck, 2010, p. 6). However, these assumptions give the false impression of clear causal relationships, while oversimplifying complex socio-environmental systems that cannot be generalised (see e.g. Dauvergne, 2017, p. 401; Kaika & Zervas, 2013; Stevenson, 2018, pp. 50-56).

The National Development Strategy and its implementation report are not the only sources providing insight into the development-based conceptualisation of sustainability in domestic Kosovar policies. Kosovo clearly mirrors the EU’s approach to sustainability as sustained economic growth. This becomes even more evident when we consider the national Economic Reform Programmes (ERPs) between 2015 and 2018. The aim of the ERPs is to create domestic “[g]rowth enabling infrastructure covering energy, transportation, exploitation of Kosovo’s natural resources in an environmentally friendly way” (Republic of Kosovo, 2015a, p. 7). Based on this summary of policy priorities, all ERPs to date equate sustainability, stability and security with the durability of economic growth, public finances, trade balance, energy supply, etc. (Republic of Kosovo, 2015a, 2017b, 2018e). In the 2018 ERP, the government acknowledges that “[e]nvironmental services have been recognized as an emerging constraint” to economic growth because they have a “negative impact on competitiveness ... in the future” (Republic of Kosovo, 2018e, pp. 58–59). The instrumental, negative conception of the environment as an obstacle to growth is a recurring theme in the ERPs. This is neither surprising nor necessarily exclusive to the Kosovar context (c.f. Chapter 3 and 4). Rather, it reflects what

⁵⁸ Interview conducted by author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 26th May 2016.

Harvey termed as the “creative destruction” of neoliberalising processes, which are simultaneously enabled and constrained by the biophysical environment (Harvey, 2005, p. 3).

However, aside from reinforcing the EU’s anthropocentric approach to the environment in terms of its instrumental value to human wellbeing, and with it the development-based conception of sustainability in Kosovar policies, the ERPs raise another crucial issue here. They draw attention to frictions between the EU institutions and their own Member States. More specifically, the 2018 ERP illuminates disagreements over conceptualisations of the environment for economic development, and of sustainability as sustained economic growth. In this regard, the German Embassy in Kosovo made the following remark on the 2018 ERP:

“Unfortunately, there are no measures indicated to improve environmental infrastructure for waste water treatment, solid waste management, etc. However, this is key for the EU approximation. Kosovo needs an environmentally, socially and environmentally balanced development” (Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Republic of Kosovo, 2018, p. 151).

While this remark remains within the conceptual sphere of the environment as instrumental to ‘balanced’ development in the context of the European integration process, it signifies an attempt at resisting a version of economic development, in which the environmental dimension of sustainable development is considered as an afterthought. The response of the government of Kosovo, however, puts this comment in perspective. Rather than the neglect for broader environmental concerns in the ERPs being a conscious decision on part of the Kosovar government, it argues that it in fact merely followed rules set out by the European Commission: “Environmental measures or environmental development issues are not part of the ERP structure as defined by EC [European Commission]” (Republic of Kosovo, 2018e, p. 164). The conceptualisation of the environment and sustainability that emerges from Kosovo’s domestic policies has therefore been prescribed by an EU institution. Yet, it is not universally accepted within its own ranks, hinting at existing tensions between the different stakeholders in the peacebuilding process.

Against this background, the European Reform Agenda (ERA), which was introduced in 2016 with the intention of streamlining Kosovo’s efforts of implementing the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, focuses on economic and social issues alone (Republic of Kosovo, 2016b). In fact, the heavy focus on the sustainability of economic growth appears to be prescribed by the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (i.e. by the EU itself), setting out Kosovo’s contractual responsibilities in the EU integration process. As the National Programme for Implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (hereafter referred to as

NPISAA) outlines, the priorities for the first stage of Kosovo's domestic reforms during 2016-2021 concentrate on preparing Kosovo's economy for the EU internal market and implementing key policies in the areas of security and justice (Republic of Kosovo, 2017c, p. 15). Reviewing Kosovo's progress on reforms to meet the Copenhagen criteria⁵⁹, the NPISAA reiterates that "a functional market economy is the first Copenhagen criteria" (p. 50). In this context, the document emphasises the need for Kosovo to meet the stability and sustainability of its public finances and economic performance (p. 50). Noting that, "Kosovo needs to continue efforts in creating a functional market economy", the NPISAA highlights improved competitiveness, privatization and growth to tackle unemployment as key priority areas (pp. 50-51). Given that the SAA is the cornerstone of EU enlargement, which in turn is a core component of the EU's overall peacebuilding process in Kosovo, the focus on sustainability as sustained economic growth is fundamentally prescribed by the EU. However, as I examine in more detail in subsection 6.2.2, Kosovo actively mirrors these narratives to promote its own agenda, namely universal recognition of its territorial sovereignty.

The above analysis therefore shows specific examples for policies that have been devised by a post-conflict country which strives to be integrated into the globally oriented neoliberal market economy of the EU. However, I discussed the implications of commodifying the environment in the process and aiming to temporarily decouple growth from environmental constraints. As I outlined in Chapter 2, rather than freeing economic growth from environmental degradation, such neoliberalising policy approaches lead to the unravelling of the link between humans and the environment. This provides the setting in which socio-ecological exploitative practices (such as the focus on mining and coal power for 'environmentally friendly' development, in which costs and benefits are unevenly distributed) can emerge. But what precisely does this tell us about how understandings of the environment affect the EU's peacebuilding process in Kosovo? My analysis demonstrated that the EU's development-based approach to sustainability as sustained economic growth has deeply permeated domestic Kosovar policy-making processes on the basis of policy harmonisation with the EU integration strategy. On the one hand, the conceptualisation of the environment as inherently anthropocentric, i.e. as a core component of economic development and as instrumental to human wellbeing, enables and reinforces this focus on growth. On the other hand, when used as an analytical lens, it can help pinpoint how unsustainabilities in the form of socio-ecological inequalities and injustices are inscribed into the policies themselves. The EU's peacebuilding

⁵⁹ The Copenhagen Criteria, which were determined at the European Council meeting in Copenhagen in 1993, define the conditions that countries undergoing the European integration process need to meet (European Council, 1993).

policies export a notion of sustainability, which is interchangeable with the stability of the economy, thereby emphasising the process of neoliberalising Kosovo's society and economy for integration into the European market. While in the above analysis I provided a glimpse of the unsustainabilities that this process institutionalises into Kosovo's policies, I analyse a more detailed example of how it leads to practical injustices and inequalities in the wider peacebuilding process in the next chapter. Here, such an emphasis on future economic sustainability can be used to legitimise unsustainable practices in the present and create frictions between the different stakeholders in the peacebuilding process. The revitalization of the Trepça mining complex under the heading of 'sustainable energy generation' as a way to mitigate the negative socio-ecological externalities of economic development is a case in point.

However, such anthropocentric understandings of the environment not only reflect, enable and reinforce the notion of sustainability as economic growth. In line with the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), sustainability is also equated with regional stability and security. But different, at times clashing agendas can hide underneath the labels of sustainability, stability and security. Unlike the EU's focus on the sustainability (i.e. stability) of the status quo, Kosovo's approach is greatly influenced by specific interpretations of history that surround its territory, which I argue is better understood as a contested space containing different material and ideational meanings. In this light, Kosovo appears to equate sustainability with stability in a scenario where it breaks with the status quo. It frames its recognition as an independent, sovereign state on the world stage as a key prerequisite for stability. But I argue that by promoting different agendas under the same conceptual banner, frictions emerge between the EU and Kosovo, and between Kosovo and Serbia, in the peacebuilding process. Against this background, it is important to note that although the emphasis on sustainability has to a certain extent been imposed by the EU, Kosovo reflects these narratives to give the impression that it acts in line with the EU's conditions, when in fact it promotes its own agenda. I explore this in more detail in the next section.

6.2.2 Sustainability = stability ≠ status quo: Exploring the issue of Kosovo's territorial sovereignty

The second manner in which domestic Kosovar policies have integrated the EU's understanding of sustainability focuses on the security-based notion of sustainability as regional stability. However, unlike the EU which equates regional stability with the preservation of the status quo - which leaves the material and ideational disputes over Kosovo's territory unresolved - Kosovo

breaks with this narrative. Instead, it interweaves regional stability in the Western Balkans with universal recognition of Kosovo's sovereignty. I analyse a number of key documents, such as Government Annual Work Plans and the Strategic Security Sector Reform, and synthesise these analyses with insights from my interviews. I discuss Kosovo's growing emphasis on resolving the status question and demonstrate the wider implications in light of the peacebuilding process. Here I draw on the findings of section 6.1 above and on Chapter 3, recognising that Kosovo's approach to regional stability is significantly influenced by specific readings of history which are deeply entangled with its territory functioning as a contested space. Therefore, my analysis in this sub-section is based on the assumption that the question over Kosovo's status and independence is deeply interwoven with the biophysical and ideational dimensions of its territory which carries different meanings, ideas and beliefs. Given that the EU's policies leave these dynamics unaddressed and that Kosovo aims to re-frame regional stability based on its interpretations of the history of its territory (namely one in which Kosovo does not belong to the Serbs), they create tensions and frictions between different peacebuilding actors, influencing the peacebuilding process itself. Crucially, in this context, the term unsustainability which I use in this sub-section does not exclusively apply to the environmental sphere. As I indicated in the introduction, I draw on peace and conflict studies and political ecology, and I understand unsustainability to include patterns of structural violence, which here also includes tensions and frictions between key stakeholders. Combined with the patterns of socio-ecological injustices and inequalities I observed above, these tensions can undermine the long-term peacebuilding process.

There is a very nuanced shift in tone and rhetoric between different policy sectors about conceptualisations of sustainability and stability which is evident in key policy documents. For instance, while internal government documents emphasise Kosovo's independence more directly, the government of Kosovo appears more diplomatic when interweaving the resolution of the status question with stability in EU-oriented policy documents. The National Programme for Implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (NPISAA) provides a useful example here. In the document, the government of Kosovo reaffirms its fundamental alignment with EU strategic priorities in the region. It states that

“Kosovo aims the development on regional cooperation ... and assisting in accomplishing the Brussels agenda for a sustainable region, democratic and integrated in EU and NATO [sic]. The Republic of Kosovo considers that regional cooperation is not only a precondition for the European integration but also a necessity for the regional stability” (Republic of Kosovo, 2017c, p. 330).

As I outlined in section 6.1, the government of Kosovo thereby underlines that its own interests and intentions support the EU's agenda in the Western Balkans. Here, we need to understand the use of the word 'sustainable' in the context of wider security considerations. More specifically, preceding the above statement, there is a reaffirmation by the government of Kosovo to support the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) on the global stage. In this context, it emphasises that "Kosovo strongly supports the EU foreign policy of security and defence, which aims at strengthening of the role of EU as an entity with an increasing political influence on international politics [sic]" (Republic of Kosovo, 2017c, p. 329). Therefore, Kosovo frames itself as a reliable partner in ensuring stability beyond the Western Balkan region by emphasising the global security dimension.

The government of Kosovo also cautions that Kosovo's unresolved status question has a negative impact on its enlargement prospects. Highlighting particularly the role of the five non-recognising EU Member States, the government warns that

"[d]espite the achievements in international relations, there remain many difficult challenges for Kosovo's position in the international arena. Non-recognition by 5 EU member states is a challenge to Kosovo's path towards European integration" (Republic of Kosovo, 2017c, p. 46).

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between Kosovo and the EU is an EU-only agreement, meaning that those Member States who do not recognise Kosovo (namely Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain) tolerate, but do not actively support it (Russell, 2019, p. 3). Without their support and full recognition, Kosovo ultimately will not be able to join the EU.

For Kosovo, there are clear geopolitical implications of this impasse. In 2015, the then Minister for Dialogue Edita Tahiri, who oversaw the progress of the Pristina-Belgrade Dialogue on the Normalisation of Relations, noted in the report assessing the state of implementation of the brokered technical agreements that,

"[w]e [the Government of Kosovo] also call on five EU member states to recognize Kosovo through which they would directly make contribution for sustainable peace and stability in the region and, particularly in the light of new geopolitical dynamics coming from certain non-western countries [sic]." (Republic of Kosovo, 2015b, p. 4)

Tahiri was referring, among others, to Russia, which, as Serbia's closest ally in the UN Security Council, considers NATO's intervention in Kosovo in the 1990s as unlawful and continues to block the recognition of Kosovo's independence. In the context of advancing EU and NATO integration across the region, Russia has been found to interfere in domestic politics throughout the Western Balkans (Bešić & Spasojević, 2018, p. 139). Further, the geopolitical relevance of the

Western Balkans has gained particular importance since Russia's annexation of Crimea, as it influences the political climate in the Western Balkans more broadly (Matthias, 2015, p. 2). Interpretations of Kosovo's territory therefore continue to play a crucial role in sustaining regional conflict dynamics. In this regard, the frustration over regional geopolitics and the impasse caused by Kosovo's status question, has begun to curb enthusiasm and confidence in the EU integration process to support post-conflict progress.

Many of my interviewees voiced their frustration with this situation, in which the EU does not recognise the deeper, ideational entanglements associated with Kosovo's territory as a contested space. For instance, when I asked about the role of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement in supporting political reforms in Kosovo, one of my interviewees, a researcher at an independent Kosovar institute, noted the striking discrepancy and at times outright counterproductive interaction between the EU's statebuilding and Kosovo's efforts to be recognised as a sovereign equal on the world stage. They explained, "we're noted as the asterisk country", which is often seen as "an indication that Kosovo is not a state" (Interview M16Pr8⁶⁰). They were alluding to the fact that, due to the five non-recognising EU Member States, the EU institutions are required to refer to Kosovo in their official statements and publications as "Kosovo (*)", explaining usually at the bottom of the page that "[t]his designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence" (European Commission, 2019, p. 1).⁶¹ With every official report or written statement, EU institutions therefore underline the special circumstances of Kosovo's sovereignty. While EU institutions reiterate their adherence to international law in treating Kosovo as an independent sovereign state on paper, in practice not even all of their own Member States recognise Kosovo's independence. By making use of the grey area in which EU-only agreements give an impression of progress – and where EU accession remains nothing but a distant promise – the EU effectively continues to entrap Kosovo in limbo over its status question. The EU's peacebuilding approach therefore plays a significant role in sustaining the territorial conflict.

In contrast to the more diplomatic references to the challenges posed by the status quo in documents addressed to the EU, Kosovo's government clearly prioritises the universal

⁶⁰ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 12th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁶¹ The UN Security Council resolution referenced here created transitional administration structures in Kosovo with the aim of determining a political solution to the conflict, without specification of how the status question was to be resolved (United Nations Security Council, 1999). The opinion by the International Court of Justice established that Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence did not violate international law (International Court of Justice, 2010).

recognition of its independence from Serbia in its internal policy documents. For example, in both the 2018 and 2019 Government Annual Work Plans, which set out government-wide and ministry-specific strategic priorities, timelines and assessments, the resolution of the status question is the first objective of Kosovo's foreign policies. Here, the Government of Kosovo specifies that the "[s]trengthening of international subjectivity of Kosovo focusing on obtaining new recognitions and full memberships in international and regional organizations" is priority number one (Republic of Kosovo, 2018d, sec. 3.1, 2019, sec. 5.1).

It is crucial to consider the political context against which such prioritisation emerged. In 2017, the implementation of reforms to achieve visa-free travel to the EU was the first priority of Kosovo's foreign policies (European Commission, 2012c; Republic of Kosovo, 2017a, sec. 5.1). One year later, the European Commission confirmed that Kosovo had met all outstanding requirements and that it would submit a proposal to the European Parliament and the Council to lift travel restrictions for Kosovars (European Commission, 2018b). However, disagreements among the Member States, a diminishing appetite for further enlargement in the European capitals, and recent experiences of the refugee crisis appear to have stalled the process (Dzihic, 2015, p. 3; Fazliu, 2018; Pastore, 2019, p. 13). At the time of writing, although the European Parliament already approved the proposal, it is now on hold in the European Council and Kosovo remains the only country in the Western Balkans which has to abide by visa obligations for travel into the EU (European Parliament, 2019; Mutluer & Tsarouhas, 2018, p. 426). In this context of rising frustration over stalling progress, the government's emphasis on resolving the status question is perhaps unsurprising.

However, the ambiguity resulting from the EU's balancing act of promoting the integration process without full recognition of Kosovo's sovereignty (and without addressing the deeper conflict dynamics that bubble away under the surface) also affects the manner in which Kosovars perceive the impact of the Brussels-brokered Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue on the Normalisation of Relations (also referred to as the Brussels Dialogue). For example, in the National Programme for Implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (NPISAA), the government of Kosovo reaffirms that "this [Belgrade-Pristina] dialogue is currently the most important contributor for peace and stability in the region" and highlights that Kosovo is "a constructive and serious party in the Brussels dialogue" (Republic of Kosovo, 2017c, p. 331). But it simultaneously cautions that there is "little progress on implementation of the agreements in general" (2017c, p. 331). Arguably, the lack of implementation is a symptom of a deeper problem.

Since the publication of NPISAA, there have been repeated breakdowns in the talks between Pristina and Belgrade. As discussed in Chapter 5, the murder of Kosovar-Serb politician Oliver Ivanović sparked tensions between Serbia and Kosovo in January 2018 and led to a temporary suspension of talks (BIRN, 2018). While the dialogue briefly resumed and both governments discussed the possibility of a contentious land swap, talks again broke down in November 2018 when Serbia blocked Kosovo's bid to join Interpol and Kosovo subsequently imposed 100 percent tariffs on goods imported from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Russell, 2019, p. 2). Recent attempts to restart the dialogue during the last Western Balkans Summit of the regional Berlin Process in April 2019 have failed (BIRN, 2019; Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 2019). Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj has since stated that the recognition of Kosovo's independence by Serbia is a precondition for the removal of the tariffs and for the continuation of the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue (Office of the Prime Minister, 2019). Therefore, the EU's balancing act between the enlargement agenda, driven essentially by EU institutions who treat Kosovo as an independent state, and the CFSP objectives, which are subject to much higher influence from European capitals and promote the status quo, have arguably reinforced existing tensions between Kosovo and Serbia. However, the EU's conceptual ambivalence on sustainability, stability and security have proven useful in creating the illusion that both agendas are in fact compatible.

I discussed this issue with one of my Kosovar interviewees in Pristina, who works for an international NGO that has contributed to the peace process since 2000. Sitting in the leafy backyard of an unusually quiet Pristina café and lighting one cigarette after another, they told me about the traumas of the conflict that many Kosovar families continue to face. They explained that the manner in which the international community all but imposed reconciliation and multi-ethnic tolerance on the Kosovar population was not helping them come to terms with the past. When I asked specifically about their thoughts on the EU's contribution to the overall peacebuilding process, their initial reaction, along with sarcastic laughter, was to ask me jokingly to switch off the voice recorder. After some contemplation, they explained that they were critical of the approach that the EU has taken in mediating between Kosovo and Serbia because it was aimed at "satisfying everyone" and "sometimes this is creating actually the problem [sic]" (Interview M16Pr10⁶²). Using the example of the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, they pointed out that the underlying issue was arising from the use of carefully selected, yet vague language that both sides could agree on. They elaborated that the ambiguity in language

⁶² Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 13th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

“gives space that it [the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and the resulting agreement] is differently interpreted or sold by our politicians in Kosovo, and differently interpreted in Serbia by their politicians. But according to EU, I think, for them it is a success to have both parties sitting and talking. It doesn’t matter that they talk, and they agree on something which is not being implemented. Talking first. People who talk do not fight, you know [*sarcastic undertone*]. It’s good, it’s good, but it’s 16, 17 years after the war. And it’s been years after the talks, so people want to see some results.” (Interview M16Pr10⁶³).

There was a similar sense of disillusionment with the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue more specifically, and the EU’s peacebuilding approach more generally in other formal and informal conversations in Pristina (e.g. Interviews M16Pr12⁶⁴ and M16Pr22⁶⁵). While they indicate that the initial enthusiasm of Kosovo’s independence and EU perspective has worn off, they also demonstrate that people in Kosovo are well aware of the tensions that have continued to boil underneath the surface of the ‘normalisation’ of relations between Kosovo and Serbia. The above interviewee referred to these tensions as “amplitudes” that would occasionally erupt into open violence (Interview M16Pr10⁶⁶).

For the international community, these tensions – and with them the fragility of the status quo - became evident again when the government of Kosovo announced that it would transform the Kosovo Security Forces (KSF) into the Kosovo Armed Forces (KAF). Having been dependent on the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) for the provision of security and protection (Triantafyllou, 2018, p. 261), the Government of Kosovo outlined in the 2014 Strategic Security Sector Reform that Kosovo would create its own army “with the mission of protecting the nation’s territorial integrity, providing military support to civil authorities in disaster situations, and participating in international peacekeeping operations” (Republic of Kosovo, 2014, p. 5). However, doing so required a constitutional amendment which the Kosovo-Serb MPs of Lista Srpska would have had to agree to (Triantafyllou, 2018, p. 274). To circumvent the constitutional amendment, in September 2018 the Government of Kosovo introduced a set of laws that effectively militarised the Kosovo Security Forces. These laws were approved by the Assembly on 14th December 2018 (Republic of Kosovo, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c) and the transformation was to be realised “in cooperation with Kosovo’s strategic partners, thus ensuring continuation of full support to the professionalization of our armed forces according to NATO standards” (Republic of Kosovo, 2019, sec. 5.5). Although the Government of Kosovo

⁶³ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 13th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁶⁴ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 16th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁶⁵ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 24th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁶⁶ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 13th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

stressed the multi-ethnic nature of the Kosovo Security Forces and attempted to pre-empt fears by Serb majority communities in Kosovo, the decision caused considerable uproar in Belgrade. Having interpreted the decision as a move of aggression, Serb President Vučić warned that should the new KSF be sent to Serb communities in Kosovo, Serbia would respond in kind (United Nations Security Council, 2019, pp. 2–3). Even before the laws were approved by the Kosovar Assembly, Serb Prime Minister Ana Brnabić likened the militarisation of the KSF to “ethnic cleansing” that could require the intervention of the Serb army (Vasovic, 2018). Although such sabre-rattling has not yet led to open confrontation, it strikingly illustrates the rapid deterioration of relations after the dialogue had broken down in November 2018.

The above analysis provides a small snapshot of the problems that Kosovo’s unresolved territorial dispute, feeding off specific interpretations of history, pose in the advancement of the peacebuilding process. It points towards unsustainabilities, in the form of tensions and frictions between the peacebuilding stakeholders, that have been institutionalised into the peacebuilding process and continue to feed into existing conflict dynamics. In this context, I demonstrated that the government of Kosovo aligns its interests with the EU’s aims in the wider Western Balkans but breaks with its emphasis on preserving the status quo for stability. Instead, the government of Kosovo frames the universal recognition of Kosovo’s independence as a prerequisite for regional stability and as a key component of advancing the sustainable peace process against the background of rising geopolitical tensions. Therefore, using the security-based conceptualisation of sustainability as stability as a lens to assess the peace process, I argue that it draws our attention to the different interests and motivations that are falsely collapsed into one homogenous entity under the current EU’s peacebuilding policies. For example, the analysis makes the tensions between the EU enlargement agenda and the Common Foreign and Security Policy evident, pushing for progress while simultaneously promoting stagnation. In the context of normalising relations between Kosovo and Serbia, the EU’s conceptual ambivalence on sustainability, stability and security has served the crucial function of giving the impression that both agendas are mutually constitutive. Such ambivalence is perhaps unsurprising as the EU is internally divided over the resolution of Kosovo’s status question and does not recognise the deeper, ideational entanglements that are associated with Kosovo’s territory as a contested space. Therefore, I argue that paying attention to how the environment is understood, even in the broader sense of underlying questions of territorial ownership, and consequently how sustainability is conceptualised in this context, allows us to see where tensions and frictions arise between the different stakeholders in the peacebuilding process.

Conclusion

When President Hashim Thaçi stated that Kosovo's place was in the Euro-Atlantic family, but that they would no longer accept the status quo, he strikingly illustrated the diplomatic balancing act and constant struggle of interests that form core components of the country's peacebuilding process. My analysis demonstrated that rather than resolving the conflict and supporting comprehensive peacebuilding, the need for balancing the different development and security agendas of various stakeholders has institutionalised socio-ecological injustices and inequalities, tensions and frictions into the peacebuilding process itself.

In this regard, I showed that the different conceptualisations of sustainability served the purpose of giving the impression that these different agendas can be reconciled. I established that the EU's emphasis on an anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment, and with it the development-based understanding of sustainability, has been deeply transposed into Kosovo's domestic policy-making processes. Here, I argued that the EU's approach to the environment, which presupposes its commodification in the process of economic development and human progress, made it possible for Kosovo's government to promote growth-focused policies that discursively align Kosovo's interests with the EU's approach to peacebuilding. However, in reality, policies based on such an understanding of the environment create practices which are deeply unsustainable, for instance by seeing (coal-powered) development as the key solution to post-conflict challenges, disregarding the negative long-term socio-environmental impacts. Thereby, they can contribute to societal faultlines and endanger the long-term peace (and hence stability) which they seek to create. Furthermore, I demonstrated that tensions and frictions emerge among key peacebuilding actors, as the Kosovar government breaks with the EU's equation of sustainability with stability of the status quo. Instead, I illustrated that the government of Kosovo prioritises the universal recognition of Kosovo's independence and frames ownership over its territory as a prerequisite for a sustainable peacebuilding process. My analysis revealed that the EU's emphasis on short-term stability and security has led to the reinforcement of existing tensions between Kosovo and Serbia, calling into question the long-term impact of the EU's approach to regional peacebuilding.

Therefore, my analysis demonstrated that the banner of 'sustainability' can hide entirely different agendas, which are in tension with each other, but which environmental peacebuilding does not currently recognise. The government of Kosovo uses the same sustainability rhetoric as the EU in its accession-related policies as well as in the context of Kosovo's contribution to regional stability; yet, it promotes policies which create new conflict dynamics *within* Kosovar

society based on socio-economic inequality (e.g. uneven distribution of costs and benefits, such as localised environmental degradation and negative impacts on public health, etc.) and *beyond* its immediate state boundaries based on specific readings of history that are deeply entangled with its territory (e.g. denouncing Serbia's claims to Kosovo's territory and non-recognition by EU Member States, etc.). However, the EU conceals its own ambiguity over Kosovo's status under the heading of 'sustainability', and thereby contributes to the institutionalisation of tensions and frictions in the peacebuilding process itself. In this context, conceptualisations of both the material and socially produced environment and sustainability can function as analytical lenses that can draw attention to deeper conflict dynamics that simmer away underneath the surface of established peacebuilding processes. I argue that research in environmental peacebuilding can gain from engaging more critically with these meanings and functions of its core concepts.

In the next chapter, I turn to the practical implications of these policies and the institutionalisation of their inherent unsustainabilities (i.e. inequalities, injustices, frictions and tensions) on the peacebuilding process itself.

CHAPTER 7

Reinforcing patterns of unsustainability: the effects of frictions in the peacebuilding process on Kosovar policy-making

“I don’t want to be condescending towards the Kosovans, but it’s literally a state-building exercise.”

– Senior representative of the European Commission (Interview S16Br29⁶⁷)

Introduction

After a period of difficult political negotiations, Kosovo’s new government, led by Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj and President Hashim Thaçi, was sworn into office on 9th September 2017. Comprising more than 23 parties, 21 ministries and more than 80 deputy ministers, Kosovo’s government is one of the largest in Europe (Avdyli, 2018; GAP Institute, 2018, p. 4). The government pledged to boost desperately needed economic development, expand energy generation capacities, reduce unemployment, and secure EU visa liberalisation within 90 days of entering into office. However, governmental statistics and assessments by Kosovar political analysts paint a sobering picture: despite gradual economic growth, the persisting trade deficit and high unemployment rates of approximately 40 percent continue to slow down Kosovo’s economy, visa liberalisation has not been achieved, pensions remain low, but salaries for ministers have increased (GAP Institute, 2018; Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2018a, 2019).

However, the government has managed to deliver on one key issue, namely on initiating an overhaul of the country’s energy sector for the sake of ‘sustainable development’. In December 2017, Prime Minister Haradinaj signed a contract with American firm ContourGlobal to build a new lignite-burning power plant and to expand an associated mining complex to address Kosovo’s energy insecurity and boost foreign investments (Avdyli, 2018). The Kosova e Re power project, which also foresees the decommissioning of high-polluting coal power plant Kosovo A, is widely disputed among Kosovar civil society and international representatives due to its uncertain negative impact on Kosovo’s economy, public finances, society and environment (Downing, 2014; KOSID, 2014). As Sanzillo observed, coal was a favourable resource in the past “because economies could absorb the financial and environmental costs” (Sanzillo, 2016, p. 2), especially with renewables having often (erroneously) been framed as being a viable energy

⁶⁷ Interview conducted by the author in Brussels, Belgium, on 19th September 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

option exclusively for wealthier states (Andreas, Burns, & Touza, 2017). But the dire state of Kosovo's post-conflict economy and uncertain political arrangements put the Kosovo e Re project into question. In fact, the World Bank initially supported the project, but withdrew its backing at the end of 2018 when it became clear that coal was by no means the most cost effective option for the overhaul of Kosovo's energy system (Gashi, 2018b).

The Kosovar government's underwhelming performance and its readiness to take controversial political decisions that could negatively impact the country long after the government's legislative period has come to an end, provide a small snapshot of the challenges of the policy-making process in Kosovo. The frustration of having to deal with these difficulties against the background of Kosovo's European integration partially explains the – in fact quite condescending – statement by a senior European Commission official that the situation in Kosovo can only be described as a “statebuilding exercise”, in which governmental incompetence is often explained by either a lack of capacities or by corruption.

In this chapter I discuss the patterns of unsustainability (i.e. inequalities and injustices) that emerge from tensions and frictions within the EU's neoliberalising peacebuilding process itself. As my analysis has so far revealed, EU peacebuilding in Kosovo promotes two clashing notions of sustainability. To recall, the document analyses in the previous chapters established that the EU's development-based notion of sustainability, which is enabled and reinforced by an inherently anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment, has deeply permeated Kosovar policies. In Chapter 6, I demonstrated that the government of Kosovo breaks with the EU's emphasis on the security-based understanding of sustainability as stability of the status quo and instead frames its independence as a prerequisite for regional stability, indicating that frictions exist among the peacebuilding actors. Here, I explore these frictions among peacebuilding actors in more detail. I focus on the peacebuilding process itself, examining the experiences of the policy-making process. Thereby, I critically interrogate how its inherent tensions and frictions that revolve around the two notions of sustainability create a setting in which *unsustainability* in the form of socio-ecological injustices and inequalities can be institutionalised and undermine long-term peace in Kosovo. Crucially, I understand unsustainability not simply in the context of the environmental sphere, e.g. as environmental degradation. Rather, as I explained in more detail in Chapter 2, I understand the term to encompass human dimensions of, for example, exploitation, power asymmetries, clashing interests and structural inequalities which can feed into conflict dynamics and undermine long-term peacebuilding.

The present chapter therefore illustrates the frictions that emerge from different assumptions about what ‘post-conflict sustainable development’ means to whom and what actions it entails. In a post-conflict setting, it is not only national actors, such as 80+ deputy ministers, striving for influence on the political stage, but also a conglomeration of international stakeholders attempting to shape post-conflict development in a manner that is conducive to their own interests. As I argued in Chapter 2, although international actors may be accountable through a variety of channels (such as market or fiscal accountability), they often lack democratic accountability towards the people who are affected by their policies or towards those that delegate powers to them in the first place (Grant & Keohane, 2005). By interrogating these experiences of the policy-making process and the underlying donor politics in Kosovo, I shed light on how the effects of struggles over influence to set the policy agenda in the sustainable development sector affect accountability structures and shorten the political time horizon. Thereby, they create a setting that makes the institutionalisation of unsustainabilities (such as policies promoting socio-ecologically harmful practices) into Kosovo policy-making processes possible. Specific understandings of the environment and approaches to sustainability function as analytical lenses here through which these frictions become visible.

In the first section, I trace and explore the tensions and frictions emerging from the peacebuilding process itself. I draw on insights from my interviews with representatives of the Kosovar government, Kosovar civil society and the EU to explore what the tensions between different stakeholders on the policy-making level reveal about underlying asymmetric power dynamics in the Kosovar sustainable development sectors. My interviews reveal that in many cases the EU’s peacebuilding policies themselves are blamed for shifting governmental accountability from the domestic to the international level. Having traced and outlined the complexities inherent to the Kosovar policy-making process, in the second section, I proceed to use the case of the Kosova e Re power project to examine how unsustainabilities in the policy-making process manifest as socio-ecological injustices in the present, with negative implications for fostering peace in the future. Here, I conceptualise the negative effects of diverted democratic accountability as a result of disjointed approaches to sustainability and donor politics. I show that they advocate a vague aim of sustainable development based on an anthropocentric approach to the environment as a key ingredient in the gradual neoliberalisation of Kosovo’s economic, political and institutional structures. In the last section, my analysis demonstrates that the Kosova e Re power project institutionalises three different kinds of unsustainabilities (financial, socio-economic, and environmental). Thereby, it subordinates democratic principles

to the logic of neoliberalisation and undermines the EU's long-term peacebuilding objectives in Kosovo.

My analysis in this chapter provides the final missing insights to answering my overall research question, namely how understandings of the environment affect the EU's peacebuilding process in Kosovo. It reveals that rather than contributing to peace in the long-term, neoliberalising peacebuilding processes, which build on anthropocentric understandings of the environment that focus almost exclusively on its material dimension and promote vague concepts of future sustainability for the sake of present development, in fact create and internalise frictions between peacebuilding actors. Such tensions become visible through power asymmetries between the different peacebuilding stakeholders and diversions of accountability. These in turn enable the institutionalisation of inequalities and injustices, such as the promotion of deeply socio-ecological unsustainable policies for the sake of economic growth, which feed into existing conflict dynamics or create new ones. I argue that research in environmental peacebuilding can gain from these insights in two ways. On the one hand, they help address the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding by unpacking the tensions, interests and power dynamics that are collapsed into its core concepts. Thereby, environmental peacebuilding can become more attuned to deeper conflict dynamics that can undermine long-term peace, meaning those that emerge from the material *and* socially produced environment. On the other hand, my analysis illustrates the merits of broadening the applicability of environmental peacebuilding. Using it as an analytical lens, it draws our attention to how and why cooperative mechanisms might be malfunctioning in post-conflict peacebuilding that aims to establish a version of 'sustainable development'. By building on the concern for power in political ecology and the emphasis on socio-economic structures in green political economy, research in environmental peacebuilding can develop a more theoretically founded approach to studying the processes of peacebuilding. Focusing on existing socio-ecological injustices (or unsustainabilities) rather than an ambiguous ideal of future 'sustainable development' can provide a helpful starting point in this regard.

7.1 Exploring experiences of the Kosovar policy-making process: donor politics, asymmetric power dynamics and distorted accountability

The post-conflict context is often characterised by the presence of a myriad of stakeholders who seek to indirectly promote their self-interests under the umbrella of an overarching policy aim, such as the promotion of sustainable development. Tensions between these actors over power

and influence are therefore a common feature of many post-conflict contexts. As Millar et al. argue, the peacebuilding processes themselves can contribute to the emergence of tensions and frictions (Millar, van der Lijn, & Verkoren, 2013, p. 139, see also Chapter 2, section 2.3). I discussed in the preceding chapters that different understandings of the environment and sustainability can provide the necessary lens to observe where and how such tensions and frictions arise. Against this background, my research reveals that Kosovo is by no means an exception. On the one hand, the government of Kosovo, reliant on the political and financial support of large international donors (e.g. EU or US), often takes decisions on key issues that are opposed by Kosovar civil society (e.g. border demarcation or energy security). On the other hand, Kosovar civil society is highly dependent on the support of international donors in their efforts to influence the domestic agenda-setting and policy-making processes (Rexha, 2018). The international donors in turn indirectly influence both parties by means of conditionality or by intertwining the provision of financial support with their own self-interests. For example, research by the Kosovar Group for Legal and Political Studies (GLPS) found that due to the limited national contribution to Kosovo's budget, the international community functions as the main agenda-setter in the first stages of the policy-making process (Rexha, 2018, p. 5).

While these features of the post-conflict policy-making process are not necessarily striking in and of themselves, my research identifies a salient feature of the Kosovar case: below I demonstrate that the tensions among international donors and national stakeholders, and the prioritisation of stability under the conceptual banner of 'sustainability' resulted in the establishment of vague structures of accountability. Drawing on Philipsen (c.f. Chapter 2), I argue that the democratic contracts between the government and civil society, and between the EU and the government of Kosovo have been breached for the sake of efficient implementation of peacebuilding policies (Philipsen, 2014). Against this background, I argue that this lack of democratic accountability enhances the negative effects of the asymmetric power dynamics between domestic and international actors on Kosovar policy-making, and thereby enables the institutionalisation of long-term unsustainabilities in the form of socio-ecological injustices and inequalities into the peacebuilding process. In line with my methodological assumptions and research strategy that I outlined in section 2.5.2 of Chapter 2, I illustrate this by assessing my interviewees' sense of disillusionment and experiences of struggles over political power and influence in the context of Kosovar agenda-setting and policy-making, focusing particularly on problems that emerge in the area of the environment and sustainable development.

7.1.1 Accountability towards the international, not the domestic

Over the years Kosovo's government has become more accountable to its international donors than to its own populace (Rexha, 2018). A common theme that emerged in my conversations with stakeholders in Kosovo is that EU peacebuilding policies themselves are to blame for the diversion of democratic accountability and for the break of the democratic contract between the government and civil society. In this context, the government's poor conduct in the field of donor coordination was often cited as the area where the negative effects of such distorted accountability structures become most visible. Much of the criticism revolves around the government's lack of political will and interest in facilitating donor coordination in the peacebuilding process and monitoring project implementation. For instance, the director of an established Kosovar civil society organisation in the area of sustainable development explained to me:

“Actually, there is this very, very strange relationship between donors and the government. The government is not interested at all in what donors do. It's almost like they have agreed that ‘you do your own business, we do our own business’. ... But their relationship is really very... false. ... So, there is an agreement, ‘we leave you alone as long as you leave us alone’. And that's it. But not much more than that. And it's unfortunate because so much money is being spent by international donors here. And everyone is in their comfort zone. Everyone hates to go beyond denial and see ‘why is actually the government not interested when we spend more than €100 million per year in this country? Why do they actually take no interest in how the money is being spent?’” (Interview M16Pr9⁶⁸)

Two specific issues deserve highlighting here. On the one hand, the quote hints at the existence of disjointed systems of communication between the national government and the donor community, indicating that the democratic contract between the internationals and the Kosovar government has been breached. On the other hand, the statement indicates that there is a deep sense of frustration and mistrust in the government; a theme which has often featured in more informal discussions with civil society representatives as well. However, here, it indicates that the democratic contract between the government of Kosovo and civil society has also been broken. Drawing on Philipsen, I argue that the above reference to ‘we leave you alone as long as you leave us alone’ points towards democratic principles having been subordinated for the sake of efficiency in implementing different policy agendas (Philipsen, 2014).

However, this breach of the democratic contract between the international donors and the Kosovar government appears to go both ways. International actors are equally as frustrated by the lack of initiative and proactive engagement by the government of Kosovo. A

⁶⁸ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 20th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

representative of an EU Member State development agency summarised the (lack of) actions of the Kosovar government in the context of donor coordination in sustainable development as follows: “Some aren’t interested. Others are incompetent. We need to say it like that. ... The government can’t get it into their heads. It’s terrible, really terrible what we have to witness here” (Interview M16Pr2⁶⁹). Admittedly, as this interviewee indicated, other factors play a role in this context, such as a genuine lack of capacities in some governmental departments. But while good governance and the lack of rule of law have widely been recognised as continuing problems in post-conflict Kosovo (c.f. Chapter 4), my interviews also indicate that, in addition to these factors, the diversion of accountability from the domestic to the international has taken away any incentive for the government to take its responsibility seriously. This means that in many cases it simply does not see the necessity to increase its efforts in monitoring the lawful implementation and evaluation of internationally funded projects (Interview M16Pr9⁷⁰).

However, the frustration over how the large sums of international money that are being spent yield no evident results for the wider Kosovar populace merely provides the messy background against which undemocratic structures of governance have emerged. For example, the above-mentioned director of a Kosovar civil society organisation stated that “the last place they [civil society] would think about lobbying is parliament. Because they know that ... as a policy-making structure [it] is completely redundant” (Interview M16Pr9). This conscious circumvention of the Kosovar assembly in an attempt to exert influence on Kosovar policy-makers hints at the existence of established and more effective structures of informal governance. In fact, during our conversation, they continued to explain where the actual chain of accountability lies: “so, you go to the embassies and you lobby the ambassador, so that he can lobby with the minister.” (Interview M16Pr9). Therefore, the peacebuilding process in Kosovo and the heavy reliance on the international community, especially in the environmental sector, has created a highly institutionalised system of dependence, in which key actors who should form the building blocks of Kosovar democracy have been side-lined.

These dynamics undermine the EU’s long-term peacebuilding objectives. On the one hand, the redirection of governmental accountability away from the Kosovar electorate towards international donors undermines the perceived legitimacy of the Kosovar government on a domestic and international level alike. At the same time, as I discuss in more detail below, it also calls the legitimacy of the EU’s peacebuilding process into question, as even the structures of

⁶⁹ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 4th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁷⁰ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 20th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

accountability between the international donors and the government of Kosovo appear to malfunction. This illustrates that the manner in which Kosovo's institutional structures have been aligned (or neoliberalised) to fit the EU's peacebuilding process has institutionalised long-term unsustainability in the form of distorted accountability into Kosovo's policy-making processes. On the other hand, informal and arguably more efficient systems of exerting influence on the policy-making process have emerged as a result. However, my interviews indicate that these informal structures have in fact led to the institutionalisation of *formal* parallel structures within Kosovar institutions. I explore this in more detail in the following section.

7.1.2 The emergence of institutionalised parallel structures

The involvement of international actors in Kosovo's domestic affairs has not just resulted in the informal circumvention of established political institutions. In fact, it also appears to have led to the institutionalisation of formal parallel administrative structures within the Kosovar government itself. Here I use the example of the Strategic Planning Office (SPO), which is integrated into the Office of the Prime Minister, and the National Development Strategy (NDS) to illustrate this point.

The SPO is tasked with the review and monitoring of sectoral policies to ensure that they complement the overall strategic direction of the government. It advises the Prime Minister and identifies emerging areas relevant to the government's priorities that could require strategic policy interventions (Republic of Kosovo, 2011; Rexha, 2018, p. 10). The SPO had a significant role in the creation of the National Development Strategy (hereafter referred to as the Strategy), which, as I outlined in the previous chapter, was intended to harmonise policies across different governmental sectors (OECD/SIGMA, 2016, p. 11; Interview M16Pr14⁷¹). However, the success and effectiveness of the Strategy as well as the Strategic Planning Office has widely been questioned. The criticism relates in large part to the lack of capacities within the office itself. For example, the Group for Legal and Political Studies found that rather than complementing each other, many policies still either duplicate or clash with existing strategies, indicating that the overall strategic alignment - one of the Strategic Planning Office's key tasks - has been insufficient (Rexha, 2018, p. 5). The OECD found another significant shortcoming in this regard. The drafting of the Strategy had absorbed all the Strategic Planning Office's capacities,

⁷¹ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 18th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

meaning that it fell behind on overseeing and evaluating other sectoral strategies (OECD/SIGMA, 2016, p. 16).

One of my interviewees explained how the SPO and the Strategy were created, highlighting the significant role of the EU as the main driver behind its creation and, simultaneously, as one of the reasons for its dysfunctionality. It is worth quoting the explanation in full. Following a brief discussion about the lack of consultation with different ministries in the process of drafting the Strategy, the interviewee explained:

Interviewee: Although the unit was the Strategic and Planning Unit, this unit was newly established, and they didn't even- the structure was not embedded properly in the Office of the Prime Minister. Then there are personality issues. They are paid from [a] different scheme. So, they are not really typical civil servants. So, ... they [the Strategic Planning Unit] were another donor project.

Interviewer: Just to see if I understood that correctly: so, the National Development Plan was an idea of a donor. Of the EU.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: So, they established this Strategic Planning Unit.

Interviewee: No, the unit was established before that. Because another donor to the government needed at that time a Strategic Planning Unit. So, the government, in order to recruit good people, they established this scheme, which was giving top ups, very big top ups to people who would be working there. So, they were not political appointees. They were recruited. But the government was unsure about their loyalty. So, they're working as kind of this elite unit within the Office of the Prime Minister. But then both the EU and these people thought it was a very good idea to have a National Development Plan. But they didn't sell the idea to the others [ministries and departments]. And this was especially important because there are three other prior processes which were donor-led and had failed drastically before that. I mean, it was not the first attempt; it was the fourth attempt." (Interview M16Pr9⁷²)

While it is difficult to trace who indeed initiated the establishment of the Strategic Planning Office or the Strategy, other governmental sources have confirmed that the Strategic Planning Office received significant guidance from the EU in the preparation process of the Strategy (Interview M16Pr14⁷³). The insight provided by my interviewee indicates that even where new formal structures are created within the government of Kosovo with the precise aim of coordinating the policy-making process, if they are created at the initiation of the international donors without being embedded in the national political culture, their effectiveness and long-

⁷² Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 20th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁷³ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 18th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

term positive impact is significantly undermined. This holds true for specific departments within the government, as well as for the governmental cabinet itself.

A representative of an EU Member State development agency put it much more bluntly. In the context of explaining the difficulties of harmonising international and national policies under the umbrella of sustainable development in Kosovo, they noted: “You can’t constantly oppose the government [of Kosovo]. Unless you’re the European Union or the United States of America because then you basically *make* the government” (Interview M16Pr2⁷⁴) [emphasis added]. This cynical remark provides a crucial insight for two distinct reasons. On the one hand, it indicates that even among EU actors, there is a growing sense of frustration with the overall approach to policy-making by EU institutions in Kosovo. The peacebuilding policies made in Brussels might not always stand the test of on-the-ground realities, creating frictions even within a specific group of peacebuilding actors. On the other hand, it underlines the argument of the previous chapters that the EU prioritises stability in the short-term over political principles in the long-term, meaning that the EU accepts deficiencies in Kosovar governance for the sake of securing the status quo. The interviewee continued to describe the situation in the context of national and international policy-coordination as follows:

“It really isn’t great. I mean, of course there is little interest among many countries or international organisations to work on it. Because one wants to do one’s own thing. I actually think that’s OK, but one can at least show a little bit of willingness. Especially on the side of the big [donors] – EU, USA – it is rather alarming what’s happening there. They just disregard it [the behaviour of the Kosovar government].” (Interview M16Pr2)

This description mirrors the picture that was painted during many informal discussions I had with policy-makers and civil society actors. The failure of Kosovo’s government to coordinate, implement and evaluate internationally sponsored projects in the sustainable development sector is often taken as an example for many other shortcomings. Simultaneously, it shows that there is little interest among the EU peacebuilding actors to change these arrangements; arguably because they lend themselves to efficient and evidence-based implementation of both its enlargement and Common Foreign and Security Policies (CFSP).

Therefore, three crucial issues emerge from this discussion of the technical policy-making processes in the areas of the environment and sustainable development, both of which reinforce the institutionalisation of long-term unsustainabilities into Kosovo’s policy-making. First, the case of the Strategic Planning Office in devising Kosovo’s approach to sustainable development highlights that a mismatch between donor and Kosovar interests resulted in the

⁷⁴ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 4th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

creation of formal parallel structures within the Kosovar government, undermining its efficiency and institutionalising inequalities and injustices into the policy-making process itself. Second, to recall, the EU, as one of the key actors in Kosovo, essentially prescribes the framework within which Kosovo's peacebuilding process takes place (namely within the frame of enlargement and CFSP). But as it accepts evident deficiencies in good governance for the sake of efficient policy implementation, it further enables the emergence of parallel structures and reinforces the lack of democratic accountability of the government towards its own electorate. Third, accepting these breaches of democratic contracts for the sake of efficient policy implementation indicates that the neoliberalising, efficiency-focused logic of the market has pushed democratic principles aside. Thereby, the manner in which actors engage in the peacebuilding process in Kosovo is influenced by the neoliberalising framework of EU policies, which paradoxically undermines the peacebuilding and statebuilding objectives that it seeks to promote. It is crucial to recall here that these inherent tensions are concealed under the broad umbrella of 'sustainability', which in turn is reinforced by a conceptualisation of the environment that overemphasises the role of its material dimension in post-conflict development and stability. However, we also need to acknowledge that there is significant domestic push-back. I explore this in the following section.

7.1.3 Domestic push-back: culture and conflict legacy as justifications for government's shortcomings

Although my interviews revealed a pronounced sense of frustration and even anger towards the Kosovar government, questions about the EU, its actions and peacebuilding policies often received a similar response, particularly by civil society. However, EU actions were not simply criticised, but normally went hand in hand with an expression of understanding towards the government's failures and shortcomings. Kosovar culture and the conflict-ridden past, and lack of political experience emerged as the main justifications for national politicians giving so much leeway to the agenda of the international donors under the banner of sustainable development.

For example, one civil society representative working closely with the EU, criticised their approach, but made a direct link with Kosovar culture, in which the treatment of strangers and guests is closely intertwined with perceptions of honour. They explained:

“We have this tradition to welcome everybody who is a foreign guest. But sometimes I think it's all being overdone because we treat them as somehow very sane, not challengeable. And then we don't want to make them feel bad and so we are not having a

voice, hang on, thank you, you are coming here to help, but I think this is not right.” (Interview M16Pr4⁷⁵)

In certain circumstances, cultural barriers might therefore prevent Kosovar stakeholders from demanding greater ownership over their policy-making process. Other interviewees supported this viewpoint, but simultaneously acknowledged the role of the conflict and the post-conflict administration system. They argued that in the immediate post-conflict years, internationals were “babying the government” with the hope of them essentially learning how to build and run a state simply by watching (Interview A16Pe1, Participant A⁷⁶). However, this undermined confidence in their own capabilities and resulted in a fragile system of dependence which has slowly begun to falter as international involvement was scaled back.

At the same time, it is not simply Kosovar politicians having to learn the act of democratic governance, but it is equally about internationals learning to let domestic actors take the lead on how they want to design their version of post-conflict ‘sustainable development’. Acknowledging that democratic mechanisms are not strong enough to punish inappropriate actions by Kosovar politicians, another civil society actor argued that big international donors like the EU need to hand over responsibility to the government “[e]ven if they are to make terrible mistakes” (Interview M16Pr9⁷⁷). However, EU institutions appear to be aware of this. A senior Brussels-based EU policy-maker acknowledged the lack of political experience in many Kosovar institutions:

“Now, we can get angry with [the government] because they’re ‘incompetent’, but I think that they have a good justification in many cases. They lack either an administration or administrative culture which other countries around them do have.” (Interview S16Br29⁷⁸)

Institutional learning processes are often time consuming, and in the case of Kosovo many political institutions simply did not exist 15 years ago. After all, to use the words of the senior EU representative, the Republic of Kosovo is “literally a state-building exercise” (Interview S16Br29).

Although there appears to be some understanding towards the shortcomings of the Kosovar government, the general perception is still that internationals played a crucial role in

⁷⁵ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 9th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁷⁶ Interview conducted by the author in Peja, Kosovo, on 28th April 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁷⁷ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 20th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁷⁸ Interview conducted by the author in Brussels, Belgium, on 19th September 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

enabling and reinforcing what one interviewee called the “organised criminal enterprise political system in Kosovo” (Interview M16Pr12⁷⁹). Another interviewee saw the reason for this in the EU’s public cooperation with Kosovar politicians who are known to be part of organised crime networks. They argued that EU representatives “shake their hands, and then this creates a perception to the population that says, we do not challenge this because they are supported by the internationals” (Interview M16Pr4⁸⁰). This matched the sense of disillusionment and lack of hope for future change that were prevalent in many of my conversations with ordinary citizens. As a researcher for a Kosovar think tank told me, people are dissatisfied with their government, but believe that what is needed for a change in government is a change of course by the EU. Because ultimately, “if the EU wouldn’t have [sic] mixed in these waters, ... our leadership would have been far better” (Interview M16Pr8⁸¹). Florian Bieber coined a term for these political arrangements where questionable political arrangements are tolerated because they are seen to be the best possible guarantor of stability. Bieber argues that these “stabilitocracies” feature “governments that claim to secure stability, pretend to espouse EU integration and rely on informal, clientelist structures, control of the media, and the regular production of crises to undermine democracy and the rule of law” (Bieber, 2018, p. 176). I argue that the EU’s heavy emphasis on the status quo which is promoted under the conceptual umbrella of security-based sustainability and the omission to solve the deeper (socially produced) conflict dynamics that surround the contested space of Kosovo’s territory (c.f. Chapters 4-6) has indeed contributed to the roots of Kosovo’s stabilitocracy growing deeply into the institutional structures of its post-conflict political system.

The above insights from my interviews reveal the practical implications of a peacebuilding process which promotes different agendas and interests under the heading of long-term ‘sustainability’. Regardless of their institutional or organisational affiliation, all of my interviewees showed a strong sense of frustration with the theoretically democratic, but practically distorted structures of accountability in Kosovo’s sustainable development sector. It appears that the breaches of the domestic and international democratic contracts have in fact enabled the creation of formal parallel structures within the government itself, leading to the institutionalisation of long-term unsustainabilities into the policy-making process. The emergence of informal and

⁷⁹ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 16th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁸⁰ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 9th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁸¹ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 12th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

parallel governance structures was in large parts blamed on the interference of EU actors and on the resulting shift of accountability from the domestic to the international level. Indeed, Obradovic-Wochnik and Dodds have drawn similar conclusions in their analysis of environmental governance in Kosovo. They observed that the existence of weak governance hierarchies in Kosovo is caused by international interference in the domestic policy-making process (Obradovic-Wochnik & Dodds, 2015). Therefore, it appears that the EU's approach to peacebuilding (i.e. promoting the logic of neoliberalisation, prioritising short-term stability and securing the status quo under the broad conceptual umbrella of 'sustainability') has indeed created a vicious cycle that is enabled and simultaneously worsened by making the Kosovar government accountable to the EU rather than to its own electorate. This in turn threatens the EU's peacebuilding objectives in the long-term by undermining the perceived legitimacy and trust in democratic governance in Kosovo, and in the EU's peacebuilding efforts themselves. As one of my interviewees put it: "[The] international community is like a house without an address. Nobody can address anything there." (Interview M16Pr12⁸²). Therefore, drawing on findings in previous chapters and using understandings of the environment and the emerging notion of sustainability as an analytical lens, my analysis revealed the deeper conflict dynamics stemming from the peacebuilding process itself. They revolve around asymmetric power dynamics between international and national (non-)state actors, as well as frictions and tensions within groups of peacebuilding stakeholders, all of which have deeply permeated the Kosovar policy-making process. Being aware of these underlying frictions and distorted accountability structures, we can now turn to an example of how they enable the institutionalisation of socio-ecological injustices and inequalities in Kosovo.

7.2 The Kosova e Re power project

As the above analysis indicates, asymmetric power dynamics and distorted governmental accountability towards the international community rather than the domestic electorate are inherent features of the current policy-making process in Kosovo. In this section, I argue that such frictions in the policy-making process enable the institutionalisation of different forms of unsustainabilities, namely socio-ecological inequalities and injustices, and undermine long-term peacebuilding objectives.

⁸² Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 16th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

One of the most striking examples of unsustainable and unjust policies enabled by this context is arguably the so-called Kosova e Re power project. It foresees the decommissioning of a high-polluting outdated coal power plant (Kosovo A), the modernisation of a second outdated coal power plant (Kosovo B), the expansion of a mining complex in close vicinity to the capital of Pristina, and, most crucially and controversially, the construction of a brand-new lignite burning power plant (Kosovo C or Kosova e Re). The first plans exploring the project were drawn up in 2006, but it took until December 2017 for the government of Kosovo to sign a deal with an American firm, ContourGlobal (ContourGlobal plc, 2017). The World Bank initially backed the project by means of financial risk guarantees and expertise, but withdrew its support in October 2018 (Gashi, 2018b; World Bank, 2015). The EU, in turn, admittedly never officially supported the project, but, as I explain below, never officially opposed it either. In fact, my interviews revealed a certain degree of informal support among EU policy-makers in Brussels as well as in Pristina, while acknowledging the political and environmental sensitivity of the project. The government of Kosovo decided to continue pursuing the realisation of the Kosova e Re power project, although it is nationally and internationally disputed due to its immense impact on Kosovar society, economy and environment (c.f. for example Sanzillo & Schlissel, 2016).

In the sub-sections below, I, first, provide an overview of the current challenges of energy generation in Kosovo to inform our understanding of the government's justifications for building a new coal-fired power plant despite increasing climate pressures. Against that background, I examine how the Kosova e Re project functions as an example of institutionalising three different, yet interconnected forms of unsustainability, namely (i) financial, (ii) socio-economic, and (iii) environmental unsustainability. Second, I examine the role of EU peacebuilding policies in exacerbating this process of institutionalising unsustainabilities in more detail. Here, I argue that the project relates closely to the advancement of EU self-interests in the Western Balkans more widely. By analysing the relation between the Kosova e Re project and the EU's Berlin Process and Connectivity Agenda, I illustrate how donor politics play out in the context of a controversial domestic project in Kosovo. Finally, I discuss the implications of these findings for the wider peacebuilding objectives before drawing conclusions.

7.2.1 Current energy generation in Kosovo

In order to understand the motivations of the government's decision to disregard widespread criticism and to invest in new lignite-burning energy generation capacities, we need to understand the challenges of Kosovo's current energy mix. As outlined in Chapter 3, Kosovo's

history is one of constant struggles with widespread poverty, social tensions, and lacking economic opportunity, aggravated by the severe and lasting impact of the conflict in the 1990s. The repercussions of the conflict are partially to blame for the lack of investment in the country's energy infrastructure, and the associated persistent forms of socio-economic poverty and social immobility (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017b, p. 17). As the government of Kosovo puts it: "The problem of electricity supply in Kosovo originates from the intentional destruction of the power system in all its elements by the former occupying regime during the 1990s" (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017a, p. 5). The government of Kosovo therefore blames the actions of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Serbia for its current state of underdevelopment. However, the legacy of the centralised Communist economy, and its impact on the organisation of the energy sector, also plays a crucial role in hampering neoliberal market liberalisation in line with EU integration (Bouzarovski, 2009; Obradovic-Wochnik & Dodds, 2015).

Today, approximately 30 percent of Kosovo's population still live below the poverty line, roughly 10 percent of which live in extreme poverty⁸³, disproportionately affecting women and the rural population, and making it one of the poorest regions in Europe (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2018b, pp. 111–114). To illustrate the link between socio-economic poverty and lacking energy infrastructure, analyses conducted for the latest nation-wide census in 2011 showed that on average 88.3 percent of households depended on firewood to heat their homes (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2011, p. 67). We can assume that this figure has decreased over recent years with the advancement of modern district heating systems in the cities of Pristina and Gjakova; however, more recent data is unavailable.

Kosovo's energy infrastructure is outdated and faulty, leaving it unable to meet current energy demands. While almost 98 percent of its energy is produced by two coal power plants (Kosovo A and Kosovo B), which were built in the 1960s and 1980s with Soviet technology, energy losses in the distribution process are estimated at around 36.7 percent (KOSID, 2014, p. 14; Orion 3E Consortium, 2014, p. 6). Due to their outdated technology, Kosovo A and Kosovo B now run at only 62 percent of their combined installed capacity (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017b, p. 28). Power shortages, or load shedding, are frequent and hamper foreign direct investment in the country (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2018b, p. 162; Ministry of Economic Development, 2017b, pp. 17, 28). Renewable energy makes a minor contribution to

⁸³ The Kosovo Agency for Statistics argues that *overall poverty* "indicates people who are poor compared to what is considered minimum requirement standard" and defines *extreme poverty* as a situation in which "people are poor because they are not able to satisfy their basic needs for food" (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2018b, p. 103).

Kosovo's overall energy mix: five small hydropower plants (Dikanci, Radavci, Burimi, Ujmani and Lumbardhi) have a combined installed capacity of only 45.8 MW. To put this in perspective, Kosovo A and Kosovo B have a combined installed capacity of 1478 MW (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017a, pp. 6, 15, 2017b, p. 28). However, as the domestic energy production does not cover energy demand, approximately 10 to 14 percent of electricity is imported, mainly from Albania (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017a, p. 6). The government of Kosovo acknowledges that renewable energy sources are "highly underutilized" and pledges to expand this sector in the long-term to achieve the three overall objectives of Kosovo's energy policies, namely (a) economic development, (b) energy security, and (c) environmental protection (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017b, p. 21).

In addition to severe energy insecurity curtailing economic development, the distribution of negative externalities is a major source for concern. In fact, the government of Kosovo acknowledges that "environmental problems" and "international obligations" make an overhaul of its energy sector "even more urgent" (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017a, p. 6). For example, air pollution in the capital of Pristina seems to be the most pressing direct threat to citizens' health. Kosovo's oldest power plant, Kosovo A, situated approximately 9km outside of Pristina, has become infamous for being the most polluting entity in Europe, emitting approximately 2.5 million tons of ash per hour (KOSID, 2014, p. 10). Against this background, monitoring of air quality should be treated as a priority. However, as Kosovo's National Audit Office observed only in May 2018, the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning is falling behind on installing functional monitoring equipment and is therefore failing to provide citizens with real-time information about air quality (National Audit Office, 2018). Admittedly, the Director of the Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency argued that this was due to lacking equipment and expertise to guarantee regular maintenance.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, such high-level public criticism from the National Audit Office came months after the US consulate released its own air quality monitoring data in Pristina for January 2018⁸⁵, which showed that, due to a combination of emissions from the coal power plants, outdated transport systems and households burning coal for heating during the cold winter months, Pristina temporarily led the list of most polluted cities in the world (Morina, 2018c; US Environmental Protection Agency, 2018). This scenario recurred in the winter of 2018/2019. In 2013, the World Bank estimated

⁸⁴ Interview conducted by author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 10th May 2016.

⁸⁵ Said data is collected at the US Embassy in Pristina and compiled by the US Environmental Protection Agency. It showed that at frequent points particularly towards the end of January, air pollution in Pristina reached "hazardous" levels, which would require "a health warning of emergency conditions" (US Embassy in Kosovo, 2018).

that each year Kosovo sees 852 premature deaths due to cardiorespiratory diseases or lung cancer associated with air pollution (World Bank, 2013, p. 21).

My conversations with local civil society actors and representatives of the Ministry of Environmental and Spatial Planning revealed that these statistics caused major concern and had a severe impact on the everyday life of the population, particularly those living in close vicinity to the power plants. I was told of people's sense of guilt for exposing their children to such a toxic environment and being unable to move them to a place where the long-term impact on their health was less damaging. Other people told me stories of reluctantly smoking cigarettes indoors during the winter, as they perceived the air on their balcony to be worse for their health than the active and passive intake of cigarette smoke. I found that these conversations reflected my own personal experiences during my fieldwork. On several occasions following interviews in the centre of Pristina, I too found myself contemplating whether taking a taxi back to my accommodation would be healthier than making the 30-minute walk, largely because the benefits of slight physical activity would not outweigh the costs of breathing the smog that lingered in the streets of the capital on particularly bad days.

Hearing more and more informal anecdotes of how people in the centre of Kosovo struggled with the daily exposure to the mix of toxic chemicals and coal dust in the air they breathe, it appeared paradoxical that Kosovo, as a country in South-Eastern Europe with Mediterranean climate and battling severe air pollution, did not step up efforts to explore and develop its renewable energy sector. My interviewees would almost always give me the same answer when I asked them why renewable energy sources were not explored: Kosovo owns the fifth largest lignite reserves in the world, approximately 12 billion tons (Lappe-Osthege & Andreas, 2017, p. 602). The argument goes, in the face of severe economic underdevelopment and energy insecurity, "you use what you can" (Interview M16Pr27⁸⁶; Ministry of Economic Development, 2017b, p. 19). However, lignite is the most polluting form of coal; its energy value is fairly low as compared to the pollutants it emits when it is burnt (approx. 35-50 percent is moisture and 14-17 percent is ash) (KOSID, 2014, pp. 9–10). While the argument of using the readily available resources to jump-start economic development, particularly in the complex post-conflict context, reflects the tensions between short-term statebuilding objectives and long-term 'sustainable development', the vast amount of available lignite in Kosovo seems to overshadow considerations for environmental and inter-generational justice in the public discourse.

⁸⁶ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 27th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

It is against this background of economic underdevelopment and severe air pollution that the government of Kosovo decided, despite the withdrawal of World Bank support and widespread criticism among civil society, to continue pursuing the Kosova e Re power project. It appears that precisely this framing of immediacy promoted the substitution of an old highly polluting coal power plant with a newer slightly less polluting coal power plant as one of the main policy solutions of the government, explaining the project's endurance even in the face of international criticism. In fact, former Minister of Environment and Spatial Planning Ferid Agani argued in an interview that the Kosova e Re power plant would be a “very environmentally friendly power plant” due to the modern standards it would be built to.⁸⁷ It is therefore hardly surprising that when the government of Kosovo speaks about tackling environmental problems caused or exacerbated by its energy sector, it cautions that “[h]owever, this should be done taking into consideration the security of the supply within the existing limited operational capacities” (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017a, p. 6). Environmental protection in Kosovo ends where it begins to interfere with the energy demands of the economy. This underlines the subordination of the environment to the list of negotiable aspects in the pursuit of human wellbeing, emphasising the underlying anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment as instrumental to growth.

As I have observed in another paper, the issues with the Kosova e Re power plant run much deeper than the paradoxical policy decision to substitute old coal power generation capacities with new coal power generation capacities for the sake of environmental protection, reflecting core assumptions of the Environmental Kuznets Curve (c.f. Chapter 6) (Lappe-Osthege & Andreas, 2017). Having given an overview over the challenges and debates surrounding Kosovo's energy sector above, in the following sub-sections I review how the pursuit of the Kosova e Re power project, and the different and at times clashing agendas that the EU pursues in Kosovo under the broad umbrella of ‘sustainability’, leads to the institutionalisation of unsustainabilities, which in turn have an impact on underlying conflict dynamics and create an obstacle to long-term peace.

7.2.2 Examining the different types of institutionalised unsustainability

Analysing the Kosova e Re power project with regards to its potential to reinforce existing and contribute to the emergence of new conflict dynamics within Kosovar society, I find that the main issues revolve around three different kinds of unsustainability, namely (i) financial

⁸⁷ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 26th May 2016.

unsustainability, (ii) socio-economic unsustainability, and (iii) environmental unsustainability. I explore each of these in more detail below.

i. Financial unsustainability

The first form of unsustainability that is institutionalised in the processes surrounding the Kosova e Re power project is the issue of financial unsustainability. The price of the project is the most contentious aspect in this regard. The government estimates that the construction of Kosova e Re will cost approximately €1 billion, plus an additional €150 million for the opening of a new coal mine to sustain the power plant (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017b, p. 48). However, researchers from the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) estimated that the Kosova e Re project would cost approx. €1.44 billion, or even €4.8 billion if interest rates and subsidies are included in the calculations (Lappe-Osthege & Andreas, 2017, p. 603; Sanzillo & Schlissel, 2016, p. 2). Such a bill would be a significant burden on Kosovo's public spending and banking system, locking it into a future of coal-powered debt. Therefore, the problems lie not only with the actual costs of the construction of the plant. The pressures on the banking sector and interest rates for business loans would result in diversion away from micro-lending towards Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), which, as the OECD has observed, have immense economic potential in the Western Balkans, more so than SMEs in the EU (OECD, 2018, pp. 28, 132; Sanzillo & Schlissel, 2016, p. 24).

To put these figures in perspective, the government plans to invest merely €600 million into the renewable energy sector between 2017-2026 (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017b, p. 47). A combination of lacking transparency in the planning process, widespread corruption and political interference has resulted in the Kosovar population questioning the legitimacy and viability of the entire project (Lappe-Osthege & Andreas, 2017). For instance, a member of a civil society advocacy group told me in an interview:

“So, because there has been- even if you read the Energy Strategy of Kosovo's government - constantly there has been only one paradigm, that is building a new lignite power plant. Therefore, anything else that comes into the holistic approach to the energy sector has been secondary or even being [sic] sabotaged.” (Interview M16Pr12⁸⁸)

Such a disregard of alternative forms of energy generation is not necessarily uncommon. Healy and Barry have found that a lock-in to specific forms of energy almost always entails a “lock-out” of other energy generation possibilities (Healy & Barry, 2017, p. 454). However, in the case

⁸⁸ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 16th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

of Kosovo, the negative effects of a ‘lock-out’ are arguably exacerbated due to the persisting challenges of the post-conflict context (e.g. weak rule of law). These observations overlap with the findings of the IEEFA that “the primary form of management of this project thus far is political rather than professionally competent” (Sanzillo & Schlissel, 2016, p. 28). Therefore, the question arises whether committing future generations to high amounts of debt was in the population’s best interest, or whether securing benefits for certain interest groups was an underlying motivation for continuing with the Kosova e Re project? Although evidence does not yet point at specific winners and losers, recent insights into the contract between the government and ContourGlobal paint an indicative picture of who the benefitting interest groups might be. Under the current contract, ContourGlobal would neither pay for the coal nor the water necessary for production, and would in fact sell the produced energy back to the government at a much higher price (Ramadani, 2019). In addition, it appears that the project caters particularly to US interests, with ContourGlobal being a US firm who subcontracted US consortium General Electric to build the power plant, financed by the US government’s Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) (Bytyci, 2019). While, of course, these decisions could have been taken on the basis of merit, the fact that the project has been criticised for its lack of transparency and bending of legal rules begs the question whether the project has been designed with the interest of the US economy rather than the Kosovar population in mind. Such an institutionalisation of financial unsustainability and intergenerational injustice leads us straight to the next issue of socio-economic unsustainability.

ii. Socio-economic unsustainability

The second form of unsustainability institutionalised by the Kosova e Re power project affects the socio-economic sectors. I illustrate this by using two examples, namely the increase in electricity prices and the need for resettlements. First, electricity generated by the Kosova e Re power plant is likely to be much more expensive than electricity sold at current rates, exerting additional pressures on Kosovo’s poorest households. Today, consumer electricity prices are already highly subsidised, meaning that they are in fact lower than the costs of generating electricity locally (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017b, p. 27). The price for electricity at 0.0596 EUR/kWh for households (which is below the EU-average⁸⁹) is therefore hardly surprising (Eurostat, 2018). However, if we also include household income in the calculation, we find that the average Kosovar household still spends approximately 9.6 percent of their annual

⁸⁹ The EU-28 average price for electricity was estimated at 0.2049 EUR/kWh (Eurostat, 2018).

income on electricity, which is above the EU-average of 6 percent. In fact, the less income a household earns, the more of their earnings they have to spend on electricity. IEEFA found that low- to middle-income households spend on average 13.4 percent of their annual income on electricity, while the number is much higher for the poorest households, having to budget 29.7 percent of their annual income for expenses on electricity. This number could rise to 40 percent with the construction of the Kosova e Re power project (Sanzillo & Schlissel, 2016, p. 9). Any fluctuations in energy prices will therefore hit the poorest the hardest. Admittedly, in its 2017 Energy Strategy, the government of Kosovo has agreed to set aside €45 million in support of a programme to protect vulnerable consumers from rising energy prices as a result of the Kosova e Re project. However, this programme is to be informed by a “detailed study” which is yet to be conducted (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017b, p. 36). It is therefore questionable whether the €45 million will be sufficient to outbalance the additional financial pressures on vulnerable households.

Rather than investing in a project that is likely to increase energy prices and is “too big to fail” (Sierra Club, 2012, p. ES-2), and thereby increasing the real dangers of reinforcing structural poverty, the Kosovo Civil Society Consortium for Sustainable Development (KOSID) found that the creation of an energy efficiency fund to finance small-scale interventions on household-levels could result in lower energy prices (KOSID, 2014, pp. 8, 16). However, as alluded to above, the government of Kosovo is only just planning an affordability study in the energy sector to assess the prices and their impact on households, so any analyses and measures, including the government’s programme to protect vulnerable consumers, are based on rough estimates (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017a, p. 65).

Second, just as the financial impact of the Kosova e Re project on society is based on estimates, so too are the impacts of resettlements that are necessary for the construction of the new power plant and the expansion of the mine. Identifying precisely how many communities are affected is complicated by the fact that the design of the Kosova e Re power plant was continuously changed during the planning phase (Lappe-Osthege & Andreas, 2017, p. 603). For instance, the World Bank-sponsored 2014 Environmental and Social Impact Assessment was based on the assumption that Kosova e Re would be comprised of two 280-320 MW units (Orion 3E Consortium, 2014). However, when signing the contract with ContourGlobal in December 2017, the government settled for one 500 MW unit (ContourGlobal plc, 2017). Therefore, any estimates of how many people would be affected by the Kosova e Re project are based on outdated studies. In addition to uncertainties over how the social costs of the project are distributed within society, as I have observed in more detail elsewhere, the responsibilities for

ensuring adequate compensation in line with international regulations are not clearly set out (Lappe-Osthege & Andreas, 2017, pp. 603–604). The government’s Resettlement Project Framework (RPF) places the responsibility of compensating those who are affected by the project in the hands of the investors, but due to the complicated nature of the tender process, these responsibilities have been left with the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning⁹⁰ (Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, 2008). The Ministry, however, has still not adequately compensated people affected by resettlements in 2003/04 when the mining area was first expanded (Orion 3E Consortium, 2014, p. 107; Interview M16Pr6⁹¹).

Therefore, aside from rising electricity tariffs hitting the poorest households the hardest, the unanswered questions about the necessary resettlements (i.e. who will be affected by them and how, and who will be responsible for covering the direct and indirect costs) has the potential to create new forms of poverty. It is crucial to remember that these resettlements will not only affect those communities who have to relocate. As it is uncertain who will foot the costs of the resettlements themselves - the investor or the government, and by that logic, the ratepayers? - new tensions may arise on the fiscal and the societal levels (Downing, 2014, p. 3). By not resolving these uncertainties before moving ahead with the Kosova e Re power project, the government institutionalises the resulting socio-economic unsustainabilities (in the form of increased inequality and marginalisation of the poorest of society) and accepts that they can have an unforeseen long-term impact on underlying societal conflict dynamics.

iii. Environmental unsustainability

The last form of unsustainability relates to the project’s direct negative impact on the human and non-human environment. First, the direct impact on the environment is thought to be more severe in close proximity to the power plant and the mining complex itself, but can in fact extend to a radius of beyond 10km, which would include the capital of Pristina (Orion 3E Consortium, 2014, p. 93). While the main impact of pollution will affect the local environment, secondary pollutants, which consist largely of sulphates and nitrates and can travel wide distances in the atmosphere, can severely affect air quality in the Western Balkan region (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017a, p. 22). In fact, these secondary pollutants are thought to be responsible for the hazardous levels of air pollution measured in Pristina in the winter of 2017/18 and 2018/19. However, given that the 2014 Environmental and Social Impact Assessment analysed the

⁹⁰ Interview with Ferid Agani conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 26th May 2016.

⁹¹ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 11th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

impacts of a plant with different design and capacity, and due to the fact that no updated version is available, precise data on how the environment will be affected by the Kosova e Re power project are lacking. Although the Annex of the 2017-2016 Energy Strategy prescribes that further studies on Kosovo's energy sector will be conducted in the near future, none of them are concerned with the environmental impacts of the energy sector (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017a, pp. 64–65). Where there appears to be (an admittedly vague) concern with environmental issues, the focus seems to be misdirected. For instance, rather than assessing the *impact of its energy infrastructure* on the local, regional and global environment, the government sets out to conduct an analysis on the “*impact of greenhouse emission* on Kosovo Energy Sector Development” [emphasis added] (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017a, p. 65). Energy security and economic development are therefore clearly prioritised over long-term environmental considerations, reinforcing the inherently anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment that I observed in the previous chapters.

Second, in addition to negatively affecting air quality, the Kosova e Re project is also thought to decrease water supply in central Kosovo, which has an impact on its population. The Iber-Lepenik River would be affected most severely, likely resulting in water shortages in Pristina and its suburbs (Orion 3E Consortium, 2014, p. 85). It is important to note that water has always been in short supply in central Kosovo, and that water rationing measures are frequently introduced, not only in the summer. The project would therefore exert additional pressure on an already fragile system. While most modern residential areas in Pristina are equipped with private water storage facilities, the poorer households who can neither afford to live in urban apartments nor invest in private water systems, will be most vulnerable to potential cuts (Lappe-Osthege & Andreas, 2017, p. 604). Moreover, other existing water systems, such as the Sitnica River, are already affected by pollution from untreated wastewater linked to industrial waste and ash dumps (Orion 3E Consortium, 2014, p. 86). But again, updated assessments of the real impact of the Kosova e Re power project on hydrosystems in central Kosovo are not available.

Therefore, aside from resulting in different degrees of direct environmental degradation, the negative externalities of the project are unevenly distributed among the population. While air pollution would affect the entirety of the Kosovo's citizens, the poorest members of society would be most vulnerable to shortages and pollution of the central Kosovar water systems. Considering the environmental costs of the project as a combination of its direct environmental impact and its indirect influences on people and their livelihoods (which is reflective of key arguments in the field of political ecology; c.f. Chapter 2) therefore demonstrates that the project

contributes to the institutionalisation of long-term socio-environmental unsustainability in the form of inequalities, injustices and marginalisation.

Healy and Barry's work on energy transitions can further help us understand the long-term implications of this process of institutionalising unsustainabilities for the sake of boosting 'sustainable development' on the wider peacebuilding trajectories. They argue that for an energy transition, even towards more renewable energy, to be just, it "could require that the state intervene more actively in the political economy" (Healy & Barry, 2017, p. 455). While the premise of this argument may hold true in that state action is required to outbalance and evenly distribute the costs and benefits of an energy transition, this seems highly problematic in a post-conflict context where state actors themselves often form part of the problem. We need to recall that, as I outlined in the first section of this chapter, the government has a negative track-record with both the international community and its own electorate. As the case of the Kosova e Re project further illustrates, the government has so far been unable to adequately assess the negative implications of the project, let alone address them. This is due in part to lacking capacities and political will, as well as corruption and the nepotism of Kosovar politics. It is therefore highly likely that the Kosova e Re project, which has been framed as the path to stability in Kosovo, will in fact lead to instability in the long-term. Against this background, it appears paradoxical that the EU, as a main sponsor of overhauling Kosovo's political system, economy and energy sector, tolerates a process whose 'success', measured here in terms of societal and environmental equity, depends so heavily on mitigation by weak and at times informal state structures.

Having outlined that the Kosova e Re power project reinforces conflict dynamics within Kosovar society revolving around the institutionalisation of financial, socio-economic, and environmental unsustainability, the question arises to what extent EU peacebuilding policies hamper, tolerate or exacerbate these patterns of unsustainability? I explore these issues in the following section.

7.2.3 Unsustainabilities and conflict dynamics: what is the role of EU peacebuilding policies?

Although the Kosova e Re power project has gained its legitimacy in large part from the significant (initial) support by the World Bank, I argue that the EU's reluctance to take a clear stance on the project in fact makes the institutionalisation of the above-mentioned patterns of financial, socio-economic and environmental unsustainability possible. I argue that the reason for

this can be found in the EU's Western Balkans regional strategy and the Berlin Process, in which Kosovo's domestic policies are now deeply embedded (at least on paper). As outlined in Chapter 4, the EU's regional strategy intertwines economic development with regional stability, powered by an interconnected energy market. In this context, the Kosova e Re project is a crucial component of enabling the EU's Connectivity Agenda, advancing the EU's own strategic interests in the Western Balkans.

Below, I first briefly revisit the Berlin Process and the associated Connectivity Agenda in order to outline how the Kosova e Re power project contributes to the realisation of the EU's Western Balkans regional strategy. I then place these findings in the context of discussions with EU policy-makers and civil society in Pristina and Brussels exploring questions of resource use and potential alternatives. I demonstrate that the project is disputed even among EU stakeholders who, along with civil society, question the overall public benefit and legitimacy of the project. However, arguments of using the readily available resources (i.e. lignite) to boost economic development appear to carry more weight. Here, I draw on work by Obradovic-Wochnik and Dodds to argue that such normative inconsistency at the energy-environment nexus can in fact undermine the broader peacebuilding priorities in Kosovo, as they foster the frictions in the peacebuilding process itself (Obradovic-Wochnik & Dodds, 2015). The EU's ambiguity on the Kosova e Re power project therefore needs to be considered as an illustrative example of subordinating democratic principles to the logic of neoliberalisation. As it accepts the exacerbation of existing conflict dynamics, the institutionalisation of socio-ecological inequalities and injustices, and the creation of potential new societal faultlines under the banner of 'future sustainability', the EU undermines its own long-term peacebuilding objectives.

Kosova e Re and the Connectivity Agenda

The creation of a regional energy market is one of the main goals of the EU-facilitated Berlin Process of the six Western Balkan states (hereafter referred to as 'Western Balkan 6') with the aim of fostering overall regional stability. Under the umbrella of the Connectivity Agenda, the EU pledged a combined sum of €1 billion of EU and national investments, and IFI loans to fund large-scale energy and transport projects across the region until 2020 (European Commission, 2016a; Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs [France], 2016). In turn, the Western Balkans 6 (WB6) agreed to implement the so-called Third Internal Energy Market Package. It forms part of the Energy Community Treaty, of which the WB6 are signatories

(European Union, 2006b). The Third Internal Energy Market Package stipulates the alignment of legal and regulatory frameworks to enable regional energy market harmonisation.⁹²

Such interconnected energy markets serve the purpose of securing energy supply within the EU itself. These goals are stressed in the Europe 2020 Agenda, which, as I outlined in Chapter 4, maps out an EU-internal roadmap for “smart”, “sustainable” and “inclusive growth” (European Commission, 2010b, p. 3). The Connectivity Agenda therefore builds on the integration of the WB6 into the EU-internal market for the purpose of energy security, and requires that the “WB6 countries will support integration with the neighbouring EU Member States” (European Commission, 2016a, p. 4). Therefore, although the WB6 receive large amounts of financial support to overhaul their energy and transport systems in support of jump-starting their economy, the Connectivity Agenda intertwines the WB6’s domestic prosperity with the core regional strategic interests of the EU, namely stability and security in its immediate neighbourhood.

The prospects of EU accession function as crucial incentives here. As Padgett observes, the Energy Community aligns third countries with EU rules without giving them access to EU institutions (Padgett, 2011, p. 1077). In this regard, Johannes Hahn, the European Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, stresses that the main components of the Connectivity Agenda are “key ingredients for the countries to advance on their path towards EU membership” (European Commission, 2016a, p. 2). However, in the case of Kosovo, EU accession is still a very distant target (c.f. Chapters 5 and 6). Therefore, if we want to understand the impact of EU peacebuilding policies on the institutionalisation of unsustainabilities in the context of the Kosovo e Re power project, we need to be aware that in the absence of EU membership, the Energy Community more widely, and the Western Balkans Connectivity Agenda more specifically, function as soft tools for EU informal governance at a distance, enabled by formal rule- and norm transfers. This reflects the argument I made in Chapter 2 that neoliberalisation itself, by prescribing social beliefs, ideologies and structures, is a form of governance (Foucault, 1978/1991; Peck, 2010, p. 15). More specifically, I argue that this process of formal rule transfers under the heading of the Western Balkans Connectivity Agenda needs to be seen as a neoliberalising process that contributes to the EU’s peacebuilding objectives, as it creates and shapes Kosovo’s institutions in a manner that supports the expansion of the European neoliberal market economy (Slobodian, 2018, pp. 4-5).

⁹² The Third Energy Package consists of Directive 2009/72/EC, Directive 2009/73/EC, Regulation No 713/2009, Regulation No 714/2009, and Regulation No 715/2009 (European Union, 2009c, 2009d, 2009e, 2009f, 2009g).

But what role does the Kosova e Re power project play in the advancement of the Connectivity Agenda? As I mentioned above, due to the lack of timely and reliable data on the impact of Kosova e Re on the national and regional energy markets, precise predictions of its contribution to the objectives of the Energy Community Treaty are unavailable. The government of Kosovo argues in its National Energy Strategy that the “clean coal technology” of the Kosova e Re power plant will be beneficial for overall regional market connectivity (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017b, p. 36). However, civil society actors have criticised the governmental approach of Kosovo becoming a regional coal-fired powerhouse in my interviews. They showed grave concern over Kosovo’s environment and population bearing the brunt of the resulting socio-economic pressures and environmental degradation. One civil society actor remarked:

“Kosovo is relying on coal. And most of the people think that our vision for economic development should be production or export of coal to other countries, you know, become a source of energy production, not only for Kosovo but for the region. Fine, fantastic, that would probably be a good source, but then we also have to think, how would that affect the environment in Kosovo, the people, the surroundings, and all the rest?” (Interview M16Pr4⁹³).

Other civil society actors joined in the criticism, denouncing these as “crazy ideas” (Interview M16Pr3, Participant B⁹⁴). They argued that decision-makers “have stuck to this old mentality and they are not seeing what the world is bringing to us in terms of sustainable development” (ibid). However, it is important to note here that this vision of Kosovo as the regional energy exporter is not only promoted by the government of Kosovo, but arguably by other states of the WB6 (ibid). The argument that Kosovo, as a poor country, needs to make use of its most readily available natural resources (i.e. lignite), is prevalent among the different groups of stakeholders.

For instance, this line of argument appears to resonate with many EU actors, both in Pristina and in Brussels (Interview M16Pr27⁹⁵; S18Br29⁹⁶; S16Br30⁹⁷). A senior EU representative indicated in an interview that this pragmatic reasoning led the EU to help the World Bank identify the efficiency standards necessary for the new power plant to meet EU regulations (e.g. the Industrial Emissions Directive), although it does not officially support the plant (Interview

⁹³ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 9th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁹⁴ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 5th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁹⁵ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 27th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁹⁶ Interview conducted by the author in Brussels, Belgium, on 19th September 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁹⁷ Interview conducted by the author in Brussels, Belgium, on 19th September 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

S18Br29). They conceded that “Kosovo has been dealt a very poor hand” in terms of its resources, but that “it simply doesn’t have the alternatives” (ibid). Another EU representative argued similarly. They asked,

“what are the natural resources of Kosovo? The first thing, which appears immediately, is the question of ... lignite. If they are following some papers [sic.], [Kosovo owns] enough lignite to cover their needs for 1000 years. It’s nonsense to try to focus on something else” (Interview S16Br30).

However, these arguments are fuelled by the clashing visions of what Kosovo’s sustainable development looks like. Among EU actors and, to a certain extent, among policy-makers in Kosovo, there is an underlying conviction that Kosovo must build institutions that suit the neoliberal market economy prescribed EU enlargement policies (c.f. Chapter 4). In this context, it appears that the problem is not that there is no alternative to using lignite; I argue that the problem lies in fact with the unwavering belief that there is no feasible alternative to the envisioned neoliberalised economic system as the end product of Kosovo peacebuilding process. Therefore, the above quotes underline that neoliberalisation is as much an economic system embedded in specific institutional frameworks as it is an ideology to which no imaginable alternatives exist.

However, others have voiced more criticism, arguing that “first of all, personally I’m not happy with what has been achieved. Because I still consider that there is great potential, specifically on wind and geothermal power to use in order to practically create alternative resources” (Interview M16Pr19⁹⁸). Another EU representative affirmed in the context of the Kosova e Re project that “there is no alternative than [sic] phasing out” coal (Interview S16Br33⁹⁹). As I indicated in the first section of this chapter, the question of Kosovo’s renewable energy potential has been a bone of contention between the EU and Kosovar civil society for some time. A high-level EU representative referred to this as the “conspiracy theory paranoia” on whether explorative studies into Kosovo’s alternative energy sector had indeed been conducted or not (Interview S16Br29). Others spoke about this dispute more pragmatically. While simultaneously acknowledging the downsides and the merits of the Kosova e Re project, another senior EU actor claimed that “I know if you spoke to civil society, they are very much against that project. We still think that Kosovo is not California. Because they often use California as an example ... And it's not Iceland either who is fully dependent on renewables” (Interview M16Pr27). Such discussions about Kosovo’s potential for renewables were often

⁹⁸ ⁹⁸ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 20th May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

⁹⁹ ⁹⁹ Interview conducted by the author in Brussels, Belgium, on 20th September 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

linked to economic considerations. Speaking about Kosovo's difficulties to attract investors because of its intermittent energy supply, an EU stakeholder admitted that "we [Kosovo] are in desperate need for energy security" and that the Kosova e Re power plant played a crucial role in this regard. However, they conceded that the trade-off of energy security and the environmental degradation resulting from coal power was "a compromise. A big compromise" (Interview M16Pr21¹⁰⁰). Crucially, against the background of widespread disagreement and frictions between the different EU peacebuilding stakeholders, the contribution of the Kosova e Re power project to the objectives of the Connectivity Agenda appears to have played an indirect role in informing policy-makers' opinions. However, it was only ever mentioned in informal discussions. As one EU representative cautioned when we began to talk about the EU's support to the project on record, "I have to be very careful [about] what I say" (Interview S16Br30).

Therefore, the Kosova e Re project illustrates the tensions and frictions that emerge from different assumptions about what 'post-conflict sustainable development' means to whom and what actions it entails. Although evidently disputed even among EU policy-makers, a strong underlying sense of pragmatism is the factor that unifies all of the conversations I had with EU policy-makers in Pristina and Brussels. Some EU representatives argued for more attention and resources to be spent on renewable energies. Others advocated for the intensified use of Kosovo's coal resources to allow it to address the dire state of its economy. Admittedly, this controversial argument of allowing less developed countries a phase of socio-environmentally harmful coal-powered development to catch up with those countries further along the development spectrum is not new (Lappe-Osthege & Andreas, 2017, p. 605). This argument has underpinned many developing countries' negotiating strategies during over two decades of climate change negotiations. In line with this argument, it appears that EU stakeholders are well aware of the consequences of locking Kosovo into a future of coal. However, in their eyes it might be justified to tackle energy insecurity in Kosovo and the wider region. After all, to recall the EU's line of reasoning that I have identified in the previous chapters, energy security translates into economic development, which is a guarantor for stability in the EU's neighbourhood. The above accounts therefore underline the deep-seated belief in the creation of a neoliberal market economy as a cure for Kosovo's ills. Based on this logic of neoliberalisation, my analysis demonstrates that policy-makers tend to accept unsustainabilities in the present (particularly in Kosovo) for the sake of future sustainability (especially within the EU).

¹⁰⁰ Interview conducted by the author in Pristina, Kosovo, on 23rd May 2016. Please note that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

Conclusion

In this chapter I shed light on the underlying complexities of the ‘statebuilding exercise in Kosovo’, to use the words of the EU representative quoted in the beginning. I demonstrated that the tensions and frictions emerging between the different actors involved in the peacebuilding process create a setting in which unsustainabilities in the form of socio-ecological inequalities and injustices are institutionalised into Kosovo’s policy-making. Such tensions are normally concealed under the broad conceptual umbrella of ‘sustainability’ but can become observable if we pay more attention to the underlying (at times clashing) interests and agendas that it conveys. In this regard, I illustrated that the tensions between international donors and national stakeholders, and the prioritisation of stability resulted in the establishment of vague structures of accountability. My analysis showed that domestic policy-makers have become more accountable to international donors than to their own citizens. This implies that they show greater concern for the implementation of the EU’s neoliberalising reforms, which I argue function as a form of governance at a distance. However, even the lines of accountability between Kosovar policy-makers and the EU appear to have broken down due to their commitment to (inherently neoliberalising) concerns for efficiency in implementing their policies. Drawing on the theoretical assumptions I made in Chapter 2, I argued that both the domestic as well as the international democratic contracts have broken down, severely undermining the perceived legitimacy of both the Kosovar government and the peacebuilding process. More specifically, I established that as the EU subordinates political and democratic principles to the logic of neoliberalisation and inevitably accepts the distortion of accountability and the emergence of formal parallel structure of governance in Kosovo, unsustainable practices become institutionalised especially in the areas of (i) public finance, (ii) society and economy, and (iii) environment. The case of the Kosova e Re coal power plant illustrated the effects of unsustainabilities on Kosovo’s society and environment, which are deeply rooted in an anthropocentric understanding of the environment as a key ingredient in post-conflict ‘sustainable development’ based on neoliberal economic growth and concerns for future ‘sustainability’.

The above analysis also bears significance for the conceptual development of environmental peacebuilding and the broadening of its analytical applicability. Firstly, it demonstrates that the peacebuilding process itself can reinforce existing tensions and create new conflict dynamics by advocating different and potentially clashing versions of ‘sustainable development’. This can result in the subordination of democratic principles to the logic of neoliberalisation, meaning, for instance, trading in democratic accountability and collective

responsibility for efficient policy implementation and evaluation. Although environmental peacebuilding recognises the limitations of cooperation on environmental issues, it needs to show greater awareness of the dynamics that can undermine cooperative structures such as the ones I discussed in this chapter. After all, these dynamics (i.e. tensions and frictions) not only undermine cooperative structures, but also create a setting in which socio-ecological injustices and inequalities (e.g. the poorest being most affected by environmental pollution, exploitation of environment to boost economic development, etc.) are institutionalised, locking in structural inequities and undermining progress towards the establishment of positive peace. Secondly, to recognise the negative consequences of this process, environmental peacebuilding needs to engage more critically with the different interests and agendas that are collapsed into the core concepts that it takes for granted, namely the environment and sustainability. As I discussed above, although giving the superficial impression of complementarity, these can promote different (neoliberalising) ideologies and structures of governance that greatly influence a post-conflict context (see theoretical assumptions in Chapter 2). I argue that these issues can be addressed by synthesising environmental peacebuilding with the concern for power in political ecology and the emphasis on socio-economic structures in green political economy. A focus on existing socio-ecological injustices (or unsustainabilities), such as the ones that are reinforced by the Kosovo e Re power project, rather than an emphasis on an ambiguous ideal of future 'sustainable development' can provide the necessary shift in analytical focus within environmental peacebuilding research.

CONCLUSION

The ways the environment is understood in sustainable development shape EU peacebuilding processes in Kosovo. My analysis demonstrated that the EU promotes a predominantly anthropocentric understanding of the environment through its approach to peacebuilding in Kosovo and its regional strategy in the Western Balkans. This is problematic because it enables the institutionalisation of conceptual contradictions and tensions into its peacebuilding policies, such as the promotion of two conflicting notions of sustainability (i.e. development-based sustainability versus security-based sustainability). These tensions and clashing agendas in turn produce socio-economic and environmental inequalities and injustices. Thereby, such peacebuilding policies lock in inequities and structural violence, which significantly hampers the transition from negative to positive peace. More specifically, conceptualising the environment anthropocentrically poses challenges because it disregards the messy social embeddedness of environmental factors in contexts of peace and conflict, and because it unravels the relationship between humans and the environment. This means that it commodifies both spheres as assets in the global neoliberal economy, subordinating socio-environmental structures and democratic principles to the logic of neoliberalisation.

These dynamics have clear negative implications for the EU's peacebuilding processes in Kosovo. The document analyses of key policies and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in Brussels and in Kosovo make evident that as the EU's peacebuilding in Kosovo advances policies guided by development-based sustainability and security-based sustainability, which are in tension with each other, it produces new inequalities and injustices in the fragile post-conflict setting (such as the uneven distribution of costs and benefits of economic development, socio-environmental exploitation, and the diversion of accountability structures). The findings of my analysis illuminate the unintended outcomes of peacebuilding efforts as well as the frictions emerging from the peacebuilding process itself. These insights are crucial for a critical engagement with the conceptual assumptions that research in environmental peacebuilding has so far taken for granted, and their implications for post-conflict peacebuilding. After all, hidden power dynamics, socio-economic structures and ideologies are collapsed into the concepts of 'the environment' and 'sustainability', resulting in current environmental peacebuilding research often brushing over nuanced but decisive differences of whose idea of sustainable peace it seeks to promote. However, we can address these shortcomings by paying attention to how the policies that are the subject of environmental peacebuilding research lead to the

institutionalisation of injustices and inequalities rather than an ambiguous ideal of future ‘sustainable development’. Insights from green political economy and political ecology provide the necessary conceptual and theoretical tools in this regard.

In this concluding chapter, I review these findings in more detail. First, I revisit the main objectives and key arguments of my dissertation in the broader context of advancing the conceptual and theoretical foundations of environmental peacebuilding. I then review how the findings in each section of the analysis illuminated a different angle of the main research objectives. Last, I identify and discuss questions for further research that emerged out of my analysis.

First, in order to explore my overarching research question, namely how understandings of the environment in sustainable development affect the EU’s peacebuilding process in Kosovo, my dissertation followed three objectives. These three objectives were to a) identify the kind of understanding of the environment that the EU promotes by means of its peacebuilding policies; b) to trace how this understanding of the environment has permeated Kosovar domestic policies; and c) to identify the implications of this understanding of the environment for the peacebuilding process in Kosovo more broadly. Each of these objectives revealed valuable insights into how we can understand and address the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding.

With regard to the first objective, my analysis demonstrated that the EU promotes an inherently anthropocentric understanding of the environment, emphasising its use-value in the neoliberalising economic strategies of perpetual market expansion and human wellbeing. This means that the EU conceptualises the environment predominantly in terms of natural resources or with reference to the profits that can be made from both positive and negative environmental externalities in the process of post-conflict development. This is problematic in so far as the anthropocentric focus separates humans from the environment, decoupling the effects of economic neoliberalisation from the constraints of the environmental sphere. Thereby, socio-environmental considerations become part of the competitive practices in the pursuit of individual human wellbeing, justifying environmental and social exploitation for the sake of human progress (Eckersley, 2004, p. 104). I argued that these underpinning dynamics of neoliberalisation, which do not consider the deep entanglement of environmental factors with their socio-cultural contexts, are not sufficiently recognised in current environmental peacebuilding research. However, these entanglements influence the manner in which conflict parties make sense of the conflict (as is the case with the understanding of Kosovo’s territory as

a contested space in both Albanian and Serb identity-building processes). Thereby, the social embeddedness of environmental factors influences expectations of what kind of peace - and the specific associated power arrangements - is to be established after conflict. Scholarship in environmental peacebuilding is yet to engage more critically with its conceptual understanding of 'the environment', the meanings it holds and the socio-economic hierarchies that it prescribes.

In addition, my analysis revealed that, based on such an anthropocentric understanding of the environment, EU peacebuilding policies promoted two different notions of sustainability, which are indicative of two different agendas clashing under the overarching umbrella of its peacebuilding process in Kosovo. These notions of sustainability refer to, on the one hand, a development-based conceptualisation of sustainability as sustained economic growth, and on the other hand, a security-based notion of sustainability as the stability of the status quo. The former strategy requires deep progressive reforms (according to the neoliberalising logic of the EU's market economy in the context of EU enlargement), while the latter prescribes the consolidation of existing power arrangements in the wider Western Balkan region (in line with overarching Common Foreign and Security Policies in the EU's neighbourhood). However, by framing these clashing agendas as complementary under the heading of future 'sustainability', the EU misses the fact that the conceptual tensions that characterise its peacebuilding approach have real, negative effects once they are implemented in-country. In Kosovo, by simultaneously promoting both a development-driven and security-driven agenda although they have different short-term and long-term requirements, the EU's peacebuilding policies feed into existing conflict dynamics and create new frictions in the peacebuilding process, such as reforming Kosovo's state structures to enable its integration into the EU's neoliberal market economy; however, this is ultimately dependent on resolving Kosovo's status question – something that the EU's security-driven agenda does not proactively pursue. These findings help us understand the implications of the conceptual shortcomings of environmental peacebuilding. By omitting to interrogate in more depth what types of sustainability (or 'sustainable peace') environmental peacebuilding aims to promote, it runs the danger of producing and reinforcing present unsustainabilities in the form of power asymmetries, inequalities and injustices, which ultimately undermine long-term peace.

The second objective of my dissertation was to trace to what extent the EU's anthropocentric understanding of the environment has permeated Kosovar domestic policy-making processes. Kosovar policy-makers have integrated the anthropocentric understanding of the environment as instrumental to economic development, and with it the development-based notion of sustainability. Kosovo's socio-economic structures and political arrangements have been neoliberalised on the basis of policy harmonisation with the EU's integration strategy. By

emphasising the alignment of Kosovo's interests with the EU's strategy in the Western Balkans, Kosovar policy-makers reflect the EU's understanding of the advancement of a regionally integrated market economy as the solution to underdevelopment and environmental degradation, while also emphasising the 'Europeanness' of Kosovo's society. However, Kosovar policy-makers break with the EU's security-based notion of sustainability. Instead, they frame the universal recognition of Kosovo's territorial independence from Serbia as a prerequisite for regional stability and sustainable peace. My analysis showed that historic conflict dynamics still influence contemporary politics in Kosovo and that the question over Kosovo's status and independence is deeply interwoven with the biophysical and socially produced dimensions of its territory as a contested space. In other words, the social embeddedness of environmental factors matters. However, by accepting and in fact promoting uncertainty over Kosovo's independence, the EU fails to recognise these underlying conflict dynamics and creates new tensions among the conflict parties and the peacebuilding actors. These insights are crucial for the advancement of environmental peacebuilding in so far as they demonstrate the inherent hybridity of 'sustainability'. The failure to recognise the different agendas hidden behind the sustainability label (such as development-driven or security-driven strategies), can create new tensions and frictions in the peacebuilding process itself.

The third objective of my dissertation was to identify the implications of the anthropocentric understanding of the environment on the broader peacebuilding process in Kosovo. The frictions that emerge from the peacebuilding process itself, and from the different versions of post-conflict sustainable development that are promoted within this framework, negatively influence democratic structures within Kosovo and undermine long-term peacebuilding objectives. This is not necessarily unique to the Kosovar case. However, due to the fact that the EU's peacebuilding in Kosovo is guided by the aim of European enlargement, Kosovo's governance, societal and economic structures are moulded in a manner that is favourable to the integration (and hence expansion) of the European neoliberal market economy. But in the process of such socio-economic neoliberalisation, concerns for democratic principles are subordinated to the logic of the neoliberal market, overemphasising the significance of efficiency and measurable successes in the implementation of policies. Influenced by such an emphasis on efficiency and measurable success, peacebuilding actors often circumvent established democratic structures as they do not always yield the desired effects within the desired timeframe. This results in the institutionalisation and reinforcement of severe deficiencies in terms of socio-environmental (in)justice and democratic accountability. The broad conceptual

banners of 'sustainable development' or future 'sustainability' function as rhetorical justifications for these policies.

However, it is not merely the desire for efficient policy implementation and evaluation according to the logic of the EU's neoliberal market economy that drives the institutionalisation of injustices and inequalities. Frictions stemming from what sustainability or post-conflict sustainable development means to whom and what actions it requires characterise the peacebuilding process in Kosovo. These asymmetries and frictions between stakeholders also feed into the creation of institutional parallel structures and distort democratic accountability, both between the Kosovar government and Kosovar civil society and between the Kosovar government and international actors, enabling and justifying obscure decision-making in Kosovar domestic policy-making. This in turn gives rise to policies, such as the Kosova e Re power project, which lead to institutionalised socio-economic inequalities and injustices, environmental exploitation, and long-term degradation for the sake of alleged future sustainable development. Underlining my arguments under the second objective, my analysis contributed to the conceptual refinement of environmental peacebuilding in a distinct way; it highlighted that the lack of engagement with the conceptual paradoxes of 'sustainability' and its role in promoting the logic of neoliberalisation undermines the ability of environmental peacebuilding research to identify and counteract the negative implications of frictions and clashing interests, and in fact runs the danger of reinforcing them. In other words, by failing to engage critically with the questions of power that are tied to conceptualisations of sustainability, environmental peacebuilding can inadvertently lock in structural inequalities that are obscured under the sustainability banner and thereby hamper the transition from negative to positive peace. Therefore, research in environmental peacebuilding can build on political ecology and green political economy to broaden its analytical focus and to recognise that the core concepts it takes for granted, namely 'the environment' and 'sustainability' are carriers of specific (neoliberalising) ideologies and structures of governance.

Each chapter of my dissertation illuminated the above objectives from a different angle. Having reviewed the main objectives and key arguments and having presented how they contribute to the conceptual and theoretical advancement of environmental peacebuilding, I now take a closer look at the findings that emerged from the different sections of my analysis. To recall the overall structure of my dissertation, the first three chapters (Chapters 1-3) outlined the rationale and review of existing research, provided the theoretical and methodological framework and examined the background of the conflict in Kosovo. The following two chapters (Chapters 4-5) traced and identified the EU's understanding of the environment in sustainable

development throughout its foreign policies more broadly and in its approach to peacebuilding in Kosovo more specifically. The last two chapters (Chapters 6-7) examined how the EU's understanding of the environment has been integrated into domestic Kosovar policy-making and discussed its implications on the wider peacebuilding process. I review the key findings of the analyses in the section below.

Environmental peacebuilding has become increasingly intertwined with sustainable development, as my analysis of the emergence of the concepts of (environmental) security, conflict and cooperation in global policy-making revealed (c.f. Chapter 1). However, research in environmental peacebuilding has not yet developed the conceptual and theoretical tools to understand the deeper dynamics driving socio-environmental processes in post-conflict peacebuilding. We can begin to address these shortcomings by becoming aware of the socio-economic structures and ideologies that its conceptual foundations prescribe. This involves a more critical engagement with the conceptual paradoxes that environmental peacebuilding takes for granted (e.g. 'the environment' and 'sustainability').

Insights from green political economy and political ecology provide the flexible theoretical framework that is necessary to explore these structures, ideologies and conceptual paradoxes of environmental peacebuilding in the complex and dynamic post-conflict context. However, this theoretical framework requires an equally flexible methodological approach. Ontological realism, epistemological relativism, and judgmental rationalism, rooted in a retroductive research strategy, provide such a methodological approach, as I argued in Chapter 2 (Bhaskar, 1978, 1979; Harré & Secord, 1972). This means that my analysis followed a cyclical logic, moving between research question and empirical material (Bertilsson, 2004; Blaikie, 2007, p. 83; Sayer, 1992, p. 113). Against this background, I argued that EU peacebuilding needs to be seen as a neoliberalising process, which prescribes certain forms of governance, socio-ecological structures, and power hierarchies (Castree, 2008, p. 140; McCarthy & Prudham, 2004; Polanyi, 1944). In order to be able to examine these underlying power dynamics and their implications on the peacebuilding process in more detail, I drew on the notions of hybridity and frictions. These function as theoretical tools to examine both the outcomes as well as the processes of peacebuilding more critically. Paying attention to the processes and outcomes of peacebuilding efforts is crucial as both can lead to the institutionalisation of unsustainability into post-conflict contexts (Mac Ginty, 2010; Millar et al., 2013; Richmond, 2015). Here, these unsustainability do not simply refer to socio-environmental exploitation, but also include the prioritisation of the neoliberal market concerns over democratic principles (Brown, 2015).

The historical context of the Kosovo conflict plays a crucial role in determining the course of the current peacebuilding process. It informs the way in which (Kosovar-)Albanian and (Kosovar-)Serb perceptions of the causes and dynamics of the conflict contribute to the construction of Kosovo's territory as a contested space, sustaining contemporary territorial disputes. My analysis in the third chapter illustrated that both conflict parties interpret historic events through the lenses of ethnicity, nationalism and religion to construct arguments of autochthonic rights and settlement continuity. These arguments are reinforced by historical myths, such as those surrounding the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, the accuracy of which bears no significance. Both conflict parties used specific readings of history based on mythologies to legitimise social structures and naturalise history by drawing clear parallels between the past and the present (Essebo, 2018). These constructions of history and mythologies are deeply entangled with Kosovo's territory and play a crucial role in both (Kosovar-)Albanian and (Kosovar-)Serb identity-building processes. In other words, they underline the importance of recognising the messy social embeddedness of environmental factors, such as territorial ownership. It is these dynamics that sustain the conflict and provide new fuel for the tensions between Kosovo and Serbia today.

The EU peacebuilding process in Kosovo takes place in this context, where the interaction of the environment, conflict and peace matters. To understand how and why this is the case, and what the wider implications are, my analysis in Chapter 4 explored the EU's understanding of the environment, and the relationship between the environment, conflict and peace that emerges out of its external policies. I established that the environment was increasingly conceptualised in anthropocentric terms as sustainable development became a guiding principle of EU external action. This means that the EU conceptualised the environment predominantly in terms of the commodification of its material dimension in the processes of economic development and human wellbeing. Simultaneously, the EU's enlargement agenda became a key component of the peacebuilding toolbox in the EU's neighbourhood. In this context, the link between the environment, conflict and peace was institutionalised through a convergence of the development and security agendas. This in turn had an influence on the EU's understanding of the environment in peacebuilding, in a manner that negates its agency and disregards its produced dimensions. However, a significant degree of conceptual ambiguity was necessary to support the interweaving of development and security, as they are not always complementary. Such ambiguity provides the conceptual banner under which tensions between the short- and long-term objectives of the development and security agendas are institutionalised into post-conflict peacebuilding processes.

How precisely this happens can be observed through a close examination of the EU's regional strategy in the Western Balkans and its peacebuilding policies in Kosovo, which include the EU's enlargement agenda and its Common Foreign and Security Policies (CFSP). My analysis in Chapter 5 showed that two vague notions of sustainability as guiding principles of EU peacebuilding in Kosovo emerged as development and security considerations were interwoven. One notion referred to sustainability as sustained economic growth. The other emphasised sustainability as stability of the status quo. While the former is a development-based conceptualisation of sustainability, the latter is a security-based conceptualisation. Although these two notions appear complementary under the same conceptual banner, they promote different agendas. For example, framing economic prosperity as a precondition for stability reinforces the EU's discursive commitment to long-term stability while in fact prioritising short-term stability, since its policy interventions have immediate negative effects which undermine said long-term stability. The anthropocentric understanding of the environment as instrumental to sustainable development plays a crucial role in discursively extending the time horizon of the policies towards future 'sustainability'. In turn, the EU's CFSP emphasise future sustainability in terms of regional stability (and hence security), yet disregard the settlement of Kosovo's status and the resolution of the conflict over its territory. Thereby, it ignores the role the socially produced meanings of Kosovo's environment (here understood as territory) play in the identity-building processes of the conflict parties. By diverting attention to the future while focusing efforts on short-term stability, peacebuilding policies that are built on anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment, ignoring its social embeddedness, can fail to address existing conflict dynamics in the present and indeed create new ones by promoting clashing agendas under the same ambiguous conceptual umbrella.

The EU's understanding of the environment as a key ingredient in the gradual neoliberalisation of Kosovo's socio-economic structures, as prescribed by the EU enlargement agenda, has been transposed into Kosovar policy-making processes. However, Kosovo's policy-makers have only partially integrated the EU's dual conception of sustainability. As I argued in the sixth chapter, the development-based notion of sustainability was transposed into Kosovar policies to interweave security and development objectives in the domestic sphere, while simultaneously giving the impression of aligning Kosovo's interests with the regional agenda of the EU. However, this shaped Kosovo's policy-making process to suit the logic of neoliberalisation, enabling the institutionalisation of patterns of (socio-environmental and fiscal) inequalities and injustices for the alleged sake of sustainable development. For example, the severe underfunding of the environmental fiscal budget was a negative consequence of this

process. In contrast to the development-based notion of sustainability, the EU's security-based notion has been rejected. Kosovo's policy-makers frame its independence as a key prerequisite for regional stability, thereby breaking with the EU's emphasis on the status quo. Therefore, although the EU has found a way to legally and diplomatically engage with Kosovo without being in agreement over its independence, a key component of the conflict remains unresolved. This not only leads to conflict between Kosovo and Serbia, but in fact creates frictions in the peacebuilding process itself. In this context, tensions arise among peacebuilding actors over the handling of Kosovo's independence and ongoing territorial disputes.

These tensions between stakeholders and their clashing interests produce socio-ecological inequalities in the immediate post-conflict context. My analysis in Chapter 7 illustrated how and why this was the case by zooming in on the experiences of Kosovar policy-making and the frictions that emerged from the peacebuilding process itself. I used insights that I gained from the interviews to identify underlying patterns of power asymmetries and tensions that emerge surrounding different ideas of sustainability and post-conflict sustainable development. Many representatives of Kosovar civil society as well as the government blamed the EU's peacebuilding policies themselves for the distortion of democratic accountability within Kosovo. I analysed the Kosova e Re power project as a specific example to illustrate how socio-ecological and economic injustices and inequalities become institutionalised and how they undermine the peacebuilding process in the long-term. My analysis revealed that the project institutionalises three different kinds of injustices and inequalities (financial, socio-economic, and environmental). It provides an example of the obscure political decisions that are taken by the Kosovar government and which are tolerated by the EU and its Member States for the sake of efficient policy implementation and the advancement of self-interests. However, I argued that thereby they prioritise the logic of neoliberalisation over democratic principles, commodifying both the environmental and human spheres and undermining long-term peacebuilding objectives.

The analyses in each of the chapters provided a small piece of the puzzle to explore how understandings of the environment in sustainable development affect the EU peacebuilding process in Kosovo. I argued that an anthropocentric understanding of the environment, which unravels the link between the environmental and the human spheres and does not recognise the role that its socially produced dimension plays in sustaining the Kosovar conflict, leads to the institutionalisation of injustices and inequalities in post-conflict peacebuilding, hampering the transition from negative to positive peace. It does so by enabling and reinforcing neoliberalising practices, meaning that it commodifies humans and the environment in the pursuit of alleged

future ‘sustainability’, which is often built on present socio-environmental exploitation. Against this background, I argued that research in environmental peacebuilding does not sufficiently question the relationship between the environment and neoliberalisation. This means that it does not recognise the hidden paradoxes and power dynamics that are prescribed by its key concepts, like ‘the environment’ and ‘sustainability’ in the context of the global neoliberal economy into which post-conflict countries are to be integrated. Thereby, environmental peacebuilding research, in its current form, fails to recognise whose idea of sustainable peace it promotes and runs the danger of inadvertently locking in patterns of structural violence. In order to address this shortcoming, I argued that a focus on present socio-ecological and economic inequalities and injustices rather than future sustainability can function as the necessary (analytical) shift in direction to develop a more critical approach to environmental peacebuilding.

Conducting this research in Kosovo and in Brussels has revealed fascinating insights into the manner in which environmental peacebuilding, if used as an analytical lens rather than object of study, can illuminate hidden dynamics in post-conflict situations where the environment did not directly contribute to the outbreak or intensify the conflict. However, my research also raises interesting questions for further enquiry. For example, what new insights can we gain if we conceptualise the environment more broadly, going beyond the anthropocentric understanding of the environment as a crucial ingredient in the processes of economic development and (individual) human wellbeing? As my analysis in Chapter 3 indicated, there is another dimension to understanding the environment, which goes beyond its material dimension and the biophysical processes. The ideas, meanings, and belief systems that are closely entangled with the biophysical environment can provide a different angle to study how understandings of the environment can affect peacebuilding processes. In fact, can we begin to explore more coherent peacebuilding approaches that recognise the intrinsic value of the environment? What are the (theoretical and methodological) opportunities and pitfalls in this regard? Research in political ecology with a specific focus on alternatives to expansive economic growth has begun to engage with the intrinsic value of the environment, but has not yet extended these insights to the spheres of peace and conflict.

Against this background, research in environmental peacebuilding would benefit from an analysis of the different ideas of ‘the environment’ and its connection to territorial conflicts through the lens of peace geography and environmental sensemaking. The former would allow us to consider the interaction of landscapes and territories with wider socio-economic conflict dynamics (see e.g. Björkdahl & Buckley-Zistel, 2016; Courtheyn, 2017). The latter would provide interesting insight into framings and social constructions of the environment, particularly with

reference to identity- and nation-building processes (Castree, 2014). Research in this area would be able to explore the political dimensions of the environment more broadly, engaging much more critically with the tendency of environmental peacebuilding research to depoliticise environmental processes and to focus predominantly on their material dimensions (e.g. natural resource management) (Aggestam & Sundell, 2016; Bruch et al., 2016).

In addition, what could these insights on the ideas and meanings that territories and landscapes can hold for clashing conflict parties reveal if we synthesise them with research on statehood and recognition? Could this provide another novel angle to understanding how conceptualisations of the environment can affect peacebuilding specifically in the context of territorial conflicts? For instance, research into statehood in peace and conflict has so far been concerned with the discussions of failed states, international trusteeship or limited statehood, which refers to systems where state sovereignty is domestically fragile, but internationally undamaged (see e.g. Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013; Fagan, 2012; Krasner & Risse, 2014; Lake & Fariss, 2014; Risse & Stollenwerk, 2018). Yet, there is a growing body of research on the tensions and frictions that arise from the process of interacting with domestically sovereign countries without formally recognising their international sovereignty (see e.g. Armakolas & Ker-Lindsay, 2020; Berg & Ker-Lindsay, 2018; Ker-Lindsay, 2015). As my analysis has shown, peacebuilding which avoids the resolution of questions over status and recognition undermines wider peacebuilding objectives in the long-term. Examining if and how understandings of the environment in both its material and produced dimensions can support or undermine recognition processes, would significantly improve our knowledge of (persisting) territorial conflicts. This type of research would broaden the applicability of environmental peacebuilding beyond the areas of natural resource management and provide the opportunity to engage critically with the conceptual and methodological assumptions that it takes for granted.

My research has attempted to kickstart this process. I explored how understandings of the environment in sustainable development affect EU peacebuilding in Kosovo. I argued that peacebuilding processes, which build on an anthropocentric conceptualisation of the environment in terms of its use-value in economic development and human wellbeing, miss the often messy social embeddedness of environmental factors in situations of peace and conflict. This means that the environment and its associated concepts, such as sustainability, are carriers of different (and at times clashing) interests and power dynamics. However, by missing to pay attention to these produced meanings and beliefs under the conceptual banners of 'the environment' or 'sustainability', these peacebuilding policies produce socio-ecological and

economic inequalities and injustices that feed into conflict dynamics and undermine overall peacebuilding objectives. Environmental peacebuilding in its current form was ill-equipped to help us understand how and why this is the case. I argued that it can build on political ecology and green political economy to unpack the underlying interests and power dynamics that are collapsed into its overarching conceptual umbrella terms. Thereby, environmental peacebuilding research can engage more critically with whose agenda (i.e. whose version of peace) it aims to promote under the heading of ‘sustainable peace’. Nonetheless, I do not aim to question the merits and achievements of environmental peacebuilding in drawing attention to the interplay of the environment, peace and conflict. In fact, my research also showed the value of environmental peacebuilding as an analytical lens, rather than object of study. It provides a useful angle to create a deeper understanding of how socio-environmental processes contribute to or hamper the transition from negative to positive peace, making the implementation of conflict-sensitive policies which respect both the environmental and the human spheres more likely. Given the increase in environmental pressures and the effects of extreme climatic changes, becoming more attuned to those processes that allow us to question and explore alternatives to dominant neoliberalisations appears all the more urgent.

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Annex 1: Overview of documents used in document analysis

Table 1: EU policy analysis, Chapter 4

DATE	TITLE	AUTHOR	TYPE	RELEVANCE	CODE
1992	Petersberg Declaration	Western European Union	Declaration	Establishes the Petersberg tasks which are developed under CFSP	N/A
1992	Treaty of Maastricht	European Union	Treaty	Creates CFSP as part of EU three pillar system	N/A
1997	Treaty of Amsterdam	European Union	Treaty	Establishes sustainable development as EU guiding principle	N/A
1999	Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the Stabilisation and Association process for countries of South-Eastern Europe	European Commission	Communication	Establishes Stabilisation and Association Process for enlargement	COM(1999) 235 final
2000	Presidency Conclusions – Lisbon European Council 23 and 24 March 2000	European Council	Conclusions	Streamlines EU policies and outlines joint approach to Western Balkans	N/A
2001	Presidency Conclusions Göteborg Summit 15 and 16 June 2001	European Council	Conclusions / Declaration	Introduced sustainable development strategy (SDS) based on two pillars (a) fighting unsustainable actions; (b) integrating sustainable development into EU policy-making)	SN 200/1/01 REV 1
2001	Communication on Conflict Prevention	European Commission	Communication	Provides basis for EU conflict prevention and peacebuilding	COM(2001) 211 final
2001	Draft European Union Programme for the Prevention of Conflicts	Council of the European Union	Conclusions	Provides basis for EU peacebuilding and conflict prevention by setting clear policy targets for what was outlined in COM(2001)211 final	9537/1/01 REV 1
2002	Presidency Conclusions Barcelona European Council 15 and 16 March 2002	European Council	Conclusions	Adds external dimension to sustainable development strategy	SN 100/1/02 REV 1

2003	European Security Strategy (ESS)	European Union	Strategy	First global security strategy; highlights security as prerequisite for development	N/A
2003	Presidency Conclusions of the European Council of 12-13 December 2003 (5381/04)	European Council	Conclusions	Adopts ESS (p. 21)	5381/04
2005	Draft Declaration on Guiding Principles for Sustainable Development	European Commission	Communication	Adopts objectives and policy guiding principles for sustainable development	COM(2005) 218 final
2006	Review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS) - Renewed Strategy	Council of the European Union	Strategy	Advances the 2001 SDS	10917/06
2006	Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)	Council of the European Union	Regulation	Establishes IPA 2007-2013	Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006
2006	Regulation (EC) No 1717/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006 establishing an Instrument for Stability	European Parliament, Council of the European Union	Regulation	Establishes Instrument for Stability (2007-2013)	Regulation (EC) No 1717/2006
2006	Brussels European Council 14/15 December 2006 Presidency Conclusions	European Council	Conclusions	Sets out renewed consensus on enlargement	16879/1/06 REV 1 (2007)
2007	Security and Development - Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Government of the Member States meeting within the Council	Council of the European Union	Conclusions	Outlines actions to institutionalise the security-development nexus in EU external action	15097/07
2007	COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 781/2007 of 12 June 2007 implementing Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 establishing an instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA)	European Commission	Regulation	Endorses introduction of IPA 2007-2013	REGULATION (EC) No 781/2007
2007	Progress Report on Sustainable Development Strategy 2007	European Commission	Communication	Assesses and reviews progress on SDS	COM(2007) 642 final

2007	Towards an EU response to situations of fragility - engaging in difficult environments for sustainable development, stability and peace	European Commission	Communication	Summarises the focus of existing instruments and identifies measures to improve complementarity	COM(2007) 643 final
2008	Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy - Providing Security in a Changing World	European Union	Report	Reinforces ESS five years on	S407/08
2008	Development perspectives for peace-building and nation building in post-conflict situations: European Parliament resolution of 18 December 2008 on development perspectives for peace-building and nation building in post-conflict situations	European Parliament	Resolution	Establishes two phases of EU peacebuilding: stabilisation phase and statebuilding phase.	2008/2097(INI) (2010/C 45 E/14)
2009	Treaty on European Union	European Union	Treaty	Articles 21-46 (external action and common foreign & security policy); Art 41 on funding; in Chapter 2, Section 2 of Title V ('Provisions on the Common Security and Defence Policy'), and in Protocols 1, 10 and 11 and Declarations 13 and 14. role of the European Parliament in the CFSP and CSDP is described in Article 36 of the TEU. [taken from website]; renamed ESDP into CSDP	N/A
2009	Treaty on Functioning of European Union	European Union	Treaty	Articles 205-222 (common commercial policy)	N/A
2009	Mainstreaming sustainable development into EU policies: 2009 Review of the European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development	European Commission	Communication	Review of the 2001/2006 SDS	COM(2009) 400 final
2009	2009 Review of the Sustainable Development Strategy - Presidency Report	Council of the European Union	(Annex to 2009 Review)	Reiterates importance of sustainable development for EU policy direction	16818/09

2009	GDP and beyond - Measuring Progress in a changing world	European Commission	Communication	Highlights that GDP does not take environmental sustainability into consideration	COM(2009) 433 final
2010	Europe 2020 Strategy	European Commission	Communication	Outlines EU-internal strategy for sustainable development	COM(2010) 2020
2010	General Affairs Council conclusions	Council of the European Union	Conclusions	Highlights peace dimension of enlargement (particularly in the Western Balkans)	17871/10
2011	Council Conclusions on Conflict Prevention	Council of the European Union	Conclusions	Sets out mandate for conflict prevention	11820/11
2011	Rio+20: towards the green economy and better governance	European Commission	Communication	Develops global dimension of Europe 2020 Strategy	COM(2011) 363 final
2011	Agenda for Change	European Commission	Communication	Provides the basis for EU development policy and identifies core principles and priority areas; informed design of financing instruments 2014-2020	COM(2011) 637 final
2012	Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - EU support for sustainable change in transition societies	European Commission	Communication	Outlines action and support for reforms and stabilisation in post-conflict transitions	JOIN(2012) 27 final
2012	Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on 'The role of the European Union in peace building in external relations: best practice and perspectives'	European Economic and Social Committee	Opinion	Suggests creation of EU-wide peacebuilding strategy and code of principles	2012/C 68/04
2013	The Overarching Post-2015 Agenda	European Council	Council Conclusions	Outlines the issues on the post-2015 agenda (which are transformed into priorities and targets in COM(2014) 335 final).	11559/13
2013	Financing poverty eradication and sustainable development beyond 2015	European Council	Conclusions	Highlights that financing for sustainable development should be in line with Monterrey Consensus and Doha Declaration	17553/13

2013	General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 'Living well, within the limits of our planet'	European Union	Decision	Establishes the 7th Environmental Action Programme (until 2020)	1386/2013/EU
2013	A decent life for all: ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future	European Commission	Communication	Assesses the progress made at Rio+20 and outlines a post-2015 strategy	COM(2013) 92 final
2013	Beyond 2015: towards a comprehensive and integrated approach to financing poverty eradication and sustainable development	European Commission	Communication	Outlines the EU's view of how best to finance the post-2015 agenda; advocates for stepping up finance in line with the Busan Principles; it's all very much reflected in Com(2014) 44 final.	COM(2013) 531 final
2013	The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises	European Commission, HRVP	Joint Communication	Develops consistency principle for CSDP; highlights importance of implementing security-development nexus	JOIN/2013/030 final
2013	EUROPEAN COUNCIL 19/20 DECEMBER 2013 CONCLUSIONS	European Council	Conclusions	Gives mandate to HR/VP to create Global Strategy and discusses CSDP	EUCO 217/13
2013	Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis-Prone Countries 2013-2020	European Commission	Staff Working Document	Sets out priorities and objectives for implementing action plan on resilience	SWD(2013) 227 final
2014	REGULATION (EU) No 231/2014 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 March establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II)	European Parliament, Council of the European Union	Regulation	Establishes IPA II, 2014-2020	REGULATION (EU) No 231/2014
2014	Regulation (EU) No 230/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing an instrument contributing to stability and peace	European Parliament, Council of the European Union	Regulation	Establishes Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)	Regulation (EU) No 230/2014
2014	Regulation (EU) No. 234/2014 establishing Partnership Instrument	European Parliament, Council of European Union	Regulation	Establishes Partnership Instrument to cover areas that do not fall under ODA as defined by OECD's DAC; implements international dimension of Europe 2020	Regulation (EU) No 234/2014
2014	Commission Implementing Decision establishing Partnership Instrument	European Commission	Decision	Approved Regulation 234/2014	C(2014) 4453 final

2014	On a transformative post-2015 agenda	Council of the European Union	Conclusions	Develops post-2015 strategy and sets priority areas	16827/14
2014	A decent life for all: From vision to collective action	European Commission	Communication	Outlines seventeen priorities and targets to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development	COM(2014) 335 final
2014	REGULATION (EU) No 236/2014 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 March 2014 laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action	European Union	Regulation	Establishes rules for implementing finance of external action	Regulation (EU) No 236/2014
2015	EU Enlargement Strategy	European Commission	Communication	Outlines priority areas of accession process	COM(2015) 611 final
2015	A Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015	European Commission	Communication	Identifies defined strategy for world summits in 2015; draws on Com(2013) 531 final for financing arrangements	COM(2015) 44 final
2015	A new Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015	European Council	Conclusions	Identifies strategy of global partnership and defines strategy for world summits in 2015	9241/15
2015	European Council meeting (25 and 26 June 2015) – Conclusions	European Council	Conclusions	Sets out mandate for creation of new Global Security Strategy	EUCO 22/15
2015	European Agenda on Security	European Commission	Communication	Establishes the need for a new Internal Security Strategy, recognises that internal and external security are linked, and highlights environmental crime as a form of organised crime	COM(2015) 185 final

2015	Taking forward the EU's Comprehensive Approach to external conflict and crises Action Plan 2015	European Commission	Joint Staff Working Document	Develops EU Comprehensive Approach (later Integrated Approach)	SWD(2015) 85 final
2015	The EU in a changing global environment - a more connected, contested and complex world	European Parliament	Resolution	Highlights the internal-external security nexus, the security-development nexus, subordinates the environment to resources and energy security, and links promotion of values to advancement of sustainable peace and security.	2015/2272(INI)
2015	Capacity building in support of security and development - Enabling partners to prevent and manage crises	European Commission, HRVP	Joint Communication	Highlights the need for EU-wide strategic framework on SSR	JOIN(2015) 17 final
2016	Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL amending Regulation (EU) No 230/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing an instrument contributing to stability and peace	European Commission	Proposal for regulation	Attempts to add military dimension to financing under IcSP	COM(2016) 447 final 2016/0207 (COD)
2016	European Parliament resolution of 7 June 2016 on the EU 2015 Report on Policy Coherence for Development	European Parliament	Resolution	Calls for increased cooperation and coherence between CSDP and development instruments	P8_TA(2016)0246

2016	The EU in a changing global environment - a more connected, contested, and complex world.	European Parliament	Resolution	Emphasises that EU external action requires a coordinated strategy assessing threats, actions and priorities	P8_TA(2016)0120
2016	Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe - A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy	EEAS	Strategy	Stresses the important role that the EU needs to play to prevent and manage conflicts, by means of promoting the SDGs through its external action; recognises the link between internal and external security	N/A
2016	EU Global Strategy Implementation Plan on Security and Defence	HRVP (European Commission)	Implementation Plan	Outlines the implementation of the Global Strategy in the areas of security and defence; highlights the role of both civilian and military CSDP missions for both external and internal security	14392/16
2016	Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence	Council of the European Union	Council conclusions	Approves implementation of the EUGS as set out in the implementation plan (14392/16), highlights the need to improve capacity building for conflict prevention	14149/16
2016	New Security Sector Reform Strategic Framework	European Commission, HRVP	Joint Communication	Proposes to support capacity-building in the area of security and development; highlights SSR as a supporting factor in establishing sustainable development	JOIN(2016) 31 final

2016	Taking forward the EU's Comprehensive Approach to external conflicts and crises - Action Plan 2016-17	European Commission	Staff Working Document	Further develops the 2015 Action Plan (SWD(2015) 85 final); highlights Comprehensive Approach as crucial for implementing Global Strategy and achieving SDGs	SWD(2016) 254 final
2016	2016 Annual Report on the implementation of the European Union's instruments for financing external actions in 2015	European Commission	Report	Reviews financing external actions and outlines provisions for improvement	COM(2016) 810 final; {SWD(2016) 456 final}
2016	Key European action supporting the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals	European Commission	Staff Working Document	Accompanies COM(2016) 739 final. Outlines EU actions in support of SDGs by distinguishing between external and domestic policies for each of the 17 SDGs	SWD (2016) 390 final
2016	Next steps for a sustainable European future - European action for sustainability	European Commission	Communication	Introduces the mapping of EU internal and external policies according to SDGs	COM(2016) 739 final
2016	2016 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy	European Commission	Communication	Assesses implementation of 2015 enlargement strategy	COM(2016) 715 final
2017	Launching the European Defence Fund	European Commission	Communication		COM(2017) 295 final
2017	A strategic approach to resilience in the EU's external action	European Commission	Communication	Outlines streamlined policy framework, especially in context of humanitarian-development policies	JOIN(2017) 21 final
2017	The New European Consensus on Development - Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future	European Union	Joint Statement	Establishes the new European Consensus on Development	N/A

Table 2: EU policy analysis, Chapter 5

DATE	TITLE	AUTHOR	TYPE	RELEVANCE	CODE
2003	EU-Western Balkans Thessaloniki Summit	European Council	Press release / declaration	Shifted EU engagement in the Western Balkans from peacebuilding and stabilisation to enlargement and integration	C/03/163
2003	The Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans – Moving towards European integration	Council of the European Union	Declaration / Annex	Outlines common agenda between EU and Western Balkan countries; included as Annex A to the declaration (pp. 11-19)	10369/03 (Presse 166)
2003	Preparing for the participation of the Western Balkans in Community programmes and agencies	European Commission	Communication	Sets out plan, timeline and preliminary conditions and limitations for SAP countries to become involved in EU programmes and agencies	COM 748(2003)
2004	REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION - The Stabilisation and Association process for South East Europe - Third Annual Report	European Commission	Report	Assesses SAP progress for Western Balkans; highlights environment as an area for regional concern	COM(2004) 202/2 final
2004	Council Regulation (EC) No 533/2004 of 22 March 2004 on the establishment of European partnerships in the framework of the stabilisation and association process	Council of the European Union	Regulation	Establishes European Partnerships (within SAP framework)	533/2004
2004	COUNCIL DECISION of 14 June 2004 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Serbia and Montenegro including Kosovo as defined by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999	Council of the European Union	Decision	Relates to (2006/56/EC) and (2008/213/EC)	(2004/520/EC)
2005	2005 enlargement strategy paper	European Commission	Communication	Assesses Kosovo's progress in fulfilling conditions of European integration in context of regional enlargement efforts; makes recommendations for the upcoming year	COM(2005)561

2005	Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) 2005 Progress Report	European Commission	Staff Working Document	Assesses implementation of Stabilisation and Association Process; accompanies enlargement strategy	SEC (2005) 1423
2006	COUNCIL DECISION of 30 January 2006 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Serbia and Montenegro including Kosovo as defined by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999 and repealing Decision 2004/520/EC	Council of the European Union	Decision	Repeals Decision 2004/520/EC. Adds environmental awareness to the list of priorities for Kosovo. Relates to (2008/213/EC)	(2006/56/EC)
2006	Western Balkans on the road to the EU: consolidating stability and raising prosperity	European Commission	Communication	Acknowledges importance and danger of resolving Kosovo's status question	COM(2006) 27 final
2006	JOINT ACTION 2006/304/CFSP of 10 April 2006 on the establishment of an EU Planning Team (EUPT Kosovo) regarding a possible EU crisis management operation in the field of rule of law and possible other areas in Kosovo	Council of the European Union	Joint Action	Establishes EU Planning Team (EUPT Kosovo) to scout possibility of creating EU crisis management operation	2006/304/CFSP
2007	COUNCIL JOINT ACTION 2006/918/CFSP of 11 December 2006 amending and extending Joint Action 2006/304/CFSP on the establishment of an EU Planning Team (EUPT Kosovo) regarding a possible EU crisis management operation in the field of rule of law and possible other areas in Kosovo	Council of the European Union	Joint Action	Extends mandate of EUPT Kosovo (set out on 2006/304/CFSP)	2006/918/CFSP
2006	Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) 2006 Progress Report	European Commission	Staff Working Document	Assesses implementation of Stabilisation and Association Process; accompanies enlargement strategy	COM(2006) 649 final

2007 (May)	COUNCIL JOINT ACTION 2007/334/CFSP of 14 May 2007 amending and extending Joint Action 2006/304/CFSP on the establishment of an EU Planning Team (EUPT Kosovo) regarding a possible EU crisis management operation in the field of rule of law and possible other areas in Kosovo	Council of the European Union	Joint Action	Extends mandate of EUPT Kosovo (set out on 2006/304/CFSP)	2007/334/CFSP
2007 (Jul)	COUNCIL JOINT ACTION 2007/520/CFSP of 23 July 2007 amending and extending Joint Action 2006/304/CFSP on the establishment of an EU Planning Team (EUPT Kosovo) regarding a possible EU crisis management operation in the field of rule of law and possible other areas in Kosovo	Council of the European Union	Joint Action	Extends mandate of EUPT Kosovo (set out on 2006/304/CFSP)	2007/520/CFSP
2007 (Nov)	COUNCIL JOINT ACTION 2007/778/CFSP of 29 November 2007 amending and extending Joint Action 2006/304/CFSP on the establishment of an EU Planning Team (EUPT Kosovo) regarding a possible EU crisis management operation in the field of rule of law and possible other areas in Kosovo	Council of the European Union	Joint Action	Extends mandate of EUPT Kosovo (set out on 2006/304/CFSP)	2007/778/CFSP
2007	Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2007-2008	European Commission	Communication	Assesses Kosovo's progress in fulfilling conditions of European integration in context of regional enlargement efforts; makes recommendations for the upcoming year	COM(2007) 663 final
2007	Kosovo Under UNSCR 1244 2007 Progress Report	European Commission	Staff Working Document	Assesses implementation of Stabilisation and Association Process; accompanies enlargement strategy	SEC(2007) 1433

2007	Brussels European Council 14/15 December 2006 Presidency Conclusions	European Council	Conclusions	Reiterates support for 2006 enlargement strategy; nothing specific on Kosovo	16879/06
2007	COMMISSION DECISION C(2007)5684 of 28/11/2007 Adopting an Annual Programme for Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244)1 under the IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for 2007	European Commission	Decision	Establishes Annual Programme for Kosovo under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for 2007	C(2007)5684
2007	Council Conclusions on Western Balkans	Council of the European Union	Conclusions	Acknowledges protracted conflict over Kosovo's status; reaffirms readiness to deploy civilian mission	16616/07
2008	COUNCIL JOINT ACTION 2008/228/CFSP of 17 March 2008 amending and extending Joint Action 2006/304/CFSP on the establishment of an EU Planning Team (EUPT Kosovo) regarding a possible EU crisis management operation in the field of rule of law and possible other areas in Kosovo	Council of the European Union	Joint Action	Extends mandate of EUPT Kosovo (set out on 2006/304/CFSP)	2008/228/CFSP
2008	Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2008-2009	European Commission	Communication	Assesses Kosovo's progress in fulfilling conditions of European integration in context of regional enlargement efforts; makes recommendations for the upcoming year	COM(2008) 674 final
2008	Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) 2008 Progress Report	European Commission	Staff Working Document	Assesses implementation of Stabilisation and Association Process; accompanies enlargement strategy	SEC(2008) 2697 final
2008	COMMISSION DECISION of 2008 adopting an Annual Programme II for Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244/99) under the IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for 2008	European Commission	Decision	Outlines annual action programme for Kosovo financed by IPA	N/A
2008	European Council Conclusions on the Western Balkans [extract]	Council of the European Union	Conclusions	Reaffirms COM(2008) 127 final.	N/A

2008	Western Balkans: Enhancing the European perspective	European Commission	Communication	Outlines potential for regional integration into EU; emphasises importance of regional stability	COM(2008) 127 final
2008	PRESS RELEASE, 2851st Council meeting, General Affairs and External Relations, EXTERNAL RELATIONS, Brussels 18 February 2008.	Council of the European Union (GAERC)	Conclusions / press release	Issues Council statement on Kosovo's declaration of independence	6496/08 (Presse 41)
2008	COUNCIL DECISION of 18 February 2008 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Serbia including Kosovo as defined by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999 and repealing Decision 2006/56/EC	Council of the European Union	Council Conclusion	Repeals Decision 2006/56/EC; provides that environmental issues need to be streamlined into other sectorial policies	(2008/213/EC)
2008	COUNCIL JOINT ACTION 2008/124/CFSP of 4 February 2008 on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo	Council of the European Union	Joint Action	Establishes EULEX	2008/124/CFSP
2009	COUNCIL JOINT ACTION 2009/445/CFSP of 9 June 2009 amending Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, EULEX KOSOVO	Council of the European Union	Joint Action	Amends Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP to increase financial budget to cover the whole period of initial EULEX mandate	2009/445/CFSP
2009	Kosovo under UNSCR 1255/99 2009 Progress Report	European Commission	Staff Working Document	Assesses implementation of Stabilisation and Association Process; accompanies enlargement strategy	SEC(2009) 1340
2009	COMMISSION DECISION of 2009 on Annual Programme for Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244/99)1 under the IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for 2009	European Commission	Decision	Outlines annual action programme for Kosovo financed by IPA	N/A
2010	Council conclusions on the Western Balkans	Council of the European Union	Conclusions	Reiterates EU commitment and European perspective of Western Balkans	N/A

2010	Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2010-2011	European Commission	Communication	Assesses Kosovo's progress in fulfilling conditions of European integration in context of regional enlargement efforts; makes recommendations for the upcoming year	COM(2010) 660
2010	Kosovo* 2010 Progress Report	European Commission	Staff Working Document	Assesses implementation of Stabilisation and Association Process; accompanies enlargement strategy	SEC(2010)1329
2010	COMMISSION DECISION of 2010 adopting an Annual Programme for Kosovo* under the IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for 2010	European Commission	Decision	Outlines annual action programme for Kosovo financed by IPA	N/A
2010	2010 Annual Programme – Project Fiche 10 Environment	European Commission	N/A	Outlines specific implementation of environmental programmes under IPA for 2010	N/A
2010	PRESS RELEASE 3060th Council meeting General Affairs, Brussels, 14 December 2010	Council of the European Union	Conclusions	Outlines key achievements of Kosovo in enlargement preparation process	17871/10
2010	COUNCIL DECISION 2010/322/CFSP of 8 June 2010 amending and extending Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (1), EULEX KOSOVO	Council of the European Union	Decision	Extends EULEX mandate until 2012; also deletes article providing for consistency and coordination of EULEX with overall Union external action	2010/322/CFSP
2010	COUNCIL DECISION 2010/619/CFSP of 15 October 2010 amending Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, EULEX KOSOVO	Council of the European Union	Decision	Specifies EULEX budget until October 2011	2010/619/CFSP

2010	Annual report from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of the CFSP	Council of the European Union	Report	Summarises progress of EU policies in Kosovo in 2009	1831-9033
2011	COUNCIL DECISION 2011/752/CFSP of 24 November 2011 amending Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, EULEX KOSOVO	Council of the European Union	Decision	Specifies EULEX budget until June 2012	2011/752/CFSP
2011	Council conclusions on enlargement and stabilisation and association process - 3132nd GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting Brussels, 5 December 2011	Council of the European Union	Conclusions	Summarises progress made and remaining challenges in SAP	N/A
2011	Main aspects and basis choices of the CFSP (point G, paragraph 43 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006) -2010 -Annual report from the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament	Council of the European Union	Outcome of Proceedings	Summarises progress of EU policies in Kosovo in 2010	12562/11
2011	Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2011-2012	European Commission	Communication	Assesses Kosovo's progress in fulfilling conditions of European integration in context of regional enlargement efforts; makes recommendations for the upcoming year	COM(2011) 666 final
2011	Kosovo* 2011 Progress Report	European Commission	Staff Working Document	Assesses implementation of Stabilisation and Association Process; accompanies enlargement strategy	SEC(2011) 1207

2011	COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 28.11.2011 adopting an Annual Programme for Kosovo* under the IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for 2011	European Commission	Decision	Outlines annual action programme for Kosovo financed by IPA	C(2011) 8703 final
2011	ANNEX: Annual Programme for Kosovo* under the IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for 2011	European Commission	Annex	Accompanies C(2011) 8703 final	N/A
2012	COUNCIL DECISION 2012/291/CFSP of 5 June 2012 amending and extending Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (1), EULEX KOSOVO	Council of the European Union	Decision	Extends EULEX mandate until 2014	2012/291/CFSP
2012 (Oct)	POLITICAL AND SECURITY COMMITTEE DECISION EULEX KOSOVO/2/2012 of 12 October 2012 extending the mandate of the Head of Mission of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (1), EULEX KOSOVO	Political and Security Committee	Decision	Xavier Bout de Marnhac appointed as EULEX Head of Mission until 31 January 2013	(2012/631/CFSP)
2012 (Dec)	POLITICAL AND SECURITY COMMITTEE DECISION EULEX KOSOVO/3/2012 of 4 December 2012 on the appointment of the Head of Mission of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, EULEX KOSOVO	Political and Security Committee	Decision	Ambassador Bernd Brochart appointed as EULEX Head of Mission from 1 Feb 2013	(2012/751/CFSP)

2012	Main aspects and basis choices of the CFSP (point G, paragraph 43 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006) - 2011 Annual report from the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament	Council of the European Union	Outcome of Proceedings	Summarises progress of EU policies in Kosovo in 2012	14605/1/12
2012	Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2012-2013	European Commission	Communication	Assesses Kosovo's progress in fulfilling conditions of European integration in context of regional enlargement efforts; makes recommendations for the upcoming year	COM(2012) 600 final
2012	COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 9.11.2012 adopting an Annual Programme for Kosovo* under the IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for 2012	European Commission	Decision	Outlines annual action programme for Kosovo financed by IPA	C(2012) 8071 final
2013	COUNCIL DECISION 2013/241/CFSP of 27 May 2013 amending Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, EULEX KOSOVO	Council of the European Union	Decision	Sets out budget for EULEX for 15 June 2013 - 14 June 2014	2013/241/CFSP
2013	Press Release 3251st Council meeting, General Affairs, Brussels, 25 June 2013	Council of the European Union	Provisional Version (of conclusions)	Council agrees in principle on draft decision on opening of SAA negotiation with Kosovo (28.6.2013)	11443/13
2013	First agreement of principles governing the normalisation of relations	Government of Kosovo Government of Serbia European Union	Agreement	Called the Brussels Agreement, April 2013; sets out plan to create Association of Serb Majority Municipalities in Kosovo; negotiated in 2013 but not signed until 2015	N/A

2013	Main aspects and basis choices of the CFSP (point G, paragraph 43 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006) - 2012 - Annual report from the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament. 16 October 2013.	Council of the European Union	Outcome of Proceedings	Summarises progress of EU policies in Kosovo in 2012	14924/13
2013	Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2013-2014	European Commission	Communication	Assesses Kosovo's progress in fulfilling conditions of European integration in context of regional enlargement efforts; makes recommendations for the upcoming year	COM(2013) 700 final
2013	Kosovo* Progress Report	European Commission	Staff Working Document	Assesses implementation of Stabilisation and Association Process; accompanies enlargement strategy	SWD(2013) 416 final
2013	COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 9.1.2013 adopting an Annual Programme for Kosovo* under the IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for 2013	European Commission	Decision	Outlines annual action programme for Kosovo financed by IPA	C(2013) 17 final
2013	ANNEX: Annual Programme for Kosovo* under the IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for 2013	European Commission	Annex	Accompanies C(2013) 17 final	N/A
2014	Final Declaration by the Chair of the Conference on the Western Balkans	Press and Information Office of the Federal Government of Germany	Press release / declaration	Sets out agenda for Berlin Process	288
2014	COUNCIL DECISION 2014/349/CFSP of 12 June 2014 amending Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (1), EULEX KOSOVO	Council of the European Union	Decision	Extends EULEX mandate until 2016	2014/349/CFSP

2014	COUNCIL DECISION 2014/685/CFSP of 29 September 2014 amending Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, EULEX KOSOVO	Council of the European Union	Decision	Establishes relocated judicial proceedings to investigate allegations of human and organ trafficking in Kosovo	2014/685/CFSP
2014	Main aspects and basic choices of the CFSP (Part II, point E, paragraph 25 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013) – 2013 –Annual report from the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament	Council of the European Union	Outcome of Proceedings	Summarises progress of EU policies in Kosovo in 2013	12094/14
2014	Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2014-15	European Commission	Communication	Assesses Kosovo's progress in fulfilling conditions of European integration in context of regional enlargement efforts; makes recommendations for the upcoming year	COM(2014) 700 final
2014	Kosovo* 2014 Progress Report	European Commission	Staff Working Document	Assesses implementation of Stabilisation and Association Process; accompanies enlargement strategy	SWD(2014) 306 final
2014	COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 11.12.2014 adopting an Annual Action Programme for Kosovo* for the year 2014	European Commission	Decision	Outlines annual action programme for Kosovo financed by IPA	C(2014) 9577 final
2015	Final Declaration by the Chair of the Vienna Western Balkans Summit, 27 August 2015	Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (Austria)	Declaration	Revisits progress since Berlin conference and sets out agenda for the next year	N/A
2015	Addendum - Western Balkans Summit Vienna 2015	Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (Austria)	Annex	Sets out targets and agenda to increase connectivity in regional energy and transport sector	N/A

2015	COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2015/901 of 11 June 2015 amending Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX KOSOVO)	Council of the European Union	Decision	Extends EULEX budget from 15 June 2015 to 14 June 2016	(CFSP) 2015/901
2015	Main aspects and basic choices of the CFSP (part II, point E, paragraph 25 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013) - 2014 - Draft Annual report from the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament	Council of the European Union	Outcome of Proceedings	Summarises progress on Kosovo in 2013/2014; highlights change in strategic mandate of EULEX	11083/15
2015	EU Enlargement Strategy	European Commission	Communication	Assesses Kosovo's progress in fulfilling conditions of European integration in context of regional enlargement efforts; makes recommendations for the upcoming year	COM(2015) 611 final
2015	Kosovo* Progress Report	European Commission	Staff Working Document	Assesses implementation of Stabilisation and Association Process; accompanies enlargement strategy	SWD(2015) 215 final
2015	COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 25.11.2015 adopting an Annual Action Programme for Kosovo* for the year 2015	European Commission	Decision	Outlines annual action programme for Kosovo financed by IPA	C(2015) 8319 final
2016	Stabilisation and Association agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and Kosovo*, of the other part	European Union	Agreement	Initiates accession process and sets out specific targets for legal harmonisation of Kosovo with EU <i>acquis</i>	in Official Journal of EU, L71, 16.3.2016

2016	Framework Agreement between the European Union and Kosovo* on the general principles for the participation of Kosovo in Union programmes	Council of the European Union	Agreement	Establishes how Kosovo can participate in which specific EU programmes	13393/16
2016	First meeting of the Stabilisation and Association Council between the European Union and Kosovo	Council of the European Union	Press release	Concludes first SAC meeting and welcomes Framework Agreement (13393/16) and European Reform Agenda	679/16
2016	Final Declaration by the Chair of the Paris Western Balkans Summit, 4 July 2016	Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (France)	Declaration	Emphasises connectivity and importance of stability in Western Balkans	N/A
2016	Western Balkan Sustainable Charter	Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (France)	Declaration	Outcome of Western Balkans summit in Paris; outlines three steps that the Western Balkan 6 will take to increase regional energy efficiency (focusing on governance, smart support measures, and climate action and transparency)	N/A
2016	Connectivity Agenda: Co-financing of Investment Projects in the Western Balkans 2016	European Commission	Roadmap	Outlines financing of regional projects under the Connectivity Agenda	N/A
2016	COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2016/947 of 14 June 2016 amending Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo * (EULEX Kosovo)	Council of the European Union	Decision	Extends EULEX mandate until 2018	CFSP 2016/947
2016	COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2016/1990 of 14 November 2016 amending Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX KOSOVO)	Council of the European Union	Decision	Expands finances for "relocated judicial proceedings"	CFSP 2016/1990
2016	2016 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy	European Commission	Communication	Assesses Kosovo's progress in fulfilling conditions of European integration in context of regional enlargement efforts; makes recommendations for the upcoming year	COM(2016) 715 final
2016	Kosovo* 2016 Report	European Commission	Staff Working Document	Assesses implementation of Stabilisation and Association Process; accompanies enlargement strategy	SWD (2016) 363 final

2016	COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 6.12.2016 adopting an Action Programme for Kosovo* for the year 2016 – Part I	European Commission	Decision	Outlines annual action programme for Kosovo financed by IPA	C(2016) 8261 final
2016	ANNEX 1 ACTION PROGRAMME FOR KOSOVO* FOR THE YEAR 2016 – PART I	European Commission	Annex	Accompanies C(2016) 8261 final	N/A
2016	COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 7.12.2016 adopting an Action Programme for Kosovo* for the year 2016 – Part II – Sector Budget Support	European Commission	Decision	Outlines annual action programme for Kosovo financed by IPA	C(2016) 8458 final
2016	ANNEX 1 ACTION PROGRAMME FOR KOSOVO* FOR THE YEAR 2016 – PART II - SECTOR BUDGET SUPPORT	European Commission	Annex	Accompanies C(2016) 8458 final	N/A
2017	Joint statement after the 2nd meeting of the Stabilisation and Association Council between the European Union and Kosovo	Council of the European Union	Press release	Concludes 2 nd SAC meeting	674/17
2017	CFSP Report - Our priorities in 2017	Council of the European Union	Report	Summarises progress of recent years and sets out priorities for 2017; highlights geopolitical importance of Western Balkans against background of political events (counter-terrorism, migration, etc.)	10650/17
2017	COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2017/973 of 8 June 2017 amending Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX KOSOVO)	Council of the European Union	Decision	Sets EULEX budget from 15 June 2017 to 14 June 2018	CFSP 2017/973
2017	TRIESTE WESTERN BALKANS SUMMIT - Declaration by Italian Chair	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation [Italy]	Declaration	Highlights importance on connectivity and security cooperation; underlines complementarity of enlargement and Berlin process, and interconnectedness of EU's and WB6's stability/security	N/A

2018	A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans	European Commission	Communication	Assesses Kosovo's progress in fulfilling conditions of European integration in context of regional enlargement efforts; makes recommendations for the upcoming year	COM(2018) 65 final
2018	ANNEX - A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans	European Commission	Annex	Outlines Action Plan	COM(2018) 65 final
2018	Joint declaration on regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations, war crimes and missing persons in the framework of the Berlin Process (London Summit)	Foreign and Commonwealth Office [UK]	Declaration	Highlights importance of good neighbourly relations, the necessity to prosecute war crimes and tackle the missing persons issues across the Western Balkans	N/A
2019	Western Balkans Summit Poznań: Chair's conclusions	The Chancellery of the Prime Minister [Poland]	Conclusions	Summarises main outcomes of the summit, focusing particularly on economic growth, investments and connectivity, as well as security	N/A

Table 3: Policy analysis, Chapters 6 and 7

Please note: The documents analysed in Chapters 4 and 5 were also taken into consideration here.

DATE	TITLE	AUTHOR	TYPE	RELEVANCE	CODE
2006	The Energy Community Treaty	European Union	Treaty	Establishes European Energy Community	N/A
2008	Program of the Government of Republic of Kosovo 2008 - 2011	Office of the Prime Minister	Policy strategy	Sets out priorities for governmental mandate	N/A
2008	Resettlement Policy Framework for Land Acquisition for the New Mining Field Zone	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning	Report	Outlines responsibilities, eligibility, and valuation in resettlement process for mining field expansion	N/A
2009	DIRECTIVE 2009/72/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 13 July 2009 concerning common rules for the internal market in electricity and repealing Directive 2003/54/EC	European Parliament, Council of the European Union	Directive	Regulates the internal electricity market	2009/72/EC
2009	Directive 2009/73/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 13 July 2009 concerning common rules for the internal market in natural gas and repealing Directive 2003/55/EC	European Parliament, Council of the European Union	Directive	Regulates the internal natural gas market	2009/73/EC
2009	REGULATION (EC) No 713/2009 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 13 July 2009 establishing an Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators	European Parliament, Council of the European Union	Regulation	Establishes Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators	713/2009
2009	Regulation (EC) No 715/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 on conditions for access to the natural gas transmission networks and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1775/2005	European Parliament, Council of the European Union	Regulation	Regulates access to internal energy market	715/2009

2011	THE PROGRAM OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO 2011-2014	Office of the Prime Minister	Policy strategy	Sets out priorities for the governmental mandate 2011-2014 (sustainable economic development, good governance and rule of law, human capital, social welfare)	N/A
2011	Kosovo Census Atlas	Kosovo Agency of Statistics	Report	Presents Kosovo census data	N/A
2011	RESETTLEMENT ACTION PLAN Shala Neighbourhood Hade Project Kosovo	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning	Action Plan	Outlines resettlement actions in response to development of Kosovo's New Mining Field in Shala neighbourhood	N/A
2013	LAW ON RATIFICATION OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT OF PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO AND THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA	Republic of Kosovo	Law	Ratifies Agreement of Principles of Governing the Normalization of Relations between the Republic of Kosovo and the Republic of Serbia; still requires promulgation by the President of Kosovo	Law No. 04/L-199
2014	ANALYSIS OF THE STRATEGIC SECURITY SECTOR REVIEW OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO	Republic of Kosovo	Policy strategy	Identifies measures to overhaul Kosovo's security sector to consolidate sovereignty of the state and ensure security of its citizens; provides the foundation for the militarisation of Kosovo Security Forces	N/A
2014	Kosovo Power Project: Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)	Orion 3E Consortium	Report	Summarises socio-environmental impact of Kosova e Re project	N/A
2015	BRUSSELS AGREEMENTS IMPLEMENTATION STATE OF PLAY (1 October 2014 - 20 March 2015)	Republic of Kosovo	Report	Assesses the progress made on implementation of the agreements reached during the Brussels Dialogue	N/A
2015	Program of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo 2015-2018	Republic of Kosovo	Policy Strategy	Sets out priorities for the annual government programme; frames Kosovo as an essentially European country whose interests complement the EU's interests for security and stability in the region	N/A
2015	2015 National Economic Reform Programme (NERP)	Republic of Kosovo	Policy Strategy	Relates to National Development Strategy (2016); key document setting out economic reforms in line with the SAA	N/A
2015	Judgment in Case No. KO130/15	Constitutional Court of the Republic of Kosovo	Judgment	Rules that the Agreement of Principles of Governing the Normalization of Relations, particularly the establishment of the Association of Serb Majority Municipalities, is unconstitutional	Ref. No. AGJB77/15

2015	Law on Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office	Republic of Kosovo	Law	Establishes Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office to take over responsibility from EULEX	Law No. 05/L-053
2015	State of Nature Report 2010-2014	Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency	Report	Reviews the state of Kosovars environment	N/A
2016	National Development Strategy 2016-2021 (NDS) - Plan for sustainable development	Republic of Kosovo (Office of the Prime Minister)	Policy strategy	Sets out detailed, cross-sectorial priorities to boost economic growth in Kosovo; highlights importance of European integration process and draws on Economic Reform Programme	N/A
2016	Kosovo – EU High Level Dialogue on Key Priorities – European Reform Agenda (ERA)	Republic of Kosovo	Policy Strategy	Provides short-and medium-term priorities for implementation of reform process; ensures continuous high-level dialogue between the signatory parties of the SAA (EU and Kosovo)	N/A
2016	Draft Law on Trepça	Republic of Kosovo	Law	Nationalises Trepca (80% of shares held by government, 20% by employees), specifies organisational structures, and highlights that all resources are property of the Republic of Kosovo	N/A
2017	Government Annual Work Plan 2017	Republic of Kosovo	Policy strategy	Sets out specific strategic priorities for overarching government action; specifies priorities for each ministry, including updates on progress and cross-references to key documents	N/A
2017	Energy Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo 2017-2026	Ministry of Economic Development	Policy strategy	Reviews the state of Kosovo's energy sector; identifies priority areas and action to achieve strategic objectives	N/A
2017	National Programme for Implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (NPISAA) 2017 – 2021	Republic of Kosovo	Policy strategy	Provides a comprehensive overview of Kosovo's progress on implementing priorities of the SAA	N/A
2017	KOSOVO ECONOMIC REFORM PROGRAMME (ERP) 2017	Republic of Kosovo	Policy strategy	Relates to National Development Strategy (2016); key document setting out economic reforms in line with the SAA	N/A
2017	Law on Strategic Investments in the Republic of Kosovo	Republic of Kosovo	Law	Regulates decision-making surrounding strategic investments	Law No. 05/L-079
2018	Government Annual Work Plan	Republic of Kosovo	Policy strategy	Sets out specific strategic priorities for overarching government action; specifies priorities for each ministry, including updates on progress and cross-references to key documents	N/A

2018	KOSOVO ECONOMIC REFORM PROGRAMME (ERP) 2018-2020	Republic of Kosovo	Policy Strategy	Relates to National Development Strategy (2016); key document setting out economic reforms in line with the SAA	N/A
2018	Draft Law on the Ministry of Defense	Republic of Kosovo	Law	Reorganises the Ministry of the Kosovo Security Force to become part of the Ministry of Defense	N/A
2018	Draft Law on Kosovo Security Force	Republic of Kosovo	Law	Sets out the design, command structure, obligations and responsibilities of the (militarised) Kosovo Security Force; approved on 13.09.2018 with Decision No. 04/65 by the Government of Kosovo, and voted through parliament on 14 December 2018	N/A
2018	Draft Law on Service in the Kosovo Security Force	Republic of Kosovo	Law	Sets out the rights, obligations and formalities of serving in the (militarised) Kosovo Security Force; approved on 13.09.2018 with decision No. 05/65 by the Government of Kosovo, and voted through parliament on 14 December 2018	N/A
2018	First Report on the Implementation and Results of the National Development Strategy 2016-2021	Office of the Prime Minister	Report	Reviews the implementation of each measure of the NDS and provides specific indicators of success	N/A
2018	Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Kosovo	Kosovo Agency of Statistics	Report	Presents key statistics on the Republic of Kosovo	N/A
2018	Economic Statistics Gross Domestic Product Q3 2018	Kosovo Agency of Statistics	Report	Summarises Kosovo's key economic statistics for third quarter of 2018	N/A
2019	Government Annual Work Plan 2019	Republic of Kosovo	Policy strategy	Sets out specific strategic priorities for overarching government action. Specifies priorities for each ministry, including updates on progress and cross-references to key documents	N/A
2019	Economic Statistics External Trade Statistics	Kosovo Agency of Statistics	Report	Summarises Kosovo's key trade statistics for 2018	N/A

Annex 2

NVivo Codebook used during analysis of interviews

Name	Description
Challenges	References to challenges in the peacebuilding and statebuilding process in Kosovo
Corruption	References to cases, nature, or implications of corruption
Geopolitics	References to the return / importance of geopolitics to / in the Balkans.
Good governance	References related to the challenges stemming from a lack of good governance
Lack of accountability	References to lack of accountability of both national and international politicians
Lack of development	References to negative impact/causes of lack of economic development in Kosovo
Lack of implementation	References to lack of implementation of existing laws or regulations resulting in negative effects
Status	References relating to the challenge of Kosovo's unsettled status question
Conflict	References to conflict in Kosovo (past or present).
Conflict legacy	References to (past) conflict dynamics in the present
Land ownership and property rights	References relating to the problem of post-conflict land ownership / property rights
Conflict potential	References relating to the existing conflict potential in Kosovo (i.e. likelihood of tensions reigniting open conflict)

Name	Description
Cultural heritage	References to the importance of Kosovo's cultural heritage (both Albanian and Serb)
Energy	References to environmental exploitation for the purpose of energy generation and to the need for energy to boost economic development
Environment	References to the environment
Environment and Conflict	References to the link between environment and conflict
Environmental awareness	References to the public's environmental awareness
Education	Using education programmes to raise environmental awareness amongst populace
Environmental degradation	References to environmental degradation
Environmental protection	References to actions contributing to environmental protection
Instrumental value	References to the instrumental values assigned to / derived from the environment
Intrinsic value	References to the intrinsic value of the environment
Memory	References to memories associated with the environment/nature/landscape
Wilderness	References to the notion of wilderness
Ethnicity	References to issues related to ethnicity and ethnic relations

Name	Description
Identity	References to the role of identity (in context of discussions on ethnicity).
Myths	References to creation / use of myths in the context of ethnicity and Balkan history
Exploitation of public opinion	References to the exploitation of public opinion by specific interest groups (such as governments) for a specific purpose (e.g. opposition to policy reforms)
Green-washing	References to practices of green-washing
Human - non-human interactions	References to the interlinkages of the human and the non-human worlds / humans as part of nature
Motivations	References to motivations for (national and international) politicians' / conflict parties' / civil society actors' behaviour
Peace	References to peace
Environment and peace	References to the links between environment and peace
Interpretations	References to the different meaning / interpretations of peace
Reconciliation	References to issues related to reconciliation efforts after conflict
Peacebuilding	References to peacebuilding efforts in Kosovo
Policy-making	References to the processes of policy-making
Alternatives	References to suggestions of alternative policies

Name	Description
Failures	References to failures of international and domestic policies in Kosovo
By internationals	References to failures of international policies towards Kosovo
By national actors	References to failed policy decisions by domestic policy-makers
Policies	References to specific policies
Border demarcation	References to the border demarcation issue with Montenegro
Brussels Dialogue	References linked to the Belgrade-Prishtina Dialogue / Normalisation of relations
EULEX	References to EULEX in Kosovo
National Development Plan	References to the Kosovar National Development Plan
SAA	References to the Stabilisation and Association Agreement process
Policy priorities	References to policy priorities identified by national and international policy-makers
Power	References to power struggles / tense relationships between certain stakeholders
Business + gov. vs. civil society	References to the close link between business and the ruling elite at the expense of the wider public
Donor vs. donor	References to clashing power dynamics within the donor community
Donors vs. civil society	References to tensions between the donor community and Kosovar civil society

Name	Description
Donors vs. gov + civil society	References to the power dynamics between the international community and donors versus national government and civil society in Kosovo
Donors vs. government	References to power struggles / hierarchies between international donors and Kosovar government
Gov vs. civil society	References to tensions between the Government of Kosovo and Kosovar civil society
QUOTES	Selection of quotes
Resources	References to issues relating to resources, resource control, use, exploitation or distribution.
Stability	References to prioritising stability in Kosovo
Stakeholders	References to specific stakeholders in the peacebuilding process (for the purpose of stakeholder mapping)
Internationals	References to international actors
National government	References to stakeholders inside the national government
NGOs	References to (national and international) NGOs
Think tanks	References to think tanks
Sustainable development	References to sustainable development
Economy	References to the purpose / impact of sustainable development on the economy. [Note: links to

Name	Description
	sustainability = economic sustainability]
Empowerment	References relating to environmental issues and/or sustainable development being conducive to empowering local communities.
Intergenerational justice	References to concern for future generations under the heading of sustainable development
Interpretations	References to the different interpretations of the term 'sustainable development'
Peace and conflict	References to the links between sustainable development and peace and conflict
'Short-termism'	References to short-term thinking in sustainable development policy approaches.
Tensions	References to tensions and faultlines within Kosovar society or politics
Majority vs. marginalised	References to tensions between the majority and the marginalised communities
Private vs. public	References to tensions between the private and the public spheres
Tourism	References to tourism
Tradition	References to traditions (land use, culture, history etc.)
Wildlife crime	References to wildlife crime in Kosovo

